

Anarchist Studies

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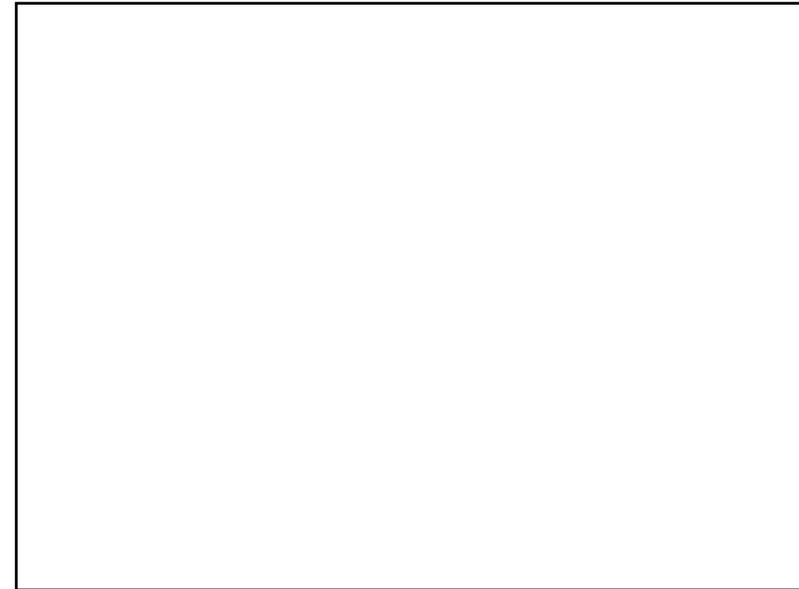
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INSTEAD OF AN EDITORIAL

In praise of the gift

In the last year I've begun to work on one of those longstanding projects that all academics yearn to find time for: in this instance, the reasons for the decline of hitchhiking as a form of transportation in many Western countries. On this subject academic analyses tend to be as scarce as anecdotal suggestions are forthcoming! Whilst plenty of possible sociological explanations for hitchhiking's 'official' disappearance exist¹ – rise of cheap coach/rail cards, rise in car ownership, growing public perception of risk, decline in 'capacity-building' of shared values across generations² – the prevalence of the hitchhiker in popular representation seems paradoxical. In an era when lift sharing is actually more important, the symbolic economy within which hitchhiking exists is still largely dominated by motifs of danger, poverty, dishonesty, youthful immaturity, female vulnerability or as the source of amusement – the film star whose car broke down. Alternatively the hitchhiker appears in news reports as paradigmatic of a now long gone innocent period of western societies, when honest people rallied around during fuel crises. In the western media, representations which focus on hitchhiking as a profoundly ecological or communitarian practice are somewhat scarce. That tens of thousands of people in Africa, Asia and South America take part in hitchhiking and other informal transport economies on a daily basis as part of social necessity is practically ignored.

Whilst I was attempting to theorise some of these paradoxes, two books on contemporary anarchism drifted through my real and virtual libraries: Lewis Call's *Postmodern Anarchism* and David Graeber's *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. What these books do, albeit with very different objectives in mind, is put the concept of 'the gift' back on the theoretical agenda. Both utilise the early twentieth century work of anthropologist and libertarian socialist Marcel Mauss, whose ideas on 'the gift', they believe, assist in theorising an alternative symbolic order. Graeber shows how Mauss refused to follow the theoretical orthodoxy of explaining gift economies as crude bartering systems, instead demonstrating the complex ethical basis that underpinned them. The idea of a 'gift without return' and a gift that cannot be rationally explained might be seen to challenge the logic of commodity driven economies, which require a sense of visible exchange and 'value'. Call – drawing on the Situationists' and Baudrillard's early work celebrating the 'death of the real' – sees real potential for the power of the gift in the semiotic complexities of the postmodern world. In essence, if the symbolic nature of capitalist forms of exchange become unstable, the damage that 'the gift' can do is considerable. What Baudrillard has called 'affirmative nihilism' opens up new spaces for action.

In their revisiting of the 'gift' Graeber and Call are not alone, even amongst anarchist writers who, long before Primitivism, have looked to the 'primitive' and 'stone-age economics' for inspiration. Thinking on 'gift economies' is now beginning to reflect the different manifestations of power in the world. In November 2004, feminists from all over the world gathered in Las Vegas for a conference entitled: 'A Radically Different World View is Possible: The Gift Economy Inside and Outside Patriarchal Capitalism'. The everyday possibilities of gift economies, inherent in these feminist perspectives, are also visible in anticonsumer and voluntary simplicity movements, who have long advocated breaking the stranglehold of expectations which capitalist forms of goods exchange have on everyday life.

The act of securing and then sharing a lift with a complete stranger may not be entirely within the realm of the gift economy, or even be regarded as essentially anarchist, but it is clearly a gesture against one of consumer capitalism's major staples – the individualistic transport experience. Hitchhiking transcends boundaries: social and class backgrounds; the organisation of time and space to suit the needs of the work and consumer ethic; locations where communication (and politics) might take place – to name a few. Its roots in human sociability and co-operation have been recognised by Governments at times of crisis, such as during wartime petrol rationing in Britain between 1940-1945, when people were positively encouraged to give lifts. Within years, those who continued to hitchhike were accused of being part of a 'something for nothing' culture, an epithet that has accompanied every succeeding generation of hitchhikers.

Although a substantial amount of the reporting of hitchhiking is for all the 'wrong' reasons, or is an opportunity for middle-aged journalists to reflect upon their own youth and invoke an earlier more 'innocent' time, there is no ideological coherence in these representations, no obvious pattern. The symbolic economy within which hitchhiking exists is profoundly unstable. Some regional newspapers cheerfully announce how one of 'their own' is heading off to raise money on a charity hitch, a week after police have publicly warned against hitchhiking after dark following an assault on a female clubber. The construction of the hitchhiker inevitably reproduces relations of power – the 'Gap year' student who hitches whilst doing something worthwhile instead of 'just travelling; hitchhikers being mistaken for 'wanted' people; teenagers hitchhiking from school to avoid bullying; pensioners hitchhiking because of cuts to rural public transport services.

The symbolic economy of hitchhiking might be complex, but it repeatedly signifies liberation from dominant assumptions about work, leisure, mobility, space, strangers and communication. Perhaps it is no accident that the incorporation of hitchhiking themes into mainstream advertising – a phenomenon that shows little sign of dissipating – largely revolves around concepts of freedom and transcendence; repackaged in the form of chewing gum, burgers

or insurance. Somehow, these sanitised representations of 'difference' are ultimately as ineffective as the sordid stories of abducted or murdered hitchhikers in terms of repressing the motivation to step out on the open road. Buried away in the middle of regional newspapers, there are constant glimpses of the gift economy. Every year hundreds of volunteer fundraisers for all kinds of small-scale projects – crechés, mountain rescue teams, community buses – travel the length of Britain in search of something more than just another capitalist transaction.

Hitchhiking as a popular activity may have had its heyday, but it still continues to signify the world of the possible.

Jonathan Purkis

NOTES

1. D. Smith and G. Chesters (2001) 'The Neglected Art of Hitch-hiking: Risk, Trust and Sustainability', *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 6, no. 3, <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/6/3/chesters.html>
2. I. Welsh (2000) *Mobilising Modernity: The Nuclear Moment*, London: Routledge.

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Anarchy in Political Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

According to the tradition, only three pure regimes – monarchy, aristocracy and democracy – are said to be capable under certain conditions of ensuring the ‘common good’. This article argues that a complete typology of political regimes must include ‘anarchy’ not as a deviant form of democracy, but rather as an ideal type of pure regime. The new typology shall include monarchy (the rule of one), aristocracy (the rule of a minority), democracy (the rule of the majority) and anarchy (the self-government of all, through consensus). Finally, it is necessary to remind that political life is not limited to the State, and that anarchy can incarnate itself – here and now – within local and small communities and political groups. Therefore, the blanket rejection of anarchy by philosophers arguing that its political realisation is impossible in our modern world is misleading and necessarily impoverishes our philosophical thinking.

‘What is the best political regime?’ This is the fundamental question to which occidental political philosophy has traditionally seen itself as having to respond. According to tradition, the contest is between four types of regimes, three of which are ‘pure’ (monarchy, aristocracy and democracy), and one which is a ‘mixture’ (republic) of elements of the three former pure regimes.¹ Under certain conditions, those who exercise authority in all of these regimes might seek and secure the realisation of the ‘common good’ for the entire community as well as ‘good life’ for every member. Conversely, those who exercise authority in pathological regimes (tyranny, oligarchy, etc) only seek to egotistically enjoy the good life (in a material rather than a moral sense) at the expense of the ‘common good’ and their subjects’ ‘good life’. With regard to ‘anarchy’, the most influential traditional philosophers have identified it as the pathological and corrupt form of democracy, here understood in terms of its direct form whereby all citizens can participate in the assembly where collective political decisions are taken.

To equate anarchy to a corrupt direct democracy is a serious error which impoverishes political philosophy. Instead, I argue that a complete typology of political regimes must include anarchy not as a deviant form of democracy, but rather as one of the ideal types of legitimate political regime. I will identify anarchy as a fourth type of pure political regime in which all citizens govern

themselves together directly through consensual deliberation and without resorting to an authority which relies upon coercive apparatus. To sustain my argument, it is necessary first to synthesise the quantitative discourse of political philosophers on the types of pure political regimes, to analyse the qualitative approach used by philosophers to distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ political regimes, and finally, to discuss the nature of anarchy.

1. THE TYPOLOGY OF POLITICAL REGIMES: A QUANTITATIVE PERSPECTIVE

For more than two thousand years, the majority of the most influential occidental philosophers have restricted themselves to identifying three ideal types of pure political regimes: monarchy, aristocracy and democracy.² These regimes are given different names at times depending upon the individual philosopher (‘oligarchy’, for example, can be exchanged for ‘aristocracy’) and certain philosophers will not always be consistent or coherent in the ways they use this typology.³ Nevertheless, three fundamental regimes remain, mainly because this typology rests upon a mathematical calculation insofar as official political authority may rest in the hands of a single person (monarchy), a few or a minority (aristocracy) or a majority of the people (democracy).

This calculation is often presented as being self-evident, as with Aristotle, for whom ‘The sovereign must necessarily be either the One, or the Few, or the Many’.⁴ The Greek etymology of these regimes’ names also underlines the mathematical foundation of this typology. ‘Monarchy’ comes from the Greek words *mona*, which signifies one (person), and *kratia*, which signifies ‘to govern’. ‘Aristocracy’ also comes from the Greek, and *aristos* signifies ‘the best’. An aristocracy is therefore the regime where the best govern. But to say ‘the best’ implies that a division exists between said group and others, and that aristocrats are a minority of individuals who are superior to the average person. An aristocracy thus signifies a regime in which a minority of individuals within a community exercise authority. Finally, within the word ‘democracy’, *demos* signifies ‘people’. By democracy, traditional political philosophy understands a regime based upon the Ancient Athenian model whereby those who are considered citizens – the people – have the right to present themselves at the agora to participate in the Assembly and take a direct role in the process of political decision making.

If this typology is primarily associated with classical philosophy, it will be taken up also by Ancient historians, and by political philosophers and actors at the beginning of modernity.⁵ In the course of the debates around the American war of independence, for example, a number of texts – speeches, pamphlets, etc – make explicit reference to this typology. Zabdiel Adams, the cousin of the second president of the United States, John Adams, would declare in a speech of 1782 that ‘three different modes of civil rule have been

prevalent among the nations of the earth, a *monarchy*, *aristocracy*, and *democracy*'.⁶ Conscious that this first typology does not permit one to grasp all of the complexity of political reality, some philosophers will come to believe it important to introduce a second typology, which mirrors the former in a distorted fashion, by proposing an eventual degenerate or pathological form for each pure regime.

2. THE TYPOLOGY OF POLITICAL REGIMES: THE QUALITATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Aristotle is the first to emphasise the importance of adding the distinction of linking the morality of a regime to its mathematical classification. A just regime distinguishes itself from an unjust regime insofar as the object of the first is the common good while the object of the second is uniquely the good of the person or the people who govern.⁷ Several philosophers will also propose a typology of regimes which takes account of the moral aspect of the exercise of political authority. The risk of corruption is great in pure regimes because nothing in their institutional structure – such as the Constitution – prevents those who govern from turning their backs on seeking, defending and promoting the common good to luxuriate unduly in the power at their disposal. Government by one thus becomes a tyranny; government by a few, is an oligarchy; and government by many, is anarchy.

Table I

The traditional division of political regimes according to a mathematical calculation

Authority	one	a minority	a majority
authority's goal			
common good (just)	monarchy	Aristocracy	democracy
own interests (unjust)	despotism	oligarchy	anarchy

This is where a newly named regime occurs, that of the 'republic'. The term 'Republic', from the Latin *res publica* or 'public thing', may be attributed to any just regime,⁸ as well as to a mixed constitution composed of the three elements the pure regimes incarnate. One must distinguish, here, classical republicanism from modern republicanism. The former rests upon an organic

vision of the republic, at the heart of which the three aforementioned elements of society find themselves in concert in the public sphere in search of the common good. Modern republicanism rests, on the other hand, upon a mechanical vision whereby the diverse elements of a society pursue their divergent interests (the modern idea of a pluralist society) but interact with the goal of protecting their private lives from public despotism, thereby creating a complex structural regime in which the diverse powers are separate and balance out one another. A republic is constituted by an equilibrium of diverse social orders, be it a monarchy (or a president), an aristocracy which sits in the Senate or in the House of Lords, and the 'people' who are represented in the democratic branch of the Republic (known as the National Assembly, House of Commons, House of Representatives, etc). According to most political philosophers, of whom Aristotle and Cicero are foremost, a mixed constitution is necessarily a just regime because none of the three forces can impose its will over the others. The three forces neutralise one another and the common good comes out the winner.⁹ In its classic version, as in its modern version, the republic is incompatible with a pure, absolute, authority.

Since the nineteenth century, politicians, like the philosophers, have developed the habit of using the term 'democracy' (qualified as 'modern', 'liberal' or 'representative') to designate the republic, such that today the terms for the two regimes are more or less synonymous. However, modern 'democracy' is a distant cousin of Ancient democracy. In the latter, those enjoying the title of 'citizen' had the right to assemble at the agora and participate directly in the deliberative decision-making process. Then, the majority would win the day (majority rule). In a modern 'democracy', several forms of authority coexist and compete within the official political system. The real majority of the people does not express its voice, even in the so-called 'democratic branch', where only an extremely small minority of 'representatives' deliberate in the name of the majority, or of the entire 'nation'.¹⁰ As Jean-Jacques Rousseau noted, the majority has only the authority to select the happy few who shall rule the community. To draw a comparison, one might wonder, then, ought a regime in which one individual – known as the 'king' or the 'queen' – who's only political function would be to elect a few 'representatives' every four or five years to rule on his/her behalf, be known as a monarchy? Such a regime should be most probably seen as a phoney monarchy and as a true aristocracy. It might still be labelled 'monarchy' for traditional or ideological reasons, despite its obvious aristocratic nature. In the same vein, a regime in which the aristocrats' only political function would be to elect one 'representative' every four or five years to rule on their behalf should most probably be seen as a true monarchy. Similarly, modern 'democracy', which is ruled by elected aristocrats, is very much closer to a real aristocracy than to a democracy. Such a fact finds echo in the tradition of political philosophy, in which Aristotle,¹¹ Spinoza¹² and Montesquieu,¹³ amongst others,¹⁴ as well as some of the most

influential founders of modern republics (Thomas Jefferson¹⁵ and Maximilien Robespierre,¹⁶ for instance), openly stated that election – i.e., the selection of an ‘elite’ – is truly aristocratic and clearly alien to democracy in its very nature. Modern ‘democracy’ is a ‘representative’, ‘popular’, ‘elected’ or ‘liberal’ aristocracy, hidden under the deceitful label of ‘democracy’ in the wake of rhetorical games motivated by political struggles.¹⁷ Throughout the remainder of this essay, the use of the word ‘democracy’ will identify a regime where the people govern (themselves) directly, respecting the sense the word had during almost two thousand years of the philosophical tradition.

3. DEMOCRACY AND ANARCHY: A MATHEMATICAL CONFUSION

The mathematical relationship between (real and direct) democracy and anarchy evidences an error in terms of the way political philosophy understands anarchy. If despotism (by a single despot) is not mathematically distinguishable from monarchy (government by one person), nor oligarchy (by a clique) from aristocracy (government by a few), there nevertheless exists a clear mathematical difference between a democracy and anarchy. From an etymological point of view, ‘anarchy’ comes from the greek word *anarkhia* at the heart of which the root *an* signifies ‘without’ and *arkhia* ‘military chief’, which eventually comes to denote simply a ‘chief’ or ‘leader’. From an etymological point of view, therefore, ‘anarchy’ refers to the absence of a leader. From a mathematical perspective, it signifies no, or zero, leader. If one looks at historical examples of anarchy (free-communes, squats, militant groups and collectives, etc), she will find indeed no formal and official leader(s). However, she will also find that anarchy is a form of political organisation in which (1) all members may participate directly in the collective and the deliberative decision-making process, through which (2) they seek consensus. Thus, stating that there is no (zero) leader (or despot) does not imply that there is no politics, nor collective decision-making procedures. In anarchy, there is no leader(s) or authority exercising coercion over some people, because all rule together in a consensual way (i.e. all agree to agree with the collective decision).

Hence, to introduce anarchy as a legitimate political regime implies confronting the tradition of political philosophy, especially its mathematical based definition of democracy. Indeed, some political philosophers refer to democracy as being the rule of the many (a majority), while others as the rule of all.¹⁸ The mathematical confusion results from a lack of distinction between the collective deliberative process and the decision itself. In conceptual and organisational terms, democracy and anarchy can be, at first glance, difficult to distinguish: the two regimes function thanks to a general assembly to which all of the citizens can participate in and the two regimes don’t have a leader/s.

But to say that there is direct democracy is not to say that there is an absence of political authority and coercion. In democracy, the Assembly possesses authority – as the incarnation of the general will – to oblige everybody to obey. Hence, it seems correct to suggest that democracy is the rule of all only if one thinks of whom has the right to be part of the deliberative decision-making process (whom may enter in the agora to participate in the popular deliberation). Yet, a democratic popular assembly does not seek consensus. At the end of the deliberation, the majority (i.e., the many, not all) imposes its will upon the minority (majority rule). Thus, with regard to authority and coercion, democracy is a regime where the majority (the many) rules over the minority, rather than the rule of all.¹⁹

If we are to remain true to the mathematical logic of the tradition of political philosophy, anarchy (the rule of all) must be distinguished from democracy (the rule of the majority). Mathematically speaking, ‘all’ and ‘many’ are not synonyms and therefore there is no mathematical correspondence between a democracy (majority rule) and anarchy (consensus rule and genuine self-government). Hence, to affirm – as the philosophers do – that the latter is a pathological form of the former is a mathematical error. Anarchy cannot be the pathological form – a ‘perversion’, as Aristotle puts it – of democracy for the simple reason that anarchy and democracy are not equivalent from a mathematical point of view.

4. ANARCHY AS A POLITICAL REGIME: POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In respecting the mathematical rule of traditional typology, it is logical to include anarchy not as a corrupted form of the democratic regime, but rather as a particular form of political organisation in which all rule. This raises three questions: (1) Is it legitimate to say that an anarchist community where there is no longer any government constitutes a political ‘regime’? (2) If it is in effect a regime, is it viable and is it worth our discussing it seriously? A final consideration returns one to the question of the qualitative element of regimes: (3) what would be the degenerate form of anarchy? These concerns merit responses.

Is anarchy a political regime? It is necessary to make distinctions between ‘governance’, ‘authority’, ‘coercion’, ‘power’ and ‘violence’ in order to better understand the specificity of anarchy. To loosely appropriate a distinction which the philosopher Hannah Arendt makes, a political authority (of one, a minority or a majority) exercises coercive means, that is to say that it can physically force an individual over whom it has authority to act or not to act depending upon the will of the authority. The political authority has the physical means to impose – coerce – its will upon individuals who immediately lose their autonomy and their liberty. According to Arendt, coercion is not

‘power’, but rather, it is ‘violence’ or the threat of violence. All authority is potentially coercive and therefore violent. ‘Power’ – as distinct from ‘violence’ – constitutes itself collectively, as the result of a collective will based upon deliberation amongst free and equal individuals who seek to understand one another and give themselves the power to realise things together, to create a common world.²⁰ From a theoretical point of view, anarchy does not so much signify the absence of ‘government’ as it does the absence of a leader/s, that is to say an official/s who wield officially recognised authority. Thus, if we understand ‘political regime’ to refer to a way of governing a community in order to organise its collective life, anarchy must be understood as the best regime for individuals who wish to live together in a context of real liberty and equality, without having to submit to a political authority exercised by some privileged citizens. In their collective participation in the assembly, where they attempt to achieve a consensus, the citizens give themselves the power to act collectively (in this essay, I deal exclusively with ‘politics’, although anarchism is also about radical liberty and equality and self-rule with regard to economic, ecology, identities [cultural, gender, etc], etc).

If we reconsider the myth of the ‘social contract’, anarchy would be the result of a contract in which the contractors decide to live together peacefully but without delegating their ‘sovereignty’ and their power to legislate to a political authority separated from the multitude of citizens. There would thus be a popular assembly where collective goals would be discussed, but the assembly would seek to attain a consensus rather than a simple majority and it would not have recourse to a coercive branch to impose its authority (everyone agreeing, no coercion shall be necessary).

Is anarchy viable? The preceding comments demonstrate that it is possible to think of anarchy as a political regime via which a community decides to govern itself without authority, that is to say without coercion or violence. This conceptual definition of anarchy must be understood within the frame of theoretical thought. Political practice clearly responds to other pressures when it is incarnate in a world obviously not as neat or ordered as that of philosophical typologies. To know whether such an anarchist regime is possible from a military, economic or cultural perspective, for example, is subject to debate. This debate deserves to be pursued, but too often the philosophers have simply avoided reflecting upon and discussing anarchy by affirming that it is not a viable regime.

In the real political world, anarchy – like other regimes – faces several challenges that jeopardise its stability and its coherence. Yet, a large number of so called traditional societies functioned for thousands of years without political authority (neither a State, nor police): the Inuit, the Pygmies, the Santals of India and the Tivs of Nigeria. More recently, some anarchist organisations have taken place on a large scale (during the Spanish revolution of 1936-39, for instance) and on a small scale (in communes or libertarian political

groups).²¹ In short, the experience of a political organisation without a leader is not simply utopian but is an integral part of human history.

Philosophers such as Marx, Nietzsche and Foucault, as well as sociologists and anthropologists, have forcefully argued that the question of power, of its conservation and its effects of domination and resistance, are not only limited to the official structure of a political regime. Nor do traditional societies without a State or police necessarily lack situations of domination based on sexual, religious, economic cleavages, for instance. Thus, one must not presume that the process of anarchist decision-making is exempt from social and psychological tensions and paradoxes. The search for consensus is a complex process in the course of which appear certain sociological and psychological dynamics of normalisation and self-censorship, informal exclusion, etc.²² In an anarchist society, influence and domination inevitably articulate themselves around symbolic struggles. But what is true for anarchy is also true for the other types of political regime: there are several forms and networks of informal authority and domination in a monarchy, aristocracy, democracy and a republic, even if these regimes claim to secure the common good and, in the latter regime, despite a republic’s pretence of neutralising power. Hence, a realist anarchist doesn’t dream of a world without conflict or domination. Real anarchists – often inspired by radical feminists – have thought of and experienced several methods to respond to problems of informal inequalities within their communities or groups. Some methods include the implementation of a speaker’s list which alternates between men and women (because men in the Western world are generally more willing than women to speak in public, thereby giving them more influence in a deliberative process²³), and/or prioritises the individual who wants to speak for the first time over those who have already spoken. In addition, there are role-play simulations which aim to identify existing informal inequalities and influences, and also non-mixed groups formed among the less influential members of a same sub-community (defined by their gender, age, class, etc) in order to empower themselves, etc In other words, and as in the other forms of political regimes, all anarchist communities or groups do not have exactly the same decision-making procedures: they may adopt and adapt specific procedures and practices in order to deal with specific challenges to their core principles (liberty, equality, solidarity, consensus, common good), and they may modified them through their experiences and history.

What is the degenerate form of anarchy? If the tyranny of the majority is the degenerate form of democracy, what is the degenerate form of anarchy?²⁴ It is *chaos*, that is to say the absence of a collective, communal, political organisation. Here, the inclusion of anarchy within the traditional typology of political regimes highlights and undermines, simultaneously, the simplistic mathematical schema. Indeed, by definition, one, a few or the many holding authority may seek personal interests that are incompatible with the common

good. All, however, cannot. This is not to suggest that an anarchist assembly always reaches clever decisions and implements them wisely. Anarchists may make mistakes, and reach a consensus or implement a decision in such a manner that it will lead to unexpected problems for the community, and therefore undermine the common good. A consensus, however, implies that the decision is made by all for the good of all, and not for the good of some. Even if a consensual decision deals more specifically with only a part of the community (the women or the youth, for instance), it is thought – in principle – to be for the good of all. Consensus is then by definition about the common good. Yet, seeking consensus is not always easy. Still within the conceptual paradigm of anarchy, a single individual has the capacity to block the process by opposing the majority. If the peer pressure is too strong, the individuals who disagree with the expected decision may decide to withdraw from the community, freeing themselves from the consensual process and its results. It is worthy to note that actual anarchist groups do include the right to ‘abstain’ – or ‘stand aside’ – from a decision-making process when an individual disagrees with the majority but does not want to paralyse the group, or the right to ‘block’ when they have fundamental reasons to oppose the decision. Such members might abstain or block in order to promote the common good, if they believe that the majority is mistaken. Such methods might lead the majority to reconsider a situation and to change its mind, if the dissenter(s) view about the common good is determined through deliberation to be the best. In real political life, thus, consensus does not mean pure unanimity, and anarchist communities may function even though some individuals abstain or block a decision from time to time.

On the other hand, anarchy (like other regimes) faces the threat of degeneration if such attitudes – withdrawing and blocking – are driven by egoistic interests rather than concern for the common good, or if the majority decide that it is in its own interest to overrun the dissenter(s) stance. In such situation, one individual, a minority or even a majority, feeling uncomfortable about the process or its expected results, may claim that some form of authority (by one, a few or a majority rule) must take over consensus.²⁵ Such a crisis may result in a coup against anarchy, in favour of monarchy, aristocracy or democracy. While anarchism implies a radical criticism of other regimes, the latter may be seen by some people as tools to solve some problems in anarchy, or to secure their own interests. There is, thus, a tension – and a rivalry – between regimes. Yet, if the crisis does not go beyond the conceptual and political limits of anarchy, the regime switches from its pure to its degenerate form, which is chaos, i.e. the dissolution of the community and the collective decision-making process, where everyone is against everyone. There is then no more political community and politics, because nobody rules anymore. Thus, from a mathematical perspective, the relation is from the all to zero, and there is therefore no mathematical correspondence between anarchy and its degener-

ate form. Anarchy is the self-government of all, its degenerate form is the dissolution of politics, it is a situation where nobody rules.²⁶

As a result of this discussion, a new typology can be schematised :

Table II

A new typology in which anarchy is a model type:

Authority	Nobody	one	A minority	A majority	all
authority's goal					
Common good	<-	monarchy	Aristocracy	democracy	anarchy
Own interests	Chaos	despotism (by one)	Oligarchy	tyranny (by the majority)	

4. ANARCHY: BETWEEN THE MACROPOLITICAL AND THE MICROPOLITICAL

If we agree to think of anarchy in its non-degenerate form, we can adopt either a pessimistic or an optimistic vision. The optimistic anarchist will claim that it is only possible to hope to attain the common good within regimes without formal authority. In effect, according to the political philosophy of anarchism, individuals in positions of authority do not help achieve social peace nor the common good. As a matter of fact, the process of exercising formal authority changes the psychological and socio-political mind set and attitude of those who exercise it, such that they eventually come to defend and to promote their own authority rather than the common good. In short, since the exercise of authority inevitably corrupts those who exercise it, any regime accepting formal authority is corrupted and incapable of defending and promoting the common good. Consequently, anarchy is the only conceptual and practical response to the issue of the common good defined as the good of all community members.

In regarding political authority with such disdain, the anarchist is tempted to practice a mathematical simplification which results in one of two binaries: on one side there is anarchy, on the other tyranny. But the defenders of republics or mixed regimes (according to Aristotle, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, or Madison), call upon the anarchist to be more moderate. For though they are imperfect, the balance of political forces (between the presidency and the upper and lower chambers) and their separation (between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary), as well as the Charter of rights, of any number of liberal republics, help to avoid, in principle, political authority that is

nothing more than pure and arbitrary violence. Yet, modern ‘democracy’ – despite the republican inner organisation – lacks a genuine democratic element: there is no popular assembly where the people might express their will. Such a flaw fuels the authoritarian tendencies within modern republics. Moreover, even if such a democratic touch was added to modern republics, it would only introduce a new form of authority, i.e. the majority rule. Such a republic would still be an imperfect mixed regime, because of the lack of any anarchist elements or branches.

A pessimist anarchist will say that even the idea of a ‘common good’ is an invention of those who govern in order to deceive the governed. For instance, monarchs, aristocrats, and the members of the majority, have claimed to govern on behalf of the common good. According to the pessimist, each society is constituted by divergent, opposing, interests and there will always be one or more individuals who will not accept the anarchist way of life and against whom the anarchist regime must exercise a certain amount of coercion (by excluding or eliminating them). Even more problematically, there would be a plurality of ways of being an anarchist and self-proclaimed ‘anarchists’ would without a doubt be incapable of coming to an agreement in the course of a consensual deliberative process about a definition of the common good and even less so regarding how to defend and promote it. In this sense, an anarchic regime is nothing more than an ideal type which can never be achieved.

