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ANARCHISM AS A REJECTION OF BOURGEOIS INDIVIDUALISM

ANARCHISM AS A REJECTION OF BOURGEOIS
INDIVIDUALISM: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
CONCEPTS OF PROPERTY AND MORALITY IN
THE WRITINGS OF KROPOTKIN, TUCKER,
AND STIRNER

By

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ABSTRACT

This work seeks to demonstrate, through an examination of the writings of Peter A. Kropotkin and Benjamin R. Tucker, that the communist and individualist schools of anarchist theory differ less in spirit and in underlying commitment than in their prescriptive measures; that each entails a fundamental break with liberalism over the notion of equality and ultimately finds itself more consistently in the socialist than anarchist tradition in political thought. Anarchism entails more truly a rejection than a projection of bourgeois individualism.

Moreover, it will be argued that the one exception to this is Max Stirner--a man who shared the anarchists' disdain for bourgeois social arrangements while adhering to the bourgeois notion of man. His vision is one of chaos not 'anarchy'.

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I

ANARCHISM: ITS MEANING AND PLACE IN POLITICAL THEORY

Since its inception, anarchism has been one of the least understood and most consistently maligned political theories.¹ Rejected by liberals and socialists alike, its meaning has been obscured and anarchism has come in the public mind to be synonymous with the negativistic and destructive tendencies of nihilism. This conception completely distorts anarchism's basic assumptions, which are positive, and fails to recognize that underlying its anti-statist and anti-authoritarian stance² is a profound belief in the natural sociality of man, premised upon a fundamental faith in human rationality and natural order.³ This confusion and ambiguity surrounding the meaning of the term are not

¹Its origin as a modern social and political theory is generally attributed to Proudhon, who first referred to himself as an 'an-archist'. The position, however, more rightfully belongs to William Godwin, whose Enquiry Concerning Political Justice was first published in 1793.

²Peter A. Kropotkin, "L'Ordre", in Paroles d'un Révolté, p. 99.

³George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements, pp. 22-23.

new but were clearly enunciated by the individualist poet and author John Henry Mackay⁴ towards the end of the last century. In a poem entitled 'Anarchy', he wrote:

Ever reviled, accursed, ne'er understood,
 Thou art the grisly terror of our age.
 "Wreck of all order," cry the multitude,
 "Art thou, and war and murder's endless rage."
 O, let them cry. To them that ne'er have striven
 The truth that lies behind a word to find,
 To them the word's right meaning was not given.
 They shall continue blind among the blind.
 But thou, O word, so clear, so strong, so pure,
 Thou sayest all which I for goal have taken.
 I give thee to the future! Thine secure
 When each at least unto himself shall waken.
 Comes it in sunshine? In the tempest's thrill?
 I cannot tell--but it the earth shall see!
 I am an Anarchist! Wherefore I will
 Not rule, and also ruled I will not be.⁵

Teetering in the popular mind between insanity and criminality,⁶ 'anarchist' has become a term of opprobrium used by regimes of both the Right and the Left as an ignominious term of reproach. And while political theorists generally have been more sophisticated than to conclude that such an extreme and dangerously pathological phenomenon as

⁴Mackay was also the biographer of Johann Caspar Schmidt, the extreme individualist author and philosopher who wrote under the nom-de-plume Max Stirner. Stirner has been widely regarded as an anarchist--an assertion, the validity of which, this work hopes to refute. See below, especially chapter IV.

⁵John Henry Mackay, "Anarchy", as quoted in Emma Goldman, "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For", in Anarchism and Other Essays, p. 47.

⁶Bertrand Russell, Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism, p. 38.

a Ravachol⁷ is a typical example of an anarchist, they too often regard anarchism as a meaningless ethical theory.⁸

The problem, it will be argued in this work, lies not in the consistency of the theory itself, but in both the anarchist movement's failure to look inward and to engage in discriminating self-criticism, and in its critics' myopic approach to anarchist theory. It is the failure of the anarchists themselves to deny the rabidly bourgeois individualism of an obsessed Stirner, which has contributed at least in part to the conception of

⁷Ravachol, an infamous and self-proclaimed anarchist whose real name was François Königstein, was guillotined on July 11, 1892, for bombings he had executed in March of that year. Hardly the characteristic martyr, Ravachol was an admitted robber--he had even disinterred a corpse in search of jewels and murdered a hermit in an attempt to take his money. Dying at the age of thirty-three at the hands of the state, he was compared by a certain element in society to Christ, and there grew up the 'Cult of Ravachol'. This phenomenon did much to set back the anarchist cause and was decried by responsible anarchists such as Kropotkin and Malatesta, who condemned Ravachol's 'dangerous buffoonery' and stated clearly that anarchism aimed at social change and not wanton destruction. See Roderick Kedward, The Anarchists: The Men Who Shocked an Era, pp. 4, 21-22.

⁸Benjamin Barber, Superman and Common Men: Freedom, Anarchy, and the Revolution, pp. 15-16, 21-22, 25, and 35-36; Isaac Kramnick, "On Anarchism and the Real World: William Godwin and Radical England", American Political Science Review, LXVI, 1 (March, 1972), pp. 114-128; George Bernard Shaw, The Impossibilities of Anarchism, in The Fabian Socialist Series No. 3: Socialism and Individualism, pp. 29-62; and E.V. Zenker, Anarchism: A Criticism and History of The Anarchist Theory, p. 315.

anarchism as an asocial and negativistic political doctrine,⁹ and it is their extraordinary simplicity--a simplicity almost bordering upon naiveté, which has led many liberal and socialist theorists to ignore or disdain both the movement and its theoretical renderings.

And while much of this criticism is justified, especially in regard to their political economy, the overall condemnation of the theories as inconsistent is not. The differing conceptions of human nature and rationality represent not a logical fallacy but merely a difference in premise which leads logically to a difference in conclusion. Thus, while the removal of the state with its oppressive laws signifies a genuine liberation for the anarchist,¹⁰ it means little more to the statist than the degeneration of civilization and a return to government by the 'Kilkenny cat plan'.¹¹

Even those socialists who viewed man's nature as less entrenched and more malleable, as influenced and shaped by pre-existing socio-economic forces and as ultimately perfectible--in the sense of developing a genu-

⁹See below, especially chapter IV.

¹⁰Colin Ward, Anarchy in Action, p. 11.

¹¹George Bernard Shaw, An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism, pp. 29-30.

inely communitarian sentiment and hence, in rhetoric at least, acknowledged the possibility of a genuine democracy established by the withering away of the state--rejected the anarchists, who shared their ultimate vision of the good society, as dreamers and, even worse, as 'decadent utopians'.¹² The dissension, which wracked the early years of the International,¹³ and the hostility and invective which emerged from it have done much to obscure and distort the place of anarchism in the history of political thought, for, aside from the anarchists themselves, who have tended to be somewhat uncritical of their own theory, the preponderance of literature written on anarchism during the last century has come out of the Marxist camp, the intellectual sincerity of which, on this issue, is questionable. Dictated by organizational necessity, rather than by scholarship, the Marxist analysis has been less than fair, rejecting anarchism out of hand as an unrealistic, utopian vision which serves the forces of reaction, and when not

¹²George Plechanoff, Anarchism and Socialism, pp. 127-143.

¹³For a study of the socialist-anarchist split in the International, see Julius Braunthal, History of the International: 1864-1914, pp. 120-194; G.D.H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought. Vol. II. Marxism and Anarchism: 1850-1890, pp. 174-212; George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, pp. 100-111, and A Short History of Socialism, p. 169.

downright aristocratic, as counter-revolutionary and bourgeois, inconsistent and contradictory.¹⁴

It is not, however, only the Marxists who argue that anarchism differs but in degree from the liberalism of an Adam Smith, a Thomas Paine, or a Herbert Spencer.¹⁵ Even some of the more serious students of anarchism, persons who have sought to examine the subject as a body of theory deserving of careful consideration and analysis, differentiate between its communist (more broadly collectivist-communitarian) and individualist forms, and while adhering to the belief in communist anarchism's genetic relation to socialism, places inordinate stress upon the similarities between the individualist school and that

¹⁴See especially Eleanor Marx Aveling's Preface (pp. 3-6), and Robert Rives LaMonte's Introduction (pp. 7-15) to Plekhanov's Anarchism and Socialism; Daniel De Leon, Socialism versus Anarchism; Eric J. Hobsbawm, Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays, pp. 57-59, and 88; Letter from Karl Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann, in Marx-Engels: Selected Correspondence, pp. 171-172; Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Paul Lafargue, "A Plot against the International", in Saul K. Padover (ed.), The Karl Marx Library, Vol. III, On the First International, pp. 251-266; Plechanoff, Anarchism and Socialism; Leon Trotsky, "The Collapse of Terror and of Its Party", as quoted in Novak, "Anarchism and Individual Terrorism", The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, XX, 2 (May 1954), p. 183; and E. Yaroslavsky, History of Anarchism in Russia, p. 24.

¹⁵See Morris Hillquit, History of Socialism in the United States, p. 212; George Bernard Shaw, The Impossibilities of Anarchism, in Socialism and Individualism, pp. 29-30, 39; and Zenker, Anarchism: A Criticism and History of the Anarchist Theory, pp. 3-4, and 311.

of classical liberal laissez-faire.¹⁶ And although there is an element of truth in this distinction, care must be taken to avoid its being overdrawn, for, while communist anarchism cannot be seen as bourgeois in any but the most roundabout and tactical sense, neither does individualist anarchism properly belong in the liberal tradition.¹⁷

Despite the fact that these two forms of anarchist theory clearly differ in perspective, the communists adhering to the abstract principle of equality in distribution,¹⁸ and the individualists subscribing to the more liberal notion of equitability or equivalence in exchange, i.e. reward in proportion to labour energies expended, they share in their rejection of contemporary social ar-

¹⁶April Carter, The Political Theory of Anarchism, pp. 8, and 89; R.B. Fowler, "The Anarchist Tradition of Political Thought", Western Political Quarterly, XXV, 4 (December, 1972), pp. 742-745; Irving L. Horowitz, The Anarchists, pp. 47-52; Isaac Kramnick, "On Anarchism and the Real World: William Godwin and Radical England", American Political Science Review, LXVI, 1 (March, 1972), p. 116; George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements, p. 20, and The Anarchist Reader, pp. 33-35.

¹⁷A number of authors have made this suggestion in the past. See Fowler, "The Anarchist Tradition of Political Thought", Western Political Quarterly, XXV, 4 (December, 1972), p. 743; and Derry Novak, "The Place of Anarchism in the History of Political Thought", The Review of Politics, XX, 3 (July, 1958), p. 325.

¹⁸This principle, itself, is viewed differently by different anarchists. See below, p. 43.

rangements and in the clearly elitist bias of liberal justificatory theory. The ultimate visions of the two are more similar than they are different.¹⁹ Each advocates the formation of a genuinely democratic society, based upon the notion of voluntarism, and each rejects the net transfer of powers which lies at the heart of liberal theory.²⁰ For while it is true that Locke set out from an initial position of freedom and equality in his classic attempt to justify the liberal state and the capitalist market economy for which it stands, it is also true that he came ultimately to defend a class state, with a differential in rights, based upon what he deemed to be a class differential in rationality.²¹

And it is this justification of inequality which

¹⁹A point made as early as 1889 by Herbert L. Osgood, one of the first political scientists to deal with anarchism in a serious manner. See his "Scientific Anarchism", Political Science Quarterly, IV, 1 (March, 1889), p. 29.

²⁰Capitalism, by definition, entails the accumulation of capital in the hands of one segment of the population and the alienation of labour on the part of another. The capitalist acquires through the wage-labour relationship directive control over the worker's labour energies for a prescribed period of time and hence sharply limits the labourer's liberty. For a fuller explanation, see C.B. Macpherson, The Real World of Democracy, pp. 48-55.

²¹John Locke, The Second Treatise of Government, in Peter Laslett (ed.), John Locke: Two Treatises of Government, especially chapter V; and C.B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, pp. 194-262.

clearly distinguishes liberal from anarchist theory. Behind it lies a different notion of human nature and a completely different conception of what comprises rational human activity. The bourgeois notion is essentially asocial and negativistic, and the role of the state is thus definitional--for, without it, the Hobbesian war of all against all would ensue. The anarchist notion, however, recognizes man's inherent sociality, deems invasive behaviour irrational, and rejects the role of the state as both superfluous and destructive of genuine social ties--fellowship and comradeship. As Godwin quotes approvingly from Thomas Paine, "Society and government are different in themselves, and have different origins. Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness. Society is in every state a blessing; government even in its best state but a necessary evil".²² Moreover, regarding wickedness not as vice, but folly, the anarchist rejects the liberal maxim that "That government is best which governs least", but rather argues with Thoreau that "That government is best which governs not at all".²³

²²William Godwin, Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Modern Morals and Happiness, ed. Isaac Kramnick, p. 168; and Thomas Paine, Common Sense, in Richard Emery Roberts (ed.), Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, p. 9.

²³Henry David Thoreau, Civil Disobedience, in Joseph Wood Krutch (ed.), Thoreau: Walden and Other Writings, p. 85.

And such a society is deemed possible for precisely the reason that the anarchist ontology differs in essence from the liberal. While both schools assert that labour is entitled to its just reward (the exact nature of this distributive principle differing from one theorist to another within the anarchist camp) and that men ought to be free to enter contractual relations with one another, and that contracts should be lived up to, the nature of these relations differs considerably. Liberalism entails two assumptions not held by anarchism: first, the liberal asserts that men are by nature unlimited desirers and consumers of material utilities and power over others; and second, that rational behaviour is acquisitive behaviour. Through the introduction of these assumptions, the liberal theorist is able to justify, in all consistency, the accumulation of capital in the hands of one segment of the society and the subordination of the remainder (by far the larger portion of the population) by arguing that all are materially better off through the establishment of this unequal arrangement than would any be in a condition of equal poverty.²⁴ On this basis, capital is entitled

²⁴This argument is used repeatedly throughout liberal theory. First appearing in Locke, it re-emerges in the writings of Bentham, J.S. Mill, Spencer, Friedman, Rand, and Hospers. See below, pp. 13, 72-76.

to a return, as it is representative of past labour, and contributes to current well-being.

The anarchists of both schools, however, reject this. Capital accumulation is deemed immoral by such widely differing theorists as Godwin and Tolstoy, Warren, Proudhon, and Tucker.²⁵ Even to the individualists, labour alone is entitled to reward, and that paid fairly (i.e. in proportion to labour), and only once.²⁶ All else is surplus value, exploitation, gain, usury; illegitimate and unjustified. The anarchist rejects the liberal justificatory claim of more and views the capitalist market as invasive. Furthermore, he contends that given the choice between material prosperity and liberty the rational individual will always come down on the side of liberty.²⁷ In his refusal to subvert individual liberty to the principle of profit maximization, the anarchist rejects the very mainspring of liberalism--a rejection which entails a denial of the bourgeois ontology and with it of bourgeois ethics in favour of the more

²⁵Each of these theorists saw within the liberal justification of capital, the denial of individual liberty to others, and each in turn placed a higher valuation upon labour than upon appropriation.

²⁶See below, p. 82.

²⁷See below, pp. 53-54, 93, 98-99.

egalitarian anarchist ethic.

Thus it is that both Kropotkin and Tucker and their respective schools reject the elitist bias of liberal theory and remain committed to the ideal of a genuinely democratic society. They move beyond the narrowly defined liberal notion of equality of rights to a more substantive and clearly socialistic notion of equality, for the anarchists view liberty and equality not as antipodes but as complementary notions. Their theories are both social and democratic, and not in the least elitist or aristocratic.

Utopian perhaps, but internally consistent, the anarchist literature offers a world of unfulfilled dreams, a wealth of new visions. Bringing together the liberal notion of freedom with the democratic assertion of equality, and the anarchistic assumptions of limited desire and man's social proclivity to harmonious interaction with his fellow man within society but outside of the state, the anarchist theorist is able to avoid the dilemma of liberal-democratic theory which seeks at one and the same time to harmonize a democratic moral commitment with an undemocratic (class-based) economy.²⁸ Thus, while

²⁸C.B. Macpherson, "The Maximization of Democracy", in Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval, pp. 3-23, and The Real World of Democracy, especially pp. 35-55.

even such democratically oriented liberals as John Stuart Mill viewed substantive equality as a threat to both liberty and individual incentive and opportunity,²⁹ the anarchist theorists genuinely believed that liberty and individual human development could only occur in an egalitarian and non-political community.

Furthermore, adhering to the postulate of individual liberty and believing with Lord Acton that "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely",³⁰ the anarchists have warned repeatedly of the dangers of state capitalism and the continuation of the net transfer of powers inherent in it.³¹ Thus, whether realizable or not,

²⁹ John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, pp. 94-95, and Principles of Political Economy, in J.M. Robson (ed.), Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, pp. 763, 782-783, and 795.

³⁰ John Emerich Edward Dahlberg-Acton, "Acton-Creighton Correspondence", in Gertrude Himmelfarb (ed.), Essays on Freedom and Power, p. 364.

³¹ Of special interest are Proudhon's Letter to Karl Marx (Lyon, 17 May 1846), in George Woodcock (ed.), The Anarchist Reader, pp. 138-140; Michael Bakunin, Marxism, Freedom and the State; and Benjamin R. Tucker, State Socialism and Anarchism. Following the Russian Revolution came a number of denunciations within anarchist circles, not the least of which arose from the communist anarchist camp itself. See Alexander Berkman, The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920-22), and Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism; Emma Goldman, My Disillusionment in Russia, and My Further Disillusionment in Russia. Not all anarchists shared this early premonition. Herbert Read, by his own account, clung for a period of time to the belief that the revolution would work itself out, but like his fellow anarchists, his hopes also waned (Anarchy & Order, pp. 89-108).

anarchism offers a pervasive criticism of both the liberal and so-called 'communist' worlds.³² Its theory, however, is not torn, as some critics have claimed,³³ between liberal individualism and communitarian values, but rather views the social and the individual as one--indivisible and hence inalienable. Its ethics are not bourgeois, but anarchist; its liberty, social and non-invasive.

Such is not the case with Stirner. His writing describes a massive and perpetual tension between each individual and the society within which he wars--a malady which he diagnoses as both natural and inevitable. And, in so doing, he differs not only from the social anarchists Bakunin and Kropotkin, the community oriented individualist Godwin, and the religious anarchist Tolstoy, but also from the individualists Warren, Proudhon, and Tucker. Each of these theorists sought harmony between the individual and the community, a position which reached fruition in the individualist axiom that competition is co-operation. Unlike the others, however, Stirner adhered to the essentially Hobbesian perspective and an acceptance of coercion was essential to his thesis. Reject-

³²David E. Apter, "The Old Anarchism and the New--Some Comments", Government and Opposition, V (Autumn, 1970), pp. 397-398; Nicholas Walter, About Anarchism, pp. 7-8.

³³Kramnick, "On Anarchism and the Real World: William Godwin and Radical England", American Political Science Review, LXVI, 1 (March, 1972), p. 128.

ing all social theory as hypocritical and destructive of individualism, Stirner, it will be argued, would have found the anarchists' socially-oriented notions of individual liberty utterly incompatible with his own possessive notion of individualism and would have viewed them as, at the very least, fraudulent--a phantasm destroying the individual in the name of an abstract liberty and humanity.

Furthermore, it will be argued, that given his dual ontology (his commitment to both a bourgeois and an anarchist ethic), his theory, if realized, would result in the most negativistic and chaotic of social arrangements. More liberal than anarchist, Stirnerian theory finds itself in a dilemma comparable to that of liberal-democratic theory. Seeking a democratic right to individual assertion, Stirner remains committed to the bourgeois essence and hence is unable to extricate himself from the horrendous portent of a competitive liberal society without a regulative state. With Stirner, the warnings of the critics have come to fruition, for in the words of Shaw the problem with anarchism lies in the fact that:

If we were all equally strong and cunning we should all have an equal chance; but in a world where there are children and old people and invalids, and where able-bodied adults of the same age and strength vary greatly in

greediness and wickedness, it would never do: we should get tired of it in no time. Even pirate crews and bands of robbers prefer a peaceful settled understanding as to the division of their plunder to the Kilkenny cat plan.³⁴

And the 'Kilkenny cat plan' is precisely the fate of Hobbesian man without his Leviathan, and Stirnerian man without the state. With it, he is deprived of his ownness, his individuality. Without it, men will stand alone and sterile, more like the monuments of Shelley's Ozymandias than like his kings, slipping in and out of the Hobbesian war of all against all, as their individual egos demand of them. The image is not attractive, nor is it anarchist. It is a vision of bourgeois man seeking to free himself from the chains of social necessity, or as Marx and Engels so perceptively noted, of the petty-bourgeois seeking to be bourgeois.³⁵

³⁴Shaw, An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism, p. 29.

³⁵See below, p. 139.

II

PETER A. KROPOTKIN--COMMUNIST ANARCHIST:

A STUDY IN THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

Of the many schools of anarchist theory, the communist is the most widely known and best publicized. The heir of Godwinian individualism and Bakuninist collectivism, this school broke with its predecessors in the anarchist tradition over the question of equality and contended that the artificially opposed notions of liberty and community were not only compatible but actually inextricably entwined and mutually requisite for the genuine realization of either.¹ In support of this doctrine, numerous theorists penned voluminous works, not the least of whom was Prince Peter Alexeivich Kropotkin--a Russian aristocrat turned populist and later acclaimed by his fellow revolutionists as the clearest and most consistent exponent of communist anarchism.² An ardent and active revolutionary, Kropotkin devoted the largest part of his adult life to

¹See below, pp. 55-65, especially p. 60.

