

# A "Feast of Fools"<sup>1</sup>

## *Food Security and the Carnavalesque in Peterborough, Ontario's Food Not Bombs*

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Counterculture movements in the 1960s and 70s dramatically reorganized the role of bodies within social frameworks and saw the internalization of political issues, both figuratively and literally. The political became the personal and quotidian moments of consumption became sites of resistance. As Warren Belasco suggests, in reference to the radical food movements that saw the expulsion of "Wonderbread" and the resurgence of home-cooked holistic foods, "[d]ietary radicalism could be lived 365 days a year, three times a day. If, as Leftists knew, the personal was political, what could be more personal than eating? And what could be more political than challenging America's largest industry, the food business?" (227). Food provides a dynamic vessel for engaging with politics and capital at both the gastronomical level (what we choose to put into our bodies) and the social level (how we arrange our bodies collectively and individually). The kneading, baking, and consumption of bread, for example, provide precious, intimate moments for expressing agency and resistance to systems of power. Belasco saw this.

This paper seeks to address both social and gastronomical resistances in the organization Food Not Bombs. I argue here that Food Not Bombs works to establish "autonomous geographies" and "autonomous food spaces" (see Am. Wilson), and creates spaces for the building of communities and 'togetherness' both outside and in opposition to hegemonic state logics including capitalism and the Canadian (but also, world) food system. In its efforts to do so, Food Not Bombs works to evoke the *carnavalesque* as a way of staging a political challenge to these systems and construct alternatives. The organization utilizes its *carnavalesque* stage to invert traditional consumption normalcies, resisting a normative *biopolitics* characterized by gastronomical sanitation and

consumption-capitalism. These challenges to normalcy evoke alternative social realities through the direct action of actually performing these alternatives. These activities are discussed as potential alternatives to typical models of environmental justice.

To support this thesis, this paper first examines how environmental justice organizations seek justice, and examines the challenges that globalization and global capital pose for environmental justice activists (S. 1.1). Following this, the paper moves to a short discussion of the nature of food justice and food security concerns, focusing particularly on the entanglements of food systems in capitalism (S. 1.2). The paper then discusses the organization Food Not Bombs, first, through a review of

relevant academic literature (S. 2.1) and, second, as an alternative to mainstream models of activism (S. 2.2), addressing how intersectional concerns arise within the Peterborough chapter (S. 2.3). In these discussions the paper relies heavily on ethnographic fieldwork—mainly loosely structured interviews—conducted with the Peterborough chapter of Food Not Bombs. The rest of the paper works towards addressing the primary thesis, first by focusing on the ideal of the carnival (S. 3.1-4), and later, moving on to the relevancy of this place within the biopolitical sphere (S. 3.5). The paper concludes by examining the revolutionary possibilities afforded by Food Not Bombs' activism (S. 4).

### **1. Environmental Justices** **1.1. Addressing (in)Justice**

Generally, environmental justice movements—and associated movements of environmental racism, classism, and equity—have sought to address and critique, at both grassroots-community and academic-policy levels, the (mal)distributions of environmental goods and ills including sustainable use of, access to, and decision-making over local and collective environments (Schlosberg "Defining Environmental Justice", "Theorizing Environmental Justice"; Shrader-Frechette). Environ-

mental justice critiques have typically argued that maldistributions of environmental risks have been borne more heavily on lower-income or marginal communities as well as communities of colour. Associated with these critiques, but importantly separate, have been a body of critiques emergent from environmental racism (and also environmental equity) movements, which have argued beyond a politics of (mal)-distribution to address the larger forces of capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy that have colluded to oppress communities of colour and communities of marginalized identities through spatialized racism (Pulido; Heiman; Miller, Hallstien and Quass; Scholsberg "The Justice of Environmental Justice").

which spatialities of hazards and resources are constructed, maintained, and challenged (Scholsberg; Walker). The second main conception of justice, the procedural frame, seeks to examine the capacity in which individuals are able to participate in the decision-making process concerning the (up- and down-stream) environments that they are implicated in (Scholsberg "The Justice of Environmental Justice" 84).<sup>2</sup>

Increasingly, environmental justice frameworks are having to adapt their analyses to consider globalizing phenomena. As Cheryl Teelucksingh has noted, traditionally, environmental justice frames have limited their analytical lenses to "fixed spatial configurations" between environmental hazards

argued for the rooting of consumption practices in local food systems (as opposed to global ones) it seems doubtful that it is even possible to de-globalize local systems.

Ultimately, the issue of global entanglements boils down to a problem with the basic structure that supports the exchange of food both locally and globally: capitalism. The effects of capitalist exchange on the dynamics of the global food system are totalizing and pernicious, and for a full examination of larger issues such as 'the agrarian question', the maldistribution of food, or commodity chain analyses, I defer to others (Barndt; Akram-Lodhi; Akram-Lodhi and Kay; Wies). However, what we *will* retain our attentiveness to here is the notion that, as Barndt suggests, "[f]ood is primarily a medium for [the replication of capitalism's] production practices and accumulative motivations" (35). The intimate relationships between capitalist consumption, accumulation, and production, and contemporary food systems suggest that for food justice critiques to be effective they must address the normative systems that underlie the creation of food injustice *as well as* other types of injustice. Food justice activists must, then, find ways for "all persons [to obtain] at all times, a culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through local, non-emergency forms" (Gottlieb and Fisher 24) *while also* attempting to avoid dangerous entanglements with capitalism.

## 2. Food Not Bombs

### 2.1. Methodology and Literature Review

This paper attempts to comment on the ways in which environmental justice and food justice concerns are addressed by the organization Food Not Bombs. This paper has been compiled through three months of field research in the Winter of 2014, including participant observation and five extended interviews with individuals who frequented the Food Not Bombs Monday Community Feasts in Confederation Park, Peterborough, Ontario. Because of the inclusionary nature of the organization there were no exclusionary crite-

## Food provides a dynamic vessel for engaging with politics and capital at both the gastronomical level (what we choose to put into our bodies) and the social level (how we arrange our bodies collectively and individually).

Importantly, Indigenous activists in Canada have identified a need for stronger awareness to the ways in which, in the pursuit of environmental justice, settler activists have the capacity to ultimately support colonial oppression by perpetuating settler-colonial logics of invasion, occupation, and attempts to 'transcend colonialism' (Agyeman, Cole, Haluza-Delay and O'Riley; O'Riley and Cole; Walia; James; Lawman and Barker 25-6 and 75-79). These concerns are important when considering the 'successes' and 'failures' of the environmental justice frame.