Such a tension between optimism and pessimism does not prevent anarchy from finding its place within political philosophy, that is to say as a type of regime which must inspire thinking rather than mockery or hatred. The silence which political philosophy exhibits regarding anarchy as an eventual legitimate regime deprives the political imagination of a stimulating subject for thought. Anarchism invites us to think of politics in other than global or strategic terms. The philosophical tradition tends to conceive of political communities as being globally defined by the nature of the political authority which heads them. Classical anarchist thinkers, such as Proudhon and Kropotkin, contemporary anarchists such as John Clark and Todd May, as well as political philosophers like Foucault and the ‘postmodernists’, suggest – in very distinct ways – that politics be looked at as a world composed of multiple margins and cores, layers and cells, as well as intertwining and tactical relations of power.²⁷

The Occident is currently dominated by impure regimes which incarnate the traditional principles of republicanism: balance and the separation of authority. Within their territories there can be sites or politics which function according to other principles. Anarchism is a political philosophy concerning any form of non-authoritarian political organisation dealing with local and daily life. Consequently, it can incarnate itself just as well within a regime as it can within political groups, housing co-operatives and squats, newspapers

and publishing houses, co-operatively managed enterprises, etc. Anarchy can live here and now, and different anarchism inspired by specific and distinct sensibilities and experiences may be organised differently from each other.²⁸ Therefore, the blanket rejection of anarchists by political philosophers who argue that its political realisation is impossible necessarily impoverishes our philosophical thinking and our understanding of the complexity of real political life.

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NOTES

1. The occidental tradition is deeply influenced by Ancient Greek and Roman philosophers and historians. Anthropology offers a broader perspective (see David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004).
2. Socrates (as cited by Plato in *The Politics*, 291d-292a), Aristotle (*The Politics*, bk. III, ch. 7, 1279-a), Machiavelli (*Discourses*, bk. I, ch. 2), Calvin (*Institution Chrestienne*, 1560, IV), James Harrington (*The Commonwealth of Oceana and a System of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.10), Jean Bodin (*Republic*, II, I), Samuel Pufendorf (*On the Duty of Man and Citizen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.142), Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, ch. XIX), Baruch de Spinoza (*Political Treatise*), John Locke (*Second Treatise of Civil Government*, ch. 10, § 132), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*The Social Contract*, bk. III, ch. 3), Friedrich Hegel (*Philosophy of Right*, § 273).
3. See also, amongst others, Socrates (in Plato’s, *Republic*, bk. VIII, 557 A), Aristotle (*The Politics*, bk. III, ch. 7, 1279-2 [3]) or Montesquieu (*L’Esprit des Lois*, bk. II, ch. I).
4. *The Politics*, bk. III, ch. 7, 1279-a [2] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.114 (emphasis added).
5. See J. de Romilly, ‘Le classement des Constitutions jusqu’à Aristotle’, *Revue des études grecques* LXXII (1959): 81-99. The republican philosopher, James Harrington, stated that ‘[g]overnment, according to the ancients and their learned disciple Machiavelli, the only politician of the later ages, is of three kinds: the government of one man, or of the better sort, or of the whole people; which by their more learned names are called monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy’ (*The Commonwealth of Oceana and a System of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.10) (emphasis added).
6. Charles S. Hyneman & Donald S. Lutz (eds.), *American Political Writing During the Founding Era 1760-1805*, I (Indianapolis: Liberty Press Edition, 1983), p.541

- (emphasis in the original). This typology is taken up by others on other occasions (see p.330, p.420, p.614-616 or James Otis, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*, Boston 1764, in Bernard Bailyn (ed.), *Pamphlets of the American Revolution 1750-1776*, I (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p.427).
7. Aristotle asserts this as follows: 'we may say that when the One, or the Few, or the Many, rule with a view to the common interest, the constitutions under which they do so must necessarily be right constitutions. On the other hand the constitutions directed to the personal interest of the One, or the Few, or the Masses, must necessarily be perversion' (*The Politics*, bk. III, ch. 7, 1279-a [2] [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958], p.114).
 8. As when Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes: 'I ... give the name 'Republic' to every State that is governed by laws, no matter what the form of its administration may be: for only in such a case does the public interest govern ... Every legitimate government is republican' and, more precisely, that monarchies, aristocracies and democracies can be 'republics' (*The Social Contract*, bk. II, ch. 6 [in *The Social Contract and Discourses* (London, Everyman, 1993), p.212]).
 9. In a republic, according to the contemporary theorist of republicanism Philip Pettit, 'the authorities are effectively checked and balanced: [the power is] effectively channelled into the paths of virtue' (in P. Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.234). See also James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and a System of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.10 and Charles Blattberg, *From Pluralist to Patriotic Politics: Putting Practice First* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 5.
 10. The majority really rules only when the elected aristocrats dare to hold a referendum about a specific issue.
 11. Aristotle, *Politics*, IV, 15, 1300-b-21).
 12. Spinoza, *Traité de l'autorité politique*, chapter 8, § 2.
 13. Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Lois*, I, bk II, ch. 2.
 14. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat social*, bk IV, ch. III; James Harrington, 'Oceana' (1656), in John Pocock (ed.), *The Political Works of James Harrington* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 184. Philodemus [Thomas Tudor Tucker], 'Conciliatory Hints, Attempting, by a Fair State of Matters, to Remove Party Prejudice' (Charleston, 1784), in Charles S. Hyneman & Donald S. Lutz (eds.), *American Political Writing During the Founding Era 1760-1805*, I (Indianapolis: Liberty Press Edition, 1983), 615. Bernard Manin, *Principes du gouvernement représentatif* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1995), 19-61.
 15. In Giovanni Lobbano, 'République et démocratie anciennes avant et pendant la révolution', Michel Vovelle (ed.), *Révolution et république: l'exception française* (Paris: Kimé, 1994), 56.
 16. In his 'Lettre à ses commentants' (Sept. 1792), in Gordon H. McNeil, 'Robespierre, Rousseau and Representation', Richard Herr & Harold T. Parker (eds.), *Ideas in History* (USA: Duke University Press, 1965), 148.
 17. Francis Dupuis-Déri, 'The Political Power of Words: The Birth of Pro-Democratic Discourse in the 19th century in the United States and France', *Political Studies*, vol. 52, March 2004, pp. 118-134.
 18. According to Hobbes, for instance, 'the Representative *must needs* be One man, or

- More: and if more, then it is the Assembly of All, or but of a Part. When the Representative is One man, then is the Common-wealth a MONARCHY: when an Assembly of All that will come together, then it is a DEMOCRACY, or Popular Common-wealth: when an Assembly of a Part only, then it is called an ARISTOCRACY. Other kind of Common-wealth *there can be none*: for either One, or More, or All, must have the Sovereign Power' (*Leviathan*, ch. XIX [emphasis added])
19. As Robert Paul Wolff recalls: *In Defense of Anarchism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998 [new edition]).
 20. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1970), pp.44-47 and Jürgen Habermas, 'Hannah Arendt: On the Concept of Power', in J. Habermas, *Philosophical-Political Profiles* (Cambridge: 1985), pp.173-189.
 21. See Harold Barclay, *People Without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchy* (London: Kah & Averill, 1996); Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology* (New York: Zone Books, 1988 [1974]); John Clark, 'The microecology of communities', Forthcoming; F. Dupuis-Déri, 'L'altermondialisation à l'ombre du drapeau noir', Forthcoming; D. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*.
 22. Donald Black, *The Behavior of Law* (Orlando: Academic Press, inc., 1976), ch. 7 ('Anarchy'); Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, pp.24-37; Joseph Pesticieu, 'La tyrannie de l'État et son contraire', Guy Lafrance (ed.), *Pouvoir et tyrannie* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1986), pp.95-98 (the section entitled 'De la tyrannie des coutumes').
 23. Nina Eliasoph, 'Politeness, power, and women's language'; Margaret Kohn, 'Language, Power, and Persuasion: Toward a Critique of Deliberative Democracy', *Constellations*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2000, p.408-429; Iris Marion Young, 'Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy', Seyla Benhabib (dir.), *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 1996, p.120-135.
 24. This concept is proposed by John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty*, ch. I) and Alexis de Tocqueville (*De la Démocratie en Amérique*, vol. I, part 2, ch. 7), both of whom speak less of political tyranny than of a social pressure upon the individual to conform.
 25. Even amongst anarchist philosophers, the distinction between direct democracy and anarchism which is articulated around the practice of unanimous consensus has failed to achieve consensus principally for reasons of a practical order. For an anarchist who encourages the search for consensus, see the anarcho-syndicalist, Erich Mühsam, 'La Société libérée de l'État : Qu'est-ce que l'anarchisme communiste?' [1932], E. Mühsam, *La République des Conseils de Bavière-La Société libérée de l'État* (Paris: La Digitale-Spartacus, 1999), p.165. For a more critical approach to consensus which valorises recourse to a decision by the majority, see Murray Bookchin, 'Communalism: The Democratic Dimension of Social Anarchism', in M. Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998* (San Francisco-Edinburgh, AK Press, 1999), pp.146-150.
 26. The so-called 'anarcho-capitalism' must then be classified, according to our new typology, under the category of chaos. According to anarcho-capitalism, the members of a community do not take collective political decisions since such a society has the capacity to control and regulate itself thanks to the mechanics of

individual *economic* actions and relations within a free market. But such a regime is not political: rather than making political choices individuals limit themselves to making economic decisions which permit a Stateless capitalist economic regime to regulate itself naturally. In other words, individuals are no longer citizens but producers and consumers: instead of deliberating they buy and sell (goods or their labour). Such individuals ultimately have no need to discuss things, since communication happens via the exchange of money or goods (barter). According to anarcho-capitalism, the conquerors of the market – the owners of the means of production – can legitimately luxuriate in their authority over their employees and can even resort to coercive means in the form of protection agencies. Such a regime, without citizens or political acts, certainly can not be identified as a *political* regime. At its best it is an *economic* regime which deploys relations of authority, coercion, violence and submission (in principle, by mutual consent), at its worst it's chaos. From the point of view of political philosophy, capitalism *without politics* may be one of the dark sides of anarchy, one of its degenerate form. See David Friedman, *The Machinery of Freedom: Guide to a Radical Capitalism* (LaSalle [ILL]: Open Court Publishing cie., 1989); Pierre Lemieux, *Du libéralisme à l'anarcho-capitalisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983).

27. Clark, 'The microecology of communities'; Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), p.7-15. See also F. Dupuis-Déri, 'L'altermondialisation à l'ombre du drapeau noir'.
28. The line 'here and now' may be found in Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia* (New York: Collier Books-Macmillan Publishing Company, 1949 [1946]), p.81. See also: Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.-The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (Autonomedia, 1991 [1985]); Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of the Bread* (1892); Elisée Reclus, 'Anarchie', lecture delivered in Brussels, 1894 (<www.bibliolib.net>). Murray Bookchin is very critical of TAZ and of what he calls 'lifestyle anarchism'. He rejects the vision of micropolitical tactics, preferring a more strategic approach (*Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998* [San Francisco-Edinburgh: AK Press, 1999]).

'Nowhere at home', not even in theory: Emma Goldman, anarchism and political theory

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ABSTRACT

In the history of political thought there has been a reluctance to accord Emma Goldman the status of a serious political thinker. Even within the anarchist tradition she is rarely acknowledged as a political theorist. However, Goldman's contribution to political thought was both original and pivotal. Three specific areas of her thought are examined (a) her view of emancipation, (b) her critique of patriarchy and insight that personal relations were power relations, and (c) her analysis of political violence. In each Goldman contributed to our political understanding and therefore should be regarded as a political theorist in her own right.

I

For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live ... In the end, the writer is not even allowed to live in his writing. (Adorno, 1978, 87)

Writing from exile while the European struggle against Nazi Germany hung in the balance Adorno's reflections on his situation as 'an intellectual in emigration' provide an apt frame of reference for a consideration of Emma Goldman's writings. For Adorno the condition of exile meant that the 'warm atmosphere conducive to growth... [is] ...now left behind, flat and stale', while the 'harden[ing] against self-pity' that is the lot of the exile, likewise hardens and stifles the nurturance necessary to foster the writer's sense of creative spirit. Lacking a place to store the refuse and discards of their writing, the exiled writer must perforce carry this detritus wherever they happen to be, at the same time constantly guarding against this detritus becoming a feature of their writing. The writing itself ceases to be a constant, and becomes just as alien a place as the actual geography of exile. Consequently, the writer is nowhere at home, a situation lamented by Emma Goldman who also saw herself as an 'intellectual in emigration'. But it is precisely in relation to the idea that she too was an intellectual, especially with respect to political theory, that sympathisers and critics alike have positioned her at a tangent to, if not completely outside, the circle where political theorists are allowed to dwell.

Despite the favourable appraisals of her place within the anarchist tradition (Avrich 1995; Drinnon 1982; Falk 1990; Gemie 1996; Haaland 1993; Marsh 1981; Marshall 1993; Shulman 1971; Wexler 1984, 1989), despite the supposedly iconic or cult-like status to which she has been elevated in the wake of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Frankel 1996; Rosenberg 1984), Goldman's status as a political theorist is largely non-existent. This paper argues that she was not simply an anarchist agitator who made fiery speeches and who happened to write a few essays. She also contributed to our political understanding on numerous issues and therefore should be regarded as a political theorist in her own right. Her contribution to anarchist thought in particular, and political thought generally, was both original and pivotal. To demonstrate this, the paper will examine a number of facets of Goldman's thought: (a) her general view of emancipation, (b) her critique of patriarchy and her view that personal relations, in particular those based on sex and sexuality, were also power relations and hence were political, and (c) her analysis of political violence and the relationship between aims and means. By way of setting the scene, the paper begins with some brief comments that suggest why a case needs to be made for Goldman's place as a political theorist.

II

To suggest that Goldman's status as a political theorist is marginal might seem to be an extravagant claim given her clearly acknowledged standing within the anarchist tradition and her almost cult-like status within American popular culture at the end of the twentieth century (Frankel 1996, 903). For example, eminent historian of anarchist and libertarian ideas George Woodcock noted in 1983 that it was Goldman who brought the questions of feminism and sexual politics to the forefront of anarchist thought such that 'the anarchist movement was completely changed' (Woodcock cited in Haaland 1993, 5); a view taken up explicitly (though to varying degrees) by a number of scholars (Farmer 1993, 265; Haaland 1993, 182; Hewitt 1985-86, 155; Marshall 1993, 406; Shulman 1982, 32; Wexler 1984, 278). And Goldman's general influence can be found echoed in the writings of other post-1960s feminist and anarcho-feminist writers such as Bendall (1993), Brown (1993, 1989), Ehrlich (1979), Gemie (1996), Kornegger (1979), and Leighton (1979). As for her cult status, Rosenberg (1984) and Frankel (1996, 903) noted her 'unique position in American politics and culture'. As Frankel pointed out, almost everyone can find an 'Emma Goldman' to suit their particular interests: 'a fighter for free speech, a communitarian, a libertarian, an anti-communist, an extreme individualist, a precursor of modern feminism, a true subversive, a harmless visionary expelled for voicing innocent ideas, a suffering victim, a cheerful life-affirming woman, or an amusing sharp-tongued, Jewish grandmother, ... or the tough politico Goldman and the nurturing, gentle spirit of *Emma*' (Frankel 1996, 903). Notably

absent from the various 'Emma Goldmans' listed by Frankel is 'Emma Goldman', the political theorist. Many within and outside the anarchist tradition have been distinctly reluctant to accord Goldman the status of 'political theorist'.

The anarchist tradition has been far less responsive to Goldman's views than is suggested by Woodcock's assessment. Despite its radical espousal of freedom as a good in itself, and opposition to all forms of arbitrary authority, anarchist theory has remained informed by masculinist ontological commitments. Apart from some of the scholars mentioned above, anarchist responses to the questions of patriarchy and women's oppression 'have been few and far between' (Brown 1993, 31), if not 'inadequate' (Gemie 1996, 437). Many of Goldman's anarchist comrades, especially men anarchists, were quite vocally opposed to her critiques of patriarchy and sexuality, despite her continual insistence on the importance of such critiques for an anarchist perspective (Goldman 1970a, 253, 271). But even for latter-day anarchists at the end of the twentieth century, Goldman's message appears to have fallen on deaf ears. Commenting on the behaviour and attitudes of some men anarchists at an anarchist conference in Sydney in 1995, Guest (1998, 1) noted that there was in evidence 'a dominant brand of anarchism ... hostile to the insights and challenges of (at least) feminist theory'. Echoing Guest's views were those of Fraser (1998, 4) who also added that the Sydney experience was no 'isolated incident' because a similar tale was told of an anarchist conference in London in 1995 in which it was noted that 'much of the organisation and many of the male participants were gender-blind'. It would seem that Goldman's contemporaries and successors have yet to integrate fully her unique contributions.

Explicit comments about Goldman's status as a political theorist can be found in the judgements of various scholars writing about anarchists and anarchism. Both within the historiography of anarchism and various biographies of Goldman, there has been a reluctance to treat her as a theorist, though no such reluctance is evinced for various men anarchists, no matter how slight their actual contribution to anarchist ideas. Even when Marshall (1994, 396) acknowledged that Goldman 'made a lasting contribution to anarchist theory by giving it a feminist dimension', he still described her as 'more of an activist than a thinker'. In Solomon's view (1987, 38), Goldman was 'not, however, an original theorist', but rather more 'an interpreter' and 'propagandist of anarchism'. As if to underline this, one well-received discussion of anarchist theory (Ritter, 1980) does not even consider Goldman's ideas. And a decade later, Crowder's excellent study of the so-called 'founding fathers', Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, barely gave Goldman a mention (Crowder 1991). Given that part of Crowder's discussion briefly canvassed who should be properly considered as an anarchist theorist, the omission of Goldman from that discussion underscores my general point. Rosenberg, in the course of reviewing an important collection of archival material about the first decade or so of Goldman's American years concluded that 'Goldman was more effective as a

public speaker than as a writer and thinker' (Rosenberg 2003), echoing her earlier view of Goldman made nearly twenty years earlier (Rosenberg 1984)

As for Goldman's biographers, the following are representative. In concluding his sensitively argued biography Drinnon suggested that she was 'by no means a seminal social and political thinker' (Drinnon 1982, 314). Even so he did note that her attempts at the 1907 Amsterdam Anarchist Conference to go beyond the either/or logic in debates about the relationship between the individual and society 'constituted her nearest approach to an original contribution to anarchist theory' (Drinnon 1982, 107), a point to which I will return later in this paper. Like Drinnon, Falk (1990) and Wexler (1984) both produced studies sympathetic to the contradictions and complexities of her life, especially her anarcho-feminism. However, neither treated her as a theorist of anarchism. Similarly Shulman, who produced one of the first biographies to emphasise Goldman's feminist ideas (Shulman 1971), suggested in her introduction to an important collection of Goldman's essays that Goldman 'was an activist, not a theoretician' and that '[t]he libertarian vision she began with at twenty served for theory, and from it, together with her large emotional resources, flowed her commitment to action' (1979, 21).

Some feminist commentators, for example Dale Spender, have been even less sympathetic in acknowledging Goldman's status as a political theorist. In her influential work, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them*, she summarily dismissed Goldman's feminism as unsympathetic to women and largely a product of malestream thought (1982, 364-5). Such a judgement goes beyond challenging claims that Goldman's ideas were significant in transforming anarchist thought; it also helps keep Goldman on the margins of both anarchist and feminist thought thereby making it even more difficult to appreciate Goldman as an original thinker in her own right. It is perhaps ironic that Spender regarded Goldman's ideas as merely a product of malestream thought because, as will be shown, Goldman's analyses challenged many aspects of malestream thought. However, there is no denying that some of her arguments reveal strong traces of often-unacknowledged masculinist assumptions, even when she was taking issue with some of their social manifestations. This is not surprising if one considers that no individual is ever able to stand outside of their social context to such an extent that their subjectivities remain untouched by the multiple impacts and effects of that context. As will be seen below, Goldman recognised this explicitly and in typical anarchist fashion railed against it.

Nor is it surprising that there would be explicit masculinist traces in her thought given the nature of anarchist discourses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gemie (1996, 418) has noted that the overwhelming majority of anarchists, despite their 'anti-authoritarianism ... their sceptical analysis of power structures' and their challenges to 'the dominant political cultures of the nineteenth century' remained 'blind to the existence of gender-based tyrannies'; though he also pointed out that 'paradoxically ... within this

tough masculine culture' there were 'rival currents' that gave rise to what he termed 'a proto-feminist strand' (Gemie 1996: 418). In Gemie's view, the masculinist biases about men and women within anarchism can be grouped into two broad accounts, those invoking nature and those invoking culture (Gemie 1996, 432-5). In common with many other political theorists across the political spectrum, many anarchists such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon equated women with nature. Grounded in nature, women allegedly were somehow outside of the boundaries of rational political discourse. They lacked whatever it was that was supposed to enable them to participate in revolutionary activities. Moreover, there was often an echo of the Rousseau-ian view that women were the 'disorderly' element within the body politic and hence had to be kept under control, if not excluded. The second pole of masculinist bias identified by Gemie took an opposite tack by locating the problem in culture rather than nature. Within these views, nature was something that many anarchists identified with, especially as a counterpoint to the juggernaut of industrialisation, and hence was not to be denigrated by being invoked to explain in any causal sense women's subordination. Rather, women (like men) were shaped by culture. But where men could argue that they had the wherewithal to transform culture to return it to something more natural (ie more human), when it came to women they argued that women were shaped to an artificial femininity that was docile and conservative. In contradistinction to the first pole, it was women's lack of connection to this idealised 'nature', exemplified by their 'artificiality', that justified their subordination within the political community. Thus this form of anarchist sexism 'reversed the argument put forward by most other political philosophies: within their dualism, Woman represented civilisation and politics, Man represented Nature' (Gemie 1996, 435). However, it needs to be noted that within and between these two poles there was considerable variation.

For those seeking to challenge the sexism within anarchism (and other political philosophies), the arguments from culture had a useful 'Achilles heel'. Their emphasis on the cultural construction of feminine and masculine subjectivities, of what it meant to be 'woman' or 'man', presupposed the historicity of social relations. It was open to those who could make the connection that our understandings of the natures of women and men, and the relations between men and women, were likewise socially and historically constructed and hence could be changed. Just as society as a whole could be remade through revolutionary activity, so too could the relations between women, men and children. Furthermore, insofar as anarchism espoused variations on the theme of 'no god no master', it was also implicit that not only should a man not have a master, but that no man should be a master. Thus anarchism, in principle at least, provided a means to articulate a philosophy of emancipation in which all, regardless of sex, could be free. And Goldman saw it as her task, in both word and deed, to articulate just such a philosophy.

III

Goldman's aim was the full emancipation of society, not just in a political or economic sense, but across every social dimension. Her view of emancipation and human freedom began from the prevailing definitions of anarchism of her time. Her essay, 'Anarchism: What It Really Stands For', provided a fairly typical summary of her anarchist principles:

Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth, an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations. (Goldman, 1969, 62)

The familiar causes (at least for anarchists) of human oppression, namely government, property and religion, are clearly identified. But her understanding of what emancipation entailed was not limited to addressing these particular causes, the 'external tyrants' as she called them. Just as important were the 'inner tyrants', the various 'ethical and social conventions ... in the form of public opinion or what will mother say, or brother, father, aunt, or relative of any sort; what will Mrs Grundy, Mr Comstock, the employer, the Board of Education say?' (Goldman 1969, 221). While it is true that Goldman developed her understanding of 'external' and 'internal tyrants' in her various discussions of women's suffrage and emancipation it formed an important part of her bigger picture of emancipation. As Hewitt has argued it was because of the need to combat the external and internal tyrants that Goldman placed so much emphasis on linking psychological and social transformations (Hewitt, 1985-86). Just as important, however, was Goldman's recognition that our understanding of these inner constraints was largely shaped by sexist social relations; a shaping that was often invisible to men political theorists. In recognising this, Goldman was expanding the horizons of the anarchist theory of her day.

True emancipation for society as a whole would not emerge unless all human beings, men no less than women, were able to free themselves of their 'inner tyrants'. In her view the mere gaining of economic and political rights was absolutely necessary, but pursued as abstract goals in isolation from other equally important aspects of the lived condition of human existence such rights would be insufficient for a fulfilling or meaningful existence, since men, no less than women, sought 'for beauty and love, for harmony and understanding' (Goldman 1981, 116). Hence at the core of Goldman's anarchism was also a belief in the importance of the emotions and the intimate aspects of human rela-

tions. In numerous essays, speeches and letters she grappled continually with the problem of intimacy and the emotions, seeking to weave them into her various explications of her anarchism. For example, her discussion of jealousy aimed to untangle the politics of this emotion (Goldman 1979, 168-75). She argued that it should have no place in any truly mutual relationship. However, at the very time that she was writing that essay Goldman was racked with raging emotions of jealousy and obsession, particularly over her lover's numerous infidelities. This has led some (eg Wexler 1984) to argue that Goldman's written views contradicted her feelings and actions, and hence the actual living of her life was not quite as her written view of her political philosophy suggested. No doubt this is true, at least in part. However, it is also possible to see her written words as attempts to think through these issues precisely *because* she had to grapple with them in real life. Questions of sexual desires and sexual feelings and their relationship to one's politics are extremely vexed. Such questions remain controversial and unresolved today, but it is largely due to Goldman that these questions have a place on the political agenda, at least for feminist political theorists. In this respect Goldman challenged the then prevailing conceptions of what anarchists regarded as political, and attempted to include within it all manifestations of power relationships between humans (1969a, 50).

Paralleling her view of emancipation, and in some respects informing it, was her conceptualisation of the individual. For Goldman, the individual 'was the center of gravity for society' (1979, 396); the 'true reality of life' (1979, 88); the 'heart of society' (1969, 52). Goldman's individualism was not the 'rugged individualism' of liberal philosophy. For her this was a corruption and perversion of straight-jacketed individuality, 'convert[ing] life into a degrading race for externals, for possession, for social prestige and supremacy' (1979, 89). Rather, Goldman's individualism was much closer to the idea of the 'socialised individual' that informed Kropotkin's social vision. Granted, there was a tension between these two approaches, and often her ideas could be interpreted as extolling the individual at the expense of the social. Her approach was predicated on the recognition that on the one hand, the ongoing industrialisation of society threatened to subsume human individuality, to destroy all that she believed made men and women truly human; on the other hand she worried about the fostering of 'the power-obsessed, socially irresponsible individual', a form of individualism antithetical to her vision of a free society (Drinnon 1982, 107).

Nevertheless, she tried to go beyond the 'rules of either/or logic' and tried to reconcile these two positions by 'fus[ing] them into a higher synthesis of individualistic communism', most notably in her speeches at the Amsterdam conference in 1907 (Drinnon 1982, 107). According to Drinnon's interpretation this produced in Goldman's thought 'a peculiar kind of elitism' in which particular anarchists, 'distinguished by their efforts for social justice and their own renunciation of power', would take on a heroic or Titan-like status that

would inspire others to emulate their example (Drinnon 1982, 107). He concluded that Goldman's thinking remained caught up in 'a never-ending flight from an elite pole to what may be described as a populist pole' (Drinnon 1982, 107).

On the surface there would appear to be some warrant for this conclusion. There is no doubting the influences of Ibsen, Emerson and Nietzsche on her understanding of the relation between the individual and society. Their critiques of the impact of the various ways in which human individuality was held hostage to prevailing social mores certainly shaped her thinking. However, and as Drinnon conceded, it did not shape it in the direction of the Nietzschean 'übermensch' (1982, 107). Rather their various critiques of social conformity and the concomitant denial of individuality pushed Goldman to develop an anarchist response that was consistent with her vision of a truly free society, in which the freedom of all is the condition for the freedom of any given individual; where the freedom of the many is not conditional on the unfreedom of others. She aimed to produce a political philosophy with such a vision at its centre. She was not arguing for the creation of an 'anarchist elite' or for anarchist heroes as such, but rather for the view that by living one's life according to particular anarchist principles those who did so could provide an example of what might be possible. Recognising that in the absence of a revolution the prevailing oppressive social relations would not be changed overnight she aimed to articulate a view that could suggest ways in which more desirable social relations might be prefigured and acted upon in the here and now. This was not an invocation to some sort of elite-led form of anarchism, nor was it a valorisation of the individual.

The tension between the individual and society, between self and others, was a constant theme throughout her writings, as is summed up in her view that 'the problem that confronts us today, and which the nearest future is to solve, is how to be one's self and yet in oneness with others, to feel deeply with all human beings and still retain one's own characteristic qualities' (Goldman 1969, 213). In her writings as well as in her own life Goldman strove to develop an anarchist vision aimed at resolving the conundrum of being 'one's self' and yet remaining 'in oneness with others'. This was a central feature of her view of human emancipation. It was no merely, *pace* Drinnon, one that 'constituted her nearest approach to an original contribution to anarchist theory' (Drinnon 1982, 107). It was clearly an original contribution to anarchist thought. Time and again she drew attention to and discussed in some depth the politics of personal relations, thus laying a basis for others subsequently to explore further the idea that personal was political. In this respect, she added a richer, more nuanced understanding of emancipation to the then prevailing anarchist views of emancipation and freedom. Goldman's conception of emancipation became central to her critique of patriarchy and indeed, developed in tandem with that critique.

IV

As has already been noted, Goldman's critique of patriarchy has been seen (at least by some scholars) as her original contribution to anarchist theory. She could not see the point of a movement to put an end to oppression and exploitation if one of the most ubiquitous forms of exploitation remained untouched by it. The various social institutions, such as marriage and sexuality, that regulated the relations between women and men and shaped their possibilities, were no less a problem than government.

In her critique of the institution of marriage Goldman reiterated the view put explicitly by Anna Wheeler and William Thompson (1825) – namely that marriage was a white slave trade, as was echoed in the title of one of her essays, *The Traffic in Women*. In that essay she articulated a view that even today finds strong resonances:

Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sex favours. Thus it is merely a question of degree whether she sells herself to one man, in or out of marriage, or to many men (Goldman 1969, 179).