²See Alexander Berkman, The Bolshevik Myth (Diary 1920-1922), p. 73; and, Emma Goldman, Living My Life, v. I, pp. 168-169.

writing and speaking on behalf of the anarchist cause. The foremost exponent of a movement which terrified the world,³ Kropotkin remained in the eyes of those who knew him an honourable and decent man.⁴ And, while many disagreed bitterly with his doctrine, few attacked the integrity of the man who so steadfastly espoused it.⁵ In the words of George Bernard Shaw, a centralist and exponent of Fabian socialism and a writer and commentator renowned for his acerbic tongue, "Kropotkin was amiable to the point of saintliness."⁶

³The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were characterized by an overwhelming and irrational fear of anarchism both as a political movement and as a criminal conspiracy. This fear resulted in such heinous acts of repression as the trials, in America alone, of the Haymarket conspirators and of Sacco and Vanzetti, and in the unconscionable apprehension and deportation of numerous left-wing radicals from her shores. See Berkman, Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism, p. 68; Emma Goldman, Living My Life, v. II, pp. 703-724, and My Disillusionment in Russia, pp. 1-7.

⁴Georg Brandes, "Introduction", Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. xxvii-xxxiv; Goldman, Living My Life, v. I, pp. 168-169, and v. II, pp. 509-510, 770, and 865, and My Disillusionment in Russia, p. 35; and Rudolf Rocker, The London Years, p. 149.

⁵Even Benjamin R. Tucker, who so bitterly attacked Kropotkin's theory from the individualist perspective, refrained from making ad hominem attacks against its originator.

⁶While harshly critical of anarchism as a doctrine, Shaw did admire and respect its leading theorist. He wrote these words in a letter to George Woodcock (Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements, p. 185).

Certainly, Kropotkin's criticism of contemporary society abounded in moralism and conflicted sharply with what he viewed the pseudo-scientific amoralism of the day. Seeing an irresolvable conflict between Christian ethics and bourgeois morality, Kropotkin sought to retrieve the notion of community from the abyss of time, without sinking back even further into the morass of metaphysical superstition.⁷ He claimed to have found the roots of human, and more specifically anarchist, morality in the nature of things--a nature which he deemed scientifically discovered and objectively verified. Through application of the scientific method, the truth about man, his nature and society, could be found and within it lay the basis of human ethics.⁸ And the ethic so determined contrasted sharply with that of existing society and demonstrated clearly what Kropotkin had long intuitively held to be true. From his earliest days Kropotkin had

⁷Peter Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, pp. 193-194. Henceforth, all references to this work will be cited K.R.P.

⁸Kropotkin writes: "As science goes deeper into the life of Nature, it gives to evolutionist ethics a philosophical certitude, where the transcendental thinker had only a vague intuition to rely on" (Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 20). See also Peter Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 47; Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 150, 155-156, and 179; and Kropotkin, Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 2-3, and 31.

disliked authority.⁹ He developed in his youth a distrust of, and even contempt for, those in positions of power and an overwhelming sense of respect and sympathy for the more kindly and benevolent masses.¹⁰ At first hoping to achieve social reform through the political process, he accepted with eagerness an administrative post in the tsarist regime, soon only to become disappointed and disillusioned by the inflexibility and insincerity of the autocratic Russian monarchy. In his autobiography,¹¹ Kropotkin writes:

The years that I spent in Siberia taught me many lessons which I could hardly have learned elsewhere. I soon realized the absolute impossibility of doing anything really useful for the mass of the people by means of the administrative machinery. With this illusion I parted forever.¹²

Simultaneously, however, this experience reinforced what had been a long developing faith in the creative

⁹Peter Kropotkin, Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 1-101; and Martin Miller, Kropotkin, pp. 22-23, 51, and 83-85.

¹⁰Kropotkin, Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 105-106.

¹¹The man's modesty and humility are apparent even in his dislike of the title given this volume, preferring his own selection, Around One's Life, a selection the publisher of the English language edition rejected, apparently feeling it too neutral. Nicholas Walter, "Introduction", Memoirs of a Revolutionist, p. v.

¹²Kropotkin, Memoirs of a Revolutionist, p. 215.

capacities and decency of the common people of his country--a faith which came in time to include all humanity and marked his writings separate and apart from those of many in the radical tradition. Thus it was that Kropotkin came to the realization that whatever reformist and revolutionary tendencies exist reside in the constructive hearts of the masses and not in the petrifying institutions of the state.¹³ And it is to this creative and constructive tendency that anarchism owes its existence, for:

Anarchism . . . owes its origin to the constructive, creative activity of the people, by which all institutions of common life were developed in the past, and to a protest--a revolt against the external force which had thrust itself upon these institutions; the aim of this protest being to give new scope to the creative activity of the people in order that it might work out the necessary institutions with fresh vigor.¹⁴

¹³Peter Kropotkin, Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 287; Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 133, 135-136, and 139; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 62-67; Expropriation, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 182; Law and Authority, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 197; Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 213-216; Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 162, and 186; The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Government, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 255-256; The Spirit of Revolt, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 36; and The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 262.

¹⁴Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 149.

Possessed by the desire for regeneration and growth, the common people stand, by definition, apart from and opposed to the repressive and often brutalizing apparatus of the state. Kropotkin asserts:

The higher administration of Siberia was influenced by excellent intentions, and I can only repeat that, everything considered, it was far better, far more enlightened, and far more interested in the welfare of the country than the administration of any other province of Russia. But it was an administration,--a branch of the tree which had its root at St. Petersburg, and that was quite sufficient to paralyze all its excellent intentions, and to make it interfere with all beginnings of local spontaneous life and progress. Whatever was started for the good of the country by local men was looked at with distrust, and was immediately paralyzed by hosts of difficulties which came, not so much from the bad intentions of men,--men, as a rule, are better than institutions,--but simply because they belonged to a pyramidal, centralized administration. The very fact of its being a government which had its source in a distant capital caused it to look upon everything from the point of view of a functionary of the government who thinks, first of all, about what his superiors will say, and how this or that will appear in the administrative machinery, and not of the interests of the country.

. . . Then I began to understand not only men and human character, but also the inner springs of the life of human society. The constructive work of the unknown masses, which so seldom finds any mention in books, and the importance of that constructive work in the growth of forms of society, fully appeared before my eyes. . . . The part which the unknown masses play in the accomplishment of all important historical events, and even in war, became evident to me from direct observation, and I came to hold ideas similar to those which Tol-

stoy expresses concerning the leaders and the masses in his monumental work, "War and Peace".¹⁵

And it was, moreover, out of this faith in the essential rationality and sociality of the common man,¹⁶ and disdain for the conservatizing and bureaucratizing tendencies of the state, that Kropotkin and his successors in the communist anarchist tradition came to reject all power relations as unnatural and unjust and to postulate a society of the future free from such oppressive and dehumanizing structures.¹⁷ Thus, while the liberal reformers of past centuries had fought against seemingly interminable odds to establish a government of laws and not of men, these anarchists, although sharing their detestation of the traditional hierarchy--both secular and religious--which had characterized both the status or customary societies of medieval times and the hereditarily class-based societies of the classical world, re-

¹⁵Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 213-214, and 215-216.

¹⁶The concepts of rationality and sociality were for Kropotkin inseparable. Man was by nature, in his estimation, both rational and social. Moreover, rational behaviour necessarily entailed altruistic acts of co-operation and mutual aid. See below, pp. 38-39, 45, 55-65.

¹⁷Included in this group are his contemporaries Errico Malatesta, Alexander Berkman, and Emma Goldman, along with his successors Herbert Read, Nicholas Walter, and the publishers of Freedom (the first issue of which came out in October of 1886).

jected with equal fervour the complete amorality and impersonalization of human relations which accompanied the development of the liberal nation-state.¹⁸

The liberal state had, in its bid for equality (meaning equality in the liberal sense of freedom to enter the market and not in the communist sense of actual equality of condition), not merely destroyed traditional privilege but sought to weed out all institutions in which mutual aid had formerly had expression.¹⁹ Hence, Kropotkin concludes that whereas in medieval towns guild members automatically helped one another,²⁰ and in barbarian society the individual took it upon himself to prevent harm to others,²¹ "under the theory of the all-protecting State the bystander need not intrude: it is the policeman's business to interfere, or not."²² Furthermore, he contends that this sense of uncaring and

¹⁸ Kropotkin, Communist Anarchism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 74; The Conquest of Bread, p. 187.

¹⁹ Kropotkin, Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, p. 226; The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 235-259.

²⁰ See below, pp. 63-64.

²¹ See below, pp. 63-64.

²² Kropotkin, Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, p. 228.

alienation were not limited to the political and socio-economic realms but extended into moral relations as well for, whereas among the Hottentots "it would be scandalous to eat without having loudly called out thrice whether there is not somebody wanting to share the food, all that a respectable citizen has to do now is to pay the poor tax and to let the starving starve."²³

Kropotkin's objection to the role of the state extended beyond that of the political radical to tsarist and feudal oppression and came to centre primarily upon what he deemed the inequitable and unjust economic relations of the capitalist market,²⁴ and the liberal theorists' attempts to elevate to a moral level the notion of benign neglect²⁵--a notion which the altruistic Kropotkin, committed to the principle of social or anarchist individualism and not bourgeois individualism,²⁶

²³Ibid.

²⁴Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 126-127; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 72; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 41-54; and Expropriation, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 162-164.

²⁵Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 182; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, p. 227.

²⁶See below, pp. 39-40, 44-45.

found highly repugnant and totally indefensible.

Differing from the liberal in his conception of human nature,²⁷ Kropotkin was able, in all consistency, to reject the role of the state and to postulate a new and more human society premised upon the principles of voluntarism and mutual aid.²⁸ In so arguing, Kropotkin, like a number of nineteenth century democratic theorists,²⁹ returned at least in part to a pre-liberal conception of man.³⁰ Seeing in each individual an infinite

²⁷See below, pp. 30-34, 55-65.

²⁸Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 284; Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 123-124; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 50-53, 68-69; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 94-95; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 159, 184-185.

²⁹Both John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx expressed feelings of revulsion at the limited and one-dimensional notion of man which pervades liberal society and theory. See J.S. Mill, "Essay on Bentham", in Mary Warnock (ed.), Utilitarianism, pp. 99-105, Considerations on Representative Government, p. 51, and Principles of Political Economy, in J.M. Robson (ed.), Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, III, pp. 754, 775; Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, in T.B. Bottomore (ed.), Karl Marx: Early Writings, pp. 72, 122; and Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, ed. C.J. Arthur, p. 105.

³⁰The notion of man as a being conscious of energies to be developed and viewing rational behaviour as behaviour engaged in such development was deeply rooted in the Western humanist tradition and, in fact, dominated Western philosophy from the time of Aristotle until the development of the market society in the seventeenth century. See C.B. Macpherson, "The Maximization of Democracy", in Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval, especially p. 5.

range of capacities to be developed,³¹ and viewing men as inherently equal,³² Kropotkin asserts that it is the ultimate moral right of each individual to use and exert these latent capacities and to develop them into manifest powers.³³ What is more, he contends that it is only through such self-motivated and self-directed activity that each man's individuality can be realized,³⁴

³¹Kropotkin, Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 284-285; Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 123-124, 141; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 70-71; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 105, 113; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 124, 164, 196-199; Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 25; Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 398-399; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 157.

³²This assumption clearly differs from that held by the ancients. It was not until the French Revolution that equality came to be held along with liberty and fraternity as an ideal of social life (Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 101-108). See also Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 52-53; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 99-109; Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 74-75, 93, 312; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 167-168, 176-177.

³³Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 48-49; The Conquest of Bread, p. 164; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 157.

³⁴The Conquest of Bread, pp. 126-127, 196-197; Fields, Factories, and Workshops, pp. 3-4; and Prisons and Their Moral Influence on Prisoners, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 223.

and the creative and regenerating spirit restored to a faltering and stagnating civilization.³⁵

Creativity and ingenuity are the products of the complete man, the whole man, the integrated man, and not of the incomplete, one-dimensional, and partialized being of bourgeois society.³⁶ As progress and improvement are reliant upon the inventive spirit,³⁷ so, too, is the inventive spirit the product of total human development.³⁸ It emerges from the union of the practical and the abstract, the manual and the mental, deriving its stimulus from human need and its means from human experience and

³⁵The Conquest of Bread, pp. 49, 130-131; Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 27-28; Expropriation, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 207-209; The Spirit of Revolt, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 35-37; and The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 259, 262, 264.

³⁶Kropotkin, Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 285-286; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 81, 104, 106, 109-111, 113; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 124-127, 165; and Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 398-400.

³⁷Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 140-144; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 96; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 184-185.

³⁸Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, pp. 196-199; Fields, Factories, and Workshops, p. 215; and Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 398-400.

capacity.³⁹ It is only from the total man, fully formed and developed, that great ideas come--ideas with practical implications and social benefits,⁴⁰ and it is, he contends, towards the creation of such ideas, such men, and such social relations as allow and even encourage this development that our notions of morality and ethics ought to be directed.⁴¹

Thus, the aim of communist anarchism is the formation of a society which allows each individual the greatest possible degree of individual expression consistent with the equal liberty of others,⁴² and this, for Kropotkin and his followers, necessarily entails the destruction of all power relations--political and economic.⁴³

³⁹Kropotkin, An Appeal to the Young, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 282; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 197-199; Expropriation, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 196; and Fields, Factories, and Workshops, pp. 3-4, 215.

⁴⁰Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 198.

⁴¹Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 47; Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 5, 12, 26; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 151-152.

⁴²Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 105; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 157.

⁴³It is upon this point that the communist anarchists differ not only from the statist liberal and socialist schools but also from the collectivists within their own ranks. See below, pp. 43-44.

While Kropotkin's theory is genuinely a product of the nineteenth century with its unabiding faith in science and progress,⁴⁴ it represents a radical shift away from the liberal theories contemporaneous with it. For while Kropotkin asserted, as did Locke⁴⁵ and even Hobbes⁴⁶ before him, that men should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves,⁴⁷ Kropotkin's interpretation of the meaning of these words differs profoundly from that given by Locke. Viewing men as unlimited desirers and consumers of material goods and power over others, Locke and his successors in the liberal tradition had been able to move from an initial position of freedom and equality (i.e. his equal rights postulate) to the justification of a class-based state (i.e. a society which denied equality of rights). Taking this natural and avaricious proclivity to material acquisition as man's defining characteristic and holding it above all others as the determining factor of human behaviour,

⁴⁴See Richard DeHaan, "Kropotkin, Marx and Dewey", Anarchy, V, 9 (September 1965), p. 273.

⁴⁵Locke, The Second Treatise of Government, in Peter Laslett (ed.), John Locke: Two Treatises of Government, pp. 309-311.

⁴⁶Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 183.

⁴⁷Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 92, 97, 98.

the liberal theorists had transformed the Aristotelian concept of man into Homo economicus, and had dismissed as ancillary the developmental portions of the human ontology.⁴⁸ In so doing, these theorists were able to morally justify the subversion of personal liberty to the material maximizing claims of the capitalist economy.

Kropotkin, however, would not. Finding the standards of morality in contemporary society highly repugnant, Kropotkin sought out and found its basis not merely in the hypocritical stance of a society which practiced the philosophy of unadulterated egoism while paying lip-service to the altruistic values of Christianity,⁴⁹ but

⁴⁸Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time, pp. 111-116; and "Our Obsolete Market Mentality", in George Dalton (ed.), Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays of Karl Polanyi, pp. 63-65.

⁴⁹By the term 'Christianity' Kropotkin, like Tolstoy, means the teachings of Christ in their altruistic and messianic form, and not the rigidly systematized dogma of the bureaucratic church hierarchy. Unlike Tolstoy, however, Kropotkin rejects even Christian altruism as inhibitive of individual character formation. See especially Kropotkin's Letter to Nettlau, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 296. See also Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 138-139; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 56; Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 119-121, 147-148; and Leo Tolstoy, The Kingdom of God is within You.

more importantly in the liberal justificatory theory itself. Liberal theory had, in its repudiation of previous hierarchical and class-based moralities, quickly grasped hold of the utilitarian notion and rejected all other theories as unscientific and untrue. Assuming men's actions to be governed by reason, the utilitarians had concluded that men were but bundles of energy pulled towards some objects by the attraction of pleasure and repelled by others in the attempt to avoid pain, and, upon this simple and rational basis, it was argued that all human behaviour could be understood and explained away.⁵⁰ And while Kropotkin accepts in part at least the rationale behind this theory and shares with the utilitarians in their rejection of transcendental ethics and divine theology, he disdains their failure to distinguish between levels of satisfaction. While he does not doubt that men, in their conscious acts, seek to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain, he contends that the utilitarian is wrong when he suggests that all actions and all satisfactions are indifferent;⁵¹ rather, like John

⁵⁰This theory was better as a tool for explaining than predicting behaviour since it has the advantage of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Any act can be explained as having been rightly or wrongly viewed as providing man with the most satisfaction. See Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 84-88.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 88.

Stuart Mill, who revolted against the crass materialism of his teacher and predecessor Jeremy Bentham,⁵² Kropotkin maintains that there are higher and lower pleasures, virtuous and vicious acts.⁵³ And the difference between these acts lies not in divine inspiration or in metaphysical speculation, as the liberal theorists suggest, but in the nature of things, or so Kropotkin claims, for animals and primitive men quite clearly recognize this differentiation without having read the dicta of Moses and of the Church Fathers and without having been exposed to the categorical imperative of Kant.⁵⁴ Men's actions are governed not by what is good for the individual per se, but rather by what is fair and good for the whole race;⁵⁵ and by this criterion, what is good is that which is useful to society as a whole, and what is bad is

⁵² Mill, "Essay on Bentham", in Mary Warnock (ed.), Utilitarianism, pp. 99-105.

⁵³ Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 88.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 89-91.

⁵⁵ This entails a misuse of the word race, but one which might be viewed as deliberate in so far as Kropotkin intends this conception to broaden with each progressive step in the evolutionary process. At first it pertains only to a narrowly defined group such as the extended family or clan. In time, however, these feelings of sociality (or mutual aid) are extended to include a whole society and ultimately the entire species. See Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 29-31.

that which is harmful to it.⁵⁶

Thus, questioning the validity of the conventional scientific world view, and repelled by the amorality generated by the market, Kropotkin set out to dismantle both the inequitable capitalist state, which allows for the perpetuation of this inequality, and the market morality which pervades and depersonalizes social relations.

Within capitalism he sees the embodiment of inequality and even inequity (the latter being for Kropotkin the lesser principle of the two⁵⁷). Placing its priorities upon greed rather than need,⁵⁸ efficiency in production rather than human development,⁵⁹ the capitalist market has relieved the individual of his right to engage in independent decision-making and transformed him into a slave.⁶⁰ Little better than a serf, in fact in some ways

⁵⁶Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 91-97.

⁵⁷Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 60-61, 74-75; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 106-107, 109; and The Conquest of Bread, pp. 136-137.

⁵⁸Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, pp. 46-47, 53.

⁵⁹Kropotkin, Fields, Factories, and Workshops, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁰Unable to utilize his capacities, man becomes withered, starved, and depraved, and loses whatever individual sense of creativity and originality he previously had. He becomes, in effect, an appendage to the machine.

worse off since, in theory at least, the feudal lord had an obligation to his property,⁶¹ the worker is used and exploited, his product being largely taken from him to support his employer and the superstructure of the state which holds him in perpetual submission.⁶² Both politically and economically he is the producer of his own oppression.

Working long hours for minimal subsistence in a competitive milieu he is necessarily alienated from his fellow men. Treated as a commodity and deemed substitutable, he loses all sense of identity save that of a worker, a wage-slave, a drudge.⁶³ His purpose in life is to survive and nothing more. Torn by a tension-ridden society, he must either struggle to climb to the top through endless competition with others (a competition which requires his using and abusing others) or

⁶¹ Kropotkin, The Great French Revolution, pp. 577-582; Memoirs of a Revolutionist, pp. 136-139; and The Russian Revolutionary Party, pp. 137-140.

⁶² Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, pp. 47-49, 53-54, 119, 162; Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 27; Expropriation, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 179; Law and Authority, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 210-211; and Revolutionary Government, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 238-242.

⁶³ Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, pp. 60, 198-199.

sink with resignation, defeated, to the depths of apathy. Stale, flat, and monotonous, the life of the average worker is, argues Kropotkin, a prosaic life, marked by boredom and routine. Reduced by the division of labour, that hallmark of market rationalism, to the manufacture of the eighteenth part of a pin, the worker can see no purpose to his work and no future for his life.⁶⁴ Locked into an economic strait-jacket and subject to both the political constraints of the administrative bureaucracy and the impersonal controls of the market, the individual experiences a profound feeling of helplessness and powerlessness.⁶⁵

Unable to engage in genuinely free decision-making since he must work in order to fulfill his basic subsistence needs,⁶⁶ the worker, under the mythology of free

⁶⁴Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 70; and The Conquest of Bread, pp. 126-127, 165, 197-198.

⁶⁵Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 48, 55, 70; Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 134-135; and Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 25-26.

⁶⁶Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 141; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 121-124; Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 31; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 152-153.

contract,⁶⁷ is forced to stagnate and wither away. Required by nature to put his subsistence needs before his 'human' needs (i.e. developmental needs), he is reduced to satisfying another's happiness--to a means rather than an end⁶⁸--and, unused, unexercised, unfulfilled, his potentialities dissipate and his faculties diminish.⁶⁹ Deprived of leisure and enslaved in unrewarding toil,⁷⁰ the men (and women) of bourgeois society are prevented from engaging in the higher arts and sciences and hence precluded from any genuine form of individuation, i.e. the development of the higher faculties--moral, intellectual, and artistic.⁷¹

⁶⁷Kropotkin writes: "For the worker who must sell his labor, it is impossible to remain free" ("Letter to Nettlau", in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 305). See also Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 55, 69-71.

⁶⁸Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 167-168.

⁶⁹Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 80-81, 111.

⁷⁰Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 167-168.