In both Canada and the United States environmental justice and its associated movements have addressed issues of justice from a variety of optics, however, predominately through examinations of *distributional* and *procedural* justice. The distributional conception of justice is attentive to the fact that material distribution of things in a society is a non-natural phenomenon, and therefore, it attempts to address the ways in

and marginalized communities (121). However, trans-, multi-, and international environmental phenomena, such as climate change, have forced these moments to cope with telescopic expansions of issues pertaining to both distributional and procedural (in)justice. For, regarding an issue such as global climate change, what scale are distributional inequalities dealt with if everyone is impacted in some way? When a crisis is global in scale and time dependent, who should be involved in the procedural aspects of addressing these phenomenon?

### 1.2. Food Systems and Security

Food is a wicked problem for traditional environmental justice frames. Food is *always* both local and global. To eat is to participate in a long chain of interdependence that necessitates the exchange of labour-capital, the opening of metabolic rifts, and extraction from cultures, nutrients, and bodies near and afar. While locavore activists have

ria for the recruitment of individuals to research interviews, for, to exclude any participant in the organization based on any determining factor (sex, gender identity, ability, et cetera) would have gone against the fundamental structural and ethical elements of the organization itself. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by myself, and while I arrived to each session with a set of questions I used these only as ideas for where to take the discussion and not as a rigid guide. My conversations with various participants in Food Not Bombs focused primarily on the nature of the organization, its politics, consumption practices, and community dynamics. Quotes from these interviews have been used here extensively and verbatim to give voice to those who participate in Food Not Bombs. Participant observation was conducted weekly on Monday nights (from February to May). I conducted the primary research for this paper in my final year as an undergraduate student at Trent University as part of a course in Ethnographic Field Methods.

Food Not Bombs is an international, decentralized, non-hierarchical organization, which, through the autonomous and fully independent work of local activists in small collectives, serves meals (generally) comprised of gleaned food-stuffs once a week to whomever should need them, in as public a location as possible (see McHenry). As an organization, Food Not Bombs has been the subject of a small amount of academic literature seeking to examine alternative consumption practices to the dominant food system. Much of this scholarship has approached the organization in tandem with analyses of anti-capitalist do-it-yourself (DIY) economies. Ferne Edwards and David Mercer have provided a broad overview of the consumption

practices of DIY communities, including practices of gleaning, dumpster-diving, and Food Not Bombs in Australia. Dylan Clarke has cogently argued that these consumption practices work to invert culinary normalcies—including those outlined by Levi-Strauss in his "Culinary Triangle"—by acquiring food through non-commercial and often illegal means; this operates as a sort of antithetical cleansing which makes the raw and rotten edible, and the thoroughly cooked and processed inedible (Clarke; see Levi-Strauss). Laura Portwood-Stacer has argued that this type of practice embodies forms of anti-consumption which "encompasses both abstinence from consumption *and* forms of consumption that are meant to signify opposition to consumption, even if the objective content of the practices seems to involve consuming something" (88).

Other authors have taken more of a political economy approach to the organization. David Giles' dissertation on Food Not Bombs situates the organization within the globalizing city as a reaction to emergent dynamics of urban waste. Nadine Changfoot focuses her attention on Peterborough's very own Food Not Bombs chapter, and has argued that the organization acts as a way for individuals to 'do good neoliberal citizenship' as a provisioning measure against increasingly neoliberal austerity measures in Ontario's social services system. Nik Hynen, on the other hand, opposes this logic and has examined Food Not Bombs as a reaction to the biopolitics of the social services system in America, which has rendered the poor a manipulable form of bare life. For Hynen, Food Not Bombs allows individuals of lower income to resist the survivalist logic key to Changfoot's argument, instead providing them with

real possibilities of resistance. Amanda Wilson identifies the organization as forming anti-capitalist autonomous food spaces, but echoes the difficulties identified by Hynen that Food Not Bombs has experienced creating these spaces in the United States.

## 2.2. Peterborough's Food Not Bombs and Mainstream Models for Activism

While Food Not Bombs engages in activities that address issues of distributive and procedural justice, and works towards assuring community food security, I am loath to write here that Food Not Bombs is an environmental justice movement or a food justice movement. Amanda Wilson has described the organization as a food democracy, "the idea that people can and should be active participants in shaping the food system . . . food democracy is about citizens having the power to determine agro-food policies and practices" (Hassanien in Am. Wilson 733). I think, perhaps, this is closer to the truth as the optics of justice in their mainstream form are seemingly too restrictive to describe the activities of the organization.

In my interviews, Food Not Bombs members consistently identified that their work operates parallel to other food security and left-activist circles. In Peterborough, the organization served as a "pillar of the activist community," or even its "heartbeat," and was identified as a central location for the creation of 'ally-ship' in activism as well as a space of social gathering (Rachelle; Myles). Key to this was not only Food Not Bombs' Monday Night Community Feasts and Wednesday Night Potlucks, which would invariably draw left-leaning activists and citizens, but also their involvement in local environmental and social justice activities through 'no pay catering.'<sup>3</sup> Despite these aspects of the organization, participants in Food Not Bombs consistently positioned themselves, as well as the work that they engaged in, as oppositional to mainstream activist models. As one individual noted,

It's impossible for Food Not Bombs not to have some political dissonance

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with almost everybody else that we work with that deals with anti-poverty issues or deals with food justice issues, because our model itself is confrontational to the validity of other models, including the [non-governmental (NGO)] model, including the charity model, and certainly including our, like, dominant cultural model. (Rachelle)<sup>4</sup>

This dissonance can be considered on both a level of structural organization and praxis. As Hynen has shown in his study of 20 Food Not Bombs chapters in major American cities, the *raison d'être* of the organization is to challenge the power dynamics structurally embedded in poverty or equity activism. Participants in Food Not Bombs identified ways in which other organizations were limited by their reliance on capitalist-based funding relations. Several of the key organizers of Food Not Bombs in Peterborough identified funding as a key problem in the delivery of social services, with Myles noting,

Okay we have social services, this is great, but also it's problematic, because these social services and agencies . . . and charities, basically commodify suffering and write off greed, in the form of tax receipts to corporations that give donations, right? And get a pat on the back and like a big tax break for like unloading, you know, tonnes of [charitable] fodder [laughs].

Further, Rachelle noted that chains of accountability in mainstream justice-based activism force groups to ensure that "funders are happy, especially . . . [with] public money," and this restricts their ability to address systemic problems in meaningful ways.