Goldman was not claiming any originality here. But she was bringing into focus a view that her radical comrades, mainly the men radicals, had forgotten (or if we wish to be charitable, were not aware of). Men, not just anarchist men, needed to be reminded that it was men who actually benefited from the 'traffic in women' and that anarchists had to address this. Moreover, she also made explicit the point (also articulated by Thompson and Wheeler [1825]) that women were brought up to accept 'this modern prison with golden bars ... and to cling to her bondage' (Goldman 1969, 196), to 'kiss [...] the rod of domestic despotism, and [to] devot[e] themselves to its worship' as Thompson and Wheeler so sharply put it almost a century earlier (1825, 65-6).

Echoing the views of *The Traffic in Women*, she noted in her essay *Woman Suffrage* that

[t]he misfortune of woman is not that she is unable to do the work of a man, but that she is wasting her life-force to out-do him, ... [on the contrary] Her development, her freedom, her independence, must first come from and through herself. First by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right of anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, etc (Goldman 1969, 211).

Clearly, the issue of sexual and reproductive freedom was of key importance for Goldman. Also being challenged in this passage was the view (contrary to

Spender's misleading interpretation) that men's values should provide the yardstick against which women should be measured, or to which women should aspire. Just as importantly, she was also pointing out that women could rely neither on men's good intentions nor on men to free them. Women had to exert themselves, to lay claim to and seize the possibilities for their freedom. So long as women had to apply to men or men's institutions for their freedom, yet at the same time insisted on leaving men and their institutions unchanged, they (ie women) would never truly be free. Women would remain as if on parole because those who had the power to grant women freedom could also revoke it.

One of Goldman's constant themes was the need for women to have control over their sexuality and reproductive capacities. While wealthier women usually had access to contraceptive information and, most importantly, could usually afford the relevant medical technologies and treatments, working-class women were generally denied both the knowledge and the technology. Goldman was an active proponent of birth control and on at least one occasion she was jailed for distributing birth control literature. One of her biographers (Wexler 1984, 210) has suggested that for Goldman the cause of birth control was 'a somewhat abstract issue'. This diminishes Goldman's contribution. It is certainly true that Goldman moved on to other issues once she was released from jail, however the fact remains that she did not abandon her interest in or agitation about the issue. Her commitment to birth control was genuine and long-standing, and consistent with her political beliefs. She had trained as a midwife and had worked as one on various occasions for over ten years before her imprisonment (Goldman 1970a *passim*; 1970b ch. 44). Where the preferred champion (ie preferred by middle-class feminists of the day) of birth control, Margaret Sanger, actually went on to push a more eugenicist and increasingly conservative political line, Goldman's advocacy of birth control information was directed to empowering women so that they regained some measure of political control over their lives. In this sense she saw her work as a mid-wife as something of a revolutionary act, or at least an act that furthered the emancipatory dynamic of anarchism in enabling women to attempt to transform the actual conditions of their existence.

Given her emphasis on the need to empower women to have control over their lives, her hostility to the suffrage movement of her time warrants some comment. There are a number of reasons for her scepticism over the claim that the right to vote would lead to emancipation. In the first place, this was contrary to her anarchist critique of government and the state, namely that voting to sustain institutions of repression is self-defeating. In principle she believed there were no 'physical, psychological, [or] mental reasons why women should not have the equal right to vote' (Goldman 1969, 198 and 224).

However, she was adamant that women would not succeed in 'purifying something which is not susceptible of purification' (Goldman 1969, 198). The institutions of government would remain largely unaffected, in any emancipato-

ry sense, by women exercising their right to vote. Their class characteristics and biases would not be altered in any fundamental manner. This points to the second reason. Suffragists were basically middle-class in their origin, orientation and biases. Goldman pointed out that women had the vote in a number of countries, but this had not led to any marked improvement their material and economic conditions. In terms of many of the issues that Goldman held dear, women were no freer than before they got the vote. They were still commodities, still treated according to their sex rather than on the basis of their merits and talents. And perhaps just as important was the fact that the class divisions between women would not be overcome simply by gaining the vote (Goldman 1969, 202-6). The third reason for Goldman's hostility to the suffrage movements of her time came from her vision of emancipation. This vision has already been discussed above. Suffice it to say here that Goldman believed that 'true emancipation begins neither in the polls nor in the courts. It begins in women's soul' (Goldman 1969, 224). Until women recognised the need to transform the various power structures that defined and constrained them, then no amount of suffrage would emancipate them to the degree envisioned by Goldman.

On this third point some critics suggest that this is evidence of Goldman's voluntarism in the sense that she placed way too much emphasis (like many anarchists) on acts of the will to bring about social and political changes. There is some truth to this criticism. However, it also needs to be remembered that Goldman said that true emancipation *begins* in woman's soul. That is, a woman's soul was the starting point, not the end point. In effect, Goldman was suggesting that some level of consciousness-raising was a pre-requisite for even a reformist strategy of social change. It was certainly necessary for any revolutionary strategy. What was important for Goldman was the need for women to recognise that juridical freedoms within the existing political and social system were only a small dimension of a truly emancipated life. What was needed was a transformation of the existing system. Both the 'internal and the external tyrants' had to be overthrown or transformed. The bottom line for Goldman was that no human being, man or woman, could be free if that freedom was at the expense or servitude of any other human being. For Goldman only anarchism held the promise of truly human emancipation.

One further aspect of Goldman's critique of patriarchy that marks her originality was her emphasis on sexual freedom in general, not just in the area of reproduction. Like many anarchists of her day Goldman was an advocate of free love. But where her anarchist comrades usually meant sex without commitment or consequences (Trimberger 1983), for Goldman it meant relationships between women and men that were based on mutual reciprocity and not constrained by the state's stamp of approval. Commenting on an incident in a hotel room while on a lecture tour Goldman lamented the view that seemed to predominate amongst too many of her comrades and supporters that free love meant that women should make themselves sexually available whenever they

were propositioned (Goldman 1970a). She was well aware of the inherent gendered meanings attached to the phrase 'free love', both in theory and practice, as her writings on marriage clearly revealed (Goldman 1969, 177 ff).

In her essay, 'Marriage and Love', Goldman exclaimed: 'Free love? As if love is anything but free!' (Goldman 1969, 236). Providing love (and sex) was the price that women, but rarely men, paid for some degree of economic security. Moreover, she was well aware of the quite different ways in which women and men experienced love, especially those who were politically active. Where it was taken for granted by politically active men that they could pursue their causes with total commitment as well as expect unconditional love, politically committed women (indeed women engaged in public lives generally) were faced with the prospect of having to choose between one and the other. As Goldman brought out in her autobiography when discussing her relationship with fellow activist Ed Brady, her commitment was seen by him as 'vanity, nothing but your craving for applause and glory and the limelight', and consequently she was deemed by him to be 'incapable of deep feeling' (Goldman 1970a, 193).

Brady's view of Goldman's commitment was that it interfered with his need for her to love him unconditionally, and he presented her with the all too familiar ultimatum: 'you will have choose' (Goldman 1970a, 193). Granted, this was Goldman's version of events in her life but it resonates with considerable force with the choices with which women have been confronted when seeking to live the same freedoms and privileges accorded to men, and which men have been able to take for granted (Trimberger 1983; MacKinnon 1997). In a long letter published in 1923 in the *Yearbook for Sexual Intermediate Types* Goldman noted that '[m]odern woman is no longer satisfied to be the beloved of a man; she looks for understanding, comradeship; she wants to be treated as a human being and not simply as an object for sexual gratification' (Goldman 1923, 380); a view she had articulated throughout her writings (1970a; 1970b; 1969; 1979). Her voluminous correspondence published several decades after her death in 1940 reveals that the theme of love, its many gendered meanings and the social implications and consequences for women active in the public sphere, was something that Goldman returned to over and over again (Goldman 1983 and 1975 *passim*). And while she never found a satisfactory solution, either for herself or in theory, her attempts to grapple with this particularly vexed issue remain insightful for readers in the twenty-first century.

What is significant is that her writings and actions exposed and challenged the masculinist assumptions taken for granted by her contemporaries. This might seem an exaggerated claim given the various criticisms that Goldman's views often reflected the masculinist assumptions of other political thinkers, particularly where notions of 'womanhood', 'femininity' and 'sexuality' were concerned. Indeed, Spender explicitly dismissed Goldman's views as merely the products of malestream thought and claimed that

there is not much evidence to suggest that Goldman challenges the propositions that male experiences are the norm, that male problems the universal problems, and male solutions the total solutions. Nor was there any likelihood that these propositions would be challenged while she made no attempt to construct and understand women's reality or to assess the discrepancies between the way men perceived themselves and the way women perceived themselves. (Spender 1982, 366)

This is a harsh judgement and one not supported by Goldman's own writings. As has already been made clear above in the brief discussion of the issues of birth control and the tensions between love and freedom, Goldman was well aware of these discrepancies. More importantly, she did not take men's experiences as the norm and was well aware that many of these so-called norms were merely men's desires writ large. For example, in a letter to Alexander Berkman, she noted that she had 'yet to meet the woman who wants to have many children' and that while many women do indeed want children she was of the view that this desire 'has been exaggerated by the male'. Indeed, she chided Berkman that she had 'seen too many tragedies in the relations between the sexes; ... [and had] seen too many broken bodies and maimed spirits from the sex slavery of woman not to feel the matter deeply or to express my indignation against the attitude of most of you gentlemen' (Goldman 1975, 186). She explicitly challenged them and tried to shift anarchist thinking in more nuanced directions. It is certainly true that on numerous occasions Goldman's thinking exhibited contradictory tensions, or more accurately different pieces of writing exhibited emphases that were not always consistent with each other. And it is certainly true that her language remained masculinist insofar as it used the so-called generic 'man' and masculine pronouns without any apparent recognition of their gendered ontological commitments. But the fact remains that for Goldman women's lives and experiences had to be part of the larger anarchist worldview. Goldman did not treat men's experiences and problems as universal problems in the sense claimed by Spender. To the extent that women and men shared common problems, Goldman often drew no distinction. But in areas where there were clear differences (and occasionally some not-so-clear differences) Goldman explored the politics of these issues.

In the area of sexuality for example, where time and time again Goldman wrestled with numerous conflicting issues, her insights were certainly not constrained by malestream assumptions. Not only did she consistently defend the right to free love and sexual expression, she was possibly the first anarchist to defend publicly the rights of people to form and enjoy same-sex relationships (Goldman 1970a 269; 1970b; 1923). In the letter to Dr Hirschfeld cited above (Goldman 1923), Goldman noted her public statements in America in defence of Oscar Wilde, and reiterated her view that his 'persecution and sentencing' was '*an act of cruel injustice and repulsive hypocrisy*' (Goldman

1923, 379, emphasis in original). Her stand, she noted, was motivated by her anarchist principles. But, *pace* Shulman, these were not the anarchist principles that she found ready-made in her youth. Goldman's anarchist principles were her own, shaped by a view of emancipation that was a significant improvement on that articulated by many of her predecessors and or contemporaries. Goldman's anarchist principles were also informed by her criticism of the prevailing attitudes of her time; she noted that '[i]t is a tragedy ... that people of a different sexual type are caught in a world which shows so little understanding for homosexuals, is so crassly indifferent to the various gradations and variations of gender and their great significance in life' (Goldman 1923, 378-9). Goldman was clearly not merely reproducing prevailing malestream views on sexuality. And even though there might be some degree of heteronormative biases influencing her understanding of human sexuality, given her own preference for men as her lovers, it remains the case that her views on love, sexuality and the relations between men and women were a central part of her critique of patriarchy. Thus she made a significant contribution to anarchist theory, far beyond the boundaries of what many of her anarchist comrades thought safe or acceptable.

V

Turning to Goldman's analysis of political violence it is also clear that many of her radical comrades, both with and beyond anarchist circles, found her views disconcerting. In part this was as much due to the timing of Goldman's public statements as to their content. The two fundamental manifestations of political violence that concerned Goldman were, firstly, the individual acts of violence perpetrated against some public figure thought to personify oppressive or tyrannical rule, and secondly, the violence accompanying the revolutionary overthrow of an existing system of government (and the aftermath of revolutionary reconstruction). In some respects, the specific colourings of these two forms of political violence may well shade into each other. Individual acts of violence directed against public figures were seen by a number of influential nineteenth-century anarchists as a form of propaganda by deed, '*propagande par le fait*' as Joll (1969, 95) described it. In Joll's view, one could date 'the passionate praise of terror, in which violence is almost accepted as an end for its own sake' from Bakunin's association with Sergei Nechaev in the early 1870s (Joll 1969, 95). Despite Bakunin's eventual realisation that Nechaev and his ideas were of doubtful value to the anarchist cause, the idea of 'propaganda by deed' remained attractive to many anarchists and it exercised considerable influence over anarchist thought for at least a further thirty years (Joll 1969, 95-6). And even though anarchists gradually distanced themselves from the use and advocacy of propaganda by deed in the sense of acts of violence, it became entrenched within the popular imag-

ination (with considerable assistance from the sensationalist representations of anarchism in the popular press) as the definitive anarchist archetype. As Redding (1995, 8) has suggested, 'the doctrine of "propaganda by deed" was poor public relations'.

Public relations, however, was not the driving factor in Goldman's early years as an anarchist. In those years there is no doubt that she was a fervent advocate of the idea of 'propaganda by deed', or '*attentat*' as she termed it (Goldman 1970a, 87), but it is doubtful that it 'was central to her *weltanschauung*', as Hawkins (1999, 3) has argued. For Goldman, individual acts of violence, at least in part, were to do more than simply strike terror into the heart of the bourgeoisie. An *attentat* would bring the plight of the oppressed, on whose behalf such acts were carried out, to public consciousness. At the same time an *attentat* would serve as a signal, a clarion call, to the oppressed group to rise up against their oppressors. Underlying this reasoning was the idea that eliminating a perpetrator or symbol of oppression was justified by the injustices for which they were to be held responsible. In short the ends justified the means. This was certainly a view that informed the young Goldman's developing anarchism in the late 1880s and early 1890s. When Alexander Berkman confided to her, not long after they first met in 1890, that one day he would avenge those comrades and relatives who had been victimised by the state for their beliefs, Goldman expressed complete agreement, exclaiming that 'their death[s] gave me life' (Goldman 1970a, 31). Neither doubted that state violence was the greater evil. Both agreed with the view expressed by one of the Haymarket anarchists, Louis Lingg, that '[I]f you [ie the state] attack us with cannon, we will reply with dynamite' (Goldman 1970a, 31). In their view, state violence or violence perpetrated by private organisations sanctioned by the state provided them with a moral justification for responding in kind, the end justified the means and in Berkman's view 'all means are justifiable; nay advisable, even to the point of taking a life ... [for]... the removal of a tyrant ... is the highest duty of every true revolutionist' (Berkman 1970, 7).

This reasoning underpinned their decision to avenge the steel workers at the Homestead steelworks of the Carnegie Steel Company near Pittsburgh. In 1892 a bitter dispute had emerged that resulted in workers being locked out of their employment. Since most of the workers and their families lived in company-supplied housing, the company had considerable leverage; not surprisingly, the struggle turned violent as the workers resisted evictions and other tactics employed by the company. One of these tactics included bringing in strike-breakers such as Pinkerton detectives (or men hired by the Pinkerton Detective Agency). One night a strike-breakers' armed attack on the steelworkers' camp left several of the workers dead, 'among them a little boy' (Goldman 1970a, 86-7). This was the catalyst that pushed Goldman and Berkman into planning their own *attentat*. They decided to assassinate the

manager of the Homestead plant, Henry Clay Frick. Since the killings were widely condemned, even within the mainstream press of the time, Goldman and Berkman thought that the time was ripe for an *attentat*. The workers would be avenged. But more importantly they would be inspired to rise up and seize the moment. For various reasons Goldman and Berkman decided that Berkman alone would carry out the actual killing, though Goldman was not happy about that decision and on numerous occasions expressed regret that she was not actually a part of the action (Goldman 1970a, *passim*). In the event, Berkman failed to kill Frick, succeeding only in wounding him. Berkman was quickly arrested, tried and sentenced to imprisonment for twenty-two years (of which he actually served thirteen). But perhaps more humiliating for both of them was the fact that the steel-workers did not rise up, nor did they appreciate (or support) the attempt to kill Frick. In this respect, ‘Berkman’s act was a crushing failure for Berkman, his friends, and the anarchists’ (Hawkins 1999, 5).

However, this apparent failure did not deter Goldman’s basic approach. While she never repudiated political violence as such, she did abandon the idea of *attentat* as an acceptable means of furthering the anarchist cause. Over time she developed a view that individual acts of terror were not an appropriate means to bring about changes to the social structures, no matter how oppressive such social conditions might be. Rather she developed the view that if the aim was to bring into being a free, just and non-exploitative society then the methods being used had to be consistent with this aim. For Goldman, anarchism was also theory put into practice, and this meant that one had to live one’s ideals rather than simply espouse them. This was a far more profound version of the idea of propaganda by deed than the limiting, and perhaps self-defeating, idea of an *attentat*. In this specific respect, propaganda by deed was certainly central to her *weltanschauung*, as Hawkins suggested. But contrary to his interpretation of her view of political violence, it was not cut from the same philosophical cloth as an *attentat*.

It must be acknowledged, however, that her views did not change overnight. At different times she made written and spoken comments that could be interpreted as defending the *attentat*. Such might be the case of a letter to the journal *Free Society* in 1901 to protest the way in which she was quoted (in a newspaper, the *New York Sun*) as never having advocated violence. It is cited by Rosenberg (2003) as evidence of ‘uncomfortable aspects of her biography’: Goldman’s darker side. In the passage cited by Rosenberg (2003), Goldman wrote:

I have never opposed force or propaganda by deed, either publicly or privately. I demand and acknowledge the right of an individual, or a number of individuals, to strike back at organised power, and to defend themselves against invasion; and I have and always will stand on the side

of the one who has been courageous enough to give his own life in taking or attempting to take the life of a tyrant, whether industrial or political.

On Rosenberg’s interpretation the issue boils down to Goldman’s acceptance of the right for anybody to decide that ‘someone is so terrible as to deserve death’, and hence has the right to take on the role as ‘self-appointed judge, jury and executioner’. Certainly after her experience of the Frick affair Goldman never again saw herself in that light. To the contrary she expressed the view, much later in her life, in a context where political violence was very much a concern, that ‘[i]f ever I believed in taking a human life, no matter how dangerous that life and how evil, I was entirely cured from it after Sasha’s act’ (Goldman 1983, 227-8). While Rosenberg was correct to point to the fact that Goldman was clearly defending the right of an individual to resort to violent means to defend their rights, she glossed over what was central for Goldman, namely the emphasis on context and motive. Political violence could not be dismissed simply as the act of bloodlust perpetrated by some (possibly deranged) individual, but rather it was an act generated within particular concrete social relationships. On its own, however, individual acts of political violence would never change prevailing social relationships. Goldman was well aware, from her own experience, that the opposite was more likely to be true, namely that the prevailing social relationships were likely to be strengthened in even more repressive directions. This was why she placed so much emphasis on the demonstration effect of living one’s ideals.

In declaring publicly her solidarity with those who perpetrated acts of political violence she was not thereby saying that what they did was right (as she was wont to do in the early 1890s) in any absolute sense, but that their acts were intelligible, that they had a social causation that could be, and needed to be, understood. In several of her discussions of political violence (eg 1969, 79-126; 1979, 301-27) she drew attention to the various ways in which prevailing repressive social relations generated or caused violent responses. Thus in defending herself in her final address to the jury during her trial in 1917, she reiterated her views published in her essay on the psychology of political violence and summarised what she regarded as the key issues.

To simply condemn the man who has committed an act of political violence, in order to save my skin, would be as unpardonable as it would be on the part of the physician, who is called to diagnose a case, to condemn the patient because the patient has tuberculosis, cancer, or some other disease. ... [The physician] will not merely give him medicine. He will tell him the cause of his disease. And that is precisely my position in regard to acts of political violence. And that is what I have said on every platform. I have attempted to explain the cause and the reason for acts of political violence ... It is organised violence on top which creates individ-

ual violence at the bottom. It is the accumulated indignation against organised wrong, organised crime, organised injustice which drives the political offender to his act. To condemn him means to be blind to the causes which make him. I can no more do it, nor have I the right to, than the physician who were to condemn the patient for his disease. You and I and all of us who remain indifferent to the crimes of poverty, of war, of human degradation, are equally responsible for the act committed by the political offender (Goldman 1979, 317-8).

Suggesting that members of the jury no less than the defendants were also complicit in acts of political violence, if only by their silence or acquiescence, could be considered either brave or foolhardy. But it was consistent with her understanding of American political processes; she would be found guilty hence it was imperative that she at least should take the opportunity to have her views lodged in the public record, where the sting in the tail could be used to best effect. What is evident from her comments is that it was not merely the psychological motivation of the perpetrator that concerned her. It was also the prevailing social relationships that had a large hand in producing the psychology of those who ended up taking matters into their own hands to seek some sort of justice, not just for themselves, but for others similarly situated. This view was consistent with her views on human emancipation and her passionate commitment to working towards creating the conditions that would be able to provide genuine human freedom and social justice. This was why her understanding of propaganda by deed moved beyond that of the *attentat*.

For Goldman the relationship between aims and means had to be such that the latter was as consistent as possible with the former; aims and means had to be in tune with each other. These considerations were clearly articulated in her analysis of the Bolshevik revolution. Far from building the conditions for human emancipation as Goldman understood it, the Bolsheviks were, in her observation, strangling the revolution by eliminating all who did not share the official line. For Goldman a revolution was ‘a *fundamental transvaluation of all values* ... not only of social, but also of human values’ (Goldman 1979, 354: her emphasis), a process that could not proceed with any success unless human emancipation remained its centre of gravity. And by this Goldman meant that the revolution had to have at its heart such ethical values as ‘the sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to liberty and well-being’ (Goldman 1979, 356). Goldman had no illusions that a revolution was a violent process. She was not critical of the Bolshevik revolution because Lenin and his fellow revolutionaries had to break a few eggs to make their socialist omelette. Her letters reflecting on the violence attending the anarchist revolution in Spain nineteen years later attest to her awareness of the realities faced by those attempting to defend their gains (Goldman 1983, 216-41). Rather the Bolshevik omelette was lacking in nutritional value, if not

inedible, because it was grounded in repression, in disempowering those who were waging the revolution (Goldman 1979, 342-3). Centralising power in the hands of a new dictatorial elite was, in effect, merely ‘a shifting of names and political personalities’ (Goldman 1979, 353).

At issue for Goldman was a conflict between two diametrically opposed trajectories: on the one hand was the spirit of a revolution imbued with libertarian principles aiming at full human emancipation and, on the other, the coercive methods of the Bolsheviks that ‘necessarily developed into systematic violence, oppression and terrorism’ (Goldman 1979, 345, 352-3). It was not just that the means were incompatible with the aims, but that the steps taken by the Bolshevik government to secure the revolution, ostensibly to save it from collapsing, diminished and eventually excluded the very aims that set the revolution in motion in the first place. For her the ends could not and should not justify the means. On her analysis,

methods and means cannot be separated from the ultimate aim. The means employed become, through individual habit and social practice, part and parcel of the final purpose; they influence it, modify it, and presently the aims and means become identical. ... Psychologically and socially the means necessarily influence and alter the aims. (Goldman 1979, 355-6).

No amount of appeals to ‘expediency’ or ‘transitional period’ could justify re-inventing centralised oppression in the name of the revolution. For Goldman, ‘the ethical values which the revolution is to establish in the new society must be *initiated* with the revolutionary activities of the so-called transitional period’ (Goldman 1979, 358).

Goldman’s emphasis on the necessity to harmonise aims and means as discussed above was a fundamental rethinking of her understanding of political violence. It was a conception of propaganda by deed that was light years away from the narrow version framed within the nineteenth-century confines of the *attentat*. She did not eschew political violence as such, nor did she harbour any illusions that revolutions would be anything but violent and bloody. It was a theme that she repeated in many of her letters, especially those written during her visits to Spain to report on the anarchists’ attempts to secure their revolution (Goldman 1983). Indeed, that struggle caused her to rethink yet again the problems that anarchists faced in waging a war to achieve their goals. And while she publicly defended the Spanish anarchists and their cause, she also wrestled with the problems of reconciling anarchist aims with such methods. But what separated the Spanish anarchists from the Russian Bolsheviks was that the former did not resort to ‘organised dictatorship and organised terror’ to realise their political goals, and for that, suggested Goldman, ‘they deserve the highest credit’ (Goldman 1983, 227).

VI

This paper began by invoking Adorno's reflections on the plight of the exiled writer – that even their writing ultimately fails to provide them with a home worthy of the name. As a writer living in exile Goldman too was literally 'nowhere at home'. She also struggled to find comfort, in Adorno's sense, in her writing. But more importantly, her writings themselves have been homeless in the sense that they have not been considered worthy of inclusion within the terrain of political theorists. The central argument of this paper has been to make the case for Goldman to be taken seriously as a political theorist. To substantiate that argument, three particular aspects of her contribution were examined: her view of emancipation, her critique of patriarchy, and her emphasis on the relationship between aims and means in her discussions of aspects of political violence. Within her various writings, these three aspects are inter-related in that, in varying degrees, they presuppose and inform each other. Nevertheless, in respect of each of these areas, Goldman developed anarchist theory in significantly original ways. As was noted at the beginning of the paper, Goldman's critique of patriarchy has been seen by some scholars as her distinct contribution to anarchist theory. Yet even that significant contribution has not led to any serious re-evaluation of her status as a political theorist. It is clearly demonstrable that prior to Goldman's writings, and indeed for some decades afterwards, anarchist thought and ideals were predominantly as men anarchists had defined them. But as the above argument has demonstrated, Goldman's contributions went beyond challenging and reworking the masculinism of her contemporaries.

On this basis it would seem that Goldman's status and legacy should be reassessed so that she is accorded a home within political theory. Explaining why she has been excluded has not been the purpose of this paper. However, if an explanation was to be pursued it would first of all have to begin from a consideration of how we might define 'political theory' and hence who and what might get included within that rubric. This is a distinctly different set of questions from those that might arise over the idea of a canon of political theory (cf Dunn 1996, Ch.2). Then secondly, we would have to accept that Goldman does not fit neatly into any given category or strand of political theory. She was too anarchist for feminists (both in her own time and subsequently), too feminist (or at least too concerned with women's issues) for her fellow-anarchists, and for far too many historians of political theory she was too politically engaged in a very public sense in a branch of political thought that has always struggled to be considered either relevant or legitimate. The periodic resurgence of interest in anarchist ideas over the past fifty years has seen some tempering of this disdain towards anarchism, with scholars paying much more attention and respect to its development and theoretical claims (eg Crowder 1991). Yet

even within this context of renewed interest Goldman and her ideas struggle for adequate recognition, even though for other anarchist writers (eg Errico Malatesta, Alexander Berkman), whose contribution to anarchist theory arguably has been far less original than Goldman's, the label 'theorist' is seen as neither controversial nor inappropriate.

Space precludes pursuing these questions beyond the following remarks. On the question of what should count as political theory or who should count as engaging in political theorising, the views (though deriving from differing starting points) of Stokes (1990) and Cook (1991) are instructive. As Cook (1991, 514) succinctly put it, 'political theorising is an activity of historically located individuals who are responding to issues that arise in their immediate social environment'. On this basis Goldman clearly engaged in political theorising, and warrants being accorded the status of political theorist. The second set of issues concerning the lack of a neat fit within the categories of political theory does not bear so much on the question of her status as a political theorist as it does on the question of why scholars have found it difficult to take Goldman seriously as a theorist.

The brief answer to this question is her direct challenge to the masculinist biases within anarchism; biases that are not confined to anarchism but which also permeate political theory in general. As has been demonstrated above, her challenges to these biases emerged explicitly in her discussions of the various issues concerning the relations between men and women. These were concerns that many of her contemporaries (anarchist and non-anarchist alike) regarded as of secondary or marginal importance. Indeed as numerous feminist scholars engaged in rethinking the masculinist presuppositions of political theory over the past forty years have argued, women's issues have often been seen or interpreted as something other than proper objects of theory, political or otherwise. Goldman's contribution was to place these issues at the centre of her conception of anarchism. For Goldman, anarchism aimed at human emancipation and this meant that it had to be inclusive of men and women. That Goldman may have failed on occasion to live up to her own ideals or that her writings betray contradictory, and at times even a masculinist cast, does not detract from the fact that she took these problems seriously. But more importantly, however, is that in pursuing those aims she engaged in political theorising.

Hence the argument presented in this article has been to demonstrate why her contribution to anarchist theory, and by extension political theory, should be considered as original and pivotal. The burden of the argument has been to demonstrate that she did not merely reproduce and perpetuate the anarchist theory to which she had been introduced in the late 1880s. Contrary to Shulman's judgement (1979, 21), Goldman took the core aspects of late nineteenth-century anarchist theory and reworked them, adding dimensions that by any measure mark her originality. Many of the ideas she put forward nearly a

century ago remain at the centre of political debates today – a judgement that is not as easy to make for some of her comrades and predecessors.

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Proudhon, from aesthetics to politics

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ABSTRACT

Recent debates on anarchist aesthetics have focused on the historical relations between anarchism and modernism, in particular during the birth of modern literature and art in the early 1890s in France. The nature of this relation, however, is the subject of much disagreement. A careful study of the aesthetic theories of Proudhon in their historical and literary contexts contributes to a better understanding of the contradictions that have plagued a coherent anarchist theory of art and literature. Proudhon's writings on aesthetics can be situated at the intersection of several aspects of his thought, as well as mutations in the field of literature during the Second Empire that shifted the role of the writer and his place in society, and transformed the nature of writing and language. Though not directly engaged with these problems, Proudhon's final book on Courbet forced him to think them through and partly overcome the influences that his childhood readings of conservative and Catholic writers had left on him. Furthermore, his implicit recognition of the historical mutation of language and writing, as well as the shift in the idea of *le peuple*, introduce a new framework for his thought on the historical role of the working class, that can be found in his last work *De la capacité politique de la classe ouvrière*.

