Žižek prescribes for this confrontation may be useful and worthwhile, as it allows us to respond to anti-Semitism, for example, by saying that ''the anti-Semitic idea of Jew has nothing to do with Jews; the ideological figure of a Jew is a way to stitch up the inconsistency of our own ideological system''; at the same time, it seems to preclude the efficacy of any reference to the way Jews really are, or the way the economy really is, or the real state of the ecosystem.[53]

Perhaps it is possible to say that the second Bush administration's serene will to increase arsenic levels in drinking water has nothing to do with the effect of this chemical on human bodies, but is merely a way of making laissez-faire ideology secure; however, if there is no effective appeal to facts (the ''real'' with a lowercase ''r''), then it is useless for me to point to objective studies of the toxic hazards posed by arsenic, or even to point to the complicity of the administration with corporate polluters. Thus, Žižek castigates as naïve Noam Chomsky's supposed belief ''that all we need to know are the facts'': ''I don't think that merely 'knowing the facts' can really change people's perceptions.''[54] A scientific account of the effects of arsenic on human bodies, for Žižek, could not constitute an effective counter to Bush's ideological narrative, for ideologies can incorporate any mere facts.

In so arguing, Žižek seems to privilege his own theoretically informed analyses over ''undertheorized'' references to matters of fact. This leaves Žižekian ideology-critique open to a question: how can we know when the analyst has reached the kernel of the Real within the ideological dream? In other words, how is it possible to differentiate clearly between the sort of analysis that really does point to the ideological function of some discourse and the kind

[53] Ibid., 48-49.

[54] Žižek, ''I Am a Fighting Atheist: Inteview With Slavoj Žižek,'' Bad Subjects, no. 59 (February 2002), http://eserver.org/bs/59/zizek.html (accessed 14 July 2003).

Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation

Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Politics

Jesse Cohn

2006

to deconstruction, and generously acknowledging literature's transformative ''Utopian functions'' as well as its recuperative ''ideological'' content, Jameson nevertheless returns to what Craig Owens refers to as ''the Marxist master narrative''—in Jameson's words, ''the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity''—which Owens regards as ''only one version among many of the modern narrative of mastery,'' culminating in ''mankind's progressive exploitation of the Earth.'' For antirepresentationalists like Owens, Jameson's calls for a ''reconquest of certain forms of representation'' signify nothing less than an attempt at ''the rehabilitation of the entire social project of modernity itself,'' a cowardly retreat from postmodern critique.[51]

Even more boldly, Slavoj Žižek has sought to defend and renew the notion of ''ideology'' as false consciousness, this time by reference to Lacan's anti- realist conception of ''the Real'' as ''a hard kernel, a leftover which persists and cannot be reduced to a universal play of illusory meaning'': ''The difference between Lacan and 'naïve realism' is that for Lacan, the only point at which we approach this hard kernel of the Real is indeed the dream.''[52] In effect, Žižek tries to have it both ways: to be an antirepresentationalist (i.e., antirealist, antiessentialist) and a representationalist at the same time.

This does not seem a happy proposition. Excised from Žižek's system is any possibility of an appeal to ''reality as it is'' or the ''objective'' for an alternative to ideological subjectivity: no objective experience can offer any ''irreducible resistance to the ideological construction.'' Instead, ''the only way to break the power of our ideological dream is to confront the Real of our desire which announces itself in this dream.'' The sort of ideology critique that

[51] Jameson, Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 10-11, 17, 19, 299; Craig Owens, ''The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism,'' in The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1983), 66.

[52] Slavoj Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 47.

becoming indistinguishable from the movies''), paving the way for the postmodern assertion that ''real life'' is itself a movie.[48]

After a certain point, Marxism found itself with only two options left. It could embrace its own dissolution in the Baudrillardian ''liquidation of all referentials,'' the death of any notion of a material reality apart from ideology, and therefore also of the notion of a ''false consciousness'' that it could edify;[49] otherwise, Marxism would have to somehow insist on its right to correct the false consciousness, re-erecting the old representationalist distinctions between true and false that now elicit incredulity. The first route, of course, is the one taken by Jean Baudrillard, for whom depth simply is surface and the representationalist pretense of a Gramsci merely the same old pedantry. Here, as Steven Best writes, the ''inversion of illusion and reality'' theorized by the classic concept of ideology is ''radicalized, finalized, pushed to its highest degree'' as ''simulation devours the real—the representational structure and the space it depends on—and, like a grinning Cheshire cat, leaves behind nothing but commutating signs, self-referring simulacra which feign a relation to an obsolete real.''[50]

Taking the other fork in the road, Frederic Jameson attempts to get away from the ''representational narrative'' of conventional historiography while privileging his own preferred brand of historicism, for which ''interpretation . . . consists in rewriting a given text in terms of a particular interpretive master code'' that demands to be recognized ''as the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation.'' For all his exaggerated attempts at flexibility and all-inclusiveness, incorporating and assimilating seemingly every methodological trend from archetypal criticism

[48] Ibid., 126; Jean Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulations, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1.

[49] Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulations, 2.

[50] Steven Best, ''The Commodification of Reality and the Reality of Commodification: Jean Baudrillard and Postmodernism,'' in Baudrillard: A Critical Reader, ed. Douglas Kellner (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 53.

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wise, they are simply confirmed by the everyday experience that they structure in advance.

To summarize:

1. Representational practices impose an appearance of sameness on the infinity of differences, giving rise to

2. the processes whereby diffuse social power is consolidated into its macroscopic institutional forms, producing

3. the phenomena of authority and hierarchy, which

4. blanket the visible universe with representations of sameness, which

5. underwrite the hypostasization of this representable sameness into the nature of things in themselves, which

6. reinforces the representationalist assumptions which

7. justify the dominant representational practices.

This is the self-confirming cycle through which the social order is reproduced.

MARXISM AND ANTIREPRESENTATIONALISM

Contemporary post-structuralism thus comes to conclusions that look rather similar on a practical level to those reached by the Frankfurt School, which ultimately inverted the Hegelian dialectic in favor of nonidentity, extending a negation of the principle of exchange-value—''the levelling principle of abstraction'' for which ''what was different is equalized''—into a nearly total abandonment of the universalism on which Marxism once depended, now seen as ''totalitarian.''[47] At the same time, their history of the triumph of exchange-value saw representations as coming to subsume and dominate material presence (''Real life is

[47] Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1997), 12, 11, 166.

guardism, the pretense of a revolutionary party to possess a theory (a representation of the world) that justifies it in speaking for (representing) a group (the people or the proletariat, conceived as a homogenous unit) conceived as universal (representing humanity as a whole). Inevitably, this arrangement, if successful, operates in the manner of every other patronizing practice: it transfers power from the represented to the representatives, creating a new ruling class, new normalizing institutions, and so on. Once more, banal narrative unity is imposed on the unpredictable course of events; once more, the creative power or Spinozan potentia of the multitude is alienated and confined in the potestas or governing power that it creates; once more, authority is reinvented and reinstated. Authority itself, in the sense proposed by Alan Ritter—a cause for obedience to commands that is not in the content of the command but in the person or position from which the command emanates[45] —is perhaps merely a result of these processes, as are the phenomena of class and hierarchy in general.

If, in this light, all social and historical existence comes to seem permeated by a carceral character, despite the inevitable (but fruitless) phenomena of ''resistance,'' this is because the critique of representation, in making power and its concentration coextensive with language and its rhetorical function, establishes the total ubiquity of both. Nietzsche's image of language as a ''prison-house'' returns with a vengeance. What Guy Debord identified as the premise peculiar to the modern consumerist ''society of the spectacle''—that ''that which appears is good, that which is good appears''—is revealed as the watchword of every society, as all establish the same ''monopoly of appearances,'' the same primary narcissism.[46] Only in periods of breakdown can dominant representations be challenged or seen as representations at all; other-

[45] Alan Ritter, Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 66.

[46] Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle, trans. Black & Red (Detroit: Black & Red, 1977), 1.12.

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tify themselves with the institution as a whole, to see its interests as sufficiently identical with their own. They, in turn, have been recruited to the service of the institution through processes that combine all three modes of representational practice: they have been persuaded that their interests are thus-and-such (they have been labeled), that the institution is identical with their interests (they have been identified), and that they will cede certain decision-making prerogatives to the institution, which will make those decisions in the best interests of the whole to which they now belong (they have been patronized).

What is true on the scale of the institution is true at every other scale. As the ultimate total institution, the State—whether it is a feudal kingdom, built on the premise that the king speaks for everyone through the authority of the divine, whose agent he is, or a modern electoral democracy, whose representatives claim to do the business of their constituents—is a permanent practice of patronizing representation: it is the clinic from which the patients are never discharged.[44] Even more absolute and far-reaching in its representational power, to such an extent that it cannot be called an institution, is the cultural community from which the power of the state ultimately derives; its customs can and do dictate the special and permanent patronization of entire sectors of society—women, for instance.

Every effort in history to transform State and society has merely reproduced the system of representation and power with superficial differences.

The same patronizing relationship present in the practice of an arrogant psychoanalyst toward a patient, expressed on the political level as the pretense through which the king speaks for God or parliament for the citizens, is translated into revolutionary van-

[44] Thus, Nietzsche calls democracies ‘‘quarantine arrangements to combat that ancient pestilence, lust for tyranny’’ (Human, All Too Human: A Book For Free Spirits, trans. R. J. Hollingdale [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 383).

Representationalist essentialism, in this sense, is part and parcel of what William Spanos calls the ''metaphysical'' project of the West, drawing on the root meanings of the Greek words metá-táphysiká (μετ τυ σικ); that is, essentialist thinking wishes and claims to occupy a vantage point situated ''after or beyond or above (μετ) the (τ) immediate processes of being (υσικ).''[42] This dualistic way of thinking, driven as much by a fear of death and a hatred of the body as it is by the will to control, stands accused of a whole host of philosophical, moral, and political crimes: the will to forget differences and impose sameness at all costs has issued in genocide and ecocide.[43]

THE ETHICAL CONTENT OF ANTIREPRESENTATIONALISM

Antirepresentationalists, with varying emphases and in different formulations, have objected to representational practices (labeling, patronizing, identifying, and focalizing), and they have rejected the ontological premises of representationalism (naturalism, naïve realism, reductivism, and transcendentalism).

Labeling practices, as documented by Erving Goffman, Howard S. Becker, Michel Foucault, R.D. Laing, and others, are accused of producing the dismal world of juridical, medical, and military ''total institutions,'' the normalizing gulags in which deviants are interned. Of course, these could not function without the patronizing representation that deputizes a representative to speak for the deviant, who is represented as incapable of or unwilling to speak for his or her own interests. The normalizing institution depends even more fundamentally on the identifying practices that induce the men and women who do the work of the institution to iden-

[42] Spanos, Repetitions, 195.

[43] Spanos, Heidegger and Criticism: Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Destruction (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 139-40.

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This book is dedicated to Rosa.

Introduction: The General Form of the Crisis of Representation

> A single but complex issue defines the representational crisis. It involves the assumption that . . . there is a world out there (the real) that can be captured by a ''knowing'' author . . .
>
> —Norman K. Denzin, Interpretive Ethnography

> Consider just two of the social practices in which representation functions centrally: literature and democratic politics. Both have operated historically as practices of exclusion. If representation . . . always presupposes a distance, then . . . literary representations and representative democracy always seem to extend the distance under the illusion of narrowing it.
>
> —Santiago Colás, ''What's Wrong With Representation?''

> The whole system of representative government is an immense fraud resting on this fiction: that the executive and legislative bodies elected by universal suffrage of the people must or even can possibly represent the will of the people.
>
> —Mikhail Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy

socialists falsely assume that their rhetorical appeals will reach the workers to whom they are directed (since, on this account, they occupy the same ''real world'').[39] They imagine that ''worker'' is a ready-made identity, a subject position that workers already occupy: that is, they take for granted the givenness of precisely that which must be socially constructed.

Moreover, where socialism succeeds, its identitarian imagination, which sees in so many different individuals the single identity, ''workers,'' reproduces what it assumes: reductivism imposes oppressive sameness on the plural. Here, representationalism is central to what Adorno and Horkheimer saw as the lethal dialectic of Enlightenment. The assumption, as David Harvey puts it, ''that there existed a single correct mode of representation'' undergirds technocratic ambitions: ''the world could be controlled and rationally ordered if we could only picture and represent it rightly.''[40] Controlling the creativity of readers and texts, ignoring the potential plenitude of meanings and the situatedness of writing and reading, representationalism is that ''monologism'' that, as Bakhtin warned us, ''denies that there exists outside of it another consciousness, with the same rights, and capable of responding on an equal footing,'' and so reifies everyone and everything: ''Monologue pretends to be the last word.''[41]

The wish to have the last word, to situate oneself at the end of, and therefore outside of, an ongoing process in which uncertainty and plurality preside, betrays a certain fear of change and temporality in general.

[39] Burke, ''Auscultation, Creation, and Revision,'' in Extensions of the Burkeian System (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 64.

[40] David Harvey, The Condition Of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 27.

[41] Mikhail Bakhtin, quoted in Tzvetan Todorov, Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 107.

as ''what Bourdieu calls the 'doxic' relation to reality . . . [i.e.,] that relation in which social determinations are simply taken for granted as uncontestable realities''; this relation, in turn, ''is the foundation of practices that reproduce precisely that relation, and with it the corresponding reality.'' In short, naturalist assumptions readily lead to exactly ''such well known phenomena as 'labeling,' in which individuals treated in function of the label they have been assigned learn to produce the behavior that corresponds to their label, thereby justifying and reproducing the initial definition under which they labor.''[37] Naturalistic conceptions, accordingly, are embraced by people who positively seek out such static, preformed identities, as Sartre argues in his existential analysis of anti-Semitism: by imagining that Jews are animated by an evil essence, the anti-Semite avoids questions about ''the Good,'' and ultimately fantasizes himself as well as Jews as objects rather than subjects, en-soi instead of pour-soi.[38]

Ignoring the social construction of subjects is perhaps only slightly more damaging, from an antiessentialist viewpoint, than ignoring the social construction of reality. Naïve realism means ignoring the creative role of subjects in co-constituting an experiential world through logos, and therefore obscures the potential multiplicity and plenitude of the real. As such, naïve realist preconceptions can be held partially responsible for the failure of socialist politics. As Burke admonished the Communist Party orthodoxy of his day, ''a reader of the New York Herald-Tribune finds that an entirely different world occurred on a given date than if he had read the Daily Worker—which suggests that there might as reasonably have been a dozen other 'real' worlds for that same day''; by ignoring this plurality (via a naïve faith in the self- evidence of workers' ''real situation'' and ''true interests''),

[37] Andrew Feenberg, Lukacs, Marx and the Sources of Critical Theory (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), 197.

[38] Jean-Paul Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 39, 44, 54.

IN OUR TIME, ACCORDING TO FREDERIC JAMESON, WESTERN THOUGHT HAS FALLEN under the shadow of an all-encompassing ''crisis of representation'' that calls into question the relationships between our concepts and the truths they are meant to denote, our images and the realities they are supposed to depict, our institutions and the interests they are supposed to serve.[1] The broad scope and significance of the crisis are implicit in its central term.

Concerns about representation cross disciplinary boundaries, straddling the realms of the symbolic and the practical, since ''to represent'' means both to stand for, as a symbol stands for a thing symbolized, and to speak for, as an elected official speaks for a constituency. It can be articulated as the denial that representation is possible, or that it is what it purports to be: so Richard Rorty's ''antirepresentationalism'' denies, in theory, that discourse can refer to something nondiscursive. Antirepresentationalism can also be articulated, as Gilles Deleuze suggests, as a prescriptive opposition to practices of representing. While the first kind of claim is concerned with knowledge and the second with action, the two inevitably overlap: if you no longer accept ''the notion of knowledge as accurate representation,'' then you will oppose practices that appeal to the authority of such knowledge as erroneous or malicious. Thus, the critique of representation appears simultaneously in ''two registers''—the ''epistemic'' and the ''political.''[2]

It is not for nothing that Jonathan Arac has pointed to this issue as ''one of the most vexed areas in contemporary theory.'' Postmodern critiques of representation extend modernist suspicion of

[1] Frederic Jameson, introduction to The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, by Jean-François lyotard, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), viii-xii.

[2] Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 6; Todd May, The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 97.

representational art and literature by questioning whether even high-modernist abstraction ever, in fact, constituted a successful exit from representation.[3] At the same time, antirepresentationalists have turned modernist attacks on ''mimesis'' into an assault on the representationalist underpinnings of interpretation.[4] Not only has this undermined the claims of social researchers to produce a scientific discourse that accurately represents its object, it also places the representative status of any political discourse in question.

To represent, it would appear, is to dominate; there is no escape from representation; ergo, there is no end to domination. Here, the moral zeal animating the postwar generation of French theorists converges, paradoxically, with the prevailing cynicism of the post-sixties era, for the critique of representation produces cynical conclusions incompatible with its own ethical premises. As Nancy Fraser has argued, the position that sees representations as indistinguishable from ''power plays'' puts in question the very possibility, let alone the content, of any kind of ethical engagement: ''How, after all, can one argue against the possibility of warranted claims while one- self making such claims as that sexism exists and is unjust?'' In this way, the very ''opposition between totalitarianism and democracy'' has been placed under the sign of radical doubt.[5]

This reluctance to defend democracy and discourses of human rights as universal norms has raised alarms. While antihumanist critiques of representation have usefully called attention to the possibility that even the most seemingly transparent representational systems, in speaking for a multitude, entail the silencing of

[3] Jonathan Arac, ed., Postmodernism and Politics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xx, xxii.

[4] Gregory Ulmer, ''The Object of Post-Criticism,'' in The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post- modern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 83.

[5] Nancy Fraser, Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 181, 184.

ism entailed in representationalism attempts to transcend the flux of shifting appearances for the security of absolutes, to turn fluid phenomena into fixed nouns, to leave the world of becomings for a world of static being. Many a philosophy of becoming, such as Aristotle's, or of history, such as Hegel's, may conceal a teleology in which all becoming— indeed, history itself—is representationally neutralized or overcome.[36]

ANTIESSENTIALIST CRITIQUES OF REPRESENTATIONALISM

Since the premises of representationalism are essentialist, they are typically critiqued from an antiessentialist position: antiessentialists aim to demonstrate the epistemic error and ethical wrong of essentialism.

First of all, it has been argued that naturalist assumptions obscure the reality of social construction, and therefore that they obscure creative possi- bilities for social practices—the potential plenitude of viable alternative so- cial arrangements. It goes without saying that essentialist predictions about behavior as read off from a purportedly intrinsic, ''natural'' character—from a feminist attribution of a good and generous nature to women to a white supremacist attribution of a lazy and violent nature to black people—are frequently translated into moral and political prescriptions, which are then imposed on real subjects as a Procrustean bed (so that they can be punished for bearing the stigma of a negative description or for failing to live up to the ''ideal'' descriptions—or both); to the extent that these imposed identities are subsequently reproduced in the behavior of these subjects, this is taken as confirmation of the naturalness of the representation. Andrew Feenberg identifies this phenomenon

[36] Stephen Best and Douglas Kellner, Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 83, 99.

Representationalism as Transcendentalism

It is precisely because the totality of the real is infinite that enclosure, the drawing of a frame around an object, is constitutive of representation. In other words, there is no representation without the exclusion of something from the scope of the representation—and representations necessarily exclude infinitely more than they include. At the same time, they depend for their intelligibility on an illusion of closure: in order that the signs that make up the representation be taken to stand for something definite, there must be the sense that the context in which these signs will acquire this definite meaning is present and ready to hand, whereas in fact this required context is endless, spilling outside the finite bounds of the text, so that the meaning of the signs can never be fixed. In order to be taken as an intelligible and adequate token of the real, a representation must promise a ''transcendental signified''—an ultimate meaning located ''outside of the text,'' where in fact ''nothing is.''[33] In this sense, then, representationalism entails transcendentalism.

Transcendental thinking is closely tied up with the reductivist premises of representationalism as well. In order for representations to operate legitimately under those premises, it is important not only that reality be intrinsically composed of neatly sorted, self-contained items; in addition, the definition of each item must be stable, a ''fixed list of unchanging features.''[34]

This, too, is a form of essentialist thinking: representationalism assumes the existence of static essences—i.e., that ''despite developmental transformations in the outward appearance of their members and historical changes in human understandings of their nature, the essential sameness of the kind remains.''[35] The essential-

[33] Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 163, 158.

[34] George Lakoff and Marc Johnson, Philosophy In the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 557.

[35] Haslam, ''Natural Kinds,'' 294.

its multiplicity, this has led to an ethical quandary. If every representation is an act of domination, and if every statement, every interpretation, and every staking-out of a position means making a representation of things, then every work of art, every reading, and every political act, even those motivated by a wish to lend a voice to those who have been silenced, involves a further silencing. How, then, can we consistently think or practice in the absence of representation?

The fact is that we cannot and do not. The show goes on—but as Terry Eagleton remarks, ''the fact that 'everything just goes on' is the crisis.'' Thus, the sanguine tone assumed by anthropologists George Marcus and Michael Fischer, who describe the ''crisis of representation'' as a climate of ''uncertainty about adequate means of describing social reality'' in which ''older dominant frameworks are not so much denied . . . as suspended,'' masks a dangerous recognition: since there is ''nothing so grand to replace them,'' ethnographers' representational practices can and do go forward, but deprived of their justification.[6] Likewise, the literary scholar Elizabeth Ermarth is forced to acknowledge that her own critique of representation ''is written in the language of representation''—for what other language is there? To speak at all, it seems, is to speak in ''the language of representation'' in which ''we are inescapably engaged.''[7]

This epistemological inconsistency dangerously weakens critical arguments, leaving practices that have as their goal the transformation of society—and in every corner of the human sciences, many, if not all, remain committed to some vision of social transformation—ethically incoherent.

[6] Terry Eagleton, The Eagleton Reader, ed. Stephen Regan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 145; George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 8, 10.

[7] Elizabeth Ermarth, Sequel to History: Postmodernism and The Crisis of Representational Time (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 14, 37.

Thus, no less an exemplar of contemporary theory than Michel Foucault, whom Gilles Deleuze credits with having issued the definitive denunciation of ''the indignity of speaking for others,'' who declares that ''there is always something ludicrous in philosophical discourse when it tries, from the outside, to dictate to others, to tell them where their truth is and how to find it,'' is also to be found suggesting that the intellectual ''provide,'' for those engaged in struggle, ''a ramified, penetrative perception of the present . . . a topological and geological survey of the battlefield,'' i.e., to represent social reality.[8] Without such representations, how can political battles be fought?

Many have insisted that radical politics need only to be rethought, that its representationalist baggage can be jettisoned. However, the radicality of the challenge to radical thought and practice cannot be overstated. The rejection of representation, ultimately, is nothing less than the rejection of language and signification, the stuff of the social itself. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's account of ''the relation between signification and power,'' which largely collapses the difference between the two, is indicative of the depth and breadth of the antirepresentationalist mistrust for and even hostility toward signification in general. ''Knowledge'' and ''critique'' are equally prone to antirepresentationalist attacks. ''Where do you criticize from?'' demands Jean-François Lyotard. ''Don't you see that criticizing is still knowing, knowing better? That the critical relation still falls within the sphere of knowledge . . . and thus of the assumption

[8] Deleuze, quoted in Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 209; Foucault, The History of Sexuality, vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 9; Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon (Brighton, UK: Harvester Press, 1980), 62.

ways irreducibly unlike. A word is something that is meant to be repeated, to appear in one mouth and another; it marks something recurring, expected, not the unique, the once-only (therefore the monotheistic substitution of euphemisms for the dread Name of God: the Name must not be treated as a word at all).[31]

Since language is inherently reductive, inevitably referring to classes and categories rather than individuals, representation could never do justice to the represented reality if reality did not present itself as something that can be meaningfully treated in reductivist terms, through classes and categories.

Thus, closely related to the naturalist aspect of essentialism is a form of identitarian or reductionist thinking, in which the differences between members of a group may be ignored or forgotten in favor of their supposed sameness.

To assume that ''discrete categories'' objectively exist, and that they are separated by boundaries that are ''defined crisply by the core of necessary properties'' that constitute the being of the category, is yet another form of essentialism. This central sameness is taken to be the ''essence'' of the group, in light of which differences between members are held to be peripheral, unimportant, epiphenomenal, transitory, ''inessential.'' Essentialism in this sense reifies necessarily provisional, incomplete generalizations about changing phenomena into rigid categories that are taken as given, even as absolute, so that all things are taken to fit into these categories, and so that all members of the ''kind'' are taken to share in this ''core of necessary properties . . . without which something cannot be an instance of the kind.''[32]

[31] Derrida, Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 324-25.

[32] Haslam, ''Natural Kinds,'' 293-94.

assume that the objects of which they speak have distinct identities that preexist their articulation in language—that they possess ''inherent or intrinsic'' properties, and that these comprise ''a hidden structure underlying the superficial properties by which the kind is recognized.'' Thus, an essence is taken to be a substance that underlies all ''outward appearance,'' a thing existing entirely outside of the language we use to describe it, a self-contained presence prior to representation.[28]

Representationalism as Reductivism

To produce a believable representational description of reality requires that we forget the indescribable plenitude of reality. As Michel Serres reminds us, every object is ''infinitely discernible'': in order to describe reality with perfect accuracy, ''there would have to be a different word for every circle, for every symbol, for every tree, and for every pigeon; and a different word for yesterday, today, and tomorrow; and a different word according to whether he who perceives it is you or I, according to whether one of the two of us is angry, is jaundiced, and so on ad infinitum.''[29] The very fact that, as Henri Bergson points out, signs are always generalizations means that a universe of unique and unrepeatable moments is altogether beyond the reach of signification—or, as Serres would have it, that the imaginary element in words is a necessary consequence of their finitude.[30] The infinitely varied language that Serres asks us to imagine is oxymoronic: words, which obtain their effects through their difference from one another, always mark an imaginary same masking real otherness, the likening of what is al-

[28] Haslam, ''Natural Kinds,'' 294; Ugo Volli, ''Crisis of Representation, Crisis of Repre- sentational Semiotics?'' Semiotica 143, no. 1 (2003): 27-28.

[29] Michel Serres, Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy, ed. and trans. Josue V. Harari and David F. Bell (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 69.

[30] Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: The Modern Library, 1944), 167.

of power?''[9] How, then, can any- one resist, denounce, or even identify domination—aesthetically, hermeneutically, politically—without simultaneously enacting it? If a poststructuralist world is one in which domination and injustice always already inhabit the very logoi that denounce them, where can justice or freedom find purchase?

Of course, radical critiques of representation are not new to the scene; they have been with us from the days of ancient Eastern and Western thought, and debates over the aesthetic propriety of representation predate even the rise of avant-garde art (in, for example, the arguments over idolatry in Judaism, Islam, and Byzantine Christianity). What I want to consider here is the value of the earliest modern critique of political representation—that posed by anarchism from the mid-nineteenth century onward. In light of the problems created for political action by a critique of representation, we might ask how, for a century and a half, men and women engaged in the most profound contestation of representation managed nonetheless to organize and struggle en masse. Could it be, in the words of Chamsy Ojeili, that a study of anarchism reveals ''a way beyond these sorts of blockages,'' a road back to practice?[10]

A number of recent arguments—for instance, those of Todd May (The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 1994), Saul Newman (From Bakunin to Lacan, 2001), and Daniel Colson (Petit lexique philosophique de l'anarchisme de Proudhon à Deleuze, 2001)—have reached just this conclusion. For these writers, the dominant critical systems have been exhausted, and the anarchist tradition supplies a new one. This tradition is particularly congenial to the poststructuralism of Deleuze, Foucault, and

[9] Jean-François Lyotard, Driftworks, trans. Susan Hanson et al. (New York: Semio- text(e), 1984), 13.

[10] Chamsy Ojeili, ''The 'Advance Without Authority': Post-modernism, Libertarian Socialism, and Intellectuals,'' Democracy and Nature 7, no. 3 (November 2001), http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol7/ojeili_intellectuals.htm (accessed 11 March 2005).

Lyotard, for whom the ''rejection of representation'' also serves as an ethical foundation.[11]

I, too, contend that anarchism has something to contribute to projects that seek a way out of contemporary impasses in hermeneutics, aesthetics, and politics. However, when we look for this contribution, we will find that it is something more and other than mere antirepresentationalism. In fact, a careful rereading of the tradition will take us beyond the sterile opposition between an unsupportable ''representationalist'' position and an incoherent ''antirepresentationalist'' one. It will require us to rethink the very premises that have premised the crisis, including such key concepts as essentialism, agency, construction, determination, and the subject.

It will also require us to dissolve some popular and academic misinterpretations of anarchism. Despite some rather unhistorical Marxist claims to the contrary, anarchism is also a socialism. While the everyday rhetorical use of the term refers merely to some vague embrace of chaos, anti-intellectualism, or disorganized violence, the word in its older sense names a body of theory generated by and uniting (in a somewhat loose but still coherent manner) a branch of the workers' movement originating in mid-nineteenth-century Europe. The historical anarchist movement presented a socialist program for political transformation distinguished from reformist and Marxist varieties of socialism by its primary commitment to ethics, expressed as

1. a moral opposition to all forms of domination and hierarchy (particularly as embodied in the institutions of capitalism and the state, but also as manifested in other institutions,

[11] Todd May, ''Poststructuralist Anarchism: An Interview with Todd May.'' Interview with Rebecca DeWitt. Perspectives on Anarchist Theory 4, no. 2 (Fall 2000), http://perspectives.anarchist-studies.org/8may.htm (11 March 2005); May, The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 47.

sentialist presumes, as Nick Haslam puts it, that an essence is a set of ''underlying intrinsic properties . . . causally related to the accessible ones, giving rise to them in some fashion,'' and that, therefore, ''knowing that something is an instance of such a kind allows many things to be inferred about it and generalized from it.''[24] Essentialism therefore means the attribution of supposedly fixed characteristics to things.

In short, essentialism is naturalist theory, speculation predicated on the notion that things have natures that predestine or predict their behavior.

Representationalism as Naïve Realism

If a representation is to be meaningfully related to what it purports to represent, then presumably there must be a parallel between the structure of signs and the structure of things signified—a system of ''kinds or types'' and a reality that ''consists of things that fall into kinds or types.''[25] For an essentialist, just as words are discrete units, so each thing is distinguished from other things by its intrinsic essence, i.e., its haeccaeitas or quiddity, the qualities that are ''essential'' to the thing rather than merely ''accidental,'' ''the ones it needs to possess to be the thing it is.''[26] This is part of what has been called naïve realism. Naïve realism allows us to think of the universe in terms of what Charles C. Fries calls an ''item-centered'' ontology, an account of reality that says that the real consists of a collection of preexisting objects, as a set of ready-made objects waiting to be perceived by a passive subject.[27] Essentialists

[24] Nick O. Haslam, ''Natural Kinds, Human Kinds, and Essentialism,'' Social Research 65, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 294.

[25] Hubert L. Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa, ''Two Kinds of Antiessentialism and Their Consequences,'' Critical Inquiry 22, no. 4 (Summer 1996): 738.

[26] Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward Craig (London: Routledge, 1998), 417.

[27] Charles Fries, quoted in Terence Hawkes, Structuralism and Semiotics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 22.

Because representation is transformative, it is an exercise in power.

''What we know about the world,'' writes Stuart Hall, ''is how we see it represented''; thus, representing means ''circulating . . . a very limited range of definitions of who people can be, what they can do, what are the possibilities in life, what are the nature of the constraints on them.''[23] By directing our attention to A, B, and C, leading us to avert our eyes from X, Y, and Z, focalizing representation manipulates our consciousness by controlling what we see and therefore what we have occasion to think about.

ONTOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATIONS FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PRACTICES

In order to legitimate these sorts of representational practices, what must be assumed about the nature of the realities to be represented? Critiques of representation have pointed to the way in which representational ''methodology,'' to borrow Burke's words, presupposes a representationalist ''ontology.'' This ontology is what we have come to call essentialism. Essentialism comprises an interlocking set of assumptions that could be named naturalism, naïve realism, reductivism, and transcendentalism.

Representationalism as Naturalism

Representations are almost the only static things in a moving world: think of Keats's Grecian urn or Shakespeare's promise to immortalize his beloved in a sonnet. If the static can be made to stand in for the changing, it would seem, the fluctuation we see around us must somehow be reducible to an unseen fixity—an essence. An es-

[23] Stuart Hall, quoted in Reba Chaisson, For Entertainment Purposes Only?: An Analysis of the Struggle to Control Filmic Representations (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 1.

e.g., the family, and in other relationships, e.g., those of city and country or empire and colony) and

2. a special concern with the coherence of means and ends.

Thus, for instance, Bakunin declared that ''we reject all legislation, all authority, and all privileged, licensed, official, and legal powers over us . . .

This is the sense in which we are all anarchists''; thus, Emma Goldman repeatedly emphasized the importance of achieving an ''identity of means used and aims sought'' in the acts intended to bring about and constitute a stateless socialist order.[12] These are typical and essential anarchist statements.

When I say typical, I am referring to anarchism as a material fact of history; when I say essential, I am referring to anarchism as an idea. The essence is an abstraction from the material fact, a generalization about what it is that unites anarchists across different historical periods in an anarchist tradition, about the ways in which individual self-identified anarchists have identified themselves (diachronically) with the historical movement as well as (synchronically) with their living cohort. Within this general consensus, there is still considerable diversity, but also enough coherence for one to distinguish between anarchism's socialist mainstream and its more marginal individualist tendencies. The distinction between mainstream and margins most clearly emerges in historical perspective: the moments in which anarchism plays its largest role in public life—for instance, in the struggle over the direction of the First International (1871-72), in the Makhnovist

[12] Mikhail Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works By the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism, ed. and trans. Sam Dolgoff (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 231; Emma Goldman, My Further Disillusionment in Russia, Anarchy Archives: An Online Research Center on the History and Theory of Anarchism, 1 March 2000, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/goldman/further/mfdr_12.html (accessed 11 March 2005), 12.

insurrection in the Ukraine (1917-21), in the formation and suppression of the Industrial Workers of the World (1905-20), or, most famously, in the Spanish civil war (1936-39)—have nothing to do with individualism, not even in the modest form individualism took in America (a handful of cooperative colonies, a limited protest against monopoly and finance capitalism). Indeed, the anarchist tradition is not defined so much by its loosely defined canon of theory as it is by a repertoire of practices: direct action, the general strike, direct democracy, collective ownership, cooperation, federation, etc. The individualist terrorism with which anarchism is still associated—peaking in 1893 with the assassination of President Sadi Carnot and Émile Henry's bombing of the Café Terminus—bears little relation to the socialist mainstream of anarchism. In the context of what is called ''social anarchism'' (to distinguish it from the individualist variety), to speak of an organized anarchist movement is not only not contradictory, it is the only way to understand anarchist history. As Voline wrote, after the crushing of the Makhnovist rebellion in the Ukraine, ''it is not a matter of 'organization' or 'nonorganization,' but of two different principles of organization . . . Of course, say the anarchists, society must be organized. However, the new organization . . . must be established freely, socially, and, above all, from below.''[13]

That it is necessary to go to this length to articulate what I mean by ''anarchism'' reflects the depth of the oblivion to which anarchism has been consigned in the academy.

It is perhaps too early to tell if this oblivion will be shaken by the recent resurfacing of anarchism in the public sphere, particularly in the nations of the old Soviet bloc (where anarchist federations, unions, and student groups have enjoyed a small renaissance) and in Western protests against the globalization of capi-

[13] Voline, qtd. in Daniel Guérin, Anarchism: From Theory to Practice, trans. Mary Klopper (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 43.

lation to its object: ''The world of nature, however, in its speechlessness [Sprachlosigkeit] and unspeakability [Unaussprechbarkeit], is immeasurably rich compared to our so- called worldview [weltanschauung].''[17] These conclusions, drawn as much from the tradition of Bakunin and Proudhon as from Mauthner's Sprachkritik (critique of language), strongly prefigure another aspect of what Andrew M. Koch calls poststructuralism's ''attack on representation'': namely, its objection to substituting ''closed,'' finite representations for unrepresentable objects. Such a ''closed system,'' as Koch writes, ''always omits an element contained in the object that it seeks to describe.''[18]

The ultimate totality, the universe, cannot be included in a finite representation. Moreover, as Howard Richards comments, any part of the universe, considered as a totality, is itself possessed of an ''infinite concreteness'' that is infinitely describable.[19] In this way, as Burke points out, all representation is synecdochic, substituting pars pro toto.[20] Since a representation presents us with a part in lieu of an unpresentable totality, representations inevitably impact our practices by what they include and what they exclude. In order to produce any representation, as Koch observes, ''one must continually limit the universe of one's objects, closing the system. One must draw a boundary around that which is relevant. But to do so . . . [is to] create fiction.''[21] Representation is fictive in the root sense of fictio, ''to make, to create, to do''; it is inevitably not only reproductive or constative but productive and performative, a matter of transformation as much as description.[22]

[17] Ibid., 6, translation mine.

[18] Andrew M. Koch, ''Poststructuralism and the Epistemological Basis of Anarchism,'' Philosophy of the Social Sciences 23, no. 3 (1993): 337.

[19] Richards, Letters From Quebec (Richmond, IN: Eartham College Bookstore, 1995), 2.50.3; 1.15.9.

[20] Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, 25-26.

[21] Koch, ''Poststructuralism,'' 334.

[22] Richards, Letters From Quebec, 1.15.8; Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 85.

and all its elaborations into bands, clans, tribes, and the like, were regarded as 'strangers' who could alternatively be welcomed hospitably or enslaved or put to death.''[14] Unable to recognize other communities as human, the primitive community that constitutes itself as a homogeneous family with a unitary culture—the very conditions that permit it to do without the State—tends to find itself at war with all the other communities, and so develops a permanent warrior class, the kernel around which hierarchy can grow.

These capacities for identification and dissociation are intrinsic to language itself;[15] what we could call identifying representation draws on these resources to produce an order that is not only intelligible (enabling some kinds of cognition and practical action in the world) but also controllable (disabling other kinds). Power operates in both of these moments. Identification is representation as a standing-for that groups and divides objects so as to promote or discourage certain relationships with or among them, forming classes and associations, oppositions and boundaries. Another anarchist, Gustav Landauer, recognized as much, and he extended this insight via Fritz Mauthner's language philosophy: ''In reality,'' he remarks, ''there is no equivalence, only resemblance.''[16]

FOCALIZING REPRESENTATION

''Our world,'' Landauer concludes, ''is a poorly-painted picture [Bild], painted by our few senses.'' This representation—and language itself, as a representation of the representation—is poor in re-

[14] Murray Bookchin, ''What Is Social Ecology?'' Institute for Social Ecology, November 17, 2003 http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031118113538865/ (accessed 21 March 2004).

[15] Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1966), 425.

[16] Gustav Landauer, Skepsis und Mystik: Versuche im Anschluss an Mauthners Sprachkritik (Köln am Rhein: Marcan-Block-Verlag, 1923), 6, translation mine.

talism (which have not only featured ''black blocs'' of anarchist protesters, but have been organized in the federative, bottom-up anarchist style). At the junction of West and East, in mass demonstrations against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings in Prague, anarchists were so visible that even left-liberal commentators were forced to account for their presence. Thus, in the Toronto Globe and Mail, Naomi Klein remarks:

> The experience of growing up disillusioned with both [communist and capitalist] systems helps explain why so many of the activists behind this week's protests call themselves ''anarchists''. Anarchism is an ideology that defines itself by being fiercely non-ideological. It rejects externally imposed rules . . . Most of us carry a mess of negative biases about anarchists. But the truth is that most are less interested in hurling projectiles than in finding ways to lead simple, autonomous lives. They call it ''freedom.''[14]

The sympathy Klein evinces toward the anarchist protesters is in such marked contrast to the sneering, dismissive tone taken by mainstream commentators that it is easy for a reader to miss the subtle note of condescension: apparently ignorant of any larger dimension to anarchists' critique, Klein reduces their ideas to a psychological reaction to the traumas of Stalinism and marketization, a weariness with ideologies, vague complaints about ''externally imposed rules,'' and equally vague longings for a vanished ''simple'' life. Like Lenin or E. J. Hobsbawm, Klein diagnoses anarchism as a primitive or regressive form of leftism. Thus, in the name of ''understanding,'' anarchism is once again misunderstood, pushed to the margins of public discourse. This book is an attempt to redress that wrong.

[14] Naomi Klein, ''Capitalism And Communism Look Equally Bad In Prague,'' Montreal Serai 14, no. 1 (Winter 2000-2001), http://www.montrealserai.com/2001_Volume_14/14_1/Article_2.htm (accessed 22 March 2004).

The chapters that follow address critiques of representation in three different areas. Part 1, ''Hermeneutics,'' begins with an examination, in chapter 1, ''False Solutions,'' of some attempts on the part of a number of theorists to formulate a nonrepresentational alternative to representationalist interpretations of texts. I want to show that all of these attempts fail to cohere on an ethical or an epistemological level, and sometimes on both levels at once, for a number of reasons; none is adequate, finally, because all are structurally committed to one or another pole of a certain persistent problem that I am calling the genetic/quantum antinomy, an inability to articulate a balanced understanding of the relations between subject and object, structure and agency, mind and body, language and world. Through an analysis of these problems in chapter 2, ''The Necessity of a Critique of Representation,'' I move toward a clarified understanding of ethical and epistemological critiques of representation. Then, in chapter 3, ''Anarchism as a Critique of Representation,'' I propose a different approach to representation, one suggested by the anarchist tradition. While recent poststructuralist treatments of that tradition tend to see it as committed to an outdated rationalist philosophy, a ''repressive hypothesis'' about power, and a mythology of ''human nature,'' a careful re-reading of the tradition reveals something much more rich, complex, and nuanced—in fact, something more approximating the ''critical realism'' of Roy Bhaskar than the naïve realism contemporary theorists use as a foil. Chapter 4, ''Anarchism Beyond Representationalism and Antirepresentationalism,'' distinguishes a particular tradition within anarchism, that of ''social anarchism,'' as the source of this critical-realist critique of representation and locates the specificity of a social anarchist account of meaning. This section concludes with chapter 5, ''Anarchist Hermeneutics as Ethics and Ecology,'' outlining a social anarchist interpretive methodology founded on ethical commitments and bearing a certain ecological character.

Part 2, ''Aesthetics,'' also begins with a review of the difficulties created by critiques of representation. In chapter 6, ''The Fate

ests. Patronizing representations suppose that the representative has capacities the represented lacks. When they are persuasive for the relevant institutional or popular audiences, they disempower the represented, at least for a time (e.g., until the institution or community judges that the represented person is rehabilitated, readmitted to the sphere of general competency, personhood, and citizenship).

IDENTIFYING REPRESENTATION

The capacity of representation to interpellate and stigmatize, to delegate and appropriate, is intimately tied to its mechanics of sameness and difference, as anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin have long recognized. Thus, when Kropotkin attempts to reconstruct the circumstances under which ''primitive society'' allowed its ruling classes, ''the priest and the warrior,'' to emerge, he suggests that this came about when they successfully confounded in one code . . . maxims which represent principles of morality and social union wrought out as a result of life in common, and the mandates which are meant to ensure external existence to inequality. Customs, absolutely essential to the very being of society, are, in the code, cleverly intermingled with usages imposed by the ruling caste, and both claim equal respect from the crowd.

''Do not kill,'' says the code, and hastens to add, ''And pay tithes to the priest.''

''Do not steal,'' says the code, and immediately after, ''He who refuses to pay taxes, shall have his hand struck off.''[13]

This operation of identification is paralleled, in the analyses of primitive society by contemporary anarchists Murray Bookchin and Janet Biehl, by a dissociative maneuver, a tendency toward spurious estrangement: ''Human beings who were outside the family

[13] Peter Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 203, 205.

the absence of a referent corresponding to the signs used to define and fix their object. The referent, Dreyfus, remains unknown, perhaps unknowable: unrepresentable.

PATRONIZING REPRESENTATION

If, for anarchists like Lazare and Goldman, hostile representations can never truly fix their objects in judgment, friendly representatives are equally unable to name the subject they would defend. Thus, as Eisenzweig points out, Proudhon links the questions of ''suffrage'' and ''language'': if ''the People'' is a ''collective being,'' he asks, ''with what mouths, in what language'' must this being speak? If it ''does not speak at all in the material sense of the word,'' then ''who has the right to say to others: it is through me that the People speak.''[11] To claim to speak for a collectivity, Proudhon suggests, is to postulate two fictitious identities where there is really difference. As Mike Michael puts it, recasting Proudhon's critique via the sociology of Michel Callon and Bruno Latour, one becomes a representative, the ''spokesperson of others,'' by persuading them not only, in the manner of labeling representation, that ''rather than maintain a particular set of self-understandings . . . they should really be conceptualizing themselves through the categories that you provide,'' but that they share an identity with this agent, and that, there- fore, ''it can represent them and their interests.''[12] That is, a representative sets himself or herself up a patron, one who can speak for others on the basis of true knowledge.

The term patronizing, then, might serve as a general term for practices that appropriate the power to represent the other's inter-

[11] Eisenzweig, Fictions de l'anarchisme (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 2001), 113, translation mine; Proudhon, ''An Anarchist's View of Democracy,'' trans. Robert Hoffman and S. Valerie Hoffman, in Anarchism, ed. Robert Hoffman, 52, 54 (New York: Atherton Press, 1970).

[12] Mike Michael, ''The Power-Persuasion-Identity Nexus: Anarchism and Actor Networks,'' Anarchist Studies 2 (1994): 30-31.

of Representation, the Fate of Critique,'' I examine the failure of modernist critiques of representation, which empty the text of its content and refuse the demands of the audience, as well as the failure of postmodernist critiques of representation, which strip texts of their referential power and authors of their authority.

Both are informed by an individualist anarchism that merely perpetuates rather than overcomes a historical rift between creative forces and their social context. Chapter 7, ''Reconstructing Anarchist Aesthetics,'' attempts to retrieve a social anarchist discourse on art, beginning with Proudhon and extending to the present, that goes beyond the sterile alternatives of representationalist classicism and the modern and postmodern varieties of anti- representationalism. This social anarchist aesthetic, known in the nineteenth century as l'art social, provides the starting point for a series of meditations on the politics of literary style and the contexts in which literary signs are produced, circulated, and consumed. Drawing on the same tradition, chapter 8, ''Aesthetic Production,'' attempts to reconceive relations between authors and audiences, signifiers and signifieds, in terms of mutuality instead of domination.

This economic turn leads to the subject of Part 3, ''Politics.'' Chapter 9, ''The Critique of Democracy as Representation,'' examines the relationship between these two terms vis-à-vis direct democracy. Chapter 10, ''The Critique of Economy as Representation,'' considers problems of economic representation and value from an anarchist standpoint. Chapter 11, ''The Critique of History as Representation,'' addresses the antirepresentationalist critique of historical metanarratives, outlining an anarchist conception of history that is neither formless nor rigidly teleological. The last chapter, ''The Critique of Identity as Representation,'' turns to questions of identity, defending forms of universality that do not subsume or annihilate diversity.

Part I: Hermeneutics

appeared more and more problematic under the gaze of structural linguistics, antiessentialist philosophies, the sociology of deviance, and speech-act theory. From these new perspectives, what had been thought of as the passive reflection of reality in representational statements was to be redescribed as the active construction of reality.[9] All of these intellectual movements combined to produce an antirepresentationalist (antirealist and morally relativist) model of ''speaking about'' that simultaneously collapses the difference between description and prescription and that between word and world. In the absence of any possible reference to an objective world or transcendent moral principles, all descriptive representation comes to be seen as an act of social power, the manipulation of some audience to some end.

It is striking, given the long intellectual development behind post- structuralism's analysis of representation's labeling function, that anarchists such as Lazare anticipated it in their politics. Thus, unlike other Dreyfusards for whom Dreyfus had to ''play . . . [the] role of victim'' in a social ''melodrama,'' Lazare insisted that ''Dreyfus did not have to represent anything,'' attempting instead to show ''that the person at the heart of the debate does not correspond at all to the central person of the imposed [juridical] narrative'': ''Was he needy?'' Lazare asks rhetorically. No, he was rich. Had he passions and vices to satisfy? None. Was he greedy? No, he lived well and had not augmented his fortune. Is he a sick man, an impulsive liable to act without reason? No, he is a calm, a thoughtful man, a being of courage and energy. What powerful motives had this happy man for risking all his happiness? None.''[10] This purely negative rhetoric, Eisenzweig argues, does not appeal to the fullness of an identity (the captain as suffering victim); it only gestures toward

[9] Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 4; Culler, ''The Fortunes of the Performative in Literary and Cultural Theory.''

[10] Eisenzweig, ''Représentations Illégitimes,'' 83-85; Lazare, quoted in Eisenzweig, ''Représentations Illégitimes,'' 85, translation mine.

To label is to attribute certain qualities to an object that encourage certain behaviors toward it, or that encourage certain behaviors for it. In prescribing behaviors both toward and for an object, labeling representations are the instrument of normalization, the enactment of moral, ethical, political, or juridical forms of social and institutional power on individuals. As such, labeling is almost inseparable from language in the mode once thought typical of all language, i.e., its descriptive mode, and from the mode once thought to be derivative of it, i.e., the rhetorical function of language, its use for prescribing action.

Labeling representations, whether hostile, friendly, or ostensibly neutral, exercise power over subjects, not only in organizing how the subject is treated, but in encouraging it to conceive itself through the other's discourse.

The labeled object may even respond by internalizing and enacting its label: as Nietzsche remarks, ''the passions become evil and insidious when they are considered evil and insidious.''[7] Thus, Emma Goldman contends, ''puritan'' representational codes, which threaten sexually active unmarried women with the labels ''immoral or fallen,'' produce not only ''a great variety of nervous complaints,'' e.g., ''diminished power of work,'' ''limited enjoyment of life,'' and ''sleeplessness,'' but also, ironically, ''preoccupation with sexual desires and imaginings.''[8]

While anarchists have long possessed a critique of labeling representation, it has taken a long time for other forms of critical thought to formulate such a critique. Positivist philosophers from the nineteenth through the beginning of the twentieth centuries had hoped to tightly cordon off descriptive language from prescriptive language. In the twentieth century, the seemingly uncomplicated matter of making descriptive propositions

[7] Nietzsche, The Portable Nietzsche, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (Viking, 1967), 79.

[8] Emma Goldman, Anarchism and Other Essays (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 171-72.

1. False solutions

> We have carried criticism to the last degree of scepticism, even to the point where it becomes sceptical of itself, and have yet no new synthesis.
>
> —Herbert Read, Poetry and Experience

WHILE ANARCHISM IS ASSOCIATED PRIMARILY WITH A REJECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE democracy, Daniel Colson argues that its critique runs far deeper: since, in each case, ''men, signs or institutions claim to replace things or to say what they are,'' anarchism extends its opposition to ''any form of representation.'' Julia Kristeva concurs: an anarchism that fails to criticize symbolic as well as political representation fails to constitute itself as truly antiauthoritarian.[1] An anarchist hermeneutics, then, would seem to be a contradiction in terms—for what is interpretation if not the construction of representations of the text? Presumably, then, a consistent antiauthoritarianism would imply resistance to the representational premises of the hermeneutic enterprise, a refusal to interpret the text as signifying something beyond itself, hermeneu-

[1] Daniel Colson, Petit lexique philosophique de l'anarchisme de Proudhon à Deleuze (Paris: Librairie générale française, 2001), 281-82, translation and emphasis mine; Julia Kristeva, Desire In Language: A Semiotic Approach To Literature And Art, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 23; Kristeva, La révolution du langage poétique: l'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle, Lautréamont et Mallarmé (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1974), 426-27.

tically substituting for the text an interpretation that says what it is.[2]

Thus, for poststructuralists such as Kristeva and Roland Barthes, interpretation appears as an exercise in representational reductivism, the imposition of a totalizing meaning on textual plurality and indeterminacy, and thereby an assertion of the interpreter's authority over it.[3] At the same time, strangely, both appear to see the realist premises of the interpretive enterprise—the pretense of discovering a subtextual meaning that is already present, if latent, within the text—as a kind of fetishism of the textual object, a cringing submission to its authority.[4] Finally, both see interpretation as an error, the attribution of meaning-making powers to something that can have no such powers, mistaking some point in the chain of signification as a definitive end, a ''meaning,'' rather than simply part of an interminable process of signification; the interpreter, from this standpoint, is saddled with a delusory authority, an imaginary knowledge about the text.[5]

The urgency of the conclusion this leads to—the call for a radical break with the very notion of interpretation as representation—should not distract us from what is curious about its premises. Linked to one another by the themes of antiauthoritarianism are no less than three competing, seemingly incompatible interpretations of the act of interpretation itself. In the first, interpretation is the reduction of all the disparate moments and instances of a text to representations of a central meaning; in the second, the interpreter is dominated by a text whose supposed meaning his

[2] Kristeva, The Kristeva Reader, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 76-77, 306.

[3] Ibid., 304-5; Roland Barthes, Image-Music-Text, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 192.

[4] Kristeva, Kristeva Reader, 306; Roland Barthes, Criticism and Truth, ed. and trans. Katherine Pilcher Keuneman (London: Athlone Press, 1987), 36.

[5] Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 37; Barthes, Image-Music-Text, 158.

tations possible and desirable. These practices, which I will call labeling, patronizing, identifying, and focalizing representation, I will examine next.