Lindsey, a neophyte to Food Not Bombs and student at Trent University, explained the basic struggle of describing the activities of Food Not Bombs to her parents who were unable to conceptualize activism outside of traditional models:

I tried explaining this concept [of Food Not Bombs] to my parents but

I couldn't really, like, make them understand. So I was like, "oh it's a charity", and they were like, "oh okay", you know and then... but it's not a charity . . . I guess [in] charities, you are always looking for money. Whereas, um, I mean, [Food Not Bombs] looks for resources—I suppose—so, you know, they'll ask "we need Tupperware containers", or, you know, "can someone help with dishes", or something, and then, I guess it's very organic.

## [T]he *raison d'être* of the organization is to challenge the power dynamics structurally embedded in poverty or equity activism.

The entanglement of other organizations in chains of capitalist accountability and assuring funding for their programs restricted their ability to effectively engage in work that could seriously and critically challenge the status quo (Rachelle; Myles; Sarah). It was seen as an important issue that these other organizations engaged unproblematically with capitalist systems, when it was these very systems that Food Not Bombs sought to address in transformative ways.

The ineffectiveness of mainstream models of activism was further argued to be found in the microcosmic relations found in justice and charity organizations between those 'delivering justice' and those experiencing injustice. For those in Food Not Bombs critical of mainstream activist models, this relationship was always described in terms of the performative relationship between those 'asking for food' and those 'providing food' at a soup kitchen or mission (Rachelle; Michael). This power dynamic was seen as a key point of differentiation between Food Not Bombs and other organizations, and was part of a larger embedded critique of class-dynamics,

The line "beggars can't be choosers", is like, a classic one that I give to give that example of how classist and how poor-bashing the reality of

how food programs tend to be. And that's not to erase the reality of class discrepancies, that's not to erase the reality of resource discrepancies . . . but just because I don't have as much resources this month doesn't mean I also shouldn't be able to make decisions, right? That doesn't make me stupider, it doesn't make me lazier, it doesn't make me any of the things that we, unfortunately, in an oppressive society, associate so deeply with low-income folks, right? (Rachelle)

Certainly, then, from these standpoints, Food Not Bombs disassociates and dislocates itself from typical justice and activist models. In order to understand how this organization fits into broader themes concerning the actual achievement of capital 'E', capital 'J', of Environmental Justice, we will consider its divergence in tactics. To get to this point, it is perhaps useful to dwell, for the moment, on some literature concerning intersectionality.

### 2.3. *Intersectionality and Community Building*

Literature on environmental justice suggests that the field of activism and research, as well as that of environmental racism, has a close attentiveness to the ways in which capitalism and socio-institutional logics like racism, colonialism, or white supremacy manifest in considerations of environmental or food problematics. Women of colour (particularly) have, through intersectional analyses, brought attention to the ways in which different individuals, placed in different social locations that correspond to their ever-present but always shifting multiple identifiers, are shaped and impacted by these larger systemic forces uniquely and unevenly. Intersectionality has provided a way for individuals to move beyond a politics of identity, and "theorize experience

at the individual level" (Smooth 11; Jordan-Zachery). In this sense, then, intersectionality "focuses on the integration of different structures of inequality resulting in a more developed picture of oppression and discrimination" (An. Wilson 2-3). Intersectionality has been key to the evolution of environmental racism research as well as an important point of reference against essentialism in the environmental justice movement (Taylor 49-50). Attentiveness to intersectionality is unequivocally important in the context of Food Not Bombs.

Peterborough has two major post-secondary institutions: Trent University (Symons Campus), an undergraduate university focusing on environmental sciences; and Fleming College's Sutherland Campus which has programs in environmental sustainability and environmental management, among others. Because of this, despite the fact that Peterborough's population trends towards being demographically older (Peterborough Social Planning Council), the city is flooded with young students between September and May each year. This, along with seasonal temperature changes, has significant effects on the people who access Food Not Bombs, as well as the nature of weekly meals. Participants in Food Not Bombs identified that community feasts in the summer (as well as Community Potlucks, which happen only in the summer) are attended more heavily, and by a wider variety of people, than meals during the winter months which are heavily attended by students (Sarah; Lindsey; Rachele; Myles; Michael). Peterborough, generally, was noted by respondents to have quite significant disparities in socioeconomic and racial indicators. The individuals I spoke to were attentive to this and Sarah, a student at Trent University, identified the complex nuances of intersectionality in Food Not Bombs eloquently,

[T]he fact that [Food Not Bombs] is open to the public without restriction does cause restrictions for other people. Like, you know, we live in a really white town, and sometimes the whiteness can be so pervasive that all of us white people can't see

it, and we're, like, we're wondering why we're so white, like, "why's everyone here so white... huh?" And maybe it's something that we can't see, but is as fucking clear as day to somebody who isn't white, right? So, maybe, you know, we doing things as far as having an anti-oppressive praxis, and practising having anti-oppressive praxis, or at least trying our best to. But nobody's perfect, and like, you know, we have a lot of shit that needs to be checked as, you know... is a person we meet a privileged person? Like, I've got a lot of shit that I need to check before I open my mouth. . . . [I]f me and my peers aren't being conscious about that, then we could be creating a theoretically accessible space that actually isn't accessible to some people, because of something that we can't really see, or choose not to, or have ed-

We're all doing this together, right? We all need to be on the ball together to make sure that the space is as safe as possible for everybody.

Furthermore, as Rachele, a long time organizer noted,

[T]here are people who will say, you know, like, "there's too many strange people at the meal" because they are still in a place of feeling, like, you know... that much diversity is really intimidating to some folks. There's also a reality that, like, sometimes it doesn't feel awesome for, like, *young parents* with, like, *young children* to be in the same space with a whole bunch of schizophrenics and a whole bunch of people who, you know, are eating and having trials and tribulations which is sometimes something that happens in our reality, right?

## [I]t is significant that in a city like Peterborough, where there are a plethora of missions and food banks, farmers markets, and locavoric options, individuals have continued to use the Peterborough Food Not Bombs for over a decade

ucated ourselves in how to see it, or... but we try, right? And like having an anti-oppressive, like, philosophy put into action is part of what we attempt to do, but it's also open to the public, and we can't control and don't really control what people are doing in that space too much. Like, obviously there's certain rules, like, you don't, you don't touch people, right? Like, always get consent first, but, like, there's no security guards. Like, the idea is that we all look out for each other, and if we see something that's fucked up going on, like, you know, ya sure get one of the organizers, but, like, speak up yourself, right? Or find somebody that, find anyone. If you don't feel comfortable, get your buddy to speak up, do something.