⁷¹Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 49, 65-67; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 110-113; An Appeal to the Young, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 264-265; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 124, 126; and Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 19-20, 25-26, 105.

Moreover, Kropotkin contends that under such circumstances even the owners of the means of production cannot really be free. Ever afraid of losing their positions of wealth and privilege and falling into the ranks of the working class, or worse, the employers of labour must also engage in a ceaseless struggle. Governed by false needs,⁷² they strive endlessly for material goods, thereby developing only the lesser and more vulgar side of their personalities,⁷³ and, in the course of this development, precluding, both for themselves and for their fellow men, the cultivation of the higher faculties. Competition, in this crass and materialistic sense,⁷⁴ leads, not to growth and development, but to conflict and disharmony, and ultimately to the dissolution of society.⁷⁵ It is only when the life of each individual,

⁷²The need for unlimited quantities of material goods is, within bourgeois society, a genuine need. It is artificial only in the sense in which bourgeois society is artificial. It is not a primordial need.

⁷³Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 141.

⁷⁴Kropotkin distinguishes between two types of competition and conflict. The materialistic one he views destructive and regressive; the conflict of ideas he sees as creative and progressive. See Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 139-143.

⁷⁵Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 48-49; and The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 262-264.

his personal aspirations and desires, is in accord with that of others, and the interests of all, that genuine freedom exists and individuation can occur.⁷⁶ Masters are as entrapped by the system as are its slaves;⁷⁷ the characters of all men perverted--human nature depraved.⁷⁸ Thus, Kropotkin concludes that the liberal assertions of freedom and equality are, at best, illusory, and, at worst, immoral.⁷⁹

Setting out from a similar equality of rights position, Kropotkin and Locke arrive at conclusions which are diametrically opposed. Each is an individualist, but their respective notions of individualism differ radically. For Locke and Bentham, the term was strictly non-developmental, asserting only the individual's right to own himself and the goods he had acquired through the application of himself. It entailed, at most, the right

⁷⁶Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 96; and Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 105.

⁷⁷Kropotkin, "Letter to Nettlau", in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 296; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 168.

⁷⁸Kropotkin, Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 285; and Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 104, 106.

⁷⁹Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 167-168.

to life, liberty, and property.⁸⁰ For Kropotkin, however, the term meant much more, and, in fact, demanded the rejection of the very principle for which bourgeois individualism stood. It required a complete rejection of private property, and, more specifically, a denial of the capitalist market and wage labour.⁸¹ The right to life, and, even more, the right to a 'free' life--i.e. a 'human' life--were, according to Kropotkin, necessarily abrogated by the individual commitment to private ownership of the means of production.

Furthermore, Kropotkin contends that the liberal theorists have failed not merely to provide for the maximum development of individuality on a universal basis--the only form Kropotkin and his school accept as morally justifiable⁸²--but they also fail to meet the preconditions of the lesser principle of justice or equity.⁸³

⁸⁰Locke, The Second Treatise of Government, in Peter Laslett (ed.), John Locke: Two Treatises of Government, p. 311.

⁸¹See above, pp. 34-37.

⁸²See above, pp. 27, and 29.

⁸³Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 48, 54-55; Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 126-127; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 42-43, 49, 51-52; Expropriation, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 162, 164; Law and Authority, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 207; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 188, 193.

They fail to guarantee each the return of his own, and hence to meet the standards of individualism itself.⁸⁴ And this problem, as in the case of the previous one, lies not in the abuses of capitalism but in its intrinsic nature.⁸⁵ If each man was to receive his just return (i.e. the full product of his labour), there would be no profit, and, without profit, no incentive. Capitalism is, by definition, an inequitable system. It does not exist to secure well-being for all, and to expect this is to expect from it something it cannot possibly deliver.⁸⁶ Kropotkin writes:

It is absolutely impossible that mercantile production should be carried on in the interest of all. To desire it would be to expect the capitalist to go beyond his province and to fulfil duties that he cannot fulfil without ceasing to be what he is--a private manufacturer seeking his own enrichment.⁸⁷

Modifications and reforms may alleviate some of the suffering, he asserts, but cannot end the inequity of its distributive principle nor return man to himself.⁸⁸

⁸⁴Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 117; Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 27; and Law and Authority, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 212.

⁸⁵Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 128.

⁸⁶Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 117.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 60, 88.

Thus, Kropotkin concludes that both justice and morality require the dismantling of this inequitable and oppressive apparatus and its replacement by conditions of freedom and equality.⁸⁹ Such conditions, however, must extend beyond the mere principle of equity (i.e. that principle which, consistent with the individualism from which it springs, demands the return to each of the full product of his labour and the destruction of exploitation) and encompass the higher ideal of equality.⁹⁰ The visionary ideal of Kropotkin's theory transcends not merely the injustices of capitalism, which he deems exploitative and immiserating, but also the degradation and poverty, both material and moral, of a society founded upon the notion of quid pro quo. To return to the relations of the past--relations in which each man worked alone to produce that which he could exchange for equal value in the open market--would entail a regression to conditions of scarcity, and an extension, rather than a shortening, of the work day and hence, a diminu-

⁸⁹Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 285.

⁹⁰Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 60-61; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 108-109; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 186-187; and Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 29-30.

tion of leisure time.⁹¹

And while collectivism might overcome these productive shortcomings, it, too, is unable to rise above the moral limitations and sterility of the individualist schemes. Men, being unequal in their capacities and in their levels of productivity, would receive unequal remuneration and thereby be denied an equal opportunity to engage in activities conducive to individual self-realization. Moreover, given the complexity and interdependence of productive relations in contemporary society, Kropotkin questions the possibility and feasibility of determining the exact contribution of any one individual to the productive process,⁹² and suggests that a society based upon such a principle would become totally absorbed by the notions of calculability and measurability--notions which he views as antagonistic to both society and morality.⁹³ Of his own society, Kro-

⁹¹ Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 126; Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 172.

⁹² Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 57-59; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 88-90, 175-189; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 172-173.

⁹³ Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 60-61, 74; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 106-109; and The Conquest of Bread, pp. 186-187.

potkin writes:

If middle-class society is decaying, if we have got into a blind alley from which we cannot emerge without attacking past institutions with torch and hatchet, it is precisely because we have given too much to counting. It is because we have let ourselves be influenced into giving only to receive. It is because we have aimed at turning society into a commercial company based on debit and credit.⁹⁴

If society is to survive, it must transcend the unjust and inequitable relations of the capitalist market and the narrowly egoistic and humanity destroying forces of an essentially sterile bourgeois morality, and return to first principles.⁹⁵ It must recognize the essential equality of men, their social needs, duties and obligations, and explicitly reject the notion of subverting the rights of one to add to the fulfilment of another. It must adopt "the ethic of a society of equals, who are completely free",⁹⁶ and with it the libertarian conception of democratic individualism--a principle which, by

⁹⁴The Conquest of Bread, p. 187.

⁹⁵Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 139-143; and The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 262-264.

⁹⁶Kropotkin, "Letter to Nettlau", in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 299.

definition, stands opposed to the exploitative and dehumanizing tendencies of its elitist or bourgeois form--that individualism which takes as its goal "the greatest individual development possible through practicing the highest communist sociability in what concerns both its primordial needs and its relationships with others in general",⁹⁷ i.e. communist individualism.

This return, moreover, is not a dream but real.⁹⁸ It is possible and, Kropotkin suggests, probable,⁹⁹ but its means must be social and not political.¹⁰⁰ Only

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 297.

⁹⁸Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 126; and The Conquest of Bread, pp. 51, 54.

⁹⁹Furthermore, Kropotkin contends that bourgeois society is doomed to failure. Given its immorality and inherent contradictions, its demise is inevitable. See Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 129; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 46-47, 59-61, 74; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 62-63; and Words of a Rebel, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 76.

¹⁰⁰Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 124, 137-138, 140-144; Law and Authority, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 212; "Letter to Brandes", in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 320; Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 159-165, 170-172, 189-191; Revolutionary Government, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 238-242, 249-250; and The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 211, 261-262.

through direct action on the part of the people as individuals can genuine democracy be attained,¹⁰¹ for any new authority, even if deemed temporary or provisional, will cling to its new status just as did the monarchs and absolute rulers of the past. The common man, the man for whom the revolution is fought and by whom it is won, will, under such circumstances, be relegated once again to the position of serf or societal drudge, supporting, with his labour and his life, a superstructure which exploits and dehumanizes him.¹⁰² Such has been the case with all previous revolutions and must inevitably be the result of any future revolution which does not embrace the equalitarian principles of anarchism.¹⁰³

Hence, Kropotkin disassociates himself from the state socialists--be they utopian or scientific--and views their position as ill-informed, unscientific and

¹⁰¹ Kropotkin, The Commune of Paris, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 128-129; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 59-60; Revolutionary Government, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.) K.R.P., pp. 247-248; and The Spirit of Revolt, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 38-43.

¹⁰² Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 136-137; The Commune of Paris, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, p. 124; The Great French Revolution, pp. 77, 97, 158-173, 195-225, 243, 291, 356, 397; and Revolutionary Government, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 238-239, 242-243.

¹⁰³ Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 154-158, 187.

dangerously counter-revolutionary.¹⁰⁴ Repelled by the administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms required for the allocation of work and resources in such a society, and asserting that "it is futile to speak of liberty as long as economic slavery exists",¹⁰⁵ Kropotkin contends that the transference of economic control from one group in society to another does not by itself end slavery but merely alters its form. To the individual worker, exploited and oppressed, it matters little who the dictator and tyrant is, and the danger with state capitalism is the ever greater vigilance and more efficient control that a centralized bureaucracy may exercise, in contrast to the more complicated and chaotic arrangements of a less-streamlined and private competitive market--arrangements in which the left hand knows not what the right hand is doing.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴The Commune of Paris, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 129-132; The Conquest of Bread, p. 198; "Conversation with Lenin", in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 326-331; Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 170-171, 186; and The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Government, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 254-255.

¹⁰⁵Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 124.

¹⁰⁶Kropotkin, Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 286; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 50; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 171.

The alienation and dehumanization, however, stemming from the direction and control of one's labour by another, does not distinguish between the private individual and the state as capitalist, entrepreneur, owner and exploiter. The failure of Marxism, argues Kropotkin echoing Bakunin,¹⁰⁷ lies in its incomprehension of the intricacy of the political-economic power relationship--a relationship which goes two ways. It is not only economic power which buys political clout, but political authority can also seek to strengthen and consolidate its position through the acquisition of economic power.¹⁰⁸ The problem lies not merely in the fact that power rests disproportionately in the hands of the bourgeoisie, but that it exists at all.

The evil of the present system is therefore not that the 'surplus value' of production goes to the capitalist, as Rodbertus and Marx said, thus narrowing the Socialist conception and the general view of the capitalist

¹⁰⁷Sam Dolgoff (ed.), Bakunin on Anarchy, pp. 283-284, 325-333. See also Marxism, Freedom and the State--a highly prophetic work, if at times an oversimplified and extremely prejudicial account of Marxian doctrine.

¹⁰⁸This tendency to seek to extend our personal powers when once in a position of authority and command is not perverse but natural. Even the best of us, Kropotkin asserts, are not without our faults and would be corrupted by the exercise of power. Thus, he concludes that it is not the anarchist, but the statist, who is possessed by utopian dreams and an unrealistic view of human nature. See Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 135-136.

system; the surplus value itself is but a consequence of deeper causes.¹⁰⁹

While Kropotkin shares with the communists a commitment to the notion of communal property, he totally disavows the role of the state. He contends that while at one stage in our history it may have performed a necessary though iniquitous function, its utter incompatibility with the notion of equality precludes its continued existence in any society which claims to be a democracy.¹¹⁰ In a society void of domination, exploitation and servitude, its raison d'etre would cease, for:

The state is an institution which was developed for the very purpose of establishing monopolies in favor of the slave and serf owners, the landed proprietors, canonic and laic, the merchant guilds and the money-lenders, the kings, the military commanders, the noblemen, and finally, in the nineteenth century, the industrial capitalist, whom the State supplied with 'hands' driven away from the land. Consequently the State would be, to say the least, a useless institution, once these monopolies ceased to exist. Life would be simplified, once the mechanism created for the exploitation of the poor by the rich would have been done away with.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 119.

¹¹⁰In so far as economic power brings with it political influence and clout, and political power seeks endlessly to perpetuate itself, the only genuinely free society is one in which all individuals function on a completely equal basis--and such a society is anarchy. Anarchism and democracy are synonymous.

¹¹¹Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 166.

The changes, both political and economic, if they are to be permanent, must go hand in hand.¹¹² To the state socialist Kropotkin says:

'You cannot modify the existing conditions of property without deeply modifying at the same time the political organization. You must limit the powers of government and renounce parliamentary rule. To each new economic phase of life corresponds a new political serfdom. Representative government corresponds to capital-rule. But in a society where the distinction between capitalist and laborer has disappeared, there is no need of such a government; it would be an anachronism, a nuisance. Free workers would require a free organization, and this cannot have any other basis than free agreement and free cooperation, without sacrificing the autonomy of the individual to the all pervading interference of the State. The no-capitalist system implies the no-government system.'¹¹³

And since communism--the socio-economic basis of the future--is unrealizable without the advent of anarchy,¹¹⁴ Kropotkin declares that "the first duty of the revolution will be to make a bonfire of all existing laws as

¹¹²Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 49-53; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 148-150; Law and Authority, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 212; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), pp. 157-170, 181.

¹¹³Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 52.

¹¹⁴Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 185.

it will of all titles of property".¹¹⁵ The failure to do this was the failure of the Paris Commune,¹¹⁶ but the anarchists have learned from past experiences:

So long as socialism was understood in its wide, generic, and true sense--as an effort to abolish the exploitation of labor by capital--the anarchists were marching hand-in-hand with the socialists of that time. But they were compelled to separate from them when the socialists began to say there is no possibility of abolishing capitalist exploitation within the lifetime of our generation: that during that phase of economic evolution which we are now living through we have only to mitigate the exploitation, and to impose upon the capitalists certain legal limitations.

Contrarily to this tendency of the present-day socialists, we maintain that already now, without waiting for the coming of new phases and forms of the capitalist exploitation of labor, we must work for its abolition. We must, already now, tend to transfer all that is needed for production--the soil, the mines, the factories, the means of communication, and the means of existence, too--from the hands of the individual capitalist into those of the communities of producers and consumers.¹¹⁷

Thus, the anarchist vision entails no state with its petrifying laws and self-interested authorities, but rather

¹¹⁵Law and Authority, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 212.

¹¹⁶Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 51-52; The Commune of Paris, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 119-132; Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 163-164; and Revolutionary Government, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 240.

¹¹⁷Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 169-170.

a society governed by mutual agreements, social custom and habit, flexible and developing--always open to new ideas, debate and social change.¹¹⁸ Only with the adoption of the principles of decentralization and fair agreement will society reconstitute itself on a truly moral and human basis.¹¹⁹

And this end, while once impossible is no longer so. With the development of industry and technology, mankind is able to produce far more than is needed to sustain all in comfort,¹²⁰ and this, if properly organ-

¹¹⁸Such a society need not be so tolerant as Kropotkin imagines. Custom and habit are often more dictatorial and tyrannous than law, and consensus more binding and prohibitive of dissent than legalistic authority. The community may wink at the legal offender, but tends to regard the transgressor of the moral code as a dangerous pervert. Some of the most intolerant and confining societies have been religious and utopian communities founded upon the principles of tolerance and consensus. See George Orwell, "Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of Gulliver's Travels", in Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (eds.), The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell, IV, 252-253. For an examination of the authoritarian tendency in utopian writings, see Marie Louise Berneri, Journey through Utopia.

¹¹⁹Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 50-53; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 184-185.

¹²⁰Kropotkin's views on this became somewhat modified in the period following the Russian Revolution, and he came to see the first need of the revolution as being one of increasing production (although he remained ever loyal to the notion of individual liberty). See Words of a Rebel, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 76-78.

ized, with a minimum of labour from each.¹²¹ Thus, Kropotkin concludes that the problem in contemporary society lies not in its productive capacity, but in its failure to examine priorities adequately, to determine needs, and to gear production to meet these needs.¹²² It lies not in overproduction, as many liberal economists suggest, but in underconsumption,¹²³ for in such an inequitable and chaotic set of economic arrangements it is inevitable that industry will be directed not by the needs of the people but by the luxurious cravings of the very rich for these lead to greater profit.¹²⁴

And while logic would have it that the methods of the 'dismal science' be inverted so that the needs of society be first determined and then solutions sought for

¹²¹ Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 129-130; and Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 71.

¹²² Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 128-130; and Expropriation, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 172-173.

¹²³ Kropotkin writes: "What economists call overproduction is but a production that is above the purchasing power of the worker, who is reduced to poverty by capital and State" (Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 127-128).

¹²⁴ Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 127-128; and The Conquest of Bread, p. 48. This has been a classic anarchist criticism of society. See William Godwin, Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, ed. Isaac Kramnick, pp. 446-447.

them,¹²⁵ Kropotkin refuses to allow for even the partial subversion of individual liberty in the name of profit maximization and productive efficiency, and it is largely for this reason that he rejects the mainstream of socialist, as well as, liberal political economy.¹²⁶ Work activity is for neither theory entirely free. It is not individually decided upon and freely entered. Bourgeois rationalism and efficiency require specialization and the division of labour, and these same fetishes, Kropotkin contends, are venerated by the majority of socialist theorists as well. Fallen victim to the same horrible principle--"so noxious to society, so brutalizing to the individual"¹²⁷--socialist political economy "still follows in the old grooves, and in most cases repeats the same mistakes".¹²⁸

¹²⁵Kropotkin, Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 55, 60; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 186-191; and Fields, Factories and Workshops, 3-4, 218.

¹²⁶While it is true that Kropotkin attributed a greater role to the state in the alienative process (a term he himself never used) than did Marx, it would be wrong to underestimate the similarities of their two theories. See Martin A. Miller, Kropotkin, p. 302, n. 2.

¹²⁷Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 198.

¹²⁸Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 179-180.

Anarchism, in contrast, explicitly rejects all power relations. Its proponents accept only voluntarism in economic and social affairs, and view liberal political economy as a study in perversity.¹²⁹ Thus, Kropotkin sets out consciously and deliberately to dispell the myths of the liberal state and to replace its elitist bourgeois ontology with the more democratic assumptions of communist anarchism.¹³⁰ Rejecting the notion of man as an unlimited desirer of material goods and power over others, Kropotkin asserts that the natural condition of man is not the Hobbesian war of each against all, but one of mutual co-operation and sociality (i.e. mutual aid).¹³¹ The liberal conception of man as an acquisitive and competitive being had long obscured the most definitive of man's characteristics and the most progressive of his attitudes--his tendency to engage in co-operative and supportative activities, activities which were aimed at the benefit of all and the derogation

¹²⁹Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 126; Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 69; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 52, 198, 210; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 179-180.

¹³⁰See above, pp. 27, 29.

¹³¹This is a theme which pervades the writings of Kropotkin and can be found in almost every article, pamphlet and book written by him. See especially Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution.

of none.¹³² The laws of middle-class sociology proceeded not from science but from mystique,¹³³ scientific observation revealing not that ruthless internecine strife of bourgeois political economy.¹³⁴

Moreover, Kropotkin contends that this failure to recognize the fallacy of bourgeois thought is not entirely accidental. Political economy has limited itself to stating the facts concerning existing social relations, and then justifying them in the interest of the dominant class.¹³⁵ A pseudo-science, it is the science of the possessing classes and stands diametrically opposed to the findings of naturalistic observation.¹³⁶ Its conception of human nature bears no relation to reality.

In fact, Kropotkin argues, impartial study and observation of the animal kingdom demonstrates conclusively

¹³²See above, pp. 44-45.

¹³³Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 135; The Conquest of Bread, p. 49; Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 146, 153, 183; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 77-78.

¹³⁴Kropotkin, Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 168.

¹³⁵Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, p. 197.

¹³⁶Kropotkin views his work as truly scientific. He writes: "In anarchism there is no room for those pseudo-scientific laws with which the German metaphysicians of the first thirty years of the nineteenth century had to content themselves. Anarchism does not recognize any method other than the natural-scientific. . ." (Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 192.

the adaptive advantage of the mutual aid tendency.¹³⁷ Warfare and struggle in the world of the lower animals are not, as Huxley argued,¹³⁸ the key determinants of progressive evolution, for relations within a given species are most generally based upon the principle of mutual aid;¹³⁹ this holding for even carnivores and members of the rapacious species.¹⁴⁰ A predominant fact of nature,¹⁴¹ mutual aid has enabled the physiologically less well adapted animals, of which man is certainly one, to survive and prosper against the odds, in the midst of greater and more independently ferocious beasts.¹⁴² More-

¹³⁷Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 74; Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 95, 97; Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 142; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 1-75.

¹³⁸See Thomas H. Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics", in Julian Huxley (ed.), Touchstone for Ethics: 1893-1943, pp. 67-94; and "The Struggle for Existence in Human Society", in Ashley Montagu (ed.), Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, Appendix B, pp. 329-341.

¹³⁹Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 96-97; Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 14; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. ix-x.

¹⁴⁰Kropotkin, Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 130-133; and Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 47, 59, 61.

¹⁴¹Kropotkin, Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 14.

¹⁴²Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 97; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 110-111.

over, the individualist conception is false both in its application to the animal kingdom and its attribution to men. A product of the imagination and not of science,¹⁴³ Kropotkin contends:

The idea dominated the eighteenth century, a period in which very little was known about the origins of man; and one must add that in the hands of the encyclopedists and of Rousseau, the idea of the 'social contract' became a weapon with which to fight against the divine right of kings. Nevertheless, in spite of the services it may have rendered in the past, this theory must be seen to be false.

The fact is that all animals, with the exception of some carnivores and birds of prey and some species which are becoming extinct, live in societies. In the struggle for life, the gregarious species have an advantage over those that are not. In every animal classification they are at the top of the ladder, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that the first beings with human attributes were already living in societies. Man did not create society; society existed before man.