LABELING REPRESENTATION

In November 1896, as Uri Eisenzweig recounts, the French intellectual world first discovered the scandal that would be known as the Dreyfus Affair—the trial of a Jewish army officer, humiliated and imprisoned by an old- boy network of anti-Semitic military men and judges. The first voice raised in Dreyfus's defense belonged to an anarchist: Bernard Lazare.[4] If this seems in retrospect ''logical, perhaps even inevitable,'' it is because of the central place accorded by anarchism to a critique of representation: ''it is precisely because of his anarchism, his anarchist resistance to the legitimacy of narrative power, that Bernard Lazare was destined to identify . . . modern anti-Semitism as a major source of totalitarian narration.''[5] In other words, Eisenzweig suggests that Lazare's opposition to the juridical narrative within which ''because he [Dreyfus] was a Jew they arrested him, because he was a Jew they tried him, because he was a Jew they condemned him, [and] because he was a Jew one could not make heard in his favour the voices of justice and of truth''[6] was part of a systematic critique of representation in what could be called, in the lexicon of the sociology of deviant behavior, its labeling function.

We can define labeling representation as symbolic representation operating in two related modes, both of which bring social power to bear on the object spoken of (even where this object is the speaker himself or herself).

[4] Eisenzweig, ''Représentations Illégitimes: Dreyfus, ou la fin de l'anarchisme,'' Romantisme 87 (1995): 80, translation mine.

[5] Ibid., 85-86, translation mine.

[6] Lazare, Une Erreur Judiciaire: la vérité sur l'Affaire Dreyfus: Deuxième Memoire (Paris: P.-V. Stock, 1897), 9, translation mine.

contrary: we need to subject this critique to analysis, to see whether it can be reformulated more gracefully.

''We all now use the word representation,'' Stuart Hall warns, ''but, as we know, it is an extremely slippery customer.'' Slippery indeed: even Arac hesitates to define the term, averring (without explanation) that ''we know well enough the different things we mean by it.''[2] But if we know well enough, then why is there such confusion about it? Pauline Rosenau suggests that the word can be understood in no less than six ways: we can speak of representation as ''delegation'' (of popular power to a ''parliament''), ''resemblance'' (as between a ''painting'' and its subject), ''replication'' (as a ''photograph'' replicates its subject), ''repetition'' (or the expression of a mental content in a linguistic/material form), and ''duplication'' (as a ''photocopy'' duplicates an original).[3] I don't find that this clarifies the issue much: for instance, is the difference between ''resemblance'' and ''replication'' a difference of degree, or a difference in kind, as seems to be the case between ''duplication'' and ''delegation''? Are these six aspects of one thing, ''representation,'' or six different types of representation? How and where do these notions acquire an ethical content, a critical force?

I have already proposed that there are roughly two closely related general concepts of representation common to most contemporary formulations of a critique of representation, namely, standing-for and speaking-for; these can be shown to subsume Rosenau's categories. I want to propose further that the unified concept of representation is manifested in four basic kinds of representational practice, which entail a set of related that comprise what can be called ''representationalism''—four basic ontological assumptions about the features of reality that make true represen-

[2] Stuart Hall, ''New Ethnicities,'' in The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, 224 (London: Routledge, 2002); Arac, xxi.

[3] Pauline Marie Rosenau, Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 92.

or her text is enjoined to re-present, to repeat and confirm; in the third, the claim of an interpretation to be representative of its object is simply taken to be empty.

Antirepresentational critiques of interpretation, then, can be enunciated in three ways. The first critique is an ethical injunction against interpreting the text as a representation of anything else; on this account, interpretation is a domination of the text by the reader. The second critique regards interpretation as the reader's domination by the text; on this account, the interpreter's supposed obligation to represent the text must be refused. The third form of critique is an epistemic denial that an interpretation can represent a text. The first two varieties of antirepresentationalism about hermeneutics find something morally or politically unacceptable about ''speaking for'' the textual other (political representation or Vertreten); the last of these finds something logically dubious about standing-for (symbolic representation or Darstellen, Vorstellen, etc.).

All three of these critiques of representation raise serious questions. First of all, can we act and intervene in the world without, in so doing, mediating between subjects, imposing meanings, translating, identifying—i.e., taking on the privilege or the burden of ''speaking for'' others? Moreover, can we observe and analyze the world without thereby appealing to concepts of meaning, referentiality, correspondence, signification, communication—i.e., seeing something as standing for something else? Finally, how do these three forms of antirepresentationalism—ethical, political, and epistemological— stand in relation to one another? Can these seemingly disparate perspectives be combined into a single coherent picture? Can these three divergent proposals be contained within a single coherent program? In short, can we go from merely particular, partial critiques of representation to a general critique of representation?

One approach to producing a general critique of representation has attempted to find a logical link between the epistemic and the

ethical, to make the one serve as a kind of grounds for the other. The argument runs as follows: if our interpretive model cannot possibly ''stand for'' the text in any reliable way, then our claims to ''speak for'' it are a priori illegitimate. Thus, Michael J. Shapiro reads Foucault as arguing that since there is nothing underlying historical appearances that is so stable and simple that it can be interpreted or represented, any claim that an interpretation truly represents history is both ungroundable and coercive.[6] Kenneth J. Gergen extends this argument into a critique of psychology as a discourse claiming interpretive authority: because the psychologist's claims to speak on behalf of the subjects of research or treatment cannot be founded on any ''grounds'' of epistemic certainty, these claims will always amount to a de facto imposition of false universality on the multiple.[7] Conversely, for Heideggerian literary theorists like William Spanos, it is because of the epistemic priority of ''difference'' over ''identity'' that the critic, in claiming to discover a unified meaning within the text, in fact surreptitiously ''coerces'' it into that shape via the machinations of ''method.''[8] The strategy shared by Spanos, Gergen, and Foucault, then, is to deny interpretations ethical legitimacy by attacking their epistemic foundations, redescribing the knowledge claims of interpreters—claims to discover meaning as a unity behind the text's multiplicity—as the coercive imposition of unity on difference, sameness on otherness. The ethical imperative that emerges from this articulation of the general critique of representation—the imperative not to represent

[6] Michael J. Shapiro, Reading the Postmodern Polity: Political Theory as Textual Practice (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 1-2.

[7] Kenneth J. Gergen, ''Exploring the Postmodern: Perils or Potentials?'' American Psychologist 49, no. 5 (May 1994): 413.

[8] William V. Spanos, Repetitions: The Postmodern Occasion in Literature and Culture (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 32, 38; ''Martin Heidegger and the Question of Literature: A Preface,'' in The Question Of Textuality: Strategies of Reading in Contemporary American Criticism, ed. William Spanos, Paul Bové, and Daniel O'Hara, xi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

2. The Necessity of a Critique of Representation

BUT WE SHOULD BE WARY OF PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS. NONE OF THE OBJECTIONS I have raised so far to the contemporary critique of representation—I have called it an intellectual trap and a practical dead end—rescinds the necessity of that critique. Jonathan Arac wishes to dispel the problems of antirepresentationalism by declaring that it is simply an erroneous interpretation, an overstatement, or a one-sided expression of the poststructuralist theory of representation: with Derrida, he disputes the notion that postmodernism can be distilled to the declaration that ''representation is bad,'' and he insists that it ''acknowledges—critically—our enmeshment in representation.''[1] The problem, however, is that this acknowledgment coincides with a critique of representation that more or less inevitably produces the consensus that, on the terms of this critique, representation is the enemy. That is why there is a crisis of representation: if antirepresentationalism were simply an unnecessary error, there would be no problem getting out of it. But it is not so easy, since the critique of representation proceeds with some real justification and owes its theoretical development to some genuine movements for justice. The animating concern behind it, the concern for violating the otherness of the other, is a legitimate response to a civilization that had for too long indiscriminately pursued and violently imposed sameness. If this response requires rethinking, it must not be at the cost of forgetting its raison d'être. On the

[1] Arac, xx.

peal to structure and those that appeal to agency are not mutually exclusive but depend on our purposes for their validity, he merely displaces one form of the genetic/quantum problem into another—the epistemic problem in terms of which we are unable to decide whether our discourses provide us with knowledge of a reality that stands apart from our purposes or reality is performatively constituted by our discursive will-to- knowledge.[75] In a similar manner, Rorty tries to get away from this epistemic problem via an appeal to conversational agreement as a replacement for cor- respondence to an independently existing reality, which leaves him open to the problem of hermeneutic suspicion: if we are effectively making up the texts we read out of whole cloth, how can we listen for others' meanings?[76]

Thus, the seeming panoply of theoretical differences obscures a monotonous sameness: every antirepresentationalism is condemned to the same theoretical bind, in which competing, incompatible premises mutually require and presuppose one another. Nor, when theorists seek to escape the undecidable questions of theory by returning to the supposed certainties of political practice, leaving questions of reality and universality unresolved, resorting instead to ''strategic'' essentialisms and universalisms, do they find firmer ground: indeed, ethical contradictions are just as endemic to antirepresentationalism as epistemological or ontological problems. Theoretical confusion over the relations between subject and object gives rise to practical uncertainties about autonomy and collectivity, activity and passivity.

Which way, then, to the exit from this hall of mirrors?

[75] K. Anthony Appiah, ''Tolerable Falsehoods: Agency and the Interests of Theory,'' in Consequences of Theory, ed. Jonathan Arac and Barbara Johnson, 74-75 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

[76] Shusterman, Surface and Depth, 205.

the other—is, in this sense, deeply Kantian, in that it evokes a respect, even a sublime awe, for the noumenal unknowability of the other, calling on us not to reduce the other to an object of knowledge or utility, a means to an end, something to be categorized and controlled.[9] This is a critique of instrumental rationality, a form of anti-instrumentalism.

While persuasive in many ways, this formulation of antirepresentationalism as anti-instrumentalism encounters a number of difficulties, since it depends on assumptions that beg their own epistemological questions. The certainty that a text cannot manifest any intrinsic form or fundamental identity, that there is no ''depth lying beneath the surface'' waiting to be represented,[10] is underwritten by a rather detailed set of ideas about what is, in fact, to be found below the text's surface, what is intrinsic and fundamental to it. In other words, claims that ''Being is fundamentally disordered,'' that ''dissension'' and ''disparity'' are intrinsic to it but not unity,[11] are by no means ontologically or epistemically innocent; they constitute a set of a priori foundational assumptions that are taken to ground practice. Translated into practical terms, they specify practices of ''interpretive disclosure,'' of unmasking or penetrating surfaces, which determine in advance what will be discovered there, ''behind things'': namely, ''the secret that they have no essence.''[12] This lack of an essence turns out itself to be a kind of essence, a truth that always and everywhere remains the same. Thus, for Spanos, all that is left for the reader to find in the text is the ''essence of literature'' as the production of difference—indeed,

[9] Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 79.

[10] Shapiro, 159n1.

[11] Ibid., 2; Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 142; Spanos, ''Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and the Hermeneutic Circle: Towards a Postmodern Theory of Interpretation as Disclosure,'' in Martin Heidegger and the Question of Literature: Towards a Postmodern Literary Hermeneutics, ed. William V. Spanos (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 122.

[12] Spanos, ''Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and the Hermeneutic Circle,'' 121; Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 144, 149, 142.

the ''existential nature of language'' itself.[13] In other words, antirepresentationalist procedures radically predetermine their own destination: the meaning one aims to reveal within the text is one that is known ahead of time. In spite of Spanos's avowals to the contrary, the refusal of interpretive ''method'' as coercive ends in the reproduction of method as the imposition of a ready-made interpretive telos on the text.[14]

The formulation of anti-representationalism in terms of an anti-instrumentalist ethic, then, seems incapable of producing a coherent practice, as witness Spanos's unsuccessful attempts to articulate the very distinction between his preferred practice of reading as ''letting be''[15] and the kind of authoritarian reading that coerces texts into a predetermined shape. Indeed, as an ethics of interpretation, antirepresentationalism appears to open itself to unethical potentials in more than one way. Either the encounter with the text is theorized in terms of a tautological process that merely reaffirms certain readerly presuppositions, or it is conceived as a kind of abject surrender of the reader to the text, the abandonment of critique. Thus, while Spanos's Bakhtinian notion of interpretation as a dialogue rather than a monologue in which the interpreter speaks for the text is appealing (it certainly does counter the sort of aggressive interpretive mastery that he justifiably abhors), what sort of ''dialogue'' is it in which one of the participants simply lets the other be, pretending to go silent? How would this foregoing of epistemological procedures or certainties differ from the Husserlian bracketing of all assumptions, which both Spanos and Heidegger hold to be impossible in theory and a false pretense in practice? Noninterventionist passivism, placing the interpreter in the contemplative position of the spectator, is simply the flip side of instrumentalist activism. The ethical injunction to avoid reducing the other to the

[13] Spanos, ''Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and the Hermeneutic Circle,'' 138.
[14] Ibid., 116-17.
[15] Spanos, Repetitions, 236.

and utter indeterminacy.[74] This antinomy prevents us from deciding whether to see the individual subject as determined by the object world (what we could call the genetic perspective) or to see the object world as constructed by subjects (what we could call the quantum perspective). I use the metaphor of genetics here to evoke the idea of determinism, our being structured by something beyond our control. I use the metaphor of quantum physics to evoke the idea that the external world is discursively produced by subjects, just as in quantum physics, an observer is said to create some aspect of the reality being observed.

If my use of this binary metaphor seems reductive—after all, there are some real differences between the kinds questions I am lumping together in each of these categories—I would suggest that it is useful to recognize a certain sameness between them, because it allows us to see how a number of solutions to one given problem succeed only by pushing the genetic/quantum problem into another domain. In contemporary theoretical discussions, this genetic/quantum antinomy takes on different forms, each of which implies all the others, and all of which call up the question of representation. Thus, when Fish avoids the messier consequences of hermeneutic antirealism by an appeal to the structuring force of the interpretive community, this just displaces one problem into the domain of another. In the domain of the first problem, Fish banishes the textual object in favor of unlimited interpretive subjectivity; then there is a return of the repressed objectivity as he tries to show that this interpretive subject is really held in place by an objective structure, begging all the questions that constitute the structure/agency problem. He tries to escape the genetic perspective via the quantum and then to escape the quantum perspective via the genetic. Likewise, when K. Anthony Appiah suggests, as a way out of the structure/agency problem, that explanations that ap-

[74] Herman Rapaport, The Theory Mess: Deconstruction in Eclipse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 116-17.

of readerly subjectivity. Meanwhile, the refusal to speak for the other entails the usual paradoxes of ethical relativism: one is forced to choose between a submissive liberationism (an ethics of difference that forbids its own universalization) or an imperialist pluralism (an ethic of relativity that particularizes itself as the sole exception to the rule of relativity that it upholds), an unethical ethics (a sense of excessive responsibility, a reluctance to impose an interpretation on the radical otherness of the autonomous other, results in a real irresponsibility, one's failure to speak for the other in the name of the other's autonomy) or an authoritarian antiauthoritarianism (the defense of the reading subject's autonomy from the domination of the object ends by reducing the subject to a manipulated object in an administered world).

Both ethically and epistemologically, the antirepresentationalist project issues in its own negation. Antirepresentationalism manifests itself first as a defense of the object, in its unique otherness, against the instrumentalizing machinations of the interpreting subject, but this generous impulse ends up surreptitiously inflating the subject by liberating it from any responsibility to represent the object; the irresponsible interpreter becomes not the object's representative, but its creator and dominator. This promotion of the subject to the status of all-dominating creator, in turn, ends in an embrace of self- domination: deprived of its other, the subject is locked in a solipsistic prison—a real subjugation that is presented as the final form of liberation from objectivist narratives. This is the kind of impasse to which every search for a nonrepresentational form of interpretation has come.

At this point, I want to reframe the crisis by taking up Herman Rapaport's suggestion that what is at work is a seemingly unresolvable conflict between just two ''paradigms.'' We experience a crisis of representation on the epistemological level because we find ourselves trapped in an antinomy between utter determinism

same, the ideal of ''releasement'' (Gelassenheit) ends up as a mirror image of the representationalist premise of ''disinterested or objective inquiry.''[16] The attempt to respect the otherness of the text, to avoid instrumentalizing it, reproduces the same impossible premise of objectivist neutrality that authorizes ''method.''

A third problem with the articulation of antirepresentationalism as anti- instrumentalism is that its ethical stance implies, but cannot really be recon- ciled with, certain political commitments. If being has a special character to which we do violence when we impose meanings on it that are incompatible with that character, then we are obligated to oppose not only violent interpretive practices but violent texts—for interpretive practices produce texts, and texts are themselves interpretations of being. Spanos's anti-instrumentalist reading practice, with its primary injunction to let the text be, is also enjoined to do battle with texts that form part of the authoritarian apparatus of Western civilization. And so it must: if it is not to abet the crimes of an ecocidal and genocidal culture, it has to be capable of doing ''hermeneutic violence'' to the violence of a representationalist hermeneutics,[17] even if this ''violence'' seems incompatible with a stance of releasement or letting-be.

Here Spanos enters, despite himself, into the meta-ethical dilemma posed more generally by an ethics of respect for difference: such ethics are not necessarily more ethically satisfying than universalist ethics if they prevent us from taking action on behalf of others who have already been silenced.

Ultimately, the injunction not to speak for the other ignores the fact of our thrownness (Geworfenheit), our being-there (Dasein), and our being-with- others (Mitsein), our perpetual involuntary intervention in the lives of others and the life processes of the Earth itself—a problem Heidegger never adequately addressed.

[16] Ibid., 306.
[17] Ibid., 306-7.

If the anti-instrumentalist approach to articulating a general critique of representation by bridging the epistemic and the ethical ends in failure largely on political grounds, another approach would begin precisely at this locus of failure. Rather than attempting to build a politics out of the refusal of representation as a kind of instrumentalism, pragmatists such as Richard Rorty and Stanley Fish propose an instrumentalist epistemology as a kind of antirepresentationalist politics. In other words, for Rorty, the epistemological error of representationalism—the mistaking of a meaning that the interpreter has produced for something that has been induced, the misperception of makings as findings—is largely responsible for the phenomena of political oppression: tyrants inevitably rule not in the name of their own will to power (which would be unacceptable), but in the name of a transcendent principle, a God (even if this God is the vox populi as vox dei)[18] Rorty's instrumentalist ''anti-authoritarianism,'' then, appears as ''a protest against the idea that human beings must humble themselves before something non-human, whether the Will of God or the Intrinsic Nature of Reality.''[19] Likewise, for Stanley Fish and Roland Barthes, the interpreter who claims to be con- strained by a preexisting meaning within the text is either submitting, in fetishistic fashion, to an imaginary authority or is surreptitiously arrogating authority for himself or herself—an authority disguising itself as submission to the text.

In this way, Rorty, Fish, and Barthes offer an alternative account of interpretation that combines a refusal of the text's political authority over us with a denial that interpretations can have any epistemic authority. The epistemic claim, here, underwrites the political claim. On the terms of this instrumentalist account of

[18] Foucault, The History of Sexuality Vol. 1: An Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 86; Slavoj Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology (New York: Verso, 1989), 146.

[19] Richard Rorty, ''Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism,'' Revue Internationale de Philosophie 53, no. 207 (1999): 7.

This makes it more difficult to imagine freedom as a nondominatory community, a shared life without either systemic or sporadic violence. Furthermore, reducing texts or signs to force or action blurs the distinction between persuasion and violence, as interpretive method becomes ''necessarily an instrument for combat.''[73] Stripped of its representational character, interpretation, for Fish, is nothing but an aesthetic competition for authority and prestige; for Deleuze and Guattari, it is even more thoroughly agonistic, a pure play of force on force.

Even in one of its most sophisticated and flexible forms, then, we can see a number of recurring problems in antirepresentationalist theories of interpretation, as this cursory overview demonstrates. Every antirepresentationalist alternative to representational hermeneutics is structurally prone to falling into theoretical and practical incoherence. The hermeneutics of suspicion, the systematic mistrust of textual surface meanings, has been radicalized into what might be called a suspicion of hermeneutics, but this systematic mistrust of any notion of subtext is itself premised on an appeal to a division between appearances and reality. The thesis that the identities we seem to discover are merely discursive constructs or performances pre- supposes a preexisting, nondiscursive reality as its ground. In the name of the material, the concrete, and the body's sensuous particularity, antiessentialism produces something like a textualist idealism or inverted Platonism, from which perspective even the most materialistic forms of realism can be made to look like Platonic idealism. Attempts to explain the experience of coherence without reference to real identities rely on objective structures that constrain (and, indeed, produce) the apparent agency of subjects, but these all-powerful structures are built of signs that are supposed to be powerless to point to anything, to be always already the unstable constructs

[73] Ruthrof, The Body in Language, 137; Deleuze, in Foucault, Language, Counter- Memory, Practice, 208, emphasis mine.

dominatory, or cannot, in which case the only recourse can be to a kind of hermetic silence. The attempt to have it both ways—as, for instance, in the injunction to produce ''a-signifying signs'' or a ''nonsignifying system without a General''—can only end in confusion: not only is it ''difficult to grasp'' what Deleuze and Guattari could possibly mean by these contradictions in terms, as Ruthrof remarks, but it is not even clear whether they are intended to mean or to be grasped, since this moment of understand- ing would constitute a return to signification, communication, and represen- tation.[72]

Why, then, deny that language is, among other things, a medium of representation—or deny that this representational role is as indispensable to one's oppositional projects as it is to projects of domination? Why attempt to collapse the category of signification into the category of force? Not only does this maneuver seem at least as reductive as the kinds of strategy Deleuze and Guattari criticize, it also opens the way back to some of the ethical problems raised by pragmatist alternatives to representationalism. First of all, unlike Fish, Deleuze and Guattari do not accept the appeal to community; indeed, in the context of their attacks on order-words, the very category of the social is made to resonate with increasingly ominous overtones: in Ruthrof's words, ''the community appears as the prison guard of meanings.''

[72] Deleuze and Parnet, Dialogues, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 78; Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 21; Ruthrof, The Body in Language, 27. Alan Taylor, among others, emphasizes the two- sidedness of Deleuze and Guattari's judgments about language: even if language, by its very nature, subjectifies and objectifies, it can be made into an agency of becoming, a possibility most visible in minoritarian discourse practices (''Incorporeal Transformation''). However, Deleuze himself seems to cast this possibility in doubt: ''if societies of control and information will not give rise to forms of resistance . . . this will not be insofar as minorities will be able to acquire speech. Perhaps, speech and communication are rotten'' (quoted in Žižek, Bodies Without Organs: Deleuze and Consequences [New York: Routledge, 2004], 190).

interpretation, texts have no fixed or preexisting identity, i.e., no essence, hence no intrinsic meaning; interpretation is simply the interpreter's ''appropriation'' and use of a text to produce meanings.[20] The attribution of meaning-making power to the text is a classic example of alienation: the subject's agency is projected onto the products of the subject's own acts. It is because there is no real meaning to be represented that the text cannot claim any legitimate authority over us, and it is for the same reason that any claim to represent the meaning of the text constitutes a covert exercise of power. In Fish's words, it is because there is, in effect, no object to refer to that no interpretation can justify itself through a referential ''demonstration'' of the truth of its claims; instead, there are only performative acts of ''persuasion,'' language games as pure power plays.[21] Thus, as Barthes remarks, whenever an interpreter attributes the meaning he or she claims to find in a text to ''the Author'' (or to an author-surrogate, e.g., ''society,'' ''history,'' ''psyche,'' etc.), this is also an arrogation of authority to the interpreter.[22]

The prevalence of power over meaning in this instrumentalist account of interpretation—or rather, the collapse of meaning into power (Foucault's power/knowledge)—gives pause, however, to those who take seriously the ethical critique of representation as a form of violence done to the text by its interpreter. Indeed, the instrumentalist premise amounts to nothing more than a hypostasization of ''domination'' of the text as both justifiable and inevitable: if ''all anybody ever does with anything is use it,'' then

[20] Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 150; Rorty, ''The Pragmatist's Progress,'' in Interpretation and Overinterpretation, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 93.

[21] Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 365.

[22] Barthes, Image-Music-Text, 147.

the interpreter ''simply beats the text into a shape which will serve his own purpose.''[23]

The only ethical demand that can be recognized from the instrumentalist position, it would seem, is the injunction not to disguise power as something else. However, even this principle seems dubious when subjected to a purely pragmatic standard of judgment: if, as Foucault suggests, the games of power played out through the struggle over the meanings of texts (the texts of law, medicine, science, history) are often won by the clever disguising of subversive appropriation as obedient submission to textual authority, then why should interpreters put away their masks of obedience?[24] Indeed, how else could anyone be persuaded of an interpretation than through the giving of reasons—i.e., through some demonstration of its validity?

What seems to be required at this point in the argument is some sort of coherence theory of truth and knowledge to replace the old correspondence models. In other words, to make an antirepresentationalist theory of interpretation work, one would need some concept of interpretive legitimation without recourse to a referent. Instrumentalism calls on other resources in order to construct this—in particular, the resources of community. Thus, Fish appeals to the structuring forces of ''interpretive communities'': since interpretation is not merely private, subjective belief, but is always a public exercise in persuasion, in practice, I will always have to formulate my interpretation in terms that will be both understandable and effective in my interpretive community, using its shared codes, procedures, and conventions as to what can count as evidence and how. While nothing objective underpins this interpretive community—the rules of its language-game are quite arbitrary, and different communities will play different interpretive games—

[23] Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 150-51; Rorty, ''The Pragmatist's Progress,'' 93, and Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays, 1972-1980 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 151.

[24] Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 139, 151, 154, 156, 158.

would have to return to certain notions of language as communication and representation. Unless language has constative, communicative, representational powers, it can have no performative powers, and vice versa.[69] Deleuze and Guattari seem to know all this perfectly well. Nevertheless, their work is replete with the insistence that language is either primarily or solely performative rather than representational—and, not coincidentally, with denunciations of the intrinsic ''despotism'' or ''imperialism of the signifier,'' the inherently dominatory nature of all forms of representation.[70]

This ambitious attack on representation as domination—an attack waged simultaneously on epistemic, ethical, and political grounds—of necessity relies on representation at every step. Deleuze and Guattari can only criticize a given ''picture of the operation of power'' or ''image of thought'' by suggesting new ones, producing new generalizing representations. The very denunciation of language as ''an abominable faculty consisting in emitting, receiving, and transmitting order-words'' takes place in language, through the production of order-words, and constitutes a representation in itself—a representation of representation.[71] Of course, this is all done with the aim of subverting the processes of signification and representation, forcing them to operate in very different ways. The strangeness and difficulty of Deleuze and Guattari's style of writing, with its nonlinearity and proliferation of idiosyncratic terms, bears witness to the intensity of this struggle. Yet it would seem that there are only two possibilities: either language and representation can be made to function in ways that do not dominate, in which case they are not intrinsically

[69] Ruthrof, ''Deleuze and the Body,'' 575; Jonathan Culler, ''The Fortunes of the Performative in Literary and Cultural Theory,'' Literature and Psychology 45, no. 1-2 (Spring- Summer 1999).

[70] Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 65-66.

[71] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 71; Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 131; Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 76.

objects from their representationally fixed positions. As part of this project, they propose a ''non-signifying semiotics'' in which signs ''do not produce effects of meaning,'' instead ''entering into direct relations with their referents.'' Their own discourses are attempts to use language to overturn orders of representation, to intervene materially in the world.[66]

This attempt to avoid the element of dualism or transcendence in conventional accounts of language by collapsing signification into the realm of immanence and material forces is persuasive in some ways, but it raises serious questions. As Horst Ruthrof asks, ''how . . . is it possible for order-words to do their work?''[67] How do order-words acquire their material effectiveness in the world? Surely not without the action of human beings as their necessary mediation. To recognize this does not mean a return to a naïve conception of the subject as an autonomous tool-user and language as a neutral instrument.

Even a conception of language that utterly eliminated the autonomy of the subject, undoing or reversing the tool/user binary, would have to acknowledge that words in themselves do not possess physical force; their causal powers are of a different order. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, in order to perform their ''incorporeal transformations'' of the corporeal order, order- words require ''assemblages''—speakers, listeners, communities, institutions—to conceptualize or embody them, to enact their meanings and respond to their call.[68] What Ruthrof argues is that a thorough account of this relationship between order-words and assemblages, or between signifying practices narrowly defined and ''the much larger circle of general semiosis that is the horizon of our world,''

[66] Alan Taylor, ''Incorporeal Transformation,'' 1996, http://www.uta.edu/english/apt/d&g/ancorporeal_transformation.html (10 March 2005); Guattari, Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Penguin, 1984), 290.

[67] Ruthrof, The Body in Language, 138

[68] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 80, 85.

the fact of community guarantees that there will be no interpretive free-for-all. Thus, even though texts do not and cannot inform our interpretations of them, we find in practice that our interpretations of a text will still tend to converge, because we share an interpretive community. This convergence is not the product of the text, but of an agreement between interpreters. Thus, while the text per se can have no power over readers, the community always exercises its power to shape and constrain readers' interpretations.

The difficulty comes when one asks about the nature of the community that holds Fish's system together. Just as structuralists have never been able to explain how a structure of language in which every sign receives its meaning from every other sign, a system that supposedly can only operate as a seamless whole, could ever have arisen,[25] so Fish has trouble explaining how one joins an intepretive community. By assuming that an interpretation cannot be determined by a text but only by an interpretive community, Fish has painted himself into a corner, for this community—its rules, its norms, its conventions—can only be another text, a social text that must be read by its participants in order for it to interpellate them at all. As Noam Chomsky has observed, the plain fact that you are interpellated by a social system, even if imperfectly, means that you have somehow acquired some relatively accurate mental representations of that system, even if these are largely inarticulate and never complete.[26]

Socialization, induction into a community, is the never-finished process of constructing this representation—an immense series of interpretations of social experiences. To arrive at an understanding of what is meant in such-and-such a context by the terms good and bad, for instance, one must make all kinds of more or less accurate inferences from the actual behavior of other people in connection

[25] Horst Ruthrof, The Body in Language (London: Cassell, 2000), 85.

[26] Noam Chomsky, quoted in M. C. Haley and R. F. Lunsford, Noam Chomsky (New York: Twayne, 1994), 183.

with the use of these words, such that one will not mistake praise for blame or vice versa. If all of these inferences were utterly unconstrained by their referents (the set of experiences acquired in the process of socialization) and unconstrained by anything else (a natural structuring agency within the subject), then there could be no coherence or convergence—nor, indeed, could there be a community.

Fish is left to insist that there is nothing—no experience, no natural structure—outside of the very community that, when one is still in the process of socialization, one must be to some extent outside. The very experiences of coherence, convergence, and community, then, quite apart from their content, tell against Fish's theory, which purports to explain the first of these facts by the last. In effect, Fish's coherence theory founders on its exclusion of any process of learning or induction—i.e., of correspondence, the sufficient adequation of the subject, even on a provisional and contingent basis, to something outside itself, an object. Here it becomes apparent, as Shapiro admits, that even ''antihermeneutic'' theories require ''hermeneutic anchors'' in order to function.[27] Once again, antirepresentationalism fails to break free from representationalist foundations.

Nonetheless, the community model promulgated by Fish and others has inspired at least one proposed answer to the ethical problems of antirepresentationalism: if any single interpretation is reductive of otherness, then perhaps many coexisting interpretations, representing the text in as many different ways, can preserve difference against the grain of representationalism itself, as long as we refuse to privilege any interpretations over any others. Norman K. Denzin cites several proposals for pluralistic models of legitimation that promote a suspension of judgment, a prolongation and deepening of ambiguity and doubt, avoiding the need to

[27] Shapiro, 42.

of false consciousness or ideology: ''there is no ideology and never has been.''[63] That is to say, there is no consciousness or concept that is not itself a part of the material world, part of what Marx called ''sensuousness as practical activity''; rather, ''transcendence is always a product of immanence,'' and what we might otherwise take to be ideological falsifications of reality ''are in no way illusions, but real machinic effects.'' Thus, the critique of ideology reappears in the work of Deleuze and Guattari as a project of track- ing down and destroying claims to transcendence, reconfirming their immanence; Deleuze and Guattari suggest that we ''revamp the theory of ideology by saying that expressions and statements intervene directly in productivity, in the form of a production of meaning or sign-value.''[64]

On these terms, ideology-critique becomes less a matter of demonstrating that certain representations fail to correspond to real states of affairs and more a matter of resisting certain forces. Signs are not, in fact, representations that correspond or fail to correspond to reality; they are ''order-words,'' performatives that produce realities, ''made not to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience.'' As forces that stratify and subjectify, imposing rigid categories and rules equally on speakers, listeners, and the world, language and communication are by nature forms of domination and violence, not alternatives to them.[65] However, instead of advocating some sort of impossible escape from language, Deleuze and Guattari seek to turn language against itself in some manner, to use signs to destratify, to dislodge subjects and

[63] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 70; Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 4.

[64] Marx, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy, ed. Lewis S. Feuer (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1959), 245; Deleuze, ''Immanence: A Life,'' trans. Nick Millett, in An Introduction to the Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, ed. Jean Khalfa (London: Continuum, 2003), 172; Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 514, 89.

[65] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 76.

This hermeneutic or realist aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's theory would seem to be in tension with its pragmatist, anti-hermeneutic aspect. If we take seriously Deleuze's insistence, in Difference and Repetition, that ''in every respect, truth is a matter of production, not of adequation,'' then how can we hold simultaneously, with Deleuze, that some truths or meanings are hidden behind false appearances, waiting to be discovered?[61] One answer may be found in the relation between the virtual and the actual: if meanings can be considered virtual, emergent properties of an actual text, then their discovery is a matter of producing them, in the root sense of the word (pro-ducere: to draw forth). The line between Deleuze's pragmatism and that of Fish and Rorty would then be drawn at the text itself: for Fish and Rorty, there is no actual text. In this sense, Deleuze is able to present, in his famous analogy, his own practice of reading as ''a sort of buggery . . . taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous.'' The monstrosity of the idea produced, the interpretation, is perhaps the strongest evidence of the interpreter's creativity (the active quality of the interpreter's desires). At the same time, for Deleuze, it is crucial that the ''child'' really belong to the actual text as one of its virtual possibilities: ''the author had to actually say all I had him saying.''[62]

It would appear, then, that Deleuze and Guattari can accommodate a certain practice of interpretation and a certain concept of meaning such that they are able to distinguish between valid interpretations, on the one hand, and distorted forms of meaning or misinterpretation on the other. Indeed, it is the perennial possibility of misinterpretation, the investment of desire in formations that suppress desire, that animates this project. However, this campaign against misinterpretation is phrased as a refusal of the very notion

[61] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 154.

[62] Deleuze, Negotiations: 1972-1990, trans. M. Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 6, emphasis mine.

award victory to any single interpretation.[28] As Gergen writes, this response to the seeming inescapability of representation precludes the hegemony of any one regime of representation by treating all such regimes as ''local, provisional, and political''; all we need oppose, on this account, is the imperialistic extension of any single discourse beyond the boundaries of its native discourse community. Even scientific and moral discourses, Gergen suggests, need not be accorded any universal validity; they are merely to be seen as useful in the practices of some specific communities.[29]

Here Gergen assumes what he ought to question: are there any shared standards for usefulness across communities, or might what is helpful to one community be harmful to another? Indeed, a primary attraction of the pragmatist notion that truth is utility is that it allows us to understand the diversity of beliefs as a result of the diversity of interests: depending on the particular agent's needs and wants, not only what is useful but also the very standards of utility may vary. Truth becomes a thoroughly contingent notion.

Problems with this pluralist pragmatism only become apparent when one stops imagining a single agent (or a homogeneous community) operating in solitary contentment and imagines instead multiple agents needing to coordinate action across two or more communities. If any two communities do not share any assumptions, then by definition, a speaker located in one community cannot have any warrant for making an argument in the context of the other community. How would this kind of epistemological and moral incommensurability be handled in practice, if there can be no argument accepted as rational across such a gap, and therefore no negotiation? An appeal to some impossible practice of cultural nonintervention will not do: in a globalized world, more than ever, the requirements of practice always throw us among others, and

[28] Norman K. Denzin, Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc., 1997), 13-14.

[29] Gergen, 414.

in practice, decisions have to be made. Without any universals to mediate between different communities, it would appear that all cooperation is merely a coercive normalization of the different.[30]

Moreover, the entities to which communitarian pluralists appeal are not exactly self-evident. If interpretive communities are constituted by agreement, where is a perfect structure of agreements to be found? One might equally ask Gergen exactly where one community ends and another begins, since in practice, as Andrew Sayer notes, one never finds ''separate, non- communicating discourses or local knowledges.''[31] What, in fact, would it mean for subjects to ''speak and act on their own behalf,'' when this ownness is always composed of otherness?[32] Indeed, if we take seriously the notion of the subject as inherently decentered or plural (such that even my ascription of identity to myself is always a kind of error, an interning of differences within the false identity of a self-representation), then would such a pluralism permit me to speak for myself? It seems that, on the level of ethics, interpretive pluralism requires an individual—an indivisible, autonomous, atomic identity—to which it is ontologically constrained to deny existence.

Thus, one major problem with the pluralist project of protecting others from one's own regime of representation is that it is never clear where a safe self, whether collective or individual, is to be found: it seems that every identity can be ultimately found to consist of others. Nor is it clear that ethical pluralism can avoid contradicting itself by issuing universalizing prescriptions, as Gergen insists, since the failure to proscribe universalizing discourses de

[30] Andrew Sayer, Realism and Social Science (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), 75.

[31] Ibid., 75, 77-78; Sonia Kruks, ''Identity Politics And Dialectical Reason: Beyond An Epistemology Of Provenance,'' Hypatia 10, no. 2 (Spring 1995).

[32] Deleuze, quoted in Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 211, emphasis mine; Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 17; Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 142.

tion as well as a process of production. Since the forces that appropriate an object can have affirmative or negative qualities, the question that Deleuze substitutes for the classical interpretive What is it?—namely, Which forces have got hold of it?—is also always to be phrased as an ethical question, a question about the quality of the desire or will to power currently invested in the object.[57]

Presumably, then, we are enjoined to appropriate the object only in ethically appropriate ways. Freud's psychoanalysis of the Wolf-Man is to be discredited largely on ethical grounds, as he reduces the patient's dreams of wolves to an Oedipal symptom, a disguised representation of a traumatic memory, thereby imposing a unified identity on the multiple and interrupting the patient's becoming-wolf.[58] In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari's critique of representation cuts against every hermeneutics of suspicion, every interpretive strategy that claims to know better: speaking for others is always to be shunned. At the same time, schizoanalysis is still in many respects a classical interpretive project, a hermeneutic of suspicion; it is a ''symptomatology,'' an ''art of piercing masks'' to discover what forces really are in possession of the object in question, what desiring-machines really compose the subject in question.[59] Pluralism is distinguished here from an arbitrary relativism, since there can be wrong answers to the questions. Thus, Deleuze attacks clinicians' use of the term ''sadomasochism'' to interpret behavior, not so much on ethical grounds, but because it fails to correspond to reality: it is a sign without a referent, imposing a false unity on real differences.[60]

[57] Ronald Bogue, Deleuze on Literature (London: Routledge, 2003), 11; Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, 76-77; May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 70.

[58] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 28-29, 32.

[59] Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, 3, 5; Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 338.

[60] Deleuze, Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: George Braziller, 1971), 115.

of a predetermined content. Likewise, a certain form of Marxist critique reduces every text to an expression (either ''scientific'' or ''ideological'') of the supposed social totality. By definition, such a process of ''interpretation'' must entail ''delegation of power'' to the interpreter, the representative. In place of representational psychoanalysis or ideology- critique, then, Deleuze and Guattari propose schizoanalysis, a practice of the performative construction of subjectivity (in Deleuze's later use of the term, a practice of liberatory ''subjectivation'' rather than normalizing ''subjectification''). The point is not to accurately represent a collection of mental contents but to produce something useful: ''Experiment, don't signify and interpret!''[55]

In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari seem to rediscover a form of pragmatism that either subsumes the category of meanings to that of uses or replaces interpretation with appropriation: it is always ''the force which appropriates the thing'' that determines its meaning. Unlike Rorty, however, their practices of use and appropriation seem to have built into them an ethical as well as a political dimension, ''immanent criteria'' to distinguish ''legitimate uses'' from ''illegitimate ones.''[56] This ethics of use manifests itself in two ways. First of all, instead of hypostasizing interpretation as an aggressive domination of the text, the active subject's imposition of form (morphe) on a passive matter (hyle), Deleuze and Guattari suggest a more reciprocal sort of interaction between the participants in a schizoanalytic process, conceived as engaged in a mutual becoming. Secondly, schizoanalysis is a project of evalua-

[55] Félix Guattari, ''A Liberation of Desire,'' in Homosexualities and French Literature, ed. George Stambolian and Elaine Marks (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 59; Deleuze, Foucault, trans. Séan Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 103; Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 54-55; Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 139.

[56] Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, 3; Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 109.

jure—e.g., aggressive forms of racism or nationalism—would comprise a de facto endorsement of them.[33] All the old ethical problems of relativism come back to haunt the pluralist project. Thus, both internally and externally, in theory and in practice, pluralist forms of antirepresentationalism fail to distinguish themselves from the representationalism that they apprehend as reductively monist.

The return of monism within pluralism takes other, more disturbing forms when we try to imagine, on its terms, acts of interpretation as a social practice, a dialogue or exchange. As we have seen, pragmatism does offer a seemingly pluralist alternative to essentialism: texts only acquire identities when they are instrumentalized—that is to say, through ''interpretation'' as ''appropriation.''[34] One text, then, should be susceptible of indefinitely or even infinitely many uses, so that comparing our interpretations of it will no longer be a matter of deciding which is the most accurate representation of its meaning; rather, representationalist hermeneutics gives way to pluralist aesthetics as interpreters show one another how many different meanings they have constructed from the same text. However, reducing the interpretation of texts to the use of instruments or the creation of artworks gives rise to problems when we try to explain just how this encounter of interpretations with one another can take place.

First of all, there is the question of how any two interpretations of a text can be said to diverge or differ if there is no way to establish that they are representing the same text. For pluralists, since the text has no intrinsic form, it can only be given its identity by readers: in Barthes's words, ''a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.''[35] If a text has no identity but that given it by readers, however, then what lets us see Kafka's The Trial, as treated by Wilhelm Emrich, as the same book treated by Valerie

[33] Gergen, 414; May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 129-30.

[34] Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 151-52.

[35] Barthes, Image-Music-Text, 148; Rorty, ''The Pragmatist's Progress,'' 97.

Greenberg or Clayton Koelb? ''However much we allow our interpretations of a work to differ,'' as Richard Shusterman remarks, ''we must allow for the reidentification of the same work in order to talk about 'the' work (and indeed 'its' different reception) at all.'' Even Joseph Margolis admits, despite his pragmatist critique of ''invariant realism''—the claim that discursive play must be anchored in a nondiscursive object world—it is obvious that ''nothing could be referentially fixed [i.e., made into an object of inter- subjective discourse] that did not exhibit a certain stability of nature.''[36] The pluralist gesture of privileging the instability of meaning ends in canceling one of the constitutive properties of meaning and the sign in general— namely, its iterability, its ability to remain relatively self-similar across time and space.[37]

Indeed, it is not only the identity of the sign which pluralism tends to dispense with, but the identity of the time and space in which discourse unfolds, since instrumentalism not only reduces the text to the (infinite) sum of its possible uses but also reduces the object world, the world as an ensemble of objects, to a text whose meaning is infinitely interpretable. On what terrain, then, can two interpreters meet to share or compare interpretations?

For Foucault, the only possible answer is a seemingly improbable one: ''the adversaries do not belong to a common space''; rather, the ''place of confrontation'' can only be quite literally a kind of nowhere or ''non-place.''[38] Gone is the situatedness of discourse. With it, too, the earth itself—in the words of Kate Soper, ''a 'na-

[36] Margolis, quoted in Richard Shusterman, Surface and Depth: Dialectics of Criticism and Culture (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 194-95; Shusterman, Surface and Depth, 194-95.

[37] Ellen Spolsky, ''Darwin and Derrida: Cognitive Literary Theory as a Species of Post- Structuralism,'' Poetics Today 23, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 50; Jacques Derrida, Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 324-25.

[38] Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 150.

result is a form of ''pluralist interpretation'' that avoids relativism, taking account of the multiple while also asserting the ''univocity of being.''[53]

One key to this balancing act appears to be the manner in which Deleuze frames the relationship between what he calls ''the virtual,'' ''the actual,'' and ''the real.'' Actuality and virtuality are opposed to one another, but both are moments of reality, and in that sense, they are complementary as well.

Thus, a ''real object,'' an object in a given, ''actual'' state of being, may also be possessed of any number of '' 'virtual' or 'embryonic' elements''—proper- ties, powers, other states that may emerge through some process of becom- ing. Plural world-potentials subsist and unfold within a single world.[54] In this way, Deleuze is able to avoid the extremes of discursive idealism and of a crude or naïve realism.

What does all this imply for the relation between interpretation and representation? Notwithstanding their critiques of the discursive constructivism and relativism endemic to postmodern theory, Deleuze and Guattari are equally committed to a critique of representation and the sign in general.

Their entire corpus can be read as an extended antirepresentationalist attack on the kinds of totalizing interpretive systems beloved by psychoanalytic and Marxist orthodoxy. ''Psychoanalysis,'' complains Guattari, ''transforms and deforms the unconscious by forcing it to pass through the grid of its system of inscription and representation,'' reducing its products to symptoms or expressions

[53] Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia Uni- versity Press, 1983), 5; Iain MacKenzie, ''Deleuze & Guattari's Post-structuralist Philosophy,'' Political Studies Association Conference Proceedings 1996, http://www.psa.ac.uk/cps/ 1996/mack.pdf (10 March 2005), 1240; Deleuze, Difference & Repetition, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 37.

[54] Deleuze, Difference & Repetition, 208-9; Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, Dialogues II, trans. Hugh Tomlinson et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 148, 150-51.

ture' which is not the cultural effect of productive interaction but the prior condition of any such interaction''—vanishes.[39]

The crowning irony of a theory that aimed to dislodge the humanist anthropos from the center of the universe is that it seems to end not in an ecological materialism, a return of the supposedly autonomous subject to the productive matrix of nature, but a kind of textualist idealism, a kind of paradoxical return to the disembedded and disembodied subject of Cartesian dualism, the master of a nature that is as nothing before the power of instrumental logos.[40] Nothing external to this decentered subject, this subject that has been dissolved or disseminated into the sum of its practices of subjection and self-production, contains or constrains it; the body, too, is merely another infinitely reinterpretable text, neither a limit nor a foundation.[41]

Granted, claims that our bodies need to be interpreted in order to be experienced as meaningful are demonstrably grounded in historical experience (we can observe some remarkable variations over time and place as to how various bodily shapes, gestures, pleasures, and pains are interpreted) and politically emancipatory (if the body does not predetermine its own interpretation, then biology is not destiny, and practices of radical self-fashioning become possible).[42] However, Crispin Sartwell complains that ''the hegemony of language in recent philosophy . . . elides the physical'' and ''deemphasizes or textualizes the body.'' When taken to the textualist extreme, this notion of embodiment as unconstrained interpre-

[39] Kate Soper, ''Realism, Humanism and the Politics of Nature,'' Theoria, December 2001, 58, italics mine.

[40] Mark S. Lussier, ''Blake's Deep Ecology,'' Studies in Romanticism 35, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 393-94; Rorty, Consequences of Pragmatism, 139.

[41] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 91-92; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 79, 85.

[42] Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 34-35.

nate, and orderly, characterized by ineluctable processes of aging and mortality.[49]

In light of these problems, as Butler remarks, some theorists have argued that the image of nature or the body as ''blank,'' merely waiting to be inscribed, is to be rejected; instead, they have suggested reframing these as active agencies that both prompt and resist our own projects. Such a conception, she notes, has led some to a reconsideration of the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.[50] Indeed, their insistence that ''everything is body and corporeal'' has been a tonic to excessive textualism, and they have produced a powerful materialist critique of what they have called, following the philosopher Gilbert Simondon, the ''hylomorphic schema,'' the conception of matter as formless and featureless.[51] If the reduction of Being to a blank slate, a representation without a prior presence, tends to reinstate the invidious distinction between acting subject and passive object, Deleuze and Guattari have proposed instead a thoroughgoing vitalism, a kind of naturalist ontology that posits active striving everywhere. At the same time, this ''becoming-realism'' is made to carry the ontological weight of an epistemological pluralism: the world is neither my subjective construct nor something that is capable of being reduced to a single objective account.[52] The

[49] Noam Chomsky, in Noam Chomsky and Kate Soper, ''On Human Nature: Noam Chomsky interviewed by Kate Soper,'' Red Pepper, August 1998, http://www.redpepper.org.uk/culArch/XCHOMSKY.HTML (10 March 2005); Bryan S. Turner, review of Bodies That Matter, by Judith Butler, in Contemporary Sociology 24, no. 3 (May 1995): 332.

[50] Butler, Bodies That Matter, 4.

[51] Gilles Deleuze, The Logic of Sense, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, ed. Con- stantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 136; Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 409.

[52] Joanne Martin, ''Meta-theoretical Controversies in Studying Organizational Culture,'' February 2002, http://faculty-gsb.stanford.edu/martin/personal/Meta-theoretical_Controversies _in_Studying_Organizational_Culture.pdf/ (10 March 2005), 4-6.

tation, as Hilary Rose comments, seems to have little in common with our actual experience of ''the body I inhabit, which bleeds, smells, hurts in an untidy intrusive way.''[43]

This apparent elimination of the body has long been a matter of concern for theorists engaged in the political critique of representation. Feminist theorists have often attempted to write the body back into the picture, but have too frequently run up against the problem of essentialism.[44] Foucault, too, attempts to re-materialize the body, but the corporeal being that emerges from books such as Discipline & Punish and The History of Sexuality is altogether too plastic, too much a tabula rasa, a thing that is ''mark[ed]'' by power/knowledge and made to produce ''signs.''[45] Judith Butler attempts to bridge the gap between the seeming limitlessness of the textualized body and our experience of embodiment as concrete finitude via the concept of ''performativity,'' ''that capacity of discourse to produce effects through reiteration'': finitude and limitation appear, then, as ''the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter'' produced by a ''process of materialization that stabilizes over time.'' Rather than imagining social construction as a single act of production, we should see it as a continuous activity of reproduction that submits the actual plasticity of being to the appearance of control and stability.[46] This formulation is anticipated by Nietzsche's remark that ''Truth is undoubtedly the sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking process of history''—a kind of reification of signifying processes into seemingly solid structures, analogous

[43] Crispin Sartwell, Obscenity, Anarchy, Reality (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 13; Hilary Rose, quoted in Richard Cleminson, ''Making Sense of the Body: Anarchism, Nudism and Subjective Experience,'' Bulletin of Spanish Studies 81, no. 6 (September 2004): 697-98.

[44] Ruthrof, The Body In Language, 1-2.

[45] Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 25-26.

[46] Judith Butler, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ''Sex'' (London: Routledge, 1993), 20, 8-9.

to Sartre's ''practico-inert.''[47] The resistance that discursive forces may encounter from time to time, then, does not come from some extradiscursive bodily reality but from other discursive forces.

On the one hand, this reformulation of construction as materialization seems to offer a satisfying reconciliation of transcendental possibility with empirical limitation, all without resorting to any explanatory principle outside of discursive practice. If material nature seems to offer resistance to discursive practice, this is merely the internal friction generated by discursive forces themselves. On the other hand, it is by no means clear that nature and the material can be so subsumed. First of all, as Horst Ruthrof points out, if the material limitations that seem intrinsic to bodies were really only discursive effects, then they should be specific to just one discourse community or another, so that ''significations concerning death, the need to eat and drink certain things and not others, the inability to survive a fall from certain heights, and so on'' would vary dramatically from one discourse community to the next. In practice, however, we find that this ''in so many respects, especially those having to do with the basic conditions of the body, cultures produce very similar texts''—from a Butlerian standpoint, a seemingly inexplicable outcome.[48] Likewise, the physical development of bodies, while inevitably marked by and interpreted through discursive structures (so that, for instance, the relatively fluid continuum of bodily states between childhood and pubescence is divided up by arbitrarily imposed social boundaries, rites of passage, and so forth), this development is also remarkably universal, determi-

[47] Nietzsche, quoted in Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, 144; Sartre, The Critique of Dialectical Reason vol. 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles, trans. Alan Sheridan- Smith, ed. Jonathan Ree (London: Humanities Press, 1976), 337.

[48] Ruthrof, ''Deleuze and the Body: Eluding Kafka's 'Little Death Sentence,' '' South Atlantic Quarterly 96, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 573.

5. Anarchist Hermeneutics as Ethics and Ecology

PROUDHON REJECTED HEGEL'S NOTION OF SYNTHESIS OR THE AUFHEBEN (OVERCOMING) of differences, seeing this as a mask for the domination of the other by the self or of the self by the other, and proposed instead the antinomy or dynamic balance of these opposing claims, a conversion of mere antagonism (a competitive relationship) into a productive tension (a cooperative relationship). Anarchist theory thus demands a hermeneutics that avoids domination of self or other.

In light of these ethical commitments, anarchist interpretive practices can and should appropriate the techniques and insights of other schools, from psychoanalysis and semiotics to dialogism and deconstruction. It can do so without regard to propriety; it ought to do so without also borrowing their restrictions, their constraints, their limitations. This means that we should appropriate technique in a critical manner, avoiding a careless eclecticism.

If anarchists are to be theoretical magpies (as, ultimately, all theorists are), then we must reinscribe what we borrow within a wider sense of purpose. But what are the limitations of these methods, and what consequences do they have for the interpretive enterprise?

ONTOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

As Kenneth Burke proposes, a methodology (a recipe, however complex, for ''how, when, and where to look for'' something) pre-

that is yet another exercise in the representational appropriation of power? The repressed term (representation) simply returns again.

Along these lines, it is disturbing that Žižek urges radicals to lose their ''fear of state power,'' their sense ''that because it's some form of control, it's bad,'' and calls for the revival of Lenin's critique of freedoms of speech, thought, and decision.[55] Surely there can be no neo-Leninist solution to the crisis of representation, a crisis precipitated in part by the vanguardist pretensions of Leninism.