During my time eating with Food Not Bombs, during a particularly cold winter in 2014, individuals accessing the service were primarily those who were either heavily involved in the organization of the weekly meals—for, while the organization was non-hierarchical (and it certainly was) there were unquestionably members who were more intensively involved than others—and individuals who were reliant on Food Not Bombs either for its food or its community, or both. As Lindsey described it, 'students' and 'locals' utilized Food Not Bombs in different ways. Amanda Wilson has noted in her examination of Food Not Bombs, that while there is usually a core group of individuals who are responsible for the organization of the meals, "the major-



ity [of these individuals] were university students or middle class and white, who participated because they wanted to, not out of necessity" (734). In many aspects this structural element could be found in Peterborough, however, it would be inaccurate to suggest that the individuals who organized Food Not Bombs were of a specific economic background. Admittedly, in my research, I never asked any individual to self-identify their socio-economic position or identify themselves in any other way. However, when the temperature dropped to below negative 30 degrees Celsius, it became abundantly clear that there were specific individuals who did not miss meals and that qualitatively these individuals relied on the services of Food Not Bombs.

Although this is by no means a complete discussion of intersectionality, it draws attention to the fact that in Food Not Bombs there are, of course, a variety of discrete reasons for individuals using the services provided by the organization and a variety of ways the organization attempts to accommodate those who participate. However, this type of intersectionality, in the context of this paper, signifies and attempts to explain how individuals are impacted by capitalism and the Canadian food system by tracking their relations backwards through their use of a 'food security' organization. This is important, but only indicates the somewhat obvious. What I would like to devote the rest of this paper to is why it is important not that these individuals are using food security organizations, but why it is significant that in a city like Peterborough, where there are a plethora of missions and food banks, farmers markets, and locavoric options, individuals have continued to use the Peterborough Food Not Bombs for over a decade (which is the longest running Food Not Bombs chapter in all of Canada).

In her *Cyborg Manifesto*, Donna Haraway asks, "[w]hat kind of politics could embrace partial, contradictory, permanently unclosed constructions of personal and collective selves and still be faithful, effective—and, ironically, socialist-feminist?" (297). Her answer: a cyborg politics, a "disassembled and re-

assembled, postmodern collective and personal self" (Haraway 302). But what might a *cyborg community* look like? The third-dimensional intersections of intersectionalities; a community that moves in all directions at once and is inclusive and targeted, ambivalent and political. Haraway likes irony, and so it seems only fitting to answer her futurism with something medieval. In order to understand the ways in which Food Not Bombs engages in its own unique brand of environmental justice advocacy and food security work, we must look to the carnivalesque.

## In order to understand the ways in which Food Not Bombs engages in its own unique brand of environmental justice advocacy and food security work, we must look to the carnivalesque.

### 3. "A place where the random and serendipitous can happen"<sup>5</sup>

#### 3.1. "Food Not Bombs: Where goats are dinner guests and the food's all vegan"<sup>6</sup>

I arrive at small student house in downtown Peterborough where Food Not Bombs will be cooking its weekly meal. I'm early (I think), but arrive to a scene very much in motion. I'm greeted at the door by a middle-aged woman who identifies herself and asks me if I am here to help cook. I am. I enter, greeted by the heat of the kitchen wafting down the hallway and also a baby goat who scampers down the hall, curious but timid. Tonight, I learn, the goat is just along for the ride; our menu is all vegan. I'm put to task gleaning and chopping potatoes and amid a flurry of knives and pounding rhythmic drum music, we prepare an all-vegan multi-course meal designed to feed at least 30 people in the span of a couple hours. We grab the goat, load the food into a car, and head to Confederation Park in the heart of Peterborough. Upon arrival, we wade through a snowbank and set up a tent and tables, and spread food

throughout, inviting the community of Peterborough to come and eat with us. Individuals come and go, with passers-by entranced with the arrangement; for, as Sarah, a student at Trent, suggests to me, "[h]ow often do you see a tent in the middle of winter, right?" Occasionally these individuals come and eat, or grab a Tupperware to go. After dinner, in the freezing cold, those still around help tear down the tent, pack up the tables and benches, as well as any leftover food. Food Not Bombs vanishes into the night, dropping leftovers off at the local missions and heading home to

wash dishes. All that is left is a footprint in the snow.

When approaching the Food Not Bombs' tent in the middle of the park, perhaps for the first time, it is hard not to notice that all of this action, all of the food served, all of the community engagement, is achieved in the looming shadow of Peterborough's City Hall; a silent watcher. Across the street stands the heart of the municipal government—by no means is this a coincidence.

#### 3.2. *Kaleidoscopic Optics*

In Victor Turner's classic construction, society is imagined as an equilibrium between two "models for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating,"

The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men [*sic*] in terms of 'more' or 'less.' The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal

period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated comitatus, a community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders. (96)

[T]he carnival is a kaleidoscope optic, one that borrows reality to create an image both more beautiful and more complex than that which is visible otherwise. It reconsiders simple acts, like eating, and makes it possible to see their revolutionary potential.

Typically, these categories are referred to as the structural (former) and the anti-structural (latter) aspects of society. For Turner, the borders of these categorizations are fluid, allowing individuals constant movement forward and backwards through structural and anti-structural spaces, movements he describes as “in and out of time” (96). For Turner, as individuals move from structural spaces, to anti-structural ones, they come to occupy a liminality: “[l]iminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arranged by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial,” they are “ambiguous” and “elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space” (95). In liminal conditions Turner argues that unique forms of community are created, which he (as above) describes as *comitatus*, or otherwise, *communitas*. As noted above, this *communitas* “submit[s]” itself “under the “general authority of the ritual elders” (Turner 95), however, not in supplication. Rather, Turner identifies that the anti-structural-structural-*communitas* relationship operates dialectically. In this sense, although the structural must be the site in which the anti-structural emerges from, the anti-structural is a key force in shaping the total nature and dynamics of structural

elements of a society—there is a certain cyclicity to the process.