Given the crucial role that anarchist aesthetics played in the development of modern literature and painting, it is curious that critics and historians overlooked it for so long. The Symbolist generation in France was almost entirely captivated by the anarchist wave that overtook Paris in the early 1890s. According to his disciple Camille Mauclair, even the gentle Mallarmé was no exception to the anarchist fever.¹ Among the Post-Impressionists, a number of painters and critics were converted to anarchism, such as the Pissaros (father and son) and the critic Félix Fénéon, to mention only two names among so many.² Was the conversion to anarchism of so many writers and artists at the moment of the birth of modern or *modernist* literature and art a mere accident, or does it reveal a deeper correlation? The dominance of the conservative and ahistorical school of New Criticism in Anglo-American universities and Marxism on the Continent accounts for the lack of any serious investigations into the role played by anarchism, a lapse that lasted until the last quarter of the twentieth century. It was not until the aftermath of 1968 that historians and theorists began to look for alternative versions of the history of modernism, and to attempt to wrest it from

Marxist interpretations. The first rigorous work came from André Reszler in 1973.³ He placed anarchist aesthetics at the origin of the avant-garde, and opposed it to the Marxist currents in art and literature: anarchism synthesises the arts ‘in order to give them a political, social *as well as* an aesthetic dimension’.⁴ While Marxism seeks to politicise art, Reszler claimed, anarchism by contrast succeeds in overcoming the dichotomy of aesthetics and politics by affirming the artwork of the unique individual. It underlines revolt, rupture and singularity rather than the political commitment of the writer or his work. While Marxism, according to Reszler, came to uphold the Realist tradition and the mimetic principle in art and literature, anarchism embraced the ‘spirit of rupture’, the impossible logic and revolutionary force of the unique artwork in an alienated world. Reszler traced a number of avant-garde practices – from the works of the Symbolist writers to the ‘happenings’ of the 1960s – to the theories of anarchist thinkers. Since then, his forceful interpretation has been echoed by many historians and literary critics who have thus come to see anarchist aesthetics at the origin of modernism.⁵ Reszler’s remarkable reading of modernism circumvents the problematics of Marxist criticism, forever divided between art for art’s sake versus political or committed art.⁶ Anarchist aesthetics shift the debate to the explosive and disruptive nature of art and literature rather than the question of the representation of social reality.

More recently, however, Reszler’s theory has increasingly come under scrutiny. Among others, the German critic Wolfgang Asholt has challenged Reszler, charging that he neglected major aspects of anarchist aesthetics that did not fit his narrative about the kinship of anarchism and the avant-garde.⁷ ‘It is important’, he has claimed, ‘to underline the fact that there is no identity or homology between the anarchist social movement and aesthetic modernity’. Asholt does admit that there was a convergence of anarchism and the avant-garde for a brief moment. Accordingly, the short-lived anarchist episode of the Symbolist writers and Post-Impressionist painters between 1889 and 1892 came to a halt and the avant-garde rapidly veered towards formalism, thus abandoning the attempt to unify its socio-political and aesthetic programs. Certain historians and critics have claimed that even this brief period of coincidence was based on a misunderstanding. Artists did not have the philosophical and political formation to fully grasp the theories of anarchism and haphazardly took whatever elements were suitable to their aesthetic practice; and for the anarchist movement, this period was a momentary lapse, a misguided digression that, according to Daniel Guérin ‘appears today like an episodic and sterilising deviation of anarchism. It is all but obsolete’.⁸

To sort out this confusion, it is helpful to return to the theories of the ‘father’ of anarchism, as Kropotkin called Proudhon, since as we shall see, much of the ambiguities that have engendered the disagreements have their source in his work, since different aspects of his thought have been taken up here and there and elaborated at the expense of others. This essay is not an attempt to explore

the relations between anarchism and modernism, but a study of the development of Proudhon’s ideas on aesthetics in their historical context, in order to show the paradoxes and ambiguities that subsequently characterised anarchist theories on art and literature. Furthermore, I will try to show how the conclusions reached in his last work on art, *Du Principe de l’art et de sa destination sociale*, in turn modified Proudhon’s thinking about politics and the political capacity of the working class. Perhaps more than any of the other anarchist writers, Proudhon’s thought was exceptionally contradictory and the course of his arguments often unpredictable, matters that were by no means assuaged by the sheer scale and prolixity of his prose. Proudhon’s anarchism, as it has often been remarked, was at once divided between the dream of traditional families collected in clusters of autonomous, federated communities and the unknown shape of the world of the anarchist utopia.⁹ More often than not, his ideas inclined towards the former; an inconsistency that parallels, as we will see, his ideas on aesthetics as well. But this paradox has its roots in the objective historical conditions of the Second Empire in France, as I will try to show, and in the particular transformations that literature underwent during these years. The failure of the 1848 revolution and the discovery of cheaper forms of paper leading to the democratisation of the book and the accompanying transformation of the reading public – apparently unrelated phenomena – had unprecedented consequences on writing and literature that have until now been only partly understood. Occurring more or less simultaneously and working in different ways, these events forever altered the position of the writer in society as well as the nature of writing, driving the writer towards formal questions and textual problems, thereby ushering in modernism. Though violently opposed to these developments, Proudhon was deeply conscious of them, and as I will show below, their traces are not only to be found in his writings on aesthetics, but also on his last significant political work, *De la Capacité politique de la classe ouvrière*. In this sense, the paradoxes in his aesthetic theories are not the consequences of confusion but of a deep grasp of the historical reality of his time.

Over the years, the question of art and literature and their place in present and future societies assumed an increasing importance in Proudhon’s work. His major work on art, *Du Principe de l’art et de sa destination sociale* (1865), was his last work, and he did not live to finish it. It began as an essay on Courbet, a close friend of Proudhon since 1848, who had asked him to write a four-page essay as an introduction to his painting *Return from the Conference*, which had been refused by the Salon and was instead going to be exhibited in England. As was usual with Proudhon, the essay quickly grew into a 400-page book, dealing with the history of art from the Egyptian period to the nineteenth century. From the beginning of the book, Proudhon affirms periods in history where art was popular, rooted in the life of the people – their joys and sufferings, their daily struggles, their aspirations and ideals. He returns to the origins of civilisation, to Ancient Egypt, in order to demonstrate his theory. Ancient Egypt was a culture

that could barely distinguish itself from nature. The limited forms of its art were not due to the incapacity of mastering form, but to a voluntary immobilism. Its mission was religious and social. But being rooted in communal life, Egyptian art transcended its own limitations. It was in Greece, particularly after Alexander, that art began to gradually split apart from life. The sensuality of forms became something in itself, for itself. Until Alexander, Greek art remained rooted in the life-world of the Greeks, reflecting their aspirations and manifesting their dreams of beauty. With the arrival of the philosophers and the skeptics, the unified life-world of the Greeks splintered, and so did their art. In its early phase, Greek art had represented the ideals of the community; with the disappearance of the cohesiveness of the communal world, the beauty of forms gave way to idolatry: beauty came to be appreciated for its own sake. Dialectically acting upon the life-world, the same art now became the agent of the further dissolution of society. Once an expression of liberty, art now became an agent of tyranny.

The idolatry and sensuality of Greek art gave way to the reaction of Christianity and its highest artistic achievement in the Middle Ages. Like early Greek art, medieval art was rooted in the social needs of the collectivity. In the Middle Ages, genius was not an isolated phenomenon. It was embodied in the entire community. It did not reside in the solitary egoism of an isolated individual. It was collective, anonymous. Once again, art was the authentic expression of the people. The entire community participated in the building of the Gothic cathedrals, monuments that Proudhon compares to great poems. The public was not a passive recipient of art but an active agent that participated in its construction. The cathedral was the embodiment of a collective aesthetic activity that benefited the entire community and not only the elite. Is this collective art superior to the work of one genius? Proudhon has to constantly grapple with this question. 'For me, I admit ... I find as much art in the *Dies irae*, the *Lauda sion*, than in the most beautiful odes of Horace'.¹⁰

The Renaissance restored once again the sensuality of forms. The saints and angels of Renaissance art are otherworldly; they have lost the concreteness of their predecessors in the Middle Ages. The Renaissance may have produced many men of genius according to Proudhon, but its art was decidedly inferior to that of the medieval era. Proudhon generally values the popular over the singular, the creativity of the multitudes over the genius of the individual, though, at times, he wavers in this conviction and affirms instead the singular and the unknown. In his analysis of the Renaissance, he stresses rather the primacy of the community over the individual. Renaissance art is not rooted in the collectivity, and is therefore inferior to the works produced in the Middle Ages. Worse yet, the Renaissance renewed the Greek cult of beauty for its own sake. It could not end in a cult of idolatry. Proudhon reserves some of his harshest evaluations for the Renaissance: 'a vampire-art fallen on Europe at the same time as syphilis, and which will disappear only with it' (Proudhon 1865: 79).

For Proudhon, the Renaissance is not merely a regression from the Middle

Ages, but a permanent tendency in art (already manifest in Greece, though kept in check by the relatively circumscribed world of antiquity), emerging at moments of social disintegration in history. It is *decadent*. It turns its back on reality and everyday life. It idolises form and sensuality. And it is the precursor of art for art's sake in the nineteenth century.

But all is not lost. For there is another principle, another tendency that counters the decadence of Renaissance art and can redirect art to its proper course. It is the Reformation, where art was rehumanised once again. With Shakespeare, literature became once again popular, dealing with the life of the lower classes. Rembrandt likewise found his inspiration in the everyday world of the people around him. 'An art that finds an aesthetic value in a grave-digger and a rag-picker and brings the ideal therein to the surface, is ten times more powerful than the one that is in need of Olympian figures' (Proudhon 1865: 90). Rembrandt's work is part of the same thread that leads to the work of Courbet, who rejected the fantasies of the Romantic school in favour of the concrete life of his time. According to Proudhon, art must live and breathe in reality. But both the dominant schools of the first half of the nineteenth century – Classicism and Romanticism – have turned their back on the reality of their time, looking instead to the past as their source of inspiration. Divorced from life, 'a new decadence has begun' (Proudhon 1865: 104). Proudhon does not distinguish between these two hostile camps and sees the battle between them as mere opportunism, a rivalry for seats in the *Académie*. The schools of Ingres, Vernet, David and Delacroix, he complains, mindlessly copy a past which has no particular relevance for the present. Art must always be based on the life of the people, a prescription that tends to become dogmatic, so literal that it traps art in the limited sphere of the artist's personal experience (a point he had in common with Chamfleury and Duranty, the proponents of Realism in literature in the 1850s). He cannot see the significance, for instance, of a historical art. He comes to the conclusion that 'every historical painting, representing an event that the artist himself has not witnessed and is not of his time, that the bulk of the public ignores, is a phantasmagoria, and from the point of view of the high mission of art, a non-sense' (Proudhon 1865: 112-3).

But for Proudhon the separation of art from life in the nineteenth century has more alarming consequences. Not only is the artist cut off from the people, he systematically cultivates his detachment and autonomy. The isolation of the artist, his solitude and his lack of principles have in turn generated an art that is merely made for its own sake, the school of 'art for art's sake'. Art must live in reality; the artist must be in tune with his public. 'What makes the miracles of art and poetry is the idealist faculty, not of the individual, but of the collectivity' (Proudhon 1865: 123). With the detachment of the artist from his public comes his specialisation, another cause of the impoverishment of art. For, 'since art has become a profession, a kind of industry, a specialisation in society ... it has constantly turned its back on its own tradition' (Proudhon 1865: 9). In *Les*

Majorats littéraires, Proudhon examines the consequences of the artist as mercenary, a professional who must fend for himself in the marketplace.¹¹

As early as 1847, a group of economists and writers had been formed in Paris who demanded that writers and poets have the rights of ownership over the products of their own work.¹² Their organ, *Le Travail intellectuel*, was distributed in large numbers among politicians and members of the State Council and wielded a great deal of influence. The rise of the serial novel during the July Monarchy had made immense fortunes for the writers who were in demand (such as Dumas and Sue), sweeping them into the world of the market. Already in the 1840s, some thinkers had noticed that with the increasing commercialisation of the novel, writing had become a profession like any other, where the poet, like the bourgeois, seeks to enrich himself with the product of his work.¹³ Far from protesting against this commercialisation, a number of writers demanded their share of the wealth produced by their work. In his book on Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin writes: 'It has been calculated that the royalties of Lamartine, between 1838 and 1851, amounted to 5 million francs'.¹⁴ For *L'Histoire des Girondins* alone he received 600,000 francs. His interest in the matter is thus perfectly understandable. It is in response to Lamartine's proposal in the writer's Congress of 1858 that Proudhon wrote *Les Majorats littéraires*. Lamartine advocated perpetual returns on books; that is, royalties for the writer on the occasion of every reprint. It is essentially the modern law of copyrights, which did not yet exist. As a result of the influence of the journal *Le Travail intellectuel*, as well as the pressure exerted by writers themselves, the decree of 28-30 March 1852 in France had declared illegal the reproduction of texts without the authorisation of the author, but the author's rights were still limited and in particular, he had no right to income from secondary editions. Proudhon, for his part, violently denounced the influence of what he called 'mercenarisme' on the literature of his time. He saw that such a law would lead to the creation of an aristocracy of writers and men of letters, distancing them even more from the people. For the men of letters he reserved particular contempt, calling them 'mercenary-artists'. 'Of what utility to society', he wrote in his newspaper *La Voix du Peuple* during the 1848 revolution, 'is this specie of parasite that is commonly called *men of letters*?'¹⁵ He invited them to join the crowd and to express its aspirations, its dreams of beauty; otherwise, 'Step back! We do not need you!' (Proudhon 1865: 373).

For Proudhon, the decadence of art and literature in the nineteenth century is the symptom of a more fundamental and disconcerting historical development: the disintegration of society in post-revolutionary France. Proudhon seems to have borrowed his concepts of progress and decadence from the Saint-Simonians. According to Saint-Simon, history is divided into 'organic' and 'critical' periods: the first consists of intervals of order and stability, while during the second the old order is contested and attacked and a new world is born. Saint-Simon divides the history of art into similar categories, periods during which the aesthetic faculties are sustained and nourished by a healthy and vigorous collective spirit, and

periods when they are abandoned and fall into hopelessness and despair, the artist himself isolated from the people and forced to take refuge in rêverie and dream. Saint-Simon considered the art of Ancient Greece and the Middle Ages as that of organic periods, whereas he placed romanticism in the 'critical' period of the history of art.¹⁶ In the voluminous *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église*, Proudhon develops a similar thesis according to which history is divided into periods of progress and decadence. Since the revolution, progressive forces have been in decline, and the near future does not offer any hopeful signs of recovery. Since art is the expression of society, under such circumstances it can only and hopelessly be in the process of *decay*.

Can art and literature reverse their decline? Can they overcome the material limits imposed on them by history? On the whole, Proudhon believes that only the onset of the revolution can revive art and literature. What is to be done in the meanwhile? Proudhon generally considers the art and literature of the nineteenth century hopelessly derailed. When he tries to formulate a positive notion of art, he resorts to dreaming of an unknown artwork to come. But by 1865, he sees in Courbet a new tendency that can point a way out of the dilemma. This solution seems, like so much else in Proudhon's work, contradictory. For if art is subordinate to historical forces, how can it break out of their dominion? Does Courbet's school have an equivalent in literature and music? Is it a general historical tendency? Proudhon was an avid reader of literature, but admitted on several occasions to not knowing very much about music and having only had a rudimentary knowledge of art before Courbet asked him to write about his work.¹⁷ While writing *Du Principe de l'art*, he complains in a letter of the difficulty of coherently integrating the theory of art into his system: 'It's beyond my powers, but the project is launched, I cannot back down any longer'.¹⁸ Was his limited knowledge of art history or his friendship with Courbet at the origin of this optimistic evaluation? Philippe Régnier has suggested that Proudhon often turned his personal opinions and literary preferences into a theoretical system. Much of his tastes were in fact shaped by his conservative and Catholic upbringing, and by his early readings of the conservative writers De Bonald, de Maistre, Bossuet and Fénelon, whom he continued to revere throughout his life.¹⁹

Régnier goes further, and places Proudhon in the tradition of 'pessimist' writers in history who viewed with much consternation the corrupting role of art in life: Tacitus, Juvenal, and even Plato. Proudhon remained intransigent about the literature of the nineteenth century. There is no indication in any of his writings that he would have seen a corollary between any of the literary tendencies of his time and what he called the 'critical' school of Courbet in painting. He could have approved of Naturalism, given his demand that art represent the life of the people. But his strict moral sense would have shrunk back in horror from the bodily details in the works of Zola or the Goncourts brothers (he died in 1865, the year of the publication of the first properly 'Naturalist' work *Germinie Lacerteux*, and well before Zola reached his notoriety). This is evident in the criticism that

Kropotkin and Tolstoy – both of them Proudhonians as far as their aesthetic theories were concerned – waged against Zola and Naturalism.²⁰

Let us resume: according to Proudhon, art and literature have become ‘decadent’ in the nineteenth century. This seems to occur periodically, during regressive historical moments, when the artist loses touch with his public and becomes a ‘dilettante’, an isolated individual who seeks his own private pleasures in refined formal combinations, in the sensual surface of art and life. Proudhon thus associates formalism with decadence, a judgement that he shares with the conservative critics of modernism. The isolation of the artist goes hand in hand with the phenomenon of art for art’s sake, and Proudhon finds them surfacing equally in late antiquity, in the Renaissance, as well as in the nineteenth century. For Proudhon, art for art’s sake is not so much a historical and literary movement as a permanent tendency of art: the appreciation of beauty for its own sake. ‘Art, inasmuch as it has as its aim the awakening of the ideal, especially that of form, is therefore a stimulation leading to pleasure. If the passion that it rouses is love, it is a pornocratic agent, the most dangerous of all’ (Proudhon 1865: 255). Furthermore, for Proudhon, the sensual pleasure afforded by art and its isolation from the healthier aspects of the aesthetic experience are directly related to the emancipation of women in the nineteenth century. In *La Pornocratie, ou les femmes dans les temps modernes*, he examines the consequences of women’s liberation. Its first and foremost result is the feminisation of society, which occurs in every civilisation in decline; for example, in Persia after Cyrus, in Greece after the Peloponnesian war, and in France with Rousseau. Romanticism is in this sense what Proudhon calls a *pornocratic* agent that can only have a maleficent effect on society. It makes a fetish of beauty, encourages free love and desire, and thus contributes to the dissolution of society. Proudhon singles out bohemian writers as the most dangerous agents of this degeneration, for their disorderly and debauched existence is necessarily reflected in their work, and is but a step away from art for art’s sake, an art that privileges the sensual over the moral: ‘The supremacy granted to the aesthetic principle over the juridical and the moral is the true pornocratic ferment. It is in this way that many people slip into the prostitution of their conscience, to the abandonment of right, and to the philosophy of Epicurus. Artistic delectation seizes them first, then the adoration of the beautiful, and soon after, Epicureanism and sensualism’.²¹

This powerful suspicion of form can be traced to his earlier writings. In 1841, in his first major work *What is property?*, he wrote in the preface addressed to the members of the Academy of Besançon for whom the book was written: ‘Maybe you regret, dear messieurs, that by having given all my care to method and facts, I neglected form and style too much; had I tried to do otherwise, it would have been merely a waste of time. I lack hope and literary faith’.²² Proudhon’s concerns about the formal and the social functions of art, and the ‘problem’ of the public, were burning questions that worried the greatest writers of the day, and to which they responded in different ways. After 1848, a number

of historical trends contribute to fundamentally transform what we may call the ‘literary field’: the gulf that opens between the writer and his public; the economic and sociological transformations of literature that end the era of the *men of letters* and usher in the era of the modern writer and the autonomy of art, as well as the corollary phenomenon of the isolation and the essential loneliness of the writer (the most significant representative of which is of course Flaubert). We have seen how these questions concerned and alarmed Proudhon. How did writers respond to these new historical circumstances? Roland Barthes has shown the ways in which 1848, apart from its political and historical significance, constituted a rupture in the history of *writing*: after the events of June, the bourgeoisie could no longer assume to represent universal values, but merely its own interests. The writer could no longer presume to be ‘universal’; that is, to be recognised by the other, the public. He had a vague but unflinching consciousness that he could not be understood by his readers, ‘hypocritical readers’ whom Baudelaire addresses in the beginning of the *Flowers of Evil*.²³ The writer was thus naturally driven to questions of form and language, on the one hand, and disdain for the ‘philistine’ public, on the other. Flaubert’s correspondence is full of scorn and indignation for his readers. At best, he claims, he could only hope to write for himself: ‘I write literature for myself’!²⁴ Baudelaire, who had praised the bourgeoisie in *The Salon of 1846*, and had been an avid reader of Proudhon until 1851, was by the time of writing *The Salon of 1859* complaining about the taste of the public, ‘hyperboreal brutes of olden days’, perverted by photography and industrialism.²⁵ For Barbey d’Aurevilly, there was nothing left to be done, since democracies can simply not tolerate beauty: ‘All in all, they abhor literature’.²⁶

Proudhon, by contrast, wanted to overcome the abyss opening between the writer and his public. His demand that form and content be united has its roots in his theories of language, a subject about which he never ceased to think. He always insisted that the writer must also be a linguist, a philologist, and a grammarian. His first book, *Essai de grammaire générale* (1837), as the title clearly suggests, was entirely devoted to the question of language. It was printed as an explicative supplement to a text that Proudhon much admired and himself brought back into print during the short period in his youth when he dabbled in publishing. This was Abbé Bergier’s *Éléments primitifs des langues*, an outdated philological work from the eighteenth century that identified the elements common to all languages in an attempt to understand their historical development. In his linguistic analysis of Proudhon’s work, Rachmiel Brandwajn concluded: ‘All of Proudhon’s philological conceptions before 1848, as well as most of his views after this date, are nothing but a faithful copy of the work of Bergier’.²⁷ All the languages of the world, according to Bergier, form a unity. The changes that we perceive in languages as different as Hebrew and French are later developments that evolved according to land conditions, climate, and local temperament. The unity of languages can be traced back by examining their

comparative history, which reveals the subsequent transformations that originary words underwent. Some years later, in *Le Système des contradictions*, Proudhon could still write: 'Men have always spoken the same language; it is ridiculous to discuss the variations of sound and letters'.²⁸

A corollary to the concept of the unity of languages (and language within itself) is the idea that the writer be rooted in the life of his public, speak clearly to the people, avoid difficulty, and express their aspirations. In *De la Justice*, Proudhon goes so far as to reduce the role of the poet to a mere transmitter, one who passively echoes back the yearnings of the people. 'The man of letters, poet or prose writer, is not the creator of language; he is the midwife: he is the one who recognises it, materialises it, purges it, then reproduces it in his work, and imbues it with clarity, force and brilliance'.²⁹ Language contains in itself the poetry of 'popular genius', it is the repository of centuries of wisdom, and is the spontaneous expression of *reason*, itself inherent in the life of the people. In this sense each word contains a thousand poems and can express the beauty of the life of the people:

Every word of a language can be considered as a poetic seed ... A word, I repeat, is a small poem given by the spontaneity of the people, which no creation of high art can surpass ... A work of constructed literature is therefore, in the last analysis, a word ... The public would appreciate the originality of the writer all the more if his work had its roots in the depths of the language of the people, and if it expressed everyone's thought. It would not be well received if it aspired to independence, contempt of the laws of speech and common sense ... A terrible sentence awaits the writer who forgets this lesson: no one shall read him, and even if he manages to steal an approbation, the reaction will not be long in coming; he will not live very long.³⁰

Around the same time, the journal *L'Artiste* published an essay by a young and still unknown Mallarmé, 'L'Art pour tous', where he recommended to poets to disdain the public and restore the archaic and magical mystery of the word to their poetry. Not only the Symbolist theory of language, but the aesthetics of the majority of the 'advanced' writers of the Second Empire, go squarely against Proudhon's notion of the authenticity and the transparency of the spoken language of the people, and his ideas on the relations of the writer and the public. As the century approaches its end, this distance grows only wider, and literary language more opaque. In his book on Baudelaire, Sartre suggests that the dandyism of the author of *Les Fleurs du mal* was a response to the problematic social situation of the writer under the Second Empire, in the years following the 1848 revolution. Albert Cassagne has brilliantly analysed this conjuncture: losing his status of the 'secular prophet' gained in the eighteenth century and the Romantic era, the writer after 1848 increasingly lacks a specific social status.³¹ Some writers, like Augier and Scribe, produced a morally upright literature for the bour-

geoisie – the *école du bon sens* – and in this way gained their public. But the majority felt that, like actors playing on the stage of an empty theatre, their public had all but vanished. We only need recall the many literary trials of the second half of the nineteenth century – among others those of *Madame Bovary* and *The Flowers of Evil* – to realise the extent to which the bourgeoisie rejected and even feared the works of these writers. This rejection, and the accompanying *déclassement* of the writer, was symbolically re-enacted, and constitutes, according to Sartre, the essence of the dandyism of Baudelaire. 'This rupture was played out through symbolic attitudes without a moment of respite: clothing, food, morals, speech and taste had to forcibly mimic a separation [from the public] that, without constant vigilance, was in danger of going unnoticed'.³² But, continues Sartre, short of drifting into insanity, the writer had to make an attempt to return to reality. He had to find or produce his public, limited as it may have been. The bourgeoisie and the working class were summarily rejected. The aristocracy, the only public recognised by writers, was no longer there. Each had therefore to create a public for himself. Flaubert, for example, fashioned an imaginary community of great writers that he revered as saints with whom he was in communication: 'Each word that Flaubert traced on paper was a moment of communion with the saints'.³³ And Baudelaire was to find his interlocutor in Poe.

For Proudhon, I believe, this return is hinged on the category of *the people*, which by the 1860s was well in decline, and was soon to be replaced by the notion of the working class or proletariat – concepts that claimed to be more scientific and less Romantic in nature.³⁴ Beginning with the French Revolution, a collective phenomenon was born, where *le peuple*, according to Alain Pessin, was sought and implored as the reservoir of social truth. By 1830, we can speak of a veritable myth and a '*complexe du peuple*': near and far, everywhere yet nowhere, the subject and purpose of history, a giant who was forever incapacitated, pure but constantly violated, sure to triumph but always beaten, 'the people for this generation was an enigma, a weakness and a quest'.³⁵ It suffices to recall Victor Hugo's mystical evocations of *le peuple*, who, invisible to an indifferent bourgeoisie, toil and suffer in the lower depths of society only to emerge some day from the sewers and redeem themselves along with the rest of humanity. Responding to the respectable classes alarmed by the periodic upheavals of the people of Paris, the Romantic historian Jules Michelet dismissed their panic by saying: 'Mother Nature knows what she is doing'. In the aftermath of 1848, however, *le peuple* began to undergo a mutation, a transformation that would take the rest of the century in order to come to full view (with the Boulangist phenomenon in France around 1890), but was already perceived by the most astute minds of the period. The people, so often lauded in the earlier part of the century, now became fearsome and repugnant, accused of having degenerated into a *mob*, subject to hysteria and violence, repository of everything irrational from limitless sexual appetite and drunkenness to anti-Semitism and frenzied nationalism.

Alain Pessin has shown the paradoxical nature of Proudhon's ideas on *le*

peuple in the course of his career, and examined the changes that the idea underwent throughout his writings. In what ways was this related to Proudhon's aesthetic ideas? While in the early works before and after 1848, *le peuple* was seen as the agent of history who knows its own interests and could see through the ruses of power, there is a paradoxical note entering Proudhon's writing in the 1850s, according to which, despite the fact that 'the people possesses in its depths the concept of justice', it can no longer articulate its own ideas. It has now been robbed of language, *la parole*, and needs a spokesperson to convey what it already knows.³⁶ In his last works, and in particular *De la Capacité politique de la classe ouvrière*, written at the same time as *Du Principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale* (he was writing both at the time of his death in 1865, and left them unfinished), Proudhon seems at once to abandon the romantic concept of *le peuple* (as indicated in the title) and simultaneously attempt a mythical return to it. This paradox appears to follow from his recognition in *Du Principe* that language can no longer unproblematically communicate the idea, that the public is no longer a coherent entity that could be taken for granted, that *le peuple* cannot see through the irrational course of history, and, therefore, cannot be counted on as the agent of revolution. And so moments of exaltation alternate with moments of absolute despair on the future of literature and art, as well as that of the people and the revolution. 'To encourage today's literature would be like wanting to resuscitate the dead',³⁷ he writes in *Les Majorats*. 'For a time, maybe a very long time, we will have neither a true literature nor a veritable art'. At times he agonises to find the course of art and literature so doomed that there is no point in continuing any further. 'It is undeniable that the weakening of the most delicate of the faculties of our soul, the aesthetic faculty ... would be a sure sign that our species is growing old, that it has one foot in the grave, that there is nothing left for it to do other than prepare itself for death' (Proudhon 1865: 167). The violent outbursts against *le peuple* in *De la Capacité* derive from the same source. Indeed, towards the end of the book, the word *le peuple* increasingly gives way to the terms 'working class', or '*la plèbe travailleuse*'. 'By voting for the bourgeois candidates in the elections of 1864 and '65, hasn't the working class proven that it accepted its own inferiority [claimed by the ruling classes]? *La plèbe travailleuse* [the working plebe] is yet nothing, alas! but an inorganic mass'.³⁸

Critics and historians have usually interpreted Proudhon's ideas on aesthetics in two ways: he has either been seen as 'reactionary' – wanting to revive the popular art forms of the past – or, alternatively, and mainly due to his violent diatribes against the art and literature of his time, as the advocate of the unknown artwork of the future. As I have tried to show, this contradiction has its source in the objective historical conditions emerging in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution. Writing about this period Barthes wrote: 'Modernism begins with the search for a literature which is no longer possible'. And it is this impossibility that Proudhon theorises.