The limits of those pretensions are most gravely challenged by one who also makes their last best defense: Louis Althusser. In scrapping Marxism as an ''explanatory model'' in favor of an antiessentialist concept of ''overdetermination,'' Althusser evacuates the category of ''science'' even as he makes a last-ditch attempt to reerect the crumbling distinction between it and the all-consuming category of ''ideology''; for him, as for the neopragmatists, interpretation is no longer tied to a correspondence theory of truth.[56]

Such a perspective, for which ''all consciousness is false consciousness'' and even ''history features . . . as an object of theory, not as a real object,'' is also an antirepresentationalism, albeit one that tries to retain the representational privilege Lenin assigned to the bearers of scientific knowledge.[57] Similarly, Burke's pragmatism acknowledges that there is, in social practice, no escape from ideology: in its violence, the world can irrupt through our ''terministic screens''—''history,'' as Jameson puts it, ''is what hurts''—but our responses to this world are inevitably mediated by ideology, that compound of ready-made ''beliefs and judgments'' that is available for acts of persuasion, the means by which an author is able to persuade a reader about something particular by appealing to his or her feelings about things in general: ''I make this exhor-

[55] Ibid.; On Belief (London: Routledge, 2001), 114.

[56] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 35.

[57] Eagleton, The Eagleton Reader, 242; Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, Reading Capital (London: Verso, 1979), 117.

tation in the terms of what has already been accepted . . . I shall argue only for my addition, and assume the rest. If people believe eight, I can recommend nine; I can do so by the manipulation of their eightish assumptions.'' Small wonder, then, that Burke ends up in the slough of despond from which it appears that ''hierarchy'' and ''bureaucracy'' are the fate of a species condemned infinitely to repeat the cycle of ''purification'' dictated by its authoritarian representations—the ultimate ''repetition compulsion.''[58] In a pan-ideological world, there is no end to ideological power struggle, for this struggle can never come to rest in a referent, an appeal to something universally true outside of the particular interests of a party in the struggle: thus Foucault remarks that ''the notion of ideology'' per se is no longer meaningful, since ''it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to stand as truth.''[59]

Representation, in contemporary theory, constitutes the very perspective from which it is refused. It is both epistemologically untenable and coextensive with our knowing, ethically repugnant and intrinsic to our doings. This is the ethical and epistemological crisis of representation. On what grounds can we sustain any objection to representation if we are always already deprived of any alternative?

[58] Burke, Language As Symbolic Action, 45; Jameson, Political Unconscious, 102; Burke, Counter-Statement (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) 146, 161; Philosophy of Literary Form, 388; Language As Symbolic Action, 15, 17.

[59] Foucault, The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 60.

it subtends (a subjective reality as experienced by some subject or subjects), not in order to make the empty pluralist gesture of passively affirming the equal truth-value of all such realities, nor in order to normalize the errant subject by pointing to the supposedly un- questionable truth of some objective reality without any reference to subjects, but to open an exchange in which multiple subjects can negotiate a shared and more complex conception of reality as a common situation in which they can collectively act.

The attempt to extrapolate critical tools from the text itself is a way of moving between the passive-receptive and active-critical moments of de Cleyre's double reading. This sort of dialogical interchange is precisely the third way that Bookchin seeks between the aggressive claims of technocracy and the passivity of deep ecology: nature intervenes in us, and we intervene in it, hopefully in a spirit of care and openness to the other. Ultimately, sameness and difference do not contradict but mutually condition one another: ''Diversity and unity do not contradict each other as logical antinomies. To the contrary, unity is the form of diversity, the pattern that gives it intelligibility and meaning, and hence a unifying principle not only of ecology but of reason itself.''[61] Anarchist readers practice the process of reading as an encounter with the text in which both text and reader have a potential for challenge, contestation, and critique, as well as collaboration, cooperation, and change.

Thus, in response to the ethical and epistemological crisis of the human sciences—a crisis occasioned by the antirepresentational turn within an endeavor that is intrinsically hermeneutical (hence intrinsically representational)—anarchist theory offers a hermeneutical epistemology that is neither simply antirepresentational (in the contemporary sense) nor simply representational (in the traditional sense), but deeply ethical and ecological in its outlook.

[61] Bookchin, Ecology of Freedom, 306-7.

instead to extrapolate theory from the text itself: not to enter the reading without theoretical tools, but to use these to discover another set of tools within the structure of the text—perhaps even the master's tools with which one might disassemble the master's house.

A valuable resource for a dialogical, ethnological, or inductive anarchist criticism would be Paulo Freire's philosophy of education, and the work of Freirean social philosopher Howard Richards. These neo-phenomenological theorists coherently combine a respect for difference and a certain critical realism with concrete practices aimed at producing functional unities- within-difference. Such practices do not take the form of a coercive methodology, as Spanos fears, but neither are they unmethodical. The dialogical methods propounded by Freire and Richards—beginning, as Goodman recommends, with an investigation of both the context in which dialogue takes place and the native context or ''life-world'' of the addressee, and going on to discover significant ''themes'' within that context, producing ''hinge themes'' to bridge contexts, and improvising a shareable code from those themes—are readily applicable to literature; and while they align themselves with Marxism, as Alan Carter points out, their attitude is far more consistent with the anarchist rejection of vanguardism.[59] A dialogical researcher, Graeber and Jablon suggest, will avoid the unnecessary and one- sided imposition of ''invader themes''—the ''official'' or ''scientific'' language that Bakhtin called ''authoritative discourse'' and that Geertz, following Heinz Kohut, calls ''experience-distant'' language.[60] Through this process, one delineates the specific shape of a ''symbolic structure'' and the corresponding subject positions

[59] Richards, Letters From Quebec, 2.40.15-16, 2.40.19; Alan Carter, Marx: A Radical Critique (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 167.

[60] Richards, Letters From Quebec, 2.40.18; Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 342-43; Clifford Geertz, Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 57.

3. Anarchism as a Critique of Representation

IS IT TRUE, HISTORICALLY SPEAKING, THAT ANARCHISM HAS ALWAYS REJECTED representation in all its forms? Is it possible to conduct political action without the use of symbolic representations—for instance, engaging in rhetorical persuasion, making factual claims about what is the case, assessing the opinions and consulting the wishes of the group, communicating intentions in order to coordinate action—in a word, without language? Does such a sweeping critique of representation leave room for anarchism, or for any radical project at all? Or is it possible for anarchists to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate representational practices? If not, how did anarchist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries succeed in waging serious and sometimes successful struggles against capital and the State?

Here, we might observe that the accounts of anarchist resistance to representation overstate the case. For instance, when Eisenzweig calls Lazare's intervention in the Dreyfus Affair unique, arguing that for the anarchist alone, ''Dreyfus did not have to represent anything,'' this interpretation can hardly account for the rhetoric of Lazare's declaration that Dreyfus ''incarnates, in himself . . . the centuries-old sufferings of the people of martyrs'':

''Through him, I see Jews languishing in Russian prisons . . . Rumanian Jews refused the rights of man, Galician Jews starved by financial trusts and ravaged by peasants made fanatics by their priests . . . Algerian Jews, beaten and pillaged, unhappy immigrants

dying of hunger in the ghettos of New York and London, all of those whom desperation drives to seek some haven in the far corners of the inhabited world where they will at last find that justice which the best of them have claimed for all humanity.''[1] There could hardly be a stronger appeal to identification and identity than this (unless one counts the personal letter to Dreyfus in which Lazare writes, ''Never shall I forget what I suffered in my Jewish skin the day of your military degradation, when you represented my martyred and insulted race''[2]). For Lazare, it seems, Dreyfus's ''representative'' character is not only a trick or a trap, but in some sense, a truth. Anarchist resistance to identification is balanced by a motif of reidentification: as Goldman wrote, ''The problem that confronts us . . . is how to be one's self and yet in oneness with others, to feel deeply with all human beings and still retain one's own characteristic qualities.''[3]

Perhaps, then, anarchists succeeded in organizing because their opposition to representation was incomplete and inconsistent. Indeed, post- structuralist critics such as May, Newman, and Koch have found ''classical'' anarchist theory (save, in some instances, for the marginal works of Max Stirner) to be shot through with residues of metaphysical, foundationalist Western thought—a thoroughgoing essentialism. As Todd May writes in his Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, ''almost all anarchists rely on a unitary concept of human essence'' to argue for the abolition of the State: ''the human essence is good; therefore, there is no need for the exercise of power.'' From an antirepresentationalist perspective, however, the very notion of a human essence ''leads to its

[1] Bernard Lazare, quoted in Michael R. Marrus, The Politics of Assimilation: The French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 188.

[2] Lazare, quoted in Pierre Vidal-Naquet, The Jews: History, Memory, and the Present, trans. and ed. David Ames Curtis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 86.

[3] Goldman, Anarchism, 213-14.

through categories drawn from the relevant situation of the text at hand. Here Graeber's words recall Proudhon's declaration that the worker is also potentially a philosopher, that the radical intellectual's role is to draw out the intellectual content that is implicit within the worker's practical experience: in practice, this would result in something like ''a form of auto- ethnography, combined, perhaps, with a certain utopian extrapolation'' of the potentials implicit within the actual.[57]

Such an ethnological approach to interpretation strikingly resembles the ''inductive criticism'' of which Madelyn Jablon writes in her introduction to Black Metafiction. She detects an impatience among scholars of African- American literature with ''the shortcomings of imposing structuralist, post- structuralist, psychoanalytic and feminist theories on black texts,'' a process with implicitly colonial overtones, and notes the emergence of ''an inductive method of investigation'': ''Instead of imposing theory on texts, critics begin with an analysis of the works themselves and extrapolate theory from them.''[58] Practices of theory-imposition, which Graeber would identify as an essentially vanguardist approach, are by definition inappropriate to an anarchist literary theory. They are also perhaps redundant: for sufficiently attentive and creative readers, literary texts can be seen to already raise the same issues that another reader would import to them with heavy citations and terminology borrowed from Lacan or Althusser, Macherey or Bakhtin, Derrida or Foucault. A text does not simply deconstruct itself, much less interpret itself, but in a sense, it does anticipate its own critique, since it emerged from a creative process of which interpretation and critique are a continuation. To preempt the text out of a fear of mystification, to read it against a theory that rigidly determines its findings in advance, is to dominate it. It is possible

[57] Ibid.

[58] Madelyn Jablon, Black Metafiction: Self-Consciousness in African-American Literature. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 1-2.

antinuclear activists in in the seventies, and so on.[54] Along similar lines, David Graeber surmises that this very lack of a theoretical canon is a prime reason why ''anarchism . . . has made such small inroads into the academy''; while Marxism is the invention of an intellectual, ''anarchism, on the other hand, was never really invented by anyone.'' Proudhon styled his own ''mutualist'' economic theories after the example of a Lyons workers' association, the Mutualists: ''I see, I observe, I write.''[55] Where anarchists group themselves by some ''organizational principle or form of practice,'' e.g., ''Anarcho-Syndicalists and Anarcho-Communists, Insurrectionists and Platformists, Cooperativists, Individualists, and so on,'' Marxisms are named for leaders and intellectuals, e.g., ''Leninists, Maoists, Trotskyites, Gramscians, Althusserians'' Accordingly, academic discourse tends to be conducted in the proprietarian language of Marxism, the language of sectarian vanguards. Speculating on what form anarchism might take in an academic setting, as a ''non-vanguardist revolutionary intellectual practice,'' Graeber suggests, like Goodman, that anarchist intellectual practice could take contemporary anthropology as its methodological model.[56]

Just as the ethnographer's role consists not in dictating truth to communities from outside them (telling the peasants whether they are a truly revolutionary class or not), but in ''teasing out the hidden symbolic, moral, or pragmatic logics that underlie certain types of social action, the way people's habits and actions makes sense in ways that they are not themselves completely aware of,'' the anarchist interpreter would make some effort to think in and

[54] Bookchin, ''Anarchism: Past and Present,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 17 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031117102316395.

[55] David Graeber, ''The Twilight of Vanguardism,'' 18 May 2003, http://www.dualpower.net/print.php?sid=61 (accessed 2 June 2003); Proudhon, General Idea, 102.

[56] Graeber, ''Twilight of Vanguardism.''

own practices of oppression''; it is already a representationalism, a ''globalizing discourse'' whose effect is ''tyranny.''[4] Accordingly, May, Newman, and Koch have sought to detach anarchism from what they see as its investment in essentialism by wedding it to post-structuralism; these adjustments to anarchist theory, they argue, will make it into a more suitable and up-to-date instrument for political practice.

We have already called these pragmatic claims into question: post- structuralism has by no means demonstrated that it is able to generate a practice coherent with its own premises, nor even a set of premises consistent with themselves. The question is whether the anarchist tradition is liable to the antiessentialist critique leveled at it by its would-be post-structuralist rescuers, particularly since, as we have already noted, the radicality of the anarchist negation of representation is wider in its implications than most have recognized. What is an anarchist ontology like? Pursuing this question ought to teach us some very important lessons about the current crisis of representation, its origins, and its limits.

ANARCHISM AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY

It is perhaps easiest to dismiss the charge that classical anarchist theory was a simpleminded naturalism. Bakunin's appeal to ''nature'' is not a refusal to see the ways in which subjects are socially constructed. Individual subjectivity is socially produced: ''The real individual,'' he writes, is over- determined by ''a confluence of geographic, climatic, ethnographic, hygenic, and economic influences, which constitute the nature of his family, his class, his nation, his race.'' Here, one's ''nature'' is less constitutive than constituted. ''Every individual,'' Bakunin continues, ''inherits at birth,

[4] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 13; Koch, ''Poststructuralism,'' 340.

in different degrees, not ideas and innate sentiments, as the idealists claim, but only the capacity to feel, to will, to think, and to speak''—a set of ''rudimentary faculties without any content.'' These empty ''faculties'' must be filled in with a ''content'' that comes from generations of cultural development, the creation of a ''common consciousness'' that is ''the intellectual and moral patrimony of a nation, a class, and a society.'' Since each real individual is always ''the product of society,'' all that is ''natural''—in other words, inevitable or inescapable—is the ''influence that society naturally exercises over him.''

Thus, since they do not exist ready-made in the human soul, ''mutual aid and solidarity'' must be ''developed'' through concrete experience in society.[5] In short, Bakunin is not a naturalist, founding his hopes on the assumption that human behavior is driven by unvarying natural drives and instincts, but a constructivist: for him, anarchy is not a ''state of nature,'' but something that must be collectively willed, struggled for, built, achieved, produced—in a word, constructed.

Bakunin's anarchism does not rely on unsupportable assumptions about the ''underlying intrinsic properties'' of the human subject, apart from the manifest behavior of actual human beings in history. Neither is it necessarily yoked to a mystified notion of the State as ''essentially immoral and irrational,'' as Newman charges, citing Bakunin's declaration that ''It would be impossible to make the State change its nature… All States are bad in the sense that by their nature, that is, by the conditions and objectives of their existence, they constitute the opposite of human justice, freedom, and equality.'' This passage seems to support Newman's interpretation, but on closer inspection, it is not so clear that Bakunin is appealing to a theory of essences here. Notice that the phrase ''the conditions and objectives of their exis- tence'' is being offered as a substitute for the phrase ''their nature.'' This implies that there is no ''nature''

[5] Mikhail Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 89, 239-41, emphasis mine.

''dialogue'' where interpreter and text ''question'' one another.[53] Instead of launching a critique either from a fixed array of categories or from nowhere, an anarchist reading of the literary text would seek to enable the text to supply the materials for its own critique—to manifest the content to be investigated and to specify the methods for reorganizing that content. This is not to say that such a reading would simply reproduce the surface or self-representation of the text; that would be anything but radical. Instead, it is to enter a complex struggle with the work, both to emancipate the reader from his or her static subject position (to allow the work to surprise the reader, to exceed and undermine his or her predetermined categories), and to liberate the truth of the work from its concealment (to dislodge it from whatever ideological devices it may yet be held captive by).

This process of mutual transformation is suggested by a recent polemic in which Bookchin urges anarchists to reconceptualize anarchism ''in terms of the changing social contexts of our era.'' In order to speak to the ''living problems'' of particular people, anarchism must be translated into the cultural dialect of whoever needs it; ''rather than . . . resurrect ideas, expressions, slogans and a weary vernacular that belong to eras past,'' we should make the effort ''to solidarize with libertarian traditions and concepts that are clearly relevant to dominated peoples.'' Bookchin denies that anarchism can or should be treated ''as a fixed body of theory and practice''; it ''does not have the proprietary character of Marxism with its body of definable texts, commentators, and their offshoots,'' but is a movement in which a core ethic is rearticulated time and time again in the historical idioms of particular people in specific struggles—turn-of-the-century Argentinean factory workers or migrant laborers in the logging camps of the American Northwest, Spanish peasants in the thirties, militant Black Panthers and Parisian students in the sixties, New England

[53] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 246.

whose end is not foretold from the beginning. At the same time, to simply engage the object in a spirit of naïve receptivity, hands supposedly empty of methodological tools, is to risk domination by the text, or even more likely, by the unseen context of cultural tradition and personal prejudice that mediates this encounter. The alternative to methodological domination is not an escape from method. Rather, to restate Burke's insight in Chomsky's terms, where a fixed vocabulary constrains, a certain kind of grammar might actually liberate, producing in its simplicity the infinite complexity of living speech, with its unlimited range of meanings. Instead of a symbolic dictionary, we need something like what Burke called a grammar and a rhetoric of meaning, a systematic understanding of how meanings are put together, how they can be constructed and reconstructed.

It is my sense that this is where the anarchist legacy might most fruitfully contribute to the work of literary criticism. Because we recognize a certain continuity of practice between the activities of poiesis and interpretation, because we see the sense in which a literary text is always an effort to interpret the world, to create a certain experience or coherence, and a literary analysis is always an effort to create a new textual coherence from the old one, we can construct our interpretive practices as something other than the imposition of an all-powerful readerly subject's design on a passive textual object or the inscription of an all-powerful textual object on a submissively receptive subject.

ANARCHIST INTERPRETATION AS NON-VANGUARDIST PRACTICE

As Goodman remarks, interpretation attains a transformative ''humanistic power'' when it becomes ''a two-way affair'' in which ''both sides risk their unexpressed presuppositions''—that is, in a

of a thing apart from its ''conditions'' and ''objectives''—its functioning in a concrete historical situation (a context) and its aims in that situation. The claim ''all States are bad . . . by their nature'' is tautological, a matter of definition, rather than a characterization of something completely extralinguistic: if a State ceased to operate more or less as it does, i.e., if it did not enforce laws, then it would no longer be recognizably a State. As Bakunin writes elsewhere: ''Where all govern, no one is governed, and the State as such does not exist.''[6] This is, in fact, a reasonable characterization of the goal of Bakunin's political program.

Like Bakunin, Kropotkin works from an empiricist psychology—a concept of self that presupposes both conflict and development. This sensing and learning self, while it is always subject to determination by experience in a social context, is not the undifferentiated tabula rasa of Lockean liberalism, but something internally divided, even fractured or fragmented: in particular, it is riven by a conflict between ''two sets of diametrically opposed feelings''—those that ''induce man to subdue other men in order to utilize them for his individual ends'' and those that ''induce human beings to unite for attaining common ends by common effort.'' The ethics that Kropotkin sought to create are not simply a representation of an already present morality, but an attempt to mediate this internal ''struggle'' that marks subjectivity, to discover a social ''synthesis'' capable of resolving ''this fundamental contradiction.''[7] That is to say, rather than assuming as the basic unit of ethical reasoning the ''individual'' who is ''one and indivisible,'' and who therefore can be judged as ''an entire being'' to be ''good'' or ''bad,'' ''intelligent'' or ''stupid,'' and so on,

[6] Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001), 24; Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism, ed. G.P. Maximoff (Glencor, IL: Free Press, 1953), 224, 240.

[7] Kropotkin, Ethics: Origin and Development, trans. Louis S. Friedland and Joseph R. Piroshnikoff (Dorset: Prism Press, 1924), 22.

Kropotkin's psychological model sees in man a multitude of separate faculties, autonomous tendencies, equal among themselves, performing their functions independently, balancing, opposing one another continually. Taken as a whole, man is nothing but a resultant, always changeable, of all his divers faculties, of all his autonomous tendencies, of brain cells and nerve centers. All are related so closely to one another that they each act on all the others, but they lead their own life without being subordinated to a central organ—the soul.[8]

As in Nietzsche's conception, the internal ''multitude'' of the human being, as well as its ''resultant'' character, render it resistant to the kinds of totalizing judgments underwriting moral and juridical systems of guilt and punishment.

That Kropotkin holds our enduring nature to be our changeability is intimately tied to his concept of development—an evolutionary notion that places him in the camp of the social constructivists rather than that of the naturalists. Kropotkin's ethics are thoroughly constructivist; if he links them to his studies of ''mutual aid,'' it is because social construction appropriates the materials deposited by the evolutionary process, not because there is a ready-formed morality that is sufficient unto itself. A Kropotkinian genealogy of morals might ultimately lead back to certain biologically evolved instincts to preserve the genetic commons of the group, but this would constitute no more than a ''foundation'' upon which a ''higher sense of justice, or equity'' must be ''developed.'' He underlines this point in a comment on Proudhon:

''The tendency to protect the interests of others at the expense of our own cannot be solely an inborn feeling . . . its rudiments were always present in man, but these rudiments must be developed.'' None of the ''feelings and practices'' we admire in tribal peoples (e.g., ''hospitality,'' ''respect for human life,'' ''the sense of reciprocal obligation'') are the result of any closeness to some au-

[8] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 119-20.

think, as Bakunin put it, ''from the base to the summit'' and ''from the circumference to the center'' rather than a unity imposed on ''base'' and ''circumference'' from ''summit'' and ''center.'' Voline, echoing Bakunin, writes that ''this is entirely false; it is not a matter of 'organization' or 'nonorganization' but of two different principles of organization, . . . Of course, say the anarchists, society must be organized. However, the new organization . . . must be established freely, socially, and above all, from below.''[50]

What does it mean to organize from below? ''The principle of organization,'' wrote Voline, ''must not issue from a center created in advance to capture the whole and impose itself upon it but, on the contrary, it must come from all sides to create nodes of coordination.'' Voline's comments recall Kenneth Burke's essays on literary methodology, which seek to create an alternative to the kinds of reductive approaches that seek to decode works ''with a 'symbolist dictionary' already written in advance.''[51] The will to preempt the text, to predetermine its symbolic vocabulary, hence its range of possible meanings, is always dominatory. As Herbert Read writes, ''The danger is that the critical faculty, elaborating its laws too far from its immediate object, may construct categories or ideals that are in the nature of impassive moulds. The critic then returns to the plastic substance of art and in a moment, in the name of science, he has presented us with a rigid shape which he would persuade us is the living reality. But obviously it is dead; it no longer pulses with that life and variability which we ascribe to emotional experience.''[52] An anarchist literary theory must oppose the tendency to reification that Read associates with a vulgar Marxist criticism by being reflexive and inductive, entering into a dialogue with the text

[50] Bookchin, Remaking Society, 165; Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 77; Voline, quoted in Guérin, Anarchism: from Theory to Practice, trans. Mary Klopper (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 43.

[51] Voline, quoted in Guérin, Anarchism, 43, italics mine; Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 89, italics mine.

[52] Read, Poetry and Experience, 37.

tween the lines is called for in situations in which power importantly comes to bear on what is and can be represented— the kinds of situations Tillie Olsen catalogues in Silences. At times, ''it is necessary, in order to interpret a text, to go beyond the text'': one's moral obligation to listen to the other demands that one risk speaking for it, acting as its representative.[49]

In short, anarchist hermeneutic practices do not prohibit the interpreter from speaking for the text's otherness, so they avoid the antinomies of a submissive liberationism and an unethical ethics; at the same time, they don't deny the text its otherness, so they avoid the traps of an imperialist pluralism and an authoritarian anti-authoritarianism. In this manner, they strike a balance between the claims of self and other that is more ethically coherent than any antirepresentationalist alternative.

How, then, do we proceed to interpret, to elicit potential meanings from actual texts without ever violating the texts in their actuality, their otherness, their determinacy, their limitations? It would seem that this task is made more difficult, rather than easier, by Goodman's exploration of the risks of textual narcissism, on the one hand, and textual paternalism on the other. If there is any answer to this dilemma, it comes from practicing critique as dialogue rather than monologue, as negotiation rather than dictation. On one level, this dialogue is among interpreters: interpretation is persuasion, and the Burkean trials of ''testing and discussion'' are entailed in every interpretation as a public act of discourse. On another level, however, the dialogue is between interpreter and text.

In the sphere of political practice, anarchist dialogism, rather than imposing a rigidly schematized order on a generic ''class'' population (as per the colonial or vanguardist model), always seeks a way to articulate the universality of the anarchist ideal with and even from within the particularity of the locally ''lived traditions'' and specific ''problems'' of given communities—to

[49] Ibid., 236-37, 238, 238-39, 241-42, 243.

thentic human nature, he insists; rather, all must be ''developed,'' for they are ''the consequence of life in common'' rather than its cause.[9]

Thus, Kropotkin does not assume, as in May's caricature, that ''people are naturally good,'' and that this good essence is being repressed by the State; this is why Kropotkin's political program does not assume that the only con- dition for a good life is that ''the obstacles to that goodness are removed.''[10]

Rather, he insists that it is not enough to destroy. We must also know how to build . . . That is why anarchism, when it works to destroy authority in all its aspects, when it demands the abrogation of laws and the abolition of the mechanism that serves to impose them, when it refuses all hierarchical organization and preaches free agreement, at the same time strives to maintain and enlarge the precious kernel of social customs without which no human or animal society can exist.

Communist customs and institutions are of absolute necessity for society, not only to solve economic difficulties, but also to maintain and develop social customs that bring men in contact with one another. They must be looked to for establishing such relations between men that the interest of each should be the interest of all; and this alone can unite men instead of dividing them.[11]

Once again, Kropotkin is delivering an imperative, not merely enunciating a description, when he says that human beings must be united in solidarity, that community must be constructed, that relationships of reciprocity must be established. Solidarity, community, and ethical relationships are not already there, components of a human essence merely awaiting expression. Nor are they, by the same token, nonexistent, so that they must be created ex nihilo.

[9] Kropotkin, Ethics, 16-17, 271, emphasis mine; Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 203, emphasis mine.

[10] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 63.

[11] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 136-37.

Rather, if they can be said to exist already at all, they already exist as possibilities implicit in the biological and social matrix of nature and humanity.

Nature alone is not the sufficient condition for their realization; culture (customs, institutions, relationships) is necessary.

Both Bakunin and Kropotkin, then, combine what Dave Morland calls ''universal'' and ''contextual'' accounts of ''human nature'' (i.e., elements of both naturalism and constructivism), in assuming that ''there are innate components of human nature, the development of which is encouraged by the environmental context within which individuals find themselves.'' Both ascribe a limited role to ''human nature'' in the codetermination of human behavior—one in which our natural ''potentialities'' are said to ''exist in . . . a symbiotic relationship with the environment.''[12] Once again, these potenti- alities or faculties only acquire their content, hence their political meaning, through this interaction with the historical environment. Thus, in the context of the patriarchal, tradition-bound Spain of the early twentieth century, the anarchist-feminist Mujeres Libres sang:

> Affirming the promise of life
> we defy tradition
> we mold the warm clay
> of a new world born of pain.[13]

To affirm that human life has ''promise,'' potential, possibilities other than those already expressed by history, is indeed to compare it to clay, which can be remolded to assume a new form. The

[12] Dave Morland, ''Anarchism, Human Nature and History: Lessons for the Future,'' in Twenty-First Century Anarchism, ed. Jon Purkis and James Bowen (London: Cassell, 1997), 10, 14.

[13] Martha Ackelsberg, Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), vii.

spell of the text's authority, to try ''to save the texts,'' a practice that ''often leads to pious fictions of allegorical interpretation, not unlike legal fictions.'' Texts can be distorted by willfully instrumentalizing reading practices, and something of value can be lost in the process—in particular, the reader's chance to be ''moved in ways I had not expected.'' What self-critical transcendence we are capable of is greatly aided by engagement with otherness: a most important kind of corrective to our primary narcissism, our tendency to a psychotic self-enclosure or panlogism in which every experience must ''be reduced to our kind of experience,'' is the recognition of some domain in which ''perhaps our kind of experience is inadequate''; the relativistic, Boasian anthropology that takes each culture as ''a functioning whole'' has ''a salutary pedagogic effect for ourselves, leading to a radical unsettling of our own presuppositions.'' One need not make a sacrament of the text, he suggests, to value the kind of true ''encounter'' in which one opens oneself to the other, ''risking one's own logic in the interpretation.''[48]

Nonetheless, Goodman argues, the principle of rigorously deferring to the logic of the text is one-sided: it ''cannot stand as a general rule of interpretation, for it misunderstands the nature of language.'' The thing it doesn't understand is that the meaning of an utterance is tied to the situation in which it is uttered, and that this situational context is ''very often . . . not expressed in speech and even less so in writing.'' Here he refers to those circumstances in which ''one cannot or dare not speak,'' or in which ''one must speak indirectly,'' or in which ''the mere act of speaking is a lie'': for instance, under oppressive political regimes, social repression, or commercial conformism.

He also considers cases where texts are vehicles of ''prejudice, cultural, or class bias,'' where they ''mythologize or ideologize or rationalize, or they are prelogical altogether, really dreams,'' or where discourse is itself an evasion of action. That is, reading be-

[48] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 236, 245-46, 246-48.

are either perversely expressed enjoyment or evidence of ''frigidity.''[45] This is also what Bookchin fears in his somewhat underinformed critique of deconstruction: he fears that by constituting itself as autonomous from the author's intentions, ''deconstruction removes the reader from the author of a work and places him or her completely in the hands of the interpreter,'' who becomes a kind of ''invisible puppeteer.'' The puppeteer claims to speak in the name of ''hidden referents'' or ''implicit 'others''' in the text but in fact only speaks for himself or herself, exerting arbitrary authority over meaning: ''we are completely in the hands of the critic.''[46] In short, the critic becomes a privileged intermediary, a representative.

There is no way to simply avoid the risk of interpretation; no non-interpretive stance is available, there is no stance of irrelation. As Burke says, no amount of rationalist disenchantment can make the problem of discursive ''magic'' go away. Yet Goodman does not deny the seriousness of this risk, as does Rorty, for whom all we are ever doing is inserting speakers and their speeches into our own realms of discourse, placing objects into contexts of our choosing in order to give them a meaning.[47] Goodman shares the New Critical suspicion of the ''genetic fallacy'' whereby the text is overwritten by its ''origins and backgrounds,'' read as ''ideology,'' ''rationalization,'' or cultural epiphenomenon. Even an ethical loyalty to texts can lead one to betray them: like Sontag, Goodman distrusts the religious tendency of humanist interpreters, under the

[45] In that sense, as Sharon Marcus insists, rape is a kind of text (''Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention,'' in Feminists Theorize the Political, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, 385-403 [New York: Routledge, 1992])—or rather, it is both a textual imposition of a script on another person and a textualizing reading of another's responses as acts so as to justify one's own acts as responses (George Lakoff, Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987], 412-15).

[46] Bookchin, Re-enchanting Humanity, 196-98.

[47] Rorty, ''Not All That Strange: A Response to Dreyfus and Spinosa,'' Inquiry 42, no. 1 (March 1999): 127.

human is not, by this token, intrinsically hylomorphic or formless, any more than clay is: where water and air are incapable of being remolded by human hands, clay is possessed of physical properties and causal powers that permit it to be shaped and informed, to change and to accept the new.

ANARCHISM BEYOND NAÏVE REALISM

A number of anarchist theorists have recognized that, contrary to our naïve realist intuitions of operating directly and unmediatedly in a world of simple presences, our very ''sense of 'reality' is surely one of those conventions that change from age to age and are determined by the total way of life,'' so that ''there is no single way, even no normal way, of representing the world we experience.''[14] They have taken account of the mediating function of language: an anarchist analysis of institutional power concludes that, in the words of Paul Goodman, ''one of the most powerful institutions is the conventional language itself. It is very close to the ideology, and it shapes how people think, feel, and judge what is functional.''[15] Read and Goodman are writing in the wake of twentieth-century relativisms, to be sure; however, they are also writing in the anarchist ontological tradition of Proudhon.

Proudhon conjectures that ''All that exists is grouped; all that forms a group is one, consequently is perceptible, consequently is.''[16] This is a powerful transformation of Aristotle's insight that to ''be'' is, in an important sense, to have form and structure, to connect and cohere; it is directly informed by Kant's recognition of the role of the subject in giving form to its own experience; it also

[14] Herbert Read, The Philosophy of Modern Art: Collected Essays (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 21.

[15] Paul Goodman, Speaking and Language: Defence of Poetry (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 26.

[16] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris: Rivière, 1946), 12.63, translation mine.

reflects the influence of Hegel's monistic claim that ''the real is rational and the rational real''; it anticipates Heidegger's description of the way in which perception of ''things'' is always a construction of these ''things'' through the intrinsically associative, generalizing, and categorizing power of words, so that ''thinging gathers,'' and so that culture, as the ensemble of linguistic constructs, enables us to inhabit a world that is within but distinct from the earth.[17] Moreover, like Heidegger and Kant— and unlike Hegel and Aristotle—Proudhon does not thereby strip difference of its value: ''What I call ORDER,'' he declares at the outset of De la création de l'ordre dans l'humanité, ''necessarily presupposes division, distinction, difference. All things that are undivided, indistinct, undifferentiated, cannot be conceived as ordered: these notions reciprocally exclude one another''; ''order is unity in multiplicity.''[18]

When Proudhon defines ''the object of metaphysics'' not as the accurate description of a preexisting order of things, but as ''the production of order,'' this resonates with Howard Richards's claim that metaphysics is ''the construction of unifying symbols'' and symbol-systems that serve to help organize communities and societies.[19] Just as Bakunin conjectures that the ''unity'' we perceive in the infinite ''diversity'' of nature is something we project onto it through our faculties of ''representation,'' Proudhon sees language not as the mirror of an unchanging reality, but as something which, as the ''spontaneous creation'' of human ''instinct,'' both emerges from and reflects nature in so far as both linguistic and natural processes constantly create and recreate ''groups and divisions.'' If language in general operates this way, it is no less apparent that particular texts must operate ''through the power of divisions and

[17] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Hegel: The Essential Writings, ed. Frederick G. Weiss (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 14; Martin Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 174, 215.

[18] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 5.33, 5.33n, translation mine.

[19] Ibid., 5.42, translation mine; Richards, Letters from Quebec, 2.48.10.

text, the reader, and the entire situation of reading. Our interpretation might take the form of a negation that annihilates the initial affirmation, a justified critical rejection of the text; it could look something like a Hegelian dialectic, in which, after trying out two opposed positions, we settle on a third; it could be a final embrace or defense of the text after the rigors of questioning; it might even look like Proudhon's dialectic, with its maintenance of a productive, ironic tension between positions that remain opposed. In any case, as Derrrida remarks of the deconstructive aporia, ''a decision that didn't go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision.''[43] To negotiate representation without either surrendering to it or subordinating it to oneself, one must first experience the presence of the absent, then attend to what is absent from this presence.

This taking an interest in what is absent or omitted is not without its own representational perils. In an essay on ''Some Problems of Interpretation: Silence, and Speech as Action,'' Goodman weighs carefully the New Critical injunction not to ''read between the lines''—an ethical injunction against interpretive appropriation of the text. To seek a subtext within the text, to read between the lines, is always to take the risk of opening up a dominatory moment. In interpreting, we may be asserting the privilege of transposing the speaker into ''our realm of discourse,'' denying its semantic autonomy: ''the interpreter treats the text as if it were psychotic.''[44] That is, there is a chance that the skeptical interpreter may simply be doing what he implicitly accuses the writer of doing—that is, pulling everything (appropriately or not) into one's own private realm of discourse, thereby screening out whatever experiences or facts might serve as ''correctives'' to the self-reinforcing delusion, like the rapist who tells himself that a woman's cries of resistance

[43] Derrida, ''Force of Law: The Mystical Foundations of Authority,'' in Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice, ed. Drucilla Cornell et al., 24 (London: Routledge, 1992).

[44] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 236, 244.

of when shoemakers lost their jobs that I know of, nor of how many shoemakers were put in their places; and I imagine it would have been at least as interesting for us to know as the little matter of Bishop Wilfred. But the chronicler did not think so.''[40] Here the focalizing aspect of representation becomes of particular interest: no chronicle could possibly contain everything that happens (the object represented, ''history,'' contains an indescribable infinity in all its parts), but the choice of what to include and what not to include within the ''frame'' of the representational ''mirror'' is significant, is part of the meaning.[41] Where, in the receptive mode, we imaginatively make present what has ''vanished'' from the world outside the representation, in the critical mode, we inquire after what is missing within it.

We can develop this interpretive narrative or ''dialectic of propositions''[42] in several different directions, depending on the

[40] de Cleyre, Selected Works, 371-72.

[41] ''If any one fancies that this disposition has quite vanished,'' de Cleyre adds, ''let him pick up any ordinary history, and see how many pages, relatively, are devoted to the doings of persons intent on slaying, and those intent on peaceful occupation'' (Selected Works, 372). Kropotkin turns this observation to his own critical purpose in Mutual Aid, when he writes that historians' ''predilection for the dramatic aspects of history'' leads them ''to exaggerate the part of human life give to struggles They hand down to posterity the most minute descriptions of every war, every battle and skirmish, every contest and act of violence, every kind of individual suffering; but they hardly bear any trace of the countless acts of mutual support and devotion which every one of us knows from his own experience'' (Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution [Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1989], 116). Here already is that critique of focalizing representation which a contemporary anarchist, Ursula K. LeGuin, places in a gendered context when she proposes departing from the infinite series of repetitions of ''the tale of the Hero,'' the ''story the mammoth hunters told about bashing, thrusting, raping, killing,'' phallocentric narrative as penetrating ''weapon,'' in favor of narrative as ''container,'' ''womb,'' ''matrix,'' ''pouch,'' ''bag,'' ''medicine bundle'' (''The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction,'' in The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, 150-52 [Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996]).

[42] Elbow, Writing Without Teachers, 149.

groups,'' likening and distinguishing, calling things into articulacy from their inarticulate being.[20]

Read and Goodman similarly recognize the ways in which human beings actively and creatively construct a world through the agency of signs and symbolically guided practices. Like Proudhon, however, they do not postulate an arbitrary creation-from-nothing but a dialectical creation-from- something, a construction from materials. ''Art,'' writes Read, ''is not an invention in vacuo,'' but a representational organization of the material of experience—''a selection from chaos, a definition from the amorphous, a concretion within the 'terrible fluidity' of life.''[21]

Rather than the pure performativity imagined by an antirepresentationalist textualism, social anarchists share the sort of critical realist perspective that sees social construction and interpretation as the production of something new through signification from something that precedes signification. As David Bordwell admonishes, while we see ''interpretation'' as ''the construction of meaning,'' we should acknowledge the implications of this figure of speech: ''Construction is not ex nihilo creation; there must be prior materials which undergo transformation.'' Even Derrida agrees that while the ''artifactuality'' of experience ''is indeed made,'' it is ''made of'' something. In a similar manner, Bakunin remarks that ''man, born in and produced by Nature, creates for himself, under the conditions of that Nature, a second existence'': nature is the set of materials from which a cultural world is constructed.[22]

[20] Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 113; Proudhon, Oeuvres, 5.136, 5.217.

[21] Read, Poetry and Experience (London: Vision Press, 1967), 31.

[22] David Bordwell, Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cin-ema (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3; Derrida, ''The Deconstruction of Actuality: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,'' Radical Philosophy 68 (1994): 28; Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 110.

It is within the framework of this modified realist understanding, which recognizes the ''unavoidable subjective necessity to project grammar into the world,'' as Goodman puts it, that we must read Landauer's apparent antirealism when he paraphrases Mauthner in declaring that ''your world is the grammar of your language.'' The object world is not immediately present to the subject, but is mediated through signs that are collectively constructed by subjects: in this sense, ''it is my own self-created world into which I look, in which I work.''[23] A ''worldview,'' like a language, is therefore subject to historical change: as Rudolf Rocker writes in his book-length riposte to fascist theories of Volk and Kultur, not only is ''language . . . not the result of a special folk-unity,'' it is something that ''readily yields to foreign influences''; it is not the bearer of an eternal racial essence, a ''mysterious 'nature of the nation' which allegedly is always the same at bottom,'' but ''a structure in constant change in which the intellectual and social culture of the various phases of our evolution is reflected . . . always in flux, protean in its inexhaustible power to assume new forms.''[24] Weltanschauungen are plural, riddled with difference, and constantly changing: ''Not only does the concept of reality differ as between a mediaeval philosopher like St. Thomas Aquinas and a modern philosopher like Bergson, but a similar difference also exists on the average level of apprehension (the difference between animism and theism, between supernaturalism and materialism, and so on). The 'reality' of a citizen of the Soviet Union is certainly different from the 'reality' of a citizen of the

[23] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 74; Landauer, Skepsis und Mystik, 8, translation in Eugene D. Lunn, Prophet of Community: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 162.

[24] Rudolf Rocker, Nationalism and Culture, trans. Ray E. Chase (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1998), 288.

timentality and even the religious sensibility of a receptive reading; it approaches the text without respect for its sacredness.[36] While the first reading aspires to a kind of disinterestedness (a suppression or bracketing of one's own assumptions and sense of self, the suppression of that flood of rationalizations and defensive responses remarked by Jeannette Winterson, the creation of a silent, internal space, so that one is open to the possible experience of pain as well as pleasure[37]), in the second phase of reading, we are not only fully, even egoistically, ''interested'' in what we can get out of the text, we are interested in ''the things which interested the author and those he wrote for.'' Rather than simply identifying with the subject of enunciation, we are now ''looking for the mind behind the work'' and actively questioning it. Along with any romantic reverence for the text goes the sense of easy, anachronistic continuity between the reader and the ''vanished passion'' of the author; the reader remembers that he or she is ''the child of another age and thought,'' and an abyss of historical relativity opens between his or her particular ''standpoint'' and ''values'' and those of the text.[38] By contrast with the romantic mode of the first reading, the second reading is in the mode of Aufklärung: as Goodman writes, ''this cutting of a text down to true size is a typical act of the Enlightenment,'' propelled not by empathy but by ''skepticism and sophistication.''[39]

De Cleyre demonstrates such a reading in her brief treatment of a frag- ment from a medieval historian's chronicle: ''678. This year appeared the comet star in August . . . Bishop Wilfred being driven from his bishopric by King Everth, two bishops were consecrated in his stead.'' ''There are,'' de Cleyre comments, ''no records

[36] de Cleyre, Selected Works, 366, 380.

[37] Winterson, Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 7-9; Lewis Hyde, The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property (New York: Random House, 1983), 23.

[38] de Cleyre, Selected Works, 371-72, 379-80.

[39] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 243.

to experimentally occupy a subject position within the text and to engage in a struggle for ''self-extrication'' from the text.[33]

The first reading, according to de Cleyre, ought to be a listening, an at- tempt ''to feel and hear the music of language,'' to be receptive to the ''vanished passion, hope, desire, thought'' within the work: ''Train your ears to hear the song of it; it helps to feel what the writer felt.''[34] This is the ''recollective'' mode Spanos opposes as representationalist; it is also that Keatsian mode of ''negative capability'' that Spanos urges as a counter to the instrumentalist tendency to ''enclose'' the text; it is also that imaginative identification with the other through the textual medium urged by the proto- anarchist Shelley (who called it a ''going out of our nature'') and the Christian anarchist Tolstoy (who spoke of our ''capacity to be infected by the feelings of other people''). Indeed, it is good for us to open ourselves to the text's otherness, even, as Sontag suggests, practicing an ''erotics'' of the text—up to a point.[35] Lest we forego our right of response, question, and critique, our openness to the text, which allows it to overcome our limits, should itself be limited and overcome.

Therefore, de Cleyre insists that after this initial receptive, sympathetic reading, one should ''read critically, with one eye on the page, so to speak, and the other on the reflection in the mirror, looking for the mind behind the work, the things which interested the author and those he wrote for.'' While de Cleyre emphasizes that this ''re-reading'' does not have to be destructive (''It means rather take notice of all generals and particulars, and question them'') there is something relatively harsh and hard about it, after the sen-

[33] Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 145, 148, 163-65.

[34] de Cleyre, Selected Works, 380.

[35] Spanos, Repetitions, 220; Percy Bysshe Shelley, Shelley's Critical Prose, ed. Bruce R. McEldberry Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 277; Leo Tolstoy, What Is Art?, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 38; Sontag, A Sontag Reader, 104.

United States.'' In short, ''we must recognize, with the Marxists, the historic nature of human consciousness.''[25]

While they have thus been able to acknowledge the historicity and cultural specificity of particular forms of ''consciousness,'' anarchists have traditionally acknowledged that there is more to the world than the infinity of perspectives on it. Goodman writes that ''we live in a kind of doubled world, a world of experiences with words attached and a world made of experienced words.'' This sense of doubleness, of ''nature'' as both inescapably connected with and irreducibly other to ''culture,'' is ineliminable. To reduce the one to the other is literally madness. To live completely within a Weltanschauung would be not only a form of ontological impoverishment, but a kind of lunacy—what Goodman calls the ''box of panlogism,'' or ''the pathology of living too much in the world of speech,'' in which the capacity for producing words, words, words translates into an ''excessive freedom.''[26]

Here an antirealist like Rorty, who thinks of his antirealism as antiauthor- itarian, might interject: in what, for an anarchist, could an ''excessive free- dom'' consist? Despite Goodman's individualist tendencies, he condemns as false the kind of privatized, merely personal inner freedom celebrated by subjectivist idealism, and affirms that the only sort of freedom that is really worth having, or even really free, is a social freedom, freedom lived in com- munity with others. The retreat into a linguistically custom-built private world actually imprisons: ''The formative power of speaking can be so un- limited that the sense of reality is deranged. Ideas and sentences crowd out experience. In paranoia, the system of meanings is so tight that countervail- ing evidence counts for nothing.'' The very ''spontaneity and freedom'' with which we speak gives

[25] Read, Philosophy of Modern Art, 21-22.

[26] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 70, 81-82.

us ''a kind of control, often a too easy control, of the world'' that renders us perilously prone to solipsistic ''delusion.''[27]

Here, Goodman's theory echoes Kenneth Burke's assertion that ''the magical decree is implicit in all language'': since ''the mere act of naming an object or situation decrees that it is to be singled out as such-and-such rather than as something-other,'' and since the world does not always immediately gainsay or offer resistance to our ''decrees,'' we enjoy a delusion of godlike power, as if we had only say ''let there be . . .'' to hear the world respond ''and there was.'' If power, for Bruno Latour, is ''the illusion people get when they are obeyed,'' Goodman would say that we enjoy a fetishistic illusion of power over what seems to obey us. At the extremes of delusion, he writes,

> ''names are persons and formulas magically produce physical effects''—as if saying literally made it so.[28] This is, in fact, a form of fetishism very much like the fetish of money that Proudhon critiques: while wealth is really the product of the collective force, ''imagination attribut[es] to the metal that which is the effect of the collective thought toward the metal,'' mistaking the representation for its object. As with commodity fetishism, the fetish of language promises the fetishist magical power over reality, but produces only a solipsistic slavery-in-freedom: ''When everything can be made up, finally nothing is given, there are no facts.'' This solipsism is no less enslaving when it locks the self inside of a group self, in the form of a folie à deux

[27] Ibid., 81, 70-71.

[28] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 3-4; Latour, quoted in Michael, 31; Goodman, Speaking and Language, 81.

Voltairine de Cleyre reaches some insights about the form to be taken by such a balancing act in an essay on ''Literature the Mirror of Man,'' in which she exhorts us to ''acquire the habit of reading twice, or at least with a double intent.'' I am reminded here of two similar formulations: Bonnie Zimmerman's advocacy of a critical ''double vision,'' and W. E. B. DuBois's notion of the ''double consciousness.''[31] Both see this sense of ''twoness'' as something with which minority or subaltern subjects are both blessed and cursed: it is because ''Negro'' subjects are not permitted to be fully ''American'' that they have a ''sense of always looking at [themselves] . . . through the eyes of others.'' Likewise, Zimmerman sees minoritarian communities as having ''had to adopt a double vision for survival.'' Nevertheless, she argues, this condition of doubleness is not to be understood as mere loss, privation, or alienation: ''one of the political transformations of recent decades has been the realization that enfranchised groups—men, whites, heterosexuals, the middle class—would do well to adopt that double vision for the survival of us all.''[32] While her identity as a feminist and the daughter of an immigrant doubtless has some bearing on the genesis of the concept, de Cleyre's ''double reading'' is not necessarily a subaltern strategy; it is, however, a process that entails challenging one's own identity and that of the textual other, and that therefore seeks to reproduce, on another level, some of the insights available to subaltern doubleness. It is, in effect, a version of what Peter Elbow calls the ''believing'' and ''doubting'' games—a systematic attempt both

[31] Bonnie Zimmerman, ''What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Criticism,'' in The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory, ed. Elaine Showalter, 219 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); William E. B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk, in Three Negro Classics (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 215.

[32] DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk, 214-15; Zimmerman, ''What Has Never Been,'' 219.

of meaning—even in this context, where it is thoroughly saturated with life-interest, project, and action—as simply equivalent to use, unless we implausibly insist that the organisms inhabiting their niches in an eco- system, living and acting and carrying out their projects, are ''using'' the environment; the metaphors of manipulation and control are just inappropriate and misleading here. Just as we do not reduce readerly subjectivity to a passively, helplessly overdetermined object—on the contrary, Chomsky and Goodman do everything to remind us of the active and creative character of every act of reading—so we do not necessarily assume that the reading subject is sovereignly self-possessed, always completely able to resist the effects of the text. Anarchists can hear and understand Thomas Frank's outraged objection to the self-serving accolades of the right wing for readers' ability to appropriate the products of the culture industry, as if that potential were simply the actual case in every case;[30] at the same time, we don't fail to observe all the ways in which, as organisms struggling to survive in a cultural environment, we also reorganize and alter that environment to our own ends.

Meanings (i) and (ii) are related but not coterminous; both are to some extent indeterminate, and meanings in the second register will fluctuate de- pending on who is asking (and in what situation), but neither is independent of the material actuality of the thing being investigated. In short, we hold that an actual text conditions its multiple potential meanings for different readers in different times and places. This anarchist account of meaning has the distinct advantage of avoiding the pitfalls of antirepresentationalist theories. In ethically balancing the claims of self and other, it avoids the ex- tremes of an instrumentalism for which the other only exists as a use-value and a passive stance of letting-be.

[30] Thomas Frank, New Consensus For Old: Cultural Studies From Left to Right (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2002), 19, 41-43.

> or madness of crowds: Goodman's prime example is ''religious superstition.''[29]

The way out of the box of panlogism, for Goodman, is not through the replacement of a faulty vernacular with some positivist linguistic ''prophylaxis,'' such as Carnap's, which would supposedly render us secure against linguistically induced illusions.[30] Like Burke, he is an enlightened debunker of the Enlightenment project of ''debunking,'' recognizing that language can never completely be cleaned up, demystified, or rationalized: ''an attempt to eliminate magic,'' Burke writes, ''would involve us in the elimination of vocabulary itself as a means of sizing up reality.'' Instead, Burke seeks magic that works—''correct magic, magic whose decrees about the naming of real situations is the closest possible approximation to the situation named,'' or which at least helps us ''cope'' with the situation.[31] Goodman appeals to an empirical reality outside of language, albeit one that can always be named with many names, an infinitely redescribable reality: bodily ''facts and failures'' offer ''correctives'' or checks on the free play of magic signifiers, grounding us in the concrete life of an ecology. Like Burke, Goodman would submit formulas (ideas, concepts, phrases, structures) to the trials of experiment and experience: the best adaptations to a situation will be ''supplied by the 'collective revelation' of testing and discussion.''[32]

In the tradition of Bakunin, then, Goodman regards nature and natural laws as anchoring social being and freedom; the reality principle is still the principle of sanity. But the lessons of linguistic

[29] Proudhon, Proudhon's Solution of the Social Problem, ed. Henry Cohen (New York: Vanguard Press, 1927), 59; Goodman, Speaking and Language, 81.

[30] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 108, 111.

[31] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 4; Goodman, Speaking and Language, 172.

[32] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 82; Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 4.

relativism have been learned, and must not be forgotten: representations always mediate between ourselves and the world, perhaps most of all where we least suspect it.

Proudhon, like Vico, hypothesizes that ''consciousness, at the first moment of its activity, is absorbed and immobilized in nature, identifies with it, seeks to penetrate it, to seize it in its essence, and . . . makes of the universe an animated whole, divine, through which it explains the organism by comparisons and symbols.''[33] Nor, in our supposedly advanced state, are we ''civilized'' people above this sort of ''primitive,'' mimetic, and anthropomorphic thinking; thus, Proudhon observes that ''In the moral and political sciences generally . . . problems arise above all from the figurative manner in which the mind originally presents their elements,'' which converts the object into ''a symbol, a mystery, an idol.''[34] The tendency of language to conjure imaginary beings out of abstract ideas is, in fact, at the root of our fetishistic relationship to the State: in primitive society, he hypothesizes, the social order itself, as an invisible but effective agency, is thingified by a mythic imagination that ''refused to believe that society, the State, and the power present in it were simply abstractions,'' so that primitives ''intuitively . . . [attributed] the origins of social power to the gods who fathered their dynasties.''[35] In this sense, Read regards statist ideologies as depending on a certain kind of organicist metaphor. Indeed, despite his own frequent attraction to such metaphors, Read observes their use by fascist philosophers, e.g., in the met- aphor of ''the circulation of élites,'' the opposite of which would seem to be ''stagnation'':

[33] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 5.130, translation mine.

[34] Proudhon, The Principle of Federation, trans. Richard Vernon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 57, emphasis mine.