Food Not Bombs operates as a very specific kind of anti-structure. Herein, I would like to propose that we conceptualize the anti-structural work of the organization through the lens of the

*carnavalesque*, a literary genre most notably elaborated by the Soviet literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. In a sense, the use of the *carnavalesque* here operates as a sort of mythology, a ‘metalanguage’ held between the forces of reality, nature, poetry, and ideology (Barthes). As such, it works, on one hand, to unveil something that is not tangibly there, but rather can be felt only through contemplative participation. On the other hand, the *carnavalesque* operates in a very real sense—as a somewhat ironic way of conceptualizing the microcosmic effects of a variety of forces and interactions on a particular moment. Because, as we will see, it is a situated and participatory way of (re)conceptualizing reality it draws out the dynamics of power, capital, and oppression but also liberation and possibility found in quotidian or fetishized actions such as talking, eating, or being together. In this way, it provides an optic for addressing the central problem tasked on environmental justice: how to deal with the hazardous effects of the global on the local, as well as the capacity of the local to resist and affect the global. In a way, the carnival is a kaleidoscopic optic, one that borrows reality to create an image both more beautiful and more complex than that which is visible otherwise. It reconsiders simple acts, like eating, and makes it possible to see their revolutionary potential.

### 3.3. The Carnival

In describing Mikhail Bakhtin, Michael Holquist draws attention to the fact that the somewhat obscure author “throws a weird light on our received models of intellectual history” through his untypical attentiveness to obscure language use and a theoretical frame that sees language as a set of normative and destructive forces constantly battling each other for supremacy over the social conscious of individual actors (Holquist xvii-xviii). Rather than a typology of language that postulates an additive structure of meaning, or as a passive structure that is formed, constructed, and evolves, Bakhtin’s understanding of language is one which “ventriloquates”; its meaning is always in flux. It is acted into by individuals, societies, temporalities, and contexts, and acts back; it resists simple moulding and is capable of operating in a multitude of contradictory forms simultaneously (Holquist xviii).

Julie Cruikshank writes of the Soviet literary critic, that “Bakhtin concluded that there must be forms of resistance more effective than the violent replacement of one set of leader by another, and he looked to everyday spoken language for inspiration” (63). Key to these meditations on quotidian language use was his examinations of the *carnavalesque*. Bakhtin works towards a substantial theorization of the carnival first in his work concerning Theodore Dostoevsky (*Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, first published 1963), but expands his conceptualization of the subject in his work on François Rabelais (*Rabelais and His World*, first published 1968). In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin lays out the general structure of what he describes as “the problem of the carnival” or of “carnivalization” and “the carnivalization of literature” (122). As a literary critic Bakhtin’s attention, here, is on the characteristics of the novel, but he identifies the essence of the carnival and its “emergence in the primordial thinking of man”, as “one of the most complex and interesting problems in the history of culture” and accordingly, Bakhtin refuses to study the carnival specifically

as a literary concept, but as a cultural phenomena which has had a significant and long-lasting impact on Euro-Slavic literature (Bakhtin, *Problems* 122).

In *Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin describes carnival life as "life drawn out out of its usual rut; it is to some extent 'life turned inside out,' 'the reverse side of the world' ('monde à l'envers')" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 122). He identifies four main tropes associated with carnival life (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123). First, Bakhtin describes a *free and familiar contact among people*. In a strikingly similar passage to Victor Turner's description of liminality and communitas, Bakhtin notes that the carnival does away with the "order of ordinary," first with the abandonment of hierarchical structures, and then also with "the forms of terror, reverence, piety, and etiquette connected with it" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123). This process of levelling, as individuals enter the town square and join in carnival activities, allows those who would otherwise be restricted from discursively engaging each other to interact in "the outspoken carnivalistic world" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123).

"[T]hese truly human relations" found in the carnival "were not only a fruit of the imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged."

Secondly, and emergent from the first, the debasing associated with the carnival allows for the creation of a *new mode of interrelationship between individuals*, again echoing Turner, which is "counterposed to the all-powerful socio-hierarchical relationships of non carnival life" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123). In this state, individuals are not only (as above) provided new ways of engaging with each other but shed the social taboos associated with profane speech forms. Here, "the latent sides of human nature . . . reveal and express themselves" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123). It is from this position, that the jester becomes the "privileged arbiter of morals, given license to gibe at kings and court-

iers, or lord of the manor" (Gluckman in Turner 104).

Following this process, the carnival, thirdly, becomes associated with what Bakhtin describes as *carnivalistic mésalliances*.<sup>7</sup> What Bakhtin is describing here is a genre of ironic and syncretic practices that are concerned with the muddling of categories. For Bakhtin, "[c]arnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123). This is not only associated with the non-carnival statuses of those attending carnival life, but also a mixing of practices that seem oppositional or contradictory, such as seriousness and mockery. Natalie Zemon Davis has described some of these practices in her examination of 'Abbeys of Misrule,' sixteenth century youth organizations that mocked traditional authorities through satirical ceremonies—which featured 'authorities' with titles such as "the Prince of Improvidence" or "Duke Kickass" and where the highest of chiefs would sometimes be replaced with donkeys—but

which also held important jurisdictional, judicial, and political roles within local communities. In this way we can consider the *carnivalistic mésalliances* described by Bakhtin to follow the logic that, as Davis suggests, "Misrule always implies the Rule that it parodies" (45).

Finally, and fourthly, Bakhtin associates carnivalistic life with *profanation*, which includes blasphemies. However, in a similar way to Turner's description of liminality's connections with death, wombs, or bisexuality, among others (95), carnival profanation is also linked to "bringings down to earth . . . obscenities linked with the reproductive power of the earth and body [as well as]

parodies on sacred texts and sayings" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 123).

In *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin mobilizes these characteristics into a discussion of the potential of the carnival. He notes that, "these truly human relations" found in the carnival "were not only a fruit of the imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10). He places important stress on the way in which individuals come to participate and experience carnival life. Here, quoting at length, Bakhtin notes,

[The] carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy the carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal in which we all take part. (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 7)

In *Rabelais*, Bakhtin reiterates the characteristics of carnival life expounded in *Dostoevsky*, expanding aspects of his previous description and placing increased emphasis on items like spectacle and inversion, which might already be considered within the play of *carnivalistic mésalliances* and the mockery of *profanity* (respectfully). As in the above quote he places emphasis on a *transformative* power, something in *Doestevsky* he describes as both "life creating" and an "indestructible vitality" (Bakhtin, *Problems* 107). Davis has described the "liberation, destruction, and renewal" of carnival practices a force that, despite their proximity to and engagement with forces of structure, do not, unlike Turner's construction, "reinforce the serious institutions and rhythms of society . . . [but] helps to change them"



(49). For Davis, as for Bakhtin, carnival is not necessarily a route to further anti-authoritarian or anti-structural action, however, she notes that "the structure of the carnival form can evolve so that it can act both to reinforce order and suggest alternatives to the existing order" (Davis 69 and 74). Whatever it becomes, it seeks to "holds a socratic mirror to the world" (Davis 68).