We now also know--and it has been convincingly demonstrated by anthropology--that the point of departure for mankind was not the family but the clan, the tribe.¹⁴⁴

Anterior to man and an essential attribute of him,¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 80-81; and Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 173-174.

¹⁴⁴The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 214-215.

¹⁴⁵Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 98; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 52-60.

society is viewed by even the most primitive peoples as a fact of nature. The isolated man of political philosophy comes only as an oddity to the primitive mind.¹⁴⁶ He is not a product of the simple and the natural, but of the unnatural and grotesquely civilized.

To a primitive man isolated life seems so strange, so much out of the usual course of nature, that when he sees a tiger, a badger, a shew-mouse leading a solitary existence, or even when he notices a tree that stands alone, far from the forest, he creates a legend to explain this strange occurrence. He makes no legends to explain life in societies, but he has one for every case of solitude. The hermit, if he is not a sage who has temporarily withdrawn from the world to ponder over its destinies, or a wizard, is in most cases an outcast banished for some grave transgression against the code of social life. He has done something so contrary to the ordinary run of life that they have thrown him out of society. Very often he is a sorcerer, who has the command of all sorts of evil powers, and has something to do with the pestilential corpses which spread contagion in the world. This is why he prowls about at night, pursuing his wicked designs under the cover of darkness. All other beings live in societies, and human thought runs in this channel. Social life--that is, we, not I--is the normal form of life. It is life itself. Therefore, 'We' must have been the habitual trend of thought with the primitive man, a 'category' of his mind, as Kant might have said.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶The use of the term 'primitive' does not in the least suggest that Kropotkin deemed such men as having a prelogical mentality, but rather that as yet uncivilized beings have not experienced the individualistic ethos of bourgeois society and find it, when they do experience it, both unnatural and distasteful.

¹⁴⁷Kropotkin, Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 60.

And so, argues Kropotkin, in opposition to the theorists of bourgeois individualism, it is in the tribal identification wherein lies the basis of human morality. The notions of sociality and mutual aid preceded those of individuality and self-assertion,¹⁴⁸ and "Even now the psychology of the lower savages scarcely knows any 'individual' or 'personality'. The dominant conception in their minds is the tribe, with its hard-and-fast rules, superstitions, taboos, habits, and interests. In that constant, ever-present identification of the unit with the whole, lies the origin of all ethics. . . ."¹⁴⁹ Thus, social life is a condition inseparable from human nature, and included in this social spirit is a "readiness to curb wilfulness for the sake of supporting social life"¹⁵⁰--a consideration which Kropotkin believes to be logical, and not in the least a violation of one's individual liberty.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁵¹Since man's nature is social, the requirements of social life cannot be viewed as limitations upon man's liberty. Absolute freedom, i.e. freedom which is purely self-regarding, has no basis in anarchist thought. It is a product of the abstract, the metaphysical, the imagination. It is not real. Solidarity, not isolation, is the root of genuine liberty. See Kropotkin, Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 96.

The conflicting arguments of liberal theory are, Kropotkin maintains, merely the product of hereditary prejudices and unsound education which preaches the beneficence of the state¹⁵² and fails to recognize in it 'that brute machine' which Godwin so eloquently attacked in the name of simplicity, sincerity and equality.¹⁵³ It is not the anarchist notion of nature which is distorted, but the bourgeois one--bastardized by a social and economic arrangement which requires a conception of man pitted against every other man, in "a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth one-ly in Death".¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Kropotkin asserts that contemporary science does not confirm the Hobbesian notion of things, but rather substantiates, to a considerable degree, the anarchist claims. It was not, he contends, the scientist Darwin, but the vulgarizer Huxley who referred to the natural condition of man in purely Hobbesian terms, and while he conceded that Hobbes's formulations were understandable, given the condition of

¹⁵²The Conquest of Bread, p. 145.

¹⁵³See William Godwin, Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and Its Influence on Modern Morals and Happiness.

¹⁵⁴Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 161.

the sciences of his days, that they would reappear at a later period and stand opposed to the findings of contemporary naturalistic observation was, to him, unfathomable.¹⁵⁵ And while Kropotkin was undoubtedly generous in his evaluation of Darwin,¹⁵⁶ he was correct in his assertion that Darwinism was at best ambivalent and not the blanket liberal apologia presented by Huxley and Spencer¹⁵⁷ in the guise of a science.¹⁵⁸ Certainly, studies

¹⁵⁵Ethics: Origin and Development, p. 152.

¹⁵⁶Darwin's work was in no sense pure science. Both he and Wallace stumbled upon the notion of evolution through natural selection while reading Malthus's classic work, An Essay on the Principle of Population, a work which itself was written in reaction to the anarchistic principles espoused by Godwin in his essay entitled "On Avarice and Profusion". See Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species, p. 53; Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, pp. 38-39; and Alfred Russel Wallace, Social Environment and Moral Progress, p. 153.

¹⁵⁷Contrary to popular opinion, Spencerism is not the reflection of biological Darwinism in the social arena. In fact, Spencer had arrived at many of the conclusions so often attributed to Darwin much earlier, and had by 1850 (the date of publication of his Social Statics) consolidated most of the ideas he was said to have taken from Darwin nine years before the publication of The Origin of Species, a fact which suggests that Darwinism might more fittingly be referred to as biological Spencerism, rather than the more common appropriation of the term social Darwinists to refer to Spencerians. See Marvin Harris, The Rise of Anthropological Theory, p. 126; George W. Stocking, Jr., Race, Culture, and Evolution, p. 122; and Robert L. Carneiro (ed.), Herbert Spencer: The Evolution of Sociology, p. ix.

¹⁵⁸Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, p. 201.

in contemporary biology and anthropology tend to confirm the Kropotkinian analysis,¹⁵⁹ for, if there was in the writings of Darwin, solace for rugged individualists, so, too, was there much of comfort for the progressive elements in society¹⁶⁰--men who adhered to the notions of social solidarity and fraternity.¹⁶¹

Having laid to rest the bourgeois contention that some men are by nature invasive beings governed by an unbridled egoism and hence necessarily engaged in irrational and asocial behaviour, Kropotkin goes on to postulate a new ethic--a scientific ethic--one based upon the true nature of man and not contrived to explain and justify the dehumanizing and brutalizing relations of existing society. Men have, he contends, an inborn need for solidarity, for unity, for belonging--a need which

¹⁵⁹ Ashley Montagu writes: "The fact is that Kropotkin had a much more accurate conception of the nature of competition as a process of evolution than most nineteenth century biologists" (Darwin: Competition and Cooperation, pp. 41-42). See also Theodosius Dobzhansky, Mankind Evolving: The Evolution of the Human Species, pp. 133-134; George Gaylord Simpson, Life of the Past: An Introduction to Paleontology, pp. 140-150, and The Meaning of Evolution, pp. 221-222, 268, 299-300.

¹⁶⁰ Darwin, The Descent of Man, chapter II, especially p. 472, n. 5.

¹⁶¹ Marx considered Darwin's work to be one of the seminal works of the century, and considered it fortunate that The Origin of Species appeared in the same year as his Critique of Political Economy. See John Hewetson, "Mutual Aid and Social Evolution", Anarchy, V, 9 (September 1965), p. 258.

has exhibited itself repeatedly in the mutual aid tendency of animals from the smallest ant on up,¹⁶² and has characterized the tribal life of primitive man,¹⁶³ much of the philosophy of the ancients,¹⁶⁴ the village communes and guilds of the middle ages,¹⁶⁵ and exists even in contemporary society in those voluntary and self-help organizations such as lifeboat associations and public libraries.¹⁶⁶ Viewing man's nature as social, and work as a physiological necessity,¹⁶⁷ Kropotkin transcends the Malthusian obsession with scarcity, and seeks to provide what he deems a scientific and objective basis for

¹⁶²Anarchist Morality, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 96-97; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 1-75.

¹⁶³Ethics: Origin and Development, pp. 51-52, 59-60, 64, 71-73; Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 76-114; and The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 215-218.

¹⁶⁴Modern Science and Anarchism, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 159-160.

¹⁶⁵Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 153-222; and The State: Its Historic Role, in Martin A. Miller (ed.), Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution: P.A. Kropotkin, pp. 227-235.

¹⁶⁶Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., pp. 60, 65-67; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 63-64; and Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, pp. 223-292.

¹⁶⁷Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles, in Roger N. Baldwin (ed.), K.R.P., p. 71; The Conquest of Bread, pp. 160-161; and The Great French Revolution, p. 574.

a new morality. In so doing he has rejected not merely liberal political and economic arrangements, but also bourgeois morality, and replaced it with a very different and genuinely democratic anarchist ethic--an ethic which demonstrates by far the greater relation between anarchism and socialism, and its basis more clearly as a repudiation of, rather than extension of, liberalism.

III

BENJAMIN R. TUCKER: A STUDY IN INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHISM

While communist and collectivist forms of anarchist thought, throughout the past century, held the spotlight, engaging as its adherents were in a number of the most bitterly fought and vituperative debates which plagued the early years of the International, another group which claimed the right to call itself anarchist, and even socialist, while pointedly anti-communist,¹ emerged and died on American soil. Its roots lay not in the metaphysical notion of equality, but in the individual. Its backward-looking, individualist orientation gave way in the early years of this century to despair among its adherents. Some joined the communist anarchists, and others the socialists, while many merely retreated into their own private catacombs, in the forlorn hope of emerging once again in a less oppressive day.²

¹The word 'communist' is generally used in individualist anarchist literature to describe what is viewed as an authoritarian or paternalistic state socialism as opposed to the notion of libertarian socialism.

²Charles A. Madison, "Benjamin R. Tucker: Individualist and Anarchist", The New England Quarterly, XVI (September 1943), p. 464.

Unlike his comrades who finally gave way to the apparently ever-advancing and overpowering forces of capitalism, corporatism, and collectivism, Benjamin Ricketson Tucker, the movement's leading spokesman, never abandoned his fundamental commitment to the cause of individualist anarchism, and fell in his old age into a deep and realistic pessimism. "He felt himself", writes Madison, "in the grip of irresistible forces: a strident monopolistic capitalism, a madly aggressive nationalism, and a worldwide social goose-stepping were brutally stifling individual liberty."³ What had previously seemed a straight-forward and viable plan for the reassertion of individual liberty, now appeared even to Tucker--the 'scientific anarchist'⁴--the vision of a utopian dreamer. In a postscript to a book of his writings edited by Clarence Lee Swartz,⁵ Tucker wrote: "Today the way is not so clear. The four monopolies, unhindered, have made possible the modern development of the trust, and the trust is now a monster which, I fear, even the freest banking, could it be instituted, would be

³Ibid., p. 467.

⁴Herbert L. Osgood, "Scientific Anarchism", Political Science Quarterly, IV, 1 (March 1889), p. 1.

⁵The book, entitled Individual Liberty: Selections From the Writings of Benjamin R. Tucker, was first published in New York by Vanguard Press in 1926. It was largely an abridgement of the author's own Instead of a Book, although it does include a few brief pieces which appeared in Liberty after 1893.

unable to destroy."⁶ A change in his mood was also intimated in a letter to Joseph Ishill, written in January of 1935. He there stated: "I put the Anarchist case as a goal that humanity moves towards. But the exact routes? Ah! It is not easy to map them!"⁷

The goal, however, remained for him ever the same,⁸ and this was the creation of a genuinely co-operative society founded upon the principles of individual liberty and equality--a position which, it will be argued in the remainder of this chapter, distinguishes Tucker from liberals and

⁶In Rudolf Rocker, Pioneers of American Freedom: Origin of Liberal and Radical Thought in America, p. 137.

⁷Ibid., p. 136.

⁸Tucker's continuing, though disillusioned, commitment to the cause of individualist anarchism is demonstrated in his treatment of Victor S. Yarros, a long time friend and associate, as an object of disdain. Yarros had, during the early decades of this century, come to recognize the apparent inevitability of growth in the economy and compromised his individualism with the forces of collectivism. And while Yarros's concessions were minimal (support for child labour laws, old age pensions, social insurance, and the like), Tucker's response was vitriolic. Of this one time individualist anarchist turned 'independent radical' he wrote: "It remains only to add that Victor Yarros, who now parades in the role of a mere observer, was for many years my most active participant in Anarchistic propagandism,--a fact which he is now careful to conceal. I once admired him; I now despise him" (In William O. Reichert, Partisans of Freedom: A Study in American Anarchism, p. 178). See also Victor S. Yarros, "Philosophical Anarchism: Its Rise, Decline, and Eclipse", American Journal of Sociology, XLI, 4 (January 1936), pp. 470-483; and, "Philosophical Anarchism (1880-1910)", Journal of Social Philosophy, VI (April 1941), pp. 254-262.

anarchocapitalists and clearly places him outside the right wing tradition in American thought. Those theorists who have mistakenly or deliberately claimed Tucker as one of the forefathers of contemporary American conservatism⁹ have, in many cases, read their own essentially liberal assumptions into his thought and have not recognized its specifically non-exploitative and co-operative character. Nor should Tucker be confused in any sense with those liberal reformers who seek a return to a form of nineteenth century competitive capitalism,¹⁰ for his criticisms were directed not merely against the monopolies and the trusts which characterize the oligopolistic market, but against capitalism itself.

Part of the difficulty, however, may lie with Tucker, for, despite his repeated assertions of equal liberty (be it from a specifically individualistic and not communistic perspective)¹¹ as his primary and inalienable postulate, he repeatedly confuses the issue by degrading the 'noble savage' type of mythology and contending, in a manner reminiscent of

⁹Dr. Murray Rothbard has included Tucker in the Arno Press/New York Times Collection entitled "The Right Wing Individualist Tradition In America". Also, a number of critics and anthologists of anarchist thought have suggested the similarity between Tuckerian anarchism and bourgeois individualism.

¹⁰Such notable liberals as Milton Friedman, Ayn Rand, and Friedrich Hayek.

¹¹See above, pp. 7-8, 41-42.

Proudhon, that private property is compatible with production on a large scale without the exploitation of labour.¹² Furthermore, he adds to the confusion by asserting that "the laborer can do nothing without capital",¹³ and contends that men would be fools to sacrifice all the comforts of civilization and return to a poverty-stricken state of barbarism.¹⁴ These assertions, coupled with his refusal to engage in any form of power politics--viewing as he did all forms of governmental legislation as invasion¹⁵--have perhaps led some to conclude that Tuckerian anarchism is but little more than a slightly modified form of classical laissez-faire liberalism. This is clearly not the case.

Tucker did not intend for his position to be taken as in any way a justification for the existing capitalist market economy, but rather intended to demonstrate that the problem for existing social arrangements lay not only in the inequitable distribution of land but also in the inequitable distribution of capital. His solution differed considerably from that proffered by those who either claim for themselves or

¹² Benjamin R. Tucker, Instead of a Book: By a Man Too Busy to Write One: A Fragmentary Exposition of Philosophical Anarchism, p. 395.

¹³ Ibid., p. 321.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 321-322.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 23, and 61.

are claimed by others to be his legitimate heirs. It lay not, as does Rand's, in the restoration of nineteenth century 'competitive' capitalism, an economy which Tucker even then did not see as competitive,¹⁶ but rather in the establishment of an equitable society in which industry would be stimulated through optimum land utilization and the granting of free capital through a scheme of free banking. Having once received access to land and capital, workers, according to Tucker, will "be independent of their employers, and then the labor problem will be solved."¹⁷ This solution rests not merely in the liberal reformer's bid to end oligopoly, but in the absolute dissolution of capital as a monopolistic property. His ultimate goal is a classless society, a society in which all men (and women)¹⁸ are capitalists and labourers simultaneously.¹⁹

Thus, while Tucker's commitment to the free market as a precondition to the realization of his libertarian beliefs presages Hayek's thesis that government intervention in the economy cannot but lead to a most dismal and repressive

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 9, 200-203, 397-401, 404-407, and 493-494.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 321.

¹⁸Tucker views women as equal to men and looks forward to a day "when every individual, whether man or woman, shall be self-supporting, and when each shall have an independent home of his or her own" (Ibid., p. 15).

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 403-404.

serfdom,²⁰ his equally significant commitment to the notion of equality precludes an acceptance of certain fundamental assertions of classical liberalism. While it may be argued that the classical liberal or traditional laissez-faire theorist held as his initial postulate the natural freedom and equality of men, it is also incontrovertible that he justified the individual's alienation of his liberty by justifying profit maximization. As Locke clearly moved from an initial position of equality and freedom to an ultimate justification of the capitalist market economy,²¹ so, too, did Smith, Bentham, Spencer, Hayek, Friedman, and Rand come to justify a state of affairs based upon inequality through the overriding assertion of man's natural and avaricious proclivity to unlimited material acquisition, and with it the maximization of

²⁰This position is held by a number of liberal theorists, Hayek being by no means the first. Herbert Spencer gave voice to such a theory in an article entitled "The Coming Slavery", in which he wrote that "All socialism involves slavery", adding that

If, without option, he has to labour for the society, and receives from the general stock such portion as the society awards him, he becomes a slave to the society. Socialistic arrangements necessitate an enslavement of this kind; and towards such an enslavement many recent measures, and still more the measures advocated, are carrying us.

Hayek's student and disciple Milton Friedman also views equality and freedom as necessarily antagonistic. See Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom; Friedrich Hayek, The Road to Serfdom; and Herbert Spencer, The Man versus the State, especially pp. 100-101.

²¹See above, pp. 7-9.

power over others.²²

Having taken this position, and having assumed man to be in essence an infinite desirer and consumer of material utilities and power over others, the liberal theorist is left with little alternative but to establish a strong and secure government strictly limited in duty to the protection of individual property.²³ "Be it or be it not true", writes Spencer, "that Man is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, it is unquestionably true that Government is begotten of aggression and by aggression."²⁴ The need for government, argues Friedman, lies in man's imperfectibility for freedoms necessarily conflict.²⁵ And according to Rand, capitalism is incompatible with anarchism, for men, by nature, require government.²⁶ Since every man is a self-owner, a self-possessor, a decision-

²² See Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations; Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, in The Utilitarians, pp. 5-398; Spencer, The Man versus the State; Hayek, The Road to Serfdom; Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom; Ayn Rand, Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal; and, Ayn Rand and Nathaniel Branden, The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism.

²³ Given these acquisitive and avaricious tendencies, men would find themselves, without government, in a continual and perpetual struggle. There would be little industry, little improvement, and little production. Thus, government is required to enhance the condition of man.

²⁴ Spencer, The Man versus the State, p. 112.

²⁵ Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, pp. 25-26.

²⁶ Rand, Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal, p. 125.

maker, motivated by desire and engaged in a ceaseless battle for limited or scarce²⁷ commodities--selfish and hence rational and even virtuous,²⁸ according to Rand and Branden--government is required as a mediator, moderator, and arbitor.²⁹

As private property is introduced as the essential precondition of liberty, and the freely competitive market as its maximizer and guarantor, so capital accumulation is justified by contemporary liberals and conservatives just as it was in the seventeenth century by John Locke, and in the eighteenth century by Adam Smith. Rand, continuing the tradition, declares:

When great industrialists made fortunes on a free market (i.e., without the use of force, without government assistance or interference), they created new wealth--they did not take it from those who had not created. If you doubt it, take a look at the 'total social product'--and the standard of living--of those countries where such men are not permitted to exist.³⁰

So, too, contends Murray Rothbard.

²⁷The context of scarcity need bear little relation to the actual material conditions of society. Given the assumption of unlimited desire, the liberal theorist cannot but envisage man as perpetually in a state of scarcity. See Macpherson, Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval, pp. 17-19, 63-70, and The Real World of Democracy, pp. 61-64.

²⁸Rand and Branden, The Virtue of Selfishness, pp. vii-xi.

²⁹Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, pp. 25-26.

³⁰Rand, Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal, p. 125.

The free market . . . transmutes the jungle's destructive competition for meager subsistence into a peaceful cooperative competition in the service of one's self and others. In the jungle, some gain only at the expense of others. On the market, everyone gains. It is the market--the contractual society--that wrests order out of chaos, that subdues nature and eradicates the jungle, that permits the 'weak' to live productively, or out of gifts from production, and in a regal style compared to the life of the 'strong' in the jungle. Furthermore, the market, by raising the living standards, permits man the leisure to cultivate the very qualities of civilization that distinguish him from the brutes.³¹

It is an assertion like this which leads the 'libertarian' Hospers to conclude that if General Motors has monopoly power, it is only because it deserves it.³² He contends that the freedom to grow, to engulf, and to corner the market is an essential attribute of the free market. Without it, business would deteriorate, enterprise dissolve, and the economy stagnate. Were it not for the incentive of profit, more particularly pure profit, the economy would come to a standstill,³³ and with it, democracy would crumble.³⁴ Hospers concludes:

³¹Murray Rothbard, Power and Market: Government and the Economy, p. 168.

³²John Hospers, Libertarianism: A Political Philosophy for Tomorrow, p. 172.

³³Ibid., p. 173.

³⁴The word 'democracy' is used by these theorists as a synonym for liberalism. They do not mean by it a society in which there is any genuine equality, but rather one in which the capitalist market is allowed to operate free from governmental interference.

Capitalism is the economic system of freedom to produce and freedom to trade the products of one's labor on the free open market. Freedom of production and trade is the essence of the capitalistic system. Equally important is the freedom of individuals to keep the fruits of their labor; if people were free to produce and trade, but not free to keep what they had earned, there would be no incentive to produce and the system of economic liberty (capitalism) would not function.³⁵

Capitalism is 'economic democracy', the consumer is 'king',³⁶-- or so, at any rate, goes the liberal myth.