[35] Proudhon, Selected Writings, ed. Stewart Edwards, trans. Elizabeth Fraser (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1969), 114.

be believed; and how can the translators and critics of Spinoza not see it? The Ethics, which everyone knows as a theory of necessity as God, is at the same time a theory of the free will of man. This word is left unstated, and it is right to say that the author does not believe in it at all; but since when does one exclusively judge a philosopher on his words?''[28] This line of interpretive speculation, then, turns our attention away from origins and beginnings and toward implications or results.

Ultimately, it tends not to a theorization of any destination or conclusion conceived of as a single, simple, and rigidly determined teleology, but in- stead toward an interpretive plurality: just as the roots of a tree spread in all directions, so do its branches.

Here we can draw on the splendid legacy of ''anarcho-spatialist'' studies of geography, architecture, and urbanism to think of a text not so much as a container containing a message, but a space we might inhabit in a variety (but not an infinite or wholly indeterminate variety) of ways. Bookchin's ''second nature'' is a space made up of just such a network of texts and textual relationships. To ask about meaning in this second sense is to ask, as Paul Goodman asked of the interior spaces of buildings, how they could facilitate some further ''adjustment to the environment'' by modifying an existing environment or creating a new environment within the old.[29]

Inquiring this way about a thing's meaning, we ask what situations it could help us adapt to ecologically, and on what terms: i.e., what kinds of behavior it could ''motivate'' in Burke's sense, and (ethically speaking) with what results. This is not quite the same as a purely instrumentalist version of meaning-as-use, however, and not only because we acknowledge that the text has intrinsic features that are not arbitrarily created by the reader. We cannot speak

[28] Proudhon, quoted in Colson, ''Lectures anarchistes de Spinoza,'' translation mine.

[29] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 156.

observes that ''the good apostles of l'art pour l'art,'' in denying the ''social function'' of art, declaring that ''art must not be humanitarian, laical, revolutionary, leftist,'' and proclaiming its superiority to mere ''utilitarianism,'' naturally make their art useful for ''militaristic, pro-clerical, patriotic, reactionary, rightist'' purposes.[24] Once more, Proudhon is there first: as Colson observes, through a ''practice of paradox and contrariety, Proudhon claims to show . . . how Descartes, in favor of free will, constructs a theory that leads to its negation [and] how Spinoza, denier of the free will, proposes on the contrary a theory that necessarily supposes it.''[25] Where Descartes's Meditations begins with the absolute subject, free from all determination, and deductively reaches the knowledge of God's existence, Spinoza's Ethics begins with the ''absolute necessity'' of God's existence, working backward to the subject. If ''Spinoza, the philosopher of the absolute, of necessity and raison d'État, who, very logically, denies that free will has any meaning,'' is nonetheless ''at the same time the philosopher of freedom, a freedom inherent in his system,'' this is because the trajectory of his thought leads to the very conclusions he wishes to exclude from the beginning: ''How can Spinoza deny free will, since, in the Ethics, he claims to show how man, degraded and miserable creation of the all-powerful divine, subjected to the darkness and the illusions of passions, can despite everything 'go against the flow of necessity' that produced it, freeing itself from passions that block it and mislead it, to reach a 'freedom at the expense of the necessity that it subordinates'?''[26]

Proudhon's primary purpose is ''to destroy and rebuild'' rationalist meta- physics through logical analysis,[27] but in the process, he is forced to go beyond a pure hermeneutics of recollection, reconstructing the author's original intention: ''It must be seen to

[24] Rothen, in Encyclopédie anarchiste, 2458.

[25] Colson, ''Lectures anarchistes de Spinoza,'' translation mine.

[26] Ibid., translation mine.

[27] Proudhon, General Idea, 43.

> A convincing rhetorical attitude can be struck if the circulation metaphor is maintained. But it is merely a figure of speech, a myth. Why all this bubble bubble, toil and trouble? Does not nature offer us alternative metaphors of balance and symmetry, of poise and repose? The best fruit grows on the sheltered wall. The deepest waters are still. To a mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders. How easy it is to find, or invent, convincing metaphors of exactly the opposite tenor. Chinese philosophy is full of them. The universe is full of them.[36]

Of course, a rhetoric of ''balance,'' ''symmetry,'' and ''repose'' is not necessarily politically innocent either; the main stream of the Chinese thought to which Read alludes is merely complicit with a form of authoritarianism older (and more genuinely conservative) than fascism—one which, if it rejects metaphors of dynamic circulation does so only because it is oriented toward a fastidiously cyclical preservation of traditional power arrangements. However, the point remains that for Read, the universe appears as something other than a static and unitary essence, source of a single natural law to which all social laws must conform; instead, it is a realm of interpretative plenitude, overflowing with other metaphors implying a variety of possible attitudes we might take up—a space of possibilities.

In short, Proudhon and Read suspect that the intrinsically metaphorical nature of language tends to constitute thought as ''a mythology'' that both enables and deranges our action in the world—and that only a certain vigilance can keep us from reifying everything into that mythological narrative.[37]

[36] Read, The Philosophy of Anarchism (London: Freedom Press, 1944), 13; To Hell With Culture, and Other Essays on Art and Society (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 65-66.

[37] Proudhon, Principle of Federation, 57.

ANARCHIST ANTI-REDUCTIVISM

What Marx condemns as idealist is precisely the anarchists' refusal to reduce all questions to one ''ultimately determining'' question, a ''last instance'': in his notes on Statism and Anarchy, he complains that Bakunin

''understands absolutely nothing about social revolution… For him its economic requisites do not exist. Since all hitherto existing economic formations, developed or undeveloped, have included the enslavement of the working person (whether in the form of the wage worker, the peasant, etc.), he thinks that a radical revolution is possible under all these formations Will power and not economic conditions is the basis of his social revolution.''[38]

In fact, it is this feature of anarchism—its coming to itself in an ethical rejection of all forms of hierarchy and domination—that renders it not necessarily ahistorical but free from the limitations of what Marx called historical materialism. Where Marxists seek to wedge each kind of historically and culturally specific injustice into a single, all-embracing economic model—Do women form a ''vertical class''? Is the hegemony of the old over the young ''economic'' in nature? Should bureaucratic totalitarianism be considered ''state capitalism''?—anarchists can universalize their critique without mutilating particular social phenomena to make them fit: whatever the form, domination is dominatory, and hierarchy is hierarchical. To say more than this is to reify theory—that is, to mistake one's theoretical representations for the represented reality itself. Thus, in a retort to Marx's Poverty of Philosophy, Proudhon

[38] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker, trans. Martin Nico- laus, Saul K. Padover, International Publishers (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), 640; Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 136; Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 544.

originally expressed by it.''[22] Thus, in God and the State, Bakunin demonstrates how the ''material'' point of departure of the revolution unfolds itself dialectically into a revolutionary practice of ''real idealization,'' while ''per contra and for the same reason,'' the Romantics' idealist point of departure produces a crassly materialistic politics of compromise and reaction:

> The literature created by this school was the very reign of ghosts and phantoms. It could not stand the sunlight; the twilight alone permitted it to live. No more could it stand the brutal contact of the masses. It was the literature of the tender, delicate, distinguished souls, aspiring to heaven, and living on earth as if in spite of themselves. It had a horror and contempt for the politics and questions of the day; but when perchance it referred to them, it showed itself frankly reactionary, took the side of the Church against the insolence of the freethinkers, of the kings against the peoples, and of all the aristocrats against the vile rabble of the streets.[23]

Likewise, in one of his entries for Sébastien Faure's 1934 Encyclopédie anarchiste, Edouard Rothen (also known as Charles Hotz)

[22] Rocker, Nationalism and Culture, 277. This interpretive practice of unmasking, revelation, surprise, is frequently tied to an awareness of the extent to which our encounter with texts is mediated or distorted by previous readings and received ideas: thus, ''everybody knows'' that Paradise Lost is a theodicy (until the Romantic rereading becomes popularized, after which ''everybody knows'' that it is a Promethean heroization of Satan). Thus, in his entries for the Encyclopédie Anarchiste, Edouard Rothen contends that ''classicism had for its result the throwing of a veil of incomprehension over both ancient and contemporary life,'' calls for ''a Shakespeare stripped of academic cosmetics,'' and claims that popular ''infatuation'' has obscured our reading of Mallarmé and Verlaine by ''put[ting] them on a pedestal from which posterity will dislodge them'' (Encyclopédie anarchiste, ed. Sébastien Faure [Paris: Librairie internationale, 1934], 1299, 2074, 2768).

[23] Bakunin, God and the State, 48, 80.

unsettled those eras,'' or that provide a safe outlet for popular frustration with the status quo.[20] At the same time, it avoids the hubris of locating the critical perspective itself outside of (in a superior position to) the ideological realm: even these moments of analysis ''float on the data of social reality.'' Thus, like Marx and Engels in The German Ideology, Bakunin traces Romanticism's raison d'être to its material roots in the ascent of the bourgeoisie following the French Revolution and the subsequent schism between its interests and the interests of ''the proletariat''—class interests whose trace is effaced and disguised as disinterestedness and ethereality but tangibly present as a motive force in the poetry of Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Novalis, and others.[21]

Under sense (ii) of ''meaning,'' the instance in which we are asking not so much what the meaningful object is determined by, but what it might determine in its turn, we regard it as an actuality that, while possessing its own determinate shape, features, and qualities (to this extent, again, anar- chist theory is traditionally realist), at the same time potentiates an indeter- minate number of functions, applications, effects. There is an actual quantum of energy, we could say by way of analogy, but it can manifest as a particle or as a wave. Thus, we could call this kind of meaning ''quantum.''

From the nineteenth century on, we can find anarchists making critiques of philosophy and literature that rely on a certain logic of development, on tracing lines away from the origin or ''point of departure'' of a discourse toward a certain destination, oftentimes an unexpected destination; to some degree, this is a function of the evolutionary character of language itself, in which ''quite gradually and unnoticeably the shadings and gradations of the concepts which find their expression in words alter, so that it often happens that a word means today exactly the opposite of what men

[20] Bookchin, Re-enchanting Humanity, 175.

[21] Bakunin, God and the State, 81.

insists ''that principles are . . . [merely] the intellectual representation, not the generating cause, of facts.''[39]

Anarchists from the nineteenth century on have been wary and often sharply critical of such tendencies to reification and essentialization, the seductions of abstraction and systematicity. Thus Bakunin rejects Marxian historical schematizations:

> The Marxist sociologists, men like Engels and Lasalle, in objecting to our views contend that . . . both the miserable condition of the masses and the despotic power of the State are . . . products of an inevitable stage in the economic evolution of society; a stage which, historically viewed, constitutes an immense step forward to what they call the ''Social Revolution.'' To illustrate how far the obsession with this doctrine has already gone: the crushing of the formidable revolts of the peasants in Germany in the sixteenth century . . . is hailed by Lasalle as a victory for the coming Social Revolution! Why? Because, say the Marxists, the peasants are the natural representatives of reaction.[40]

The subtext of Marxist sociology, as Bakunin reads it, is not only a variety of Stoicism, in which even one's own subjective role in struggle is to be viewed from the objective standpoint of the final goal of history, but also a form of essentialism. Why is a communist defeat to be celebrated as progress? Because ''the peasants are the natural representatives of reaction'': no matter what they happen to do (contingently), they are reactionary (necessarily). Their ''reactionary'' quality is an essence underlying appearances.

Thus, Richard DeHaan, a contemporary anarchist, considers Marxism to be fraught with ''ontologism'': ''Marxists talk about

[39] Proudhon, quoted in Robert L. Hoffman, Revolutionary Justice: The Social and Political Theory of P.-J. Proudhon (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 113.

[40] Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 309-10.

'the nature of capitalism,' 'the essence of October,' 'internal contradictions in the very heart of bourgeois democracy,' etc. Thus, such well-intentioned people as the Trotskyists (Socialist Workers' Party variety) are forced into saying that Russia is in essence a workers' state, but that it has been distorted by bureaucratic Stalinism (i.e., it has had affixed to it attributes that do not accord with its nature). They become prisoners of their 'objective reality.'''[41]

Prisoners, perhaps, but uniquely privileged ones all the same, since their theory pur- ports to give them ''objective'' insight into the ''essence'' of States, classes, and individuals. This is the colonial, ontological privilege Bakunin revoked when he declared ''the revolt of life against science.''[42]

Life, then, is something that resists any fixed, definitive, absolute schematization. ''Reality,'' writes Proudhon, ''is inherently complex; the simple never leaves the realm of the ideal, never arrives at the concrete.'' ''The concept,'' Bookchin adds, ''can never fully grasp the concrete in its own particular uniqueness and in the uniqueness of each ecosystem.''[43] A critical-realist fallibilism, for which errors and surprises are essential to knowledge, grounds anarchism: true ''science,'' writes Bakunin, ''when it has reached the limit of its knowledge . . . will say in all honesty: 'I do not know.' ''[44] In the face of a universe whose ''infinities'' are ''inexhaustible,'' Proudhon asks us to attend to the ''fecundity of the unexpected,'' which ''outstrips any foresight''—the ''fecundity of the creative

[41] Richard DeHaan, ''Kropotkin, Marx and Dewey,'' Anarchy 55 (Sept. 1965): 282-83.

[42] Bakunin, God and the State (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 59.

[43] Proudhon, The Principle of Federation, 17; Bookchin, ''Finding the Subject: Notes on Whitebook and 'Habermas Ltd,' '' Anarchy Archives: An Online Research Center on the History and Theory of Anarchism, 30 June 2002, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/finding.html (accessed 10 March 2005).

[44] Peter Wilkin, ''Chomsky and Foucault on Human Nature and Politics: An Essential Difference?'' Social Theory & Practice 25, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 200; Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 56.

explanations of the orgin of the text (investigating ''how and why did it come to be'').[17] This mode of interpretation, while basically oriented toward the past, also bears the trace of an opposite orientation in time: to ask what produced this text, what it is a ''sign'' or symptom of, is also to ask what it implies for the future. This is an evolutionary approach to the text, and we could call the kind of meaning that it seeks ''genetic.''

Working on this level, interpretation seeks to read a text en situation, reading it for the traces of a consciousness in terms of the genesis of that consciousness in social and natural history. Along these lines, Bookchin proposes that ecological thinking opposes ''the claim of epistemology to adjudicate the validity of knowledge'' in a historical vacuum, insisting on ''the claim of history to treat knowledge as a problem of genesis.'' This rules out the kinds of abstract, formalist, or textualist philosophy that overlook the fact of embodiment: ''From this historical standpoint, mental processes do not live a life of their own. Their seemingly autonomous construction of the world is actually inseparable from the way they are constructed by the world.''[18]

Where textualist idealism erases bodies and nature, Bookchin offers to re- root interpretation in material life: ''There is no facet of human life that is not infiltrated by social phenomena and there is no imaginative experience that does not float on the data of social reality.''[19] On one level, this retrieves the ideology-critique of Marxist historical materialism, in which ''societies . . . foster ideologies that render their pathologies tolerable by mystifying the problems they raise,'' sponsoring ''world views'' that conveniently ''uphold the hegemony of those in power and . . . explain the crises that

[17] Goodman, The Structure of Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 2-3; Utopian Essays, 246-47.

[18] Bookchin, The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1991), 38.

[19] Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism (San Francisco: Ramparts Books, 1971), 284.

tation does not look like an assault on Being; rather, it is as natural a process as anything else.

Without collapsing the distance and the difference between the human and the natural sciences, it seems to me that an anarchist hermeneutics treats the social as parallel to the ecological, and insofar as our knowledge of ecology is a knowledge of development—not reducible to a Newtonian billiard-table model, but still in some sense a study of cause and effect, conditions and consequences, potentiations and actualizations—our knowledge of the social will also be developmental in character. A naturalized conception of meaning would conceptualize it in terms of development from antecedents that are themselves developments from further antecedents, and so on. On these terms, to ask what X means is to ask two related questions: i. What is X a development from (i.e., what does X stem from or portend)? ii. What can develop from X (i.e., what are the uses of X, and what might it affect)?

Let us take the first instance, in which we are thinking about the ''meaning'' of a thing as a matter of what it has developed from. This means looking for its meaning in its relation to an originating context or source—i.e., the way in which smoke betokens or indicates the presence of fire. We are treating the meaning-bearing object here as more or less the kind of sign that Peirce called an ''index''—something by which, when we know it, we also know something else because the first thing is materially and causally related to the second thing. This is not necessarily an anti-intentionalist theory of meaning. Rather, it places the thing to be interpreted somewhere on a continuum between intended ''message'' and unintentional ''symptom''; the range of possible meanings may encompass conscious expression and unconscious parapraxis. In the case of a text, asking what it ''means'' in sense (i) is asking what produced it, i.e., what situation was it a response to—as Kenneth Burke says, what ''motivated'' it; it is to construct what Paul Goodman called ''final explanations'' (in the sense that they refer to purposes, goals, or ends), or equally to seek ''genetic''

power'' of ''Nature,'' whose works are ''always new and always unforeseen . . . a text which cannot be exhausted of conjectures.''[45]

ANARCHISM AND POWER

Anarchism has borne the charge of transcendentalism for a long time. This charge has recently been resuscitated by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who, like many left Marxists, take positions that are rather close to anar- chism—i.e., advocating bottom-up popular movements organizing outside of parliamentary politics and antagonism to the State as such—while declaring, ''we are not anarchists'': ''you are just a bunch of anarchists, the new Plato on the block will finally yell at us. That is not true. We would be anarchists if we were not to speak . . . from the standpoint of a materiality constituted in the networks of productive cooperation

No, we are not anarchists but communists who have seen how much repression and destruction of human- ity have been wrought by liberal and socialist big governments.''[46] The putative difference to which Hardt and Negri are obliquely appealing appears to be between locating one's critique within history, seeing one's own perspective as the result of an economic process, and claiming some privileged perspective outside of history and beyond the material world. In other words, from this perspective, the anarchist departure from Marxist historiography, with its stages of development and necessitarian teleology, constitutes idealism, a postulation of an ideal of freedom that, since it is equally available to all times and places, must somehow exist outside of history. Thus it is that Negri, in naming what purportedly ''radically distinguishes Marx's positions from those of the anarchists,'' approvingly cites the ''polemic against Bakunin'' in which Marx declares it necessary that ''the or-

[45] Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 58; Proudhon, Selected Writings, 104; Oeuvres, 5.233.

[46] Hardt and Negri, Empire, xv, 349-50.

ganisation of the working class, an organisation which arises from its economic struggles, should previously reach a certain level of development'' before it can take power.[47] Indeed, for Hardt and Negri no less than for Marx, the erection of a global capitalist Empire is progress.

In another perennially popular interpretation, anarchism is centered around the belief that human beings are naturally endowed with a social instinct that is repressed by present-day society. It is this essentialism that more knowing post-structuralist types find naïve: as Michael Walzer explains, if Michel Foucault seems at times to approach a kind of anarchism in his politics, he ''does not believe, as earlier anarchists did, that the free human subject is . . . naturally good, warmly sociable, kind and loving''; rather, ''men and women are always social creations, the products of codes and disciplines.''[48] Anarchism, so it would seem, entails belief in a transcendent human essence—as the notion that we are socially constructed supposedly does not.

Saul Newman, too, characterizes anarchism as transcendentalist. ''For Kropotkin,'' Newman writes, ''anarchism can think beyond the category of the State . . . because it has a place, a ground from which to do so. Political power has an outside from which it can be criticized and an alternative with which it can be replaced.'' In other words, anarchist theory falsely externalizes power in order that it may see itself as external to power, outside its corrupting influence. In reality, Newman argues, power comes from human subjects. If, as Foucault remarks, there is no escape from power, this is because it is not an object with a location. Classical anarchism, Newman contends, is crippled by its inability to recognize

[47] Negri, Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State, trans. Maurizia Boscagli (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 229.

[48] Michael Walzer, ''The Politics of Michel Foucault,'' in Foucault: A Critical Reader, ed. David Hoy, 61 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

the textualist tendency to inter all questions of meaning within the seemingly self-contained web of signifiers pointing to other signifiers, writing the body out of the picture.[14] From Goodman's perspective, meaning can be seen to emerge from ecological processes of adaptation—both on the ontogenetic level, in the life experience of individual human beings, where it emerges in the activity of adapting oneself to what Bookchin calls the ''second nature'' of one's historical and cultural setting, and, ultimately, on the phylogenetic, evolutionary level, where it emerges in the slow adaptation of the species to that ''first nature'' within which we have made our home.

Goodman's account of meaning resonates strongly with the ecocritical dimensions of Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theory, which regards speech as a ''strategy'' for responding to a ''situation,'' a means of forming ''attitudes'' in the face of a hostile or friendly ''history.''[15] By the same token, interpretation is a response to a situation; it is also animal, natural, an adaptation to environment. Just as Bergson characterized the most basic animal responses to the environment as incipiently linguistic, since recognition of a recurring situation, such as the presence of food, is already an exercise in ''the faculty of generalizing,'' and ''a sign—even an instinctive sign—always to some degree represents a genus,'' Burke sees animal behavior as organized by something like the interpretation of signs: for instance, ''a trout, having snatched at a hook but having had the good luck to escape with a rip in his jaw, may even show his wiliness thereafter that he can revise his critical appraisals.''

Ultimately, we could say that ''all living organisms interpret many of the signs about them.''[16] From this perspective, interpre-

[14] Ruthrof, The Body In Language, 3, 7.

[15] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 1; Attitudes Toward History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 1.

[16] Bergson, Creative Evolution, 167; Burke, Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 5.

It is in this sense that Goodman proposes that ''signs . . . help us to cope with their designates.'' A text is not something that exists apart from the world of deeds and consequences, but is itself an ''act'' performed ''in a concrete situation'' with consequences of its own. ''A style of speech,'' he argues, is something we devise to ''cope with . . . experience''; a way of speaking is ''a way of being.'' Meaning is driven both by the intentions of interpreters and the extra-intentional reality of the situation in which interpretations happen: the content of speech, the ''what needs to be said,'' is ''not the thoughts or intentions of the speaker; it is the situation of the speaker and hearer as a problem to be coped with... It is the unifying tendency in the on-going situation, the coping.'' One consequence of this position is that ''meaning is not mental,'' a matter of ghostly contents-in-the- head transmitted through a material medium to another head; it cannot be reduced to an original intention. Moreover, meaning is redefined as a natural phenomenon, ''characteristic of most overt animal behavior,'' as well as a social one; we look for ''meaning'' in texts just as we look for ''meaning'' in any phenomenon.[13] An anarchist account of meaning thus can be seen to answer the calls of ecocritics and recent proponents of a ''corporeal turn'' in the philosophy of language such as George Lakoff (Metaphors We Live By), Marc Johnson (The Body in the Mind), Ellen Spolsky (Gaps in Nature), and Horst Ruthrof (The Body in Language) for a naturalized, embodied account of meaning in opposition to

components of its experience elicit consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and usages, respecting other components of its experience'' (Whitehead, quoted in Read The Philosophy of Modern Art, 24). However, where Read cites Whitehead's notion of the ''symbolic'' in order to underscore the complementary notion of ''presentational immediacy'' or nonsymbolic experience, Proudhon is arguing—rightly, I believe—that there is no such thing as mere ''immediacy,'' that all presence is also representational in character, or to put it more simply, that all experience is ''symbolic'' or meaningful.

[13] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 85; Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 242; Speaking and Language, 97, 171-72.

this, trapped in a mistaken notion that society constitutes a standpoint that transcends power.[49]

The classical anarchists did not, however, found their hopes on an transcendent ideal standing outside human history, on a human essence prior to society, or on a metaphysical civil society that is beyond power. We have already contested the interpretation of anarchism as a form of naturalism: the classical anarchists knew nothing of a presocial or asocial human subject. Neither did they know of a way to get outside of history, to assume a supra-material vantage point. For Bakunin, nothing could be more axiomatic than the intuition that ''everything in existence is born and perishes, or rather is transformed,'' and that nature, as ''the sum of actual transformations of things that are and will be ceaselessly produced,'' is an ''infinity of particular actions and reactions which all things having real existence constantly exercise upon one another'' in ''combination[s]'' that can be ''in no way predetermined, preconceived, or foreknown.'' The ''abstract'' thinker who ''disdains all that exists,'' seeking to transcend this endless series of transformations, ''lifting himself in thought above himself, and above the world around him''—beyond all historical determination—only ''reaches the representation of perfect abstraction . . . this absolute nothingness is God.''[50]

From the beginning, anarchism has set its face against theological nihilism, affirming our existence in and through matter and time.

Neither does classical anarchism postulate a society that is exterior to power, or a power that is exterior to society. ''Power,'' Proudhon insists, ''is immanent in society.'' In fact, it is Bakunin who writes that ''no minority would have been powerful enough to impose all these horrible sacrifices upon the masses if there had

[49] Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan, 17, 31.

[50] Bakunin, Michael Bakunin: Selected Writings, ed. Arthur Lehning, trans. Steven Cox and Olive Stevens (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 231; The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 53; Bakunin on Anarchy, 272.

not been in the masses themselves a dizzy spontaneous movement that pushed them on to continual self-sacrifice, now to one, now to another of these devouring abstractions, the vampires of history''; it is Kropotkin who points out that if, in spite of its patent injustice, the State survives and grows, this is because ''all of us are more or less, voluntarily or involuntarily, abettors of this society''—or, as Proudhon puts it, ''everyone is complicit with the prince.''[51] Both State and marketplace, Errico Malatesta reminds us, are called into being not only by the few who persuade, coerce, and exploit, but—more fundamentally—by the fragmented community that needs someone to organize it.[52]

In fact, for Proudhon and Bakunin, it is always society which produces its own oppressors. Thus, ''when the masses are deeply sunk in their sleep, patiently resigned to their degradation and slavery,'' writes Bakunin, ''the best men in their midst, those who in a different environment might render great services to humanity, necessarily become despots.'' The oppressor does not come from ''outside''; rather, ''one may say justly that it is the masses themselves that produce those exploiters, oppressors, despots, and executioners of humanity, of whom they are the victims.''[53] In Proudhon's historical narrative, as Stewart Edwards explains, ''mankind had come to believe that the State had a strength of its own, as seen in the armies and public officials.

But all its apparent power came from the alienation of the 'collective force.'

Once men recovered the power they alone had created, then the State would be seen as it really was, simply a façade.'' It is when ''individuals'' are ''vested with social power'' that power seems to

[51] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 8.2.261, translation mine; Bakunin, God and the State, 59; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 104; Proudhon, Oeuvres, 8.2.269, translation mine.

[52] Errico Malatesta, Life and Ideas, ed. and trans. Vernon Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1993), 84, 86.

[53] Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 248-49.

> ter of beef is the lowest degree that we can observe of the ideal, that which is immediately above zero; but do not say that the ideal has been absolutely lacking here: you would be contradicted by the universal sentiment.
>
> Instead of a side of beef, a leg of mutton, or a ham placed in the stall, put an orange tree in its box, a spray of flowers in a porcelain vase, a child playing on a settee: all these images, types of copies created by an artist without consciousness, absolutely insensitive to beauty and ugliness, but with a perfection of details which no living artist could approach, will be realistic images, if you wish, in the sense that the author, namely the light, does not put anything of his own into them and is not aware of you; still, however little you give him your attention, these same images will not cause you any less of a sensation of pleasure; they will even appear to you all the more pleasant, leaving less of the realistic, more of the ideal, as the objects represented will move away from pure materiality, as they will participate in your life, your soul, your intelligence.[11]

Not even counting such aesthetically privileged viewers as the butcher, the cook, or the gastronomer (who all know good from bad meat, and can imagine how delicious or vile it will taste) there is still always in the viewer some ''degree'' of aesthetic response, an activity of ideation, and therefore an aspect of the subjective or the ''ideal'' added onto objective reality—an ineliminable dimension of ''attitude'' (in Kenneth Burke's sense) or ''interestedness'' (in Martin Heidegger's).[12]

[11] Ibid., 11.60-61, translation mine.

[12] I am also reminded, here, of Herbert Read's citation of Whitehead's definition of ''symbolism'': ''the human mind is functioning symbolically when some

the ideal, or rather everything produces or emanates the ideal; everything has meaning.[9] In this sense, Proudhon declares art to be ''at once realist and idealist,'' for ''it is equally impossible for a painter, a sculptor, a poet, to eliminate from his work either the real or the ideal.'' He sets out to demonstrate the ''inseparability of the two terms'' via a thought experiment: ''Take from your neighbor the butcher a quarter of a slaughtered animal, beef, pork, or mutton; place it before a lens, so as to receive the image from it reversed behind the lens, in an darkened chamber, on an iodized metal plate: this image traced by the light is obviously, as an image and from the point of view of art, all that you can imagine of the highest realism.''[10] The experiment asks us to imagine eliminating, so far as is possible, every element of subjectivity from the process of producing a representation of reality: ''the image obtained,'' we are reminded, ''is the work of a natural agent which the photographer knew how to set to work, but into the action of which he does not at all enter.'' Is there such a thing as a purely objective representation—absolute realism, a zero degree of the aesthetic? Proudhon answers in the negative:

> It is certain that this realism is not deprived of all idea, nor powerless to arouse in us the least aesthetic spark: because, without counting the butcher and the cook, who can easily tell when to say: Here is beautiful or nasty meat, and who knows it; without counting the gastronomist, who is no more insensitive to the thing, there is the plain fact of the photographic work, one of the most marvelous phenomena in the universe that we are given to observe. Say, if you like, that the aesthetic feeling aroused by this representation of a quar-

[9] Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geof- frey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 323.

[10] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 11.59-60, translation mine.

detach itself from the social matrix, to become a property or quality independent of the combined action of the collectivity.[54]

Such is the consensus of the classical anarchist theorists. It is Landauer, however, who most memorably renovates this insight into a sophisticated social theory of power, combining it with Etienne de la Boétie's concept of the people's ''voluntary servitude'' as the source of the apparent ''power'' of the ''tyrant'' and Mauthner's linguistic skepticism, which noted the capacity of words to hypostasize abstract ''phantoms'' and ''illusions'' into perceived realities and necessities. ''The State,'' as Eugene D. Lunn summarizes Landauer's argument, ''is not an external force that operates on man, but a mere 'name for what man allows.' ''[55] Just as Malatesta warned against the ''meta- physical tendency'' of those who think of the State as a discrete, abstract ''entity,'' an essence existing apart from its instantiations in practices of coercion and domination, so Landauer warned in his 1907 Die Revolution against conceptualizing ''the state'' as ''a thing or as a fetish that one can smash in order to destroy it''; rather, ''The state is a condition, a certain relationship among human beings, a mode of behavior between men; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another . . . We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institutions that form a real community and society of men.''[56]

Foucault's concept of disseminated power could not be more forcefully anticipated. Nor is Landauer's concept of power ahistorical, as Karl Mannheim charges. Rather, Landauer traces an historical process whereby the ''unifying spirit'' of primitive communities is increasingly articulated through ''external forms'' such as

[54] Stewart Edwards, ''Preface,'' in Proudhon, The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century, trans. John Beverly Robinson (London: Pluto Press, 1989), 23-24; Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 245.

[55] Lunn, Prophet of Community, 225.

[56] Malatesta, Anarchy, trans. Vernon Richards (London: Freedom Press, 2001), 18; Landauer, quoted in Lunn, Prophet of Community, 226, my emphasis.

''religious symbols and cults, ideas of faith, prayer rituals or things of this sort,'' a formalization that reduces ''the warmth and love of the unifying spirit'' to ''the stiff coldness of dogma,'' which in turn leads to the growth of religious institutions and other ''organizations of external coercion''—e.g., ''serfdom, feudalism, the various departments and authorities, the state.''[57]

Bakunin's speculations on the origins of the State also trace it to the religious illusion. He hypothesizes that the origin of primitive conceptions of the world lies in ''inadequate representations of natural and social phenomena, and the even less valid conclusions inferred from those phenomena,'' errors reiterated and compounded through the agencies of language and cognition. For primitive peoples, reason itself—''the capacity for generalization and abstraction, thanks to which man is able to project himself in his thought, examining and observing himself like a strange, external object''—gave rise to the reification of abstractions into fetishes that could be worshipped—the primordial alienation that gives the priestly caste, and with it the class system, its first foothold in human community.[58] In retrospect, these fetishizing processes seem to have been ''inevitable and necessary in the historical development of the human mind, which through the ages, only slowly arriving at a rational and critical awareness of itself and its own manifestations, has always started with absurdity in order to arrive at truth, and with slavery in order to win freedom.'' Religion and the State have arisen within the human subject as the perhaps unavoidable by-products of its own process of self-constitution; nevertheless, that

[57] Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1963), 197-98; Landauer, For Socialism, trans. David J. Parent (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1978), 33.

[58] Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 237-38; Bakunin on Anarchy, 272.

ourselves to searching for the laws of being and to following the order of their appearance as far as reason can reach.[6]

Proudhon would be an idealist, like Plato, if he postulated the dimension of the ideal as a realm separate from and existing outside of matter. However, for him, there is no ideal outside of its instantiation in the material. Just as matter, stripped of its dimension of ideality, cannot be fully or truly real, so ideas cannot exist outside of their material representations. Truly, in this scheme, there is no presence prior to representation; yet Proudhon is also realist enough. The ''dialectical series'' may be ''the queen of thought,'' but thought does not reign over life: ''the series is not at all a substantial or causative thing: it is order, an ensemble of relations or of laws.''[7]

Thus it is that Proudhon approaches economics as a human phenomenon, and hence as a representational phenomenon. All our doings re-present or incarnate ideas that are only made present through representation. Just as a structuralist anthropologist might put it, all human activity generates meaning. Proudhon asserts that ''metaphysics . . . [or] philosophy entire lies at the bottom of every natural or industrial manifestation; that it is no respecter of degrees or qualities; that, to rise to its sublimest conceptions, all proto- types may be employed equally well; and, finally, that, all the postulates of reason meeting in the most modest industry as well as in the most general sciences, to make every artisan a philosopher,—that is, a generalizing and highly synthetic mind,—it would be enough to teach him—what? his profes- sion.''[8] As Antonio Gramsci was to write, ''everyone is a philosopher,'' for everyone continually manifests as well as operates within a certain ''conception of the world.'' Everything, even the seemingly menial or trivial, is endowed with this quality and significance,

[6] Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions, 173.

[7] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 5.141, translation mine.

[8] Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions, 171.

equally say that matter is a representation of ideas: ''human facts are the incarnation of human ideas'': ''In following in our exposition this method of the parallel development of the reality and the idea, we find a double advantage: first, that of escaping the reproach of materialism, so often applied to economists, to whom facts are truth simply because they are facts, and material facts. To us, on the contrary, facts are not matter,—for we do not know what the word matter means,—but visible manifestations of invisible ideas.''[3] Thus, for Proudhon (as we shall see in more detail in part 2), it is possible to distinguish between ''the real'' and ''the truth,'' or between mere empirical fact and reality in a broader sense; the first, strictly speaking, ''has no meaning in itself,'' while the latter includes the dimension of the ideal, and therefore a dimension of meaning.[4]

Here, Proudhon is close to anticipating postmodern insights into the cultural construction of reality. This is where Marx finds reason to write Proudhon off as an idealist Hegelian, of course. ''Equality,'' he sneers, ''is M. Proudhon's ideal.''[5] However, Proudhon anticipates this criticism:

It is as impossible to accuse us of spiritualism, idealism, or mysticism: for, admitting as a point of departure only the external manifestation of the idea,—the idea which we do not know, which does not exist, as long as it is not reflected, like light, which would be nothing if the sun existed by itself in an infinite void,—and brushing aside all a priori reasoning upon theogony and cosmogony, all inquiry into substance, cause, the me and the not-me, we confine

[3] Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions; or, The Philosophy of Misery, trans. Benjamin R. Tucker (Boston, MA: B.R. Tucker, 1888), 172-73.

[4] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 12.188, translation in James Henry Rubin, Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 94.

[5] Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy (New York: International Publishers, 1963), 119.

same process and the linguistico-cognitive faculties that drive it also produce the possibility of critical self-awareness and revolt.[59]

Kropotkin, too, as we have seen, theorizes history in this dialectical fashion. In his account, the very feature of primitive communities that makes them nearly models of functional anarchy—their ability to exist peaceably without law and the State—is pregnant with the fatal flaw that will tear the egalitarian social nexus apart. In oral cultures, Kropotkin writes, ''human relations were simply regulated by customs, habits and usages, made sacred by constant repetition.'' It is this susceptibility to repetitive action in daily life—the ''tendency to run in a groove, so highly developed in mankind''— that makes human subjects prone to regimes of exploitation, provided these are introduced gradually enough. Thus, through ''the indolence, the fears, and the inertia of the crowd, and . . . the continual repetition of the same acts,'' priests and warriors manage to establish ''customs which have become a solid basis for their own domination.'' Appealing to the logic of sameness, these emergent ruling classes gain power by persuading others to identify the communal ''code'' with theocratic and militaristic privilege. As these new practices become customary, they are invested with ''the spirit of routine,'' and even the exploited are too timid to challenge their exploiters. The past itself is fetishized. Hierarchy becomes an enduring presence in human life.[60]

Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Landauer all trace the emergence of domination and hierarchy back to a process through which the very attributes that make humanity potentially capable of living in a rational and equitable order pro- duce irrational fetishes—and with them, social and political inequality. The human subject is not distinct from the power that seems to confront it as ''a strange, external object''; this apparent separation of power is the alienation that produces an effectively separate power in the State. State

[59] Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 239, 106-7.

[60] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 201, 203-5.

power springs from and depends on the community of human subjects.

For Bakunin, as for Newman, power is the natural product of society. Nor does Bakunin wish to abolish power as such—an impossible project; rather, like Newman, he wishes to abolish ''domination.'' Bakunin's account of the way that ''social power'' is produced and operates, however, is substantially more concrete than that given by Newman. In Newman's writing, as in Deleuze's, abstract concepts are reified into quasi-tangible entities and treated in pseudo-physical terms: ''power relations'' can ''flow'' or ''become congealed'' or ''crystallized,'' and so on.[61] To describe social relationships in this way is to beg the question: is this not a way of falsely applying physical language to an inappropriate domain—indeed, is this not a form of naturalist mystification? Bakunin, more sensibly, explains ''social power,'' the mutual play of influence between individuals in a society, as the product of individuals' natural need for ''the approval and esteem of at least some portion of society'': ''The power of collective sentiment or public spirit is even now a very serious matter. The men most ready to commit crimes rarely dare to defy it, to openly affront it. They will seek to deceive it, but will take care not to be rude with it unless they feel the support of a minority larger or smaller.''[62] Since, along with their most basic biological needs, all human beings also have some need of the companionship and support of others, human nature is to influence others and be influenced by others in turn: ''To wish to escape this influence in the name of some transcendental, divine freedom . . . is to aim toward non-being.'' Proudhon concurs: ''The living man is a group.''[63]

Thus, from a classical anarchist perspective, social power is ineradicable—nor is there any call to abolish this power, for it

[61] Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan, 30-31, 32, 34.

[62] Bakunin, God and the State, 42-43n.

[63] Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 168; Proudhon, Oeuvres, 12.128.

ANARCHIST THEORIES OF MEANING: MULTIPLICITY AND CREATIVITY

Perhaps no anarchist has written a direct answer to the question, ''what is meaning?'' However, certain concepts of meaning are implicit within the anarchist tradition, particularly in its accounts of the real. An ontology of change and relationship implies a theory of meaning and representation that avoids both representationalist assumptions about the fixity and simplicity of the representation-object or signifier-signified relationship and the anti- representationalist dissolution of those relationships. Rather, anarchists have generally presupposed a robust form of realism that does not ignore the extent to which ''speakers and hearers are active and shaping,'' nor deny that ''they intervene in the world and are in the world in a special way as speakers.''[2] The primary object of anarchist critique, whether it is called ''authority,'' ''domination,'' or ''hierarchy,'' is never a purely objective reality, an en-soi existing apart from the human beings who reciprocally form it through their beliefs, discourses, and actions and are formed by it in return, nor is it ever a purely subjective illusion, a figment of individual or collective imagination that can be instantaneously doubted or willed out of existence.

Moral opposition to hierarchy, to domination, to authority as such has compelled anarchist theory to develop in a tension between the claims of objectivity and subjectivity, materialism and idealism, realism and textualism.

This is why Proudhon can at some moments sound every bit the idealist heir of Hegel and at other times like a staunch materialist.

For Proudhon, there is no meaningless experience, for nothing is excluded from the dimension of the ideal. It is not the case with Proudhon, as it was with dualist philosophers like Hobbes, that ideas are merely ghostly representations of material facts; we could

[2] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 33.

racial essences that had been called on to legitimate and ground all the revolutions of the past. Marx's solution was to immanentize the transformative power in history itself, conceived as a definite development, so that freedom would emerge from and of necessity. The anarchists immanentized the transformative power, locating it within nature (after the example of Spinoza, as Daniel Colson points out), proposing that nature formed a matrix that made freedom possible and desirable but not necessary.[1]

Like their Marxist counterparts, then, the classical anarchists operated from a dialectical conception of reality, in which change, which traditional metaphysics had done its best to deny, and relationship, which modern meta- physics was progressively exorcising from reality, were accorded a primary ontological status. Anarchists rejected what they saw as the overly schematic representations of change and relation in Marxist theory, which seemed all too clearly related to an authoritarian will to schematize and represent in practice. Instead of representing change and relation in terms of rigid historical stages and monolithic class structures, they argued for a more open- ended, non-necessitarian conception of historical development, in which all sorts of classes were potentially capable of making change (even the peasants and lumpens that Marx wrote off as essentially reactionary). Insisting on the ethical coordination of means and ends, rather than a centralized, hierarchical revolutionary movement and a dictatorship of the proletariat, they proposed decentralized, horizontal federations of self-managing units as the most appropriate organizational form for both the transition and the future beyond it.

This is not only a theory of political practice; it is a theory of meaning.

[1] Colson, ''Lectures anarchistes de Spinoza,'' Réfractions, no. 2 (Été 1998), http://refractions.plusloin.org/textes/refractions2/spinoza-colson.html (accessed 26 March 2004).

alone can provide any guarantee that, in the absence of the organized violence of the State, acts of informal, antisocial violence will not erupt and form the basis for a new State: ''The only grand and omnipotent authority, at once natural and rational, the only one which we may respect, will be that of the collective and public spirit of a society founded on equality and solidarity and the mutual human respect of all its members . . . It will be a thousand times more powerful, be sure of it, than all your divine, theological, metaphysical, political, and judicial authorities . . . your criminal codes, your jailers, and your executioners.''[64] The persuasive and normative power woven into our social relationships is Bakunin's alternative to the brute-force rule of State law.

There is, then, no question of Bakunin wishing to abolish power per se.

The question this does prompt is: if disseminated power is preferable to centralized State power, and if this disseminated power always already exists, why are we not now living in a Stateless social order? We have already seen that for Bakunin, social power is not an essentially good alternative to an essentially evil State power. Nonetheless, if Bakunin thinks that the ordinary processes of socialization and education at society's disposal are powerful enough to produce subjects who will not behave criminally toward, make war on, or oppress one another, how does he account for criminality, warfare, and oppression? Again, Bakunin anticipates the question:

> But, if this social power exists, why has it not sufficed hitherto to moralize, to humanize men? Simply because hitherto this power has not been humanized itself; it has not been humanized because the social life of which it is ever the faithful expression is based, as we know, on the worship of divinity, not on

[64] Bakunin, God and the State, 42n.

> respect for humanity; on authority, not on liberty; on privilege, not on equality; on the exploitation, not on the brotherhood of men; on iniquity and falsehood, not on justice and truth. Consequently its real action . . . has constantly exercised a disastrous and depraving influence. It does not repress vices and crimes; it creates them. Its authority is consequently a divine, anti-human authority; its influence is mischievous and baleful.[65]

It is not that social power simply is good or bad; rather, its historical forms, riddled with hierarchy and irrationality, have produced conflict, placed us in relations of domination and submission to one another, and produced ideologies to justify these as natural and necessary. Thus social power spawned its official double, State power.

Social power has not yet found a form that is not oppressive and incoherent, a form that is fully social and therefore fully human; it has remained self-contradictory. However, Bakunin claims, a coherent, consistently social form of power does exist in potentia, as a virtual possibility to be realized in history: ''Do you wish to render its authority and influence beneficent and human? Achieve the social revolution. Make all needs really solidary, and cause the material and social interests of each to conform to the human duties of each. And to this end there is but one means: Destroy all the institutions of Inequality; establish the economic and social equality of all, and on this basis will arise the liberty the morality, the solidary humanity of all.''[66]

Once again, it is not the case that the words power and authority always mean one thing to Bakunin, or that they are simply synonymous with evil; they are not monovalent words, but as ambiguous

[65] Ibid., 43n.
[66] Ibid., 43n.

4. Anarchism Beyond Representationalism and Antirepresentationalism

BEYOND REPRESENTATIONALISM AND ANTIREPRESENTATIONALISM

HOW COULD THE CLASSICAL ANARCHIST THEORISTS OF THE NINETEENTH century have anticipated and transcended the most important findings of twentieth-century theories of the human sciences, the findings that culminate in a crisis of representation? Were Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin such profound savants that they were able to do what the trained philosophers of their age and ours were unable to do? I do not claim that they were necessarily aware of all the philosophical implications of the positions they staked out, nor even that they were concerned with such an awareness; they did not think of themselves as philosophers any more than Marx and Engels did. A more plausible interpretation would note that while they were working on the same practical problems that occupied Marx and Engels, their solutions come from the kind of broadly ethical orientation that animates structuralism and post-structuralism rather than from the largely descriptive or analytical orientation that Marx took over from philosophy. The problems, crudely stated, concerned how to construct a movement for social transformation that would not be limited by the sorts of idealist illusions that had constrained such movements in the past—the divine mandates, national destinies, and

outside of both positivisms (which deny reality to what-could-be in favor of what-is) and relativisms (which deny the existence of a what-is for a pure play of what-could-bes), also places it beyond both representationalism and antirepresentationalism. From this perspective, there is clearly an object world to be represented, and our representations can and should be informed by, sensitive to, anchored in that world; at the same time, we assume that our representations will never completely coincide with their object, for the object is not fixed or self- identical. It follows that to be as adequate as possible, our representational practices should evoke the creativity, plurality, and interconnectedness of reality, so that actualities are seen by the light of potentialities, and potentialities in view of actualities.

as the social contradiction itself. As Murray Bookchin forcefully restates the point:

> Power itself is not something whose elimination is actually possible. Hierarchy, domination, and classes can and should be eliminated, as should the use of power to force people to act against their will. But the liberatory use of power, the empowerment of the disempowered, is indispensable.

It seems inconceivable that people could have a free society, both as social and personal beings, without claiming power, institutionalizing it for common and rationally guided ends, and intervening in the natural world to meet rational needs.[67]

Anarchism in this sense has always been a theory of popular empowerment, aiming at the return of the collective force to its origin in the collective itself.

Rather than assuming that power originates solely in the State, and that society is a pure realm of freedom, Bakunin sees the social as marked by contradictory tendencies toward freedom and oppression; moreover, since he sees subjectivity as socially produced, these contradictions are played out within each individual subject: ''social tyranny . . . permeates every facet of life, so that each individual is, often unknowingly, in a sort of conspiracy against himself. It follows from this fact that to revolt against this influence that society naturally exercises over him, he must at least to some extent revolt against himself.'' Bakunin specifically says that the influence of society on individuals can be either ''injurious'' or ''beneficent''—hardly located on one pole of a ''Manichean'' opposition.[68] This social power is not located or localizable at all; it

[67] Bookchin, Re-enchanting Humanity: A Defense of the Human Spirit Against Antihumanism, Misanthropy, Mysticism, and Primitivism (London: Cassell, 1995), 183.

[68] Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 239, italics mine; Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan, 17.

needs to be combated—more properly speaking, transformed —not only in its concentrated, centralized, institutional manifestations, but in its dispersed, disseminated, everyday forms. Thus, Bakunin calls for the contradiction between the liberatory and dominatory forms of social power to be played out within the subject as well as in the streets—for the individual to ''revolt against himself,'' to overthrow not only the ruling institutions without but the reigning ideologies within. Here, too, Newman might have read his own conclusions vis-à-vis the need for a self- transformation to accompany the abolition of oppressive political institutions—''we must work on ourselves''—in Bakunin's text.[69]

ANARCHIST IMMANENCE

The notion that classical anarchist theory presupposes an ''essentialist foundation'' outside of the flux of history is also open to challenge.[70] Rather, in refusing dualisms of matter and thought, bodies and souls, nineteenth- century anarchists locate their theory within a process of development that is at once natural and historical. The visible universe does not ask for a transcendental supplement, but is the source of its own autopoietic and self- transformative creativity.

The universe described by nineteenth-century anarchist theory is characterized by ecological diversity and evolutionary fecundity. Elisée Reclus took up Bakunin's ontology of change and creativity, integrating it more fully with Darwinian biology: ''evolution,'' he wrote, ''is the infinite movement of all that which exists, the incessant transformation of the universe and of all its parts from the eternal origins and until the infinity of the ages.''[71] Accordingly,

[69] Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan, 36.

[70] Ibid., 38, 30.

[71] Élisée Reclus, ''L'évolution, la révolution et l'idéal anarchique,'' Bibliothèque Libertaire, http://kropot.free.fr/Reclus-evorevo.htm, translation mine.

Rocker insists that ''the artist does not simply give back what he sees,'' Rolloff suggests that the subject does not simply give back its social encoding, but always and inevitably transforms it, makes the social over into the individual, makes the old new: ''Even if we are constituted in very strong ways by society, our action and how we re-enact our inscriptions never have a predetermined outcome.''[96] Because the self and the work of art are both inscriptions or constructions, products of a contingent historical process without a predetermined end, they are both capable of redetermination, even if this does not take place in a void of quantum indeterminacy.

This is what Bookchin points to as a dialectics appropriate both to ecology and anarchism, in the tradition of Reclus and Kropotkin: rather than conceptualizing the real as simple, self-identical, and essentially static, an ecological dialectic apprehends being in terms of becoming, development and relationality.[97] It does so, moreover, in a manner curiously consistent with Deleuze's ostensibly anti-dialectical ''becoming-realism,'' as an ontology of movement. Just as Deleuze maintains that the real is not exhausted by the infinitely detailed concreteness of the actual but comprises an even greater order of emergent or virtual possibilities, so from Bookchin's standpoint, reality includes not only the immediately, empirically present ''actuality,'' but also a dimension of ''potentiality'': ''Reality is always formative. It is not a mere 'here' and 'now' that exists no further than what we can perceive with our eyes and noses. Conceived as formative, reality is always a process of actualization of potentialities. It is no less 'real' or 'objective' in terms of what it could be as well as what it is at any given moment.''[98] This dialectical stance, which places anarchism

[96] Rocker, Nationalism and Culture, 474; Rolloff, ''An-archism,'' 19.

[97] Harvey, Condition of Postmodernity, 206; Bookchin, ''A Philosophical Naturalism,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 18 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031118095030293/.

[98] Bookchin, Remaking Society: Pathways to a Green Future (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), 203.

development. Nevertheless, in the ''moment'' one recognizes the obligation to develop oneself, one is ''nothing else but the product of external influences which led to this point.''[92] What is wanted is the development of a society that tends to produce individuals who are self-developing.

Bakunin's developmental perspective has also been elaborated by Sylvia Rolloff in her anarchist response to post-structuralist accounts of the subject as ''constructed.'' Rejecting as one-sided the sorts of genetic perspective that reduce the subject to something predetermined by its social construction, she also refuses the consolation of a quantum or transcendental perspective outside of any determinate subject position: ''We need not be completely separated from the forces of our construction (indeed, this is impossible) in order to make critical statements about the world.''[93] Instead, she describes ''a socially constructed subject'' whose very constructedness implies that it can become something other than it is. Citing Butler's work, she finds that understanding the self as a product of social forces does not necessarily doom it to reproduce these forces: ''My position is mine to the extent that ''I'' . . . replay and resignify the theoretical positions that have constituted me, working the possibilities or their convergence, and trying to take account of the possibilities they systematically exclude.'' ''Once a subject is created,'' Rolloff interprets, ''that is not the end of the process''; instead, ''to be a subject . . . is to be a permanent possibility.''[94] If the self is something that is put together, built, made, then it can be remade, rebuilt, put together differently in the same way that a representation or an artwork can.[95]

What Butler and Rolloff do is to make explicit the connection between the could-have-been and the could-yet-be. Just as Rudolf

[92] Bakunin, The Political Philosophy of Bakunin, 104.

[93] Sylvia Rolloff, ''An-archism: On The Political Philosophy (Or Lack Thereof) In Foucault's Philosophy'' (unpublished paper, 1998), 14.

[94] Butler, quoted in Rolloff, ''An-archism,'' 18; Rolloff, ''An-archism,'' 19.

[95] Susan Sontag, A Sontag Reader (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 30.

Reclus sought to historicize geography, to reveal the effects of time and transformation within the very form of space, to produce an evolutionary vocabulary in which life is synonymous with change, growth and development.[72] Peter Kropotkin likewise interpreted the data of contemporary science as providing a Weltbild in which there is no more metaphysical ''center,'' ''origin,'' or ''law,'' only the ceaseless self-transformation of the inconceivable ecological whole: the center, the origin of force . . . turns out to be scattered and disseminated. It is everywhere and nowhere

The whole aspect of the universe changes with this conception. The idea of force governing the world, pre-established law, preconceived harmony, disappears to make room for the harmony that Fourier had caught a glimpse of: the one which results from the disorderly and incoherent movements of numberless hosts of matter, each of which goes its own way and all of which hold each in equilibrium.[73]

If this conception of the universe is deeply organicist, then its concept of the organic also closely resembles what Richard Shusterman calls ''the deconstructive idea . . . that there are no independent terms with positive or intrinsic essences''; ultimately, such a resistance to representationalism must represent each particular thing as ''a product of its interrelations and differences with other things . . . [and] the world as an organic totality or system.''[74] It is just such a world picture that permits anarchism, no less than post-structuralism, to dispense with any impulse to go beyond life for values.