### 3.4. Food Not Bombs; Carnival Communities Not City Council

I'm pretty sure that the mayor or whoever, or I dunno, probably doesn't want to look out the window. (Lindsey)

Rachelle asks,

how you get, like, a true citizens democratic voice too? That's part of what it is we're trying to stimulate, or that this movement is trying to stimulate, because we don't have town squares anymore, right? We don't have forums where, where people talk about real things.

Sited across the street from Peterborough's municipal government, Food Not Bombs occupies Confederation Park each Monday night in an attempt to make visible the need for local level governments to address food insecurity issues; "it says 'there is a need and it also says there are options'" (Myles). Individuals participating in Food Not Bombs overwhelmingly felt that their local government representatives were not willing to engage with the issues that were important to them, and were overwhelmingly critical of the Ontario provincial government and the Canadian federal government.<sup>8</sup> So, each Monday night, regardless of weather, they set up a large tent in the middle of Confederation Park and held their own town hall.

While, spatially, this positioning was clearly a parodic juxtaposition to the physical presence of City Hall, it also served functionally as an alternative to the politics of City Hall which holds one of its three weekly meetings at the same time as Food Not Bombs

serves. Food Not Bombs worked to provide an anti-structural space in which individuals who were unwilling to participate in dominant politics could seek an alternative. As Michael noted,

Instead of going into City Hall and complaining about things which [local politicians] don't really care much about—in my opinion—we basically are there to show [politicians] that there is a need for more organizations like this.

## The inclusivity of Food Not Bombs, imperfect as it is . . . worked to create new carnivalesque socio-political spaces, and a "shared space of as-safe-as-we-can-make-it-vulnerability."

The creation of this alternative was not incidental, but explicitly intentional and extended beyond local fora for political discourses. As Myles noted, for him Food Not Bombs provides an opportunity to engage with non-capitalist economic models, which during his day job he was reliant on,

It's, like, a fourteenth of a week that I actually get to engage in praxis, right? And act out anarchism, and act out anti-capitalism, and act out community building, and create spaces, create space that fertilizes that, sort of, alternative... that set of alternative models.

These alternative models took on an explicitly carnivalesque character. As noted above, Food Not Bombs—by its members' definition—*has* to be public. While a significant aspect of this rational has to do with making community meals accessible to as wide a variety of people as possible, it is also rooted in more performative aspects of direct action and 'street theatre' (McHenry 51). Particularly in warmer months, Peterborough's Food Not Bombs would incorporate increasingly performative actions: it would spatially expand from just a small fraction of the park to cover its entire expanse and members from

the organization would invite spoken word artists, local visual artists, dancers, musicians, and whomever else wished to come contribute their craft to the process of 'doing food not bombs' (Rachelle; Myles; Michael; Sarah). This performative action invited a flood of carnivalization to flow from Food Not Bombs. Embracing Bakhtin's *free and familiar contact among people*, participation (in any way) is open to all. Without membership and without any requirement to participate, 'doing Food Not

Bombs' could be as simple as eating, or as complex as picking up unwanted produce from farmers; "if you show up and help for five seconds or if you come and eat once in your life, you 'did Food Not Bombs,' right?" (Rachelle). Although, as mentioned above, Food Not Bombs could, by its very nature as a constructed community, exclude individuals who felt that it was not representative of them, as Rachelle noted,

[U]nless someone's like, 'hey, I wanna bring my, like, fascist fan club to Food Not Bombs' [laughs], it's like, it's not even in anybody's, you know, like, description, to like, be able to say 'yay' or 'no' to something. 'Cause part of what we aim to create is an organic experience, that you know might have some people paying attention to try and make sure that people are comfortable. But [Food Not Bombs] does not belong to anyone.

The inclusivity of Food Not Bombs, imperfect as it is (for, it does not provide food to the entire city), worked to create new carnivalesque socio-political spaces, and a "shared space of as-safe-as-we-can-make-it-vulnerability" (Rachelle). As much as it is possible, Food Not Bombs would achieve this,

bringing together—even on blisteringly cold nights—a wide variety of individuals from vastly different privileges and positionalities. Furthermore, the meals provide a safe space for individuals who otherwise were without community, or felt excluded from other communities in Peterborough, to find a weekly place to connect with others. Individuals who had disabilities, were economically-disadvantaged, had mental illness or substance abuse issues, or were mourning death, were all noted by participants as having used Food Not Bombs as a place to find a community to help them cope with difficult times.

On cold winter nights—when, to stay warm while eating, it was prudent to huddle in the small food tent—Food Not Bombs shifted from being a food security organization to truly realizing its capacity as an alternative political form. In evoking *a new mode of interrelationship between people*, community feasts would often feature intense but constructive conversations on pertinent political subjects. Not all those who attended participated in these, but all were welcome to, and debates were usually conducted in a manner that was accessible to individuals coming from a variety of backgrounds and knowledges. As Rachele noted,

We often have like teenagers and preteens, we've had children and we often had elders in the kitchen with us too, right? And that simple act alone of once a week having, like, five to six strangers of totally different ages, having a conversation that can start with a very simple, banal political point... the *perspectives* that people have from different angles, like, so many people don't talk to people ten years outside your age range of them, outside of certain relationships.

In this sense, Food Not Bombs worked to find new ways of exploring political ideas, and learning from others in a collective manner.

In both cases, as *free and familiar contact* and *a new mode of interrelationship*, Food Not Bombs has moved away from typical capitalist modalities of 'be-

ing together' and community construction based on collective commodity consumption, and worked to find ways in which to build communities, engage political attentiveness, and address food security issues through direct action, all the while outside of capitalism. Through the creation of carnivalized anti-structural, anti-capitalist spaces, which are for all intents and purposes free and open to all, Food Not Bombs engages in the creation of what Amanda Wilson has helped identify as autonomous geographies, "non-capitalist, egalitarian and solidaristic forms of political, social and economic organization through a combination of resistance and creation" (Chatterton and Pickerill in Am. Wilson 278). Through a praxis that has incorporated carnivalistic ethics, and helped allow for the creation of new community models, Food Not Bombs has carved out a generative space in which new food modalities can be imagined. In addressing Bakhtin's third and fourth characteristics of the carnival (*carnivalistic mésalliances* and *profanity*) this is where we turn.