And it is as a myth that Tucker views it. Always calling himself a socialist--while condemning any suggestion of communal or social ownership--Tucker accepts the initial assertions of the liberal theorists, i.e., individual self-ownership and the assumption of equality inherent in it.³⁷ He, however, rejects the notion of unlimited desire which stands behind the liberal acceptance of inequality in socio-economic relations and hence he can, in all consistency, reject the government which upholds or helps to create this unjust, inequitable, and power-laden state of affairs. In a calm and logical manner, Tucker makes a carefully deliberated and persuasively argued case for individualist anarchism as

³⁵Hospers, Libertarianism, p. 104.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 104-105.

³⁷Implicit in the notion of self-ownership is the assumption that all men are equal at least in so far as each has sole rights over himself (at the beginning).

the true meaning of democracy. Socialism (meaning libertarian socialism and not authoritarian or state socialism) is right, he argues, in rejecting the social and economic inequalities in contemporary society, which make a mockery of its democratic claims. Furthermore, he contends that these political assertions are but a veil for the coerciveness of the interests which manipulate and utilize the state and that these interests could not retain their artificial position of supremacy were it not for the power they have accumulated in the name of the state. Rent,³⁸ interest, and profit--that 'trinity of usury'--require the state to ensure their continued existence, for the state is both their creator and perpetuator.³⁹ The socialists, moreover, are wrong in their attribution of this unjust state of affairs to competition, for "It is not competition, but monopoly, that deprives labor of its product."⁴⁰ And, it is the state, argues Tucker, which gives the four monopolies--land, money and

³⁸When Tucker speaks of the abolition of rent, he means monopolistic rent ("that paid by tenant to landlord") and not economic rent ("that advantage enjoyed by the occupant of superior land"). The first is man-made and, he argues, can be rectified. The second is a fact of nature and, unfortunately, must be lived with. The first is a blatant denial of liberty and must, he concludes, be destroyed. (See Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 300; and "Why I Am an Anarchist", in Libertarian Broad-sides, No. 4, p. 37.

³⁹Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 6.

⁴⁰Tucker, "Why I Am an Anarchist", p. 37.

banking, trade, and patents and copyrights--the capability of creating all the evils of society, surplus wealth being 'the culprit' and the recipient 'the usurer'.⁴¹ Anyone, argues Tucker, who engages in exchange for more than an equivalent of the labour value inherent in the product is a usurer,⁴² including any man who accepts a penny for which he has not himself directly worked.⁴³ Wages, inheritance, gifts, and gambling aside, every process whereby men gain wealth rests upon a monopoly,⁴⁴ and vice is the effect and not the cause

⁴¹Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 6. Tucker's rejection of usury was not new but continued a long tradition in moral and ethical theory. Classical and medieval theorists had long criticized it. Aristotle had written in the fourth century B.C. that retail trade (trade engaged in for gain) "is justly censured, because the gain in which it results is not naturally made [from plants and animals], but is made at the expense of other men. The trade of the petty usurer [the extreme example of that form of the art of acquisition which is connected with retail trade] is hated most, and with most reason: it makes a profit from currency itself, instead of making it from the process [i.e. of exchange] which currency was meant to serve. Currency came into existence merely as a means of exchange; usury tries to make it increase [as though it were an end in itself]. . . . of all modes of acquisition, usury is the most unnatural." See Aristotle, The Politics, pp. 28-29. Tucker's criticisms of usury are very similar to those of Aristotle. See below, pp. 81, 92.

⁴²A usurer is a man who lives off the labour of others. An idler, he merely collects the surplus value of the labour of others (be this in the form of feudal taxation, rent, interest, or profit). See Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 177-178, 396, and 398.

⁴³Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁴Tucker, "Why I Am an Anarchist", p. 37.

of poverty.⁴⁵ Its cause lies deeply embedded in monopoly, and not, as many socialists contend, in private property. Property limited to use and occupancy is, according to Tucker, neither the cause of manifold suffering nor of existing and debilitating power relations. It is not property per se which is evil, but monopolistic control of property--for this alone entails a denial of liberty.⁴⁶ The problem lies not in the right of possession, but in the right of unlimited possession.⁴⁷

It is on this point that Tucker and the individualist anarchists clearly distinguish themselves from both the socialist (including communist anarchist) and liberal theorists. They differ from the former in their defence of even a limited right to private property and in their utter rejection of communal ownership and equal distribution.⁴⁸ In ethos, however, they are far closer to the socialists than to the traditional supporters of laissez-faire, men who uphold privilege and justify the existence of monopoly power.⁴⁹ Thus, Tucker

⁴⁵Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 58.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 395-396.

⁴⁷In taking this position, Tucker followed Proudhon who had distinguished between possession and property, the former being legitimate possession of a product by its producer, the latter illegitimate but legally privileged wealth (i.e. the power of usury). See Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 391-392, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, What Is Property?, pp. 271-274.

⁴⁸See below, pp. 93-94, 96-98.

⁴⁹Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 292, 370-374, and 403-407.

contends that 'free' trade, if it is to be free, must be completely free and not the half-way arrangement that so-called free-traders support. They are not, he argues, genuine exponents of the doctrine of laissez-faire for they support, without question, the greatest and most oppressive monopoly of all--the money monopoly, upon which all other monopolies hinge.⁵⁰ Of the Manchester school he writes:

They agree and insist that it is nothing less than tyranny for the government to clip a large slice out of the foreign product which any one chooses to import, but are unable to detect any violation of freedom in the exclusive license given by the government to a conspiracy of note-shaving corporations called national banks, which are enabled by this monopoly to clip anywhere from three to fifteen per cent out of the credit which the people are compelled to buy of them. Such 'free trade' as this is the most palpable sham to any one who really looks into it.⁵¹

In so arguing, Tucker contends, that the spokesmen for the Manchester school are engaging in justificatory theory, and merely defending the status quo.⁵² A truly free market is not the end of these 'so-called' laissez-faire economists, but their most bitter opponent and enemy. The market does not and cannot exist so long as the state guarantees the security of the banking and money monopoly and precludes the freedom to

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 292-296.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 292.

⁵²Ibid., p. 86.

take possession of unoccupied land.⁵³ Such abnegation of individual liberty prevents the realization of economic democracy, and makes the state's role as coercer and denier of freedom essential for the protection of that elite which prospers from the advantages accrued from their privileged position of monopolists.⁵⁴ "Those who would have the usurer rewarded for rendering a service always find it convenient to forget that the usurer's victims would not need his service were it not that the laws made at his bidding prevent them from serving themselves."⁵⁵ So, too, does he condemn philanthropy,⁵⁶ and quotes with approval the following inscription:

"This hospital a pious person built,
But first he made the poor wherewith to fill 't."⁵⁷

Tucker holds that such vast accumulations of money were not the natural product of economic processes but of privilege, for labour is the only true measure of price.⁵⁸ In taking this position, Tucker follows in the tradition of

⁵³Ibid., p. 85.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 454, and 460-461.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 292.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 483-487.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 26.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 5, and 200.

Warren⁵⁹ and Proudhon, and not that of Ricardo and Smith. Unlike the latter who contend that past labour too is entitled to its just reward, and that all factors of production contribute to the process and hence should be compensated, Tucker and his associates argue that labour alone is entitled to reward and that fairly and only once.⁶⁰ Capital is dead matter and a return on it is usury, pure and simple.⁶¹

⁵⁹Josiah Warren is a relatively obscure, but most interesting, character in the history of American economic and political theory. Originally an Owenite, this New England Puritan became one of the progenitors of philosophical anarchism. He concluded that the major problems encountered by his mentor's communal experiment at New Harmony lay in its paternalistic and socialistic nature, for what's everybody's business is nobody's business. Warren did not, however, give up the idea of a society free from exploitation and oppression, and through practical experimentation came up with the notion of a community founded upon the twin principles of 'individual sovereignty' and 'cost the limit of price', from which issued his notion of equitable commerce. See Josiah Warren, Equitable Commerce, and True Civilization: An Immediate Necessity and the Last Ground of Hope for Mankind. See also, William Bailie, Josiah Warren, the First American Anarchist, and "Josiah Warren", in George B. Lockwood (ed.), The New Harmony Movement, pp. 294-306; Bowman N. Hall, "The Economic Ideas of Josiah Warren, First American Anarchist", History of Political Economy, VI (1974), pp. 95-108; James J. Martin, Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908, pp. 11-108; John Humphrey Noyes, Strange Cults & Utopias of 19th Century America, pp. 98-101; and, Eunice M. Schuster, "Native American Anarchism", in Smith College Studies in History, XVII (October-July 1931-32), pp. 93-105.

⁶⁰Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 184, and 187.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 184-185. Tucker, like Warren and Proudhon before him, refuted the notion of the productivity of capital and argued in favour of a 'no-profit' theory of political economy. See, pp. 183-187, 300, and 302.

Thus, he contends that capitalists are not democrats but elitists, and that the state they so blatantly justify is a class-based state.

During the rebellion, when all of us, except the much abused 'copperheads', temporarily lost control of our reasoning faculties (we dare say that even the editor of the Nation at that time forgot himself and became sentimental for once), we got very angry with Carlyle for patly putting the American Iliad in a nutshell and epigrammatically establishing the substantial similarity between the condition of slave labor at the South and that of so-called 'free' labor at the North. England's blunt old sham-hater was answered with much boisterous declamation about 'freedom of contract', and his attention was proudly called to the fact that the laborer of the North could follow his own sweet will, leaving his employer when he saw fit, attaching himself to any other willing to hire him, or, if he preferred, setting up in business for himself and employing others. He was at liberty, it was loudly proclaimed by our abolitionists and free-traders, to work when he pleased, and no man could say him nay. What are we to think, then, when the chief newspaper exponent of the 'freedom of contract' philosophy deliberately sacrifices the only answer that it could make to Carlyle's indictment by proposing the introduction of a military discipline into industry, which, in assimilating the laborer to the soldier, would make him--what the soldier is--a slave? Think? Simply this,--that the hypocritical thieves and tyrants who for years have been endeavoring to make their victims believe themselves freemen see that the game is nearly up, and that the time is fast approaching when they must take by the horns the bull of outraged industry, which, maddened by the discovery of its hitherto invisible chains, is making frantic efforts to burst them it knows not how. It is a point gained. An enemy in the open field is less formidable than one in ambush. When the capitalists shall be forced to show their true colors, the laborers will then know against whom they are fighting.⁶²

⁶²Ibid., p. 460.

The battle lines are drawn, for "The whole industrial and commercial world is in a state of internecine war, in which the proletaires are massed on one side and the proprietors on the other."⁶³

The so-called laissez-fairists, Tucker contends, are not unbiased scientists as they proclaim, but proponents of an inequitable theory and supporters of an exploitative and dehumanizing regime. Thus, he has this to say of Herbert Spencer:

Mr. Spencer convicts legislators of undeniable and enormous sins in meddling with and curtailing and destroying the people's rights. Their sins are sins of commission. But Mr. Spencer's sin of omission is quite as grave. He is one of those persons who are making a wholesale onslaught on Socialism as the incarnation of the doctrine of State omnipotence carried to its highest power. And I am not sure that he is quite honest in this. I begin to be a little suspicious of him. It seems as if he had forgotten the teachings of his earlier writings, and had become a champion of the capitalistic class. It will be noticed that in these later articles, amid his multitudinous illustrations (of which he is a prodigal as ever) of the evils of legislation, he in every instance cites some law passed, ostensibly at least, to protect labor, alleviate suffering, or promote the people's welfare. He demonstrates beyond dispute the lamentable failure in this direction. But never once does he call attention to the far more deadly and deep-seated evils growing out of the innumerable laws creating privilege and sustaining monopoly. You must not protect the weak against the strong, he seems to say, but freely supply all the weapons needed by the strong to oppress the weak. He is greatly shocked that the rich should be directly taxed to support the poor, but that the poor should be indirectly taxed and bled to make the rich richer

⁶³Ibid.

does not outrage his delicate sensibilities in the least. Poverty is increased by the poor laws, says Mr. Spencer. Granted; but what about the rich laws that caused and still cause the poverty to which the poor laws add? That is by far the more important question; yet Mr. Spencer tries to blink it out of sight.⁶⁴

Furthermore, Tucker applauds the position taken by Stephen Pearl Andrews,⁶⁵ in a speech given before the Manhattan Liberal Club, that

Mr. Spencer is not the radical laissez faire philosopher which he pretends to be; that the only true believers in laissez faire are the Anarchists; that individualism must be supplemented by the doctrines of equity and courtesy; and that, while State Socialism is just as dangerous and tyrannical as Mr. Spencer pictures it, "there is a higher and nobler form of Socialism which is not only not slavery, but which is our only means of rescue from all sorts and degrees of slavery."⁶⁶

Tucker's critique of the proponents of laissez-faire would hold equally, to-day, for the writings of such defenders of the capitalist system as Ayn Rand and Milton

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 370.

⁶⁵Stephen Pearl Andrews was the leading student and disciple of Josiah Warren. His Science and Society (New York, 1852) is generally considered to be the fullest and clearest statement of the former's ideas. See Martin, Men Against the State, pp. 65-72; Schuster, Native American Anarchism, pp. 106-111; and, Harvey Wish, "Stephen Pearl Andrews, American Pioneer Sociologist", Social Forces, XIX, 4 (May 1941), pp. 477-482, especially pp. 478-479.

⁶⁶Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 370-371.

Friedman.⁶⁷ These theorists, especially Rand, look back with longing to the good old days of the nineteenth century--days which spawned the radical criticisms of a Marx, a Proudhon, and a Warren, besides the scorn of even such liberal theorists as John Stuart Mill and T.H. Green. None was more critical, however, than Tucker and his school of American individualist anarchists. "No other radical group", writes James J. Martin, "denounced the prevailing system more vigorously than the spokesmen for individualist anarchism."⁶⁸ While they adhered strictly to the concept of private property (viewing it as a precondition of liberty), the right which included use and disposal was to be strictly limited. Ownership of land was to

⁶⁷In fact, a similar criticism has been levelled at them by the new right-wing 'libertarian' school headed by Murray Rothbard, and including such bourgeois radicals as Morris and Linda Tannehill and Jarret B. Wollstein. These theorists call themselves anarchocapitalists and clearly distinguish their position in socio-political thought from the unrelenting and pessimistic conservatism of the Buckleys, the more radical, but essentially nineteenth century liberalism of the Rands and the Friedmans, and even from that group of 'libertarians', such as Hospers, who remain in the final analysis governmentalists. The prime stress of all these authors has been placed upon the question of government and taxation as invasion. None of these twentieth century theorists, however, has even considered the possibility of retreating into the co-operative world of Warren's 'equitable commerce' or that of Tucker's Proudhonian-inspired mutualism. In so stressing the political and legalistic elements, none has attacked, as did the individualist anarchists, the fundamental question of the net transfer of powers, and its implicit critique of surplus value.

⁶⁸Martin, Men Against the State, p. 7.

be restricted to occupancy and use,⁶⁹ and capital was to be freely available to all.⁷⁰ Tucker necessarily viewed the acquisition of property as limited, labour providing the only legitimate title to it.⁷¹

Claiming his position to be scientific and value free,⁷² Tucker, unlike his predecessors in the anarchist tradition,⁷³ based this limitation of property rights upon what he considered to be pragmatic and amoral considerations, the basis of his ethical theory being originally utility and later the more extreme egoism of James L. Walker.⁷⁴ Tucker's brand of egoism, however, demanded equal liberty⁷⁵ as fully as did Godwin's ideal 'justice',⁷⁶ and Warren's natural rights,

⁶⁹Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 12, 61, 178, 300, and 346.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 273-274, 281-282, and 321.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 400-401.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 24, 41-42, 64, 132, 210-212, and 350.

⁷³Godwin, Warren, and Proudhon had each subscribed to the highly moralistic principle of equality. Tucker retains the commitment (see n. 75), but rejects the moralism (see n. 72).

⁷⁴See James L. Walker, The Philosophy of Egoism.

⁷⁵Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 35, 41-42, 64-65, 350, and 457-458.

⁷⁶William Godwin, Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness, ed. F.E.L. Priestley, v. I, pp. 125-140.

a postulate not asserted by the classical liberal theorists and both asserted and denied by liberal democrats.⁷⁷ He writes:

I regard liberty as the chief essential to man's happiness, and therefore as the most important thing in the world, and I certainly want as much of it as I can get. But I cannot see that it concerns me much whether the aggregate amount of liberty enjoyed by all individuals added together is at its maximum or a little below it, if I, as one individual, am to have little or none of this aggregate. If, however, I am to have as much liberty as others, and if others are to have as much as I, then, feeling secure in what we have, it will behoove us all undoubtedly to try to attain the maximum of liberty compatible with this condition of equality.⁷⁸

Essential to the understanding of philosophical or scientific anarchism⁷⁹ is its egalitarian thrust, if not complete adoption of the principle of equality.⁸⁰ Setting out from individualist premises, these theorists subscribed to a principle of equity or justice--a principle which they viewed as more liberal than the communistic assertion of absolute and blanket equality, and hence more acceptable to both the peculiarly 'progressive' American social and intel-

⁷⁷See Macpherson, Democratic Theory, especially pp. 1-76.

⁷⁸Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 41-42.

⁷⁹The words 'philosophical' and 'scientific' are often used synonymously with 'individualist'. It should not be assumed, however, that the latter has exclusive claim to its usage.

⁸⁰See above, pp. 78-82.

lectual climate and to what was taken to be the genuine and universal nature of man--previously misunderstood or ignored by church and state, but now fully revealed in its 'scientific' and eternal form. In taking this position, however, these men, disdainful of power relations, avoided the pitfall of their comrades in the call for "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality". The French Revolution--that great battle for human rights--had been aborted in the reaction of the day. The liberals had turned their backs on the revolution and sought in its wake to re-establish a class system. Its mastery was no less strong than its predecessor's. Its rule, more brutal and certainly more mystified.⁸¹ For Tucker, as for Warren and Proudhon, the central problem facing contem-

⁸¹ Proudhon had expressed his disappointment in the following poignant passage:

. . . the society which the Revolution of '89 should have created, does not yet exist. That which for sixty years we have had, is but a superficial, factitious order, hardly concealing the most frightful chaos and demoralization.

. . . The result is that competition, as Rossi, Blanqui, and a host of others have recognized, instead of democratizing industry, aiding the workman, guaranteeing the honesty of trade, has ended in building up a mercantile and land aristocracy, a thousand times more rapacious than the old aristocracy of the nobility. Through competition all the profits of production go to capital; the consumer, without suspecting the frauds of commerce, is fleeced by the speculator, and the condition of the workers is made more and more precarious. (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, General

Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 45, 50-51.

porary society was the inordinate accumulation of wealth and hence power in the hands of a few, and the denial of free access and equal liberty to the remainder of society. Tucker applauds, on this point especially, the argumentation of his two mentors. He writes:

The Manchester men were accused of being inconsistent. They believed in liberty to compete with the laborer in order to reduce his wages, but not in liberty to compete with the capitalist in order to reduce his usury. Laissez faire was very good sauce for the goose, labor, but very poor sauce for the gander, capital. But how to correct this inconsistency, how to serve this gander with this sauce, how to put capital at the service of business men and laborers at cost, or free of usury,--that was the problem.⁸²

Liberal economics merely explained the status quo it did not set out to change it. While Warren and Proudhon argued that it was unscrupulous and immoral,⁸³ Tucker, in his 'scientific' and pragmatic egoism, contended that it was unviable and inevitably self-destructive.⁸⁴ The point on which all three agree is that the problem lies not in property itself, but in the right to unlimited acquisition,⁸⁵

⁸²Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 10.

⁸³Both theorists repeatedly refer to the existing state of affairs as 'cannibalistic' and disclaim its failure to meet the equal opportunity demands of either natural rights theory (in the case of Warren) or social justice (in that of Proudhon).

⁸⁴Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 132.

⁸⁵Proudhon, What Is Property?, especially v. I; Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 395-396, 454; and Warren, Equitable Commerce, and True Civilization.

a right which totally ignores man's social nature and hence his equal claim to a full and human life.⁸⁶

. . . nature furnishes man immense forces with which to work in the shape of land and capital, that in a state of freedom these forces benefit each individual to the extent that he avails himself of them, and that any man or class getting a monopoly of either or both will put all other men in subjection and live in luxury on the products of their labor. But to justify a monopoly of either of these forces by the existence of the force itself, or to argue that without a monopoly of it any individual could get an income by lending it instead of by working with it, is equally absurd whether the argument be resorted to in the case of land or in the case of capital, in the case of rent or in the case of interest.⁸⁷

Thus, Warren, Proudhon, and Tucker seem to agree that one of the aims of anarchism is to democratize liberalism and allow the fullest degree of freedom possible to every individual. They contend that monopolistic control of resources (meaning control in excess of that limited by occupancy and use) is as much an act of invasion as theft and taxation.⁸⁸ Tucker asserts:

It is not enough, however true, to say that, "if a man has labor to sell, he must find some one with money to buy it; it is necessary to add the

⁸⁶See above, pp. 77-80.

⁸⁷Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 205.

⁸⁸Proudhon, in his much quoted assertion that 'Property is theft!', was in no sense condemning private appropriation, but rather denying the right to monopolistic control. (Proudhon, What Is Property?, pp. 38-39). See also Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 4, 127, 309-312, 342, 391-392, and 400-401.

much more important truth that, if a man has labor to sell, he has a right to a free market in which to sell it,--a market in which no one shall be prevented by restrictive laws from honestly obtaining the money to buy it. If the man with labor to sell has not this free market, then his ability is violated and his property virtually taken from him.⁸⁹

And a genuinely free market is a co-operative market for, "where freedom prevails, competition and co-operation are identical."⁹⁰ The state of war, which characterizes contemporary economic relations, is not brought about by the free market but is the result of the invasiveness of capital.⁹¹ "Competition means war only when it is in some way restricted, either in scope or intensity,--that is, when it is not perfectly free competition; for then its benefits are won by one class at the expense of another, instead of by all at the expense of nature's forces."⁹² Complete freedom, Tucker argues, necessarily entails a postulate against invasion--invasion being not liberty but licence.⁹³ It demands the destruction of usury, for "Usury is the serpent gnawing at labor's vitals, and only liberty can detach and kill it."⁹⁴

⁸⁹Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 454.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 405.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 454.