NOTES

1. Mauclair claims that Mallarmé sympathised with the anarchists, but had a horror of the bombs of Ravachol and Émile Henry. The famous sentence 'The real bomb is the book' was uttered in this context. Camille Mauclair, *Servitude et grandeur littéraires* (Paris: Ollendorff, n.d.) 116.
2. Richard Sonn's *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989) is an excellent account of this history. For Fénéon, see Joan Ungersma Helperin's *Félix Fénéon. Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), though her claim about Fénéon's terrorism has been challenged and at best appears doubtful.
3. André Reszler, *L'Esthétique anarchiste* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973).
4. *Ibid.* 6. All translations are mine.
5. For example, among others, David Weir, *Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), or Richard Sonn's claim that 'Anarchist art [stands] simultaneously for aesthetic autonomy and political engagement', op cit, 6.
6. The classic essays on this question can be found in *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: NLB, 1977).
7. Wolfgang Asholt, 'Entre esthétique anarchiste et esthétique d'avant-garde: Félix Fénéon et les formes brèves', in *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 99:3, May-June 1999, 499-513; and 'Aux Débuts d'une esthétique anarchiste: Ernest Coeurderoy et Joseph Déjacque', in Pessin and Terrone, op cit.
8. Daniel Guérin, *L'Anarchisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965) 7.
9. James Joll, *The Anarchists* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1964) 61.
10. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Du Principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1865) 71. Further references to this work will be made in parentheses in the body of the text.
11. Proudhon, *Les Majorats Littéraires* in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 16 (Paris: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven and Co., 1863).
12. Albert Cassagne, *La Théorie de l'art pour l'art en France chez les derniers romantiques et les premiers réalistes* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 1997) 59; and Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Idiot de la famille*, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) 202-5.
13. Balzac had addressed this problem as early as 1839, calling for the creation of a 'surface commerciale' that would ensure the writer's income from various editions of his work. See P.-A. Perrod, 'Balzac "avocat" de la propriété littéraire', *L'Année Balzacienne* 1963, 269-296.
14. Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poète lyrique à l'apogée du capitalisme* (Paris: Payot, 1979) 47.
15. Proudhon, 'Ce que la Révolution doit à la littérature' in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 8 (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1939) 378.
16. See Pierre Ansart, *Sociologie de Saint-Simon* (Paris: PUF, 1970).
17. He admits not understanding music very well: 'Most of the time, music bores me ... I think that it is worth nothing. Am I a barbarian who mistakes the twitching of his nerves for revelations produced by art?' *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église*, vol. 3 (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1932) 586.

18. Proudhon, *Correspondance*, vol.13 (Paris: Rivière, 1968) 132.
19. Philippe Régner. 'Les Contradictions littéraires d'un révolutionnaire: Proudhon'. *Littérature*, 24 (1976) 73. For Proudhon's Catholic education see Pierre Hautmann, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Sa vie et sa pensée* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1982), though according to the spiteful remarks that Proudhon makes about Fénelon in *Du Principe*, his opinion on this writer must have undergone a radical change.
20. Peter Kropotkin, *Russian Literature. Ideals and Realities* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991), and Tolstoy, *What is Art?* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960). Guyau and Georges Sorel were also Proudhonians, and attacked Zola, the first in *L'Art au point de vue sociologique* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1889), and Sorel in *Les Illusions du progrès* (Paris: Paul Rivière, 1929).
21. Proudhon, *La Pornocratie, ou les femmes dans les temps modernes* (Paris: A. Lacroix, 1875) 228-29.
22. Proudhon, *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966) 42.
23. Roland Barthes, *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* (Paris: Seuil, 1953-1972) 44-45. See also Alain Vaillant's brilliant essay on the subject, 'Révolutions politiques et extinction de voix' in Hélène Millot and Corinne Saminadayar-Perrin, eds. *1848, une révolution de discours* (Saint-Étienne: Éditions des Cahiers Intempestifs, 2001) 13-26.
24. Flaubert, *Correspondance*, vol. 2 (Paris: Conard, 1936) 357.
25. In his early critical essays, 'Pierre Dupont' and 'Les Drame et les romans honnêtes' Baudelaire speaks approvingly of Proudhon and shows himself a careful reader of Proudhon's work. Proudhon never mentions Baudelaire anywhere in writing.
26. Barbey d'Aurevilly, 'A propos des *Misérables*' in *Les Oeuvres et les hommes*, quoted in Cassagne, 192.
27. Rachmiel Brandwajn. *La Langue et l'esthétique de Proudhon*, special issue of *Prace Wroclawskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego*, Seria A, n.30, 1952, 50.
28. Proudhon, *Système de contradictions économiques, ou la philosophie de la misère*, vol. 2 (Paris: Marpon et Flammarion, 1896) 310; quoted in Brandwajn, 50.
29. Proudhon, *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église*, vol. 3 (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1932) 588.
30. *De la Justice*, vol.3, 588-9.
31. See Paul Bénichou, *Le Sacre de l'écrivain, 1750-1830* (Paris: José Corti, 1973). I borrow the term 'secular prophet' from Bénichou.
32. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947) 161.
33. *Ibid*, 164.
34. See Alain Pessin, *Le Mythe du peuple et la société française du XIXe siècle* (Paris: PUF, 1992).
35. *Ibid.*, 17.
36. Proudhon, *De la Justice*, vol. 1, 227, quoted in Alain Pessin, 'Proudhon et les contradictions du peuple', in *Peuple, mythe et histoire* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2001) 80-81.
37. *Les Majorats*, 86.
38. Proudhon, *De la Capacité politique de la classe ouvrière* (Paris: Paul Rivière, 1929) 380.

THE TORTURE SHOW: REFLECTIONS ON IRAQ AND THE WEST

Allan Antliff, Sureyyya Evren, Sharif Gemie and Marcus Milwright

PREFACE

A number of regular contributors to Anarchist Studies have written to me over the past two years, suggesting the need to comment on issues raised by the recent war in Iraq. Obviously, with events still unfolding, most were reluctant to propose anything resembling a definitive analysis. When Sureyyya Evren sent me his essay, I felt that it was time to draw together some short texts into a single collection, with its title 'borrowed' from the original title of Evren's essay. A further collection of texts on this topic will follow in a later edition.

Occupation and insurrection in Iraq, 2003-04

SHARIF GEMIE

Sometimes, one can almost feel sorry for the news services and reporters who have attempted to cover the unpredicted events that have unfolded in Iraq since March 2003. They suggest that US and UK soldiers are fighting mysterious 'enemies' and 'aggressors', 'insurgents' and 'militants' – but what *is* the right term for their opponents? The term 'resistance' briefly surfaced in the media during the summer of 2003, only to be quietly dropped after suggestions from various government agencies that it sounded too positive. This problem of naming the opposition faced by the occupation forces is a direct result of Rumsfeld's military strategy.

In place of the post-Vietnam Powell strategy, according to which the USA would only engage in military offensives when it possessed overwhelming military superiority, Rumsfeld devised a lighter, more flexible scheme. It would begin with bribes and propaganda: Rumsfeld correctly assessed that such initiatives would persuade the bulk of the Iraqi army not to fight to save Saddam Hussein. In place of a massive infantry offensive, the new US forces would be organised according to the principles of the so-called 'Revolution in Military Affairs', whereby information technology is deployed to increase the effectiveness of relatively small units. The key destructive force would be air-borne: a massive air attack would disable key components of the Iraqi forces

before infantry advances. The central objective, however, was 'regime change'. This would be implemented by the removal of Saddam and the installation of a government designed to work with western interests.

There were some problems along the way: the last-minute decision by the Turkish government to refuse to allow coalition forces access to its land or air space resulted in a sudden shift in planning and delayed the offensive for several days. The disappearance of Saddam denied the coalition forces an easy and obvious symbol of their victory – an importance consideration in a war that was fought as much on the television screens as on the battlefield. However, after only six weeks of fighting, the coalition forces certainly appeared to have gained a convincing victory, and Bush's announcement on 1 May 2003 that the war was over seemed accurate. In practice, only about a fifth of the Iraqi army had followed the orders to defend their positions: the rest simply went home.

There remained, however, one discrepancy. Rumsfeld's strategy had contained a reasonably accurate assessment of the Iraqi military culture, but only considered this point from one angle: would they fight to save Saddam? Other issues were ignored or side-stepped. In particular, there was a certain amount of wishful thinking, by which US and UK leaders fooled themselves about the political dimension of the conflict. It was fondly imagined that the coalition forces would be welcomed as liberators: the streets would be filled with jubilant, cheering crowds throwing flowers at the advancing tanks and humvees as they entered the towns of Iraq, celebrating the end of Saddam's tyranny. Even if this was too optimistic, more hard-boiled planners estimated that a form of rational choice calculation would enter into play. Iraqis would recognise that the US-UK forces were clearly stronger, and therefore accept that their future lay in collaboration with their new rulers.

In reality, it was hardly a great victory. The richest and most powerful country in the world, with a population of some 274 million, supported by one of the world's largest ex-imperial powers (population: 58 million), invaded a country suffering a prolonged and serious economic decline, with a population of 22 million people. Of course, the lessons of the US defeat in Vietnam provided important warnings against over-confidence, but the Rumsfeld strategy responded to this by aiming, above all, to produce an immediate and convincing military victory, thus preventing the development of any long, drawn-out guerrilla campaign. Where the US planners miscalculated was in considering the effects of the twelve years of sanctions since 1991. They correctly considered that these privations had weakened the once formidable Iraqi military machine, and they hoped that the obvious social decline might also have produced a wider loss of faith in Saddam's leadership. The effects of the 1991 conflict, however, were more wide-ranging and more subtle than the American military planners understood.

In March 1991, fourteen of Iraq's eighteen regions were in the hands of

anti-Saddam insurgents. These rebels expected the active support of the US-led coalition: instead, they were left to the mercy of a ferocious repressive counter-attack by Saddam loyalists. Contradictory lessons were learnt from this episode.¹ Henceforth, Iraq-based opposition groups were extremely wary of any head-on clash with the state. If 'regime change' were to be effected, then the force for this would have to come from outside. On the other hand, after 1991, there was a new scepticism about Saddam's regime. The state was no longer able to provide access to the prosperity that Iraqis had known in the 1980s. The army itself was reduced in size to about 400,000 soldiers. The once efficient health services became unreliable. A long period of steeply declining salaries forced many to consider desperate methods to preserve their living standards. Family collections – antiques, manuscripts, furniture – were sold off. Above all, corruption became generalised. Robert Fisk's memories of his entry into Saddam Hussein International Airport in March 2003 are probably quite typical: \$20 to the man who checked his computer, \$40 to the guy who accepted the paper from the man who had taken the \$20, and another \$20 to the soldiers at the gate.² For Iraqis, such practices became a normal part of their daily lives: to obtain ration books or driving licences, one had to bribe officials. As these costs soared, so the provision of forged documents became one of the few developing sectors of the Iraqi economy and, correspondingly, faith in the regime declined.

Signs of dissidence and non-conformity multiplied after 1991. The Kurdish nationalist movements of the north, whether tribal and conservative or urban and Marxist-Leninist, had won a protected place within Iraqi politics. Shi'a religious leaders in the south were less confident in openly opposing the regime, but began to speak more critically. More significant, perhaps, were the widespread unplanned and unorganised flickers of resistance. Public monuments were often vandalised. More young men deserted from military service, and a few actually refused to become conscripts. The most prominent sign of dissidence was the creation of a shadowy alternative public sphere, in which a new generation of non-conformist writers and above all poets circulated samizdat-style publications: bitter, ironic works satirising the regime and its pretensions. The kind of witty, self-deprecating, worldly-wise sensibility that we can find in the works of Salam Pax, the 'Baghdad Blogger', with his keen ability to capture viewpoints and attitudes, was typical of this movement.³

Another lesson was also learnt during these years. The Iraqi people are probably the most militarily experienced population in the world. Anyone over thirty will have known three wars (the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, the UN invasion of 1990-91 and the US-UK invasion of 2003) plus probably at least two major internal conflicts (the repression following the March 1991 risings and the subsequent campaign against the Marsh Arabs). Most men have been conscripts, and many have served in military campaigns. Most householders have had to prepare their homes against bombings. These have become part of

the normal experiences of ordinary people. As one mother explained to a journalist in January 2003, 'once we were worried but now we have become used to war'.⁴

The 1990s therefore taught ordinary Iraqis contradictory lessons. While they lost faith in the regime, they were unable to oppose it openly. While they learnt, with much pain, of the realities of modern warfare, they lost some of their fear of such experiences. While they devoted their time and energy to stealing back tiny micro-liberties from the regime, they acquired a certain resilience in the face of impossible circumstances.

Rumsfeld's calculation was that such people would probably welcome the US-UK occupying forces or – at least – accept occupation as their best possible option. This strategy has clearly not worked, to the point where, for the first time in history, a period of 'peace' is proving more bloody to the occupation forces than a period of war.

In fact, for most of the US and UK forces, Iraq has proved to be disappointing. They had been told that land of Iraq was one of the historic sites of the origins of civilisation: they found that the Euphrates river was just a muddy creek. In place of cheering crowds, they found a suspicious, resentful people, capable of extraordinary acts of violence. Above all, after a complex and highly-skilful military campaign that went – more or less – according to plan, they found themselves in a position they did not and could not understand, and for which they had no preparation.

The most telling images of the end of Saddam's regime was not the staged toppling of his statue in the main square in Baghdad on 7 April 2003, but rather the wave of looting that following, as vast angry crowds tore into the now-deserted and unguarded public buildings, stripping libraries, museums, hospitals and power stations of their furnishings, seizing objects of no conceivable value. Their motivation was clear: this was their final revenge on a hated regime, the climax to the widespread vandalism of public monuments which had begun after March 1991. But what was to replace Saddam's regime?

At first sight, there were many options available: there were approximately fifty political groups formed by Iraqi exiles, many of them linked to the INC (Iraqi National Congress) led by Ahmad Chalabi. There was SCIRI, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which linked Shi'a clerics in the south of the country. There were the PDK and PUK parties operating in the Kurdish north. And, for the moment, there was the interim authority led by Jay Garner, a sixty-four year old ex-general, who stated that 'we're here to do the job of liberating them, of providing them with a form of government that represents the freely elected will of the people'.⁵ This last phrase reveals the deep contradiction in the US-UK Coalition's plans. The US leaders spoke the language of liberation and democracy, but such principles were to be implemented strictly according to the Coalition's plans. In practice, every political figure that the Coalition proposed as a representative, whether temporary or

long-term, whether American or Iraqi, was unacceptable to the Iraqis, and every figure which the Iraq-based political, social or religious movements pushed forward was unacceptable to the coalition authorities. On both sides, attitudes hardened, to the point where even the most minimal collaboration with the Coalition was often seen as evidence of a betrayal of Iraqi interests by many Iraqi observers. This point seems to have crushed the last hopes of the once powerful Iraqi Communist Party, who unwisely chose to accept a post on the Iraqi Governing Council. American nominees fared no better: Garner's past record as a pro-Israeli, anti-Arab politician clearly made him uniquely unsuitable to be even the temporary leader of the Occupation, while Chalabi's history of corruption was notorious within Iraq. His current replacement, Iyad Allawi, can boast of previous links to no less than fourteen intelligence agencies, including organisations run by Saddam's Ba'athist Party, the CIA and MI6.⁶ In practice, the occupation authorities are growing more and more worried about the prospect of democratic elections in Iraq, and almost inevitably prefer to select 'representatives' for the Iraqi people. Naomi Klein provided a useful and memorable summary of Bremer's project for the democratisation of Iraq: 'Iraqi sovereignty will be established by appointees appointing appointees to select appointees'.⁷

In place of the willing co-operation that they had been expecting, the occupation forces found themselves lost in a society which appeared as intricate, mysterious and intractable as the Vietnamese jungle. Predictably, almost none of the American or British soldiers spoke Arabic, and few of them knew anything of Iraqi history or culture. Reliable translators who were prepared to work for the coalition forces were difficult to find. 'Nothing is normal in Baghdad' reported one British journalist.⁸ Even in April 2003 the process started to go wrong. After winning a relatively easy victory in the south, around Basra, the coalition forces were then surprised by attacks from irregular, non-uniformed militias who would hide among the crowds. On 29 April there was a demonstration concerning the occupation of a school in Falluja, to the west of Baghdad. Reports concerning the incidents that followed are confused, and it is unlikely that the truth will ever be established: however, at the end of the demonstration somewhere between seven and twenty-three demonstrators had been shot dead by American soldiers. Predictably, the American authorities argued that the demonstrators had shown signs of preparing to attack them. Such points are significant: the American soldiers were not capable of distinguishing a noisy crowd from a guerrilla unit.

Bush's choice of 1 May to mark the end of the war did not change the social and political developments in Iraq. In place of orthodox military confrontations, the conflict was changing its nature. In reality, there was nothing mysterious about this. There had been 400,000 soldiers in Saddam's armies: many of them with military experience. What would they do once peace had been declared? When they left the battlefields, many of them took their arms

with them. Military equipment – rifles, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades – was easily available on the black market. In June 2003, press reports spoke of twelve attacks on coalition forces each day. While no statistical information that comes out of occupied Iraq can be read as trustworthy, a simple trend is obvious.

<i>Number of attacks</i>	<i>Date of estimate</i>
12	June 2003
12	August 2003
35	October 2003
33	November 2003
80	September 2004
100	December 2004

Estimates of number of daily attacks on coalition forces in Iraq⁹

The coalition forces were bewildered by these attacks. Rumsfeld's strategy had assumed that the Iraqi people were simply a supine mass who would be prepared to accept anything as an alternative to Saddam's dictatorship. Moreover, who would be mad enough to attack the coalition forces after the 'shock and awe' of the initial bombardments? The first assessments of the improvised guerrilla warfare attempted to stick to the ideological framework of the initial strategy. These attacks, the coalition authorities argued, were carried out by last-ditch defenders of the old regime. In June 2003 General McKieran justified Operation Peninsula Strike, which mobilised 4000 US soldiers and made use of the lethal AC-130 gunships, by explaining that they were going after 'the bad guys'.¹⁰ Bremer spoke of 'pockets of violence', composed of ex-Ba'ath party members, Islamists and criminals.¹¹ Wolfowitz stated that the attacks were organised by 'a criminal gang of many thousands of rapists, murderers and torturers'.¹² Throughout the course of 2003, the coalition forces could comfort themselves with the thought that the attacks were probably by remnants of forces loyal to Saddam. After his capture, they hoped, the attacks would decrease. Correspondingly, the cliché of the 'Sunni Triangle' was invented: an attempt to identify the Iraqi resistance as drawn from the areas north and west of Baghdad which had been most loyal to Saddam. Instead, following the imprisonment of the old dictator in December 2003, the attacks actually increased in frequency and force. As Robert Fisk noted, the 'triangle' now appears to have grown into an octagon.¹³

One extremely important consequence of the insurgency was the growing isolation of the coalition forces from the areas which they attempted to police. At precisely the moment when they needed the most accurate information possible about the Iraqi people, they were learning less and less about the people they claimed to direct. The distinguished Peruvian novelist Mario

Vargos Llosa visited Baghdad in 2003 and produced a memorable description of the American soldiers in the city.

The only authority is represented by the tanks, the armoured cars, trucks and jeeps, and by foot patrols of US soldiers who cross and re-cross the streets all over, armed with rifles and submachine guns, making the buildings shake with the power of their war vehicles. Soldiers who, on a closer look, seem as helpless and frightened as the citizens of Baghdad themselves. Since I have arrived the attacks against them have been increasing systematically, and have already killed 30 and injured about 300. It is not surprising that they seem suspicious and in bad spirits, with fingers on triggers patrolling streets full of people with whom they cannot communicate, amidst a hellish heat, which for them, dressed in helmets, bullet-proof jackets and other war paraphernalia, must be even worse than for the average local ... They were all pouring sweat, eyeballs perpetually moving, like distrustful grasshoppers.¹⁴

Their reply to resistance is to call in ever more powerful weapons, to the point where F-16s are used to bomb areas in which guerrillas, armed with Kalashnikovs, may be hiding. General Swannack explained the type of sophisticated military thinking behind such operations: 'Our patience is wearing thin and we are not going to tolerate it'.¹⁵

But who are these mysterious resisters? There is no simple answer to this question: indeed, it is probable that the insurgents themselves could not provide a clear response, for the simple reason that their movement is growing rapidly and unexpectedly. There are, however, a few points which can be made.

The basis for the resistance movement is a simple anti-colonialism. Western observers constantly underestimate this point and, to some extent, the tendency to analyse colonialism in economic terms as a function of western capitalist development has led to an underestimation of its political and psychological dimensions in the East. Colonialism is the violent denial of the political capacity of the colonised; it is their reduction from the status of adults to the status of children. No matter how dreadful the rule of Saddam – and, as Noam Chomsky has noted, he was 'as evil as they come' – the simple denial of the Iraqi people's capacity to act as political agents was never part of his programme.¹⁶ De-colonisation was a long, bloody and difficult process in Iraq, and it has left deep memories in Iraqi political culture. To many Iraqis, the pseudo-democratic posturing of the coalition authorities looks like another form of colonialism, particularly in the context where American companies are being granted contracts to run important sectors of the Iraqi economy.

Such sentiments, however, are rarely developed into any political analysis. The Iraqi insurgents are fired by a primitive anti-Americanism which shades into anti-Semitism. Any representative of outside interests, whether a UN aid

worker or a journalist, can become the target for their anger. Here, there is an important weakness in their movement: while the wit and eloquence of the dissident poets and writers of the 1990s could rival the texts of *subcomandante* Marcos, unlike him they never succeeded in developing a political analysis and – most significant of all – their dissidence was never linked to any mass political or social movement. New papers and new parties still spring up in many Iraqi towns – Vargas Llosa found fifty new parties in Baghdad alone – but few of them have any substance.

The state of political analysis remains terrifyingly basic. The insurgents learnt their politics from the actions of Saddam's political police, from the 'shock and awe' of the coalition bombers, from the sub-pornographic images from Abu Ghraib and from the disgraceful and mendacious pronouncements of western leaders, whose speeches, noted Edward Said in one of his last articles, have sunk to 'new dysfunctional levels of pure, ungrounded polemic [and] ruinous sham pragmatism'.¹⁷

In central Iraq, in the area around Baghdad, there is a type of ideological freefall, a 'shifting, complex matrix of thieves, idealists, patriots, Ba'athists, gunmen and Islamists' according to one briefly captured journalist.¹⁸ This is a movement in which bandits fight alongside militants, in which insurgents learn to act as bandits, and in which mercenaries act as resistance fighters. Rather than relaxing into some happy post-modernist hybridity, the insurgents demand the rigidly clear proclamation of separation and rejection. It is this mixture which produces terrifying acts of spectacular violence such as the public lynching of four foreigners (probably US paramilitaries) in Falluja in March 2004. When the local rebel commanders in this town briefly achieved their semi-official status as a semi-autonomous municipality in summer 2004, they attempted to define and clarify their movement through a turn to culturally repressive practices in a primitive attempt to 'purify' the area they controlled: hence the imposition of the *hijab* on women, the banning of alcohol and western music, and even the policing of male haircuts. This is a movement which was created by external violence and which demonstrates its existence through further violence, whether through military attacks on foreign soldiers and Iraqi collaborators, or through the cultural and psychological violence of the repression of women and young people.

In the south, particularly among the rebel Shi'a movements linked to Moqtaba al-Sadr, a different type of discourse is developing. Obviously, the Shi'a were less implicated in Saddam's power structures. They have had a long experience as a minority group within an authoritarian society: they have learnt from this a certain respect for the basic principles of minority rights and cultural pluralism. Their demand for moral purity makes sense in a society which has lived through a decade of generalised corruption. Furthermore, they have a difficult relationship with Shi'a Iran, seeing it as a religious model, but insistent of their own distinctiveness as a national religious culture. The imme-

diately objective among these movements is the control of religious shrines: in peaceful times, these attract crowds of pilgrims, and so they are also important centres of revenue.

There are also Iranian, Syrian and Saudi groups present in Iraq. Potentially, these are extremely important. In a context in which it is difficult to fund and to organise political parties, outside backing can be of great assistance to insurgent groups. It carries with it, however, a cost: there is a real danger that Iraqi political groups will be hollowed out in the same manner as the parties that formed among Afghan dissidents in the 1980s.¹⁹ Instead of functioning to represent the political cultures of Iraq, they could be transformed into mere conduits for external funds and directives, further corrupting and distorting the forms of political debate in Iraq. Political thought is in danger of being replaced by warlords' rule. Amongst these external groups is the shadowy presence of Al-Qaeda. If this organisation exists at all in Iraq, its influence can be seen in the substitution of political critique by acts of spectacular destruction. The attacks on Kurdish organisations in the north, and on Shi'a leaders in the south may reflect the Sunni intransigence of Al-Qaeda's anti-nationalist, anti-Shi'a leaders.

At present, however, there are signs that anti-Americanism and anti-Occupation militancy is functioning to draw together the divergent strands of the Iraqi resistance. The Sunni rebels in Falluja and the Shi'a rebels in Najaf have attempted to assist each other. A Muslim Scholars' Committee appears to be acting to co-ordinate these different elements. Leftist and secular nationalist groups seem to be co-operating with the religious militants. Their struggle has now lasted for the best part of two years: in that time, structures of organisation, supply and direction are being established. Their attacks are growing bolder and more destructive. They clearly cannot be described as the 'last remnants' of Saddam's followers, for they represent the incoherent beginnings of some new type of power structure in Iraq.

Two years ago Chomsky refused to predict what might happen in Iraq. 'What happens when you start a war is unknown. The CIA can't predict it, Rumsfeld can't predict it, nobody can ... That's why sane people refrain from the use of violence unless there are overwhelming reasons to undertake it – the dangers are simply too great'.²⁰ After the deaths of over 500 American soldiers and of an estimated 100,000 Iraqi civilians, the dangers are still there.²¹ There has been no liberation and no democratisation of Iraq. 'Today, I'm not allowed to leave my house', one young woman told a journalist in Baghdad, 'I feel as if someone has stolen my youth from me'.²² A horrific authoritarian regime has been dismantled, but in its place the towns are patrolled by nervous, over-armed coalition soldiers who are growing to hate the 'fucking Arabs'. Bandits, fundamentalists and terrorists are now all active in the country, and they are joined by militants who only know politics as violence. The idea that a working parliamentary democracy can be started under these conditions is ridiculous.

There is nothing to celebrate here. The Coalition has demonstrated the abject condition of political rule in the West, showing its hypocrisy, its greed, its stupidity and its destructiveness; the Iraqi resistance has often answered in kind, fighting a war in which the suicide bomber responds to the smart bomb.

Abu Ghraib: the spectacle of torture

SUREYYYYA EVREN²³

It is widely known that children who are unable to feel pain are prone to injuries at every moment of their lives and that they tend to die early. Such children require extra care. In other words, their painlessness is not a gift, but a disguised curse.

On the other hand, the adult who cannot feel pain is usually considered as a fantastic figure, a superhuman. In adventure novels and films, characters are given special operations on their nervous system so that they do not feel pain anymore. They then face the most dreadful challenges and – because they are painless – it is impossible to torture them. Painlessness is presented as a kind of superhuman advantage. But even in these fantasies of painless superhumans, the painless person still suffers. For example, they get used as a hit-man or a murderer, on the frontline and in the most difficult tasks, and then they are thrown away. When such characters are kidnapped, enemies use new techniques to find their weak point. You realise that their humanity has been taken away with their sense of pain. Although you might be afraid of them, you would show no sensitivity to them. It is difficult to feel pity for such people: their lack of sensitivity and dehumanisation separates them from concepts of good and evil. The painless hero is a robot-man, as alien as an android – wasn't this tragedy one of the main themes of *Blade Runner*?

In certain contexts, this bizarre quality can be turned into a vaudeville show. The story of Edward H. Gibson provides an interesting example of this.²⁴ Born in Prague, at the age of seven he was struck in the skull with a lathing-hatchet. It stuck in so deeply that he ran home, about fifty yards, where his father removed it. He felt no discomfort at the time, he said, except for a headache lasting several days. From then on, however, he lived a life immune from the normal electrochemical penalties that flesh is heir to. He knew what pain was until he was seven, and then he felt no more pain.

His case was thus the opposite of the experience of most torture victims, who – during their capture – know and remember what it is *not* to feel pain, but who suffer extreme pain.

Anyway, painless Gibson tried to figure out what profit he could derive

from his gift and decided to play a unique role in the American entertainment industry. He acquired the stage-name of *The Human Pincushion*, Edward H. Gibson. During the 1920s, he spent almost two years on the American vaudeville stage. Twice a day, clad only in shorts, Gibson would walk on stage and ask a man in the audience to stick pins in him anywhere except the abdomen and groin. Some fifty or sixty pins – each carefully sterilised – would be inserted up to their heads. Then, still in the presence of the audience, Gibson would methodically pull them out, one by one. This forgotten spectacle in the history of American entertainment toured theatres and stages for some nineteen months.

The crucial point of his show was that there was no illusion, no gimmick and no trick. But the absence of illusion in this show of painlessness did not win him many admirers. Gibson's case marked a particular stage in early show business: he presented a spectacle in which real torture became a show with audience participation.²⁵

Gibson wanted to take his show further. As a special stunt, he planned a re-enactment of the Crucifixion. He prepared a rough cross and four gold-plated spikes with sharp points. On the appointed day, the 'Human Pincushion' spread his arms against the wooden cross. A man with a sledgehammer drove the first spike through the palm of Gibson's hand – at which point, a woman in the audience fainted dead away.

Maybe this development was a challenge from a painless human to his God. Or perhaps this bridge of pain took him from being mortal through being a prophet, and on to being God. Or maybe his new show was just 'the next step' in a commercial enterprise.

Painless man Gibson, a 'freak', an 'outsider', was merely a show on the stages of the USA. But his history suggests many comparisons with the contemporary world.