[72] Reclus, ''Evolution and Revolution,'' Anarchy Archives: An Online Research Center on the History and Theory of Anarchism, 21 January 2002, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/coldoffthepresses/evandrev.html.

[73] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 117-18.

[74] Shusterman, ''Organic Unity: Analysis and Deconstruction,'' in Redrawing the Lines: Analytic Philosophy, Deconstruction and Literary Theory, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock, 107-8 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

The basic this-worldliness intrinsic to the tradition, its contempt for what Kropotkin called ''metaphysical conceptions,'' e.g., ''of a Universal Spirit, or of a Creative Force in Nature, the Incarnation of the Idea, Nature's Goal, the Aim of Existence, the Unknowable, Mankind (conceived as having a separate spiritual existence), and so on,'' is easily documented; what is less well understood is the sense in which its accounts of ethical life are rooted in this ontological decision. ''The end of morals,'' Kropotkin writes in his Ethics, ''cannot be 'transcendental,' as the idealists desire it to be: it must be real. We must find moral satisfaction in life and not in some form of extra-vital condition.''[75]

Instead of postulating a transcendent source of goodness outside of nature, Kropotkin articulates ethics through embodiment, embeddedness, and development. Ultimately, it is phusis, the ''immediate processes of being,'' that creates not the inevitability of an ethical social order, but the material preconditions for ethical life, and even, to the extent that violence and injustice threaten human survival, the empirical necessity of a viable ethics.[76] Nor is this ethics pronounced from the supposed ground of a metaphysical no-place or a view-from-nowhere, the panoptical perspective that surveys the temporal world from after, beyond, or above; one formulation Kropotkin suggests to replace the falsely globalizing, generalizing, and universalizing ''do unto others as you would have others do unto you'' is the more particularizing, contextualizing, and individuating (yet still universally binding) ''treat others as you would like them to treat you under similar circumstances.'' Thereby, Kropotkin admits a degree of relativity, ambiguity, and temporality into the ethical: ''the conception of good and evil varies . . .

[75] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 257; Ethics, 12.

[76] Spanos, Heidegger and Criticism, 139-40.

is equally false.[90] Essentializing either flux or fixity is a mistake, for the two concepts are relative to one another, and to polarize and abstract them from one an- other can only lead to confusion; there is no flux without something fixed to measure it against, and no fixity without relation to flux. A concept more potentially meaningful than either of these abstractions is that of development. This ecological concept needs to be defined against its economistic counterfeits—the stereotypes of ''economic development'' and ''underdevelopment'' used to foreclose political possibilities in the name of capitalist teleology. If adequately understood, however, it synthesizes flux (change, motion, transformation, dynamism) with fixity (continuity, coherence, directionality, self-control) to yield a notion of change that is neither a unidirectional monologue, a metanarrative, nor a disjointed collection of micronarratives.

An anarchist account of development is also compatible with the idea of ''reconstruction'' that Shusterman appeals to, insofar as it assumes, as Bordwell argues, some prior materials that are to be reconstructed. ''Self- creation,'' Shusterman agrees, ''can never be self-creation ex nihilo,'' because ''the self you have to work with in self-creation is made of things you didn't create but were given or done to you.''[91] In so saying, Shusterman and Bordwell are close to Bakunin, who also sought to describe the human subject as somehow self-determining while remaining within the context of social determination: ''the idea of human responsibility . . . cannot be applied to man taken in isolation and considered as an individual in a state of nature, detached from the collective development of society.'' Instead, Bakunin proposes, it is where one becomes aware of oneself and one's place within that collective development that one ''becomes to some extent [one's] own creator'' and therefore ''to be held accountable'' for decisions made about one's own self-

[90] Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, 8.

[91] Shusterman, ''Self-Styling After the 'End of Art,' '' interview with Chantal Pontbriand and Olivier Asselin, Parachute no. 105 (2002), http://www.parachute.ca/public/+100/105.htm self (accessed 10 March 2005).

project that is always underway, engaged in what Proudhon and Kropotkin called ''reconstruction.''[87]

Such evolutionary and reconstructive perspectives are congenial to anarchism because they posit a subject who is both formed by community and self-forming—in the words of Voltairine de Cleyre, a ''conception of mind, or character . . . [which is not] a powerless reflection of a momentary condition of stuff and form, but an active modifying agent, reacting on its environment and transforming circumstances.'' The relation between the self and its determinations is not static or unidirectional, but dialectical; moreover, these determinations include both the material and the symbolic economies that are the products of its own activity, so that the self is produced both by physical, bodily discipline and by ''dominant ideas.''[88] If there is a subject to be represented in a text, it is not the eternal ''human nature'' that Arnoldian humanists wished to find there, but something that alters and is altered, something whose identity is other than itself.

ANARCHISM BEYOND RELATIVISM

At the same time that social anarchism affirms change and reconstruction, it does not theorize these either in terms of a linear, teleologically predes- tined progress toward an end or an aimless, open-ended fluctuation, a mere ''precession of simulacra.''[89] If Hegel's teleological version of history merely amends Parmenidean fixity with ''false movement,'' then a Nietzschean theorization of history as random flux offers a notion of movement that

[87] Landauer, Skepsis und Mystik, 16, translation in Lunn, 168; Proudhon, General Idea of the Revolution, 207; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 189.

[88] Voltairine de Cleyre, Selected Works of Voltairine de Cleyre, ed. Alexander Berkman (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1914), 83.

[89] Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulations, 1.

There is nothing unchangeable about it.''[77] This is hardly evidence of meta- physical, foundationalist thinking.

Indeed, for Kropotkin, the ecological embeddedness of morality is contiguous with a certain kind of groundlessness: he describes the most striking instances of moral life not in terms of an instrumentally rational or utilitarian ''calculation,'' nor in terms of abstract rules and principles, but in terms of ''fertility,'' ''energy,'' ''expansion,'' ''overflowing,'' the excessive and the gratuitous.[78] Here, Kropotkin does not draw a Manichean dichotomy between power (in the sense of an ability to intervene in the world, to exert influence on others) and morality, as Newman alleges—quite the contrary. ''Power to act is duty to act,'' writes Kropotkin, whose attention to the gratuitous aspect of altruistic behavior at times approaches Nietzsche's. For Kropotkin's ecological anarchist morality, in the words of J.-M. Guyau, whose Equisse d'un morale sans obligation ni sanction inspired both Kropotkin and Nietzsche, altruism ''is nothing but a superabundance of life, which demands to be exercised, to give itself; at the same time, it is the consciousness of a power.''[79]

Ethical action, for Kropotkin, cannot be said to emanate from any arché or foundation outside of life itself (indeed, in the most profound instances, outside of the act itself). If all of this simply amounts to replacing the divine logos with ''Nature'' or ''Life''—a danger of which Kropotkin is well aware[80] —then none can do more than to add, as he does, that even if our capacity for ethical behavior has evolved in time, an ethics is not in itself a destiny or telos. ''We certainly must abandon the idea of representing human history as an uninterrupted chain of development from the prehistoric Stone Age to the present time,'' he warns. ''The intellectual

[77] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 97, 92, emphasis mine.

[78] Ibid., 107-9.

[79] Kropotkin, Ethics, 322-23 n3; Guyau, quoted in Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 108.

[80] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 83-84.

evolution of a given society may take at times, under the influence of all sorts of circumstances, a totally wrong turn.''[81] Consequently, his historical studies, in contrast to those of Marx and Engels, do not represent history as the unfolding of material necessity, but as a series of largely contingent events, possibilities opened for a time but then closed again, roads not taken, and avoidable catastrophes. Even Bakunin, with his strict emphasis on material determinism, regards the project of a totalizing ''science of history'' as impossible, denies that any ''process of economic facts'' is ''inevitable,'' and rejects the Marxist tendency to retrospectively justify the catastrophe of State and capital as a particularly loathsome form of theodicy.[82]

These anarchists reject a ''science of history'' to the very extent that they embrace their own historicity. The radical concept of ''progress'' that Proudhon philosophizes is not at all part of that nineteenth-century teleological faith that led Hegel and Marx to speak of history as a linear process with an end; rather, as Gareth Gordon argues, it anticipates ''the radical alterity of the Derridean undeconstructible, the future'':[83] ''Progress, I repeat, is an affirmation of universal movement, and thus it is the denial of all forms and formulae of immutability, all doctrines of eternity, irremovability and impeccability, etc., applied to any being whatsoever. It denies the permanence of any order, including that of the universe itself, and the changelessness of any subject or object, be it empirical or transcendental.'' Its diametric opposite, according to this definition, is not racial stagnation or regression but the very notion of an ''Absolute'': ''The Absolute or absolutism, on the contrary, affirms all that Progress denies, and denies all that Progress affirms. It is the search, in nature, society, religion, politics, morality, etc.,

[81] Kropotkin, Ethics, 17, 21.

[82] Bakunin, God and the State, 61; Bakunin on Anarchy, 311.

[83] Gareth Gordon, ''Horizons of Change: Deconstruction and the Evanescence of Authority,'' 6 January 2003, http://melior.univ-montp3.fr/ra_forum/en/people/gordon_gareth/theses_ intr.html.

for the eternal, the immutable, the perfect, the final, the unchangeable, the undivided. It is, to borrow a term that has become famous in our parliamentary debates, in all things and everywhere, the status quo.'' ''Absolutism,'' on this definition, is rather close to what is now meant by terms such as ''foundationalism''— the quest for an unchanging ground, outside of history, for our values and concepts, perhaps with an eye toward placing certain historically contingent institutions beyond the reach of critique.

From these double and contradictory definitions of progress and the absolute, we may first deduce as a corollary a proposition that seems rather strange to our minds, which have been attuned for so long to absolutism. This is that the true, real, positive and practicable in all things is what changes, or at least what is capable of progression, reconciliation and transformation, while what is false, fictitious, impossible and abstract appears as fixed, complete, whole, unchangeable, indefectible, not capable of modification, conversion, increase or decrease, and is thus refractory to any greater combination or synthesis.[84]

This is most certainly ''essentialist,'' in that it is a statement about the way things are. It is also a coherent affirmation of temporality: the way things are is temporal. Indeed, for Proudhon, it would have been more accurate for Descartes to declare: ''I move, therefore I become.''[85] It is in this spirit that Landauer proposes a vision of ''the world as time'' and writes that ''Time is not merely perceptual, but the very form of our experience of self; therefore it is real for us, for the conception of the world that we must form from out of ourselves.''[86] The human species, for Landauer, is a

[84] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 12.49-51; Ewen, translation in Proudhon, Selected Works, 247-48.

[85] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 12.50, translation mine.

[86] Landauer, Skepsis und Mystik, 22, translation mine; Skepsis und Mystik, 55, translation in Lunn, Prophet of Community, 164.

ting them up and turning them to new uses. The culture of ironic appropriation, on this account, is an antiauthoritarian ''politics of subversive quotation,'' an attack on elite culture.[120]

It is left to a few Marxist types, such as Thomas Frank, to question these notions of agency, resistance, and elitism: such ''active-audience theorizing,'' he argues, is little more than an ideological fig leaf for neoliberal capitalism. For Postrel, however, Frank's ideology-critique is still another version of elitist vanguardism, claiming a higher epistemological ground from which to speak for others—a representational authority—at the expense of the autonomous agency of those for whom he would speak, who are represented as dumb victims. By contrast, Postrel's active audience is positively empowered, and she includes herself in its ranks.[121] The consumerist self recreates itself, in magpie fashion, by adopting and rewriting the texts of others, making them part of its own fictional project.

This notion of performative self-construction, and ultimately of ''liberation through fiction-making,'' Hutcheon argues, is what makes postmodern fiction at least potentially something more than a form of textualist escapism; in- deed, ''if self-reflecting texts can actually lure the reader into participating in the creation of a novelistic universe, perhaps he can also be seduced into action—even direct political action.''[122] Rather than presenting an apolitical textualism à la Borges or Nabokov, works of self-referential art may indeed, as Takayuki Tatsumi and Larry McCaffery argue, ''[have] very direct and relevant implications for our daily lives.'' In particular, metafictions politicize their own antirepresentationalism

[120] Greil Marcus, Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 178; Postrel, ''The Pleasures of Persuasion.''

[121] Frank, quoted in Postrel, ''The Pleasures of Persuasion''; Postrel, ''The Pleasures of Persuasion.''

[122] Hutcheon, Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox (London: Methuen, 1980), 155.

supposes and entails an ontology (a theory about ''what to look for, and why''—i.e., a theory as to what kinds of things there are to be found).[1] Most of the interpretive methods that have been developed by textual scholars are vitiated to some extent by the limited concepts of the object that they presuppose. Insofar as interpretation apprehends a text as something produced by human activity, a creative deed, a speech-act—in short, as an action—then we can produce a typology of genres of interpretive method sorted by the different categories through which these methods have apprehended the ontology of the text.

Burke's famous ''pentad of key terms,'' as set forth in his Grammar of Motives, offers a useful framework for just such a typology. ''In a rounded statement about motives,'' i.e., a full answer to the question of ''what people are doing and why they are doing it,'' which arises when we treat these doings as a readable text (i.e., when we regard them as ''action,'' the work of rational creatures who form the field of rhetoric, rather than mere ''motion,'' the patterned but irrational ongoing happening of the universe, which is not subject to rhetorical appeal), we are compelled to name the ''act'' itself in terms of both the ''agency'' (the ''means or instruments employed'') and the ''purpose'' (the end aimed at), and in terms of both ''the scene,'' (''the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred'') and the ''agent'' (the ''person or kind of person [who] performed the act'').[2] Thus, we can see the field of interpretive methodologies as divided into those centered on a notion of the text as an action through an agency versus those focusing on the purpose served by the textual act (structural versus functional methodologies), and between those foregrounding the

[1] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 68.

[2] Burke, A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1962), xvii; ''Dramatism,'' in Drama in Life: The Uses of Communication in Society, ed. James E. Combs and Michael W. Mansfield, 11 (New York: Hastings House, 1976); A Gram- mar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives, xvii.

importance of the scene in which the textual act takes place versus those privileging the agent who acts through the text (contextual versus rhetorical methodologies).

In my exposition, I have already hinted at the ways in which these four categories arrange themselves into agonistic binaries, as theories of texts as means (structural theories) versus theories of texts as fulfilling given ends (functional theories), or theories of texts as constituted by the not-me (contextual theories) versus theories of texts as constituted by a me (rhetorical theories). We could also organize them through the rubric of genetic theories (structural and contextual theories, which emphasize underlying frameworks and situational determinations behind the textual act) versus quantum theories (rhetorical and functional theories, which highlight the agency of the subject in its moment of textual action). Opposition, of course, entails a relationship between the opposed parties, but it also means their mutual striving to exclude one another. Each of these genres of methodology essentializes certain aspects of the text-as-act (or act-as-text) rather than others.

The question to consider in reviewing these genres of theory is this: given the ethical parameters of anarchist scholarship defined by theorists such as Goodman, Bookchin, and Graeber, which of these approaches, if any, is most appropriate for the anarchist intellectual, whose function is not to dictate to the text but to tease out its own implicit logic in a utopian extrapolation of the potential from the actual?

RHETORICAL METHODOLOGIES

We can treat the text as the act of an agent, the deed of a doer, practicing a rhetorical method of analysis. Shucking the traditional dichotomy of rhetoric versus literature, we read the text as an act of expression or communication.

irony-deprived could find it truly offensive. The 1990s reaction is to puncture it, to make jokes at its expense. In the age of Monica, the story cries out for reinterpretation as soft-core phone sex (‘Well, darling, I’m all over cream. Just imagine, cream tip to toe. Arms. Legs. All of me!’ says the ad) or a desperate cry for attention.’’ Our knowing, ironic responses to this priceless bit of kitsch, Postrel argues, are the cumulative result of advertisers’ attempts to craft evermore-effective pitches, ‘‘a media dynamic that made consumers increasingly immune to the ad men’s favorite tech- niques.’’[118] The ability of such images to elicit credulous and affective responses has steadily declined, while a postmodern culture of resistance has arisen, in which advertising imagery and narrative style are subject to the continual ‘‘parodies and satirical allusions,’’ which have become a ubiquitous part of pop culture. As Carl Matheson explains, postmodern comedies like The Simpsons ‘‘tend to be highly quotational: many of today’s comedies essentially depend on the device of referring to or quoting other works of popular culture. Second, they are hyper-ironic: the flavor of humor offered by today’s comedies is colder, based less on a shared sense of humanity than on a sense of world-weary cleverer-than-thou-ness.’’ These quotational and hyper-ironic strategies both reflect and participate in what Matheson calls ‘‘a pervasive crisis of authority, be it artistic, scientific or philosophical, religious or moral’’: no one, in any of these fields, now has an unchallenged right to speak for others, or can claim uncontested legitimacy for his or her representations of the world.[119] As Sterling remarks, when one can no longer either faithfully represent a world (as classicism aspired to) or create one ab novo (as modernists aspired to), one instead quotes worlds, cut-

[118] Virginia Postrel, ‘‘The Pleasures of Persuasion,’’ Reason, 2 August 1999, http://reason.com/opeds/vp080299.shtml (accessed 22 March 2004).

[119] Carl Matheson, ‘‘The Simpsons, Hyper-Irony, and the Meaning of Life,’’ in The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D’oh! of Homer, ed. William Irwin et al., 109, 117 (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 2001). Note the conspicuous absence of political authority from Matheson’s list of the kinds that are in crisis.

A postmodern emphasis on the active audience valorizes what Umberto Eco calls the ''open work''—the text that forces the reader to produce, rather than passively consume, its narrative form.[115] Already, in modernism, we find hints of de Certeau's notion of the text as a kind of space that readers inhabit differently: Sonn cites the Symbolist writer Léon Deschamps as one who believed that a poem ''only provided the palace which the reader was free to furnish,'' so that a poem's ambiguity should allow ''freedom of interpretation.'' Indeed, for the Bloomsbury modernist critic Roger Fry, ''the accusation of revolutionary anarchism'' leveled at formalism by conservatives was due to its elimination of elitist requirements on its interpretation, the abolition of an aristocratic genre vocabulary.[116] The spirit of this open work is democratic and leveling, typified by Kerouac's cavalier invitation at the end of Tristessa: ''This part is my part of the movie, let's hear yours.'' Juliana Spahr describes this kind of text as ''giving the reading act as much authority as the authoring act,'' arguing that it ''cultivates readerly agency by opening an anarchic space for reader response.''[117]

Presumably, this ''anarchic space'' is offered as an answer to Marxist concerns about ideology and repressive structures. Instead of confronting a nearly all-powerful ''culture industry'' that reifies subjects into objects at every turn, we find active agents subverting the system by creatively, autonomously appropriating its products. Thus Virginia Postrel rereads a 1950s ad for Dove soap as high camp: ''Read with today's eyes, the ad is quite insulting, but it is also hilarious. It is so unabashedly over-the-top that only the most

[115] Eco, The Open Work, trans. Anna Concogni (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3-4.

[116] Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 223; Roger Fry, Vision and Design (New York: Brentano's, 1924), 291; Jack Kerouac, Tristessa (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 96.

[117] Spahr, Everybody's Autonomy: Connective Reading and Collective Identity (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001), 47; ''Resignifying Autobiography,'' 148.

Instead of assuming that literature is entirely unlike rhetoric, we can read a literary text as if it were a work of rhetoric, presupposing an audience, crafted for the purpose of persuasion. This is to interpret the text in terms of some extratextual cognition or emotion, as the expression of some thought or wish by the author (even if this author is collective).

To make a rhetorical interpretation of a literary text, we treat it as an instance of rhetoric—as if it were implicitly stating a claim about some topic and presenting a kind of argument for that claim. In other words, we parse the ''symbolic act'' of the text as a statement. ''A very clear way to illustrate the meaning of an act,'' Burke writes, ''is to say, 'The actor, by this act, is saying, in effect . . .'—then give a declarative sentence. Thus the practice of shaking hands after a game says in effect: 'There are no hard feelings.

The rivalry does not extend beyond the confines of the game' '' (Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form 447).

In literature, implicit statements can be deduced at several different levels. Since, as Irving Howe writes, ''when a writer works out a plot, he tacitly assumes that there is a rational structure in human conduct, that this structure can be ascertained, and that doing so he is enabled to provide his work with a sequence of order,'' narrative has an intrinsically rhetorical, persuasive function; Charles Johnson goes so far as to assert that ''each plot—how events happen and why—is also an argument. To plot well is to say, 'This is how the world works,' that if you place this person A in this situation B, the result will be event C.''[3] Narrative provides what Stephen Toulmin calls a ''warrant'' for this implicit claim (specifying the features of the ''data'' that relate it to the ''conclusion''), and what Charles Sanders Peirce calls a ''ground'' (specifying the

[3] Iving Howe, quoted in Peter Bürger, Theory of the Avant-Garde, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xii; Charles Johnson, Being and Race: Black Writing Since 1970 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 32.

''respect'' in which a ''sign stands for something, its object'').[4] In nonnarrative texts, the warrant or semiotic ground appears in the relationships we are led to infer between the words juxtaposed on the page, the reason we perceive them as going together.

To read rhetorically, then, is to read the text as an implicit argument—a justification for the crime, perhaps—for certain claims (even if these are tacit or ambiguous), using figures, affective appeals, and narrative logic as the reasoning and evidence with which it makes its case. We do so by distinguishing ''theme'' and ''thesis,'' identifying a topic we could take it to be about, then deducing what it seems to argue for regarding this topic.[5] Moreover, we can ask for the warrant that advances this argument—i.e., what feature of the data is being seized on to universalize it (within the text's fictive universe) so that it applies to the implicit claim—and ask to what extent this universality is particularized, historicized, limited, tempered by implicit ''qualifiers.''[6]

This does not necessarily reduce to looking for the author's intention, although intentional dimensions of meaning are included in its domain. However, looking for an argument in the text doesn't require us to postulate a conscious authorial intention; many of the arguments we make on a daily basis are gestural, habitual, unconscious, and unintended. Nor are we necessarily supposing that the text will make a clear and univocal argument: it could be that the text expresses more than one idea about a given topic— perhaps even contradictory ideas. This method also opens onto another infinity: in theory, given the flexibility of ''aboutness,'' a new characterization of the ''topic'' can be given for every context into which

[4] Stephen Edelston Toulmin, The Uses of Argument (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 98; Charles Sanders Peirce, Collected Papers, ed. Charles Hartshorne et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 2.228.

[5] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, ''What Is Theme And How Do We Get At It?'' in Thematics: New Approaches, ed. Claude Bremond et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 10.

[6] Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, 101.

Once again, postmodernism looks to a modernist precedent. If, according to Derrida, traditional drama is tied to humanism by its commitment to ''a representation of life,'' then anarchist antirepresentationalism dictates Artaud's antihumanist Theater of Cruelty, which ''is not a representation'' but ''life itself.'' Rather than a drama of realism and the word, Artaud's is one of action. Refusing the transcendental pretense of the signifier, Artaud produces what Perez terms a ''theater of the flesh,'' a ''theater of passion and desiring-production, where expression is not linguistic but hieroglyphic and a-signifying in nature,'' so that ''flows of the body replace the flows of words'' and ''linguistic expression is replaced by the emotive a-signification of 'affective athleticism.' '' Thus, instead of enacting a predefined text, actors in the Theater of Cruelty engage in ''gestures, dances, and shouts,'' for ''the gesture is always spontaneous, non- coded and non-inscribed; and it disappears like a musical note the moment it is performed. But most importantly, unlike the despotic and imperial Signifier it does not refer back to anything.'' In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, this theater is one of ''production'' rather than ''expression'': if psychoanalytic representation inappropriately imposes an expressivist or dramaturgical model on the unconscious, Artaud's theater presents instead ''a factory, a workshop.'' Within this workshop, Derrida notes, everyone and everything is productive: rather distancing a contemplative audience from the action on stage, cruelty involves them, enters into their bodies. Anarchist theater proposes to abolish ''the distance between the spectator and the actor''— displacing the performer's agency and the author's authority in favor of the active audience. Thus, in Artaud's words, ''the true theater, like poetry . . . is born out of a kind of organized anarchy.''[114]

[114] Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 234, 237; Rolando Perez, On (An)archy and Schizoanalysis (Brooklyn: Auto- nomedia, 1990), 38-39; Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 55; Artaud, quoted in Derrida, Writing and Difference, 249.

introduce everyday language in poetry to Picasso's incorporation of the day's newspaper headlines in cubist collages) and attempts to popularize art by siting it in everyday life (e.g., Man Ray's abstract chess set or the Muralists's public art). Arguably, then, this aspect of postmodernism begins with those modernists ''who effectively practised postmodernism avant la lettre.''[111]

Once again, as they struggle to articulate the antirepresentationalist project in aesthetics in terms of a radical deflation of the authority of art, post- modernists find themselves referring to modern experiments. According to Harvey, Picasso's collage and Eisenstein's montage come to be redefined as the postmodern techniques par excellence, in part because the fragmentary style they produce undermines our sense of stability and univocity, but also because ''minimizing the authority of the cultural producer creates the opportunity for popular participation and democratic determinations of cultural values.''[112] Rather than creating art ex nihilo like a god, the postmodern bricoleur produces the new through recombinations of the old, as collage and montage; since we are all now equipped with a store of recombinable materials, all of us are the potential creators of Duchamp's ready-mades. This de- deification of the artist expresses itself in a camp aesthetic of travesty and parody: what Spanos considers ''the essential characteristic of postmodern literature,'' i.e., its ''mockery of the canonical literary forms of 'official' culture,'' finds ample precedent in modernist parodies of official art, from the ridicule Pirandello heaps on the ''well-made play'' to Eliot's mock-melodrama, Sweeney Agonistes.[113]

This anti-aesthetic reduction of the distance between artist and audience, between art and everyday life, means that the didacticism of traditional drama must give way to something nonmimetic.

[111] Featherstone, Consumer Culture and Postmodernism, 38.

[112] Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity, 51.

[113] Huyssen, After the Great Divide, 196; Spanos, Repetitions, 20.

the text can be placed, and the set of possible contexts is boundless.[7]

STRUCTURAL METHODOLOGIES

Tools are, of course, created by toolmakers for their own use, but it is also true that they can suggest and even constrain certain kinds of uses; the means employed to an end can supply and even supplant the intended ends themselves. Language, as an ''implement of action,'' is not to be seen as a transparent or passive medium; in some sense, it must always overtake, become, be its own message. Thus, since symbolic materials form the agency through which the writer must express himself or herself, we need to investigate the forces arising from within the ''writer's medium,'' the ways in which, as the sociologist Hugh Duncan insists, rather than being motivated by ''some kind of experience 'beyond' symbols,'' they become ''a motivational dimension in [their] own right.'' We come to see the invention as the mother of necessities—indeed, as a creation that to some extent invents its own creator. Rather than seeing the agency as derivative from and subordinate to purpose, we see it as primary, producing its own aims, shaping the agent in its own image—perhaps to our peril; carried away by our own figures of speech, believing in the flatness of our maps, we sail off, looking for the edges of the earth. The power of a device such as metaphor to compel attitudes and action is profound: entire fields of thought and discourse, as Burke remarks, in terms reminiscent of Borges and Derrida, ''are hardly more than the patient repetition . . . of a fertile metaphor.''[8]

[7] Menachem Brinker, ''Theme and Interpretation,'' in Thematics, 37-38; Stephen David Ross, A Theory of Art: Inexhaustibility By Contrast (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 201.

[8] Burke, Counter-Statement, 54-55; Permanence and Change, 176; Duncan, ''Introduction'' in Burke, Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose (Indianapolis: Babbs- Merrill), xxi; Burke, Language As Symbolic Action, 9, 15; A

By establishing relationships between the things it orders, a text, perhaps regardless of (or even contrary to) the intentions of its author, embodies certain ideas about how the universe is ordered; it performatively enacts, rather than constatively conveys, certain ideas, certain meanings.

Linguistic devices structure the world for us, giving things shape and form, enabling us to act and indeed compelling action. Despite the astounding diversity of these devices, the ''two basic dialectic resources'' any language affords are those of ''merger and division''—the structure of categories that dictates ''what goes with what'' and ''what is vs. what.'' In effect, through this activity of ''pulling bits of reality apart and treating them like wholes,'' the agency of language constructs the very context within which we operate: ''The universe would appear to be something like a cheese; it can be sliced in an infinite number of ways—and when one has chosen his own pattern of slicing, he finds that other men's cuts fall at the wrong places.''[9]

This pattern or ''equational structure'' is to some extent inscribed in the lexicon of each discursive community, but this community is not to be conceived as a crystal, an immobile unity predetermining the position of each of its component molecules; rather, within it, different discourses can proliferate, each with its own particular usages (as Burke remarks, ''there are cultures within cultures''), and within a particular discourse—say, literature—a particular text creates its own structure through its ''internal organization,'' its narrative or spatial arrangement of elements into patterns.[10]

Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives, 276, 317; Permanence and Change, 35.

[9] Burke, Permanence and Change 95; Language As Symbolic Action, 425; Philosophy of Literary Form, 20, 69; Permanence and Change, 103.

[10] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 89; Permanence and Change, 35; Counter- Statement, 161; Attitudes Toward History, 191, 195.

redescribed as the attempt to retain for the artist, in the face of the challenge posed by science, some degree of his former ''authority,'' a ''claim to represent some authentic vision of the world.'' At the same time, as Featherstone writes, ''This attack on autonomous, institutionalized art was itself not new,'' but had already been anticipated by modernism.[109] The earlier generation of the Symbolists, like their Romantic forebears, had already been fascinated with the unconscious forces outside the artist's control; Dada put the idea of abdicating conscious control into practice with Tzara's cut-up poetry method, and the Surrealists extended this experiment with the aleatory and the unconscious in practices of automatic writing (écriture automatique) and the Exquisite Corpse poetry game. By replacing authorial will with Mallarmé's ineradicable hasard, these anarchist moderns aimed to radically de-privilege the poet as individual genius. Anti-art strikes at the spirit of aesthetic hierarchy,[110] not only by painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa or placing a urinal on a pedestal, but also in more modest uses of vernacular (from Wordsworth's timid attempt to

[109] Owens, ''The Discourse of Others,'' 58; Featherstone, Consumer Culture and Post- modernism, 38.

[110] It strikes at the spirit of hierarchy, but does not kill it: instead, it calls into being new élites (of literati who ''understand'' anti-art as a continuation of aesthetics, wealthy patrons who own ''valuable'' aesthetic objects, and arts bureaucrats who commission control aestheticized ''public'' spaces), and at the same stroke, destroys the spirit of aesthetic community (ex-cluding the public from art as plebian ''philistines,'' rather than impressing it through art, as did the old aristocracies via ostentatious art-display). Even in 1865, Proudhon was concerned that ''art's 'true significance' is falsified'' by its ''commodification'' through ''awards, galleries, government sponsorships, etc.'' (Max Raphael, Proudhon, Marx, Picasso: Three Studies in the Sociology of Art, trans. Inge Marcuse, ed. John Tagg [Atlantic Highlands, NJ]: Humanities Press, 1980), 4); by 1936, Herbert Read was lamenting the state of affairs in which the most radical modernisms could be cheerfully ignored by an oblivious public while government patronage meant dependence on bureaucrats (Poetry and Anarchism), and by 1949, Paul Goodman bemoaned ''the disappearance of a popular audience for good work'' and the self-isolation of artists, the familiar dilemma in which art and the public mutually excluded one another (Creator Spirit Come!, 77-79).

series The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems is exemplary in its renunciation of representational ''mastery.'' A number of oblique, vacant photographs—for example, the façade of a ''First National City Bank'' with two empty bottles of liquor resting on its granite stoop—are juxtaposed with a scattered series of words for drunkenness (''plastered,'' ''stuccoed,'' ''rosined,'' ''shellacked,'' ''vulcanized,'' ''inebriated,'' ''polluted''). In this stark ''juxtaposition of two representational systems, visual and verbal,'' Rosler not only denies us the satisfaction of a direct statement, an explanation, a single meaning; she has also refused to photograph the inhabitants of Skid Row, to speak on their behalf, to illuminate them from a safe distance (photography as social work in the tradition of Jacob Riis). For ''concerned'' or ''victim'' photography overlooks the constitutive role of its own activity, which is held to be merely representative (the ''myth'' of photographic transparency and objectivity). Despite his or her benevolence in representing those who have been denied access to the means of representation, the photographer inevitably functions as an agent of the system of power that silenced those people in the first place. Thus, they are twice victimized: first by society, and then by the photographer who presumes the right to speak on their behalf.[107]

We are thus presented only with floating signifiers that stubbornly refuse our wish to master them, to subdue them into revealing a final meaning. The only statement Rosler offers is one about ''the impoverishment of representational strategies'': All these images and words, she writes, ''are powerless.''[108]

Anarchist postmodernism thus aims at the displacement or decentering of the artist as privileged representative. Here, once again, the postmodern both cancels and preserves the results of modernist experimentation. On the one hand, what modernists conceived of as the artist's liberatory struggle for autonomy is

[107] Owens, ''The Discourse of Others,'' 68-69.

[108] Rosler, quoted in Owens, ''The Discourse of Others,'' 70.

While a text may always borrow its materials from a preexisting language and a ready-made set of cultural codes, it may also tinker with these systems, making new combinations and splitting up traditional groupings to give us a different way of seeing the world; indeed, we never really use a word ''in its mere dictionary sense'' because it will always acquire different ''overtones'' by being placed in the ''company'' of other words, what Bakhtin called the ''dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words.''[11] That is to say: a textual act doesn't only use its native language, or duplicate the particular system of symbols that makes up its native culture; by entering into a meaning-altering context (and every passing moment provides, to whatever small degree, just such a new context), it reconstructs the language, it ''codifies reality'' in ways that can differ from the dominant codifications of the parent culture. Thus we might see literature, as Richards sees philosophy, as ''a meaning-making activity,'' a project that produces new relationships between old signs. In this way, Goodman argues, ''the power to speak and hear continually modifies the code to say sentences that do mean.''[12]

According to Burke, paying this kind of careful attention to the way that words transfer or share their connotative charges is key to the enterprise of interpretation. The first interpretive move is to ''watch for the dramatic alignment'' of things, looking for the associations that an author builds be- tween elements.[13] This is, in fact, a key insight of structuralist literary theo- rists like Roland Barthes: if a text is organized like a language, it can be analyzed like one. We are examining the text as if it were a language tha has its own way of grouping and splitting things, its own way of carving up the universe. It is by tracing these webs of association

[11] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 35; Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, 276.

[12] Richards, Letters From Quebec, 1.1.6; Goodman, Speaking and Language, 33.

[13] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 20, 69.

that we can start to reconstruct a specific text's internal thesaurus, observing which terms are being used as synonymous, or identical, and which appear to be antonyms, or opposites.

For example, in Thomas Pynchon's novel, The Crying of Lot 49, ''inside'' and ''outside'' are key terms, dramatically aligned against one another. They figure in Oedipa Maas's most significant moments of realization, e.g., when she is trying to understand the implications of the enormous conspiracy she has stumbled upon: ''The act of metaphor then was both a thrust at truth and a lie, depending on where you were: inside, safe, or outside, lost.''[14] Normally, we use ''inside'' and ''outside'' as slang for certain degrees of power and knowledge (which are the two things that make for a conspiracy, a secret organization that is powerful because it is unknown to the many): we say that insiders are those who are powerful and/or knowledgeable, and outsiders those who are not in the know, who do not have access to power. However, to read ''inside, safe'' as synonymous with knowledge or ''outside, lost'' as synonymous with ignorance would be to misread Pynchon—for in the world of The Crying of Lot 49, it appears that the most powerless outsiders (poor people, despised minorities, social outcasts, misfits, screwups, and other ''lost'' types) are the ones who know the most about the conspiracy; it is in her night-journeys through the ghettoes and the slums that white, middle- class Oedipa reaches her most intense moments of revelation. For Pynchon, it is one's position as an outsider, the position of alienation or marginality, that gives one access to a certain kind of truth; those who stay safe inside middle-class suburban Kinneret-Among-The-Pines are systematically blind to what is really going on. We can only understand this if we suspend our presuppositions about the connotations of the words ''inside'' and ''outside'' enough to notice how they actually function in the text at hand, whereupon we observe that their

[14] Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49 (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 129.

this antirepresentationalist pluralism underlies many of the techniques of postmodern fiction: in a manner notably dramatized by Burroughs's reappropriation of the Dadas' cut-up technique, all manner of texts, from pulp fiction and publicity to political propaganda, the factual alike with the fictional, are reduced to ''raw material for collage work.''[103] Thus, in Steve Erickson's Arc d'X, more or less factual historic episodes (Thomas Jefferson's embassy to Paris, his rape of his slave Sally Hemings) are combined with the counterfactual (in a sublime act of revenge, Hemings stabs Jefferson in his bed) and the marvelous (in the moment after the murder, ''she picked herself up from the floor to see fly out of his body a hundred black moths which filled the room'').[104] Such juxtapositions, in suggesting that these ''fantastic elements . . . are not clearcut 'departures from known reality' but ontologically part of the whole mess,'' challenge the reality principle, inviting the subversive question: '''real' compared to what?'' This disrespect for intellectual property and ontological propriety, as well as the presentation of ''worlds in the plural,'' is what Brian McHale calls the ''anarchic'' in postmodern literature.[105]

An anarchic plurality of worlds, as Dreyfus and Spinosa acknowledge, means a certain ''incommensurability'' between them; even in a Habermasian ''ideal speech situation,'' according to Andrew M. Koch, the irreducibility of one world to the terms of any other implies relativism, ''skewed languages speaking at one another—neither truth nor consensus.''[106] This, in turn, spells out a further ramification of postmodern antirepresentationalism—the ethical responsibility of the artist not to represent or ''speak for'' others. For Craig Owens, Martha Rosler's 1974-75 photographic

[103] Sterling, ''Slipstream,'' 80.

[104] Erickson, Arc d'X (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993), 38.

[105] Sterling, ''Slipstream,'' 80; McHale, quoted in Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity, 301.

[106] Dreyfus and Spinosa, ''Two Kinds of Antiessentialism,'' 759; Koch, ''Poststructuralism,'' 338.

make sense of them,'' they take a step toward oblivion. Thus, Auster says that his The Invention of Solitude poses ''the question of . . . whether it's in fact possible for a person to talk to another person.''[99] A kind of Stirnerian self, resistant to identity, reappears.

This singular-plural self presupposes plural-singular realities. In place of a realist representation that claims veracity for itself—a mimetic matching of its own unified system of categories to a unified system of nature, so that each natural kind fits its cultural category and vice versa—postmodern fiction presents us with multiple worlds.[100] If, as Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa argue, representationalism entails the essentialist assumption of an ''all-embracing set of types''—in Borges's famous analogies, a perfect Map that would cover the Empire point for point, or a perfect language whose noun structure would exactly fit the structure of really existing things—then an antirepresentationalist approach would dispense with this unified picture of things, acknowledging the creativity of language and embracing the coexistence of many realities.[101] Gianni Vattimo defines postmodern beauty in terms of this ontological fecundity, the proliferation of ''possible life worlds,'' rather than the reduction of the manifold to unity, à la Percy Bysshe Shelley.[102] As Bruce Sterling observes,

[99] Kundera, The Art of the Novel, trans. Lisa Asher (: Harper & Row, 1988), 23-26; Juliana Spahr, ''Resignifying Autobiography: Lyn Hejinian's My Life,'' American Literature 68, no. 1 (March 1996): 146; Sartwell, Obscenity, Anarchy, Reality, 15; Paul Auster, The New York Trilogy (: Penguin, 1986), 9; Auster, The Art of Hunger (: Penguin, 1993), 300.

[100] Harvey, 301.

[101] Hubert L. Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa, ''Coping with Things-in-Themselves: A Practice-Based Phenomenological Argument for Realism,'' Inquiry 42, no. 1 (March 1999): 752; Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, Extraordinary Tales, ed. and trans. Anthony Kerrigan (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 123; Borges, Other Inquisitions, 1937-1952, trans. Ruth L. C. Simms (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 101-5; Dreyfus and Spinosa, ''Two Kinds of Antiessentialism and Their Consequences,'' 747.

[102] Gianni Vattimo, The Transparent Society, trans. David Webb (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 72.

culturally assigned relationship has been deliberately and systematically inverted. It is in this manner that Burke insists we should ''get our equations inductively, by tracing down the interrelationships as revealed by the concrete structure of the book itself''—in other words, making no firm assumptions about what a given element means until we have seen how it functions in this particular instance: ''Thus, if we want to say that one principle equals 'light,' and the other equals 'darkness,' we must be able to extract this interpretation by explicit quotation from the work itself.''[15]

CONTEXTUAL METHODOLOGIES

If the structural analyst is a bit like a sports announcer commenting on the brilliance of each play in a particular game, this would seem to exclude from view the rules and parameters of the game itself, the boundaries of the field on which it is played. So Burke calls for a ''statistical'' assessment of meaning that asks what words and texts represent by asking what norms they are ''representative'' of, interpreting the text as an act taken in a situation (a particular time and place, a set of circumstances, an occasion, a moment, a setting), ultimately reading it as the effect of a given set of social relations, a time and place.[16]

The goal of contextual interpretation is not only to discover equational structures in the text or describe how these patterns operate, but to trace them back to structures and patterns outside the text—whether these are inherited aesthetic forms (like literary archetypes), large-scale social structures (like sexism), or habitual patterns of thought and feeling in the psyche of the author (like the Oedipal Complex)—attempting to sum up or capture the nature of this resemblance, what Raymond Williams calls the ''homology''

[15] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 69, 70.

[16] Ibid., 18-19.

between text and context.[17] The textual instance, the text as parole, is taken to be a moment in a larger system, a social langue; it is a fragment of some signifying whole, synecdochically reflecting the social totality. Contextual analysis sees the text not so much as the linguistic production of a world as the culture's reproduction of itself.

If a rhetorical analysis reads a literary text as an act of persuasion, fore- grounding the aspect of persuasion rhetoricians call logos, identified most closely with the ''message'' or content, contextual analysis foregrounds the aspect of pathos or ''audience''—the collectively held ''values and beliefs'' that are the condition for any successful appeal.[18] From this perspective, the speaker does not appear as an ''agent'' expressing a ''meaning'' formed independently from the ''audience'' to which it is directed; rather, one is dependent, for one's very ability to speak, on the preexisting structure of meanings within which one comes to speak, think, act, and be. ''The so- called 'I,' '' as Burke comments, is merely a function of ''corporate we's,'' and indeed, ''persuasion'' must be reconceived in terms of the ''identification'' of self with others: ''You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his.''[19] One is a priori embedded in a ''scene'' that determines what one can say and mean, for it is only to the extent that others already participate in an economy of shared beliefs and expressive conventions that one can effectively persuade them of anything; an ''ideology'' or a ''culture'' is nothing less than ''the nodus of beliefs and judgements which the artist can exploit for his effects.''[20] In short,

[17] Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 105.

[18] John C. Bean and John D. Ramage, Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric With Readings (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1998), 82.

[19] Burke, Attitudes Toward History 264; A Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives, 579.

[20] Burke, Counter-Statement, 161.

representation, and from the combined pressure of the commercial marketplace and philistine popular tastes for artists to produce representational art—anarchist postmodernism tends to take these freedoms for granted as having been won by modernism.[98] Instead of defending the autonomy of the artist and the artwork, an anarchist postmodernism deflates the artist's pretensions to authority, contesting the power of art to reveal a natural realm outside of its own artifice or a transcendent truth beyond its own historical materiality. Authors and narrators are fragmented, as are the wholeness of narrative and symbol.

In The Art of the Novel, Milan Kundera sketches a brief history of the novel as the story of a series of attempts to represent the self. At first, the self is revealed through action, the picaresque experience of adventure on the open road; as the world becomes increasingly colonized, however, this sphere of free action diminishes, and the self resorts to revealing itself through words (the epistolary novel) and ultimately through thoughts (the stream-of-consciousness novel). Finally, with the modernism of Kafka and Beckett, the self is utterly flattened and negated by a totalitarian environment that makes personality irrelevant. Beyond this modernist ne plus ultra, Juliana Spahr traces how postmodern ''antirepresentational impulses'' are realized instead through the representation of the self as a ''multiple subjectivity''—hermetic, unknowable, irreducibly fragmentary. As Sartwell writes, lived experience resists representation: ''Every attempt I make to narrativize my life is radically impoverished . . . my life is no novel and cannot even be described.'' In Paul Auster's stories, the indescribability of the self, its absolute otherness to itself, is powerfully affirmed, and when his protagonists succumb to the temptation of accepting identities imposed on them as a way to ''pull all these things together and

[98] David Graeber approvingly notes Bourdieu's argument that modernist formalism, despite its political aloofness, achieved a political victory in securing ''the autonomy of one particular field of human endeavor from the logic of the market'' (''The Twilight of Vanguardism'').

nist restores communicative understanding. This ironic restoration, this ''replenishment'' of what has been ''exhausted,'' as John Barth has it,[96] seems like an odd outcome for what is still a critique of representation in all its forms: is not communication synonymous with representation, since one communicates through representational signs, and what represents must, by definition, communicate something to someone?

This paradox makes more sense if, as Mitchell suggests, one sees the axis of representation connecting signifier to signified as interrupting or obstructing the axis of communication connecting speaker to hearer. Since the concern with purity is gone, postmodernism celebrates the Bakhtinian mixture of genres: all the conventions and standard tropes of the universe of low-art genres (romance, western, science fiction, mystery) spawned within the matrix of mass culture from traditional realist fiction and cinema (as if in imitation of the classical genre taxonomy of lyric, epic, dramatic, etc.) become part of the common store of imagery and styles. Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow references both Rilke and Plastic-Man comix, while Auster's City of Glass blends Dashiell Hammett with Wittgenstein.

Where classical realism entailed an insistence that our senses are adequate to represent an ultimately sensible world, the heteroglossic mixture of genres deployed by postmodernism suggests that ''nothing we know makes 'a lot of sense' and perhaps even that nothing ever could.''[97]

A shift in materials and tactics is accompanied by a shift in strategy. Where anarchist modernism typically emphasized the liberation of artists and their works from a restrictive social framework—both from the bigotry of bourgeois moral codes, with their strictures as to what is and is not a proper subject for

[96] John Barth, ''The Literature of Replenishment,'' in The Friday Book: Essays and Other Nonfiction (New York: Putnam, 1984), 193-206.

[97] Bruce Sterling, ''Slipstream,'' Science Fiction EYE 1, no. 5 (July 1989): 78.

it is not possible to mean something radically new; all meanings are contextual, bound to a particular time, place, language, culture, situation.

If it is possible to transcend this structure, it is not through the introduction of ''new principles'' ab novo but through the ''casuistic stretching'' of ''old principles,'' the ''stealing back and forth of symbols'' between warring social forces, the exploitation of the contradictions and ambiguities in a given structure. Just as the agent, insofar as its very subjectivity is the product of social and historical processes, is not a coherent whole but a collection of disparate and conflicting forces, any ideological and cultural structure capable of constituting it is inevitably a more or less unstable ''aggregate of beliefs,'' many of which are ''at odds with one another'' at any given time, rather than ''a harmonious structure of beliefs or assumptions.'' Contexts are constantly changing, sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes radically. Thus, we are to seek not only the ''internal consistency'' of the relations between clusters of signs, but to look for transformations of those relationships.[21]

For instance, in Tom Godwin's classic 1954 science-fiction tale ''The Cold Equations,'' which concerns the dilemma posed for a male spaceship pilot who discovers that either the ''girl'' stowaway, who is innocent of ill intention, must be thrown overboard, or both he and she and the colonists to whom he is delivering a vaccine must die, the rhetorical force of the story is clear enough: this is the expression of a stoic creed, the sad wisdom that recognizes the universe as a ''cold'' system of natural laws that do not recognize our moral purposes. From the perspective of a structural analysis, however, we can note the almost obsessively symmetrical clustering of binary oppositions around masculine and feminine ''principles'' (male rationality is ''cold,'' female emotionality is

[21] Burke, Attitudes Toward History, 229, 328; Counter-Statement, 146; Attitudes Toward History, 264; Counter-Statement, 147, 163; Terms For Order (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 172.

''warm''; space is masculine territory, Earth is feminine, domestic space; and so on).[22] In this sense, contextually speaking, Godwin's vision of the future is really a reflection of its own present, a distorted representation of Eisenhower-era gender codes that projects these onto the universe itself, rewriting social conventions as natural law. However, this is not yet a complete account of the ways in which ''The Cold Equations'' reproduces its context, for if we look closer, we can see that its very attempt to eternalize a contingent set of social relations is undone by historical forces. At a key moment, all the carefully constructed symmetry chiasmatically demolishes itself: the stowaway's transgression against gender boundaries is rectified by her expulsion from the ship's ''warm'' interior into ''cold'' space, and the pilot's ''cold'' rationality is feminized by his ''warm'' internal experience, his emotions of guilt and regret.[23] The text's law is upheld by its own violation; the equational structure follows its own logic to the demonstration of its absurdity, collapsing inward upon itself.

Statement and structure alike are overcome by the instability of the determining context, the general text within which we all are caught.

FUNCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES

But pragmatists will insist that a culture is simply the set of particular ways that people in a given time and place have found of getting on with the business of living together, getting done what needs to be done. It is the ''what needs to be done'' that becomes the focus of functional methodologies.

[22] Tom Godwin, ''The Cold Equations,'' in In Dreams Awake: A Historical-Critical Anthology of Science Fiction, ed. Leslie Fiedler, 123, 125, 134 (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1975).

[23] Ibid., 145-46, 138.

the war to be fought / which will make the world safe / for anarchy.''[93]

Thus, while a popular reading of postmodernism frames it as the collapse of modernist opposition to representation, Owens argues that it is primarily ''a critique of representation, an attempt to use representation against itself to challenge its authority, its claim to possess some truth or epistemological value,'' and therefore a continuation of that anarchist project.[94] Postmodernism responds to the impasse posed by an obsolete classical tradition, a corrupt commercial culture, and an exhausted anarchist modernism by attempting to cobble together what it needs, in a mode of bricolage, from each of these sources—using elements of the commercial and the classical as a means to a kind of populism, and using a blend of classical and modernist techniques, particularly techniques of reflexivity and irony, to neutralize the conservative content of realism without a step back into abstraction. Along these lines, Eco describes postmodernism as a step away from the kind of modernist program that ''destroys'' or ''defaces the past'' in an attempt to be free of it: ''the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited; but with irony, not innocently.''[95] That is, instead of seeking to eradicate everything that is impure in the received codes and traditional forms, a project which ends in self- annihilation, the postmodern ironist distances himself or herself from these materials by citing them, appropriating them while holding them at one remove. In doing so, the iro-

[93] Yeats, ''The Second Coming,'' in William Butler Yeats: The Poems, 4; John Cage, ''Anarchist Poem,'' The Anarchist Library, http://flag.blackened.net/daver/anarchism/john_cage.html (accessed 3 April 2004), 25-26; Lawrence Ferlinghetti, ''I Am Waiting,'' in A Coney Island of the Mind (New York: New Directions, 1958), 17-20.

[94] Charles Jencks, quoted in Featherstone, Consumer Culture and Postmodernism, 36; Owens, Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture, ed. Scott Bryson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 88.

[95] Umberto Eco, Postscript to The Name of the Rose, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 67.

''heterotopia'' is conceived as the place ''where community is based on the inclusion of differences, where different forms of talk are allowed to exist simultaneously, and where heterogeneity does not inspire conflict.''[91] Opening space for this coexistence of differences means not so much leaving representations behind as placing them all under suspicion, bracketing their claims to be connected to anything extra- representational. Accordingly, Marike Finlay locates two moments in the postmodern destruction of ''representational'' art that present a return of the utopian mode. First of all, this destruction stands for ''the negation of what is not utopian,'' the unmasking of official representations of the status quo as free, happy, just, and good. At the same time, it stands for some radically different form of relation in which the state of being a fragment would not be experienced as a wound or a deviation from any norm (such as coherence, self-similarity, or wholeness), reconceiving utopia as ''a dispersion, a dissemination, a free, unconstrained production and practice of discourse.''[92] While Finlay takes Adorno and Schlegel for her primary points of reference, we can see here the return of that nexus of agreements about fragmentation and representation that constituted the common politics of anarchism and modernism. Indeed, in Ihab Hassan's famous chart of ''differences between modernism and postmodernism,'' reproduced in Harvey's Condition of Postmodernity, ''hierarchy'' is classified as modern, while ''anarchy'' is classified as postmodern. If Yeats's anxiously conservative modernism worried, as had Matthew Arnold, that ''mere anarchy'' had been ''loosed upon the world,'' Cage's postmodernism declared, ''We must make the world safe for poverty / Without dependence on government''—or, with Ferlinghetti, that it was ''waiting / for

[91] Siebers, Heterotopia, 2, 20.

[92] Marike Finlay, The Romantic Irony of Semiotics: Friedrich Schlegel and the Crisis of Representation (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1988), 169-70.

To treat the text as an action taken to realize some purpose, a tool crafted for some use, is to analyze it in the way that an engineer might analyze an unfamiliar tool or, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense, a machine: ''Given a certain effect, what machine is capable of producing it? And given a certain machine, what can it be used for?''[24] Asking these utilitarian and pragmatic questions about a text, we look for how it has been or can be placed in the service of some individual or social group or set of values or interests, how it can be used to achieve some goals or aims, reading the text not as a sign with a referent but as an instrument with powers. This is to see a text as a machine or a tool with multiple applications—purposes for which it serves, whether according to an author's designs or not, as an instrument. Texts in this sense are ''equipments'' for acting in and on the world.[25]

Machines, tools, only receive their meaning from their uses: as Rorty com- ments, screwdrivers can be used ''to drive screws,'' but they can just as well be used in other ways—''to pry open cardboard boxes,'' for instance. In the functional register, making a statement about what a text ''means'' is analo- gous to saying that the amount of money in my wallet ''means'' that I can afford to buy one china doll, or three tacos, or five packages of batteries, etc.