⁹²Ibid., p. 407.

⁹³Ibid., pp. 42, and 407.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 178.

It is only with the adoption of the principle of liberty (a principle which requires free land, free money, and free trade) that rent, interest, and profit will disappear and with them all class differentiations and distinctions.⁹⁵ Men (and women, too) would then enter all relations on a free and voluntary basis, and refuse to work for less than the full value of their labour.⁹⁶ Capitalist greed would succumb to what Tucker viewed the greater ends of mutualism for, given the choice between wealth and liberty, rational men will always favour the latter.⁹⁷

Political reform, an enlarged state, palliative measures, are not the answer.⁹⁸ Any form of economic democracy founded upon compulsion is totally unacceptable. The purpose of equality is to assure liberty and not to establish a new and wholesale servitude. Individualist anarchism is an attempt to establish a genuine economic democracy and at the same time provide for a maximum of individual freedom.⁹⁹

Having rejected the inequality of rights produced by the net transfer of powers inherent in the capitalist

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 398, and 475.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷See below, pp. 98-99.

⁹⁸Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 178-179.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 83-85.

market economy,¹⁰⁰ Tucker and his school found the communist alternative to liberal political economy, equally if not more, objectionable. The communist alternative, in their view, did not end this transfer, but merely replaced the individual recipient with the state, and hence perpetuated the diminution of the individual in the name of a mythical or metaphysical entity, whose influence was more pernicious, more deadly, because more unified.¹⁰¹ The 'Beast of Communism' was in no sense a lesser monster than that of property.¹⁰² It had failed, in its condemnation of capitalistic or monopolistic property rights, to distinguish between usury, or theft, and that which may be legitimately called possession, and hence justified. Condemning the former, Tucker writes, in support of the latter, that anarchist property is "that which secures each in the possession of his own products, or of such products of others as he may have obtained unconditionally without the use of fraud or force, and in the realization of all titles to such products which [he] may hold by virtue of free contract with others."¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Capitalism, by definition, entails the accumulation of capital in the hands of one segment of the population and the alienation of labour on the part of another. The capitalist acquires through the wage-labour relationship the directive control over the worker's labour energies for a prescribed period of time and hence sharply limits the labourer's liberty.

¹⁰¹Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 7-8, 61-67, and 378-379.

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 429-433.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 61.

Rejecting the legitimacy of surplus value¹⁰⁴ and viewing labour as the only acceptable title to property,¹⁰⁵ Tucker spurned capitalist property rights while allowing for liberty in production and exchange, a liberty which Tucker and his predecessors viewed as essential to the development of the individual as an independent and self-reliant being.¹⁰⁶ Anything less, he contends, results in a servile character and demoralized species, and a society of such degenerated beings could not but be paternalistic and authoritarian in its structure.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Tucker concludes that the only stable society is one founded upon the twin notions of liberty and equality, for it alone is a truly contractual society, a co-operative society.¹⁰⁸

The complaint of Archistic Socialists that the Anarchists are bourgeois is true to this extent and no further--that, great as is their detestation for a bourgeois society, they prefer its partial liberty to the complete slavery of State Socialism. For one, I certainly can look with more pleasure--no, with less pain--upon the present seething, surging struggle, in which some

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 177-178, and 495-496.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 4-6, 127, 200, 203-205, 307, 403-404, and 493-494.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 41, 98, and 333.

¹⁰⁷Subject to this attack were all utopian socialist schemes, the 'scientific' writings of Marx and De Leon, and such reformist platforms as single-taxism and Greenbackerism.

¹⁰⁸Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 35, 44-48, and 342.

are up and some are down, some falling and some rising, some rich and many poor, but none completely fettered or altogether hopeless of a better future, than I could upon Mr. Thaddeus Wakeman's ideal, uniform, and miserable community of teamy, placid, and slavish oxen.¹⁰⁹

In Tucker's view there are only two methods of distribution consistent with equality of liberty, and these are distribution by a free market in accordance with the natural and impersonal operation of economic law, i.e., anarchism, and distribution by a centralized authority in accordance with statute law, i.e., state socialism.¹¹⁰ He has this to say about state socialism:

. . . in its worst and most probable form, it is the exploitation of labor by officialdom, and at its best it is a regime of spiritless equality secured at the expense of liberty and progress; the former is a regime of liberty and progress, with as close an approximation to equality as is compatible therewith. And this is all the equality that we ought to have. A greater equality than is compatible with liberty is undesirable. The moment we invade liberty to secure equality we enter upon a road which knows no stopping-place short of the annihilation of all that is best in the human race. If absolute equality is the ideal; if no man must have the slightest advantage over another,--then the man who achieves greater results through superiority of muscle or skill or brain must not be allowed to enjoy them. All that he produces in excess of that

¹⁰⁹Tucker, "Why I Am an Anarchist", p. 36.

¹¹⁰Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 4-16.

which the weakest and stupidest produce must be taken from him and distributed among his fellows. The economic rent, not of land only, but of strength and skill and intellect and superiority of every kind, must be confiscated. And a beautiful world it would be when absolute equality had been thus achieved! Who would live in it? Certainly no freeman.¹¹¹

The ultimate end of state socialism could be no other than the annihilation of the species. In an almost prophetic manner, Tucker writes:

Whatever, then, the State Socialists may claim or disclaim, their system, if adopted, is doomed to end in a State religion, to the expense of which all must contribute, and at the altar of which all must kneel; a State school of medicine, by whose practitioners the sick must invariably be treated; a State system of instruction, which will do away with all private schools, academies, and colleges; a State nursery, in which all children must be brought up in common at the public expense; and, finally, a State family, with an attempt at stirpiculture, or scientific breeding, in which no man and woman will be allowed to have children if the State prohibits them, and no man and woman can refuse to have children if the State orders them. Thus will Authority achieve its acme and Monopoly be carried to its highest power.¹¹²

"Such is the ideal," he concludes, "of the logical State Socialist, such the goal which lies at the end of the road that Karl Marx took."¹¹³ However, unfair this is as a depiction of Marx's theory, the fact remains that Tucker saw

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 347.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 9.

within state socialism the germs of totalitarianism. He recognized an implicit, if not explicit, threat to individual liberty and human initiative within state ownership and organization,¹¹⁴ and while he argued that wealth and liberty are both preconditions of happiness,¹¹⁵ he concluded that between the two there is little room for comparison. Liberty, he contends, must always take precedence over material prosperity.¹¹⁶

It would be but a poor apology for happiness that either factor alone would give, if it could not produce nor be accompanied by the other; but on the whole, much liberty and little wealth would be preferable to much wealth and little liberty.¹¹⁷

Equality is the lesser of the two conditions when compared with liberty. Disparity, Tucker asserts, is "a comparatively trivial consideration, certainly never to be weighed for a moment in the same scale with liberty."¹¹⁸ His postulate of equality is aimed solely at the maximization of liberty, and at the pragmatic consideration that equality of liberty is the only condition under which social stability, and hence human happiness, can flourish.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 23, and 65-67.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 41.

¹¹⁶Ibid., pp. 40-43, 333, and 350.

¹¹⁷Tucker, "Why I Am an Anarchist", p. 36.

¹¹⁸Tucker, Insead of a Book, p. 333.

His conclusion is that while

Liberty will ultimately make all men rich; it will not make all men equally rich. Authority may (and may not) make all men equally rich in purse; it certainly will make them equally poor in all that makes life best worth living.¹¹⁹

The solution for Tucker lies not in some abstract notion of equality which will destroy initiative and irreparably damage the individual sense of responsibility,¹²⁰ but in the creation of a genuinely free market. While retaining incentive and freedom of choice in production and exchange, it would destroy all economic power relations and hence provide the ideal milieu for rational and independent decision-making. It stands between the abuses of communism and property, asserting the equality-postulate of the one and the liberty-postulate of the other. Tucker approvingly repeats what Proudhon had written years earlier.

Communism is inequality, but not as property is. Property is the exploitation of the weak by the strong. Communism is the exploitation of the strong by the weak. In property, inequality of conditions is the result of force, under whatever name it be disguised: physical and mental force; force of events, chance, fortune; force of accumulated property, etc. In communism, inequality springs from placing mediocrity on a level with excellence. This damaging equation is repellent to the conscience, and causes merit to complain; for although it may be the duty of the strong to aid the weak,

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 348.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 23, and 65-67.

they prefer to do it out of generosity,-- they never will endure a comparison. Give them equal opportunities of labour, and equal wages, but never allow their jealousy to be awakened by mutual suspicion of unfaithfulness in the performance of the common task.¹²¹

Unlike state socialism, and the less threatening voluntary communism of Kropotkin and his school,¹²² individualist anarchism retains the virtues of independence and responsibility, while simultaneously rejecting the inequality of wealth and net transfer of power inherent in the capitalist market economy and liberal society.¹²³ Like the communist anarchists, the individualists reject the notion of coercion and appeal to a society of free and equal beings. Unlike the communists, however, they view complete or absolute equality as incompatible with liberty and appeal instead to the more individualistic principle of equity behind which lies an ideal or moralistic notion of just distribution, a notion which is ultimately no less abstract than that of

¹²¹ Proudhon, What Is Property?, p. 250, quoted in Tucker, Instead of a Book, p. 392.

¹²² Tucker clearly viewed Kropotkin's brand of communist anarchism as a less oppressive and more humane theory than he did the writings of such socialists as Marx and Lassalle. Nonetheless, he completely rejected their claim to the title 'anarchist', arguing that it was totally inconceivable that any person who rejected the notion of freedom in production and exchange could be an anarchist. See Instead of a Book, pp. 386-393, and 407-408.

¹²³ See above, pp. 93-94.

absolute and total equality. Despite repeated protestations to the contrary,¹²⁴ Tucker's pragmatism and egoism give way, in the final analysis, to a moral perspective not unlike that of Godwin, Warren, and Proudhon. While claiming that his philosophy is founded upon a value-free utilitarianism,¹²⁵ or egoism void of ethical considerations¹²⁶ and based solely upon force, the language he uses¹²⁷ and the conclusions at which he arrives differ little from those of his predecessors, for his conclusion also demands an assertion of equal liberty. Whether men are not to invade others because such an action is deemed immoral or merely impractical is not of the essence as far as political theory is concerned. What is of significance is that invasive behaviour is irrational behaviour, i.e., behaviour of a type that enlightened individuals simply would

¹²⁴Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 24, 132, and 211.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Tucker writes, for example, "So far as inherent right is concerned, might is its only measure. Any man, be his name Bill Sykes or Alexander Romanoff, and any set of men, whether the Chinese highbinders or the Congress of the United States, have the right, if they have the power, to kill or coerce other men and to make the entire world subservient to their ends. Society's right to enslave the individual and the individual's right to enslave society are unequal only because their powers are unequal" (Instead of a Book, p. 24).

¹²⁷Throughout his writings Tucker, as Proudhon, uses highly moralistic words, such as 'usury', 'sin', 'cannibalistic', 'unjust', and 'inequitable'--words which put to question his amoral claims.

not deliberately engage in. Such, for Tucker, has been the educational value of history:

The history of humanity has been largely one long and gradual discovery of the fact the individual is the gainer by society exactly in proportion as society is free, and of the law that the condition of a permanent and harmonious society is the greatest amount of individual liberty compatible with equality of liberty. The average man of each new generation has said to himself more clearly and consciously than his predecessor: "My neighbor is not my enemy, but my friend, and I am his, if we would but mutually recognize the fact. We help each other to a better, fuller, happier living; and this service might be greatly increased if we would cease to restrict, hamper, and oppress each other. Why can we not agree to let each live his own life, neither of us transgressing the limit that separates our individualities?" It is by this reasoning that mankind is approaching the real social contract, which is not, as Rousseau thought, the origin of society, but rather the outcome of a long social experience, the fruit of its follies and disasters. It is obvious that this contract, this social law, developed to its perfection, excludes all aggression, all violation of equality of liberty, all invasion of every kind.¹²⁸

Such, as we shall see,¹²⁹ is not the view of Stirner, another writer who has been regarded as an individualist anarchist.

¹²⁸Tucker, Instead of a Book, pp. 24-25.

¹²⁹See below, especially chapter IV.

IV

ANARCHISM RECONSIDERED: THE NEGATIVISM OF MAX STIRNER--A STUDY IN SCHIZOID ONTOLOGY

Having sought, in the foregoing chapters, to demonstrate the fundamental assumptions of anarchist theory in both its individualist and communist forms, it is now necessary to examine in greater detail the non-political and, more specifically, nihilistic writings of the man most commonly and somewhat uncomfortably regarded as the most extreme of the individualist anarchists, Max Stirner.¹ At times revered for his emotion-packed plea for individual

¹ Born Johann Kaspar Schmidt, in Bayreuth, Germany, on October 25, 1806, this man had, by the time of his death only fifty years later, written one of the most powerful and fanatically gripping statements of individualism known to man. Der Einzige und sein Eigentum, which was published in English under the somewhat ambiguous title The Ego and His Own (a more accurate translation being "The Individual and His Property"), had a meteoric impact upon the philosophical scene in Europe towards the middle of the last century and gave rise to one of the longest and most vituperative attacks ever written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who devoted by far the largest portion of The German Ideology to a line by line refutation of this most unusual and ominous work. For the twentieth century continuation of this battle see Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx, pp. 165-185, Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx: A Revolutionary Interpretation, pp. 65 and 131, and Herbert Read, "Max Stirner", in The Tenth Muse: Essays in Criticism, pp. 74-82.

self-assertion,² at others feared and disdained for his condonation and even exaltation of crime and murder,³ Stirner is most typically viewed by anarchists and historians of anarchist thought as a figure to be modified and explained away.⁴ His glorification of the individual appealed to them artistically, romantically, and emotionally. His complete rejection of 'the other' proved a source of immediate and continued embarrassment. The fact that he has found his way into the anarchist tradition at all is an accident of history and not a deliberate attempt on his part to identify himself with the movement, for it did not as yet exist as such, and if it had, Stirner, without doubt, would have regarded it as the epitome of that very idealism he set out so deliberately and consciously to destroy.⁵ Anarchists would most assuredly have been numbered among the possessed--the concepts of freedom and equality, the two ideals shown in the previous chapters

²This response was not limited to the American individualist anarchists, such as Benjamin R. Tucker and James L. Walker, but was echoed by the communist anarchist Emma Goldman.

³Interestingly, it was the communist anarchists Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta who gave strongest expression to these sentiments.

⁴This has taken two forms: one, the reinterpretation of Stirner to fit the anarchist mould; and, two, the downplaying of Stirner's significance, as in James Joll's statement (The Anarchists, p. 172) that "Stirner was not a very important thinker nor a very interesting one."

⁵See below, pp. 116-117.

to be the keystones of anarchist theory in both forms being regarded by Stirner as the ultimate spooks, subordinating the individual to unreal and unattainable ideals.⁶

Stirner's placement in the anarchist tradition appears to have been the work of non-anarchists and artistically oriented libertarian elements rather than that of the classical anarchists themselves.⁷ It was Marx and his followers, in fact, who most consistently applied the term 'anarchist' to his writings--a term they used uncritically and with much abandon for its opprobrious effect rather than critical intent. Not until the end of the last century, after Nietzsche had paved the way for the solipsistic bliss of desultory egoism, did the German individualist poet and author John Henry Mackay refurbish the self-assertive ego in a panegyric of its author.⁸ That some anarchists got caught up in the ethos of its individualism run rampant is scarcely surprising, but it should not be taken as a blanket acceptance by them of all of Stirner's egoistic teachings. Emma Goldman's praise of Stirner's appeal to direct action⁹ and criticism of Christianity,

⁶Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 98-151.

⁷R.W.K. Paterson, The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner, p. 127.

⁸The only biography of Stirner is written by Mackay. Published in Germany in 1898, Max Stirner: sein Leben und sein Werke has not been translated into English.

⁹Goldman, "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For", in Anarchism and Other Essays, p. 61.

"with its pernicious slave morality",¹⁰ should be taken no more seriously than her assertion of Nietzsche's affinity to anarchism, for she regarded it as nothing more than that. She writes: "Nietzsche was not a social theorist, but a poet and innovator. His aristocracy was neither of birth nor of purse; it was of the spirit. In that respect Nietzsche was an anarchist, and all true anarchists were aristocrats."¹¹

It was in this artistic or romantic sense that some anarchists greeted Stirner's work with warmth and feeling. Recognizing a Peer Gyntian quality in his writing,¹² they have unconsciously or deliberately, as the case might be, ignored the anarchical elements which conflict irreconcilably with the fundamental anarchistic assumptions of their own thought. Essentially tolerant--a position Stirner would have himself scorned--anarchists have inevitably refrained from engaging in any form of purge, a fact which makes a truism of John Wakeman's statement that there are as many anarchisms as there are anarchists.¹³ To argue, however, that one is an anarchist

¹⁰Emma Goldman, "The Failure of Christianity", in Alix Kates Shulman (ed.), Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings & Speeches, p. 186.

¹¹Goldman, Living My Life, v. I, p. 194.

¹²James Huneker, "Max Stirner", in Egoists: A Book of Supermen, p. 351; Joll, The Anarchists, p. 172.

¹³Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders, Socialist Thought: A Documentary History, p. 328.

merely because one declares so is to render the term meaningless. Certainly, to engage in the sort of endless hair-splitting, which has traditionally characterized small revolutionary organizations remote from power, would not in the least add credence to the anarchist position, but I think that it can be credibly argued, as has been demonstrated in the preceding chapters, that the concepts of equality and liberty may be taken as a defining characteristic of both schools of anarchist thought.¹⁴

The fact that Stirner, unlike the other anarchists discussed, does not subscribe to this crucial principle but explicitly rejects it¹⁵ must lead one to the conclusion that he is not an anarchist. Moreover, given his initial assumptions it is impossible for him to arrive at other than non-anarchistic conclusions. Unequivocally opposed to the feudal notion of divine and social hierarchy,¹⁶ and a believer in neither the principle of communistic equality¹⁷ nor that of

¹⁴This is not to suggest that the postulates of equality and liberty are the sole definitional criteria for anarchism. Such is clearly not the case; if it were so, the theories of Rousseau and Marx would have to be included in a multitude of others so labelled. Equal liberty is a necessary but not a sufficient criterion.

¹⁵See below, pp. 115-118.

¹⁶Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 67-97.

¹⁷See below, pp. 120-122.

individualist equitability,¹⁸ Stirner completely rejected the notion of a paradisaical utopia free from conflict and ruthless struggle.¹⁹ His 'Union of Egoists' ought not be so conceived, and it is highly questionable, as Shatz points out, whether such individuals could enjoy any genuine form of co-operation.²⁰

A number of authors, however, take the opposite position. Woodcock, for instance, contends that while the distance from Godwin's Political Justice to Stirner's solipsism and amorality may seem great "it ends for both in a society of proud individuals, each secure in his integrity and co-operating with other individuals only in so far as it is convenient to him."²¹ Furthermore, Woodcock argues that the withdrawal of each man into his uniqueness would prevent rather than foster conflict.²² Runkle essentially agrees with this interpretation and adds that a society of egoists would not be a bad place at all²³--a position which even

¹⁸See below, pp. 122-123.

¹⁹Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 328-329.

²⁰Marshall S. Shatz, The Essential Works of Anarchism, p. 42.

²¹Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 105.

²²Ibid., p. 102.

²³Gerald Runkle, Anarchism: Old and New, p. 64.

Stirner himself does not take.²⁴ It is Huneker, however, who carries this train of thought to its ultimate conclusion, one which Stirner would have most certainly rejected as exhibitive of 'sickly altruism', when he writes that Stirner desires us to learn to love and respect ourselves so that we may learn to respect our brothers.²⁵

In each of these cases the respective authors have read into The Ego and His Own assumptions which are not justified and which Stirner has himself implicitly, if not explicitly, denied. Moreover, in a number of instances, they have selected one strain of his thought, only to neglect the other side of his schizoid ontology. In so doing, they have missed the significance of his integrative approach to the human personality and his ceaseless attempt to transcend the dilemma proffered by Christian dualism and to reconcile two separate and necessarily antagonistic world views.

The irreconcilability of these two visions (the one, democratic and consistent with the anarchist world view; the other, bourgeois and antagonistic to it) suggests that Stirnerian theory lies more properly in the nihilist than the anarchist tradition. While such an argument is not new²⁶ and

²⁴See below, pp. 139-140.

²⁵Huneker, Egoists: A Book of Supermen, p. 361.

²⁶See Paterson, The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner.

many have commented on the nihilistic tinge to Stirner's presumed 'anarchism',²⁷ its significance lies not merely in the assertion of Stirnerian nihilism, but rather in Stirner's partial rejection of anarchist ethics in favour of the unrestricted egoism of bourgeois man. And it is at this level of ontology that the works of even his biographer, Mackay, and those of Stirner disagree, for Mackay saw in anarchism that slender thread of moral sense in man which binds him to his fellow men in a stable and brotherly community.²⁸ It was the anarchistic philosophy of the Bostonian individualists which had its appeal for Mackay and not the nihilistic tendencies of Stirner's thought.²⁹

While both the Proudhon-inspired anarchists and the egoistic Stirner rejected the liberal state and the capitalist market economy for which it stood, they did so for different reasons, the former in the name of that maximum

²⁷Atindranath Bose, A History of Anarchism, p. 173; G.D.H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, II, p. 47; E. Lampert, Sons against Fathers: Studies in Russian Radicalism and Revolution, p. 314; David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, pp. 117-136; and Woodcock, Anarchism, p. 95. The question of Stirner's influence on Nietzsche has long been debated. See James A. Martin's Introduction to The Ego and His Own, p. xvi.