Insensitivity to moral pain has also been considered as a kind of 'abnormality'. It has been used as a legitimisation to permit attacks on others who are considered so barbarous that they have no sensibility to moral pain. With their incurable amorality, these 'others' deserve, even need occupation by another power.

The modern concepts of civilisation and evolution in the western world create a scheme to demonstrate a progressive hierarchy of cultures and peoples. This places the shameless others at the lowest level: these are backward, old cultures without self-control. Many Euro-centric writers condemn their own past – medieval Europe – as well as native peoples and cultures outside Europe for not feeling enough shame and for therefore being primitive and undeveloped. These 'backward' peoples behaved more publicly in matters such as nakedness, sexuality, urinating and so on. People of medieval Europe or people of 'uncivilised societies', were considered childish within this perspective. Norbert Elias, for example, suggested that the emotional struc-

tures and consciousness of uncivilised people were childish because they were repeating the processes that civilised people had passed through in history. According to this linear perspective, the truth of civilised societies is a truth that uncivilised societies could never realise, and shame is only present at a very high level of culture. Shame is based on the suppression of sexual compulsions – a facility which does not exist in human nature and is only present in a progressive culture.²⁶

Such theories legitimate colonial practices and slavery; it is argued that their purpose is to civilise the shameless. These shameless foreigners represent a very early stage of human progress with their primitive body politics and their lack of self-control. And so occupation is, without any question, a good way to guide them into learning how to acquire the qualities of shame and self-control.

Baghdad, the city of harems and the fantasies of the Arabian nights, has been a target for this approach many times before. But today, as the prison abuse in Abu Ghraib shows, the notion of a shame threshold is used to create a radically different form of legitimisation.

It follows the same logic. We can see the same occupation politics, the same linear scheme, the same self-pride. Today, however, the meaning of being ashamed works the other way around.

US consultants analysing Iraqis and Arabs came to the conclusion that Arabs were much too conservative in their approach to sexual attitudes. Sexuality and especially homophobia were their weak points. The US authorities decided to exploit these qualities in their interrogations. They concentrated on creating humiliating scenes with a sexual character. In the torture fantasies created in Abu Ghraib, US forces created a near-perfect replica of common pornographic images. Scenarios such as the peeing scene, the woman holding a man on a leash, underwear placed on a face to be smelt, a group of naked men lying on each other, were familiar sex (and also porn) possibilities for the civilised citizen.

The scale had been turned upside down; shamelessness or lack of self-control were not symptoms of a primitive condition. Instead, extreme shame and over-control were read as symptoms of primitiveness. US soldiers claim that the specific scene of holding the leash, was not only humiliating Iraqi detainees, but also implied that the prisoners are backward primitives who do not understand contemporary sex and who are too easily hurt by simple sexual acts. In this way, primitiveness was demonstrated by the inability to conform to the new shame culture of post-sexual revolution societies.

At one time, fantastic, orientalist images of the harems of Baghdad circulated. These evoked scenarios such as four wives and one man, fantastic orgies and baths offering enjoyment and satisfaction, women volunteering as sex slaves, lazy and – always – hard men, and power relations used for pleasure: in all, a dazzling picture of uncivilised people. Later, thanks to western

modernisation, these people managed partially, although with very slow steps, to start to achieve civilisation. Modernisation demanded that each man should only have one wife; it even instituted the inalienable rights of women. And instead of the sex-addicted leisure culture of the old days, a work-culture was imposed, with an orderly sexual life. More control, more shame, more civilisation.

Today Baghdad is uncivilised again. And this time, because its people feel too much shame. Iraqi people (or Afghans) are seen as less civilised, or even as non-civilised, for they are unable to comprehend the contemporary shame levels of a civilisation to which they must adapt, and they never see how much shame they should feel. And this is another point showing that they have a long road to travel before they become civilised ...

While the ‘civilised’ world is creating opportunities for those who want used women’s underwear on their faces, while taboos are breaking down, while all the behaviours which were once condemned as pagan are now being embraced, while gender identities are mixing, and boundaries are disappearing, while sado-masochist alternatives are growing more detailed, more common and more public, and even creating their own institutions, and while every fetish is being allotted its deserved rights, this ‘uncivilised’ world in Iraq presents examples of sexualities which seem like diseases to be cured. The Iraqis’ extreme sexual sensitivity is read as an open sign of their uncivilised character – and this is where the abuse starts.

In the ‘civilised’ world, the only sexual demons are sexual acts that violate human rights – such as the abuse of children. A sexual difference is no longer, in itself, a target for condemnation because it is not normal, it can only be condemned if it is against human rights. But, who is human anyway?

Of course, these tortured Iraqi prisoners and others are not being accused of failing to take pleasure from these acts, because they did not volunteer for them. Still, it is as if the entire scenario is designed to throw into their faces the argument that sexuality is too touchy a topic for them, and that they suffer from a primitive homophobia. It is as if during torture, they not only experience pain, but they are also being told that they are too barbarous to be masochists!

Masochism requires an environment of mutual freedom, where mutual wills can join for pleasure. In Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s classical novel, *Venus in Furs*, the main characters – Wanda and Severin – consider living out their master-slave fantasies in a foreign land. They are worried that they will not be able to experience them as they wish to in their hometown. So Severin (the slave) offers to go with Wanda to a country where slavery still exists: to the Orient, to Turkey. The idea of this journey to the East in order to experience slavery freely, at first sounds appealing to Wanda. But then she changes her mind and refuses to sign the contract in Istanbul. ‘No’, she says, ‘I have thought things over. What special value would there be in owning a slave

where everyone owns slaves. What I want is to have a slave, I alone, here in our civilised sober, Philistine world, and a slave who submits helplessly to my power solely on account of my beauty and personality, not because of law, or property rights, or compulsions. This attracts me’.

Sexual humiliation during torture is not a new fact and overseas torture activity by US forces was seen in other countries before the Iraq war. Of course, the US forces were not the first to bring torture to Middle East. Abu Ghraib, once one of Saddam’s torture centres, now shows its loyalty to the continuity of power by hosting new torturers.

What is *new* is the number of torture images that are circulating. The show of torture is perhaps more striking than the torture itself. The images’ well-designed scenes and angles are striking. The images’ wide distribution is extremely novel... two million hits for an actual political torture is startling. They raise many questions.

For the ‘civilised’ world perhaps these events suggest some problematic applications and some examples of misbehaviour. Were the ‘civilised’ world’s e-surfers the real target audience of this torture show? Who knows? The ‘uncivilised’ world has more reasons to consider that they themselves were the more likely targets for these images.

Another news story suggests that the torture methods used in Iraq were similar to those detailed in a CIA handbook on coercive interrogation methods produced forty years ago during the Vietnam War. That manual states: ‘The threat of pain is a far more effective interrogation tool than actually inflicting pain’. So, the US military authorities threaten to make more and more prisoners become part of the show, thus making many more into torture victims from whom the torturer can construct his show.

The Abu Ghraib photographs did not demonstrate the most terrible torture applications. When considering Iraq, we are discussing a country in a geographic region where systematic torture has been instituted in the very recent past; we are looking at photographs from places where torture practices were common. Readers and viewers from such regions know that is not exceptional to have a relative, friend or a neighbour who was tortured. People who would feel threatened by such photographs grew up with far more terrifying torture stories. Neither Abu Ghraib nor Guantanamo would gain a prominent place in charts depicting Great World Torture Centres. US forces know of worse forms of torture, for they have applied such techniques several times, as do many other states and armies: they have even given courses on the subject to many torturers of the ‘uncivilised’ world.

Remember the first images that came from Abu Ghraib.

A torture scene in which Lynndie R. England was playing her role with enthusiasm was one of the first Abu Ghraib images I came across. I had expected to see images where occupying male soldiers rape women, since we know this happens in most wars. A few examples of this kind of stereotypical

rape image from Iraq can be found on the internet, and are probably filed in archives, as the authorities imply; but even if they exist, they don’t have a big role in this show because they are merely stereotypical.

England’s photos: a woman with a cigarette in her mouth, pointing at the genital organs of a naked ‘native’ man, whose face was hidden by sandbags. That is all she does, she only points – but still, the photo gives a terrible impression of torture. The position of her hands suggests the holding of a machine-gun. We are witnessing a woman occupier, showing captured naked penises with a gesture of shooting them with a machine gun – and, at the same time, her hand gestures, and her way of standing with her left foot in front, and the way she is slightly leaning towards the naked penises, reminds me of a more common scene, where a showman is presenting a new guest to the show. Applause. Applause. Till our palms explode ...

Torture took its place in the show world of the twenty-first century with these photos, and slipped effortlessly into the entertainment industry.

The woman torturer of a ‘civilised’ country, with its inalienable women’s rights, is showing us the uncivilised penises she has captured, smiling, possibly accompanied by a melody. Whatever ... this is a fascinating show. A show that threatens many, many people. And these images’ purpose is not to expose the terrifying dimensions of torture in Iraq. It is the opposite; it is revealing how all the shows in world are torture. All these television entertainment shows, competitions, stages, meaningless clapping each contain torture. The show in torture is showing the torture in the show.

Of course, it is possible to ask: how did we watch a torture show in the past and how will we watch it today?

The consumption of torture is often also a stage of torture process. Sometimes you hear the screams of other victims while you are waiting for your turn, and these direct messages make you feel the torture your brother/sister/companion is experiencing. Under the Inquisition, one of the first institutions that exploited torture techniques, different stages were designed for breaking resistance. In some instances, the first stage was to threaten the victim with possible torture. As it is known by torturers of our times, the threat itself can often achieve the desired result. The inquisition would pass onto another stage if the verbal threat itself was not enough, and the victim would be taken to the dungeon or torture chamber, where instruments of torture were shown like an exhibition. These dark places created fear, horror and hopelessness. Showing the instruments of torture and the torturers was the second phase of torture. The potential and threat of pain are also part of the torture. The knowledge of the place of torture is in itself a torture.

The materials and tools used by the Inquisition to intimidate and to torture were exhibited, centuries later, in a torture exhibition, which toured through Europe. Its programme explained: ‘Shown in many historical and prestigious venues all over Europe, in Tokyo, in Argentina and Mexico, the exhibition has

always raised the interest of millions of visitors and the press, not only for its great visual impact, but also for its clear message against the violation of human rights'.²⁷

Unfortunately, this is not the only conclusion that can be drawn from the exhibition. Sometimes opposition groups display the torturers' techniques to expose the dirty and ugly side of a pseudo-democratic regime. On the other hand, the display of torture and victims of torture has been a part of the torture process: it can be used to humiliate, to threaten and to terrorise. The effects of such exhibitions really depend on how they are presented and perceived.

'Exposition Boards', stocks or pillories, were an old method used in many places from Britain to China as a punishment. They locked the victim into a wooden board with his head and arms and sometimes legs put into holes through the board. The victims were then exposed in the streets or in a square, sometimes with the sin or guilt of the victim is written on the board.

It could be argued that, in Iraq, the Exposition Board was updated and its techniques developed into photography. The US forces used more complex instruments than a simple wooden board. Statements by the Abu Ghraib detainees tell us that they recall the endless photographs as a kind of torture.

This aggressive side of photography has been analysed or criticised many times before. But in the Abu Ghraib case, we can take a step forward, and when we list the types of prison abuse carried out in Iraq, we should add 'taking photographs' to the list: Beating, bastinado, locking up in small spaces, applying cold, holding in different painful positions, raping, leaving hungry and waterless, being forced to eat shit or drink urine, and now, 'taking photographs' especially in undesired positions.

One detainee says they told him to stroke his penis in front of an American female soldier. Guards were 'laughing, taking pictures': 'They came with two naked boys, and they were cuffed together face to face and Grainer was beating them, and a group of guards were watching and taking pictures from top and bottom. And there were three female soldiers laughing at the prisoners'.

Their statements give detailed accounts of how guards ordered them to masturbate, for example, and then took pictures, or to bend over, like dogs (and like homosexuals, perhaps they thought), how they were put into special sex positions and posed for the photographs. 'They were taking pictures of everything they did to me'. One victim on his knees in front of another victim, both masturbating. 'Like they were in a porno movie'. And the power of 'watching' was used: just watching and laughing, making them watch each other naked. Making a father and son watch each other naked. 'They removed all my clothes for seven days and they were bringing a group of people to watch me naked'. Sometimes directly being ordered to pose like homosexuals, and then taking photographs. Most of the abuse was posing for photographs unwillingly. It is also noticeable that they wanted detainees to stroke their

penises so frequently, as if they were acting in porn scenes, but also masturbating as if they were watching one, as if they were consuming one. And homophobia was used frequently as part of the abuse.

And then, this systematic photographing of everything ends with the images being published everywhere. These torture victims are like some unlucky walk-ons, and the real torture is the photographs. This process aims not to obtain information but to produce these photos. These torture shows, designed for exhibition, this new trend, is perhaps a new form of torture specifically for Iraq, or more generally for the Middle East. This concept can be transferred and transformed on a global scale.

But we, receivers of these images, how do we 'consume' them? How can you consume a torture show?

- interactive (the Islamic penalty of stoning to death, witch-burning, and lynching)
- with appetite; with applause, curiosity, cheering, excitement, the feel of watching an 'event', like watching TV. As Doctor Geddes said in 1682 during the execution, by the Inquisition, of a series of various punishments: 'there has been no bigger show in Madrid for years. The citizens are waiting for the event as though they were waiting for a festival, with impatience'.
- with fear, taking it as a warning, anxiously
- without consent, under duress, as a part of the torture, being forced to watch torture applied to friends, lovers, relatives etc
- with anger, looking for a guilty person
- with a supermarket basket, from the shelves
- fast, silently
- with conscience, compassion, by 'feeling shame'

You can add other ways ...

But what was the result of these photographs and their consumption: what were the effects? Did it have any effect on the consciences of people in different parts of the world?

Many reactions to the Abu Ghraib photos demonstrated what might be termed an 'official conscience': a conscience that does not make its own decisions but follows state guidance and definitions, to the point where it loses all the necessary ethical characteristics of a sense of conscience, while still using the language of human rights. This led to an 'official opposition conscience', which suggested that the torture at Abu Ghraib should be seen as regrettable, but accidental.

There is also a new 'totalitarian conscience', which did not feel hurt when half a million Iraqi children died because of the embargo, and today feels no disgust at the sight of these images. And it is not only Mr. Bush who has it...

After the events, Slavoj Žižek said, ‘And the fact that the case turned into a public scandal that put the US administration on the defensive is a positive sign. In a really “totalitarian” regime, the case would simply be hushed up. (In the same way, the fact that US forces did not find weapons of mass destruction is a positive sign: A truly “totalitarian” power would have done what cops usually do — plant drugs and then “discover” the evidence of crime.)’. Žižek took these ‘defensive positions’ as signs of a democracy.²⁸

However, when the US authorities admitted that they could not find any weapons of mass destruction, this could also be read more pessimistically. Why should a ruling power have to ‘plant drugs’ when it is also possible to confess that there are no drugs but still apply the punishment for ‘having drugs’?

Could this not be considered as evidence of a more advanced totalitarianism? Maybe this is not a ‘really totalitarian regime’ – but it is ‘another totalitarian regime’. We cannot assume that the US administration does not know that the same message will be understood differently in different places. It could be understood as a defence in one place, but as an attack somewhere else.

The occupying forces are easily killing people without feeling the need to provide explanations. They are able to bomb a wedding party to add another small massacre to the history of the region, and feel that it is enough to explain that ‘bad people party too’. These new authorities are creating a new totalitarian regime in which they do not control every small detail or aspect of life as happens in a ‘really totalitarian regime’, but in which values are temporary and formed according to their role in international interests: a new, eclectic totalitarianism.

The public humiliation of Saddam Hussein

ALLAN ANTLIFF AND MARCUS MILWRIGHT

‘Ladies and gentlemen... we got him’. That was how Paul Bremer III opened his press conference announcing the capture of Saddam Hussein by the US 4th Infantry Division on 13 December, 2003 (Garamone, 2003). Bremer’s presentation was augmented by a video display of Hussein being pulled from a ‘spider hole’ by smiling American soldiers and a second clip displaying the former president saying ‘ahhhh’ for a US medical examiner during processing. Information concerning the arrest and processing of Hussein was filtered through the media wing of the US Defence Department which supplied additional visuals. It released ‘before’ and ‘after’ mugshots of a dishevelled, bearded Hussein and a cleaned-up Hussein, minus the beard. The infamous ‘Ace of Spades’ poker card with Hussein’s photo was also published with a red

line crossed through it, signalling ‘mission accomplished’. And there were additional articles – “‘Saddam Caught Like a Rat’ US Infantry Commander Says”; ‘Saddam Hussein: Disoriented and Bewildered’ – to enhance the story-line’s human dimension. This was rich news fodder for the mass media, which dutifully regurgitated the videos, photographs, and reports – ‘Saddam Captured “Like a Rat” in Raid’ (*Fox News*); ‘We Got the Rat!’ (cover, *New York Newsday*). The circumstances of Hussein’s capture were an object of ridicule, and in short order his dishevelled visage with slogans such as ‘We Got Him!’, ‘No More Holes for Saddam’, and ‘Ace in the Hole’ was gracing everything from coffee mugs to thong underwear (from the Saddam Hussein Gift Shop).

The spectacle seems extraordinary but, in fact, the ritual humiliation of defeated leaders is a long established tradition in western politics. During the era of the Crusades, for example, Europeans frequently humiliated Muslim rulers to symbolically display the superiority of the Christian faith. This is the central motif of a play by Jean Bodel performed in the French town of Arras c.1200 (*Jeu de saint Nicholas*) which contrasted the spiritual efficacy of a painted icon of Saint Nicholas with the impotence of the Saracen (ie Muslim) idol of Tervagant. Tervagant was one of the unholy ‘trinity’ – along with Muhammad and Apollo – commonly believed to have been worshiped by Muslims. As the ‘true’ power of the Christian icon reveals itself through the course of the play, a Muslim king is placed in the humbling position of acknowledging that his own belief is false. In the end the idol of Tervagant is cast to the ground and abused as an ‘empty bladder of wind’ (Camille, 1989: 129-34).

In the early sixteenth century Europeans found themselves faced by the seemingly inexorable expansion of the Ottoman Turkish empire. The long catalogue of Ottoman military successes against both Muslim and Christian opponents was, however, marred by one notable defeat. In July 1402 the armies of the Ottoman sultan Bayazid I Yildirim (the title means ‘the thunderbolt’) engaged the forces of the Turko-Mongolian conqueror Temür (better known in the West as Tamerlane) on a plain north of Ankara in Anatolia. The latter was victorious and, in the aftermath of the battle, Bayazid was captured and brought before Temür. The Persian historian Sharaf al-Din Yazdi (d.1454) reports that Bayazid was well treated by his captor (Yazdi, 1723: 2, pp 285-86) but when this episode made its way to the West the story changed. In one of the earliest European descriptions, Piccolomini (Pope Pius II, d.1464) claims that the Bayazid was held captive within an iron cage (for a survey of the European and Turkish sources, see Ellis-Fermor in Marlowe, 1930: 17-42). A more elaborate version of events is given by the Greek emigré Theodore Spandounes (or, Spandugino, late fifteenth / early sixteenth century). He writes:

When Sachatai [i.e. Temür] got back to Scythia he staged a magnificent triumph for his victory over Bayazid and a great assembly attended by almost all the lords and princes of Scythia; and the cage containing Bayezid was brought in. Then [Sachatai] did something very out of keeping with his

grandeur and noble character. He had Ildrim's [i.e. Bayazid's] wife, who was also his prisoner, brought in and he caused her clothes to be ripped down to the navel so that she showed all her pudenda; and he made her wait and serve food to all his guests. Ildrim seeing his wife thus shamed, bewailed his fortune and wanted to kill himself at once. But he had no knife or other means, so he banged his head against the iron bars of his cage so hard that he dispatched himself miserably (Spandounes, 1997: 23-24).

The humiliation of Bayazid was illustrated in books, paintings, tapestries, plays, operas, and even a ballet (Denny, 1999: 6-9). Why was the public humiliation of a Muslim ruler by a non-Christian so important to European audiences? Certainly the need to compensate for the military threat posed by the Ottoman armies was a major factor, but what was equally significant was the belief that the event illustrated the power of the Christian God over all beings, including non-believers. In this context, Temür was not an individual agent operating with free will, but the instrument of divine justice (a 'scourge of God': Battenhouse, 1941). The defeat and humiliation of the Ottoman Bayazid at the hands of Temür was evidence that the Turks did not enjoy God's Divine sanction and that they could be cast down and destroyed at any time, if the Lord so willed it.

Which brings us back to the humiliation of Saddam Hussein at the hands of the US military. Following the attacks of 11 September 2001 by the Muslim terror network of Osama Bin Ladin, George W. Bush announced that American was embarking on a 'war' which he likened to a 'crusade' (Carroll, 2004). In 2002 Bush's close friend, Attorney General George Ashcroft, stated that the US was 'a nation called to defend freedom – a freedom that is not the grant of any government or document but is our endowment from God' (Giroux, 2004). And in 2003, contemplating the impending invasion of Iraq, Bush intoned, 'We do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all life, and all of history. May He guide us now' (Giroux, 2004). For George W. Bush and co., the defeat of Hussein is verification of God's blessing on the United States, the embodiment of freedom that will vanquish evil just as surely as, in the nineteenth century, it vanquished the 'savage' Indian who sits, slumped in defeat, facing the personification of America on the pediment of the US Capitol. The public humiliation of Hussein is in keeping with the crusader logic of US culture and its manifest destiny to dominate: 'In God We Trust'.

NOTES

1. On the long-term effects of the events of 1991, see Françoise Rigaud, 'Irak: l'impossible mouvement de l'intérieur' in Mounia Bennani-Chaïbi and Olivier Filleule (eds), *Résistances et protestations dans les sociétés musulmanes* (Paris: Presses de Sciences-Po, 2003), pp.197-218.

2. Robert Fisk, 'Iraq, one year on', *Independent*, 15.03.04.
3. Published as Salam Pax, *The Baghdad Blog* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003).
4. *Guardian*, 24.01.03.
5. Quoted in the THES, 18.04.03.
6. Robert Fisk, 'The New, Free Iraq', *The Independent*, 4.07.04.
7. *Guardian*, 23.01.04.
8. *Guardian*, 25.04.03.
9. *Guardian*, 13.06.03; *Le Monde*, 22.08.03; *Guardian*, 24.10.03; *El País*, 1.11.03; *Guardian*, 30.09.04; Dahr Jamail, 'Iraq's Reality', *ZNet* 13.12.04, www.zmag.org, accessed 14 Dec 2004.
10. Cited in the *Guardian*, 13.06.03.
11. Cited in *Le Monde*, 27.06.03.
12. Cited in the *Guardian*, 28.07.03.
13. Robert Fisk, 'Iraq, one year on', op cit.
14. "'This is no good, sir!'", *Guardian*, 05.09.03.
15. Cited in the *Guardian*, 19.11.03.
16. ZNet, 5 Sep 2002, www.zmag.org, accessed 5 Sep 2002.
17. 'Dreams and Delusions', *Al Ahrām*, 30 Aug 2003, re-published in www.zmag.org, accessed 1 Sep 2003.
18. Stephen Farrell, *The Times*, 08.04.04.
19. See my 'Afghanistan, 2001-02' in Ronald Creagh and Sharif Gemie, *The Shadows Under the Lamp* (London: Freedom, 2003).
20. *Guardian*, 04.02.03.
21. Les Roberts, Riyadh Lafta, Richard Garfield, Jamal Khudhairi and Gilbert Burnham, 'Mortality before and after the 2003 invasion of Iraq: cluster sample survey', *The Lancet*, 29 Oct 2004, image.thelancet.com, accessed 1 Nov 2004.
22. *Le Figaro*, 23.01.04.
23. Sureyya Evren is a Turkish writer and editor. He has written four novels and three books of stories, all in Turkish. The latest collection of his stories was published in September 2004. He was one of the founders of Karasin Anarchist Collective in Istanbul, which also works as a publishing house. Evren has worked with his friend Rahmi on a book of political essays, and on a book on anti-globalisation movements and related theory. He has studied the connections between anarchism and poststructuralist thought and has created [RTF bookmark start: _Hlt94001982] [RTF bookmark end: _Hlt94001982]with friends. Evren is now the editor of the Istanbul-based post-anarchist magazine *Siyahi*, which concentrates on literature, contemporary art and political theory.
24. Details of the Edward H. Gibson case are taken from David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (University of California Press, 1991) pp 12-15.
25. Here, perhaps we should recall Bob Flanagan (27 December 1952 – 4 January 1996), an American writer, poet, performance artist, and comic. He was also a sufferer from cystic fibrosis, who used sado-masochistic techniques to convert his pain into pleasure and into art. Some of his performances were notable for acts of extreme masochism (on at least one occasion he hammered nails through his own scrotum, while cracking jokes). Some say he was killing the pain caused by a

serious illness with the created pain of masochism.

26. For the discussion of this thesis of Elias and others, see Hans Peter Duerr's *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess: Band I, Nacktheit und Scham. (Çýplaklýk ve Utanç, Uygarla^{ma} Sürecinin Miti: 1*, translated into Turkish by Tarhan Onur, Dost Kitabevi, 1999, Ankara. Duerr cites many examples to critique the myth of shameless natives and primitive medieval Europe.
27. See <http://www.torturamuseum.com/this.html>.
28. Slavoj Žižek, 'What Rumsfeld Doesn't Know That He Knows About Abu Ghraib', *In These Times*, 21.05.04: http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/what_rumsfeld_doesnt_know_that_he_knows_about_abu_ghraib

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REVIEW ARTICLES

In defence of Michael Bakunin

Mikhail Bakunin: the philosophical basis of his anarchism

Paul McLaughlin

Algora Publishing, New York 2002

ISBN 1892941848, 268 pages

Harassed, abused, jailed, denigrated, ridiculed, misunderstood in his own day, poor old Bakunin has long been treated by Marxists and liberal scholars alike in the most appalling and derogatory fashion. In recent decades something of an anti-Bakunin bandwagon has grown within anarchist publications as well. Derided by everyone from postmodernists to primitivists, many of these attacks have been highly personalised, petty, and largely repetitions of reactionary opinion from long ago. Such treatment motivated me a decade ago to write to write a short book on the remarkable life and political philosophy of Michael Bakunin, for in a real sense old Bakunin was one of the first to outline social anarchism as a coherent philosophy. I did not have any particular fondness for Bakunin – he was certainly not without his foibles, ethnic prejudices and political misjudgements – but his ideas about capitalism, state power and religion have a contemporary relevance in the same way as the ideas of Darwin still have salience for evolutionary biologists.

Against the backdrop of attempts to bury him, there has been a genuine renewal of interest in Bakunin in recent years, and this is reflected in Paul McLaughlin's excellent study. Focusing more on the philosophical foundations of Bakunin's social thought than his anarchism per se, the book also provides a spirited and scholarly defence of these ideas against liberal and Marxist critiques. Combining the logic of negative dialectics with an ontology of evolutionary naturalism, Bakunin's philosophy might be best described as an embryonic form of dialectical naturalism, the perspective associated with Murray Bookchin. Such ideas are therefore indicative of a stance that is far from the mechanistic materialism frequently assumed by his detractors.

THE CRITICS OF BAKUNIN

In my book I tried to defend Bakunin as against both his Marxist and liberal critics. Marx famously described Bakunin as a philosophical 'ignoramus', and Marxists have invariably followed their mentor in describing Bakunin as a petit-bourgeois ideologist like Proudhon, or as a misguided romantic with a bent for destruction and secret societies, and pour scorn on Bakunin for his 'elitist despotism'. Hal Draper, for example, saw Bakunin as essen-

tially a revolutionary brigand, whose politics involved little more than pillage, theft and murder, while Lichtheim wrote that all that Bakunin's anarchism entailed was a 'chiliastic vision of an armed uprising that would smash state and society' (Morris, 1993: 136). Thankfully, McLaughlin continues and develops my defence of Bakunin and offers a strident critique of his Marxist critics, whom he felt were critical of Bakunin mainly because the anarchist had dared to challenge the philosophical doctrines and statist politics of their hero Marx. McLaughlin notes that the Marxist scholars who dismiss Bakunin as a 'voluntarist' (in being ignorant of the political economy) or as an apolitical 'bandit', never actually studied in depth the theoretical writings of Bakunin. McLaughlin focuses his own analysis on two Marxist scholars, George Lichtheim and Francis Wheen. Lichtheim, as noted, had portrayed Bakunin as a mindless revolutionary, a misguided romantic with an insatiable faith in the goodness of humankind, yet one who, nevertheless, was bent on 'pan destruction'. This portrait of Bakunin McLaughlin fervently critiques, suggesting rather than being a hopeless romantic bent on destruction, Bakunin had his roots in the Enlightenment tradition, and that his main philosophical interests were in the development of Enlightenment naturalism and 'anti-theologism' (p4).

With regard to Wheen's biography of Marx, which includes a chapter on Bakunin entitled 'The Rogue Elephant', McLaughlin suggests that this chapter is simply a regurgitation of what Marxists have been writing about Bakunin for many decades, and that the truth value of the chapter approaches zero. The 'superfluity of this work, the idiocy of its tone, and the poverty of its content overall' meant, for McLaughlin, that Wheen's account of Bakunin lacked any scholarly merit (pp5-6).

Liberal scholars have been even more hostile to Bakunin. Eugene Pyziur also claimed that Bakunin was the 'apostle of pan destruction' and thereby a precursor of Bolshevism; Bakunin's early biographer E. H. Carr thought him an advocate of 'extreme individualism', in essence a Hegelian idealist and a precursor of Italian fascism. The eloquent liberal scholar Isaiah Berlin, in one highly biased essay, declared that Bakunin, for all his love of humanity, was like Robespierre prepared to wade through 'seas of blood' to achieve his political aims, and that Bakunin was thus akin to Attila and had a 'fascist streak' (Morris, 1993: 73). Even more crude is Aileen Kelly's portrayal of Bakunin as a prototype alienated individual, which is subtitled 'a study in the psychology and politics of Utopianism'. Showing little interest in either Bakunin the person or in his anarchism – which is dismissed as of 'little merit' – Kelly largely repeats the oft-heard diatribe of Bakunin the fanatical, gullible idealist, completely out of touch with reality.