Money, too, lacks meaning apart from its enactment in purchases; in this sense, James spoke of the utility of a representation as its ''cash-value.'' Just as instrumentalism and functionalism call for what Spanos calls ''problem- solution'' thinking, an functionalist analysis of a text will ask what problems it offers to solve: the range of possible answers is the range of possible mean- ings.[26]

[24] Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 3.

[25] Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 304.

[26] Rorty, ''The Pragmatist's Progress,'' 103; William James, Writings, 1902-1910 (New York: Viking, 1987), 573; Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 85.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Each of these roles, as a performative translation of presuppositions into practices, is marked by the same old pernicious genetic/quantum binary— the opposition that sets the perspective of being (in which subjects are only passive epiphenomena of an object world) against that of doing (in which the object world is only the pliable fantasy of subjects). Since both of these perspectives are dominatory, as Spanos would say, they give rise to a ''blindness'' proportional to the ''insight'' each makes possible.

TOWARD ECOLOGICAL READING

In the face of durable antinomies, I appeal to the wisdom of poetry.

In ''Blanco,'' Octavio Paz writes: ''The spirit / is an invention of the body / The body / is an invention of the world / The world / is an invention of the spirit.''[27]

If the contradiction we are confronting is a contest between the limited truth of the statement that the spirit is an invention of the world, on the one hand, and the limited truth of the statement that the world is an invention of the spirit on the other, then Paz is right to make of the static contradiction a flowing cycle by postulating the body as the crucial overlap between the mutually opposed categories of spirit and world, the zone in which they coexist. As Martin Buber writes, ''the world dwells in me as a notion''—Walter Kaufmann notes that Buber here uses the word Vorstellung, also translatable as representation—''just as I dwell in it as a thing. But that does not mean that it is in me, just as I am not in it. The world and I include each other reciprocally.''[28] If we are to transform a fruitless

[27] Octavio Paz, Collected Poems of Octavio Paz, 1957-1987, ed. Eliot Weinberger, trans. Eliot Weinberger et al. (New York: New Directions, 1987), 328, 329.

[28] Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 141, 141n9.

knowledges that, like mass culture, it is ideologically loaded because of its representational (and often narrative) nature.''[87]

Moreover, to a postmodern eye, utopias appear under the sign of Apollonian idealism, as attempts to realize ideals like freedom, happiness, equality, and justice—static, closed representations from which, inevitably, something must be excluded, but on which the representation surreptitiously relies. Not incidentally, that which utopias appear to exclude is that which is celebrated by postmodern theory: the Dionysian multiplicity, diversity, and flux of unruly and unpredictable desires. Where the classic utopians, from Plato and More all the way through to the communal experimenters of the nineteenth century, assumed that ''truth is one, and only error is multiple,'' in Judith Shklar's words, postmodernists tend to assume the reverse.[88] Some postmodernists have even suggested, à la Baudrillard, that the cynicism and passivity generally displayed by the postmodern masses with regard to politics is itself the only credible politics remaining, a form of mass ''resistance'' to utopian ideologies of both the Left and the Right.[89] For a Marxist such as Eagleton, conversely, much postmodern art seems to present a cruel parody of the modernist aspiration to merge art with life: ''Mayakovsky's poetry readings in the factory yard'' return as ''Warhol's shoes and soup-cans.''[90]

Nevertheless, Tobin Siebers argues that postmodernism, in evoking the desire for some absolute liberation of difference, is itself ''a utopian philosophy.'' This utopia of difference or

[87] Linda Hutcheon, A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction (Cambridge, UK: Routledge, 1988), 41, 230.

[88] Judith Shklar, ''What Is The Use Of Utopia?'' in Heterotopia: Postmodern Utopia and the Body Politic, ed. Tobin Siebers, 42 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Richards, Letters From Quebec, 1.2.8.

[89] Baudrillard, In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities: Or, the End of the Social, and Other Essays, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), 9.

[90] Eagleton, ''Capitalism, Modernism, and Postmodernism,'' in Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader, ed. David Lodge, 385-86 (New York: Longman, 1988).

signification takes place via the agency of the universal economic subject, whose absolute individuality is signaled by a resistance to all signification, whose calculating practices spring from incalculable desires, who makes of everything a property, annihilating it and taking it into its interior nothingness.

Postmodern artists have taken a more skeptical attitude toward the very ''oppositional pretensions'' of modernism, forgoing the ''austere indecipherability'' of autonomous art to operate from the belly of the beast, and abandoning the abstractionist dream of making a clean break from representation: the postmodern, Mitchell notes, appears as the reversal of minimalist abstraction and the quest for purity into the proliferation of copies and simulations, a period of ''hyper-representation.''[85] The question is: does postmodern art thereby renounce its critical function, becoming a dutiful duplicate of commodity culture? Does postmodernism dispose not only of modernism but of anarchism?

POSTMODERN ANARCHY

To the extent that anarchism is a utopian politics,[86] it might seem unlikely that postmodern aesthetics could have any affinity to anarchism. The concept of ''the loyal opposition'' in postmodern theory militates against revolutionary political commitments per se, and postmodern aesthetics embrace complicity rather than seeking purity. As Linda Hutcheon writes, ''postmodernism questions centralized, totalized, hierarchized, closed systems: questions, but does not destroy''; thus, ''postmodern art self-consciously ac-

[85] Featherstone, Consumer Culture and Postmodernism, 108; Mitchell, ''Representation,'' 16.

[86] Which is by no means an incontestable claim: Daniel Guérin, for one, insists that ''anarchist theory emphatically rejects the charge of utopianism'' (41). However, anarchists have typically been more willing to elaborate a vision of the good society than have their orthodox Marxist counterparts.

contest between subject and object into a complementary relationship, it is crucial that we fully acknowledge this mutual inclusion: our embodiment, our embed- dedness, our interdependence with others and with the world as other. This is where an anarchist ethic meets the ethic of ecology.

Thus, a truly anarchist hermeneutics cannot be content to treat the text as statement or structure, reflection or instrument; the fullest anarchist analysis of a text would have to place the interpreter in the role of ecologist. Much as Ernst Haeckel defined ''ecology'' as the sum total of the sciences, I would argue that ecological methodology should be seen as not merely another ago- nistic category in a catalogue of methodologies, but as their dynamic synthesis.[29]

Burke implies as much when he extends his pentadic model into a ''hexad'' including a sixth term, ''attitude'': ''With regard to the Dramatistic pentad (act, scene, agent, agency, purpose), I have found one modification useful for certain kinds of analysis [Namely,] I have sometimes added the term 'attitude' to the above list of five major terms.''[30] This shift seems to have come as Burke became uneasy about his pentadic reorganization of older, more complex rhetorical schemes: ''Recall the scholastic hexameter listing the questions to be answered in the treatment of a topic: Who, what, where, by what means, why, how, when: quis, quid, quibus auxiliis, cur, quo modo, quando. The 'who' is obviously covered by agent. Scene covers the 'where' and the 'when.' The 'why' is purpose. 'How' and 'by what means' fall under agency. All that is left to take care of is act in our terms and 'what' in the scholastic formula.''[31] But does ''quo modo'' really reduce to another aspect of ''agency''? Burke decides that it does not: '' 'attitude' would desig-

[29] Howard Richards, ''Comments on Martin Heidegger's 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,' '' http://www.howardri.org/Heidegger.html (accessed 21 March 2004).

[30] Burke, A Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives, 443.

[31] Ibid., 228.

nate the manner (quo modo). To build something with a hammer would involve an instrument, or 'agency'; to build with diligence would involve an attitude, a 'how.' '' The distinction is crucial. Attitudes may be something one ''shapes,'' the ''policies'' that one ''adopts'' in view of a universe that includes ''anguish, injustice, disease, and death''; however, as Burke's invocation of such overwhelming forces as ''anguish'' and ''death'' indicates, attitudes are not necessarily tools manipulated by an autonomous subject who stands apart from, over, and against a world of objects.[32] The concept of attitude implies not only operating but being operated on. At the same time, we do ''adopt'' and ''shape'' attitudes—in an alternating blend of the voluntaristic and the involuntary, the conscious and the unconscious, that no other term in the hexad seems to encompass.

Interestingly, Goodman also identifies a close relation between aesthetic ''manner'' and ethical ''attitude'' (or, significantly, ''attitudinal meaning'') and sees literary styles as the embodiment of ''powerful world-outlooks'' that allow authors and readers to ''find meaning'' in the world they look out on: from this perspective, ''a literary method . . . is a moral hypothesis,'' presented as if ''it has the reality of necessity.'' Just as dreams are the unconscious mind's way of responding to the problems we face in our waking lives, Goodman suggests, a work of literature is an author's (and perhaps also a reader's) way of coping with a ''situation''—in Ernest Hemingway's case, the trauma of surviving World War I. Goodman implies that Hemingway's ''passive'' style of writing, using short declarative sentences that make it seem as if the characters merely experience events rather than actively participate in them, enacts a strategy for dealing with an overwhelming world by becoming ''stoic,'' hardened, inert.[33]

[32] Ibid., 443; Attitudes Toward History, 3.

[33] Goodman, Creator Spirit Come!: The Literary Essays of Paul Goodman, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: Free Life Editions, 1977), 22-28, 31, italics mine; Speaking and Lan- guage, 181.

kitsch ''a folding screen set up to curtain off death.''[81] Thus, kitsch encodes a ''world-hatred,'' a compulsive, repetitive ''expression of [dominant] 'values,' '' ultimately ''the enactment of the assertion that what is ought not to be,'' in the words of Crispin Sartwell; rather than evoking a utopian desire for world transformation, it transforms the existing world into the utopia of one's desires. In short, commercial culture provides both the sort of generalized endorsement of existence that Marx calls an opiate with the sort of generalized hatred of existence that Nietzsche calls nihilism.[82] To be pleased, here, means saying No to one's own concrete experience of everyday life (which certainly includes shit) and Yes to an illusion.

Here is the impasse, then, as summarized by Andreas Huyssen: ''While low art . . . floods the consumer with positive models which are as abstract as they are unrealistic, the function of high art is to legitimate bourgeois domination in the cultural realm by intimidating the non-specialist, i.e., the majority of a given population.''[83] The only two options on offer seem to be the elitist populism of consumer culture (art produced for popular consumption against elite culture but in exclusive elite interests) or the populist elitism of avant-garde modernism (art produced against elite interests by an elite for its own exclusive consumption).

Yet the modernism that once declared war on kitsch[84] is no longer an option: now, having exhausted its populist and anarchist energies, it appears merely as elitism. The refusal to communicate, to send a message in a common code, only renders artworks more recuperable: one can make them mean whatever one likes. This re-

[81] Milan Kundera, The Unbearable Lightness of Being, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York: Harper & Row, 1991), 248, 253.

[82] Sartwell, Obscenity, Anarchy, Reality, 12, 5; Robert C. Solomon, Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays (New York: Doubleday, 1973), 207.

[83] Andreas Huyssen, After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 150.

[84] Ibid., 35.

as if to exemplify the dour Frankfurt School slogan: ''To be pleased means to say Yes.''[79]

Robbed of any connection to ''art'' as a wholly separate, private institution, the community goes elsewhere for its pleasure: to art as commoditized, mass-produced ''entertainment.'' This so-called popular culture offers only a sham populism: images, gestures, and impulses originating outside of (and even in opposition to) the marketplace are recuperated by it and commoditized, while the overwhelming spectacle of cultural production intimidates the public into playing a passive, spectatorial role, leaving the production of art to specialists in the pay of commercial elites. Similarly, in the Proletkult designed for ''the undifferentiated mass of the collectivist state,'' as Read writes in his 1936 manifesto, Poetry and Anarchism, ''the artist must have one aim and only one aim—to supply the public with what it wants.'' Under authoritarian socialism and capitalism alike, ''what this public wants is what it has wanted throughout history—sentimental tunes, doggerel verse, pretty ladies on chocolate-box lids: all that which the Germans call by the forceful word Kitsch.''[80] The ''aesthetic ideal'' of this cliché-ridden ''kitsch'' art and literature, as Milan Kundera writes, is a representation of the world ''in which shit is denied and everyone acts as though it did not exist . . . kitsch excludes everything from its purview which is essentially unacceptable in human existence.'' This ''categorical agreement with being,'' this will to believe that nothing is essentially wrong with the world, that all is well (or at least that all the problems we see are exceptions to the rule, transitory, temporary, destined for Aufhebung), expresses a rejection of whatever is unacceptable about the world—including the ultimate unacceptable fact, to which all the others refer: Kundera calls

[79] Featherstone, Consumer Culture and Postmodernism, 66; Picabia, quoted in Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 228; Adorno and Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, 144.

[80] Read, Poetry and Anarchism (London: Freedom Press, 1941), 27.

The profoundest level on which a text proposes a ''solution'' is in its representation of some feature of life in a context as a ''problem'' in a manner that implicitly endorses a particular ''attitude'' that we should take in response. Burke suggests that as we locate ourselves in a situation—a ''universe'' and a moment of ''history''—that includes ''anguish, injustice, disease, and death,'' we create works of art that shape our responses to the situation: ''One constructs his [or her] notion of the universe or history, and shapes attitudes in keeping.''[34] For Hemingway and his contemporaries, ''the problem''—if we can call it a problem—is that the twentieth-century industrialized world seems more complicated and dangerous than it used to be; it produces war, crime, and corruption, and it lacks the social solidarity and religious certainty that traditional societies enjoyed. One solution is a kind of nostalgia for the lost tradition—the sort of rejection of modern life that Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, and Pound exemplify in their poetry and novels. This attitude of horrified rejection is, at times, so intense that it identifies the forward movement of time with death itself: ''Consume my heart away,'' writes Yeats; ''sick with desire / And fastened to a dying animal / It knows not what it is; and gather me / Into the artifice of eternity.''[35] Another solution—Hemingway's—is to accept modern life stoically, to endure it. As Scholes notes, this stoic attitude can extend to ''the aestheticizing of death itself'': Hemingway's descriptions of bullfights and warfare seem to invite us to glory in depictions of slaughter.[36] Psychoanalytically, we could say that this style of writing plays out a fantasy in which one saves oneself from pain by pretending to be an inanimate object, a thing—in effect, by playing dead.[37]

[34] Burke, Attitudes Toward History, 3.

[35] William Butler Yeats, ''Sailing to Byzantium,'' in The Poems, ed. Richard J. Finneran (New York: Macmillan, 1983), 21-24.

[36] Robert Scholes, Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 72-73.

[37] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 181.

To see literature as ''a meaning-making activity,'' in this sense, is to see it as an attitude-forming activity, a way of negotiating the manner in which and degree to which one accepts or rejects the situation one finds oneself in.

It is not, by this token, to call it a mere game and thereby to dismiss it as unimportant; rather, for a theorist like Goodman, ''speech is a presence, a force, an act'' in itself, and art is ''the evoking and displacing and projecting of dormant desires by means of some representation.'' The ''force'' of art, its power to motivate ''desires,'' is visible in the very ubiquity of art in the age of mass media: our seemingly unaesthetic society is in fact awash in ''floods of printed matter, merchandising pictures, cartoons,'' etc., most of which function in one way or another to mediate social conflicts, reinforce social mores, and perpetuate ''audience passivity.'' The prominent role of art in securing power arrangements is evidence enough of its representational power.[38]

In an important essay, de Cleyre, too, chides the vulgar materialists of her day for representing representations as ''shifting, unreal reflections, having naught to do in the determination of Man's life, but so many mirror appearances of certain material relations, wholly powerless to act upon the course of material things''—a metaphysics for which ''ideas are but attendant phenomena, impotent to determine the actions or relations of life, as the image of the glass which should say to the body it reflects: 'I shall shape thee.' ''

However, much as in Lacan's account of the mirror stage, the mirror does instruct the body it reflects, and the essay goes on to explore the causal powers of ''Dominant Ideas'' to dominate (or facilitate) the material world.[39] As de Cleyre suggests, we shouldn't allow the word symbolic to occlude the word action in the phrase symbolic action, or the say that a symbolic solution to a problem

[38] Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 80-81, 137.

[39] de Cleyre, Selected Works, 82-84.

instance, the object world as it appears in the act of seeing (Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism), or in the act of seeing over time (Cubism), or filtered through moods (Expressionism), or refracted through the unconscious (Surrealism). In any case, classical representationalism was no longer an option.

A further problem with classicism, apart from its technological obsolescence, is its wedding of community to hierarchy. The anarchist modernism charted by Weir, Allan and Mark Antliff, and Kadlec, as a subjectivist and individualistic reaction against tradition, never resolves its relationship to community. Pound, for example, began his career under the communitarian influence of Ruskin and Morris, but came to find its neo-medieval traditionalism abhorrent and its reliance on reference unsupportable; when Pound arrived in London, modernist critics like Ford Madox Ford were already turning against Morris, and ''by 1913 Pound was cursing the 'slush' of PreRaphaelite verse.''[78] Modernist hostility toward community vitiates attempts ''to efface the boundary between art and everyday life,'' rendering them incomplete and internally incoherent. Thus, Symbolism, whose goal is to liberate art from the world, inaugurates an aestheticism (a program of abstraction or drawing away from the social), separating art from community; Dadaism, whose goal is to liberate the world from art, inaugurates a negation of the aesthetic (a program summed up in Francis Picabia's declaration that ''art must be unaesthetic in the extreme''), separating community from art— which ironically places it in apposition to aestheticism, for which art must be ''useless and impossible to justify.'' The final expressions of aestheticism empty art of all content, anything recognizable from everyday life: art has gotten as far away from everyday life as it can possibly get. At the same time, they strip art of any aesthetic sensuality or erotic appeal, producing ''unaesthetic'' art as nausea,

[78] Kadlec, ''Pound, Blast, and Syndicalism,'' 1015-16, 1023.

power. The agreement between present and past, or present and re-present, is a purely formal agreement that literally objectifies the world. Ordinarily, we may assume, we agree among ourselves about things (to the extent that we do agree) because we all live in the same world. But a close look at the conventions of realism gives rise to a disconcerting reversal: not ''it exists, therefore we agree,'' but the reverse, ''we agree, therefore it exists.'' What is objective in realism is only so because all available viewpoints agree and to the extent that they so agree . . . the very act of reading [a realistic novel] thus entails acceptance of the view that the world is a common world, a ''human'' world, a world that is the ''same'' for everyone.[76]

The oppressive enforcement of sameness on the different elicits submission. The ''world picture'' produced by this aesthetic act of ''enframing,'' as Heidegger would put it, is of an essentially ''invariant world''; while each subject's experience is particular, conditioned by culture and circumstances, the ''representational convention'' of the all-seeing narrator assures us that ''if each individual could see all the world . . . all would see the same world.''[77] Once again, essentialism and representationalism ride together.

Since this task of turning the world into a picture by rendering it in its objectivity could now be taken over by technology and science, modernist art could only justify itself by either reconstituting itself as a quasi-scientific activity of controlled observation (particularly in terms of the still heavily verbal and narrative study of social relations), as in Zola's Naturalism, or, in a manner pioneered by the Romantics, by claiming to produce representations of something more sublime or ineffable than the object world—for

[76] Elizabeth Ermarth, ''Fictional Consensus and Female Casualties,'' in The Representation of Women in Fiction, ed. Carolyn G. Heilbrun and Margaret R. Higonnet, 4-5 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

[77] Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 20, 128; Ermarth, Sequel to History 30.

is merely imaginary; it would be a mistake to assume that since literature is all about manipulating symbols, it simply amounts to finding imaginary solutions to real problems—a naïve realist prejudice in favor of unmediated presence that perhaps underlies much antirepresentationalism.

What literature does, in offering us another way to cope with reality, is what culture itself does—and if, as the anthropologists argue, we can't live in this world without the mediation of culture, we shouldn't regard literature as a dispensable mediation either. Furthermore, we can easily see that many of our real problems are rooted in faulty symbolization: flawed concepts and beliefs promote social practices that give rise to conflict, violence, and misery, where more adequate ones might enable the negotiation of conflicts, the avoidance of violence, and the attainment of justice in our relations. The seemingly abstract business of symbol-manipulation is closely related to action in the material world. As Burke writes, ''it is an act for you to attempt changing your attitudes, or the attitudes of others. Our philosophers, poets, and scientists act in the code of names by which they simplify or interpret reality. These names shape our relationships with our fellows.''[40] No less than science or philosophy, literature is a response to problems posed by the material and social conditions, an adaptation.

In place of the autonomous subject and the heteronomous object, then, we have an organism, a node of self-organization in a self-organizing ecosystem.

As Timothy Crusius writes, ''Burke 'saves' the individual'' as a self- constituting entity even while recognizing that this subject, seen from another angle, is an object; ''in our thrownness, in our being caught up in trans- personal forces beyond our control and

[40] Burke, Attitudes Toward History, 4.

mostly preconscious, unconscious, or nonconscious, we still do act. Burke's individual is an agent. Constructed, s/he also constructs.''[41]

One works with a hammer; one works with diligence. The preposition with is the same and not the same, altered by the company it keeps as it slides from one noun to the other: one works on materials through the instrumental- ity of a hammer; one works in a spirit of diligence. The difference is under- scored by Bookchin's summary of Dorothy Lee's analysis of concepts of equality and freedom implicit in the Wintu language: ''She notes that terms commonly expressive of coercion in modern languages are arranged, in Wintu syntax, to denote cooperative behavior instead. A Wintu mother, for example, does not 'take' a baby into the shade; she goes with it. A chief does not 'rule' his people; he stands with them.'' The Wintu way of relating agent and scene, agency and purpose, evokes a mutualistic, reciproal relationship between spirit and world.[42] Just as the body, for Paz, links the subjectivity it produces and the objectivity that produces it, so attitude stands as the threshold between the two perspectives that have come to dominate interpre- tive thought, the mutually alienated domains of being and doing. This threshold, this excluded middle, is the ground from which an ecological interpretation might begin.

Treating a text ecologically entails an awareness of intentionality, purposiveness, and freedom (the organism's adaptation of the environment to itself) together with an awareness of determinacy, reactivity, and communal being (the organism's adaptation of itself to its environment). It means thinking of the text both as an organism cohabitating the environment in which one lives and as a potentially habitable space to inhabit—something one lives with and within. To read as an ecologist is to examine the text as a sign

[41] Timothy W. Crusius, Kenneth Burke and the Conversation After Philosophy (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 41.

[42] Bookchin, Ecology of Freedom, 44-45, italics on ''with'' mine.

In its critique of the signifier and the subject, then, postmodernism becomes a meditation on the complicity of modernist antirepresentationalism with representational systems, an inquiry into the source of art's authority.

According to Lyotard,

> Painting obtained its letters of nobility, was placed among the fine arts, was given almost princely rights, during the Quattrocento. Since then and for centuries, it made its contribution to the fulfillment of the metaphysical and political programme for the organization of the visual and the social. Optical geometry, the ordering of values and colours in line with a Neoplatonically inspired hierarchism, the rules for fixing the high points of religious or historical legend, helped to encourage the identification of new political communities: the city, the State, the nation, by giving them the destiny of seeing everything and of making the world transparent (clear and distinct) to monocular vision.[74]

This vast representational project—''the intellectual counterpart of political tyranny,'' as Read calls it[75]—was taken up, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by literature, particularly by realist fiction. As Elizabeth Ermarth points out, the realist novel, as ''representational fiction'' par excellence, is presided over by the unifying figure of the narrator, who operates as its vanishing point, a panoptical eye whose recollective gaze, located after and often altogether outside the action—a metaphysical view-from-nowhere—''enables the many to speak as one'' via an ''arbitrary hindsight which unifies the field.'' The ''consensus'' thus generated by this narration has absolute ontologizing

[74] Lyotard, The Inhuman: Reflections on Time, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 119.

[75] Read, The Philosophy of Modern Art, 112-13.

tation or to spurn them as unworthy. A few decades later, this contest seemed exhausted.

Magritte had already hinted, in works such as Evening Falls (Le soir qui tombe, 1964)—in which, as Gablik describes it, we look out at a landscape through a ''window [that] has shattered . . . but fragments of the landscape reappear on the broken bits of glass as they fall inside the room''—that attempts to destroy representation and meaning still left representation somehow intact. Indeed, representation had survived in the form of the ''visionary'' artist who ''expresses'' himself or herself in the work of art—as Graeber observes, a thoroughly representationalist conception in the political sense as well. From the moment that Saint-Simon coined the term ''avant-garde'' or ''vanguard,'' the concept linked the ''priestly function'' of artists to that of party leadership, so that ultimately avant-gardes began to imitate political vanguardists, ''publishing their own manifestos [and] communiqués, purging one another, and otherwise making themselves (sometimes quite intentional) parodies of revolutionary sects.'' This visionary authority had already been proclaimed by the Romantics, who seemed to want poetry to subsume the functions of both spiritual and political leadership: Blake says that poets are prophets, and Shelley calls poetry unacknowledged legislation—leading Paul Goodman to ask the inevitable question: does poetry then want the acknowledgment of Church or State?

Similarly, Kenneth Burke, commenting on Read's anarcho-modernist mani- festo, Poetry and Anarchism, suggests that art, rather than being ''the oppo- site of authority,'' inevitably ''derives its strength as much from the structure of authority as from . . . resistance''; while ''the artist will tug at the limits of authority . . . authority provides the gravitational pull necessary to a work's firm location.''[73]

[73] Gablik, Magritte, 97; Graeber, ''Twilight of Vanguardism''; Goodman, Speaking and Language, 230; Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, 225, 232.

whose potential meanings are the entire range of functions that it has fulfilled and might yet fulfill for the entire range of subjects engaged with it. This is to investigate the text as a formative nexus of relationships (attitudes, ideologies, worldviews, Weltanschauungen, paradigms, moods, mindsets, etc.). It is, in Goodman's sense, to investigate the text as a mode of situational coping.

An ecological interpretation, instead of simply naming particular patterns of identification and division in the text, tries to generalize about the text's ''representation of life.'' That is, it recognizes the fact that ''we live more or less in stories,'' and that the stories we tell shape the life we live: even if, as Goodman argues, ''the thesis of Benjamin Whorf, that the language determines the metaphysics of the tribe and what people can think . . . was too sweeping,'' since ''language is checked by non-verbal experience,'' there is truth in the observation that as we use language, we ''focus [our] experience and define and limit [our] thoughts'' through its signifying agency. Thus, every text, through its very ''style of speech,'' proposes an implicit ''hypothesis about how the world is''—one that offers to help us to deal with the very ''experience'' that we call ''non-verbal.''[43]

To look for the ''way of seeing'' the text ''embodies,'' or for its ''world vision,'' as Lucien Goldmann calls it, means to try to spell out not just the ways in which the text is related to some significant context, but to articulate, as far as possible, the ''whole complex of ideas, aspirations, and feelings'' through which the text offers to relate us to the world. The important thing to remember, in spite of the fact that theorists like Goldmann and Berger tend to name it through metaphors of vision, is that this mode of investigation is never merely spectatorial; what we are interested in is the range of poten- tial attitudes suggested and enabled by the text, a way

[43] Peter Lamborn Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility.'' Science Fiction EYE 8 (Winter 1991): 57; Booth, The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction (Berkeley: University of Cali- fornia Press, 1988), 14-15; Goodman, Speaking and Language, 171-72.

of seeing as it could inform a ''way of being.''[44] What we try to do through our ecological and ethical engagement is to spell out what kinds of relationship a text encour- ages us to build between ourselves and the world that it ''frames'' for us. We seek simultaneously for genetic and quantum meanings, casting back into the history from which the text emerged, projecting into the text's possible future development.

Anarchist hermeneutics as ecological interpretation is an ethical interpretive practice, balancing the claims of self and other. It avoids a one-sided, reductive featuring of textuality (the written and the act of reading) as either purely active, an instrument for aggressively acting on the world outside of any determination, or purely passive, a reaction, reflection, response, symptom, or outcome, the result of supra-purposive forces—since texts clearly can be and are both. Ecological reading affirms embeddedness and embodiment (the unconscious, involuntary, and supra-individual) as well as intervention and transformation (consciousness, choice, and individual agency).

CONCLUSION: FROM ANARCHIST READING TO ANARCHIST WRITING

All of this has implications for questions of representation in aesthetics.

If representation is not merely an illusion, a play of signifiers with no relation to concrete life and practice, but is the inescapable medium of human life and action, then we must reconsider aesthetic programs that have been premised on the rejection of representation as illusionism. If a work of art proposes not only a game of form, an implicit statement about a topic, a significant cultural

[44] John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 10; Lucien Goldmann, quoted in Roger Webster, Studying Literary Theory (UK: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 71; Good- man, Speaking and Language, 172.

Abstract Expressionists leapt, one by one—many via a literal as well as a metaphorical act of suicide.

Moreover, the drive to create an art unrecuperable by capitalism— ''something that would ruin the appetite of every son of a bitch who ever ate in that room,'' as Rothko said of his plan for the Seagram Building murals— was, in the end, fruitless. Ultimately, Zerzan admits, even the works of Pollock and Newman succumbed to commodification: ''It becomes hard to resist concluding, let me concede, that the heroic AE enterprise was destined to be a dead end, inspiring to some, but unrealizable.'' Zerzan quotes the Abstract Expressionist painter Clyfford Still, who reflected after the fact that, in the face of the ''cool, universal Buchenwald'' constructed with the active collusion of authoritarian Bauhaus and Proletkult modernisms, anarchist modernisms had proved useless: ''All the devices were at hand, and all the devices had failed to emancipate.''[71]

Was this not, then, the limit-case of anarchist modernism? George Marcus and Michael Fischer trace the emergence of ''postmodern aesthetics'' in part to the ''crisis of representation'' created by the waning of the ''shock value'' once possessed by modernist rejections of realist representation.[72] Most commentators trace the modernist moment, in turn, to the challenge posed to the arts by the rise of nineteenth-century positivist science (including, with particular relevance to the narrative arts, the science of sociology) and its technological applications (including, with special relevance for the visual arts, photography). By the end of the nineteenth century, the proliferation of modernist avant-gardes was fully underway, as Naturalist social novels and Neo-Impressionist paintings vie with Symbolist poetry either to rival the achievements of scientific and technological represen-

[71] Rothko, quoted in Zerzan, ''Abstract Expressionism,'' 41; Zerzan, ''Abstract Expressionism,'' 38, 40; Still, quoted in Zerzan, ''Abstract Expressionism,'' 42.

[72] Marcus and Fischer, Anthropology as Cultural Critique, 7.

where: to the extent that we are socially fragmented, we are no more free.

It was partially in response to the growing sense that earlier waves of modernist anarchy were being recuperated by the system that the last great push for a ''rejection of representation'' as the refusal of audience and signification came in the form of Action Painting or Abstract Expressionism. As Zerzan recounts, artists such as Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Adolph Gottlieb, and Barnett Newman, most of whom in fact had explicit commitments to anarchist politics, castigated surrealism for what they deemed its ''conservative representationalism'' in incorporating elements of recognizable empirical reality. ''Action paintings,'' by contrast, ''do not 'stand for' anything outside themselves, and in the autonomy of the artistic act imply an autonomy in the world.''[68] Specifically, they claimed an absolute autonomy from the demands of the public for ''the social art, the intelligible art, the good art''—producing instead ''something that fills utterly the sight and can't be used to make life only bearable.''[69]

The very negativity, the almost purely destructive character of anarchist modernism defined it as unsustainable. ''Anarchist texts,'' Moore suggests, ''are in a sense suicide notes, but notes left by suicides who expect to survive the leap into the unknown, anticipating the miraculous existence of utopia on the other side of the abyss.'' Here he recalls Sontag's cautionary note that the pursuit of an ever more perfect silence is not a sustainable program.

Indeed, Moore recognizes that ''anarchist artists risk falling into incomprehensibility.''[70] This is the edge over which the

[68] Zerzan, ''Abstract Expressionism: Painting as Vision and Critique,'' Anarchy: A journal of Desire Armed 17, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1999), 37, 39, 41-42, 39.

[69] Baziotes, quoted in Zerzan, 43; Francis, quoted in Zerzan, 39.

[70] Moore, ''Composition and Decomposition,'' 120; Sontag, A Sontag Reader, 204; Moore, ''Composition and Decomposition,'' 121.

pattern, and a set of use-values, but an entire ecological and ethical way of being in the form of a representation of life, then our aesthetics must be critically informed by the way we desire to be, the form of life we want to live. But if the antirepresentationalist problematic has cast a long shadow over questions of reading, they have equally cast doubt on the enterprise of writing and aesthetic creation as a whole. Once again, we will have to retrace and rethink the historical processes that brought us to this point.

Part II: Aesthetics

public executions), the appeal of individual violence faded, even for the minority who had embraced it at first; instead, theories emphasizing social relationships (anarcho-communism) and the formation of shared identities (anarcho-syndicalism) came to the fore of the movement.[65]

Apart from the historical failure of antirepresentationalism as a political practice, there is another major problem with the history that reduces anarchism to the aesthetics of modernism: its flat historical redundancy. ''For better or worse,'' as Weir remarks, ''in today's postmodern, postrevolutionary society, anarchy itself is a sign of culture.'' In our time, according to Andrei Codrescu, the culture of individualism has already won; in the endless stream of fragmentary, libidinal, often surreal images circulating through our media, anarchist modernism seems to carry the day.[66] Decadence is positively respectable, and the rebellion of the unique ego against the masses is a mass-marketed product. If commercial culture has learned to market individuality, then the rediscovery of an individualist aesthetic is politically belated indeed. What was once an experiment and a political act is now so nearly an official style, a ''new 'cultural dominant.' '' Indeed, as Graeber acknowledges, it is possible that ''insofar as bohemians actually were an avant garde, they were really the vanguard of the market itself, or more precisely, of consumerism''—the hip white kids who settle in the rough, scary neighborhoods of outlaw desires only to help developers commodify them into loft apartments, boutiques, and upscale restaurants, the cutting edge of gentrification.[67] The multiplicity of desires unleashed by capitalism are, at least in the ruling economies, readily satisfied by capital itself. Individualist anarchy is indeed a sign of capitalist culture, only it hasn't gotten us any-

[65] Lay, ''Beau Geste!,'' 87, 96.

[66] Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 267; Andrei Codrescu, The Disappearance of the Outside: A Manifesto for Escape (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1990), 131-56.

[67] Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 259, 264; Graeber, ''Twilight of Vanguardism.''

sima), Joseph Conrad (The Secret Agent), and G. K. Chesterton (The Man Who Was Thursday), which helped to cement the public perception of anarchists as pathologically violent miscreants.[62]

Indelibly associated with lunacy and criminal violence, turned into fodder for thrilling novels, the anarchist movement was in danger of becoming permanently estranged from the working classes whose cause it championed. In the end, the unreadable act only gave way to ''readerly gratification'' and a return to ''the congenial placidity of false consciousness.''[63] Meanwhile, in Sorel's hands, the ideology that valorized violent action over communication and cognition became part of the intellectual armory of a new European movement, one that, like anarchism, held the representational pretenses of bourgeois democracy in contempt—namely, fascism.

The anarchist movement only managed to return to health when the infatuation with immediate revenge gave way to a renewed commitment to organized struggle. For these purposes, a reading of anarchist theory that set the gesture (action without legitimation, pure deed, pure violence) against representation (theorization, propaganda work, entry into public discourse) was not only incompatible with the ethical premises of anarchism, but no longer even ideologically useful or tenable; ultimately, the policy of propaganda by the deed, as the operation of ''a tiny band of the 'elect' substituting itself and making the choices for everybody,'' proved inconsistent, not only with the basic populist thrust of the movement, but with its own antirepresentationalist premises:[64] even as the lone terrorist functioned as a scapegoat for State crimes, he became the icon of a quasi-religious cult of martyrdom. As terror increasingly became the pretext for an emergent police state (complete with domestic spying, repressive legislation, and

[62] Alexandre Skirda, Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization From Proudhon to May 1968, trans. Paul Sharkey (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2002), 57, 55-58; Lay, ''Beau Geste!'' 91, 82; Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 52-53.

[63] Guérin, Anarchism, 74-75; Lay, ''Beau Geste!,'' 95.

[64] Skirda, Facing the Enemy, 54.

6. The Fate of Representation, the Fate of Critique

> Our culture is altogether on the guide-book model; Shakespeare has four stars, Milton three, Donne and Blake one. We do not stop to ask on what system, and by whom, the stars were awarded.
>
> —Herbert Read, The Philosophy of Modern Art

THE ANSWERS WE GIVE TO THE QUESTION OF INTERPRETATION WILL CONDITION how we think about the possibilities of the aesthetic. If the text is, epistemologically speaking, a nothing, as neo-pragmatists suggest, then there is almost nothing to say about what texts should be or do, since we have decided a priori that they cannot be or do anything. Here the question of whether ''the subaltern'' can ''speak'' acquires a certain keenness, as when Santiago Colás considers the implications of antirepresentationalism for the aesthetics of ''testimonio,'' the first-person literature of witness written by a nonliterary person in ''a native voice''; if representations are inevitably self-referential, then of what value can a testimonio be? Must a testimonio such as that of Rigoberta Menchú either make a false promise to represent a pure, unadulterated, authentic history, or else ground itself in some transcendent position ''beyond representation,'' as George Yúdice argues? Could there be an authoritarian subtext in Menchú's claim to speak for or represent the experience of her Guatemalan Indian community—a claim perhaps epistemologically undermined by the very fact that

Menchú is writing, a fact that already makes her ''unrepresentative'' of this community?[1]

More generally, Colás raises the question: must a radical aesthetic either ''reject representation altogether,'' or else simply ''return to representation'' like the rest of the demoralized and defeated Latin American left wing? Is there yet, as Colás suggests, the possibility of ''a contestatory, oppositional discourse that seeks to reoccupy and redefine—not escape or flee—the terrain of representation''?[2] This question, unfortunately, is posed in the absence of a certain historical context—the memory of an anarchist critique of aesthetic representation.

One precursor of testimonio is the tradition of littérature proletarienne, of which the anarchist Henry Poulaille was one of the first exponents. Writing in the time of Eugène Jolas's Modernist ''Revolution of the Word'' and Henri Barbusse's marxist conception of ''proletarian'' literature, Poulaille rejected the former as ''bourgeois'' and the latter as mere ''littérature à thèse.''[3] An anarchist literature of testimony or ''témoignage,'' as Poulaille imagined it, could be neither antirepresentationalist, an exercise in aestheticism discon- nected from social life, nor a mere ''vehicle for ideas,'' representing a fixed ideology anchored outside the social experience it bore witness to. Its ''revo- lutionary character'' would be neither-nor, different, other.[4]

Neither Poulaille's name, nor the names of his primary theoretical sources, Lazare and Proudhon, appear in contemporary discus-

[1] Santiago Colás, ''What's Wrong With Representation?: Testimonio and Democratic Culture,'' in The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 161, 170, 161, 170, 162.

[2] Ibid., 169, 171.

[3] Karl-Anders Arvidsson, Henry Poulaille et la littérature prolétarienne française des années 1930 (Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gotoburgensis, 1988), 11; Rosemary Chapman, Henry Poulaille and Proletarian Literature, 1920-1939 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 165.

[4] Poulaille, quoted in Chapman, 164, translation mine.

of anarchist modernism in its many forms. The seeming diversity of modern- ist styles, Harry Redner argues, from Mallarmé to Malevich, from Kafka to Cocteau, conceals a programmatic, a pragmatic unity: all enactments of ''an anti-representationalist aesthetic'' whose ''political import . . . is stated by Theda Shapiro: 'modern art is the ultimate act of anarchism.' ''[61]

THE IMPASSE OF ANARCHIST MODERNISM

The violent implications of a modernist flight away from representation ought to be enough to give us pause; if terrorist propagande par le fait was the practical corollary of the formalist embrace of incommunicabilité, history records the dismal practical results of this anti-intellectual fetish of action among anarchists. First of all, while earning applause from ''literati and artists,'' terrorism may have actually contributed to the well-being of a political elite that was otherwise in serious trouble, conveniently drawing public attention away from the scandals of power. Indeed, some investigators have pointed to evidence that the enthusiasm of a few anarchists for violent revenge on the State was supplemented by the State itself via agents provocateurs and even ''phoney attentats.'' Furthermore, as Lay observes, the supposedly sublime unreadability of the terrorist's bomb ''was immediately delimited by the discourses to which it was accordingly conjoined'': the juridical discourse that pinned the act to an agent (the ''perpetrator'' as author or final referent), and the medical discourse that redefined the act as ''a symptom (of a sociopathic personality) rather than a statement (of revolutionary intransigence),'' as well as the novelistic discourse of writers such as Henry James (The Princess Cassamas-

[61] Harry Redner, A New Science of Representation: Towards an Integrated Theory of Representation in Science, Politics and Art (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 288.

The connection between individualist anarchism and aesthetic abstrac- tion, however paradoxical—Stirner, after all, condemns ''abstraction'' as ''lifeless'' and propounds an instrumentalism seemingly incompatible with the aesthetics of disinterestedness entailed in l'art pour l'art —makes sense when framed as the artist's refusal to subject himself or herself to the signifying regime of a social audience by representing a subject: thus, as Tzara asserts, ''DADA is the mark of abstraction.'' ''Abstraction in art,'' reasoned the Stirnerite anarchist John Weichsel in an influential manifesto in Alfred Stieglitz's journal Camera Work, is ''the index . . . of the artist's anarchistic freedom from socially-imposed aesthetic demands through the affirmation of his own expressive individualism.''[59] Formalism, condemned as apolitical by Marxists, is understood by its originators as a means of revolt against authority far more far-reaching than ''bourgeois and Marxist aesthetics,'' which ''subordinate [art] to an ideal,'' could ever be. Where politically committed art reduces its rebellion to finite, identifiable ''theses,'' Moore argues, ''the coherence of its discourse indicates its lawfulness''; the truly subversive text, however devoid of a thesis it may be, achieves a more thoroughgoing rebellion by disrupting the very laws of discourse, destroying coherence itself. That is to say, works of anarchist modernism distinguish themselves not by what they say, since saying emanates from a self who is subject to a structure, but by what they do: even when taking place in the medium of words, what transpires is a gesture, an action. ''In the beginning,'' writes Lacaze- Duthiers, quoting Goethe's revision of Genesis, ''was the deed.''[60] It is this deed, this performative gesture, which may be most characteristic

[59] Stirner, Ego, 112; Tzara, quoted in Varisco, ''Anarchy and Resistance in Tristan Tzara's 'The Gas Heart,' '' 139; Alan Antliff, ''Man Ray's Path to Dada,'' 51-52.

[60] Max Blechman, ''Toward an Anarchist Aesthetic,'' in Drunken Boat: Art, Rebellion, Anarchy (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1994), 15; Moore, ''Public Secret'' 128, 131n23; Lacaze- Duthiers, ''Action,'' in Encyclopedie anarchiste, 18.

sions of aesthetic representation. They form a tradition outside the modern and postmodern aesthetics to which I now turn.

REFUSALS OF AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION

Since both modern and postmodern artworks engage in a critique of repre- sentation, it is notoriously difficult to make rigorous historical distinctions between modernism and postmodernism in terms of techniques or effects.

For David Harvey, the aesthetic roots of the postmodern go back to the ''crisis of representation'' produced by the financial and political upheavals of 1847-48, while Lyotard calls Montaigne's essays ''postmodern.'' According to Michael Berubé, ''every attempt to define postmodern fiction in stylistic terms . . . winds up being a definition of modernist fiction as well.'' In the end, it seems, postmodern antirepresentationalism looks an awful lot like the modern variety.[5]

If neither the specific devices employed by postmodern writers nor their immediate effects are sufficient to distinguish postmodernism as a literary movement or tendency belonging to a specific historical period, then what is more distinctive to the period is the way in which writers and readers alike conceptualize the purpose of these devices and their effects. While both modernism and postmodernism propose a certain critique of representation, then, Craig Owens suggests that the form of this antirepresentationalism changes, so that modernist techniques and effects are turned to different ends in postmodern art. Modernism, Owens ar-

[5] Harvey, The Condition Of Postmodernity,260-63; Lyotard, Postmodern Condition, 81; Michael Berubé, ''Teaching Postmodern Fiction Without Being Sure That the Genre Exists,'' The Chronicle of Higher Education 46, no. 37 (19 May 2000), http://chronicle.com/free/v46/i37/37b00401.htm (accessed 10 March 2005).

gues, ''proclaimed the autonomy of the signifier, its liberation from the 'tyranny of the signified,' '' while postmodernism opposes ''the tyranny of the signifier, the violence of its law.''[6]

This scheme is too simple, since it only addresses two of the four moments of W. J. T. Mitchell's quadrilateral diagram of representation. Representation, Mitchell writes, entails a relationship between four key elements: a something (signifier) through which someone (sender) communicates something else (signified) to someone else (receiver): Cutting from the left-hand to the right-hand quadrant is the ''axis of communication'' or speaking-to; connecting the upper to the lower quadrant is what Mitchell calls the ''axis of representation'' proper,[7] which I would call the axis of reference or standing-for (''representation'' rather involves at least the leftmost three quad- rants, and ultimately the entire quadrilateral). We could call the ensemble of the top and left quadrants of the quadrilateral, comprising the artist in relation to the art object, the ''aesthetic level,'' with the other side, comprising the audience's relation to meaning, forming a ''social level.''

Accordingly, we can distinguish in modernist and postmodernist departures from norms of communication and referentiality in art a number of critiques of representation, revolts not only against the respective tyrannies of signifier and signified but also against those of the artist (sender) and the audience (receiver):

Using this second table to classify the welter of modern and postmodern aesthetics, we find that programs aiming at the emancipation of the audience from the burden of being represented or spoken for by artists and their works occupy the upper left-hand

[6] Craig Owens, ''The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism,'' in The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 58-59.

[7] W. J. T. Mitchell, ''Representation,'' in Critical Terms for Literary Study, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 12 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

The inspiration for this conception would appear to be Stirner's proposal for a limited form of social cooperation, a Union of Egoists, which is never allowed to become anything more than the ''instrument'' of the individuals who engage in it. Like Stirner, Colomer also defines ''society'' as an alienated instrument that instrumentalizes its creators, a contract whose ''conditions'' are unconditionally imposed on each by all; the Artistocrat refuses to be a party to these conventions, as to any ''which he was not the author of.''[56]

Rather than participate in society as its subject, an Artistocrat aspired to be self-authoring, both authorized and created by his or her own ineffable selfhood, in something like the manner of Foucault's askesis or aesthetico- ethical ''care of the self.'' Just as Ball had proposed that artists ''adopt symmetries and rhythms instead of principles'' and Erich Mühsam had proclaimed the artist's ''thoroughly unethical character'' in opposition to every regime of control, the philosophy of Artistocratie substituted aesthetic values for ethical values: one was to ''make of his existence a work of art.''[57] Conversely, the artwork itself was to enact the individual's freedom from constraints: ''Artistocratic art was beautiful by virtue of its utter individuality and complete separation from anything construed as 'social.' '' The artist, in short, in joining an aesthetico-social body without organs, is enjoined to represent nothing and no one, fulfilling Ball's prophecy that one could ''reach an incomprehensible, unconquerable sphere'' by abjuring the ''dreary, lame, empty language of men in society.''[58]

[56] Stirner, Ego, 234, 417; Colomer, quoted in Mark Antliff, ''Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism,'' 114.

[57] Ball, quoted in Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 232; Erich Mühsam, ''The Artist in the Future State,'' trans. Christopher Winks, in Revolutionary Romanticism, ed. Max Blechman, 188-89 (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1999); Lacaze-Duthiers, ''Artistocratie,'' in Encyclopédie anarchiste, 145-47.

[58] Mark Antliff, ''Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism,'' 110; Ball, Flight Out of Time, 77.

the Surrealists proposed nonsense—bending rather than breaking the representational mirror. Despite this limited use of mimetic illusionism, Surrealists maintained a critique of any commonsense notion of referentiality. Magritte declared that his famous painting The Human Condition, in which he ''placed in front of a window, seen from inside a room, a painting representing exactly that part of the landscape which was hidden from view by the painting,'' was an analogy for ''how we see the world: we see it as being outside ourselves even though it is only a mental representation of it that we experience inside ourselves.''[52] The limited embrace of a representational practice becomes a means to question the epistemology of representationalism.

Set diametrically against the claims of bourgeois and socialist realism alike, this anarchist modernism claims the broadest possible privileges for the ''peculiar consciousness of the artist,'' defined in terms hostile to all forms of sociality, whether those produced by capitalist conformism or socialist collectivism.[53] Just as Pound declares in The Egoist that the Vorticist artist is ''born to rule,'' while Marsden declares that ''what I want is my state . . . the world should be moulded to my desire if I could so mould it'' and Artaud imagines the figure of ''the crowned anarchist,'' members of Action d'Art paradoxically crown themselves ''Artistocrats'' to express their Nietzschean master morality.[54] Consequently, the only appropriate relationship between Artistocrats is what Colomer calls ''La Bande,'' a collective project that ''can only exist through the conscious will of the individuals who form it.''[55]

[52] Magritte, quoted in Suzi Gablik, Magritte (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 185-86.

[53] Murillo, quoted in Mark Antliff, ''Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism,'' 110; Mark Antliff, ''Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism,'' 114.

[54] Pound, quoted in Allan Antliff, ''Man Ray's Path to Dada,'' Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed 18, no. 2 (Fall 2000-Winter 2001): 52; Marsden, quoted in Weir 180; Artaud, Heliogabalus: Or, The Anarchist Crowned; translated by Alexis Lykiard (London: Creation Books, 2003); Antliff, ''Man Ray's Path to Dada,'' 53.

[55] Colomer, quoted in Mark Antliff, ''Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism,'' 114.

corner; metafiction, parody, ironic self-deflation (particularly romantic irony), and self-referentiality or reflexivity in general, aiming at the emancipation of temporal Being from the arrogance of a static discourse that claims to stand for or reveal its truth, occupies the upper right-hand corner; a wide variety of formalist, abstractionist, minimalist, absurdist, and aestheticist programs for the emancipation of art from the burden of standing for a meaning or representing a world occupy the lower left- hand corner; even more hermetic or hedonistic aestheticist, aleatory, and expressivist programs, meant to emancipate artists from the audience's demands to speak for or be representative of it, occupy the lower right-hand corner.

What unites modernism and postmodernism, let us say, is their identity as avant-garde movements with conscious, articulate programs—this despite the objections of scholars like Mike Featherstone to lumping postmodernism in with other avant-gardes.[8] Granted, many postmodern artworks blur the line between high culture and popular culture, but so did any number of modernist works: the Futurists and Dadas appropriated the typographical style of poster art, Joyce and Dos Passos made use of the newspaper format, the Surrealists tinkered with the commercial cinematic imagery of the Fantômas movies, film noir returned the favor by translating the alienated, nihilistic impulses of German Expressionism into narrative film, and so on.

Conversely, even if the history of postmodernism fails to constitute itself as a long series of isms (Orphism, Vorticism, Cosmism, Abstract Expressionism, etc.), it does present us with groups and group identities—e.g., the Black Mountain Poets, the Apocalyptics, the Beats, Pop Art, the Factory, and so on.

Besides, I am thinking in a more general way of the history of avant- gardes, particularly in terms of Graeber's discussion of the

[8] Mike Featherstone, Consumer Culture and Postmodernism (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991), 37.

emergence of the concept, which he links to a utopian desire for ''a society . . . premised on less alienated forms of creativity,'' importantly expressed not only through radical works of art, but through a bohemian experiment in the possibility of ''new and less alienated modes of life.'' So it is that Derrida, exemplar of the postmodern, writes of Artaud, paragon of modernism, that he ''attempted to destroy a history, the history of the dualist metaphysics . . . of the body and the soul which supports, secretly of course, the duality of speech and existence, of the text and the body''—and, we might add, of art and life.[9] Both modern and postmodern forms of antirepresentationalism are attempts to collapse the duality between the two halves of the quadrilateral of representation, to reabsorb the aesthetic into the social or the social into the aesthetic.

Here, modernists and postmodernists find some important common ground with anarchists old and new. In particular, a recent strain in anarchist theory associated with contemporary writers such as John Zerzan, Fredy Perlman, David Watson, Hakim Bey, and John Moore has taken aesthetic antirepresentationalism onboard as an important form of critique. One can hear an anticipation of their arguments in the 1969 manifesto that Michael Lucas published in Anarchos, wherein it is asserted that the very existence of a realm of practice separate from everyday life, art as an institution, is in itself a symptom of alienation: ''The generative condition of art is the dichotomy of man with himself and with reality... In its negativity art is because man is not.'' Thus, Moore finds anarchists articulating a critique of aesthetic representation through a rhetoric of ''abolition,'' the route taken by Lucas and Zerzan, or one of ''transformation,'' the favored idiom of theorists like David Watson, Hakim Bey, and Kingsley Widmer: ''in either case art as it is currently constituted would disappear one way or

[9] Graeber, ''Twilight of Vanguardism''; Derrida, Writing and Difference, 175.