## Food Not Bombs has moved away from typical capitalist modalities . . . to find ways in which to build communities, engage political attentiveness, and address food security issues through direct action

### 3.5. The Carnivalized Biopolitics of Food Not Bombs

Amanda Wilson has argued, following others, for a post-structural political economy approach to food alternatives, which sees the hegemonic effects of capitalism as non-totalizing, and therefore also, permeable. In this construction opportunities for resisting and working countervailing to dominant normalcies, such as the Canadian food system, are possible through the creation of autonomous food spaces that weave through the cracks of capitalism's purported hegemony (Am. Wilson). For her, an 'autonomous' food

system "brings considerations of power relations and equity to the forefront and situates food within the broader context of non-capitalist communities seeking to build relationships of mutual aid and non-market exchanges" (Am. Wilson 727). Food Not Bombs engages in these practices through carnivalistic modes of reality that work not only to find ways out of capitalist systems, but also to actively stage debasements and transformations of normative structures through a biopolitics of inversion.

Fundamental to Michel Foucault's conceptualization of biopower is the presumption that "power is situated at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population," and that the modern variant of this form of power is the "power to foster life or swallow it to the point of death" (Foucault 260-1). Following this, biopolitics concerns the way in which with the emergence of the idea of 'the population', the state's primary focus becomes the management of populations' biological functions, "transforming its politics into biopolitics" (Agam-

ben 15). The function of food as both a metaphorical vessel for the consumption of state biopower and as a commodity to be supplied and withheld is essential to biopolitics.

Food is interlocked with, and imbricated between, larger systems of power, but is also in its essence an imaginative commodity. Individuals involved in Food Not Bombs were aware of this, suggesting that,

Food has always been a good tool to blackmail people. I call it blackmail because it's not just overpriced it's not just greedy, it's basically at the point where it's blackmail. Basi-

cally, when someone makes 1000% profit on a banana that's more than greed, or profit, or profit margin; that 1000% profit margin is robbery, rip-off. (Michael)

and that,

Food Not Bombs is a really literal analogy. They've been using food against us as a weapon for all of time. Every society politically, otherwise, food is this thing that everybody needs, so you can control people with it. It is the ultimate tool, therefore, that we can take back. (Rachelle)

tion normalcies is literally 'garbage'; waste food, unfit to eat due to partial spoiling or physical deformity. Laura Portwood-Stacer has noted, this "anti-consumption," through practices of consumption, is structured by a desire to subvert and resist capitalist food-chains (93). However, a complimentary but inverted process also occurs. By utilizing only gleaned foods, Food Not Bombs creates an *alternative hedonism*, or *aesthetic revisioning* (Soper). In this process, "the commodities," in this case capitalist commodities in general, "once perceived as enticingly glamorous come gradually instead to be seen as cumber-

ers have lovingly donated, that may aesthetically... it might not look pretty, right? ...To buy. But you can eat it. It still serves you the same nutrition, it gives you the same amount of energy so it's, kind of like, reshaping the relationship to food also, and breaking down the consumer-commodity based relationship . . . I grew up as a consumer and Food Not Bombs has helped me kind of interrogate that relationship. . . . It's feeding people, and it's breaking down those false, imposed relationships that are founded, or grounded, in commodity or consumer-based relationships.

## Through a rejection of a biopolitics reliant on the creation of food-scarcity and the enforcement of gastronomical sanitation . . . Food Not Bombs opens up possibilities of profane ways of eating. It politicizes the most basic of the reproductive powers of the body

Because of this Food Not Bombs, while concerned with creating open community spaces, was, perhaps obviously, foremost concerned with feeding people in anti-oppressive ways. Food served at weekly meals was procured in the most anti-capitalist ways possible, largely through partnerships with local farmers who would donate food that they were unable to sell at Peterborough's Sunday farmers market because it was either aesthetically undesirable or partially spoiled. Although these practices do not avoid all capitalist relations, they allow Food Not Bombs to conduct their activities in a manner that is as resistant and non-contributive to capitalist systems as possible.

These practices of gleaning operate as a way for the organization to engage in a praxis of *carnivalistic més-alliances* and *profanity*. By practicing forms of culinary inversion (Clarke) Food Not Bombs works to carnivalize the act of eating through the performance each week of eating what under dominant (non-carnival) consump-

some and ugly in virtue of their association with unsustainable resource use, noise, toxicity or their legacy of unre-cyclable waste" (Soper 580). There is no Wonderbread at Food Not Bombs meals.

Through a rejection of a biopolitics reliant on the creation of food-scarcity and the enforcement of gastronomical sanitation through the maintenance of codes of purity in eating, aesthetically or otherwise, Food Not Bombs opens up possibilities for profane ways of eating. It politicizes the most basic of the reproductive powers of the body through the performance of culinary inversion and eating 'bad food' and 'rotten food' in ways that are healthy and delicious. These practices encourage not only critiques of the carefully managed logics of dominant ingestion, but also an attentiveness to the ways in which acts of consumption are always in conversation with capitalism. As Sarah describes,

It brings us back to our relation to food as humans, you know, and not consumers. So, this food that farm-

### 4. "One fourteenth a week..."

I fantasize about doing Food Not Bombs and then it just catching and, like, everybody just ceasing to engage in this bullshit system. And all of a sudden, you know, people just stopped going to work at the call center, and like, people stop going to work on their computer, and they just, like, get together and organize how the hell are we going to take care of ourselves and actually look after what life is about, right? Which is about food, air, water, shelter, meaningful action, right? It's pretty basic. There's so much other bullshit that goes throughout our days that has nothing to do with acquiring, you know, clean air, food, water, shelter, and meaningful action, right? Most of it is like meaningful action that we do because we are afraid of dying poor, and alone, right? And like, it's either a carrot on a stick or a gun to our heads, right? Like, why do I have to work? Why do I go to work every day? It's out of fear. And I want to... I would love to see that just dissolve. And Food Not Bombs, you know... one fourteenth of my week that gun is not against my head. (Myles)

The carnival, like all things, must come to an end. Food Not Bombs, like a carnival, exists only ephemerally. However, in the short few hours when it is sited in Confederation Park, across from Peterborough's City Hall, Food Not Bombs has the effect of evoking an entirely

new reality between individuals. Food Not Bombs creates a carnivalistic sense of the world by shrinking the normative forces of capitalism, neoliberal politics, and the global food system into a microcosm: consumption. In this singularity, it challenges these forces, and many others, and attempts to seek out alternatives through a grounded praxis deeply informed by the spectacle, inversion, and communality of the carnival. It grapples with these forces and by its very fact of existence, challenges the notion that their oppressive nature is totalizing. Food Not Bombs, as an embodied politics, imagines totally partial, but totally liberatory alternatives.

