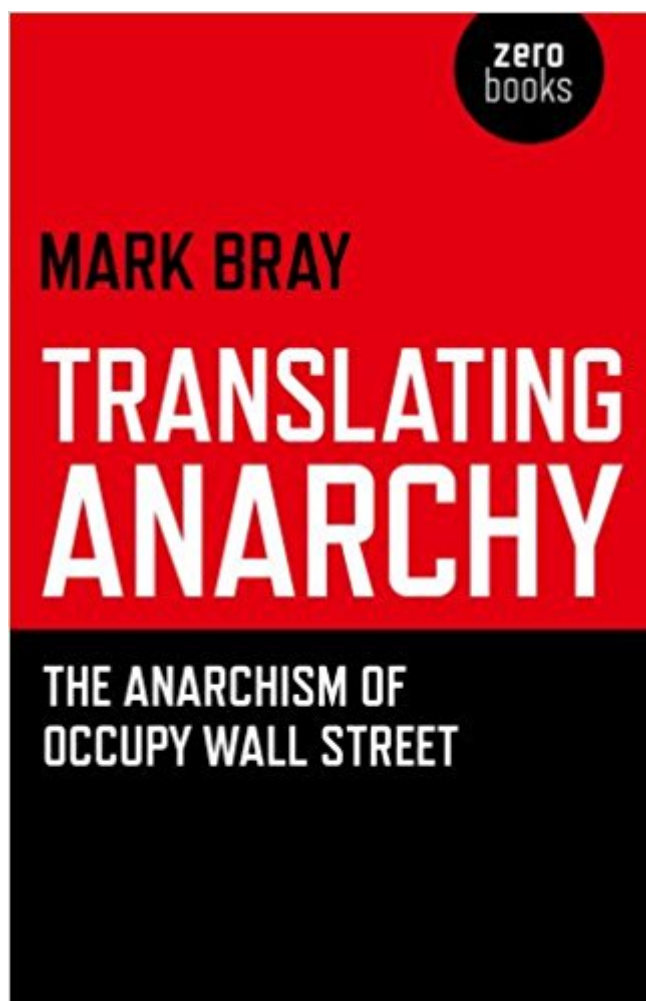




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Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism Of Occupy Wall Street



Synopsis

Translating Anarchy tells the story of the anti-capitalist anti-authoritarians of Occupy Wall Street who strategically communicated their revolutionary politics to the public in a way that was both accessible and revolutionary. OWS organizer Mark Bray combines his direct experience in the movement with nearly 200 interviews with the most active, influential architects of Occupy Wall Street, to reveal the revolutionary anarchist core of Occupy. Although The New York Times and CNN thought that OWS simply wanted tighter financial regulations and a millionaire's tax, Bray shows that the vast majority of organizers called for the abolition of capitalism altogether. By "translating" their ideas into everyday concepts like community empowerment and collective needs, these anarchists sparked the most dynamic American social movement in decades.

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Customer Reviews

In Translating Anarchy Mark Bray provides unique insight into the inner workings and politics of OWS and its interactions with the press and the public. Straightforward and non-academic but in fact scholarly and historically informed, it provides an often witty good read. It is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the OWS phenomenon or who may ever interpret social movements for the public and the media. -Jeremy Brecher, author of Strike! Bray's meticulous, rich insider account of Occupy Wall Street demonstrates the central influence of anarchism on its core militants, but refuses to shy away from drawing hard lessons from its limitations. Anarchism, he convincingly argues, must position itself as an everyday movement of the 'ordinary' folks who alone

can change the world - this requires a positive, practical programme and message, self-reflective and accountable politics, solid organisation, and clear tactics and strategy. -Lucien van der Walt (Rhodes University), co-author of *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*

Mark Bray is a PhD Candidate in Modern European History at Rutgers University and longtime political activist. He was a core organizer of the Press Working Group of Occupy Wall Street. He lives in New Jersey, US.

This work, and *Thank You, Anarchy*, give a good picture of the emergence and course of the OWS. It came as a surprise that anarchism was the key influence on the whole movement. Whether that is good or bad, the reality is that this movement wasn't what people thought it was, until it was almost over. As such, it is a classic, and unexpected, experiment in activist tactics, requiring a careful verdict as to future movements and tactics. That verdict is likely to make future activists wary of a movement that lacked objectives, leaders, and organization, and whose demand for consensus tended to paralysis. But the standard narrative here has been barren, while this innovative movement penetrated the enigma of successful action, briefly. The text here reviews all of those issues, along with giving a set of historical notes on anarchist movements. For a movement that expressed such a frequent refrain on the subject of overcoming capitalism the actual gestures in that direction seem to be no match for the problem. And the obvious suspicion arises that the anarchist strain is a commentary on classic communist revolutionaries histories and their legacy. But if the traditional marxist groups tend to paralysis, the moment of success of the OWS should make the legacy revolutionaries with no revolution possible sit up and take notice. In any case the historical snapshot here of the OWS movement will be indispensable to anyone considering the future of the left. Anyone who tried to follow the OWS from a distance will find this book an indispensable chronicle.

"*Translating Anarchy*" by Mark Bray demonstrates the importance of anarchism to contemporary Leftist politics and the Occupy movement. Mr. Bray is an activist, writer and academic who participated in direct actions and media relations at OWS in New York. This well-researched, enlightening and accessible book will inform and inspire people who believe that a better world is possible. Mr. Bray leveraged his status as a trusted OWS insider to conduct an ethnographic study of the movement. Mr. Bray's survey found that OWS consisted of a core group of organizers with

mostly anarchist views who were surrounded by mostly liberal supporters. Mr. Bray interviewed nearly 200 of the organizers to gain unprecedented insight into the views of the most active participants and shares their opinions throughout the text. Disillusioned by the failures of capitalism and state socialism, many young activists are attracted to inclusive, empowering and participatory organizations. Through this exacting first-hand research, Mr. Bray makes a persuasive case that OWS signifies a decisive turn of Leftist tactics and strategy from Marxism to anarchism. Mr. Bray reveals that the media's confusion about the movement's anti-capitalist intentions stemmed from the organizer's calculated use of strategic messaging. OWS' core members understood that aspirational messages about social and economic justice for the 99 percent would play best with a public that does not understand the anarchist movement too well. In any case, Mr. Bray explains that avoiding ideology was successful in attracting media attention and winning supporters on the streets. Mr. Bray situates OWS within the tradition of radical politics and working class struggle. Mr. Bray is especially keen to share his deep knowledge about the anarchist tradition and its relevance to us today. Mr. Bray suggests how activists might better manage a number of critical issues including organizational structure, accountability, autonomy and state violence. As capitalism and the welfare state crumbles, Mr. Bray's powerful writing helps us understand how anarchism has inspired a new generation of activists who are intent on building a better future. I highly recommend this important book to everyone.

Very well-informed book. Although I don't subscribe to theories, the book makes lots of interesting points and the author has clearly done their research.

Articulate, well-researched history of the beginning of the Occupy movement. As someone in a similar position at our local Occupy camp, I relate very much to his story, and found the book engaging as well as educational.

Good

I met the author of this book (how I discovered it) at a book store while browsing in Amsterdam. I heard him begin to give a talk, before hand, I was speaking with another person there about what I major in, economics and finance. Then throughout the talk he was very standoffish. He clearly doesn't see the full picture of how systems work and what supports a thriving economic and political system. Sure, our country's not perfect, but anarchy definitely isn't the way to fix it.

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