This valuation of ''dynamic embodiment''—action, force, and motion— over the ''static,'' abstract intellectuality of representation was embraced by another explicitly anarchist avant-garde, the Action d'Art group founded by Gérard Lacaze-Duthiers, André Colomer, and Geraldo Murillo, whose aesthetic philosophy combined Wilde's endorsement of l'art pour l'art, Bergsonian and Nietzschean irrationalism, and Stirnerite egoism.[49] Echoing Bergson's argument that ''representation'' is merely the reflex of blocked, delayed, or frustrated ''action,'' Lacaze-Duthiers declared ''action'' to be more ''concrete,'' more ''sensory,'' hence more ''real'' than ''the word and writing,'' the resorts of mere ''chatterers'' and ''soapbox speechmakers.'' It is in this spirit that Herbert Read would later write admiringly of the Action painters that their works ''are not the result of any process of reflection''—in the sense both of introspection and mimesis: ''there did not first exist an object, or even an internal feeling, for which the artist then found an equivalent symbol.'' Rather, they present ''a Gestalt that has not yet been organized for formal communication—that is still free.''[50]

The Bergsonian valorization of le Geste, action, and intuition over ''reflection,'' ideation, and intellect, as Georges Sorel advocates in his Reflections on Violence (translated into English by T. E. Hulme in 1912[51]), links anarcho-modernist resistance to representation with a revolt against the domination of the ego by reason, which after all is a matter of following rules, signifying, and making sense. In place of Dadaist negation and Symbolist silence, therefore,

[49] Kadlec, Mosaic Modernism, 2; Mark Antliff, ''Cubism, Futurism, Anarchism: The 'Aestheticism' of the Action d'art Group, 1906-1920,'' Oxford Art Journal 21 (1998): 102.

[50] Bergson, Creative Evolution, 151-52; Lacaze-Duthiers, ''Action,'' in Encyclopédie anarchiste, 18-19, translation mine; Read, quoted in Herbert Peter Hogue, The Anarchic Mystique of Five American Fictions (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1971), 34.

[51] Kadlec, ''Pound, Blast, and Syndicalism,'' English Literary History 60, no. 4 (Winter 1993), 1027.

of hermetic ''incommunicabilité,'' some anarchists turned toward a similarly solitary and antisocial practice. After the 1876 Berne conference, anarchists turned to a practice of ''propaganda by the deed'' which is held to be revolutionary precisely by virtue of being pure of all representation, all signification—one for which communication is no longer relevant.[45] If bombings such as the ones rending the Restaurant Foyot and the Café Terminus in 1894 ''seemed to defy logic,'' writes Howard G. Lay, this could be taken to demonstrate how ''in the absence of authorial identity and interpretive legibility . . . [an] explosive '!' was liable to stretch language to its limits, to reveal both its ideological constitution and its deficiencies as a system of representation, to contest both its powers of containment and its capacity to establish the parameters of cognition.''[46] This attempt ''to navigate around the referential trap of language, to pass beyond the cognitive borders that governments and language both patrol'' drew approval from Symbolists like Mallarmé, who compared poems to anarchists' bombs, and Laurent Tailhade, who after Vaillant's bombing of the Chamber of Deputies commented, ''What do the victims matter if the gesture is beautiful? What does the death of some unidentified persons matter if, by it, the individual is affirmed?''[47] Spontaneous, individual violence, as the epitome of ''the nonutilitarian act,'' functioned as an embodiment rather than a representation of the individual's desires. Thus, art critic Félix Fénéon undertook his own bombing, while the poet Pierre Quillard redescribed Symbolist poetry as ''an eminent form of propaganda by the deed,'' praising its ''destructive power.''[48]

[45] Laurence M. Porter, The Crisis of French Symbolism (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 11; Guérin, Anarchism, 74-75.

[46] Howard G. Lay, ''Beau Geste!: On the Readability of Terrorism,'' Yale French Studies 101 (Spring 2002): 91.

[47] Ibid., 95; Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 255; Tailhade, quoted in Sonn, 234.

[48] Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 3, 234; Halperin, Félix Fénéon, 373n1; Pierre Quillard, L'Anarchie par la littérature (Paris: Editions du Fourneau, 1993), 14, trans- lation mine.

another,'' whether through its ''suppression'' or through its ''subsumption in the broader practice of culture as creative play.''[10]

Perhaps we could say, then, that postmodern aesthetics continue the modern pursuit of the end of art, but in a different manner.[11] While it is still impossible to draw rigid boundaries between modern and postmodern aesthetics, we can generally observe that modernisms usually negate the social side of the quadrilateral in favor of the aesthetic level, while postmodernisms tend to negate the aesthetic in favor of the social. Both propose a radical interruption of the axes of communication and reference and identify the rejection of aesthetic representation with the rejection of political representation.

ANARCHISM AMONG THE MODERNISTS

This historic conjunction of aesthetic with political antirepresentationalism is one of the great discoveries—or rediscoveries—of the last decade and a half of research in modernist studies. Historians of art and literature like Mark and Allan Antliff, Joan Halperin, Carol Hamilton, John Hutton, David Kadlec, Patricia Leighten, Robyn Roszlak, Richard Sonn, and David Weir have shown how a series of modernist avant-gardes, from Symbolism, Expressionism, Dada, Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, and Surrealism on the Continent to the Anglophone modernisms of Man Ray, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound, not only drew inspiration from anarchism

[10] Michael Lucas, ''Guerrilla Theater, the Esthetic, and Technology,'' Anarchos 3 (Spring 1969): 34; John Moore, ''Composition and Decomposition: Contemporary Anarchist Aesthetics,'' Anarchist Studies 6 (1998): 118.

[11] O. B. Hardison Jr. calls this project ''the disappearance of art.'' See O. B. Hardison Jr., Disappearing Through the Skylight: Culture and Technology in the Twentieth Century (New York: Viking Press, 1989).

but, in effect, constituted an anarchist aesthetic—an ''anarchist modernism,'' as Allan Antliff terms it.[12]

Studying modernism in the context of anarchism (particularly Max Stirner's individualist variety) has provided scholars with nothing less than a new narrative about modernism. The collective oblivion following anarchism's eclipse—that is, its apparent world-historical defeat after the First World War in America, the crushing of the Kronstadt rebellion in Russia, and the Falangist victory in Europe—obscured its history to such an extent that Leighten could write, in the significant year of 1989, that ''socialism is now popularly conceived as the only revolutionary movement to have risen in the nineteenth century.''[13]

Subsequently, as Kadlec explains, left-wing responses to a dominant history of modern art—e.g. the Greenbergian narrative that describes as ''progress'' modernism's development towards pure form without a content—identify this telos with a reactionary ''bourgeois 'individualism,' '' privileging art with ''progressive'' communist commitments instead. The new narrative reinstates a third option that had been effectively ignored by previous historians: namely, ''left radical anarchism.'' As Weir writes, the dichotomy ''between politically engaged realist art . . . and apolitical purist art'' is challenged by the recognition that ''much of modernist art is consistent with''—indeed, directly informed by—''the politics of anarchism.''[14]

Building on a well-documented history of association between anarchists and modernists (e.g., in the exchanges between anar-

[12] Alan Antliff, Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[13] Patricia Leighten, Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897-1914 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), xv.

[14] David Kadlec, Mosaic Modernism: Anarchism, Pragmatism, Culture (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2-3; David Weir, Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 160.

For Kristeva, as Moore explains, poetry manifests radical force only in a ''refusal of meaning,'' the embrace of ''incoherence.'' Ordinary discourse, in presenting itself as a transparent conduit of meaning, subjects us to a repres- sive, socially governed structure of signification. Poetry, conversely, instead of concealing its artifice, produces a ''crisis, explosion, or shattering'' that makes this artifice visible. The overthrow of the speaking subject through poetic fragmentation reveals the fragmentary, disunified nature of the pre- linguistic self, liberating it from its semantic prison.[43] Thus, while chiding Mallarmé for his reticence about politics, which amounted to a ''refusal to consider the possibility of a political activity that would be simultaneous to textual activity,'' she agrees with him that politically committed art is self- canceling, nonrevolutionary. ''One cannot ask that 'art' . . . emit a message which would be considered 'positive,' '' she declares; since art is only ''ethical'' in destroying the language within which this ''message'' could be carried, the language that situates self in relation to society, ''the univocal enunciation of such a message would itself represent a suppression of the ethical function as we understand it.'' As an attack on representation, art's social mission consists in its violation of the social; it has a ''social-anti- social function.''[44] The negation of an illusory selfhood is the liberation of ego as ''creative nothing''; the refusal of ethico-political commitment in favor of autonomous aesthetics is itself an ethics and politics of autonomy in an aesthetic form.

Thus, as Sonn observes, the ''politicization of aesthetes'' in fin-de-siècle France was matched by an ''aestheticization of politics.'' While poets elaborated this critique of representation into a style

Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), 428; Ball, Flight Out of Time, 22; Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 186.

[43] Moore, ''Public Secret: Fredy Perlman and the Literature of Subversion,'' in Twenty- First Century Anarchism, ed. Jon Purkis and James Bowen (London: Cassell, 1997), 128; Kristeva, quoted in Moore, ''Public Secret,'' 127-28.

[44] Kristeva, Revolution in Poetic Language, 189, 195, 232.

space of the theater of representation, whose retrospective gaze brings all the fragmentary moments of action into the end-shaped unity of a plot[40] —is paradoxically compatible with an egoist politics, since this subject is seen as a false image or a reified structure imposing itself on the unnamable. If the self is actually a creative nothingness, ''a fluctuating element,'' as Herbert Read writes, then it cannot be fixed through mimetic ''mirror knowledge'' or ''representation,'' and ''we . . . cannot know a self; we can only betray our self… All art is in this sense an unconscious self-betrayal.'' Accordingly, for Read, the lesson of Stirner's Ego and His Own was its warning against ''surrendering one's self to an abstraction, to an illusion of any kind,'' including the illusion of an ideal, unified self: ''the Self (with a capital S) is not an essence to which the self (with a small s) must pay homage.''[41] For Hugo Ball, one could ''discard the Ego like a coat full of holes'' precisely because ''man has many Egos, just as the onion has many skins. It is not a matter of one Ego more or less. The center is still made of skins.'' Likewise, in poetry, the unrepresentable uniqueness of the ego could not express itself in a language of communication, whose function, as Nietzsche says, is to ''make the uncommon common.'' Thus, for the Dadaists, the fluctuating self could be recognized in ''a fluctuating style,'' an anarchist aesthetic in which ''the separate parts of the sentence, even the individual vocables and sounds, regain their autonomy.'' Seen in this light, the decadent art that has most frequently been depicted as a mere aesthetic reflection or symptom of modern urban anomie can be reinterpreted as a deliberate ''expression of anarchist politics'' in the form of ''aesthetic individualism.''[42]

[40] Barthes, Image-Music-Text, 69-70; Spanos, Repetitions, 20.

[41] Read, Icon and Idea: The Function of Art in the Development of Human Consciousness (name city: Harvard University Press, 1955), 110-11; The Forms of Things Unknown: Essays Towards an Aesthetic Philosophy (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), 173-74.

[42] Hugo Ball, Flight Out Of Time: A Dada Diary, ed. John Elderfield, trans. Ann Raimes (New York: Viking, 1974), 29; Nietzsche, The Will to Power, trans.

chist circles and those of the avant-garde poets and painters of Paris in the 1880s through the 1890s, or the intensely anarchist milieu inhabited by American artists like Man Ray in the years before the First World War), the new narrative posits a thematic as well as a historical link between anarchism and modernism.

The primary theme linking modernism and anarchism, in this new narrative, is the translation of an anarchist revolution against every form of domination into the Revolution of the Word fomented by Joyce and Jolas—that is, the translation of an anarchist refusal of political representation into a general- ized ''resistance to representation,'' as Kadlec puts it,[15] and particularly into a refusal of symbolic representation. A corollary theme is that of ''the frag- ment,'' which traces the shattered style of modernism back to Max Stirner's egoism via figures such as Oscar Wilde and Dora Marsden.[16] The connection between the first and the second theme is to be found in Stirner's elaboration of an individualist politics that postulates the ego as an irreducible fragment that belongs to no group and therefore cannot be represented.

Max Stirner's Der Einzige und sein Eigentum (The Ego and His Own, or more literally, The Unique One and Its Property), which has been called indi- vidualist, nihilist, egoist, and even poststructuralist, seems to inform almost every direction taken by anarchist modernism. Stirner, Marx's fellow Young Hegelian, makes his own radical inversion of Hegel: the Spirit whose cunning made toys of individual wills becomes the will of the bodily individual, the ego or Einzige. This sovereign self may choose to have ''commerce'' or ''intercourse'' with other individuals or not, depending on the values it assigns its varying interests, desires and whims. Prior to every thought and sign, declaring that ''no concept expresses me, nothing that is designated as my essence exhausts me; they are only names,'' it wages unconditional war on the categories,

[15] Kadlec, Mosaic Modernism, 2.

[16] Weir, 168, 185, 188.

universals, and ideals threatening its uniqueness (''God,'' ''truth,'' ''freedom,'' ''humanity,'' ''justice,'' ''people,'' ''fatherland,'' etc.), unmasking them all as mere ''spooks'' and ''fixed ideas.''[17] Ultimately, for Eisenzweig, this critique is ''more radical . . . than the texts of Proudhon, Bakunin, and their successors'' in its insistence on ''refusing all representative systems and questioning the denotative nature of language.'' Koch, Newman, and Colson agree that The Ego and His Own is uncannily proleptic of poststructuralist critiques of representation.[18]

Stirner's subordination of social relations to individual expediency—''we have only one relation to each other, that of usableness, of utility, of use,'' he writes; ''for me, you are nothing but—my food, even as I too am fed upon and turned to use by you''—disgusted Marx, who, with Engels, spent much of The German Ideology attacking ''Saint Max.'' It likewise repelled most anarchists, whom Stirner himself never bothered to address, apart from di- recting a little scorn at Proudhon's maxim that ''property is theft,'' for similar reasons, since theirs was primarily a socialist movement, associated with the trade unions, centered on notions of a common identity and shared values.[19]

Nonetheless, Stirner's work found its way into a sort of anarchist theoretical canon when it was rediscovered near the turn of the century, partly due to the devotion of a small but vocal group of individualist anarchists such as John Henry Mackay and Benjamin Tucker. It entered the milieux of the liter- ary and artistic avant-gardes via intellectuals such as Felix le Dantec and Zo d'Axa, who interpreted Stirner for the readers of journals like Entretiens Politiques et Littéraires and L'Endehors, and Dora Marsden, whose journal The Egoist published her own Stirnerite analyses of pol-

[17] Stirner, The Ego and His Own, trans. Stephen Byington (New York: Benjamin R. Tucker, 1907), 3, 11, 55, 177, 337, 490.

[18] Eisenzweig, Fictions, 120, translation mine; Colson, Petit lexique, 11, 16n2; Koch, ''Poststructuralism,'' 332; Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan, 68.

[19] Stirner, Ego, 100, 394.

bat against social structures,'' engaging in a bilateral exchange of ideas.[37]

Among other things, individualist anarchists and Symbolist aesthetes agreed on the need to protect what Alfred Jarry called the ''sacred disorder of my spirit'' from the menace of an administered world and its rationalist representational systems. Together, they came to see language as having been corrupted by commercialization and propaganda; for Mallarmé, ''the attitude of a poet in an epoch like this one, in which he is on strike against society, is to put aside all the corrupt means that may offer themselves to him.''[38] Since, for Symbolist aesthetes like Maurice Devaldès, ''communication'' had in some sense become impossible, it became ''irrelevant'' as well: silence, whether figurative (in the sense of withdrawing from a shared, publicly accessible language) or literal (in the case of Rimbaud, whose desertion of poetry some have taken to be the prototypically modernist act), became an aesthetic protest against the banalization and mediocrity of modern existence—ultimately, the means by which the poet could escape from the constraints of the social symbolic order. The modern word, as defined by Mallarmé, is precisely that which refuses complicity with the ''system of representation'' to which writer and readers are subjected.[39]

Here, once again, we can see how a certain critique of the unified subject—that figure whose commanding eye projects the visual

[37] Varisco, ''Anarchy and Resistance in Tristan Tzara's 'The Gas Heart,' '' 140; Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 131; Leighten, Re-Ordering the Universe, 49-50; Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 38; Kristeva, Révolution, 427, translation mine.

[38] Jarry, quoted in Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 77; Read, Poetry and Experi- ence, 120; Mallarmé, quoted in Joan U. Halperin, Félix Fénéon, Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siècle Paris (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 50, translation mine

[39] Alexander Varias, Paris and the Anarchists: Aesthetes and Subversives During the Fin de Siècle (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 146; Sontag, A Sontag Reader, 183-84; Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 222; Kristeva, Revolution in Poetic Language, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 183.

acter,'' Tzara sees any such unified, specular identity as a lie and a trap. Instead of characters, we are presented with ''general, undisguised body parts as names for the play's characters: Eye, Mouth, Nose, Ear, Neck, and Eyebrow; Tzara thus deconstitutes customary dramaturgical organization and re-constitutes a spontaneous, revolution/riot- type (mob formation) anonymity . . . They jockey for position above their squirming audience, anesthetizing the hall with ravings and gibbering.''

Rather than presenting an organically unified subject, Tzara gives us organs at odds with one another—a riotous ''mob'' or ''anarchist swarm.''[35] Where traditional drama encourages us to recapitulate our méconaissance of our- selves in the coherent whole of a self-representation, Dada antirepresenta- tionalism gives us something remarkably like the state of fragmentation we occupy prior to the mirror stage—a dis-organ-ized body: that which Deleuze and Guattari name, following Antonin Artaud, the ''organless body.''[36]

Just as ''Dadaists believed that language, like other representational art forms . . . had become a tool bankrupt of artistic probity, one which effectively buoyed ideological power structures,'' so Symbolist aesthetes such as Mallarmé, seeking a ''purified poetry,'' took on board an anarchist critique of representation. In fin-de-siècle Paris, indeed, the Symbolist poets were so closely involved with the anarchists that Sonn speaks of them as ''dual libertarian avant-gardes.'' In this milieu, as Kristeva remarks, ''writers engaged in an investigation into the liberation of the subject in language encounter the preoccupations of anarchists, the com-

[35] Varisco, ''Anarchy and Resistance in Tristan Tzara's 'The Gas Heart,' '' 141-42.

[36] Guattari, Molecular Revolution, 290.

itics and culture alongside the writings of Pound and Eliot.[20] In making of ''nominalism'' a weapon against the humanist who, in Stirner's words, ''takes little heed of what you are privatim'' but ''sees only what you are generatim,'' Marsden constructed an egoist aesthetic that ''would encourage a numbering of the streaks of the tulip, details stripped of the discursive apparatus that facilitates generalization.''[21] Marsden articulates the philosophical roots of the modernist campaign against disembodied ''ideas'' (William Carlos Williams) and ''abstractions'' (Ezra Pound) in poetry:

They are made up of misty thought-waste, confusions too entangled to be disentangled; bound together and made to look tidy by attaching an appellation-label, i.e., a sign. It is the tidiness of the sign which misleads. It is like a marmalade label attached to an empty jar. Remove the label, and confusion vanishes: we see the empty jar, the bit of printed paper, and know there is no marmalade. And so with abstract terms and ideas . . . An idea is a privileged assertion. It is seated high on a pedestal above question and offering no explanation. The only concern is to learn the most fitting form of rendering such idols allegiance—justice, law, right, liberty, equality, and the rest; each matched with a spouse, its negative. It is part of our work to shatter the pedestals.[22]

The anarchist project of stripping the would-be representatives of humanity of their political authority is here translated into a program stripping symbolic representations (thoughts, abstractions, ideas, signs, binary oppositions) of their metaphysical authority, reducing them to their lowly, fragmentary, material

[20] John G. Hutton, Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground: Art, Science, and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siecle France (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 54, 244; Richard Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France (University of Nebraska, 1989), 16-17.

[21] Stirner, quoted in Robert von Hallberg, ''Libertarian imagism,'' Modernism/Modernity, 2, no. 2 (1995): 65; von Hallberg, 65.

[22] Kadlec, Mosaic Modernism, 225, 4; Dora Marsden, ''Views and Comments,'' The New Freewoman 1, no. 11 (1913), 204.

origins. If ''Culture is Thought,'' Marsden argues, we must instead engage in ''Thinking''—that is, the ''destruction of Thought.''[23]

In so arguing, Marsden rephrases arguments made over seventy years ear- lier by Stirner himself in an essay for the Rheinische Zeitung. Here, he ar- gues that the only liberatory role for art to play is that of the negative ''comedy'' that destroys accumulated thought: ''Comedy, as befitting its es- sence, probes into every holy area, even into Holy Matrimony, for this itself is no longer—in the actual marriage—Holy. It is rather an emptied form, to which man should no longer hold.'' However, where comic art plays a useful role ''in openly displaying the emptiness, or better, the deflation of the . . . old belief,'' it tends to do so merely in order to clear the way for a new fetish; the nihilistic moment in comedy is merely idealism showing its disappointed face before it recovers its spirits.[24] Thus, as Paul Goodman observes, Shakespeare's Henry plays subject the feudal ideal of ''honor,'' with its antique ideal of ''personal allegiance to the chief,'' to a throughgoing comic deflation: ''What is honour?'' Falstaff asks rhetorically. ''A word . . . What is that word honour? air.'' Nonetheless, the impetus of comic art is to ''form again'' or re-form the discarded ideal:

> By the end of the sixteenth century, when Henry IV was written—and Cervantes was writing Don Quixote—the old feudalism was dead and gone… And honor… has become air.

[23] Marsden, ''Culture,'' The Egoist 1, no. 17 (1914), 322. If this formulation reminds us of Deleuze's admonition that ''thought thinks its own history . . . in order to free itself from what it thinks'' (Gilles Deleuze, Foucault, translated by Séan Hard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988) 119, it is nonetheless quite directly attributable to Stirner: ''a fixed idea arises by a thought—to wit, by the vanishing of the energy of the thought (the thinking itself, this restless taking back all thoughts that make themselves fast) from the thought'' (Ego, 407).

[24] Stirner, ''Art and Religion,'' trans. Lawrence Stepelevich, Egoist Archive (rest of text in bibliography?)

This ascetic tendency, incidentally part of chastisement and acquired resignation, one can trace in every investigation of the value and meaning of the Drama, though in different forms.[33]

The very claim of the drama to hold up a truth-telling mirror to the spectator is, on this account, a deception, and moreover a religious one, calculated to evoke a guilty fear of ''uncontrolled human passion,'' and thus to justify forms of control and rule: once again, ''Life must learn Duty,'' only this time, not from the projection of an ideal self beyond the real self, but from the very reverse—the projection of a bad self that one is simultaneously to identify with and reject (producing another kind of disunion). What one sees in the representational medium of the dramatic mirror is not a neutral description of life, but an aggressively moralistic prescription: This is how you should not live. A robust, self-affirming individual, however, ought to see through these representational scare tactics: knowing himself or herself to be unique, and affirming rather than fearing his or her own desire, an Einzige should laugh at these false reflections in the tragic mirror.

In this way, Baginski formulates one version of the antirepresentational stance in relation to art: the very stance that the Dadas, led by Hugo Ball (an assiduous reader of Bakunin and Kropotkin, familiar as well with Gustav Landauer and Otto Gross) were to take up a decade later. As Robert Variscz notes, Dada was not merely anarchic in the frequently noted sense of being chaotic and ''antisensical,'' but in the way that it programmatically ''turned its face away from recognizable representation.''[34] In Tristan Tzara's Le Coeur au Gaz, the sort of conventional drama in which ''clearly delineated identities permitted the action to proceed in an orderly fashion'' became a target. Whereas the protagonist of the traditional drama impeached by Bag- inski is a richly rounded ''char-

[33] Max Baginski, ''The Old and the New Drama,'' Mother Earth 1 (April 1906): 36.

[34] Robert A. Varisco, ''Anarchy and Resistance in Tristan Tzara's 'The Gas Heart,' '' Modern Drama 40, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 139.

Yet in the same Histories, Shakespere tried to give the word ''honour'' a new lease on life, as national patriotism, for instance in Henry V's speech on Crispin's Day at Agincourt. Honor was now securely fastened to the ideology of dying for England and being a household word in every English mouth. It is likely that Shakespere himself believed in the renewed word—at least he consigns Falstaff to disgrace—and patriotic honor certainly proved to have vitality and reality for the nation-states for a couple of centuries.[25]

Ordinarily, then, art plays the recuperative role of cultural guardian, providing the world's Matthew Arnolds with a surrogate for waning faith: ''even comedy, as all the arts, precedes religion, for it only makes room for the new religion, to that which art will form again.'' Stirner's pragmatism in dictating that all anything and anyone can be is ''an object in which I take an interest or else do not, an interesting or uninteresting object,'' dictates that art, like everything else of the world of ideas, can only be an instrument, one that must be thrown away after its has worn out its usefulness, lest it become a new spook or idée fixe dominating the subject.[26]

For art can and will act as a force for domination. ''Art creates disunion, in that it sets the Ideal over and against man,'' Stirner writes; ''this disunion is called by another name—religion.''[27] Men and women possessed by a religious attitude project ideal selves ''over and against'' their real selves, then strive to match these ideals, to fit themselves to the Procrustean bed of an abstraction: as Marsden remarks, ''the Symbol . . . is not even an approximation to anything in life, but is the tracery of an arrangement among dead things which accidentally Life, in its passage through, has left. Is

[25] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 84-85.

[26] Stirner, ''Art and Religion''; Ego, 211, 407, 414-15.

[27] Stirner, ''Art and Religion.''

a continual extinction of personality'' in the pages of Marsden's The Egoist.[32]

It is in just these terms (at least initially) that the anarchist Max Baginski attacks traditional Western drama in a 1906 issue of Emma Goldman's journal Mother Earth, impeaching its claim to represent the human subject. In the drama's representational pretense, he finds a disciplinary institution:

> The inscription over the Drama in olden times used to be, ''Man, look into this mirror of life; your soul will be gripped in its innermost depths, anguish and dread will take possession of you in the face of this rage of human desire and passion. Go ye, atone and make good.''
>
> Even Schiller entertained this view when he called the Stage a moral institu- tion. It was also from this standpoint that the Drama was expected to show the terrible consequences of uncontrolled human passion, and that these conse- quences should teach man to overcome himself. ''To conquer oneself is man's greatest triumph.''

[32] Signac, quoted in Egbert, Social Radicalism and the Arts, 249; Weir, Anarchy and Culture, 181; T. S. Eliot, Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 40, 177. None, to my knowledge, have placed Eliot in the context of anarchism—probably for good reason, given his ''extraordinary sense of 'the reality of Sin,' '' which seems to have led him to ''Hulme, Maurras, and Action Française'' rather than Spain. However, his disgust with ''wasteland'' modernity, his resistance to representational language, and even his rejection of democracy are not too different from the beliefs that once sent Symbolist writers careening between anarchist, royalist, communist, and proto- fascist positions—nor, as George Franklin points out, from those that propelled Percy Bysshe Shelley toward William Godwin's philosophical anarchism. Indeed, Eliot owes an unacknowledged debt to Shelley (George Franklin, ''Instances of Meeting: Shelley and Eliot: A Study in Affinity,'' English Library History 61, no. 4 [Winter 1994]: 956, 960, 979-80).

Life restive inside the Symbol? Then Life must learn Duty.''[28] In ostensibly post-theological discourses like Marx's, this striving after the unattainable ideal reappears as ''alienation,'' the separation of one's false, fragmented, merely apparent being from one's potential, whole, true self. This is precisely what Stirner's account of the Einzige is designed to counter: ''The true man does not lie in the future, an object of longing, but lies, existent and real, in the present . . . I am it, I am the true man.'' For Stirner, as for Baudrillard, the notion of alienation, in postulating subjects as incomplete fragments of an emergent whole, is itself alienating: ''What an absurdity it is to pretend that men are 'other,' to try to convince them that their deepest desire is to become 'themselves' again! Each man is totally there at each instant.'' The Einzige only manifests itself, however, as an unrepresentable ''creative nothing'' that subsumes everything: ''all things are nothing to me.''[29]

For Marsden and Stirner, this emptiness or lack of essence in the subject renders every representation of it a lie, every ''effort to mirror life'' a crippling form of ''submission.'' When the empty subject looks in the ''mirror'' of its own ''Intellect,'' becoming ''self-conscious,'' it makes a drastic error: Intellect, like fire, is a good servant but a bad master . . . in place of being directed it becomes director: in place of its performances being judged by Soul . . . it begins to judge the Soul—to prove that the Soul is not there in short, and establishes itself in its place

In pressing its mirror back upon the inner life and failing to find the spatial qualities with which alone it has experience, Intellect has adopted one of three courses: either it has maintained that it could detect nothing there distinct from itself, or that the something which existed was identical with itself, or finding nothing but being conscious of a vague uneasiness, it has faked up false

[28] Marsden, ''Intellect and Culture,'' The New Freewoman, 1, no. 2 (July 1, 1913), 22.

[29] Stirner, Ego, 436-37; Jean Baudrillard, The Mirror of Production, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975), 166; Stirner, Ego, 490.

images and declared that these are what it found.[30] Here Marsden, like many other individualist anarchists at the turn of the century, blends Stirner's declaration that ''thinking and its thoughts are not sacred to me'' with Bergson's rejection of the Kantian belief that all ''experience'' is ''infra-intellectual'' to project an aesthetic for which, as the anarchist painter Signac declared, ''the subject is nothing, or at least is . . . not more important than all the other elements, colour, drawing, composition.''

Thus, as Kristeva points out, from the nineteenth century through the early twentieth, ''It seems thus that certain anarchist tendencies, far from stopping at the contestation of social and official structures, assert a major transformation of the concept of the speaking subject itself,'' both in the political and aesthetic fields.[31] It is in keeping with the logic of this antirepresentational aesthetic that the work of radically questioning ''the speaking subject'' is assigned to ''one who . . . will struggle with all of his individuality, with a personal effort, against bourgeois and official conventions'': what often appears to be a suggestion that the artist owes the world an act of ''self-effacement'' is actually a strategy whereby ''the artist exercises individualism by negating it, or rather, by appearing to negate it,'' since the work of art is taken to ''embody the political ideal of egoism merely by its existence, so that individualist politics is enacted through aesthetic practice.'' It is significant that even T. S. Eliot, a conservative for whom ''anarchy'' is merely synonymous with ''futility,'' should publish his call for the poet to pursue ''a continual self-sacrifice,

[30] Marsden, ''Intellect and Culture,'' 22.

[31] Stirner, Ego, 197-98; Bergson, Creative Evolution, 380; Signac quoted in Donald Drew Egbert, Social Radicalism and the Arts: Western Europe: A Cultural History from the French Revolution to 1968 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 249; Kristeva, La révolution du langage poétique: l'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle, Lautréamont et Mallarmé (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974), 426-27, translation mine.

five or fifty'' to produce ''all that is necessary to guarantee comfort to society,'' would leave ''five or seven hours a day which each will have at his disposal, after having consecrated several hours to the production of necessities.''[27] ''With this duration,'' Pataud writes, ''each one had leisure, and employed it according to his tastes, his aspirations, and his abilities.'' Thus, in addition to professional ''Theatrical Companies'' organized on the syndicalist model, he projects a proliferation of ''what previously were called Amateur Theatres,'' provided with like theater space and materials, these having become public property; ''little by little,'' he predicts, ''these became general, and perhaps they will end by replacing the professional theatre.'' Only unquantified time, communist time, can guarantee the diversity that anar- chist space requires. Here is the beginning of the very argument against Bakunin's ''collectivism,'' with its retention of the wage system, that Kropotkin articulates: ''The collectivists say, 'To each according to his deeds,' '' as if the relative value of labor could be represented with precision, but this ''yearning for justice . . . is only the perpetuation of injustice,'' for the value of labor, in its irreducible collectivity, is what cannot be represented.[28] Kropotkin has no such difficulty in imagining the economics of postrevolutionary art: ''A painter or sculptor who has produced a work of personal feeling will offer it to the woman he loves, or to a friend. Executed for love's sake—will his work, inspired by love, be inferior to the art that today satisfies the vanity of the philistine, because it has cost much money?''[29] Only an art created ''from mere inclination, not for mercantile purposes,'' Kropotkin suggests, leaves the realm of instrumentality behind.[30] Such an art realizes fully its nature as ''gift'' and goes far-

[27] Ibid., 211; Kropotkin, Conquest of Bread, 126, 136.

[28] Pataud, Syndicalism and the Co-operative Commonwealth, 211-12; Kropotkin, Conquest of Bread, 183-85.

[29] Kropotkin, Conquest of Bread, 136.

[30] Kropotkin, Fields, Factories, and Workshops (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 408.

when they prompt us to reflect on our own status as scripted characters in a mediated, artifactual, virtual world: ''Metafiction made us aware that what fiction can tell us is not reality itself but a narrative version of reality . . . our contemporary lives are all ideological versions of reality, with us characters within narratives. It isn't so much that metafiction is now out-of-date, but that it's no longer an avant-garde literary device. It's part of the popular life we are leading now.''[123] McCaffery and Tatsumi argue that despite the ebbing shock value of metafictional devices now incorporated into pop culture—the very pop culture that to some degree constitutes our ''ideological versions of reality''—there is still room for a radical aesthetic intervention. This intervention would be neither quite avant-gardist nor pop-cultural but a hybrid ''avant-pop''— ''emphasizing the 'avant' part of the term,'' as McCaffery insists, to foreground the connection between A-P and the avant-garde movement which hoped to use its radical aesthetic orientation to confuse, confound, bewilder, piss off, and generally blow the fuses of ordinary citizens exposed to it. The idea being that it's now useless to try to create change via political institutions (useless because they are so infused with corruption, stagnation, and blind adherence to the tautologies that create and protect their existence), so artists need to try and work on peoples' consciousnesses directly. Radical formal devices are one means of trying to swerve peoples' consciousnesses off the daily ''grooves'' of normalcy— the kind of ''tracks'' of response, desire, intuition, beliefs, etc. that have been laid down for us by our governments, advertisers, and schools (they're interlocking systems, at this point, don't you agree?), and to steer people away from the predictable places . . . to maybe discover ''tracks'' that are more interesting and maybe even more ap-

[123] Larry McCaffery and Takayuki Tatsumi, ''Toward the Theoretical Frontiers of 'Fiction': From Metafiction and Cyberpunk Through Avant-Pop,'' Science Fiction EYE 12 (Summer 1993): 45, 43-44.

propriate for our own tastes and desires (if we could only discover for ourselves what these actually are, for a change).[124]

The call for a return to an avant-garde strategy of épater les bourgeoises might seem datedly modernist, but what seems to make avant-pop postmodern is the ''pop'' component. Rather than trying to create art outside of and against the mass-marketed art produced by capitalism (presumably no longer an option), McCaffery promotes ''active resistance'' in the form of a ''subversive, guerilla-art'' produced from within the belly of the beast, using the images, texts, and sounds thrown up by the marketplace as the very materials through which it will enact aesthetic rebellion. Postmodern avant-pop thus continues that modernist strategy pioneered by the Dadas and Cubists— what Read called, in a 1930 review of Max Ernst's collage-novel La Femme 100 Têtes, that ''function of art'' that is ''to snatch things from the security of their normal existence.'' This new brand of subversive appropriation, according to McCaffery and Tatsumi, will be about ''seizing control'' of the collective cultural product, remixing and ''re-narratiz[ing]'' boring, racist, sexist, capitalist pop-culture narratives, subverting and appropriating them: ''In other words, you storm the reality studio. And retake the universe.''[125]

PROBLEMS WITH THE POSTMODERN PROJECT

As ambitious and inventive as this project is, here are some flaws in the assumptions animating it that will seem a little familiar. First of all, there is a heavy dose of essentialism here that

[124] Ibid., 48-49.

[125] Read, quoted in Andrew Causey, ''Herbert Read and Contemporary Art,'' in Herbert Read Reassessed, ed. David Goodway, 128 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998); Mc- Caffery and Tatsumi, ''Toward the Theoretical Frontiers of 'Fiction,' '' 49.

would be ''established,'' could simply be ''applied . . . to the working of the theatres,'' as well as ''novels, poetry, scientific and historic works.'' In a very similar fashion, Abad de Santillan proposes that the syndicalist structure include a ''Council of Publishing and Cultural Activities,'' comprising a ''syndicate of graphic arts,'' a ''syndicate of writers,'' and so on; thus, ''theatres . . . cinemas, sports, etc., will all be integrated in the culture council and for the first time fulfil their real purpose . . . art, today a privilege of select and rich minorities, will be available to all and ennoble and beautify the lives of everybody capable of appreciating it.''[25]

Here is where things get particularly sticky. The system of ''social cheques'' Pataud proposes as the new arbiter of ''relations between producer and consumer'' is geared to account for labor time and use-value, but both of these categories map very poorly onto aesthetic production. How to measure the time required to produce a work of art, let alone its utility? The very features of aesthetic work that, as Hyde observes, tend to set it in permanent opposition to the system of commodity exchange with which it coexists—that is, its ''gift'' character, the degree to which it requires an ''inspiration'' whose arrival cannot be predicted or calculated—also make it difficult to accommodate within a system designed to guarantee ''a balance in the enjoyment of luxury,'' the equality of work and leisure by quantification.[26]

As if in recognition of this difficulty, Pataud proposes a tertiary sphere for the production of art (and of knowledge—a related, but distinct matter, to which we shall return): that of an expanded leisure time, ''a consequence of the reduction in the hours of work'' as calculated by Kropotkin, whose 1885 Conquest of Bread calculated that rationally and fairly organized production, requiring of each worker only ''four or five hours a day till the age of forty-

[25] Pataud, Syndicalism and the Co-operative Commonwealth, 210, 214; Abad de Santillan, After the Revolution, 89, 91.

[26] Pataud, Syndicalism and the Co-operative Commonwealth, 209-10.

tologically, this choice can never be in error, we have to pause to consider the problem of aesthetic ''freedom.''

This problem fundamentally derives from the aesthetic's resistance to quantification. Thus, when Pataud, a leading theoretician of the French anarcho-syndicalist movement at the height of its historical strength, describes how ''luxuries'' such as the arts would be organized after the revolution, his argument becomes less convincing than when it addresses the production of necessities. His primary instinct is to take the Arts-and-Crafts direction endorsed by anarchist theorists like Charles Albert, who writes that ''all that which is well made is in a sense a work of art,'' and Kropotkin, who insists that ''everything that surrounds man, in the street . . . must be of a pure artistic form,'' arguing that art, rather than ''restrict[ing] itself to painting large canvasses, to sculpturing marble, to moulding bronze,'' could henceforth ''enter into all production,'' so that ''there would be art . . . in the small- est everyday things.''[24] Have we not returned, here, via the route taken by Morris and Ruskin, to a vision of art's ''disappearance'' into the social text, its ''subsumption in the broader practice of culture as creative play''?

However, since it would be hard to argue that the desire for great novels could be fulfilled in such a manner, Pataud finds himself forced to address not only the aestheticization of production but aesthetic production per se, and he does so in keeping with his overall program: the free reorganization of production at the point of production by the producers themselves, balanced by a collective reorganization of consumption by consumers. He assumes that the same ''mechanism of an organization, which measured out the using of things according to the possibilities of the moment,'' so that ''by means of rationing . . . a balance in the enjoyment of luxury''

[24] Charles Albert, L'Art et la Société (Béarn, France: Bibliotheque de l'Art Social, 1896), 5, translation mine; Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, ed. Paul Avrich (New York: New York University Press, 1972), 135, 226.

belies the constructivism of McCaffery and Tatsumi's postmodern premises: they presume the reality of a preexist- ing actual or true self that is outside capitalism, but simultaneously argue that the seemingly true self that we discover on introspection is likely to be just another ideological construct: just as the childhood experiences that the replicant Rachel ''remembers'' in Blade Runner are merely an implanted ''fake memory,'' so, in the time of late capitalism, ''our past . . . becomes [a] commodifiable object that we can sample, cut and mix, colorize, and other- wise re-experience.''[126] McCaffery and Tatsumi want to be strategic realists in facing up to the absolutely dominant power of capitalist structures, but at the same time, they seem to imagine that the subjects of this dominant structure—who appear, in this column, as colonized, constructed, programmed, and completely passive—are capable of using the media of their own domination for the purpose of resistance. The late-capitalist world, supposedly utterly impervious to political intervention, is at the same time supposed to be open to forms of aesthetic rebellion that still have as their goal the production of an avant-garde-style shock effect, the very possibility of which has already largely been lost to the advance of capitalist pop culture.

Avant-pop is conceptualized partly from a quantum perspective, from which it appears that nothing now is real and everything is possible for us, and partly from a genetic perspective, from which it appears that the very reality we now have to face is that nothing is possible.

Indeed, metafictions may have the paradoxical effect not of empowering us to rewrite our own scripts, but of making us feel all the more paranoiacally powerless (since, like Thomas Pynchon's Oedipa Maas, we are trapped inside a narrative prison-house, a conspiracy of sublime proportions) and all the less concerned to

[126] McCaffery and Tatsumi, ''Toward the Theoretical Frontiers of 'Fiction,' '' 46-47.

change anything (since we are convinced, like David Foster Wallace's Lenore Stonecipher, that none of this is real anyway[127]).

From the subject positions offered by metafiction—remarkably similar to those occupied by the protagonists of the virtual-reality paranoia films of the late 1990s—we find, as Slavoj Žižek writes apropos of the latter, that we are looking at ''the ultimate American paranoiac fantasy,'' with all the contradictions that entails. The scenario is terrifying in that the protagonist ''suddenly starts to suspect that the world he lives in is a fake, a spectacle staged to convince him that he lives in a real world, while all people around him are effectively actors and extras in a gigantic show''; it is nonetheless the obverse side of a ''fantasy,'' in that the ''real social life'' of ''late capitalist consumerist society'' promotes itself as a ''paradise'' that is somehow ''unreal, substanceless, deprived of material inertia.'' In such a disembodied world, no one can really suffer, nor need any such suffering take place, for the bounty of consumer pleasures and pleasant appearances is not produced through exploited labor; everything is produced mysteriously, as if by wishing, from the flow of ephemeral images, information, desires, and ''financial speculations disconnected from the sphere of material production.''[128] Paranoia, as Pynchon recognizes, is the twin of narcissism: for the ''paranoid,'' he writes, ''all is organized in spheres joyful or threatening about the central pulse of himself.'' If, in conspiracy narratives, the numinous forces organizing appearances are ''basically omniscient,'' hence omnipotent, we can only respond with (im)passivity.[129] Better yet, as Sartwell speculates, the conviction that all appearances have been arranged for our benefit, that we

[127] Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49; David Foster Wallace, The Broom of the System (New York: Avon Books, 1997).

[128] Žižek, Welcome to the Desert of the Real! Essays on September 11 and Related Dates (New York: Verso, 2002), 12-13, 14.

[129] Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49, 129; Sterling, ''Sneaking for Jesus 2001,'' December 1992, http://www.eff.org/Misc/Publications/Bruce_Sterling/Catscan_columns/catscan.11 (accessed 10 July 2003).

ate all the different qualities of the work of art.''[22] A redistributive durational politics might have the effect of allowing more eyes to be ''educated,'' thereby widening the audience for challenging art beyond the relatively privileged fraction of the middle class that sponsors it now.

So some anarchists assume. ''As soon as actors no longer played for money, and the public were not attracted to amusements by the schemes of advertisers,'' predicts Émile Pataud in Syndicalism and the Co-operative Commonwealth, ''their taste, until then artificially misled, was purified.''[23]

Or perhaps not. What happens when sponsorship for aesthetic production is no longer divided into two categories, as it is now—with one regime of production (''popular culture'') drawing sponsorship from mass audiences of average means, and another regime (''high art'') drawing sponsorship from small, elite audiences of above-average means? Granted, the choices made by mass audiences about the kind of aesthetic production they want are made passively from a menu rigged by a shrinking handful of corporate decision-makers, with a corresponding distortion of desires, but recognizing this is not cause for an optimistic faith that post-revolutionary mass audiences will fail to manifest the same conservative desires. Will the tastes of the mass audiences change, or will ''high art'' shrink to the size of its existing sponsor pool? Would the disappearance or near-disappearance of what we now think of as ''high art'' be a loss? What if what predominated was the stultifying ''kitsch'' which Read fears is ''what this public . . . has wanted throughout history''? What if what disappeared was precisely the kind of art social that Proudhon and Lazare hoped for? Unless we agree with the pragmatists that the good in art, as in everything, is whatever people happen to freely choose over time, so that, tau-

[22] Signac, quoted in Egbert, Social Radicalism and the Arts, 249.

[23] Émile Pataud, Syndicalism and the Co-operative Commonwealth: How We Shall Bring About the Revolution, trans. Charlotte and Frederic Charles (Oxford: The New International Publishing Co., 1913), 210.

privileged domination of speaking-for, is largely due to the ''less than convivial'' tools they control: ''because of our peculiar social arrangements, a feature of the mass-media is expense; and expense is controlled by, let us say, 'social policy.' . . . Thus, if I want to move a million people, I must also persuade the editor of The Saturday Evening Post to let me.'' Media ownership is concentrated in fewer hands, giving the owners ''the ability to control the flow of memes,'' Birrell argues—the sort of ''vertical and elitist control'' that properly can be called ''ideological control.''[20]

The anarchist critique of aesthetic representation, therefore, cannot only criticize the manner in which signs relate to signifieds; it must also be a critique of the re- in representation, the manner in which signs bridge the time and place in which they receive their form and the times and places of the audiences who interpret them. We must not only examine what I will call the durational and spatial politics of the sign at its point of production (poetics) nor only at its point of consumption (hermeneutics); we must also attend to the processes of distribution and circulation. As an anarchist, Birrell of course favors ''the circulation of cultural signs in a horizontal mode which befits them.''[21] The question, then, is how to achieve this horizontal organization of culture.

It would be disingenuous for anyone to pretend that the kinds of entrenched contradiction we have been discussing can be simply magicked away in some post-revolutionary state, let alone in a period of revolutionary transition. Signac hoped for a future in which conditions would be so changed that formalism would no longer be opposed to populism: ''When the eye is educated, the people will see something other than the subject in pictures. When the society we dream of exists, the worker, freed from the exploiters who brutalize him, will have time to think and to learn. He will appreci-

[20] Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' 194; Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 85; Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' 193-94; Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 85-86; Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' 198.

[21] Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' 198.

are blanketed in a solipsistic ''representation,'' provides a consolation, for at least ''images are safe'': ''In my fantasy, in the world of images, I can commit horrific crimes and remain innocent. I can plunge off cliffs and awaken before I hit bottom. No one has ever been blown to bits by a picture of an explosion. So if the world as I experience it were an image, I would be perfectly safe.''[130] In the root sense of the word, then, postmodern paranoia is fascinating: it invites passive speculation and spectatorship rather than action. The paranoid's universe, like the detective novels favored by Auster's protagonist Daniel Quinn, is infinitely readable:

What he liked about these books was their sense of plenitude and economy. In the good mystery there is nothing wasted, no sentence, no word that is not significant. And even if it is not significant, it has the potential to be so—which amounts to the same thing. The world of the book comes to life, seething with possibilities

Since everything seen or said, even the slightest, most trivial thing, can bear a connection to the outcome of the story, nothing must be over- looked. Everything becomes essence; the center of the book shifts with each event that propels it forward. The center, then, is everywhere, and no circumfer- ence can be drawn until the book has come to its end.[131]

Like Borges's Library of Babel, Quinn's world is a kind of utopia of interpretative plenitude. If it appears meaningless, this is because it is overflowing with meanings: everything represents something else, and yet nothing represents anything, for unlike a book, the system of language (in which signifiers merely point to other signifiers) has no end. At the extremes, antirepresentationalism and hyper-representationalism meet.

If postmodern utopia consists in this kind of overflow or superabundance of signification, one might ask whether it is also a material paradise, abundant in the means of life—food, water, shel-

[130] Sartwell, Obscenity, Anarchy, Reality, 10-11.

[131] Auster, The New York Trilogy, 9.

ter, clothing. Here, postmodern fictions fall curiously silent. Auster is certainly aware of the material world; throughout The New York Trilogy, his characters confront the dilemma posed by their dwindling resources, as they are drawn into the rapture of their respective mysteries; after a certain point, the plots of the stories are like a countdown toward the exhaustion of the protagonist's savings, the zero-point of survival. Still, they do leave behind the normal world of money, work, property, and the relationships bound up in these. Thus, near the end of City of Glass, Quinn is mysteriously relieved of the need to work or take care of himself so that he can spend all of his time writing in his red notebook. Similarly, the inhabitants of Borges's library-universe are mysteriously supplied with light, warmth, and even, it must be assumed, food and drink.

However, these last considerations are not even mentioned, though the narrator does write that each hexagonal gallery contains a ''closet'' in which one can ''satisfy one's fecal necessities''; this seems to leave us with a world in which people read and defecate but do not eat. This image of the universe tends to confirm Jane Flax's warning that postmodernism, when it takes the deconstructive aphorism that ''nothing exists outside a text'' too literally, essentializes its own preoccupations into a human vocation, ''as if the modal human activity is literary criticism.'' Flax further worries that ''this lack of attention to concrete social relations (including the distribution of power) results . . . in the obscuring of relations of domination.''[132]

The degree to which the utopian moments in postmodern fiction as well as postmodern theory are invested in images of reading, writing, textuality, and interpretation raises certain concerns. How is such an investment com- patible with action in and on a real world (however socially constructed) that is not merely what

[132] Flax, quoted in Margery Wolf, A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Reponsibility (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 118-19.

Early on in the development of a society, culture may already be a medium for the circulation of ''ideology,'' i.e., ''that body of ideas and values which presents the world from the point of view of one particular section of society and supports their interests,'' as shamans and warriors propagate the myths and misrepresentations that favor their own ascendancy within the tribal community. However, the imperial ''imposition of one cultural set of values'' over an indefinitely broad territory that constitutes ''ideological control'' is not yet possible, for none is yet capable of broadcasting memes very far. Birrell cites Illich's claim that as late as the beginning of the twentieth century, ''most of the words heard by an American,'' outside of the public spaces of ''the classroom or church,'' ''a rally or a circus''—''were personally spoken to him as an individual, or to someone standing nearby.''[19]

As long as this is the case, Birrell argues, ''we all own the convivial tools'' necessary for ''reinforcing the cultural code'' or ''mutating or subverting it.''

As Goodman comments, ''from time immemorial an essential characteristic of the great art-media . . . is to be cheap: paper, mud, rock, tinkling, humming, talk, agitating the limbs.'' Indeed, it would seem that ''there is little room . . . for one group or individual to hijack the process and force culture down a given path unless, of course, they have access to tools which are less than convivial, tools which can only be exchanged as expensive commodities, such as TV and radio broadcast equipment, and which therefore do not circulate horizontally but broadcast information vertically.'' Media, instead of constituting a ''means'' or commons in which strangers can meet, appear as interfering mediation or ''obstacles'' to ''communication'': as Goodman writes, ''between the artist and the public stand those who control the mass- media, the publishers, impresarios, etc.'' The representational power of these middlemen, their

[19] Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' 194, emphasis mine; Illich, quoted in Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' 194.

Neil Birrell revives this metaphor of ''infection'' in a recent issue of the British anarchist journal The Raven dedicated to questions of ''Culture and Ideology.'' Adapting for his own purposes the theory of ''memetics,'' which posits the unit of information as a kind of virus or ''meme'' (from the French même, ''same'') that reproduces itself by spreading itself from one human mind to another through communication and imitation, Birrell suggests that ''the very stuff of culture'' consists of memes such as ''tunes, ideas, catch- phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches'' that can be transmitted from person to person.[16] Where Tolstoy proposed that it is ''thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art'' that ''every man may . . . become a sharer in their activity,''

Birrell too sees the memetic function of culture, grounded in our nature as mimetic creatures, as founding for the possibility of the ''gift'' economy that Lewis Hyde calls ''anarchist property.''[17] Where commodity economics are based on the assumption of ''scarcity,'' the gift economy of memes is characterized by plenitude: ''if someone has ten coppers and spends five,'' as Malatesta points out, ''he is left with exactly five,'' but ''if one has an idea it can be communicated to a million people without losing anything, and the more the idea is propagated the more it gains in strength and effectiveness.'' Merging Hyde's analysis of ''gift exchange'' with Illich's notion of ''conviviality,'' Birrell argues that cultural memes ''are, in essence, 'convivial tools' which may be freely exchanged as gifts.''[18]

chism'' with offshoots ranging from the Catholic Worker movement of Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and Ammon Hennacy to the writings of Jacques Ellul.

[16] Neil Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' The Raven 10, no. 39 (Summer 1999): 194, 198.

[17] Tolstoy, What Is Art?, 38; Lewis Hyde, The Gift, 84.

[18] Hyde, The Gift, 22-23; Malatesta, Life and Ideas, 42-43; Birrell, ''Notes on Culture and Ideology,'' 194.

any particular individual wants it to be, a world in which saying doesn't simply or immediately make it so? If postmodern utopia is conceived in such a way as to have no meaningful relation to the world of bodily, material experience and action, then how can it lay claim to reality? I'm not sure that any sufficient answers can be made to these questions. Tobin Siebers seems to answer these in the negative in his introduction to Heterotopia: ''What distinguishes postmodernism ultimately is the extremity of its belief that neither utopia nor desire can exist in the here and now . . . [it] is concerned with what lies beyond the present moment, perhaps beyond any present moment.''[133]

One line of argument would defend Siebers's statement while denying its implied reinstatement of the transcendental beyond. Heterotopia, in the orig- inal sense of the word proposed by Foucault, is both ''here and now'' and not-here, not-now: it lies in the ''juxtaposition'' of normalized spaces with certain ''elsewhere'' spaces—railway cars, cemeteries, motels, cinemas— that host transitory episodes of the abnormal, the liminal, the transgressive.

In this sense, ''there is probably not a single culture in the world that fails to constitute heterotopias.'' Similarly, Michel de Certeau proposes that the most seemingly obedient subject can be seen to be ''poaching in countless ways on the property of others,'' subversively appropriating the spaces that it occupies.[134] In this spirit, postmodern anarchist Hakim Bey (a.k.a. Peter Lamborn Wilson) argues that the seeming omnipresence of ''the State'' conceals innumerable ''cracks and vacancies'' in which spontaneous life can flourish. While the repressive apparatus is more than capable of destroying or co-opting any revolutionary program, it cannot prevent the eruption of the ''Temporary Autonomous Zone,'' ''an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation

[133] Siebers, Heterotopia, 3.