McLaughlin's treatment of these liberal works on Bakunin is substantial and refreshing, particularly in drawing attention to their lack of thoroughness or honesty. It is ironic, then, that Berlin's famous distinction

between positive and negative freedom is actually filched from Bakunin's own writings (p17). Similarly, Kelly's apparently scholarly treatment of Bakunin as a Bolshevik in the making fails to appreciate the inherent critique of the Stalinist tendencies within Marxism that is so central to his social anarchism (p12).

McLaughlin's book consists only of two long chapters or parts: one on Bakunin's negative dialectics, the other on Bakunin's naturalism and his critique of theologism – which for Bakunin meant not only religious ideologies, but also the idealist metaphysics of Kant and Hegel. I will discuss each of these in turn.

NEGATIVE DIALECTICS

As one of the Left-Hegelians, like Stirner and Marx, Bakunin, of course, was steeped in the philosophy of Hegel. According to McLaughlin, and contrary to Carr, Bakunin however did not fully embrace Hegelian metaphysics, for he repudiated both Hegel's idealism and his form of dialectics. McLaughlin suggests that Bakunin's writings exemplify a revolutionary logic or negative dialectics in which negation is seen as a creative force – implying as Bakunin put it, a 'sense of freedom', and as the one 'true expression of justice and love' (Lehning, 1973:43). In his well-known article 'The Reaction in Germany', published anonymously in 1842 – the article Lehning suggests (1973:11) created a sensation in revolutionary circles in Germany – Bakunin offers a critique of what he calls the 'reactionary party'. Bakunin himself advocates 'democracy', which for the anarchist entailed an opposition to government, and the total transformation of the socio-economic and political order, to herald 'an original, new life which has not yet existed in history' (1973: 39). The reactionaries for Bakunin belonged to two types: the Consistent reactionaries (or conservatives) who stood for the complete suppression of the negative (the suppression, that is, of those like Bakunin who stood for democracy and the complete negation of the existing conditions), and Compromising reactionaries (or liberals) who attempted some sort of compromise or reconciliation between the positive (existing capitalism and government) and the negative – that is, democracy or the revolutionary critique. Discussing this article at some length, McLaughlin notes that Bakunin, using Hegelian terminology, is essentially concerned with exploring the contradiction between the reactionary principle – the positive thesis of unfreedom – and its antithesis – the negative principle of freedom. But for Bakunin, McLaughlin argues, the dialectical process is not viewed as sublation, or as a positive dialectic (as with Hegel, Marx and Comte), still less as a 'synthesis', but rather negation in itself is seen as an affirmative or creative principle – expressed as the principle of freedom or democracy. Contradiction for Bakunin thus represents not a

mediation nor an equilibrium but the 'preponderance of the negative' (1973:49). In Bakunin's version of the dialectic there is no synthesis, for the negative itself is seen as an 'affirmative, creative principle', one that would engender a 'new, affirmative and organic reality'. Thus the slogans of the French revolution, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, were understood by Bakunin as implying the complete negation of the political and social world of the nineteenth century. The article concludes with the famous words, 'The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too' (1973: 58). These words, McLaughlin argues, have been seriously misunderstood, for they did not imply mindless destruction, nor even nihilism, but rather Bakunin's negative logic, which implied the affirmation of freedom and the democratic order (p30). Negation for Bakunin is thus an affirmation not a mediation or sublation – an affirmation of creativity and freedom. McLaughlin thus repudiates entirely Kelly's attempt to foist upon Bakunin a triadic conception of history, which implied a 'fall' from some mythical golden age of primitive harmony, and the eventual restoration of this harmony in some vision of a utopian society. For Bakunin expressed no nostalgia for some primitive golden age, and any speculations regarding some futuristic society Bakunin regarded as reactionary (p55). As Bakunin expressed it in *Statism and Anarchy*: 'Even the most rational and profound science cannot divine the form social life will take in the future. It can determine only the negative conditions, which follow logically from a rigorous critique of existing society' (1990: 198).

McLaughlin thus regards Kelly's attempt to portray Bakunin as a utopian thinker as quite 'absurd'.

BAKUNIN'S NATURALISM

The second part of McLaughlin's book gives a very good outline of Bakunin's evolutionary naturalism as well as of Bakunin's theory of religion, for in an important sense Bakunin's naturalism is very much bound up with his critique of 'theologism' – which embraces both religious ideologies and philosophical idealism. In Bakunin's nature philosophy nature – understood as universal causality, and reality are synonymous; Bakunin making a distinction between the natural world (as actualised) and nature as universal causality, that is, the possibilities inherent or imminent in the natural, material world (p105). Materialism and naturalism, for McLaughlin, essentially have the same meaning, and he emphasises that for Bakunin nature is dynamic, with 'movement of its own' (p107). Influenced by Diderot, Feuerbach, Comte and Darwin, Bakunin's dialectical or evolutionary naturalism thus repudiates both theologism (idealism) and mechanistic materialism. It is a philosophy that is characterised by the belief that 'life always precedes thought' and that objective or natural Being is always ontologically prior to human subjectivity; and that from an epistemological standpoint dialectical

thinking precedes philosophical or theological speculation (p33). In contrast metaphysics, or what McLaughlin calls anthropocentrism, articulates the belief that thought and human subjectivity precede life and the objective natural world. Noting that Kantian metaphysics is radically opposed to naturalistic philosophy in its anthropocentrism, and given the subjectivist reactions of Kierkegaard, Stirner and the neo-Kantians against post-Hegelian philosophy, McLaughlin notes that much contemporary philosophy (whether Nietzschean, phenomenological, structuralist, post-structuralist, pragmatist or post-Marxist), besides being scholastic and obscurantist, is 'absolutely antithetical to the naturalist tradition' to which Bakunin belongs. In spite of their radical pretences, much contemporary philosophy, McLaughlin affirms, is both philosophically and politically reactionary (p68). Even Marx, McLaughlin argues, given his undue emphasis on social mediation, is essentially closer to Kant than Hegel and thus there is a Kantian strand in his materialism (p16).

Given the close association between Bakunin's naturalism and his atheism McLaughlin devotes a great deal of discussion to Bakunin's theory of religion, as well as to Feuerbach's philosophy. Indeed, Feuerbach's critique of theology and speculative philosophy had an important influence on Bakunin. Although religious consciousness may have been important in the development of human culture and in the affirmation of humanity, Bakunin was highly critical of the religion of his day, particularly Christianity, and for two reasons. Firstly, it is hostile to science and entails the abdication of human reason: and secondly, it involves the negation of human liberty (p141), particularly in having a symbiotic relationship with political power. The latter is expressed in the oppression and exploitation of the mass of people by various functionaries – priests, monarchs, gendarmes, capitalists, entrepreneurs and politicians of every shade (p148). Thus although Bakunin follows Hegel in viewing religion or the 'divine idea' as the product of human consciousness, he also emphasises the inadequacy of religion as a form of reason, and the need for human consciousness to develop beyond religion in order to realise itself (p160).

Reason, the ability of humans to create culture – the faculty by which humans achieve the consciousness of freedom (which is how Bakunin understood the rational faculty) – and the 'spirit of revolt' are the two essential aspects, for Bakunin, of human nature (p127). It should be noted that although Bakunin is better known for his critique of theologism and statism, he also opposed deterministic 'scientism', and was particularly hostile to the rule of scientific savants. Charges that Bakunin embraced the 'myth of progress' should therefore be regarded with some caution.

Making an interesting comparison between the philosophies of Marx and Bakunin, McLaughlin emphasises that Bakunin was always critical of the economic determinism that was inherent in Marx's materialist concep-

tion of history, and that Bakunin put much more stress than did Marx on the biological aspects of human life. Puzzled on how Marx 'can assert that nature is prior to that by which it is essentially mediated', McLaughlin interprets Marx as a Kantian idealist rather than as a 'genuine' materialist (p170). But of course Marx was affirming, like later anthropologists, that nature is ontologically prior to humans, though our knowledge of the world is always socially mediated.

In my earlier study I suggested that Bakunin's philosophical writings on nature presented, in embryonic form, an ecological approach to the world, one that is materialist and historical, and stresses the continuity and organic link between humans and nature (Morris, 1993:84). This ecological world view is implicit in the philosophy of Feuerbach, who wrote:

Man is dependent on nature ... he should live in harmony with nature ... even in his highest intellectual development he should not forget that he is a part and child of nature, but at all times honour nature and hold it sacred, not only as the ground and source of his existence, but also as the ground and source of his mental and physical well-being. (p199)

For Feuerbach this did not imply a religious perspective or the deification of nature. Yet although Bakunin follows Feuerbach in his naturalism, and is not, unlike Kant and Marx, an anthropocentric thinker, McLaughlin does suggest that there is an anti-ecological strain in Bakunin's thought, when, for instance, he writes that humans can and should conquer and master nature (p231). But it is also important to recognise that Bakunin was influenced – like Kropotkin – by Darwin's evolutionary biology, and thus conceived of nature as a kind of evolutionary process, which ought not to be equated with the myth of progress. Thus human sociality and consciousness is seen by Bakunin as a natural development, and he denied any dualism between humans and nature, which was intrinsic to Cartesian mechanistic philosophy (Morris 1993:79). What of course was significant about Darwin's evolutionary philosophy is that it introduced and emphasised the crucial importance of openness, chance, creativity, and the subjective agency and individuality of all organisms in the evolutionary process. Surprisingly, McLaughlin has little discussion of Darwin or evolutionary theory.

What is perplexing and frustrating about McLaughlin's study is that it contains some fifty pages of footnotes, many of which suggest valuable discussion in their own right and could have formed another chapter. These topics include: a critique of Marx's notion of a state 'administered' society, which Bakunin presciently saw as leading to despotism (p80); and Bakunin's 'federalist principle', which implied that the organisation of social life was from below. Also of interest was McLaughlin's denial that

Bakunin was an anarcho-syndicalist (p232) and the discussion regarding Bakunin's constant advocacy of true communism, which implied the unity of freedom and equality.

As McLaughlin denoted, liberal critics like Berlin and Pyziur denigrate Bakunin's socialism, while Marxists repudiate the libertarian aspects of Bakunin's political philosophy: in essence, of course, Bakunin was a libertarian socialist.

For McLaughlin, Bakunin was an heir to some of the radical aspects of the Enlightenment tradition – stemming from Spinoza and Diderot – which suggests that through secular reason and empirical knowledge (and struggle) humans could create a better world – one in which liberty, equality and fraternity could be fully manifested. Like his radical contemporaries Marx and Kropotkin, Bakunin was unduly optimistic regarding the coming revolution – but to blame 'reason' for the ills of the twentieth century seems to me to be completely facile. Equally, to describe Bakunin as a 'modernist' is also rather inept, for Bakunin repudiated many of the key aspects of so-called 'modernity' – specifically the modern nation state, industrial capitalism, possessive individualism and liberal ideology more generally.

No social anarchist, as far as I am aware, certainly not McLaughlin, treats Bakunin's writings as 'holy writ' or with uncritical adulation, for they have long acknowledged that Bakunin's anarchism is complex and full of contradictions. Most have approached Bakunin with an attitude of critical sympathy, recognising that for all his faults and foibles, he was the first to articulate, through his disputes with Marx, social anarchism as a political philosophy. Thus rather than viewing Bakunin as a misguided romantic bent on violence, or as having an unbalanced mind, he has been described – by, for example, Peter Marshall – as a man whose search for wholeness was a 'bold and inspiring attempt to reclaim one's humanity in an alienated world' (1992: 308). McLaughlin, likewise, emphasises the contemporary relevance and critical significance of Bakunin – both with regard to his dialectical naturalism as a philosophy, and his social anarchism as a political vision.

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Enemies of the state? Homosexuality in the nineteenth century

Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century

Graham Robb

Picador 2003

342+viii pages, hardback £18.99 ISBN 0-330-48223-8

paperback £8.99 ISBN 0-330-48224-6

London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914

Matt Cook

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

ISBN 0-251-82207-6 223+xiv pages £45

Two days after the attack on the World Trade Centre, leading USA Christian fundamentalist Jerry Falwell denounced ‘the pagans and the abortionists, the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians’: ‘I point the finger in their face and say “you helped this happen”’.¹ To their enemies, feminists and homosexuals share with anarchists the desire – and the potential – to undermine the foundations of society, to create chaos. In the late nineteenth century, fears of ‘sexual anarchy’, the overthrow of existing gender and sexual power structures, were intertwined with anxieties about the growth of anarchism. There were bombings in Paris, Barcelona and London, and 1895 saw the widely publicised prosecution of Oscar Wilde for homosexuality. ‘The unbridled licentiousness of your literary decadent has its counterpart in the violence of the political anarchist’, wrote one contemporary.² Scientists and social commentators drew on new anthropological theories to depict homosexuals and anarchists alike as exemplars of degeneration: biological as well as political harbingers of social destruction. Though these ideas were presented as modern reason replacing outmoded superstition, their apocalyptic rhetoric echoed the religious fire-and-brimstone tradition now continued by Falwell and his fellow fundamentalists.

Publishers and booksellers willing to take on anarchist literature were often already involved with material on the fringes of legality. (Conrad’s fictional shopkeeper Mr Verloc in *The Secret Agent*, furtively dealing in both pornography and anarchism, is entirely realistic in this respect.) The new disciplines of sexology and anthropology overlapped and intertwined with pornography, and any discussion of sexual matters could be deemed pornographic. In 1898, the sexual radical George Bedborough was arrested and convicted on obscenity charges after carelessly selling a copy of Havelock Ellis’s *Sexual Inversion*, one of the first English-language studies of homosexuality, to a policeman. The charges against Bedborough

also involved copies of *The Adult: a Journal of Sex*, which he edited. This was the journal of the Legitimation League, an organisation campaigning for free love and the rights of children born outside marriage. The League’s honorary president was anarchist-feminist Lillian Harman, and the membership included many anarchists. It also included an infiltrator from Scotland Yard, Detective John Sweeney – who recalls in his memoirs that the authorities believed an attack on marriage laws to be just the preliminary to an attack on all laws. The prosecution, he says, was a deliberate attempt to destroy at a blow the triple threats of free love, homosexual propaganda and anarchism.³

Sharing the unwanted attentions of religious fanatics, the police and scientists doesn’t necessarily mean that homosexuals and anarchists saw themselves as having anything in common. Then, as now, anarchists could be as prejudiced as anyone else when it came to homosexuality, and most homosexuals showed little interest in overthrowing the social order. But the increasing visibility of both groups was linked to the wider social upheavals of the fin de siècle. Between 1890 and 1914, more than a thousand books on homosexuality were published. A hundred years later, there is a similar flourishing of interest, and the two books under review make valuable contributions to the steadily growing field of gay history. At the risk of sounding like the parody reviewer in *Field and Stream* who complained about having to wade through the extraneous material in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in order to fish out details of practical gamekeeping, I suggest that anarchist researchers can find useful and thought-provoking material here.⁴

In *Strangers*, Graham Robb sets out to map the ‘lost world’ of homosexual love in Europe and [North] America in the nineteenth century. He wants to challenge the preconceptions and prejudices of those ignorant of gay lives and histories, as well as those historians who, he says, paint a melodramatic account of largely invented oppression and largely fictitious liberation. ‘Evidence of ordinariness tends to be neglected because it lacks dramatic interest.’ But, he argues, extreme examples are not representative, and ‘theories, then and now, can make the gay past seem much poorer and more dismal than it was’.⁵

For many historians, the key events in the development of modern gay male identities were the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which extended the laws against male homosexuality, and Wilde’s subsequent prosecution. Robb and Cook concur in part that these episodes had relatively little impact on the way most gay men lived their lives. According to Robb’s analysis of the statistics, once the rise in population is taken into account there was no significant increase in the rates of prosecution or conviction for homosexual offences in England and Wales until well into the twentieth century. (After sexual acts between consenting adult men in private were legalised in the UK in 1967, rates of prosecution actually

went up.) Meanwhile in France, where homosexual acts were legally tolerated, police simply used other laws to persecute homosexuals. But policing, persecution and publicity could produce solidarity and a sense of connection as often as it produced fear and silence. Whatever the law, Robb argues that most homosexuals carried on with their lives and met with a surprising degree of toleration or even acceptance. They 'lived under a cloud, but it seldom rained'. The commonest forms of persecution were silence and the social pressures which led to shame and concealment: 'Loveless marriages caused more lasting grief than laws.'⁶

Robb also rejects that fundamentalist version of Foucault which says that 'homosexuals' did not exist before late nineteenth century sexologists invented the term. Arguing that this is a fantasy about academic power, he claims that homosexuals played a significant part in constructing the medical discourses which supposedly constructed them. The boundaries of acceptable sexual behaviour – or even what constitutes sexual behaviour – may shift over time, but the very existence of boundaries indicates a continuing heterosexual/homosexual division.

Apart from this minor skirmish with Foucauldians, Robb does not directly address recent historiographical debates. Indeed he is dismissive of theorising in general, pointing out that theories do not bring about equality. Though some nineteenth century proponents of medical and biological explanations of homosexuality had progressive and humane intentions and saw themselves as pathbreakers for human rights, in fact they inhabited 'an intellectual swampland', their theories hopeless byways leading nowhere.⁷ However, sexology, along with scandal sheets and the notorious 'French novels' (a byword in England for sexual impropriety), enabled readers to realise that they were not alone, and to devise stories which made sense of their lives.

Although *Strangers* rejects the standard account of progress towards (relative) sexual liberation, it is nevertheless structured as a movement from darkness to light. What characterises gay communities, Robb says, is not so much their coherence, but 'their ability to survive in the diffuse manner of resistance groups or nomads'.⁸ In a powerful and engrossing final section he puts forward a convincing argument for a vital gay presence in art, literature, religion, and what he calls the art of living. Homosexuality is not something separate from mainstream culture, but part of it; in the words of the later gay liberation slogan, 'We Are Everywhere'. Finishing with a bravura analysis of the emergence of the modern detective novel, Robb suggests that by the turn of the century homosexuals could be seen in a shamanic role, or as a kind of existential avant-garde, skilled in masks, codes, disguises, interpretation, allusion, deception: detectives of the modern. I wonder what Detective Sweeney would have said to that.

Robb writes accessibly, with great style and wit, though in a book aimed

at a general audience he too often sacrifices developed argument in favour of a smart remark, producing more sparkle than illumination. He uses the term 'nineteenth century' extremely loosely, and his examples jump about between countries and decades in juxtapositions sometimes helpful, sometimes just anachronistic. I was pleased that he begins with a promise to discuss lesbians as well as gay men since they are part of the same story. However, the material he actually includes on lesbians is disappointingly thin, most of it based on a relatively narrow selection of secondary sources.

Matt Cook avoids this problem in his book by concentrating exclusively on men. Although both authors discuss the importance of friendship networks in providing support as well as fostering an emergent gay politics, they ignore the many everyday friendships and alliances between lesbians and gay men. At the same time, feminists from a variety of perspectives were raising new questions about sexuality and sexual identity. And on a more general level, it is impossible to grasp how homosexuality in the nineteenth century was seen as a threat to family, nation and empire without considering the contemporary debates about femininity as well as masculinity.

Both books show how the anonymity and opportunities offered by the growth of the cities enabled individual transformations and the development of gay communities. In his highly focused study, drawing on the insights of cultural geography, Cook uses a fascinating selection of diaries, letters, novels, and other contemporary accounts to map out London's sites of homoerotic encounter. The book is structured thematically around different representations of the relationship between homosexuality and the city – from journalists who wrote of Soho as 'a fertile breeding bed of crime and anarchy', with its foreigners, prostitutes and blackmailers, to Edward Carpenter's lyrical account of finding love and democracy in the noisy crowds.⁹ Cook argues that the Decadents, for whom the city was a place of excitement, intensity, danger and pleasure, and the neo-Hellenists, who emphasised healthy bodies, new virtues and social renewal, were significant in formulating urban gay identities and politics: an analysis which would gain from an acknowledgement of the part played in both circles by lesbians.

Some of the characters he discusses are important figures in anarchist history, for example author and agitator Edward Carpenter, who lived and wrote more or less openly as a gay man, and Oscar Wilde, who gave practical as well as ideological support to socialist, anarchist and feminist causes as well as writing the much loved and reprinted *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*. Although Cook discusses how Wilde's various identities were able to emerge in different parts of the city, he misses out this overtly political identity.

A less familiar character is George Ives, who in the early 1890s founded the Order of the Chaerona, a somewhat secretive and elitist precursor of Gay Liberation, which Cook believes to be the first such

group in Britain. Ives, a champion of the cross-class and transnational potential of homosexual organisation, became increasingly interested in socialism and anarchism, cruising ‘The People’ as he rode round London on his bike.

One of the places highlighted by Cook as a site where space could be reconfigured according to different visions of desire, comradeship and sexual interaction, is Hyde Park. Here Wilde’s *Dorian Gray* explored forbidden sensation, soldiers from the nearby barracks solicited sex for pleasure as well as for pay, while Carpenter thought of it as a place where desire could go hand in hand with democracy. Ives wanted Hyde Park to be publicly designated as a ‘spoonitorium’; it would be unlocked, secluded, open to lovers at all times – an (outdoor) prefiguration of the 1960s Situationist vision of ‘rooms more conducive to dreams than any drug, and houses where one cannot help but love’.¹⁰

Political demonstrations in Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square could well be added to Cook’s tour (or *détournement*) of stations and skating rinks, pubs and cafés, bookshops and the British Museum: those alternatives to domestic and familial space which allowed gay men to discover themselves in discovering one another.

Such tales resonate with my own experiences as a teenager who came to London from a stiflingly conservative small provincial town. My first anarchist meeting was in a smoky basement room in Soho; there I glimpsed a life that could be different from the one laid out for me. A few years later and just a couple of streets away, I made my first visit to the Women’s Liberation Workshop, located upstairs from a newsagent selling sex magazines. Soho was still, as it was in the nineteenth century, a location where all kinds of dissidents and outsiders could meet. Cook’s careful, stimulating analysis suggests parallel directions for an anarchist cultural geography that would investigate those spaces which make anarchist identities and activism possible. It would also look at how marginal groups – deliberate or inadvertent enemies of the state – may, sometimes at least, come together in what fin de siècle lesbian writer Vernon Lee called ‘the queer comradeship of outlawed thought’.¹¹

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NOTES

1. CNN news report, 14.9.01.
2. Hugh E.M. Stutfield, quoted in Cook, 111.
3. John Sweeney, 1904, *At Scotland Yard*, Grant Richards, London.
4. Ed Zern, 1959, in ‘Best of the Best’, *Field and Stream*, Oct 1995: 148.

5. Robb, 2, 10, 91.
6. Robb, 30.
7. Robb, 42.
8. Robb, 169.
9. George Sims, quoted in Cook, 65.
10. Ivan Chtcheglov, 1953, ‘Formulary for a New Urbanism’, in Ken Knabb, ed., 1981, *Situationist International Anthology*, Bureau of Public Secrets, Berkeley, California, 3.
11. Lee, quoted in Richard Dellamora, 2004, ‘Productive Decadence: “The Queer Comradeship of Outlawed Thought”’: Vernon Lee, Max Nordau, and Oscar Wilde’, *New Literary History* 35:4, 529-546.

Reviews

Emma Goldman: a documentary history of the American years, Volume 1, Made for America, 1890-1901

Edited by Candace Falk, Barry Pateman and Jessica Moran
University of California Press, 2003
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It is a curiosity of anarchist history that much of the available material is biographical. Of course, biography is a necessary first step, but even general works recount the lives and writings of ‘great thinkers’ to represent all the varied activity of a social movement.¹ So, is another book on Emma Goldman, Famous Woman Anarchist to be welcomed?

Actually we owe this book to the existence of Emma Goldman, Famous Woman, and the celebration of her life which began in the 1960s. To a generation of radicals in search of role models she was an understandable attractive choice. Goldman’s life is one of constant activism; and activism on familiar issues: war, free speech and a concern for women’s freedom more social than legalistic. One eventual outcome of this was the creation of an image of Emma Goldman the radical in which her anarchism and involvement in the anarchist movement fade to a strong but non-specific ‘spirit’, or go entirely unmentioned.² Not since Max Nettlau’s attempt to collect every document relating to Bakunin has an anarchist been as heavily researched as this. So, is the work of the Emma Goldman Papers project worthwhile – or are we straying into the twilight world of the archaeologist, where mumbling academic clones protest ‘The crucial factor is what colour underpants Kropotkin wore in 1893...’ (Warren, 1980)? Thankfully, this documentary edition gives us a much more accurate picture of Goldman’s activity and attitudes. This is partly because of the range of primary sources it reproduces, and partly because it’s not afraid to put her in her proper political context.

How do we know anything of Goldman’s life and ideas? Her autobiography *Living my Life* is of course important, but as Falk point out, it is only a *version* and in writing it Goldman ‘underplays the extent of her clandestine entanglements’, choosing instead to ‘foreground her inner drama’ (Falk, 2003: 4). In the documents presented here, the reader will have to cope with the facts that Goldman often speaks differently to different audiences and that journalists often misunderstand her position completely: ‘I thought that my personal friends would not believe anything said in the newspapers about me’.³ The extra effort required holds out the chance of a clearer and more detailed view of her beliefs.

The collection starts slowly: 1890 is represented by one newspaper

article, 1891 has nothing – largely because of police seizures of Goldman’s papers. After that no year has less than six entries, ranging from private letters, articles and essays in anarchist and capitalist papers to police reports. Especially valuable are the early pieces translated from German-language anarchist publications. Everything is footnoted, so a reader coming to the text at any point won’t be wrong-footed by names, events or disputes which are no longer common knowledge.

Much of the early material deals with Alex Berkman, Goldman’s life-long comrade, imprisoned for attempting to assassinate the industrialist Henry Clay Frick. That Goldman was involved in planning the *attentat* is known from *Living my Life*. Here, however, see her evolving attitude to political violence, not the ‘authorised version’. Goldman first describes Berkman’s act as ‘The heroically brave attempt by Comrade Berkman to liberate human society from a beast’.⁴ Later, as Bresci, Angiolillo, Caserio and others strike down kings and prime ministers, her response remains consistent: ‘the philosophy of Anarchy is an absolute foe to violence, therefore I do not advocate violence. [...] If I stand on the side of the rebel, or if I approve an act of violence, it is only because I know that organised force – government – leaves us no other method of propaganda – because we are the invaded, and not the invaders’.⁵ Even in 1901 after the killing of McKinley, she states ‘It has taken all my time for the past fourteen years to deplore human misery in all its awful forms, so I have not a moment left to deplore the assassination of one, who has ignored all the rights of the people’.⁶ Thus Goldman’s position varies between active support and what you might call ‘understanding the inevitable’. On occasion, we get the social forces which cause political violence compared to violent natural events, notably in ‘The Tragedy at Buffalo’ (Goldman, 2003: 471-8). If we talk about these ideas of inevitability and the individual avenger as myths, it’s not to suggest they’re untrue. But they are also rhetorical devices, designed to frighten the bourgeoisie more than an ‘International Anarchist Conspiracy’, and to act as images of empowerment. I’d also suggest they’re defensive, and limit the effects of repression on the most combative parts of the movement. Clearly these documents will be very useful for any intelligent study of ‘propaganda by the deed’.

Support for Berkman is one of the chief concerns of Goldman’s early activity and is well represented here. This leads to the exchange with Tucker, reprinted from *Liberty*. His (undelivered) appeal on Berkman’s behalf is fascinatingly bad. ‘They approach you as penitent sinners [...] what they once regarded as a wise act of heroism they now regard as a foolish act of barbarism’. Not content with this, Tucker points out from the moral high ground that ‘there is nothing for which I have occasion to apologise. [...] since circumstances may arise when a policy of violence will seem advisable, I decline to surrender my liberty of choice.’⁷

Goldman's increasing prominence as a propagandist is also covered in depth, including important pieces like the 'Letters from a Tour', translated from *Sturmvoegel*.⁸ We get both internal discussions and reports of the anarchist movement and journalistic pieces (which often seem as concerned with Goldman's clothes as her ideas). But her ideas are there and we see them evolving. Originally active with the German-language anarchist movement, Goldman soon felt the need to appeal to a much wider audience: 'To conduct the anarchist propaganda in the English language was and remains the most important issue; because only if the English-speaking element adopts our views is there hope for change in the situation in America.'⁹

Given the sheer volume of spoken propaganda that Goldman carried out it's no surprise to see that she often reflects on its usefulness: 'I will be content if I sow the seeds of discontent.'¹⁰ More interesting are her doubts about its effectiveness. Writing to Nettlau she complains 'not one person has become an Anarchist or a revolutionary through lectures, while such is more likely to be the case through literary works'.¹¹ This is presumably a reflection on how she was influenced rather than the movement as a whole.

Her speaking engagements often developed into free speech fights, which are a pretty constant theme of this volume. But free speech was not an 'issue' Goldman chose to adopt – the alternative was to submit spoken and written propaganda to the veto of the police, capitalists and 'moralists'. Inevitably these struggles were 'tied to a virulent critique not only of police repression but of capitalism itself.' (Falk, 2003: 28-9) But they did encourage her to expand her audience to middle-class Americans as well as workers, and Liberals as well as Anarchists and Socialists. That this strategy was steamrollered by the repression of 1917-19 is obvious. Still, any political biography of Goldman should address it – alongside the contradiction that those willing to listen to revolutionary propaganda are not always those with the incentive to change society.