²⁸See above, p. 2; John Henry Mackay, "An Individualist Attack: Communists Cannot Be Anarchists", in Leonard I. Krimmerman and Lewis Perry (eds.), Patterns of Anarchy, pp. 20-21.

²⁹See below, pp. 139-140.

individual liberty consistent with equality of liberty, and Stirner in that of blanket and unrestricted egoism. In subscribing to this latter proposition, Stirner inevitably found himself, at least at times, at odds with the anarchist ethic which is by definition democratic. With the anarchists he rejected the state, the church, and capital; alone, he rejected 'the other'.

Turning in revulsion from the Christian concepts of hierarchy and order, Stirner saw in their place the equally tyrannical and even more horrible liberal state, for under the guise of freedom and equality the liberal state had set out to destroy individuality. All the more terrifying because the more obsequious, the 'liberal' state, this wolf in sheep's clothing, sought the destruction of egoism. Regarding all equally as its enemies, it lacked the weaknesses which permeate personal rule and made more totalitarian its despotic grasp. The relation between individual and leviathan Stirner viewed as necessarily antagonistic, and in taking this position he differs little from Kropotkin, Berkman, and Walter, as well as from Warren, Proudhon, and Tucker. Each of these viewed the state as an oppressive and coercive apparatus standing in opposition to the individual members of society and supporting the unequal and inequitable distributive mechanisms of rent, interest, and profit. As Stirner sees it, between the state and the self-possessing

individual there is nothing but a 'deadly hostility', for every state, by its very nature, is a despotism,³⁰ and every ego is from its birth a struggling self-owner.³¹

The egoist, in Stirner's view, is always regarded by the state as a criminal³² or an un-man.³³

The unbridled ego--and this we originally are, and in our secret inward parts we remain so always--is the never-ceasing criminal in the State. The man whom his boldness, his will, his inconsiderateness and fearlessness lead is surrounded with spies by the State, by the people. . . . Only he who renounces his ego, who practices 'self-renunciation,' is acceptable to the people.³⁴

He who does not is condemned as evil, sinful and immoral, and is placed in prison or, under the kindly custody of the new, humane and benevolent altruists, is declared insane and placed for 'treatment' in a lunatic asylum³⁵--for the un-man "is a man who does not correspond to the concept man, as the inhuman is something human which is not conformed to the concept

³⁰ Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 196.

³¹ Ibid., p. 200.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p. 179.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 200.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 177. Stirner shows prophetic insight into this problem. See Thomas Szasz, Law, Liberty and Psychiatry: An Inquiry into the Social Uses of Mental Health Practices, and The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct.

of the human",³⁶ and curative measures are necessary to restore to him his humanity--which is society's reason not his, his reason being regarded by it as unreason.³⁷ This attempt to heal anti-social tendencies is regarded by Stirner as merely the reverse side of punishment, for neither crime nor disease is a label the egoist would apply,³⁸ since in "crime" he has merely asserted himself and mocked the sacred.³⁹

. . . in the State the unbridled I--I, as I belong to myself alone--cannot come to my fulfillment and realization. Every ego is from birth a criminal to begin with against the people, the State. Hence it is that it does really keep watch over all; it sees in each one an--egoist, and it is afraid of the egoist. It presumes the worst about each one, and takes care, police-care, that 'no harm happens to the State,' ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat.⁴⁰

Neither sinful nor divine, neither ill nor human, the egoist is merely what he is--himself. Recognizing the legitimacy of no power outside himself, the self-conscious owner and creator of the universe submits willingly to none. The common weal is no concern of his--merely the furthest extremity of self-renunciation and denial.⁴¹ The 'other' is to him but a countervailing force, engaged with him in a ceaseless

³⁶Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 177.

³⁷Ibid., p. 205.

³⁸Ibid., p. 240.

³⁹Ibid., p. 241.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 200.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 213.

battle of wills, to be overcome and used, an object to be made one's property and hence to enhance one's power and enjoyment. The state, the people, and the common weal demand the death of egoism. Morality is threatened by it, justice extinguished by it, and freedom and equality mocked by it, for egoism merely expresses in cold and honest words what has always been known by intelligent and aggressive men--that beneath the hypocritical veil of altruism and morality it is might alone that makes right, and that the appeal to a higher authority, be it a god or a moral precept, is merely an elaborate ploy by the wielders of power to keep the unenlightened masses in subjection. In like measure, liberal freedom is but a myth, a dangerous one to our egoism at that, because "the craving for freedom as for something abstract, worthy of every praise, deprived us of oneness: it created self-denial."⁴² Furthermore, negative freedom, that paltry 'freedom from' which the liberal state so graciously grants, is a dispensation, and hence the modern state differs only in degree from the feudal fiefdom. Thus, while the state boldly declares that men are not property but proprietors⁴³--a revolutionary statement when considered against the feudal conception, in which no individual human being was regarded as proprietor of anything, especially not of himself--it allows this free-

⁴²Ibid., p. 156.

⁴³Ibid., p. 263.

dom only in those narrowly restricted areas which do not conflict with the interests of the bourgeoisie. Beyond these limits any manifestation of egoism is viewed as subversive.⁴⁴ The failure of the ego to recognize an authority may result in the confiscation of its property, i.e., of its life or liberty.⁴⁵

The State has nothing to be more afraid of than the value of me, and nothing must it more carefully guard against than every occasion that offers itself to me for realizing value from myself. I am the deadly enemy of the State, which always hovers between the alternatives, it or I. Therefore it strictly insists not only on not letting me have a standing, but also on keeping down what is mine. In the State there is no property, no property of the individual, but only State property.⁴⁶

Stirner, moreover, contends that there is not and cannot be perfect freedom:⁴⁷ being an ideal, it cannot become reality.⁴⁸ The ego, and it alone, is real, and it seeks enjoyment not in abstraction but in the ownership of itself. Freedom is but a spook, a ghost, an ideal before which the possessed

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 255.

⁴⁵Stirner uses the term property in much the same way as does Locke. For both theorists the term entails more than mere possession or estate. It also includes life and liberty.

⁴⁶Stirner, The Ego and His Own, 255.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 307-308.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 362.

prostrate themselves, deny and renounce themselves. They give to freedom all and make themselves nothing, as the early Christians gave fully to God and were nothing themselves,⁴⁹ but freedom is useless, if it brings nothing with it. Moreover, it is the enemy of our only possession: our ownness, our individuality.

To Stirner, it is property (meaning ownership) and not liberty, or equality, or justice, which is essential to the realization of the ego, for the egoist's aim is enjoyment,⁵⁰ and to enjoy life is to consume it.⁵¹ Such is the natural and universal expression of egoism, and it applies to no authority.

My intercourse with the world, what does it aim at? I want to have the enjoyment of it, therefore it must be my property, and therefore I want to win it. I do not want the liberty of men, nor their equality; I want only my power over them, I want to make them my property, material for enjoyment. And, if I do not succeed in that, well, then I call even the power over life and death, which Church and State reserved to themselves--mine. . . . my satisfaction decides about my relation to men, and that I do not renounce, from any access of humility, even the power over life and death.⁵²

One cannot enjoy what one does not have. This, Stirner argues, is the mistake of all altruists, be they Christian or communist. In their endless search for the 'true' life, the 'blessed'

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 59.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 319.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 320.

⁵²Ibid., p. 318.

life, the 'good' life, the 'human' life, they fail to live their own lives.⁵³ In paying homage to a ghost, the humanist shares in the piety of the religionist⁵⁴ and cannot realize his individuality, his ownness, for "Not till I am certain of myself, and no longer seeking for myself, am I really my property",⁵⁵ but to gain possession of oneself, and use and enjoy oneself, one must first exorcise the ghostly ideal and return the individual to himself.⁵⁶

Liberalism, according to Stirner, is the most deceptive myth of all. In transcending the old feudal hierarchy with its specific or caste interests the liberal did not free man but rather intensified his subjugation, for the interests of all mean to Stirner the interests of none. Thus, the destruction of personal power in favour of impersonal power benefits the socially determined concept 'man' at the expense of the actual individual. The state alone gained and declared the egoism, which necessarily weakened it, illegal and immoral.⁵⁷ In the name of reason--the 'right reason', that is,

⁵³Ibid., p. 320.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 185.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 320.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Herein lies the egalitarian thrust of Stirner's argument for, while Stirner views the state as the instrument of power-seeking egos, he contends that if all men were fully developed egoists, the state could not continue to exist.

the state's reason--a 'natural' order was created and moral behaviour dictated by it. This reason, however, did not, according to Stirner, exist objectively and lie in wait of discovery. Rather, it was created by the state for its own benefit and was adopted and worshipped by men as a god. Thus, the liberals were no less idealistic than their predecessors, but had merely exchanged man for God and ethics for theology. The result was the same: as reason triumphed, the individual succumbed. The state's existence depended upon the moral fibre of its individual citizens--upon their willingness to sacrifice their ownness, their individuality, their only real and eternal possession⁵⁸--for the guarantee of a mythical freedom and an artificial equality.

At the root of liberal theory, however, argued Stirner, lay a fundamental contradiction, for it postulated one set of social relations and proposed another--it demanded one set of conditions and created another. While the state had been transformed from its highly personal and hierarchical form of feudal times to the impersonal and supposedly arbitrary governing force of the liberal age, its task of guaranteeing and protecting property remained the same, and hence its declarations of political freedom and equality have been rendered almost meaningless by the strait-jacket which the unequal

⁵⁸Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 158.

distribution of property rights entails. While the bourgeois revolution replaced the feudal notion of centralized distribution by the liberal conception of competition, thereby transforming a customary or status-oriented society with its rigidly determined duties and obligations into the free-for-all of a crap game,⁵⁹ the state protected the initial winnings of the players, thereby promoting an overwhelming disparity in wealth and resources.⁶⁰ This, Stirner believes, is the fundamental contradiction in political liberalism.

He who is satisfied with what he is and has finds this state of things profitable; but he who would like to be and have more looks around for this 'more', and finds it in the power of other persons. Here he comes upon a contradiction; as a person no one is inferior to another, and yet one person has what another has not but would like to have. So, he concludes, the one person is more than the other, after all, for the former has what he needs, the latter has not; the former is a rich man, the latter a poor man.⁶¹

Furthermore, Stirner contends that while such disparity existed also under the preceding regime it was given holy sanction and promised to all who abided by its rule a heavenly equality.⁶² The liberal, however, had removed God from his

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 121.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 117.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., p. 120.

throne and replaced him with 'Man', and a secular god demanded secular and immediate rewards--rewards which were not forthcoming in any manner which could be perceived as equal or equitable. Neither the demands of the individual's vulgar egoism⁶³ nor those of his newly found humanism⁶⁴ were to be met in the majority of cases by this inequitable regime.⁶⁵ The game would continue, but with loaded dice.

Accurately perceiving the injustices of liberal political theory and recognizing the vacuous nature of negative freedom, a group of critics emerged who have contended that as freedom is nothing without power--a right being merely a claim without the might necessary to enforce it--so the power relations in society must be equalized in order to be justified. Stirner vigorously rejects this conclusion, although it stems from a critique with which he heartily agrees. Stirner is very much aware that the liberal state is a class state, "forever intent on getting benefit from me, exploiting me, turning me to account, using me up, even if the use it gets from me consists only in my supplying a proles (prole-

⁶³By 'vulgar egoism' is meant the empirical egoism in contemporary bourgeois society as distinct from Stirner's philosophical egoism. See below, p. 134.

⁶⁴This is not to suggest that humanism was new, but rather that Stirner viewed it as such. Actually this may be found in the pre-liberal works of theorists as far back as Aristotle with his conception of man as a developing being. See Macpherson, "The Maximization of Democracy", in Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁵Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 119-120.

tariat)", and that "it wants me to be 'its creature'",⁶⁶ but he is even more conscious of the dangers of communism and views its spectre with horror. As political liberalism sought to extend freedom by destroying individuality and transforming all men into citizens of the state with equal rights, duties and obligations, social liberalism seeks to end the abuses of individual liberty by depriving all of economic liberty. Under this scheme, argues Stirner, men live not for themselves but for others. Even the limited and somewhat deceptive choice which existed under political liberalism is crushed and man is forced to conform to 'right' reason. The liberty which exists is not the individual's but society's, and all men become the property of society. The cult of god has been replaced by the cult of society and of altruism which knows only self-denial.⁶⁷ Thus, Stirner contends that for the individual there lies no less restraint in collective wealth than in the unequal distribution of individual wealth, and consequently of power, in the class-based liberal state; in each case the individual is viewed not as a self-owner and, hence, is not free to make his own decisions. "Communism," writes Stirner, "by the abolition of all personal property, only presses me back still more into dependence on another, to wit, on the generality or collectivity; and, loudly as it always

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 254.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 257.

attacks the 'State', what it intends is itself again a State, a status, a condition hindering my free movement, a sovereign power over me."⁶⁸ Thus, while Stirner sees within contemporary social arrangements conditions which are unjust or inequitable even at the starting gate,⁶⁹ he finds 'still more horrible' the force which communism places in the hands of the collectivity⁷⁰--a collectivity, which is full of police sentiments,⁷¹ seeing in egoism the seeds of its own destruction.⁷² He concludes that "All attempts to enact rational laws about property have put out from the bay of love into a desolate sea of regulations."⁷³

No less ardent is Stirner in his rejection of the moral principle of equitability. He denies the workability and desirability of any scheme based on a moral principle of distribution in proportion to labour energies expended. He explicitly and repeatedly condemns as blatant idealism and religiosity any political economy founded upon an objective criterion, and it is here that Stirner differs even from the individualist anarchists, who subscribed to the labour theory

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹A situation which has become even more so since Stirner's time.

⁷⁰Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 257.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 200.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 257.

of value not merely as an empirical statement of fact but also as a normative exchange principle.⁷⁴ Warren, Proudhon, and Tucker had rejected the notion of exchange premised upon use value as totally immoral and exploitative,⁷⁵ but Stirner denies the legitimacy of such a criticism as the utmost of moralism and hence as a retreat into the realm of religiosity. Stirner views such a principle as exhibiting that sickly sentimentalism and altruism which have characterized the Christian era, reaching its epitome in the totalitarian humanism of Bauer, Feuerbach, and ultimately in the early writings of Karl Marx.⁷⁶ The Warrenite principle has its roots in a fundamental communitarian objectivism which, according to Stirner, stands diametrically opposed to his own principle of egoistic subjectivism, a principle which he views as amoral, truly 'scientific', and bereft of value. In taking this position, Stirner's theory shares more with the mechanism and pragmatism of the power theorists, Machiavelli and Hobbes, than with the highly moralistic and humanistic writings of the anarchists.

⁷⁴See above, pp. 78, 81-82.

⁷⁵See above, pp. 78-82.

⁷⁶Marx is not mentioned in The Ego and His Own, but certainly the extent of his and Engels's criticism of Stirner is suggestive of the seriousness with which they viewed Stirner's attacks on the communist and humanist traditions. See McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, p. 131.

Accepting completely the relativistic position of total moral and epistemological subjectivism,⁷⁷ Stirner totally rejects the 'other', save as a countervailing power to be reckoned with in calculating the positive and negative aspects of any given action. He writes in the most unambiguous language and one reminiscent of Hobbes:

I decide whether it is the right thing in me; there is no right outside me. If it is right for me, it is right. Possibly this may not suffice to make it right for the rest; that is their care, not mine: let them defend themselves. And if for the whole world something were not right, but it were right for me, that is, I wanted it, then I would ask nothing about the whole world. So every one does who knows how to value himself, every one in the degree that he is an egoist; for might goes⁷⁸ before right, and that--with perfect right.

The individual exists only for himself--the other is to him but an object, something to be used.⁷⁹ He has no rights except what he can secure through his own powers, i.e., his competence.⁸⁰ And competence, for Stirner, is nothing more than property, which means

Nothing but what is in my power! To what property am I entitled? To every property to which I--empower myself. I give myself the right of property in taking property

⁷⁷Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 353-354.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 190.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 297.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 266-267.

to myself, or giving myself the proprietor's power, full power, empowerment.⁸¹

Overcome by the amoralism and scientism of competitive market relations, Stirner concludes:

Let us therefore not aspire to community, but to one-sidedness. Let us not seek the most comprehensive commune, 'human society,' but let us seek in others only means and organs which we may use as our property! As we do not see our equals in the tree, the beast, so the presupposition that others are our equals springs from a hypocrisy. No one is my equal, but I regard him, equally with all other beings, as my property. In opposition to this I am told that I should be a man among 'fellow-men' (Judenfrage, p. 60); I should 'respect' the fellowman in them. For me no one is a person to be respected, not even the fellowman, but solely, like other beings, an object in which I take an interest or else do not, an interesting or uninteresting object, a usable or unusable person.⁸²

Missing are the Kantian overtones of individualist anarchism, with its fervently moral perspective.⁸³ Unlike this school, which rejects not property rights per se but specifically capitalist property rights--those which carry with them a net transfer of power and hence preclude all individuals from receiving their equitable and just reward--Stirner explicitly denies the validity of all such rights, capitalist and petit-bourgeois. Thus, for Stirner, poverty is not the result of

⁸¹Ibid., p. 256.

⁸²Ibid., p. 311.

⁸³See above, pp. 87-91.

exploitation and theft as the individualists argue, for robbery presupposes the existence of rights of property, the validity of which he unequivocally denies.⁸⁴ Its root lies rather in the weakness and illusions of the masses. The poor suffer not because they are locked into an exploitative situation and condemned by it to a life of misery and servitude, but because they are stupid and have failed to recognize the deception in the myths of the profitting classes. Lacking egoism and self-valuation, they are little more than cowardly and foolish givers of presents.⁸⁵ "Why", asks Stirner, ". . . put the fault on others as if they were robbing us, while we ourselves do bear the fault in leaving the others unrobbed? The poor are to blame for there being rich men."⁸⁶ Clearly, this is not the position of a Warren, a Proudhon, or a Tucker, much less that of a Kropotkin, a Berkman, or a Walter.

Thus, it may be argued, as R.W.K. Paterson does, that Stirner's position on property is totally at variance with the anarchist tradition and may, indeed, be seen as irreconcilable

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 315.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 259, and 315. This position is akin to that of the existentialists. See John Carroll, Break-Out from the Crystal Palace: The anarcho-psychological critique: Stirner, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, pp. 39-48.

⁸⁶Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 315.

with it. In Paterson's words,

. . . Stirner's denial of property rights is superficially so acceptable to anarchists only because they misunderstand it or willfully ignore the conclusions drawn from it. Stirner is not in the least desirous of abolishing property rights in order to restore to humanity the fruits of the earth and of human labour, unjustly distrained by the institution of private property. In fact, The Unique One's whole effort is exclusively directed to increasing and enjoying his own private 'property', and if he denies the existence of property 'rights' this is only because he equates 'property' with the operative power to control and enjoy the thing possessed: 'the property question is solved only by the war of all against all'. . . . When the anarchist denies property rights, he does so because he deplors the misery and degradation caused by economic inequality and exploitation. When Stirner denies property rights, on the other hand, he is merely announcing that his cupidity will not permit itself to be curbed by any foolish scruples about legal titles or moral ownership.⁸⁷

Despite Stirner's many explicit and often repeated denunciations of all rights and his loudly proclaimed commitment to the amorality and supposedly value-free ethics, which the capitalist market propitiates in the name of profit maximization, he simultaneously remains committed to the moral perspective of the independent commodity producer.⁸⁸ The huckster spirit,⁸⁹ which Huneker characterized as "Pragmatism

⁸⁷Paterson, The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner, pp. 135-136.

⁸⁸See below, pp. 130-131.

⁸⁹Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, p. 469.

with a vengeance",⁹⁰ stands side by side with, and yet in opposition to, the moral and ethical principles of 'equitable commerce' to which Stirner also adheres.⁹¹ The two images entail two separate sets of ontological assumptions regarding the human essence,⁹² the realization of which demands two different and mutually exclusive sets of social arrangements.⁹³ The bourgeois egoist in Stirner appreciates and desires scarce and expensive commodities,⁹⁴ and finds his being in owning⁹⁵ and his desires antagonistic to, or in conflict with, those of his fellow men.⁹⁶ Since owning is all, his essence, and the materials he desires are scarce, he finds himself necessarily

⁹⁰Huneker, Egoists: A Book of Supermen, p. 364.

⁹¹See below, pp. 129-131.

⁹²These two images, which run concurrently through Stirner's work, will henceforth be referred to as bourgeois and anarchist respectively. The first is that of an unlimited desirer and consumer of material utilities and power over others, who willingly subverts the notion of equal liberty to that of profit maximization and, setting out from individualist assumptions, necessarily finds himself in conflict with his fellow men. The second is that of the limited desirer, who places a higher value on individual freedom than on material acquisition.

⁹³The fulfilment of the bourgeois essence requires the subversion of the principle of equal liberty to that of profit maximization. See Locke, The Second Treatise of Government, especially ch. V. In contrast, the anarchist ethic rejects any such subversion and remains committed to the principles of equality and liberty.

⁹⁴Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 155.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 157-158.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 9, 178-179, 257.

engaged in an endless war of every man against every other man,⁹⁷ a view which closely parallels the traditional Hobbesian view of the individual governed by "a perpetuall and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death".⁹⁸ This is not, however, to suggest that Stirner's egoism is in any way limited to, or synonymous with, that crassly materialistic or vulgar egoism which traversed the pages of Locke on route from Hobbes to Bentham, but rather to state that at least half of Stirnerian man is a bourgeois man. The other half of Stirner's schizoid ontology rejects the social and ethical implications of this vision and replaces its tension-ridden and conflict-oriented notion of social interaction⁹⁹ with the more anarchistic notion of voluntary co-operation.