In this sense, Food Not Bombs engages in environmental justice insofar as it seeks the provisioning of alternatives to oppression. However, the organization does not engage in typical modes of procedural or distributive justice. It cannot. Instead it works to challenge the normative fields in which these, and other forms of justice, are fought for by refusing to engage with or recognize the institutions that hold power over the deliverance of justice. In doing this, Food Not Bombs works to create alternative, autonomous spaces outside both capital and state in which real alternatives and 'ways-out' can be live-tested. Food Not Bombs does address issues of procedural and distributive justice, among others, but it does so in a way all its own. It engages the serious and important systemic critiques central to environmental justice work, but does so not in the hope that the faulted system might see its way to enlightenment, but rather as a way of identifying how utopian alternatives might succeed.

**"[W]hat we are actually going for is creating an opportunity for people to see that they might want to live a different way, that they might want to share, that they might want to self-liberate in all kinds of different kinds of ways"**

I don't believe it's the will of our city council, I don't believe it's the

will of the Wynne government, and I sure as heck don't believe that it's the will of the Harper regime to empower people to share or to reclaim lives in ways that are more empowering, or to do anything, but be cogs in an economy until they are no longer useful, basically, right? So that is what corporations do, and that is what states do at all levels from your municipal government up; it's just their mandate. And getting pissed at them for it doesn't make much sense either. . . . I come from a background of, like, real strong belief in diversity of tactics and I believe that people need to disrupt and stop bad things from happening sometimes, right? That said most of our energy, if it's not being placed in a position of self-liberation is actually being given over to our oppressors. And I believe that philosophically, I believe that tactically, and I believe that politically, that we need to at least spend 50% of our time not complaining how bad they're making it for us, but making our own lives good. And that's a huge difference of model that Food Not Bombs engages in than pretty much every other food model that I've seen. . . . Without, you know, forcing anything upon anyone whatsoever, what we are actually going for is creating an opportunity for people to see that they might want to live a different way, that they might want to share, that they might want to self-liberate in all kinds of different kinds of ways that happens, in, a not prescribed way, but in an organic way when you just claim space and give a basic resource out. (Rachelle)

But when or how do these alternative realities become realized? As identified

in the epigraph to this section, even for the most dedicated of 'Food Not Bombers' the type of anarchistic praxis that the group participates in is not possible every day of every week.

In his *Ten Theses on Politics*, Jacques Rancière writes that "[a] political demonstration is . . . always of the moment and its subjects are always precarious. A political difference is always on the shore of its own disappearance" (39). For Rancière, the insurrection of the political into the sphere of the (police-) structural functions as a charge against a hegemonic ordering of what is allowed to be made sensible and visible within a society. Food Not Bombs is all *dissensus*, without the hope or desire for *consensus* (Rancière).

We live in a world of little revolutions. Of every-day imaginative potentialities; small acts of hope in dangerous times. The ephemeral, in-your-face carnivalesque reality that Food Not Bombs evokes each week is just one such revolution; that small moment in which there is no 'gun against your head'. It is a realization of an alternative in a double sense: both realization that there are alternatives, and the enunciation of them. Shedding normative biopolitics, and structures of togetherness predicated on capitalist consumption, Food Not Bombs *eats together* in a way that outside their small carnival seems impossible.

We would do well to consider the imaginative possibilities that the carnivalesque affords us in revolutionary contexts. Its fluid ambivalence, capacity for inversion, and the muddling of borders is a robust way to conceptualize geographies of resistance and out of them build inclusive anarchic communities. When we begin to consider that which is both more abstract and more complex we find our path forward.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> "[T]he Feast of Fools at Christmas time . . . a choirboy or Chaplin would be elected bishop and preside while the minor clergy burlesqued the mass and even confession, and led an ass around the church. By the late fifth teen century this topsy-turvy saturnalia was being slowly banished from the cathedrals, and apart from it, virtually the population recreations were initiated by lay-



men. They were not, however, official affairs in the sixteenth-century French city; that is, city governments ordinarily did not plan, programme and finance them . . . Rather the festivities were put on by informal circles of friends and family; sometimes by craft of professional guilds and confraternities; and very often by organizations which literary historians have called 'societies joyéuses' or 'fool-societies'" (Davis 42-3).

<sup>2</sup> Various authors include discussion of justice through the frames of: recognition (Schlosberg); creativity and restoration (Draper and Mitchell); and responsibility (Walker). For our purposes here we will retain our attention to only distributive and procedural forms.

<sup>3</sup> During the time that I was conducting research on Food Not Bombs the organization catered Trent University's Students Association for International Development Community Movement Conference "Skyscrapers to

Slums: The Dynamics of Urbanism" as well as "Seedy Sunday" an annual seed exchange event hosted by Nourish Peterborough. These activities are typical for the Peterborough chapter of Food Not Bombs, and while the organization is ostensibly happy to provide 'no pay' services, they are often provided with an honorarium. These honoraria are actually key to the function of the organization and are used to purchase items that the origination is unable to otherwise procure through non-capitalist means, such as spices and cookware.

<sup>4</sup> The co-founder of Food Not Bombs, Keith McHenry, has written what is ostensibly a 'how-to' book on Food Not Bombs, and indicates in it that, "Food Not Bombs has never been considered a charity" (16). I have limited the use of this book in this paper, and am not reliant on it here, because Food Not Bombs is not structured by any central authority, and so while McHenry's description

of 'how-to' do Food Not Bombs is contextually important it does not necessarily reflect the ways in which the grounded operation of Peterborough's chapter is conceptualized. McHenry indicates this, identifying in his somewhat paradoxical "Principles of Food Not Bombs" that "Food Not Bombs has no formal leaders or headquarters, and every group is autonomous and makes decisions using the consensus process" (16).

<sup>5</sup> Rachele 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Field Notes, February 17th, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> *mésalliances*: "marriage with a person of inferior social position."

<sup>8</sup> At the time of research Peterborough's Member of Parliament was Dean Del Mastro (Conservative); the Premier was Kathleen Wynne (Liberal); and the Prime Minister was Stephen Harper (Conservative).

<sup>9</sup> Myles 2014.

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