The notoriety Goldman gained from these battles – as well as being publicly linked with both Berkman and Czolgosz, the assassin of McKinley – gave her yet another platform: the mainstream press. As well as caricature and vilification, she was interviewed and used the opportunity – with all its limitations – to put her views across. The benefit of having someone willing to do this is clear, but it's not unproblematic. Goldman seems to have had no regrets that she earned a celebrity she was unable to resign, but no doubt not all anarchists were happy with the position of their 'high priestess'.

Those in search of quotes will find some good material, and I wouldn't be surprised to find some of the resurrected essays and reports being reissued as pamphlets. However, the real strength of this volume is that it's more than the sum of its parts. It has an index, which you'd expect, but an effective one which doesn't ignore concepts in favour of easy entries like

names and places. The chronology is comprehensive and, reconstructing (as far as possible) the location and subjects of all Goldman's lectures, as well as sign-posting virtually every other relevant event. The best features are the directories of individuals, periodicals and organisations. These make sure the reader knows the history and significance of people Goldman mentions or corresponds with, but they also form an encyclopaedia of the anarchist movement for these years – a feat which makes collecting the original documents seem ridiculously easy.

Volume two, *Making Speech Free*, covering 1902-09 will be published in December 2004. It will be interesting to see what light it shines on the birth of *Mother Earth* and the Modern School movement. That said, I find it strange that this documentary history is scheduled only to cover the years to 1919. Does Goldman's political significance end once she's deported? Are American historians reluctant to study the Russian and Spanish revolutions, since they have a perfectly good one of their own? Hopefully this oversight will be corrected – and it's more likely it will if these volumes do as well as they should. Any institution where anarchism is mentioned in any course should have a copy. Any individuals interested in anarchism will find themselves referring to it more often than they would think.

It's tempting to be journalistic and say that this book shows us 'The Emma Goldman no-one knows'. Certainly, people who only know her as a feminist (or anarchist) icon will be surprised. But this book's real achievement is that alongside the rich and detailed picture of Goldman's life and ideas we are given a much clearer view of her comrades and the movement they built.

NOTES

1. Eltzbacher 'selected the representatives not upon the basis of any objective criteria, but rather examined the thought of those whom (informed) public opinion of the time regarded as the principal exponents of anarchism' (Fleming, 1979:19).
2. 'Selecting these two themes [free speech and reproductive rights] tied Goldman's legacy to the political sensibilities of the day. [...] The exhibition's brochure smoothed over the thornier edges of Goldman's revolutionary creed by highlighting her role as an "educator"' (Frankel, 1996: 932).
3. 'An open letter', *Free Society*, 17.02.1901 (Goldman, 2003: 434).
4. 'Attention!', *Der Anarchist*, 13.08.1892 (Goldman, 2003: 123).
5. 'An open letter', *Free Society*, 17.02.1901 (Goldman, 2003: 434-5).
6. 'Emma Goldman defines her position', *Lucifer, the Lightbearer*, 11.11.1901 (Goldman, 2003: 479).
7. 'An undelivered speech', *Liberty*, January 1899 (Goldman, 2003: 350-1).
8. 'Letters from a Tour', *Sturmvoegel*, 15.12.1897 – 15.02.1898 (Goldman, 2003: 300-17).

9. 'Letters from a Tour', *Sturmvoegel*, 15.02.1898 (Goldman, 2003: p317).
 10. 'Emma Goldman Has Her Say', *Chicago Tribune*, 30.09.1897 (Goldman, 2003: 288).
 11. [Letter] to Max Nettlau, 31.06.1900 (Goldman, 2003: 412).

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El Cuento Anarquista (1880-1911) Antología (The Anarchist Story [1880-1911] An Anthology).

John Patten
 Kate Sharpley Library

El Cuento Anarquista (1880-1911). Antología (The Anarchist Story (1880-1911). An Anthology)

Lily Litvak

Fundación de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, Madrid

ISBN 84-86864-60-7, 267 pages

In this anthology Lily Litvak has selected a number of 'Anarchist stories', which first appeared in Spanish Anarchist publications between 1880 and 1911. In most Anarchist newspapers of the period one or two pages were set aside for 'literature', which usually took the form of short stories. The stories in this volume deal with a whole range of social issues, and reveal a specifically 'Anarchist' popular style, which, undoubtedly, contributed in no small measure to the wide diffusion of Anarchist ideas during the period.

The Anarchist story inhabits a symbolic, stereotypical universe, dominated by slothful, greedy capitalists, aggressive generals, and sly, venomous priests. The unequal and corrupt world of Restoration Spain is painted vividly here, through dramatic, and, at times, heartbreaking stories that reveal the personal tragedies of the 'disinherited' within the system.¹ But there is also hope. Other stories describe how the 'The Good News' ('*La Buena Nueva*')

of the Anarchist Utopia will be heard, and the popular masses will launch their spontaneous revolution, overthrow the old order, and create a new society, where social justice, solidarity and freedom prevail.

Many of these stories have been influenced by the *novela por entregas* (serialised melodramas, a popular genre of the period), in which a young heroine is endlessly pursued by a powerful man – sometimes a priest – who eventually seduces, or rapes her. This drama is re-enacted in many Anarchist stories, but in Anarchist literature this drama assumes a symbolic, social character. One of the stories included in this volume '*Historia de una Prostituta*', ('The Life Story of a Prostitute') written by a 'Cobbler', reveals the Anarchist treatment of this theme. The young woman, María, finally succumbs to the advances of her exploitative landlord, to prevent her family's eviction. Her father, however, driven by rage and revenge, kills the landlord, and María, shunned by her community, eventually ends up in a house of prostitution. This story illustrates the way in which a popular genre could be transformed to impart a vision of the world based on the class struggle, wherein the man represents capitalist power and corruption, while the woman symbolises the weakness and powerlessness of the popular masses.

This tale also shows the firm commitment of Spanish Anarchists to the emancipation of women, which informed their view of the monogamous, bourgeois family, the 'most disgusting aspect of private property, and the most degrading form of slavery'.² This theme is taken up by Ricardo Mella, a leading theoretician of the Spanish Anarchist movement, in '*La Nueva Utopía*' ('The New Utopia'). In this future, emancipated society women can freely change their partners, and even jealousy has been consigned to the dustbin of history. This feminist perspective, which formed the basis of their commitment to 'free love', made Spanish Anarchists extremely sensitive to the plight of prostitutes – in the main 'daughters of the people', workers who were exploited in a particularly humiliating fashion.³ Moreover, this compassionate understanding of prostitutes was extended to other 'marginalised' sectors of the working class: petty thieves, delinquents, convicts. Some of the stories included in this volume contextualise their misfortune, in a world where property is 'theft', and unjust laws and punitive penal codes condemn these people to a lifetime of misery.

Indeed, through these stories one can clearly glimpse the world view of early twentieth-century Spanish Anarchism: its fervent anti-militarism and abhorrence of the prison system; its feminism and veneration of work; its compassion for all sectors of the 'disinherited' – whether urban or rural – and perhaps above all, its profound anti-clericalism. Though anti-clericalism would characterise all the progressive forces of opposition to the Restoration regime, the treatment of the theme in these stories reveals not

just a depth of hatred towards the Church and the clergy that was unparalleled on the Left of the period, but also a ‘popular’ attitude to religion that set Anarchism apart from the other progressive movements of the time.⁴ Certainly in these stories the priest is portrayed as the most loathsome representative of the Restoration state, a much more obdurate and unyielding creature than the other figures which sustained it – the capitalist and the general. One is struck by the many references to the Bible and the Christ figure, and in one story ‘*El Cristo Nuevo*’ (‘The New Christ’), by José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín) Jesus Christ is viewed as an Anarchist, who comes down from his cross to denounce the false teachings carried out in his name. This sort of ‘folk-Catholicism’ – which viewed the Church as ‘distorting’ the inherently egalitarian and peaceful teachings of Christ – was prevalent amongst Spain’s popular masses, particularly in the more religious, rural areas where the priest was the most intrusive and ‘hypocritical’ agent of control at the local level. This popular religious attitude is most faithfully reflected in the Anarchist movement, the most proletarian organisation on the Spanish Left, and one, moreover, committed to the creation of a revolutionary proletarian literature, ‘which would allow the creative potential, the originality of every person to emerge’.⁵ Thus, Spanish Anarchists, unlike their rivals in the Spanish Socialist Party, opened the pages of their press to workers and peasants, and indeed these are the authors of most of the stories in Litvak’s volume.

This commitment to a new, revolutionary proletarian literature, was, of course, part of the wider project of the Spanish Anarchist movement, which viewed knowledge, particularly scientific knowledge, as the fundamental prerequisite for the creation of the new Anarchist Utopia. Thus, the educational efforts of Spain’s Anarchists were truly prodigious, and, at the turn of the twentieth century, Anarchist newspapers could be found even in the smallest villages, where a literate peasant or worker would read out the ‘Good News’ to all assembled, often in the local bar. Given the primacy accorded to knowledge within their world-view, it is hardly surprising that religion was anathema to Spanish Anarchists, who viewed the dogmatic obscurantism of the Church to be in direct opposition to its belief in the emancipating power of science. Thus, popular anti-clericalism in Spain found its strongest defender within Anarchism, a deeply moral philosophy that could, through the example of its militants, show the benefits and possibilities of another moral code – one based on scientific knowledge.⁶

And science was, quite simply for Spain’s Anarchists, a method of decoding Nature’s laws, a way of revealing a hidden order beneath Nature’s apparent chaos. In ‘*La Nueva Utopía*’ (‘The New Utopia’), Ricardo Mella shows how the twinned concepts of Nature and Science will lay the basis for the new society. Freed from ‘political’ laws, the ‘natural’ human will freely associate in bonds of solidarity, in a technologically advanced world

where tedious labour is abolished, and where leisure, creativity, and sexual pleasure abound. A century later, one is struck by the Spanish Anarchist belief in reason and progress, and its extraordinary faith in the beneficial effects of technological advance, which places it closer to Enlightenment thought than is generally recognised. Indeed, for Spain’s Anarchists, the possibilities for an Anarchist Utopia are seen to rest on technological progress, which hopefully should dispel, definitively, previously held notions on the agrarian nature of Spanish Anarchist thought.

Lily Litvak’s anthology is a welcome addition to the historiography of early twentieth-century Spanish Anarchism. As she correctly points out, Anarchist ‘literature’, and its popular story-telling technique, has been under-researched until now. Her intention, with this anthology, is to open up this area for further research and debate, an aim with which I entirely agree. Certainly, to understand Anarchism’s strong resonance in Spain – the only European country where it succeeded in maintaining a mass movement up to the end of the Civil War in 1939 – then all aspects of Spanish Anarchist philosophy and activity should be examined. However, my only critique of Litvak’s, otherwise, excellent, introduction, is its total omission of the enormous efforts made by Spain’s Anarchists to organise trade unions, community organisations, and strikes. We already know that this organisational thrust – and its ‘open’, participatory, structure – was important in establishing the credentials of the first generation of Anarchist militants during this period, and surely an assessment of the impact, and popular reception of Anarchist ‘literature’ must be seen within this context. Seen through this wider lens, this anthology then serves to reinforce the view that Spanish Anarchism was, above all, profoundly democratic. Perhaps it was the ‘participatory’ nature of Spanish Anarchist organisations that was a crucial factor in their success, as it was, undoubtedly, one of their major contributions to the development of the consciousness and organisational capacities of Spain’s labouring masses.

Maggie Torres

NOTES

1. The Restoration period begins with the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, in the person of Alfonso XII, in 1875, and concludes in 1923, when General Primo de Rivera launched a military coup. This coup, with the king still on his throne, established Primo’s dictatorship until 1930, just a year before the coming of the Second Republic in 1931.
2. Litvak, op cit, p.34.
3. This feminism was put into action during the revolutionary period that followed Franco’s military rebellion of July, 1936. In Catalonia, where the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo was hegemonic, abortion was legalised,

- brothels closed down, and a process of 're-education' of prostitutes put into place.
4. Given the privileges, and power of the Spanish Church in Restoration Spain – the most reactionary Catholic Church in Western Europe – it is hardly surprising that most progressive thinkers were anti-clerical, to varying degrees. Moreover, assailed by industrialisation, urbanisation, the rise of labour organisation and peripheral bourgeois nationalism, the Church became increasingly militant from the turn of the twentieth century. The response was a more militant anti-clericalism amongst liberals, socialists, and perhaps most of all, republicans. It was mainly the latter that would dismantle Church privileges during the reforming period of the Second Republic, from 1931 to 1933.
 5. Litvak, op cit, p.25. Though some professionals, and 'petty-bourgeois' intellectuals were active within Spanish Anarchist organisations, many of those in leadership positions were from worker or peasant backgrounds. Unlike the Socialist Party and its trade union, the U.G.T., which represented white-collar workers, Anarchist-influenced trade union organisations attracted, in the main, Catalan factory workers, and Andalusian landless labourers in this period. Moreover, Anarchist influence was not confined to the trade union sphere, but extended to the wider community of the 'poor'; this was a looser, but significant area of support and sympathy for Anarchist ideas and activities.
 6. For Spanish Anarchists, the libertarian ideal would not be realised solely by scientific progress, but also through a series of 'disciplined moral successes'. Thus, revolutionary praxis was integrally related to ethical concerns; Anarchism had 'to be lived'. This implied an exemplary life-style, which would show the masses that the 'new Anarchist world' would be based on moral principles. Anarchist militants were well known for being widely read and 'knowledgeable'. They were also hard working, and many were vegetarians, non-drinkers and non-smokers, and some even refused to drink coffee.

Under the Yoke of the State: Selected Anarchist Responses to Prisons and Crime, Volume 1, 1886-1929

The Dawn Collective

Kate Sharpley Library, London 2003

ISBN 1-873605-48-X, sixty pages

A Day Mournful and Overcast

An 'uncontrollable' from the Iron Column

Kate Sharpley Library, London 2003

ISBN 1-873605-33-1

The exclusion of anarchist ideas from contemporary debates is both familiar and regrettable, but in some areas it is also surprising. This is certainly the case in recent discussions concerning prisons, and punishment more generally, where critical abolitionist perspectives have gained considerable prominence in recent years. People such as de Haan and Nils Christie

amongst others have argued for an end to the use of imprisonment as a response to crime, as well as challenging the whole construction of the concept of crime itself. At the same time Foucauldian theory has put the prison at the centre of a new understanding of modern society as a disciplinary complex. And yet there seems to be little appreciation that anarchists have been advancing articulate critiques of punishment and imprisonment for the last two hundred years or more.

Indeed a number of anarchist writers on prisons have been uniquely well placed to speak of these matters since they have experienced prison, in varying degrees of brutality, under both capitalism and communism, as inmates. To this personal experience they have also been able to add a unique anarchist theoretical perspective on the role of the prison as exemplifying state domination.

Under the Yoke of the State contains an anthology of anarchist writing on crime and punishment. It forms the first volume of two such publications – volume two of which will be devoted to writing from the Spanish Civil War up to the present day. Part one, entitled 'Ideas', contains the theoretical responses of anarchists to the practice of imprisonment. The most impressive of these is Kropotkin's essay 'Prisons and their Moral Influence on Prisoners', which still stands out in terms of the cogency of its explanation of why the prison is doomed to fail in its stated aims. Put simply, Kropotkin demonstrates that prison is bound to make the criminal less able to act as a responsible member of society than before – making his re-offending more, rather than less, likely. Kropotkin's arguments look even more impressive when we consider that the essay was written in 1888, when the modern penitentiary idea was still reaching its present dominance. Indeed, Kropotkin manages to identify most of the specific failings of the new system long before they became apparent to most other observers. Goldman's 'Prisons: a Social Crime and Failure' takes up the environmentalist theme from Kropotkin: 'crime is the result of economic conditions, of social inequality, of wrongs and evils of which government and monopoly are the parents' which has now become a commonplace. And there is a recognition that, while some crime is genuinely anti-social, most of what is called 'crime' is really an affront to the political and property owning class, who use legal oppression to supplement economic oppression when the former is under threat. After all, whether certain activity is made criminal is inevitably a political decision in some sense – although most anarchists were imprisoned for activity which they undertook as deliberately and publicly political. Nevertheless, Goldman, in particular, is prepared to advance practical suggestions for reform in the prison system, but like the other anarchists her real objective is abolition. In this sense the

anarchists are abolitionists as much as those who describe themselves as such today. But the anarchists, unlike contemporary abolitionists, explicitly deny that abolition of prisons can be a reality without the abolition of the state system in its entirety. By the same token they cannot see the contemporary abolitionist idea of reparation and reconciliation as a replacement for prisons being effective in anything short of a fully anarchist society.

Part Two of the collection, entitled 'Memories', draws on the experiences of anarchists in both capitalist and communist prisons. By the selection of a number of short extracts an extraordinarily compressed and vivid picture of the effect of imprisonment on the mind of the prisoner is created. Here Berkman's account of a regime of solitary confinement stands out as giving voice to the vulnerability and resilience of humanity when placed in inhuman conditions. Yet even more poignant is Nicola Sacco's letter to his son Dante written on the eve of his execution.

Each of the selections included comes with explanatory notes which are particularly helpful in situating the writer and their personal experience of prison.

These critical contributions may span a hundred years or more, but they are still strikingly contemporary. The continuing expansion of imprisonment in Britain, despite the widespread acknowledgement that it fails to reduce offending, whatever other purposes it may serve, is only one sign that such criticism is still timely. Indeed, as a note at the end of the collection reminds us, there are currently two million Americans in prison, a rate of imprisonment per head of population rivalled only by the so-called People's Republic of China – which also shares the continuing American belief in the effectiveness of capital punishment.

A Day Mournful and Overcast provides an appropriate companion piece to the previous pamphlet. It consists of the personal testimony of an 'uncontrollable' from the Iron Column, a former prisoner released by anarchists in the Spanish Revolution who went on to fight for the anarchist cause. Although it has less to say about prisons, it draws a parallel between imprisonment and the imposition of military discipline which other 'fellow revolutionaries' sought to impose on the anarchist fighters who were their comrades. The lesson is clear. The prison system and the state of which it is a part must be overthrown – but not by the very same authoritarian methods which have sustained them, nor by the people who would impose their own authoritarian system under the guise of revolution.

Both these publications deserve an unreserved welcome.

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A Movement of Movements: is another world really possible?

Tom Mertes (ed.)

Verso, London 2004

ISBN: 1859844685, 288 pages

Readers of *Anarchist Studies* will not always be sympathetic to lines of thought emerging from the pages of *New Left Review* (of which this is an edited collection of interviews and articles, appearing between 2001 and 2003). Mertes's book, however, is a timely one and debates much that is of interest to libertarians and to those concerned about the future of anti-capitalist politics. Its publication is opportune in that it appears ten years after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which in turn precipitated the EZLN, Ya Basta!, Peoples Global Action and the big summit demonstrations. The viability and effectiveness of the latter as the core of the movement is of course now open to question and the search is on for a more sustainable anti-corporate politics. This text is essentially a retrospective on the movements of the last decade – with an emphasis on their structures, bases, campaigns and analyses.

A Movement of Movement is split into three sections. 'Southern Voices' includes interviews with Subcomandante Marcos and with a range of activist/leaders involved in Brazil's Sem Terra Movement, resisting dam construction in India, fighting debt in Africa and battling the ANC's increasingly neo-liberal and authoritarian turn. 'Northern Voices' includes accounts of ATTAC, the Ruckus Society and its direct action training, José Bové's rural campaigning and David Graeber's account of the 'new anarchism'. The collection concludes with a series of 'Analytics' – by Naomi Klein, Michael Hardt, Mertes himself, Emir Sader and Immanuel Wallerstein. Coverage-wise, then, Mertes's text covers many of the groups that might be represented at the World Social Forum. Indeed the Porto Alegre Forum of 2001 is a point of reference for many of the authors here.

Amid the diversity of contributions a number of common themes (or at least debates) emerge. Not least of these concern the North/South divide within today's movement. A minor version of this is the recognition that many campaigners in the South risk imprisonment, torture and death, whereas European and North American activists are 'more likely to get home after the demo'. However, several writers note that the North is now learning from the South and following its tactics. As Graeber puts it, previous internationalisms 'ended up exporting Western organisational models to the rest of the World; in this, the flow has if anything been reversed' (p.207). This, in turn, is not unconnected to a general decline in Leninist forms and intersects to some degree with the Hardt/Negri concept of the 'Multitude'.

In a formal sense, the role of anarchism within the so-called 'anti-globalisation movement' is under-analysed in this collection. The sole dedicated

piece is David Graeber's 'The New Anarchists', which can be seen as a piece of *reclaiming*. As such, he points out that many academics and commentators on these debates are themselves really liberals and, underneath the rhetoric, have offered no challenge to neo-liberal capitalism. Similarly they have failed to see that much of the recent protest upsurge has been inspired by anarchism. As Graeber puts it 'anarchism is at the heart of the new movement, its soul, the source of most of what is hopeful about it' (p.203). He then goes on to correct media misconceptions – particularly that anarchists and campaigners are both parochial and violent. Graeber also notes that prefigurative and horizontal organisational forms increasingly predominate – as do consensual decision making processes.

Other writers in the collection celebrate the appearance of less hierarchical forms. For example, discussing the Brazilian land occupation movement, Joao Pedro Stedile points to Sem Terra's decentralised structure and belief that 'people organise themselves through struggle, not the vote' (p.47). Similar, Subcomandante Marcos opposes vanguardism and states that 'we do not believe that the end justifies the means. Ultimately we believe that the means are the ends' (p.11). A parallel argument is made by Wallerstein who detects the death of the Leninist two-step model of revolution – i.e. that power has to first be secured before the transition to socialism can begin. In all of this, then, we see some evidence of organisational flattening and ways of mobilising and acting that vindicate Graeber's claim of an increasingly anarchist influenced international movement (though a counter example is also included in this volume – the ATTAC campaign, which is described by its founder Bernard Cassen as highly centralised). It is however an open question whether the wider movement has adopted anything like a sustained anarchist position on capital and free markets. The view that neo-liberal globalisation needs merely to be regulated or reformed is indeed represented in this volume. This is particularly so in Naomi Klein's calls for the strengthening of democracy against the multinationals and her view that we need to campaign to give 'our goals' the force of law.

A further debate within *A Movement of Movements* relates to the conceptual (and practical) frameworks within which campaigners and activists should operate. Referring particularly to discussions at Porto Alegre, Michael Hardt detects two main positions. The first of these could be regarded as *opposed to neo-liberalism* and willing to seek solutions within nation states – even using the nation state as a bulwark against the worst excesses of capitalist globalisation. For Hardt, this has become the semi-official position of those who seek to speak for the movement (and run its summits). The second and more radical position should be seen as fundamentally *anti-capitalist*. This would regard nation states as inherently repressive and 'part of the problem' – be they social democratic or not.

Hardt's support for this latter position is opposed here in contributions by Tom Mertes and Emir Sader. They in turn argue that social movements need to fight within existing national frameworks and engage/use the political power represented by the state. In passing, it can be noted that this logic is currently being applied in the UK by the Socialist Workers Party's latest front, *Respect*, in their astonishingly opportunistic attempt to use post 9/11 Muslim anger to gain Parliamentary representation.

Finally, it is worth noting that the pull of *New Left Review* has brought together a range of big names from the academic/activist community. But whilst this has produced an interesting and geographically varied set of contributions, those contributions are essentially from leaders and key players. Little here represents the views of street level activists – though, admittedly, many of the Southern leaders have themselves suffered repression. A further omission relates to local campaigning, with only limited analysis of the way movements need to develop out of functioning communities and networks. The protest represented in this text is largely one of the big battalions and national level campaigns – rather than a broader portrayal of the settings in which people oppose capital and take control of their lives.

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A Voyage to New Orleans: Anarchist Impressions of the Old South
Elisée Reclus, translated and edited by John Clark and Camille Martin
Glad Day Books: Thetford, VT, 2004
ISBN: 1930180039, 111 pages, including six black and white illustrations and one map, \$10.00

John Clark and Camille Martin have unearthed a little gem from the archives of anarchist history. In 1853, Elisée Reclus sailed across the Atlantic to live and work in New Orleans. He recorded his impressions of the journey and its sights, which were eventually published in 1860. Clark and Martin have translated his essay, and supplemented it with some translations of letters sent by Elisée to his brother Elie. The quality of their translation is extremely high: the subtlety and ease of the writing is such that one often forgets that it has been translated. Furthermore, Clark and Martin also supply meticulous and observant annotations, allowing the reader to understand the implications and contexts of Reclus's writing. The collection of texts is introduced and concluded with short essays by John Clark, informing the reader of Reclus's political evolution.

The main essay, by Reclus himself, demonstrates the fascination that many Europeans felt for this new civilisation which was developing in the west. Reclus notes the decline of Francophone culture in New Orleans (p.51), and – like many Europeans – depicts this early American society as a rough, violent community, cheerfully and openly obsessed with money-making: a place in which vices are not hidden. Above all, Reclus is sensitive to the intrinsic racism of this new world. The pages in which he describes a slave market (pp.51-53) remain shocking, even after a century and a half of history. Reclus's horror at what he sees is obvious, and is well-expressed in series of cool, well-observed sentences.

In conclusion, this well-edited and good-looking collection of texts is a useful addition to anarchist history.

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We are Everywhere: the irresistible rise of global anticapitalism,
News from Nowhere (eds)
Verso Press, London and New York, 2003
ISBN 1-85984-447-2. £10.99 or \$16.99

The short review of this book is to advise you to read this book. The longer review follows. In my view, this is the best book I have read on the altermondialiste movement, especially for the 'thinking person'. Perhaps a proper 'academic' might want something with more footnotes or more discussion of 'contested concepts' at the frontiers of academic debate. But as I will claim later, even the theoretical side of the book is excellent and challenging. *We Are Everywhere* is edited and written by a collective that came together solely to edit this book. It is over 500 pages long and contains the stories of at least 50 different social movements or events during the ongoing creation of the altermondialiste movement. It weighs 560 grams, but you can carry it in a medium sized coat pocket.

Few books written on the subject give us such a rich perspective on the tremendous variety of the altermondialiste movement. All sorts of projects, demos, struggles and actions across the world are covered here, in the form of short pieces usually written by the altermondialistes themselves (occasionally in the form of transcribed speeches), but sometimes by outsiders who are participating and observing. Each piece is supported by a short editorial introduction which provides good contextual background for the unfamiliar reader. Most sections include one or two URLs at the

end for further research and there is a highly useful time line (from 1994) outlining nearly all the principal events during the rise of the altermondialiste movement, at the bottom of each page. In addition, there are seven medium length theoretical pieces, some very creative photography and useful bibliographies and indexes.

One of the problems in writing about altermondialism is the near impossibility of communicating the tremendously varied voices, actions and cultures in the movement(s). In addition one must describe, to some extent, the particular context in which each smaller movement arises, within the larger movement. It is a genuinely global movement, although most of us reading this journal probably know more about the American or European side of things. Obviously the theory and practice is context dependent, so small farmers in India and France might or might not have a good deal in common with North Americans struggles of a similar (or different) nature.

When the editors chose a piece, or wrote about something I knew well – 'J18', Karnataka Farmers, 'The Woomera Breakout' – their selection and descriptions seemed right. So I began to trust their choices and descriptions in other spheres or with other movements I didn't know so well: Community Gardens of New York City, the Infernal Noise Brigade, Kenyan Students resisting the World Bank, Surfing the Net in Papua New Guinea. Although the editors are primarily English speakers, the balance of altermondialiste voices is well-handled with representations from: Mexico, France, Brazil, Argentina, India, Italy, Thailand, South Africa, Switzerland, Kenya, Ireland, Quebec, Bolivia, Finland and others. It is impossible to do justice to the complexities of such events and movements, so the inclusion of suggestions for follow up reading is very welcome. Nevertheless, the stories are excellent reading and short enough that you can feel that you have made new discoveries and whetted your appetite for further knowledge or action within twenty minutes or so. Some of them are actually tremendously moving.

The theoretical passages in the book preface each of its subsections: 'an irresistible global uprising', 'the sociology of movements', 'creating spaces for freedom', 'resistance is the secret of joy', 'resisting state oppression', 'building it without taking it', and 'we ask questions'. These 'theoretical' sections are more like reflections than 'academic' 'theory' and are definitively not tedious reading. These 'reflections' do, however, refer to notions and ways of seeing these movements with extremely up to date academic currents of thought.

Readers of this journal will be interested that the understanding of the altermondialiste movement presented here is fundamentally anarchist. The authors and editors are quite clear that they are themselves part of the larger movement, and that the larger movement is essentially anarchist,

although not explicitly linked to ‘anarchist groups’. The aforementioned ‘reflection’ sections for instance summarise emerging trends in anarchist theory/practice, but it is more likely for instance that complexity theory is used to back up points than Bakunin or Bookchin. This side of anarchism is often criticised by the more anti-intellectual tendencies in anarchism, but their reflections are a genuine addition to the movement. The editors, like so many others, are trying to move beyond cultural social movement theory, post-structuralism, postmodernism, post-colonialism and post-situationism. As with most ‘emerging’ currents of theory or practice, none of us know exactly what will happen next. Reading this book will give you a very clear idea of what some of these currents feel like. In my mind, both street anarchists who are mainly interested in acting, as well as academics or intellectuals busy reading books and writing, would benefit from a look at the theoretical sections.

The decision to include a large number of photographs into the book is also a definite bonus. Sometimes these seem a bit arty, with clever literary captions, rather than a collection of realistic photographs, yet this ‘punctuation’ of content is very enjoyable. An accompanying CD would have satisfied the more technologically minded. One might grumble that there was not enough material on Canada, Indonesia or Portugal, but the essential structure of the book is about right. Similarly, the writing style is a balance between the creative and the informative, the challenging and the accessible, which as many of you know, is hard to accomplish.

Now that I have got you this far, I have to declare an interest, as they say. I actually know two of the editors. So I have ‘declared my interest’. In fact, when they started the work I was genuinely interested to see what they would come up with. Making the choices they made is hard work and I think they made wise, creative and totally appropriate choices. The book is a cracker.

Tom Cahill
Shifting Ground – France