It is upon this notion that Stirner's argumentation for the formation of 'unions of egoists' is based, for, according to this view, the state having been once dissolved, all individuals would be free and equal, autonomous, and able to enter and leave relations with others as they pleased.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Ibid., pp. 210-319.

⁹⁸Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 161.

⁹⁹A position which could not be otherwise given Stirner's statement that "In society the human demand at most can be satisfied, while the egoistic must always come short" (The Ego and His Own, p. 210).

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 306-308.

Freed once and for all from their ragamuffian status, their means of life would be their own¹⁰¹ and they would be genuinely free to move about in accordance with the principle of enlightened self-interest or, to put it better, egoistic interest.¹⁰² This, as Stirner sees it, would be possible for the reason that the egoist would not see it as in his long-term interest to violate the desires of individuals or groups of individuals stronger than himself.¹⁰³ His strength would then become the strength of the group with which he was affiliated, and the mightier the group, the mightier the individual. The purpose of this union, according to Stirner, is to secure for the individual his property, and thus his individuality.¹⁰⁴ Within the group, the principle of contractuality would be held sacred.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Stirner holds that the enforcement of contracts would not in any way violate his theoretical position, membership in the unions being completely voluntary.¹⁰⁶ By entering the union of his

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 307.

¹⁰² The Stirnerian notion of enlightened self-interest differs considerably from the Benthamite, since it stems from a highly ambiguous ontology. Unlike the latter, which seeks man's essence in the unlimited pursuit of material goods and power over others, the former finds it in the abstract ego 'in agreement with itself'. See below, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰³ Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 311-313.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 312.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 307-308.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 311-313.

choice, the individual will necessarily have to sacrifice certain 'phantom' freedoms¹⁰⁷ in exchange for others which he deems more beneficial and more attainable.¹⁰⁸ This, according to Stirner, does not entail a loss but a net gain, for all that is given up is the ideal freedom,¹⁰⁹ and "as regards the sacrificing, surely I 'sacrifice' only that which does not stand in my power, that is, I 'sacrifice' nothing at all".¹¹⁰ The distinction between the union and the state rests not with liberty but with ownership.¹¹¹

Stirner concludes that

in reference to liberty, State and union are subject to no essential difference. The latter can just as little come into existence, or continue in existence, without liberty's being limited in all sorts of ways, as the State is compatible with unmeasured liberty. Limitation of liberty is inevitable everywhere, for one cannot get rid of everything; one cannot fly like a bird merely because one would like to fly so, for one does not get free from his own weight; one cannot live under water as long as he likes, like a fish, because one cannot do without air and cannot get free from this indispensable necessity; and the like. As religion, and most decidedly Christianity, tormented man with the demand to realize the

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 160-161.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 306-308.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 160.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 313.

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 306-308.

unnatural and self-contradictory, so it is to be looked upon only as the true logical outcome of that religious overstraining and overwroughtness that finally liberty itself, absolute liberty, was exalted into an ideal, and thus the nonsense of the impossible to come glaringly to the light.--The union will assuredly offer a greater measure of liberty, as well as (and especially because by it one escapes all the coercion peculiar to State and society life) admit of being considered as 'a new liberty'; but nevertheless it will still contain enough of unfreedom and involuntariness. For its object is not this--liberty (which on the contrary it sacrifices to ownness), but only ownness.¹¹²

Thus, the primary distinction between the union and the state rests with one's ability to opt out and to seek one's alliances elsewhere. The need for such alliances, however, is not questioned. The multiplied force of one egoist is required to fend off the multiplied force of other egoists, and the situation of the lone egoist would be precarious, to say the least.¹¹³ Finally, Stirner concludes that despite his many suggestions of the invasiveness of man, the human being governed by his natural impulses would be no more erratic than are other animals.¹¹⁴ "No sheep, no dog, exerts itself to become a 'proper sheep, a proper dog'; no beast has its essence appear to it as a task, as a concept that it has to realize. It realizes itself in living it-

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 307-308.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 313.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 330-332.

self out, in dissolving itself, passing away. It does not ask to be or to become anything other than it is."¹¹⁵ So, too, should it be with men, because every man can say, "I am a 'true man' from the start".¹¹⁶ Men can only be what they are. They cannot become what they are not:¹¹⁷

Yes, 'if men were what they should be, could be, if all men were rational, all loved each other as brothers,' then it would be a paradisaical life.--All right, men are as they should be, can be. What should they be? Surely not more than they can be! And what can they be? Not more, again, than they--can, than they have the competence, the force, to be. But this they really are, because what they are not they are incapable of being; for to be capable means--really to be. One is not capable for anything that one really is not; one is not capable of anything that one does not really do. Could a man blinded by a cataract see?¹¹⁸

This passage contains one of the most strongly worded justifications for the status quo ever penned, and yet it appears in the heart of a work regarded by some as the most revolutionary ever written.¹¹⁹ The plea of The Ego and His Own, however, is not merely one for things to remain as they are, but for men to recognize their individual competences

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 331-332.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 327.

¹¹⁷Stirner's position here is very much akin to that of Hobbes.

¹¹⁸Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 328-329.

¹¹⁹James Huneker wrote: "It is dangerous in every sense of the word--to socialism, to politicians, to hypocrisy" (Egoists: A Book of Supermen, p. 371).

and to assert them. This, as Stirner claims, is meant neither as a call to duty nor as a moralistic theory of development, but as an empirical statement of fact.¹²⁰ And yet, beneath this claim lies a fundamental contradiction, for men are not, as Stirner contends, as they ought to be. Stirner's egoism transcends both the vulgar egoism of the bourgeois mind and the altruism of Christianity. Both are religious ideals which rob the individual of his will. The avaricious man is as much a victim of mammon as the Christian is of God.¹²¹ Where the forces of realism and humanism meet, there emerges a new and transcendent egoism,¹²² egoism in agreement with itself, self-conscious egoism.¹²³ Thus, out of this opposition arose the negation of the negation--the abstract 'I'.¹²⁴ The egoist is governed by neither the spirit nor the flesh, but is of the spirit and of the flesh.¹²⁵

¹²⁰Stirner argues that one need not tell a man to use his force--it is not a task but a fact--he always does so. He writes: "To use his force is not man's calling and task, but is his act, real and extant at all times. Force is only a simple word for manifestation of force" (The Ego and His Own, p. 327).

¹²¹Ibid., p. 60.

¹²²Max Stirner, The False Principle of Our Education, or Humanism and Realism, pp. 11-28.

¹²³Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 272, and 258.

¹²⁴Stirner does not conceive of it as such. See below, pp. 135-136.

¹²⁵Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 333.

He fights his carnal desires with the spirit and his spiritual cravings with the flesh, remaining forever the dualist--not creator but only mediator. "What the Christian does in one direction," writes Marx, "Saint Max does in both. He is the chretien 'composé', he once again reveals himself as the perfect Christian."¹²⁶

Stirner's creative activity amounts to little more than rationality, and this, according to Marx,

in the good resolution to understand himself, and indeed to understand himself wholly or to be rational, to understand himself as a 'complete, whole being', as a being different from 'his momentary being', and even in direct contradiction to the kind of being he is 'momentarily'.¹²⁷

Yet, this true egoist, this abstract 'I', is an ideal unattainable by the great majority of individuals, for they are not now rational and, consequently, argues Stirner transfixed by his own logic, it is doubtful that they ever can be.¹²⁸ Men are not in any sense equal and certainly not in their rationality. Stirner himself had precluded any such possibility:

. . . the born shallow-pates indisputably form the most numerous class of men. And why, indeed, should not the same distinctions show

¹²⁶ Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 284.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 329.

themselves in the human species that are unmistakable in every species of beasts? The more gifted and the less gifted are to be found everywhere.¹²⁹

The abolition of the state, however, requires this belief in social rationality. For, unless all men turn equally into themselves and seek fulfilment in themselves, there would, given Stirner's negativistic and bourgeois assumptions, ensue a universal reign of rapacity and slaughter. Recognizing this, and desirous of his own independence, the egoist, according to Stirner, would be neither master nor slave.¹³⁰ This assertion entails in itself a reversion to that very illogicality which he criticizes so harshly in the religionists, *i.e.*, the belief that because something is thinkable it is possible and it ought to be.¹³¹ Only that which is, according to Stirner's own logic, can be, and philosophical egoism is just that--philosophical egoism and it therefore cannot exist in reality. Thus, Stirner, in effect, lapses into the very form of religiosity and ideological fallacy for which he criticizes the writings of Bauer and Feuerbach. He has attempted to abstract the individual from that whole myriad of socio-economic, cultural, and historical

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 325.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 305.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 330.

factors which provide the material basis of his experience, and set forth the true, empirical or scientific individual, devoid of all social and environmental ties. In so doing, he has attempted the impossible and has read into the universal nature of man highly particularistic attributes, characteristic of man in particular societies at particular times. If this were all, Stirner's work, like that of Hobbes, would stand as a consistent statement of the social relations amongst one type of men, in one type of society, at one point in history.¹³² Stirner, however, was not so fortunate, for he held two totally different and mutually exclusive world views, the resultant interaction of which could not but lead to a collision of the most violent and negativistic sort.¹³³

Thus, while numerous anarchists and historians of anarchist thought have viewed Stirner's theory as an acceptable statement of some of their most fundamental beliefs, others have expressed equally grave doubts about its desirability, let alone feasibility. The critics are equally

¹³²A most convincing case for the specifically bourgeois nature of Hobbesian man has been made by C.B. Macpherson. See "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man", in Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval, pp. 238-250, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke, and Macpherson's Introduction to Hobbes's Leviathan, pp. 9-63.

¹³³See above, pp. 127-129.

divided. Ranging from Huneker's extreme assessment of The Ego and His Own as "the most revolutionary work ever written"¹³⁴ to Marx and Engels's assertion that despite his rousing rhetoric Stirner was but the theorist of the petit-bourgeois in disguise¹³⁵ are fleeting and rapidly contrasting images. On the one hand, there are dark and gruesome reflections of Stirner's call to self-consciousness and egoistic realization, and hence to self-assertion and to force,¹³⁶ which, given his narrow and exclusionist conception of ownership,¹³⁷ cannot but lead to the Hobbesian war of all against all. On the other hand, intermittent glimpses may be caught of a self-contained and self-dissolving egoist who stands undaunted and alone, much like the monument of Shelley's Ozymandias.¹³⁸ The visions, which themselves differ considerably, are the products of separate and mutually exclusive sets of social arrangements, and in them lies the key

¹³⁴Huneker, Egoists: A Book of Supermen, p. 350.

¹³⁵Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 289.

¹³⁶Zenker is clearly misinformed about Stirner when he writes: "That the theory of Anarchism is not merely a systematic incitement to robbery and murder. . . . Proudhon and Stirner, the men who have laid down the basis of the new doctrine, never once preached force" (Anarchism, p. 306).

¹³⁷See above, pp. 128-129.

¹³⁸Percy Blythe Shelley, "Ozymandias", in Newell F. Ford (ed.), The Poetical Works of Shelley, p. 366.

to the confusion and ambiguity which pervades Stirner's thought.¹³⁹ Its essence lies not in the subordination of the one to the other, but in the negation of each. As Marx and Engels put it, "His sole service--rendered against his will and without his knowledge--was that he expressed the aspiration of the German petty bourgeois of today whose aim it is to become bourgeois."¹⁴⁰

Stirner does not, as Plekhanov and Hook,¹⁴¹ for example, suggest, merely drop the one ontology in favour of the other. Sidney Hook holds that

In preaching a moral philosophy upon the basis of egoism, Stirner is really coming to the defence of the petty-bourgeois proprietor who sees what he produces, interprets the whole process of production on the basis of its local character, and regards both the development of large industry and the organization of workmen as a conspiracy to deprive him of the legitimate fruits of his labour. Despite its Bohemian flavour, Stirner's thought reveals that pains-taking and touchy sensitiveness to what belongs solely and exclusively to the individual which is generally associated with the peasant proprietor or shopkeeper.¹⁴²

It is not the critics so much as Stirner who saw most clearly the terror in his words. He himself recognized, at least

¹³⁹See above, pp. 127-129.

¹⁴⁰Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p. 462.

¹⁴¹Plekhanoff, Anarchism and Socialism, pp. 50-51; and Hook, From Hegel to Marx, pp. 183-185.

¹⁴²Hook, From Hegel to Marx, pp. 183-184.

in part, that in the conflict of his visions lay the potential holocaust. The underlying ethos of the work is forbidding, as can be seen in the following words of Stirner:

Do I write out of love to men? No, I write because I want to procure for my thoughts an existence in the world; and, even if I foresaw that these thoughts would deprive you of your rest and your peace, and even if I saw the bloodiest wars and the fall of many generations springing up from this seed of thought--I would nevertheless scatter it. Do with it what you will and can, that is your affair and does not trouble me. You will perhaps have only trouble, combat, and death from it, very few will draw joy from it. If your weal lay at my heart, I should act as the church did in withholding the Bible from the laity, or Christian governments, which make it a sacred duty for themselves to 'protect the common people from bad books'.¹⁴³

Out of Stirner's theory emerges the abstract 'I'-- a species whose existence Stirner has explicitly precluded.¹⁴⁴ Stirner has re-entered the void.¹⁴⁵ It is the bliss of desultory egoism of which he writes. His bourgeois ontology demands a state; his anarchistic ethic precludes it. Taken together, Stirner's ego is dissolved in the nihilistic flight of the abstract 'I'.

¹⁴³Stirner, The Ego and His Own, p. 296.

¹⁴⁴See above, p. 134.

¹⁴⁵Stirner, The Ego and His Own, pp. 339-340.

V

CONCLUSION:

ANARCHISM AS A REJECTION OF BOURGEOIS INDIVIDUALISM

It has been the intention of this work to demonstrate through an examination of the writings of Kropotkin and Tucker, the leading theoreticians and proponents of communist anarchism and individualist anarchism respectively, that these two schools differ less in spirit and underlying commitment than in their suggested prescriptive measures, and that each represents a complete and decisive break with the prevailing liberal tradition. Thus, while each theorist views man as an individual, neither views him as a discrete and atomic entity, necessarily engaged in hostile and antagonistic relations with his fellow men. For neither theorist is man's basic nature competitive and invasive. Each, in his own separate and mutually exclusive way, rejects the Hobbesian vision of man--a vision which pervades classical liberalism and precludes the jettisoning of capitalist property rights from its contemporary liberal-democratic form. For this reason anarchism, be it in its communist or individualist

form, is able, in all consistency, to postulate the positive doctrine of a free society premised upon the principles of voluntarism and mutual aid, and does not find itself in the dilemma of liberal-democratic theory, which postulates one set of ontological assumptions regarding the preconditions for human development and fulfilment and then finds itself hopelessly entangled in another set of such assumptions--assumptions which require a totally different and mutually exclusive set of social arrangements from the first. Prescriptive and not merely descriptive, anarchist theory is able to transcend the undemocratic restrictions of the capitalist market, an end which a justificatory theory cannot even attempt to achieve. What others (i.e., liberals and socialists) take to be irresponsibility on the part of the anarchist stems from his distinctive assumptions of unparalleled optimism about the human essence.

When viewed in this light, it may be seen that anarchism is not a negative doctrine. Even in his criticism of contemporary society, the anarchist seeks not the destruction of all social relations but merely those which preclude the individual from engaging on an equal basis with his fellow human beings in those activities which distinguish him from other animals and define his humanness. Both schools argue that ultimately capitalist

greed will succumb to the greater forces of mutualism, for, given the choice, rational men will always choose liberty over wealth. And it is upon this postulate that these anarchist theorists clearly differ from the liberals with whom they share in a fundamental commitment to the postulate of equality of right. Thus, while Locke moved from an initial position of equality and freedom to the justification of a class-based state, Kropotkin and Tucker both reject the notion of subverting individual liberty to material gain. For each theorist the liberal conception of man's natural and avaricious proclivity to unlimited material acquisition and power over others is both unfounded and repugnant. The Hobbesian war of all against all is, for neither theorist, the natural condition of man.

Rational behaviour is, for each, co-operative behaviour. It is consensual behaviour. And consensus, each argues, requires the postulate of equality in addition to that of liberty. It demands a recognition of the other, of his rights, and of one's own duties and obligations. And while the moral basis for this recognition differed considerably from one theorist to another--some subscribing to natural rights theory, others to social idealism, and still others to pragmatic egoism--all of the anarchists mentioned in this work ac-

cepted such a recognition and viewed it not merely as a moral perspective but as the basis of rational human activity. To do otherwise was to engage in abnormal or deviant behaviour, behaviour which was socially unacceptable and condemned by the community. Such invasive or criminal behaviour was, for both Kropotkin and Tucker, epitomized by the exploitative capitalist market, an economy which had transformed free men into wage-slaves.

Thus, while these two theorists adhered to very different conceptions of the ideal society, Kropotkin rejecting the morality of the market with its notion of quid pro quo and arguing that need and productive capacities are totally unrelated, and Tucker, committed to a genuine policy of laissez-faire, believing that in the end competition would be the great leveller, each man rejected the notion of individual capital accumulation and the perpetuation of a class-based state--a fact which makes ludicrous the claim that anarchism differs but in degree from the liberal writings of an Adam Smith, or a Thomas Paine, or even a Herbert Spencer. While anarchism sets out from assumptions shared with bourgeois individualism (i.e., that each man is an individual self-owner and has the right to enter contractual relations with other men), it clearly rejects the elitist bias of liberal theory with its justification of the class state

and remains committed to its initially democratic assumptions.

Having thus demonstrated the internal consistency and democratic claims of the two theories under consideration, it has been argued that Stirnerian theory is inconsistent, subscribing not to an anarchist morality solely, but adhering simultaneously to both an anarchist and a bourgeois ethic--two ethics which lead to two separate and mutually exclusive sets of social arrangements, stemming as they do from two different sets of ontological assumptions regarding the human essence and two totally different notions of human rationality. For while liberalism is, without doubt, one of the ideological progenitors of anarchism, it is not the sole one. Socialism, too, has its claims. The anarchists themselves recognized this and viewed themselves not as liberals but as libertarian socialists. If socialists rejected this, their reasons were organizational or tactical rather than theoretical, for the anarchists like their socialist progenitors accepted the notion of equality as a precondition of liberty and rejected as invasive all class differentials in wealth and power.

Stirner, in contrast, recognized no such principle. The notion of equality in any form was repugnant to him, for it threatened the very essence of his subjective ego-

ism. And yet it was the acceptance of this principle which allowed for the possibility of an anarchist society, or, in the words of G.D.H. Cole, "The Anarchists . . . were anarchists because they did not believe in an anarchical world".¹ Anarchy is order,² and that order is based on the recognition of 'the other'. He (or she) is an individual with equal rights, equal duties, and equal obligations. For Stirner, however, 'the other' is but an object to be used--to be made one's property. Otherwise, he is a threat to one's own ego, for men are necessarily opposed to one another. Unlike the limited Tuckerian notion of egoism, the Stirnerian knows no bounds, it is total and unadulterated. In a tone strangely reminiscent of Hobbes, Stirner contends that all relations, if stripped of their hypocritical altruism, are relations of war. Unlimited and unending, men's desires are totally subjective. There is no distinction between liberty and licence, for liberty short of licence is no liberty at all. It is but a phantom, a spook which steals one's ownness in the name of a greater humanity, and must be destroyed.

Yet, as it has been argued in the preceding chap-

¹As quoted in Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), The Anarchists, p. 9.

²Herbert Read, Anarchy & Order: Essays in Politics, pp. 35-58.

ters, it is this distinction, this recognition of equality of right, and its essential predominance over all other considerations, which distinguishes anarchism from all other schools of political theory and makes it prescriptive message the most democratic of all theories. Seldom, it has been argued, has there been a school of thought which stressed so forcefully the notion of 'solidarity' and 'fraternity'. Individual happiness and social wellbeing are inseparable to both schools of anarchist theory. Gide and Rist sum up the case well when they write:

Hobbes's society, or Stirner's, where the hand of every one is against his brother, fill the anarchists with horror. To their mind that is a faithful picture of society as it exists today. In reality, however, man is a social being. The individual and society are correlative: it is impossible to imagine the one without thinking of the other.³

The distinction between the two--the Stirnerian and the anarchist theories--rests, however, much more deeply than this. It lies in the basically possessive nature of Stirnerian theory, which, like Hobbesian individualism, tends to view men as individual entities, or more correctly, as atomic units, engaged in constant

³Charles Gide and Charles Rist, A History of Economic Doctrine from the Time of the Physiocrats to the Present Day, p. 625.

warfare and collisions, seeking to satiate their entirely subjective and at times infinite, and hence insatiable, desires. Since these ends are not merely in the field of human development and self-realization, but often require the accumulation of material goods and power over others, Stirnerian man finds himself hopelessly embroiled in the Hobbesian war of all against all, and in a milieu of perpetual scarcity in relation to unlimited desires, his only pleasure lies in the solitary exaltation of subjective egoism. It is more truly anarchy (in the sense of chaos), not anarchism.

Thus, Stirnerian theory differs qualitatively from that of the anarchists under consideration in this work. It has accepted a bourgeois morality while rejecting the social arrangements essential for stable intercourse in such a bourgeois society. Stirnerian man shares more with Hobbes's restless, acquisitive, and generally contemptible, being than with Ibsen's irresponsible Peer Gynt. Neither, however, is the common man of classical anarchist theory--the man whose natural rationality dictates the recognition of the other and the acceptance of the postulates of equality and liberty.

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This list does not include all of the works written by Peter Kropotkin, but only those of direct use in the preparation of this paper.

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