[134] Foucault, ''Of Other Spaces,'' Diacritics 16, no. 1 (1986), 22, 24-25; de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xii, xxi.

which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/ elsewhen, before the State can crush it. As soon as the TAZ is named (represented, mediated), it must vanish, it will vanish, leaving behind it an empty husk, only to spring up again somewhere else.''[135] This antirepresentationalist tactic, however, is only successful to the degree that it is temporary, an evanescent and to some extent private experience of the non-ordinary, leaving the spatial hegemony of the ordinary unchallenged. As Murray Bookchin argues, the TAZ is an aesthetic substitute for politics, irrelevant because it fails to engage with historical actuality.[136] Revolution, like the final signifier, is infinitely deferred, its possibility relocated to an elsewhere or virtuality outside of every actual. Condemned to a deterritorialized exile, one consoles oneself by valorizing the nomadic.

Postmodern fiction, like postmodern theory, seems to locate itself in a spurious ou-topos or no-place, taking as its perspective the very view from nowhere (the imaginary position-that-is-not-a-position) that it attacks as a transcendental fiction. After relativizing all values, it issues the Nietzschean call to create new values, without realizing or admitting that this very invitation is itself a value, and without confronting the contradiction this poses for relativism and the limiting principle it implies. In annihilating the meta- physical ground of both knowledge and ethics, it promises that we can live in a noncoercive relation with our world and each other, but leaves no ground for that promise to take root in, so that these new relations are relegated precisely to the no-ground, the no-place. It is a way of thinking about human possibility that, in Kafka's terms, leaves plenty of room for hope, but not for us.

Utopia, in postmodern culture, appears as its own disappearance—or reappears as an empty simulation of freedom. Just as the

[135] Hakim Bey, T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, and Poetic Terrorism (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1991), 99.

[136] Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm (: AK Press, 1995), 20-26.

participates in the hostile interests and passions.'' Even Bookchin is enough of a historicist to write that ''no movement for freedom can even communicate its goals . . . unless historic forces are at work to alter unconscious hierarchical values and sensibilities,'' and that, therefore, ''no individual, newspaper, or book can undo a character structure shaped by the prevailing society until the society itself is beleaguered by crises''; ultimately, ''ideas reach only people who are ready to hear them.'' ''I am myself, as a poet, looking for a way out,'' writes Goodman.[14] But if the aesthetics of the individual work are insufficient to provide such an exit, what ''way out'' can there be?

THE REORGANIZATION OF CULTURE

''The fact is,'' writes Kropotkin, lamenting the rise of specialization, ''that a new Art is indeed required . . . truly great Art, which, notwithstanding its depth and its lofty flight, will penetrate into every peasant's hut and inspire everyone with higher conceptions of thought and life—such an Art is really wanted.'' He takes Christian anarchist Leo Tolstoy's What Is Art? as a helpful indicator of the direction from which this genuinely popular art might come: Tolstoy ''defines still more correctly the domain of Art when he says that the artist always aims at communicating to others the same feelings which he experiences . . . to infect the others with his own feelings.''[15]

[14] Reclus, ''Art and the People''; Bookchin, Ecology of Freedom, 346; Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 80.

[15] Kropotkin, Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature, 297. Tolstoy never identified himself as an ''anarchist'' per se, since the overwhelming majority of anarchists in his time, while fiercely antimilitarist, also believed violence in a revolutionary situation to be legiti- mate and even necessary. Nonetheless, he aligned himself with their defining anticapitalist and antistatist positions, and on the same (ethical) grounds, in works such as The Kingdom of God is Within You, which subsequently became the principal texts of a pacifist ''Christian anar-

tological self-justification in an aesthetic practice that, as Marcus puts it, ''naturally produced not actors but spectators: modern men and women, the citizens of the most advanced societies on earth, who were thrilled to watch whatever it was they were given to watch.'' The Argentine anarcho-syndicalist Diego Abad de Santillan anticipates the Frankfurt School's concept of the culture industry when he remarks that, under the reign of State and capital, ''the public schools, the university, the cinema, the theatre, sports, etc., are all used as means towards providing a legal, moral and material foundation for the privileges of a few and the slavery of the vast majority.''[12]

At the same time, as Goodman recognizes, the predominant modern ''response'' to the problem of stereotyped or formatted communication has been just the kind of ''avant garde'' art that ''devotes itself . . . to flouting the standard style, to offending the audience,'' an approach that terminates in the noncommunication of the ''incomprehensible'' work: ''the audience just gets lost—and bored.'' Moreover, attempts to transcend this divide in a ''committed,'' revolutionary art have not been very successful: ''in practice,'' Goodman writes, art as propaganda tends to amount to ''a condescending populism'' relying on ''half-truths'' and ''slogans'' that are rendered immune from criticism—ultimately, a form of leftist kitsch that is ''ideological through and through'': ''By a 'revolutionary' route we come right back to format.''[13]

This situation is a ''vicious circle'' indeed, returning every line of flight to its point of origin. We seem drawn to Reclus's rueful conclusion that ''the 'beautiful' and the useful cannot become reconciled whilst men are not united among themselves,'' that alienated conditions trump every aesthetic revolt: ''Society being divided into enemy classes, art has become, of necessity, false, since it

[12] Marcus, Lipstick Traces, 99; Diego Abad de Santillan, After the Revolution: Economic Reconstruction in Spain Today, trans. Louis Frank (New York: Greenberg Publisher, Inc., 1937), 90.

[13] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 215-16, 218.

participants in a TAZ pretend that a propertyless world is here now, that the streets are theirs, commercial culture openly invites us to appropriate its symbols: ''Make 7UP Yours,'' as the slogan goes (openly calling attention to its naughty counter- reading: up yours!). Many, perhaps most of the songs played on the radio and music-video TV are open works or reader-centered texts, offering fragmentary lyrics, loose semantic bundles, maximally open to interpretation.

Take, for example, a classic hit by that epitome of postmodern self-creation, Madonna: ''Papa Don't Preach.'' While entirely straightforward and narrative in contrast to the more avant-garde stylings of contemporaries New Order, The Cure, or R.E.M., the subject of the video, according to Renate Müller, was interpreted by young white audiences as ''teenage pregnancy'' and as ''[a] father-daughter relationship'' by young black audiences; Planned Parenthood staffers saw it as a ''commercial for teenage pregnancy,'' and antiabortion activists saw it as ''a positive prolife video.'' Müller proposes that the ability of such commodities to elicit ''multiple and contradictory meanings'' makes them ''open to cultural struggle over meaning,'' but I see no evidence of such a struggle. Consumerist pluralism, in its superficial displays of tolerance and more fundamental anomie, allows these interpretations to float past one another without connecting, avoiding conflict. We can see anything we want in the mirror of the commodity, which is magically all things to everyone.[137] Polysemy, promising everything and nothing, saves one the risk of getting caught taking a position—a surefire marketing technique.

As long as audiences take what they want and tune out the rest without resistance from the text, the text does not challenge its self-understanding, as Eco hopes, or promote its sense of auton-

[137] I am reminded of Bookchin's remark that fortune-tellers typically ''hedge their state- ments lest a prophecy fail to materialize in reality'' by using ''vague phrases'' with ''multiple meanings'' (Re-enchanting Humanity, 216).

omy and creative empowerment, as Spahr hopes. Listeners who encounter the ''social codes'' in the songs as if they were autonomous ''users,'' in de Certeau's formulation, who can make them into narratives and symbols of themselves, ironically fulfill Adorno and Horkheimer's prediction that the culture industry would extend its reign of uniformity precisely by ensuring that ''something is provided for all so that none may escape.''[138] In this way, like Siebers, Eagleton sees postmodernism as desiring a utopian world of ''plurality, free play, plasticity, [and] open- endedness,'' but argues that it ''prematurely'' identifies this utopia with the present, creating a ''false utopianism . . . for which freedom exists in reading the world differently.''[139] The freedom thus afforded is false because it is essentially private. It is entirely possible for members of this supposedly ac- tive audience—who are never forced to depart from their essentially passive stance as consumers of music made for them, who never engage in a true gift-exchange by giving back their own representation of reality—to be ap- propriated by the industry at the same time that they appropriate its prod- ucts. Instead of a modernist abolition of meaning, postmodernism pursues a privatization of meaning, just as neoliberal capitalism proceeds to privatize all experience.

THE IMPASSE OF ANARCHIST POSTMODERNISM

Some might argue that all discussions about prescriptive aesthetics or poetics have been mooted by the pragmatist argument that, as Rita Felski suggests in Beyond Feminist Aesthetics, the radical or conservative effects of texts can be traced not to anything inherent in the texts themselves but to their reception by

[138] de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, xx-xxi; Adorno and Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, 123.

[139] Eagleton, The Illusions of Postmodernism (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 64-65.

> experience remains su- perficial; the passional story releases a surface tenseness, but there is no change in character, habit, or action.[9]

In short, we are sold the kind of kitsch representationalist aesthetic that, shorn of any critical function, justifies the status quo arrangements (the ''as usual,'' the ''routine,'' the ''habit,'' the ''norms'') to which the stereotyped plot invariably returns us; this indeed ''releases a surface tenseness,'' allow- ing us to ''cope'' with our miserable ''situation.''

Here, in a darkly Heideggerian fashion, the technique to which art is subjected retrieves one of the worst possibilities implicit in our nature as ''mimetic'' creatures, our ''tendency to run in a groove,'' to adapt ourselves to our surroundings, to imitate.[10] While making the festival culture that once sprang from community obsolete, modern ''popular culture'' thus resurrects one of its least attractive features: its pervasive conformism, that ''splendid fixity'' exemplified by such typical devices of folk aesthetics as the ''unvarying formula'' and the ''refrain.'' Just as ancient Egyptian art reflects and justifies the static composition of the ancient Egyptian class system, modern art reflects and justifies ''the passivity of people in contemporary society.''

But while commercial art is still harnessed for its ''power to find meaning and make sense'' of the world, it has been stripped of its power to help us to change the world, to do anything: instead, it relies on and reproduces that ''audience passivity'' that guarantees that ''they do not strongly or overtly react, nor do they artistically participate themselves . . . they dance to music but do not make it.''[11] Thus, the ''specialization'' of art has produced its own tau-

[9] Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 81-82.

[10] Michael Taussig, Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses (New York: Routledge, 1993), xv; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 204.

[11] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 174, 181, 218, italics mine; Creator Spirit Come 80-81.

munity of values and shared purpose, but art is no longer available for this purpose: in ''the kind of vicious circle that is familiar to radicals,'' it appears that ''an occasional poet can strengthen the sense of community if the sense of community is strong.''[6]

The problem of alienation, then, is larger than any particular artist or work of art: it is, properly speaking, a social problem, a dysfunctional cultural structure. On the one hand, Kropotkin complains, an elite or ''erudite'' art dependent on the ruling class for sponsorship, ''being chiefly for the rich . . . has too much specialised its ways of expression, so as to be understood by the few only''; on the other hand, as Goodman points out, popular art has decayed into the ''melancholy specialties'' of ''advertising and ballyhoo'' because of ''the disappearance of a popular audience for good work.''[7] Commercial culture is not only vitiated by its commercial function, but is inevitably conservative in its effects as well, for an audience that is subjected to a dreary, unaesthetic work regime and a social environment largely deprived of what Ivan Illich called ''conviviality'' craves consolation. Accordingly, so- called popular culture is largely an exercise in ''format,'' rote repetition of a formula:[8]

> Works of popular art have the following form: they present an important emotional situation, of love, danger, adventure, in a framework where everything else is as usual. The detailed routine of life, the posture and speech-habits of the actor (and of the audience), the norms of morality, the time-table of work, these things are not deranged by the plot; they are not newly assessed, criticized, X-rayed, devas- tated by the passional situation. Therefore the aesthetic

[6] Ibid., 77.

[7] Kropotkin, Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature, 299; Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 78-79.

[8] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 200-1.

audiences.[140] If radical readers are capable of discovering radical potentials within any text (and conservative readers likewise capable of reading any text as an affirmation of traditional values), then why bother asking writers to write one way or another? But this attempt to circumvent aesthetic debate falls prey to the same logical problems as the pragmatist subjectivisms of Richard Rorty and Stanley Fish, for it cannot be the case that just any text can have just any effect, or that readers are all-determining—otherwise, lacking any texts to inform and shape consciousness, there would be no radical or conservative readers to do the reading. We are thrust back into the old debate willy-nilly.

However, the desire to leave this long-contested terrain was understand- able. The conversation over aesthetics has gotten stuck in a groove, with generations of theorists doing little more than oscillating between the twin poles of the same old binaries. If readers' power does not provide us with a way out of the impasse, does this not return us to the old choice ''between an autonomous art which protests against society but remains elitist and ineffective,'' on the one hand, ''and the products of the mass media, which encourage identification and blur the distinction between art and life but with the loss of any critical dimension'' on the other[141]—or, even less promisingly, between an irredeemably compromised traditional aesthetic and the dead end of all avant-garde aesthetics, whether modernist or postmodern?

[140] Rita Felski, Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 157.

[141] Ibid., 181.

7. Reconstructing Anarchist Aesthetics

ANARCHY VERSUS DECADENCE

''UNLIKE THE MARXIST G. PLEKHANOV,'' WRITES SONN, ''THE ANARCHISTS NEVER elaborated a theory of decadence, at least not in the 1890s. The term in fact found no place in their rhetoric.'' On the contrary, ''writers who identified themselves as decadents also gave a positive valuation to anarchy.'' After all, all that decadence connotes—fragmentation, amoralism, self-indulgence, the anomie that Émile Durkheim observed in young men at that time—is compatible, as Matei Calinescu notes, with ''the unrestricted manifestation of aesthetic individualism, a style that has done away with traditional authoritarian requirements such as unity, hierarchy, [and] objectivity.'' Anarchists, by this logic, could not have had a critique of decadence because anarchy simply is decadence, nihilism, chaos, dissolution—''a rising of individuals . . . without regard to the arrangements that spring from it.''[1]

Or so the story goes. Is the legacy of anarchist discourse on the aesthetic merely assimilable to the basically individualist, decadent discourse of the avant-gardes? Was anarchism entirely identifiable with the practitioners of épater les bourgeois, and not at all with the philistines of both Right and Left who objected to l'art pour

[1] Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 297, 294; Matei Calinescu, Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 171; Stirner, Ego, 421.

tion, the saying of what is forbidden. Yet the basic context in which this play of forces transpires, in which the desires of the many are left to be represented or misrepresented by institutions run for the benefit of an elite few, is insupportable, an index of the basic problem that motivates modern and postmodern critiques of representation in the first place: the separation between art and society.

It is this separation that creates the intolerable situation Goodman de- scribes in his essays of the late 1940s: without a working relationship of ''mutual aid'' or gift exchange between themselves and their communities, poets are forced to create works that are ''combative and private,'' and the community is deprived of art's ''public functions.'' Worse yet, the gap once bridged by that ''Occasional Poetry'' or ''use-music'' that unites individual creativity with collective celebration (''weddings, mourning, rites and feasts, anniversaries'') is filled instead by commercialism:

> I am not a friend of advertising, but as a friend of art I must say that there is more inventive showmanship, in layout, calligraphy, musical setting, and almost in diction and syntax, dedicated to these stupid commodities, than poets dare to muster for the truths of the heart. These ads are our occasional poems, as the purchase and sale is our public occasion. It was interesting to see that even the last war . . . could not evoke anything so neat and shiny as the singing-commercial for Cresta Blanca Wine.[5]

The loss of the artist's community role is commensurate with (and intimately related to) the loss of community itself, an index of which is that commerce, i.e., private ''purchase and sale,'' is the only remaining ''public occasion.''

The fragmented society created by the reign of ''stupid commodities'' more than ever needs to be drawn into a functional com-

[5] Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 77, 76-78.

> café-concerts, the unliterary nonsense of paperback novels… They were supplied with cinema, rendered as stupid as possible, then boxing matches and bullfights. The people of the twentieth century, who are called ''sovereign,'' rediscover in their diseased hovels, where social diseases devour those whom war has spared, and in the circuses, the existence and the pleasures that were those of the Roman plebians: Panem et circenses![3]

For Rothen, the appearance of popular ''sovereignty'' in the sphere of popular culture is mere illusion: mass-produced kitsch is nothing more than a strategy of pacification. In a series of essays on cinema for La Revue Anarchiste written around the same time, Léo Claude offers a more balanced view of mass culture as a product of the interaction between audience desires and expectations, authorial agendas, and a spectrum of commercial imperatives.[4]

Certainly, in the play of forces between capital, whose project is certainly one of recuperating popular desires into capitalist values, and the popular audiences, who may selectively, if unconsciously, reward those productions that speak to their own unacknowledged wishes and frustrations, there is room for subversive representa-

[3] Rothen, ''Art,'' in Encyclopédie anarchiste, 143, translation mine.

[4] Léo Claude, ''Pour Prendre Langue,'' La Revue Anarchiste 1 (December 1929): 48. Rothen was joined in his suspicion of cinema by several of his anarchist contemporaries, such as Franz Pfemfert, who regarded it as ''soulless'' and ''fantasy-killing'' (''Das Kino als Erzieher,'' in Kino-Debatte: Literatur und Film, 1909-1929, ed. Anton Kaes, 61 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1978), translation mine), and Victor Roudine, who saw it as ''poisonous'' (''Le Cinéma calomniateur,'' Pelloutier.net: Histoire du syndicalisme revolutionnaire et de l'anarcho-syndicalisme, 17 November 2004, http://www.pelloutier.net/dossiers [accessed], translation mine); however, apart from the anarcho-modernist examples of Jean Cocteau and Luis Buñuel, there were many attempts to adapt film to social anarchist projects, particularly in revolutionary Spain—a subject for another book, not at all exhausted by Richard Porton's otherwise valuable Film and the Anarchist Imagination (New York: Verso, 1999).

l'art? In fact, the anarchist engagement with modernism is more complex than this. Weir concludes Anarchy and Culture with an expression of surprise at finding that a leading contemporary anarchist, Murray Bookchin, apprehends the present moment in culture as a time of ''cultural decadence'' whose signs include ''disillusionment,'' ''fragmentation,'' ''anomie,'' and ''loss of belief in progress,'' culminating in a ''post- modernist nihilism.'' Bookchin inveighs against ''the self-indulgent aesthetic vagaries'' of countercultural ''lifestyle anarchism,'' which seek ''emancipation . . . outside of history, in the realm of the subjective,'' perhaps even to such a degree that any objective reality is erased in favor of the subject and its private whims.[2] Likewise, the contemporary anarchist feminist Regina Cochrane criticizes ''the highly aestheticized individualism'' of current anticapitalist protests, an individualism ''embraced by both camp- and neo- pagan-oriented anarchafeminist activists'': ''Focusing on emotion, aesthet- ics, 'non-ordinary' consciousness, and even 'aristocratic sensibilities,' it rejects the struggle for democracy, picket line demonstrations, and revolution. Instead, it favours self-liberation—especially 'the right to party'—and temporary but frequent 'festive' uprisings. Life in the TAZ . . . is a continual 'rising up' that carries individuals from one protest to the next in search of 'peak experiences.' '' By drawing primarily ''middle-class individuals'' together in a transitory search for pleasure, to the exclusion of a more concentrated and sustained attempt at organizing around the needs and interests of less privileged people, postmodern anarchism creates a ''decadent, elitist, and ultimately depoliticized aesthetics.''[3]

Such a critique of individualist aesthetics as decadent is not at all a recent development in anarchism, but springs from traditions more than a century old. Where much of the recent scholarship

[2] Bookchin, Re-enchanting Humanity, 172-73, 180; Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 51, 53.

[3] Regina Cochrane, ''(Eco)Feminism as a 'Temporary Autonomous Zone'?'' Women & Environments International Magazine, no. 56/57 (Fall 2002): 25-26.

on anarchist modernism tends to reduce all anarchist discourse about aesthetics to an outgrowth of Stirner's egoism, this omits a considerable degree of dissensus and political difference. Allan Antliff argues that anarchist history presents us with ''a contested discursive field'' rather than a simple political identity; within this field, as Leighten notes, we can observe ''a constant stream of argumentative theorizing in the anarchist press and little reviews,'' in which modernist defenders of ''art for art's sake'' clash with the advocates of '' 'social' art.'' Even Sonn, contrary to his own argument, notes that ''the charge of decadence was leveled at the Symbolists from the left by proponents of l'art social''—for instance, Bernard Lazare, himself an anarchist and former member of Mallarmé's Symbolist circle.[4] It is eye-opening to find Lazare using the word ''decadent'' again and again in his pamphlet, L'Écrivain et l'Art Social (The Writer and Social Art), decrying the ''swamp'' of ''mystico-decadent'' ideas in which Symbolism had issued no less than the ''inferior forms of life'' catalogued by the naturalists, the ''libertine or obscene art of a decrepit society'' no less than the new social novel's focus on ''the scum of the earth.''[5] Lazare's contemporaries Paul Flaustier and Fernand Pelloutier inveigh against the ''syphilitic canker'' of Symbolist aesthetics and the ''debauchery'' of the aesthetes' delight in mystical subjectivism. Even Elisée Reclus, who elsewhere defends Zola's naturalism against the charge of decadence and makes friendly overtures to the Symbolists, attacks the immorality of forms of art that represent ''scenes of vice, and a thousand filthy things that it would have been simpler to leave in the dirt,'' citing Ruskin's notion that ''the beginning of art . . . consists in making the

[4] Alan Antliff, Anarchist Modernism, 10; Leighten, Re-Ordering the Universe, 50; Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 296.

[5] Bernard Lazare, L'Écrivain et l'art social (Béarn, France: Bibliotheque de l'art social, 1896), 28, 29, 16, 28, translation mine.

to fall to the level of that human beast that it would be on the eve of 1789 . . .[1]

It is hard not to be struck by how sharply this representation inverts the traditional narrative of art history, preserved in the very nomenclature Rothen is forced to use, in which the glories of Greece and Rome are succeeded by a ''night of the spirit'' or Dark Age, a mere interregnum or ''Middle Ages,'' followed at last by a rebirth or ''Renaissance'' of classical learning and a glorious Enlightenment. For an anarchist, the triumph of an ''erudite'' neoclassical culture means the gradual loss of a ''popular and collective'' folk culture and a growing estrangement between ''the people'' conceived of as nonartists (if not totally illiterate, then to some degree intellectually isolated) and a separate institution called ''art.'' Even the medieval mystery plays, Rothen argues, ''despite their religious character and ecclesiastical censorship . . . are essentially the product of popular inspiration,'' a populist influence visible in their heterogeneous combination of elements of the ''miracle plays'' and ''comic theater.'' This ''mélange des genres,'' which proved ''necessary'' to keep the audiences interested, resulted in the blending of the high material of Christian doctrine with ''farce pushed just to the edge of obscenity''—a subversive mingling of discourses that finally met with State repression in 1548.[2]

Practitioners of cultural studies would be quick to note the contradiction between Rothen's affirmation, here, of admixture and hybridity, his vision of multiple forces, both authoritarian and popular, converging to shape art, and his unilateral denunciation, elsewhere, of contemporary mass culture as an authoritarian trap:

> For a long time, to satisfy their need for art, the workers . . . have had no more than the degradation [abrutissement] of the cabaret, pompously called ''the salon of the poor'' by the demagogues, the shit of

[1] Rothen, ''Littérature,'' 1295, translation mine.

[2] Rothen, ''Théâtre,'' in Encyclopédie anarchiste, 2761, translation mine.

8. Aesthetic Production

THE PROBLEM OF ALIENATION

IN ROTHEN'S ESSAY ON ''LITTÉRATURE'' IN FAURE'S ENCYCLOPÉDIE ANARCHISTE, we find five centuries' worth of literary history described as follows: after some ''fifteen centuries'' of a poetics whose ''source and formation'' was ''both popular and collective,'' the Renaissance was to change things. For the popular thought resulting from the upheavals one hundred centuries of migrations from which Europe was born, it would substitute an erudite formation born of the stabilization [stabilisation] of Hindu, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Arab civilizations. In place of collective social life that integrated individualities into a single whole of thought and activity shaped by corporative spirit and solidarity, it established the individualist spirit and competitiveness that would divide men. Printed literature succeeded oral literature. Collective production, transmitted by wandering poets, would be exhausted, deprived of voice and renewal. Nothing would remain for the people, who were illiterate and cut off from the intellectual communion of men, but some inferior troubadours who could not elevate their souls, who could only abase through their vulgarity. Those who were somewhat talented would write books for the rich who could afford to buy them, if not read them. Much more so than in the Middle Ages, night would fall among the people, the night of the spirit into which it would be systematically plunged in order

people beautiful.''[6] We can find Kropotkin, too, inveighing against ''the art of our time'' for its supposed ''realism'' in treating such subjects as ''the suffocating filth of a sewer, the boudoir of a whore of high degree''—what he elsewhere calls ''the lowest aspects of life,'' a spectacle of ''degeneracy.'' Reviewing Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, he exclaims, ''there is certainly not in any literature such a collection of the most repulsive types of mankind—lunatics, half- lunatics, criminals in germ and in reality, in all possible gradations—as one finds in this novel''; he brands it a specimen of ''morbid literature,'' ''unnatural'' in its obsession with ''psychical disease'' and ''moral perversion.''[7]

Likewise, Voltairine de Cleyre, for all her fascination with the Gothic, writes with amused condescension of the ''vogue'' for ''fever-bred stories and sketches which deal with the abnormalities of men'': ''madmen explaining their own madness, perverted men analyzing their own perversions, anything, everything but sane and normal men… [We see] the curious paradox of the people of the most highly evolved scientific and mechanical age taking especial delight in psychic abnormalities and morbidities,—whereby the most utterly unreasonable fictive creation becomes the greatest center of curiosity and attraction to the children of Reason.''[8] This psychoanalysis of literary and artistic decadence is carried

[6] Flaustier, quoted in Hutton, Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground, 113; Fernand Pelloutier, ''L'Art et la Révolte,'' in Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicali- sme d'action directe, ed. Jacques Julliard, 509 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1971), translation mine; Reclus, letter to Amy Putnam-Jacoby, 2 May 1889, Anarchy Archives: An Online Research Center on the History and Theory of Anarchism, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/reclus/ishill/ishill259-324.html (accessed); Sonn, Anarchism and Cultural Politics, 191; Reclus, ''Art and the People,'' Anarchy Archives: An Online Research Center on the History and Theory of Anarchism, 5 May 1998, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/reclus/ishill/ishill325-330.html (accessed).

[7] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 272-73; Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1916), 86, 168.

[8] de Cleyre, Selected Works, 378, 380.

over into Edouard Rothen's entry on ''Littérature'' in Sebastien Faure's 1934 Encyclopédie anarchiste, in which he complains of the ''complete deterioration of style [deliquescence]'' resulting from Symbolism and ''the decadent schools,'' a discursive decay that only serves to prevent the formation of ''collective, popular, and human thought.'' Rothen sees the ''aristocratic and bourgeois literature'' of the post- 1848 period as an ideological justification of the ''feelings'' and ''view of life'' shared by the ''privileged,'' reflecting a certain ''restlessness'' felt by the members of this class ''in view of the uncertainty of a happiness illegitimately founded on the unhappiness of others.'' This class anxiety, Rothen explains, produces a ''tendency . . . to that hyper-analysis that is, as Barbusse has said, 'one of the present signs of artistic decadence.' '' Like Kropotkin and de Cleyre, Rothen sees decadent literature as a... ''morbid product'' of ''sick aesthetes,'' and ultimately of the moral corruption of the wealthy.[9] Even Herbert Read, chief promoter of Surrealism in England, can be heard to complain of the ''warped psychology'' of ''modern man,'' whose aesthetics display his ''worst disease,'' ''the one he creates out of his own isolation: uncriticized phantasies, personal symbols, private fetishes.''[10]

This defensive impulse to psychoanalyze new literary styles, to diagnose them as forms of quasi-physiological ''morbidity,'' stunted or diverted manifestations of an ''energy'' that should properly express itself in revolutionary action, is not confined to anarchist literary discourse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It carries over into George Woodcock's The Writer and Politics, in which he regards the dystopian works of Franz Kafka with a mixture of disapproval, admiration, and disappointment, seeing them as a token of the ''malady'' besetting ''many of our contemporary intellectuals'': an obsession with

[9] Edouard Rothen, ''Littérature,'' in Encyclopédie anarchiste, 1300, 1302, translation mine.

[10] Read, Poetry and Anarchism, 19.

THE LIMITS OF THE POLITICS OF STYLE

Aesthetic styles have political consequences; a style of representation is a kind of effective action-in-the-world, even when its effects are unforseen, unintended, or unwanted. Differences in the manner of representing things are practically, materially real in ways that belie the leveling claims of a supposedly reader-centered poetics and hermeneutics for which the text is simply an effect of the reader's interpretation. However, while stopping short of endorsing such facile dismissals of the politics of the text and its reality, we should give serious consideration to Felski's argument that those politics are at least partly the product of their interpretation by audiences. It is to this problem of audience reception, the social context of art, that we must turn next.

Province: The Moral Ambiguity of America (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 421; Paul Goodman and Percival Goodman, Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), 6, emphasis mine.

> people should die of hunger in India, while in America or Europe governments penalize farmers who ''over''-produce—this is a macabre farce, this is Grand Guignol in which the cadavres and the suffering are real, but this is not tragedy, there is nothing ineluctable here… When a neurotic repeats for the 14th time the same behaviour-pattern of failure, reproducing for himself and for those nearby the same kind of misfortune, helping this person get out of such a situation is to rid his or her life of grotesque farce, not tragedy; it is to allow the person finally to see the real problems of life and the tragic element they may contain—which the neurosis served in part to express but especially to mask.[92]

To apprehend dominated life not as a tragic, but as melodramatic, grotesque, farcical—this is to see the world through what Burke calls the ''comic frame,'' to represent historical evil as unnecessary ''error,'' as a ludicrous failure, rather than as the tragic enactment of necessity.[93] An anarchist aesthetic sees human beings, under these contingent conditions, not as the self- possessed masters of their own fate, willfully pursuing their own and others' ruin, but as ''confused'' and ''trapped,'' displaying ''bafflement'' and ''spectacular folly''; from this perspective, one is moved to exclaim, not ''Es muss sein'' (''It must be!''), but ''What stupid fuck-ups men are!'' Only this cannot be flattened into a depiction of humanity as afflicted by ''incurable stupidity,'' as the brothers Goodman remind us—else one arrives again at the ''tragic frame,'' Baginski's disciplinary mirror.[94]

[92] Cornelius Castoriadis, The Imaginary Institution of Society, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 94.

[93] Burke, Attitudes Toward History, 172.

[94] Goodman and Goodman, 6; Kundera, Unbearable Lightness, 32; Goodman, People or Personnel: Decentralizing and the Mixed Systems and Like a Conquered

depictions of ''tragedy and evil'' to the exclusion of any ''living quality,'' an ''insufficient faith in man.''[11]

We can draw a straight line from this to the 1991 essay titled ''Amoral Responsibility'' in which Peter Lamborn Wilson, usually associated (under his nom de plume, Hakim Bey) with the antirepresentationalist aesthetic of individualist anarchism, nevertheless expresses a social anarchist vision of art. Wilson insists that every text, no matter how fictional, inevitably offers a ''representation of life,'' and that its politics are to be found here. It is important to note that this concept of representation is very different from Zola's: where Zola wished to pretend to neutrally record what happens, Wilson insists on the fictive nature of fiction. The power of the writer to shape and condition even the most referential reportage of reality is considerable, and confers on the writer a corresponding ''responsibility'' for how the text represents life and its possibilities. On this basis, Wilson offers a critique of commercial ''horror'' fiction from Victorian times to the present that mirrors, in many ways, Lazare's critique of Naturalist fiction. He denounces it as ''a literature of morbid cultures,'' ''flowering in decadence,'' ''denying all moral and social codes'' (and ultimately all meaning), a literature that represents life solely in terms of ''fear and disgust,'' ''reduces human beings to sacs of blood and filth,'' and ultimately ''leaves the reader . . . holding the bag. The bag of slime, the bag of sexual secretions.'' The ironic use of such an iconography of degradation by postmodern filmmakers like David Lynch, Wilson argues, only deepens the bad-faith cynicism of horror.[12] Again, contemporary culture is lambasted for its perceived combination of pessimism and immorality, which is attributed to a kind of psychic disease, a pathology of aes- thetic will.

[11] Rothen, ''Littérature,'' 1302; Woodcock, The Writer and Politics (London: Porcupine Press, 1948), 183-84.

[12] Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 54, 55-56, 57.

So frequent and vehement are such statements that one is compelled to ask: why are these anarchists—whom one would think ready to champion almost any sort of radical innovation or change, in art or anywhere else—so outraged, vexed, shocked, and scandalized by all manner of aesthetic and poetic innovators, from Dostoyevsky to Lynch? Is their outrage symptomatic of a rationalist refusal to see empirical reality, a will to substitute kitsch representations (idealized, sentimental, politically correct) for real perceptions? This interpretation would nicely complement the dominant interpretation of anarchism—recently revived in Tom Stoppard's drama, The Coast of Utopia—that views it not as a social practice but as an impractical theory: a utopian doctrine founded on a naïve essentialism, the assumption that people are more ''rational,'' ''compassionate,'' and ''gregarious'' than they really are.[13] This version of anarchism is merely the idealistic inverse of the nihilism Wilson attacks; on the terms of Stoppard's psychoanalysis, it stems from an unwillingness to accept the disappointments of life in an imperfect world, or in the language of Lynch's film Blue Velvet, from the wish to deny the existence of ''people like Frank''—the irrational, violent, and cruel.

As we have already noted, this is a diagnosis that social anarchists have consistently refused. Rather than seeing themselves as perfectionists or idealists, they have insisted, in the words of one editorialist in an 1888 article for the London anarchist journal Freedom, that their premise is precisely the ''imperfections of human nature'':

When we hear men saying that the Anarchists imagine men much better than they really are, we merely wonder how intelligent people can repeat that nonsense. Do we not say continually that the only means of rendering men less rapacious and egotistic, less ambitious and less slavish at the same time, is to eliminate those conditions which favour the growth of egotism and rapac-

[13] Koch, ''Poststructuralism,'' 328.

An anarchist utopia cannot be statically perfect, for this constitutes it as ou- topia, a ''no place,'' ontologically removed from the domain of all possible experience; such ou-topias deny from the outset the very possibility that they seek to assert. Instead, what is wanted is eu-topias, ''good places''— heterogeneous processes. They must be shot through with impurities in order that they may invite us to inhabit them: impurity signals that a better world is capable of admitting even such corrupt and miserable creatures as ourselves. In such worlds, suffering and sadness must at least exist as memory (as, indeed, they do for the freed slaves of Toni Morrison's Beloved)—or else we sad and suffering subjects can feel no relation to them. Only a utopia that recalls pain—specifically, the pain of injustice—can have a beginning; only a utopia that has a beginning, a root in the historical world, is something other than a timeless heaven.

Ursula K. LeGuin's The Dispossessed, to its credit, attempts to meet this challenge, giving us access to ''an ambiguous utopia'' (in the words of its subtitle) that is nonetheless keenly tangible, and at times painfully sweet. It is the presence of anguish amid sweetness that distinguishes an authentic utopianism from what Castoriadis calls the ''chimera of wanting to eliminate the tragic side of human existence.'' In this sense, perhaps the inhabitants of LeGuin's anarchist world, Annares, have more personality than we do, for in their freedom and equality, they love and hate, they are frustrated or lonely at times, they experience sickness or hunger or jealousy as we do— only none of these is simply an irremediable outcome of the social structure. The tragic still exists, as does the possibility of a general slide back into authoritarianism (a key moment of ambiguity); rather, what is eliminated is

> the melodramatic aspect, the false tragedy—the one in which catastrophe arrives without necessity, in which everything could have been otherwise if only the characters had done this or had done that. That

path back to sensuous awareness and practice'' away from its own ''dream'' existence; rather, as Burke reminds us, art is an effective material practice insofar as it has effects on us: ''poetry contributes to the formation of attitudes, and thus to the determining of conduct.''[89] Art as ''a call to action,'' for Landauer, is mimetic, in the manner suggested by his reading of Goethe's Campagne in Frankreich: ''the beautiful is when we see the principles of life in their greatest activity and perfection, whereby we, incited to reproduction, feel ourselves equally alive and thrust into a state of most powerful activity.'' In imitating art, we recreate ourselves.[90] Perhaps in this sense a certain metafictionality would be appropriate to anarchist works of art, in that we can be made to recognize and feel our own activity as readers, our engagement in a world-building project— even a utopian project.

It is not simply true that ''every fiction is a utopian fiction,'' as Wilson writes, since not all fiction so fuses prescription with description, the actual and the good.[91] However, what Wilson gestures toward here is perhaps a certain implicitly utopian dimension within all fictions: namely, their inevitable value-ladenness, and the degree to which they help us to sensuously imagine (or hinder us from imagining) a world constituted by those values, and the kinds of acts and facts that would tend to constitute it. Such a utopian dimension can only be made fully manifest in works that do not simply collapse the possible into the actual, and that do not exclude pain and evil.

[89] Lucas, ''Guerilla Theater,'' 36, 30; Burke, Counter-Statement, 163.

[90] Charles B. Maurer, Call to Revolution: The Mystical Anarchism of Gustav Landauer (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1971), 145; Goethe, quoted in Maurer, Call to Revo- lution, 145. I find interesting, along these lines, the recent argument made by Elaine Scarry, who despite her insistence that a certain kind of experience, for instance, of pain, ''resists representation,'' finds a strong connection between mimetic ''beauty'' and social ''justice'' (Scarry, Resisting Representation [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994], 3; On Beauty and Being Just [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999]).

[91] Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 55.

ity, of slavishness and ambition? The only difference between us and those who make the above objection is this: We do not, like them, exaggerate the inferior instincts of the masses, and do not complacently shut our eyes to the same bad instincts in the upper classes. We maintain that both rulers and ruled are spoiled by authority; both exploiters and exploited are spoiled by exploitation; while our opponents seem to admit that there is a kind of salt of the earth—the rulers, the employers, the leaders—who, happily enough, prevent those bad men—the ruled, the exploited, the led—from becoming still worse than they are.

There is the difference, and a very important one. We admit the imperfections of human nature, but we make no exception for the rulers. They make it, although sometimes unconsciously, and because we make no such exception, they say that we are dreamers, ''unpractical men.''

We can make two observations about this retort. First of all, it is important to note the anarchist representation of ''the masses'' that appears here: it is characterized by ''egotism,'' ''rapacity,'' ''slavishness,'' etc.—the very litany of human degradation that Lazare and other social anarchists seem to reject in its literary manifestations. The speaker here does not deny the ''realism'' of this ugly representation of the human, and even proposes to deepen and widen it. This is difficult to accommodate within the rubric of the explanation that social anarchism is an aesthetics of good-human-naturism; at the very least, a more complex explanation is required.

A second social anarchist response to the diagnosis of idealism is a counter-diagnosis. It is ideologically convenient for those who wish to maintain the status quo to assume that anyone proposing to radically transform society must be out of tune with ''reality''; in fact, such an assumption merely unconsciously hypostasizes whatever conditions happen to be prevailing at the time—mere historical contingency—into ''reality'' per se, and therefore into natural necessity. The ruling ideologies that prevail in any dominatory

social order—or, in Voltairine de Cleyre's terms, the ''Dominant Ideas''[14] —surreptitiously substitute a ''must be'' for every ''is,'' and turn every ''must be'' into an ''ought to be.'' It is precisely this ideological slide from description to prescription that anarchist critics from Proudhon to Wilson have always called attention to, and it is in terms of this opposition that they have encountered works of radical ugliness as manifestations of a conservative aesthetic.

This is the animating idea behind Wilson's attack on horror fiction.

''Every fiction,'' Wilson asserts, ''prescribes as well as (or more than) it describes.'' How so? Anarchism, like Marxism, takes some of its inspiration from the Hegelian and Spinozan rejections of the fact/value binary, and unlike Marxism, also refuses the form/matter binary. Thus, as Peter Marshall explains, anarchists posit ''no unbridgeable gap'' between representations of the actual, the possible, and the desired, ''since the former contain the moral and practical potential of the latter.'' What must be avoided is collapsing the productive tension of this dialectic between is, could, and should into the error of ''maintaining that because something is, it follows that it ought to be.''[15] Wilson sees a strong tendency in fictional representation to reduce values to facts, or as Kropotkin put it, to reify contingent ''facts'' into eternal ''laws.'' Because a fiction presents itself as a microcosm, ''a kind of world,'' it posits at least an implicit claim to represent the macrocosm, i.e., the world.

As LeGuin puts it, ''an artist'' not only ''makes the world her world,'' appropriating it representationally, but reciprocally ''makes her world the world,'' a representation of the whole: ''the

[14] de Cleyre, Selected Works, 79.

[15] Peter Marshall, ''Human Nature and Anarchism,'' in For Anarchism : History, Theory, and Practice ed. David Goodway (New York: Routledge, 1989), 138, 144.

vative in this way. However, representation can take other forms, fulfilling other functions. Eco describes a third kind of narrative — more an antigenre or an intergenre than a genre of its own—that is both comic and tragic at once, while presenting something that is neither comedy nor tragedy. This both-and/neither-nor entity, which he provisionally labels ''humor,'' and which others might call ''tragicomic,'' is defined via Pirandello's comparison of Cervantes' protagonist, Quixote, to Ariosto's Astolfo: ''Astolfo arriving on the moon riding a fabled hippogriff and, at nightfall, seeking a hotel as if he were a commercial traveler, is comic,'' Eco explains, ''but not Don Quixote, because we realize that his battle with the windmills reproduces the illusion of Cervantes, who fought and lost a limb and suffered imprisonment for his illusions of glory.''[87] Cervantes does not allow us to completely distance ourselves from Quixote, pulling us into tragic identification with him, but at the same time undercuts this identification with absurdity. Quixote provokes laughter, but there is a painful edge to this laughter, in part because he is not merely breaking rules, but seeking to uphold feudal rules that have ceased to have any purchase on the post-feudal world, inflexibly interpreting everything by a law that does not change. In this sense, the conservative who reads well cannot disown him without injury or identify with him without shame. Such a narrative does indeed call things into question, as Kundera suggests,[88] but it can do more than sustain mod- ernist ambiguity or deconstructive hesitation: it can set cognitive dissonance to work in the service of a critical dialectic that leads back to the world of ethics, the world of practice.

For it is back to the world of practice that radical art can and should call us. This is not to say, as does Lucas, that art is either a mimetic ''illusory form'' that is ''ineffective in reality,'' or at best merely ''a prop'' defined by its ''purpose,'' which is ''to map the

[87] Eco, Travels in Hyperreality, 276.

[88] Kundera, The Art of the Novel, 18.

''The comic seems to belong to the people, liberating, subversive, because it gives license to violate the rule. But it gives such license precisely to those who have so absorbed the rule that they also presume it is inviolable. The rule violated by the comic is so acknowledged that there is no need to reaffirm it. That is why carnival can take place only once a year… Carnival comic, the moment of transgression, can exist only if a background of unquestioned observance exists.''[85] Both tragedy and comedy, Eco argues, are fundamentally conservative genres, exploring breaches of the social ''rule,'' whether via terror or laughter, only in order to reaffirm the naturalness, the rationality, the rightness of the rules. This would be in keeping with the speculations of scholars such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Kenneth Burke, and James Redfield, for whom the central ''social function of art'' is to smooth over the ''contradiction'' implicit within the rules that constitute a given society—hence the central role of ''conflict'' in narrative: it is not that narrative per se requires a crisis as the occasion for drama, but that social crises require dramatic resolution (e.g., the Burkean ''ritual'' cycle of guilt, scapegoating, and purification). Hence, Redfield argues, ''the poet investigates the norm in situations and in relation to characters where the norm implies dysfunction—situations in which and characters to whom the norm fails to prescribe the proper end or to furnish the necessary means.''[86] In this general description, we can see the primordial precursor of the circular kitsch narrative that always returns things to a status quo ante framed as natural and unquestionable.

Here we seem to have come back to Stirner's critique of comedy (and, by extension, of all art) as the defense of the religious ideal by other means. If all representation were necessarily comic or tragic, then perhaps representation would be intrinsically conser-

[85] Ibid., 275.

[86] James Redfield, Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 82, 166.

work of art seems to contain the whole, and to imply eternity.''[16] Fiction invites generalization: the fictional text typically presents us with particulars (the story of a person in a place at a time) but at the same time invites us to think of these particulars as tokens of something larger. That is to say, a fiction embodies ''a worldview,'' a ''view of what life 'really' is—or should be.'' The radical ugliness of horror fiction, its tendency to represent ''life'' in terms of an abbreviated vocabulary of suffering and nausea, evokes a worldview for which ''sensuality connects only to disgust.'' Instead of projecting a critique of the negativity present in life as it is constituted here and now, it expresses a universal loathing for life in general: ''Life, love, pleasure—all is death, all is shit and disease.''

Wilson suggests, in other words, that the typical horror text is a secular revision of Gnosticism, with its postulation of the material creation as the work of an evil Demiurge, or in terms of Nietzsche's psychology, a form of nihilism. In short, ''by its very nature,'' this sort of writing is ''politically reactionary.''[17]

Thus, for Woodcock, even the ''honest horror'' of novels like Arthur Koestler's Darkness at Noon, which documents the barbarity of the Stalinist purges with ''remarkably destructive clarity,'' nonetheless reproduce the ''state of mind''—with an implicit pun on the word state—''which produces the evils they regard with such honest horror.'' Paul Goodman, too, asserts that ''where the imagination is bound to the actuality, the world is a prison even without bars'': the utopianism of the pleasure principle is chained to a repressive reality principle.[18]

[16] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 179; Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 54; Ursula K. LeGuin, Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places (New York: Grove Press, 1989), 47.

[17] Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 54-55, 56.

[18] Woodcock, The Writer and Politics, 183-84; Goodman, Utopian Essays, 126.

But to attribute to the imagination a certain degree of autonomy from actuality is not to repudiate reality. When Proudhon and Kropotkin advocated a mimetic practice of ''realistic description'' in the service of an ''idealistic aim'' they did not merely ask artists to pretend that historical reality is already a utopian ideality.[19] Their respect for historical reality, in all its concrete particularity and material detail, is evident. Indeed, Bakunin's polemic against the pretensions of Marxian ''science'' in God and the State reproaches it precisely for its will to forget the concrete particulars of historical reality, ''the living and suffering materials of this history,'' in favor of lifeless ''abstractions''; conversely, Bakunin valorizes the potential of ''art'' to ''excite in our imagination the memory and sentiment of life'': for while it is peculiarly concerned also with general types and general situations . . . art in a certain sense individualizes the types and situations which it conceives; by means of the individualities without flesh and bone, and consequently permanent and immortal, which it has the power to create, it recalls to our minds the living, real individualities which appear and disappear under our eyes. Art, then, is as it were the return of abstraction to life.''[20] Proudhon, who wrote Du Principe de l'Art largely as a defense of the work of his friend Gustave Courbet, urged other artists to join Courbet in depicting human beings ''in the truth of their nature . . . without artificial poses''; Kropotkin, too, had called on ''poets, painters, sculptors, musicians'' to ''show the people how hideous is their actual life''—an ''actual life'' that includes ''people dying of hunger . . . corpses piled up in these mines . . . [and] mutilated bodies lying in heaps on the barricades.''[21]

[19] Kropotkin, Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature, 86.

[20] Bakunin, God and the State, 56-57, 61.

[21] Proudhon, quoted in Paul B. Crapo, ''The Anarchist as Critic: P.-J. Proudhon's Criticism of Literature and Art,'' The Michigan Academician 13, no. 4 (Spring 1981): 464, translation mine; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 273, 278.

classical aesthetics specifies that tragedy must be the story of ''the downfall of a person of noble condition, neither too wicked nor too good, for whom we can in any case feel sympathy, and at his violation of the moral or religious code . . . feel pity for his fate and terror at the suffering that will strike him.'' In the case of classical comedy, however, we are witness to ''the violation of a rule committed by a person of lower degree . . . toward whom we feel a sense of superiority, so that we do not identify ourselves with his downfall.''[82] In the modern period, this comic protagonist mutates: no longer restricted to the class-coded ''person of lower degree,'' populist comedy attacks the high and brings them low. ''The man who kills a sovereign,'' observes Reclus, is thereby ''doing him the honour to take him as the representative of a whole society''; the true ''regicide'' is the playwright who has us ''laughing at the Grand Duchess or General Boum,'' demonstrating concretely that the ''political power'' on which their real-life counterparts depend ''is a worm eaten institution,'' that ''the universal respect which gave it worth has disappeared'' so that what is left is ''nothing but an external scaffolding, the edifice itself has ceased to exist.''[83]

Perhaps the ultimate extension of this regicidal comedy is Jarry's anarchic monarch, King Ubu. Nevertheless, comedy entails mockery of someone with whom one disidentifies, so that ''in the violation of a rule by a character so different from us we can not only feel the security of our impunity but also . . . allow ourselves the vicarious pleasure of a transgression that offends a rule we have secretly wanted to violate, but without risk.''[84] Drawing on these genre definitions, Eco reflects on the limitations of Bakhtin's privileged aesthetic category, the basically comical ''carnivalesque'':

[82] Umberto Eco, Travels in Hyperreality, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 270.

[83] Reclus, ''Evolution and Revolution.''

[84] Eco, Travels in Hyperreality, 270-71.

rather traditional ones: women and the Vietnamese are both constantly figured as uncomprehending or incomprehensible, pushed outside of the circle of solidarity created by the soldiers' ritual of storytelling, marginalized and omitted from the frame.[80] To the extent that this takes effect for readers—which I have also witnessed among students discussing the novel—The Things They Carried develops into another version of the dominant American postwar narrative of Vietnam, which Pat Aufderheide dubs the ''noble grunt'' genre, in which the war is not something American military power did to the Vietnamese people, but something that happened to the American soldiers whose individual stories we are to listen to. The telling of war stories becomes therapeutic, recuperative.[81]

Still, O'Brien's use of a reflexive realism to entice readers into a more epistemically and politically challenging critique of representation demon- strates some of the possibilities, and it illustrates the kind of connection I would like to articulate between an anarchist aesthetic, on the one hand, and an anarchist hermeneutic, on the other. The aesthetic process of seduction and surprise should trigger the hermeneutic process that de Cleyre describes as ''double reading,'' in which an initial state of openness, receptivity, and identification is followed by cognitive, analytical, critical consciousness.

If anarchist aesthetics require a certain dialectic of identification and dis- identification, it is important to consider how existing aesthetic genres approach these questions. The tragic drama that Baginski critiques emphasizes identification, as Eco points out:

[80] Lorrie N. Smith, '' 'The Things Men Do': The Gendered Subtext in Tim O'Brien's Es- quire Stories,'' Critique 36, no. 1 (Fall 1994): 16-17.

[81] Pat Aufderheide, ''Vietnam: Good Soldiers'' in Seeing Through Movies, ed. Mark Crispin Miller (New York: Pantheon, 1990), 82, 111. Recently, in the wake of the reelection of George W. Bush, O'Brien himself has confessed to feeling ''as if, despite the efforts of writers like Larry Heinemann, Michael Herr, and myself, we've lost the battle . . . the lessons [of Vietnam] have not stuck'' (''Vietnam and Iraq,'' presentation at Valparaiso University, February 16, 2005). Perhaps the very effort to remember has been recuperated in the service of forgetting.

Neither do social anarchists necessarily assume that aesthetic mimesis elicits a simple mimetic response from the reader. Although Wilson questions the distinction between description and prescription in representation, he does not presume that everything that a fiction presents is automatically represented as good or desirable and subsequently represented by the receptive reader via action in the world; nothing is that simple. However, it cannot be denied that fictional representations have a ''real effect in the real world'': they can and do ''change peoples' perception'' of things.[22]

This leaves open the question, however, of exactly how art can represent life in its actual condition—which is, in no small part, a violent condition— without at the same time representing this violence as intrinsic to ''the human condition.'' As Read puts it, ''If we are to measure the dominion of force [in Simone Weil's phrase], must we not in the very process depict it?

. . . Any avoidance of acts of violence would be arbitrary, and falsify the truthful relation of art to life. The problem is to determine the relationship that should subsist between art and action, or, to make the problem more precise, between art and violence.''[23] The answer to this question about ''the relationship that should subsist between art and action,'' for Wilson, is not to assume that every depiction of violence or grotesquery in ''art'' automatically prescribes aggression or mutilation as ''action'': rather than concluding that writers should ''give up dealing with violence and hatred as fictional subjects and write only scripts for Disney films,'' he outlines ''another possibility.''[24]

[22] Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 55.

[23] Read, The Forms of Things Unknown, 186.

[24] Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 56.

ANARCHIST ONTOLOGY, ANARCHIST AESTHETICS

The social anarchists do not ask art to simply map the ideal onto the real, or to take the ideal for the real; rather, they propose that the ideal be discovered within the real, as a moment of reality. This goes beyond merely asking art to preach a social gospel, beyond ''dull moralisation,'' as Kropotkin called it; it asks for a complex, dialectical interplay between the imperatives of realistic reflection and idealistic persuasion. This is the sense in which Woodcock regards Arthur Koestler as a ''brilliant journalist of fiction'' in speaking truth about the corruption and debasement of the actual world, but contrasts him critically with ''the constructive artist,'' for in a work of ''constructive'' art, ''some living quality can be apprehended growing out of the ruins of tragedy and evil.'' This ''living quality,'' the ''seed beneath the snow,'' as Colin Ward puts it, is what this type of anarchist reader looks for in the text no less than in life.[25] Thus, as Eugene D. Lunn paraphrases Gustav Landauer, while art ''cannot be viewed as an autonomous activity,'' detached from all social reality, ''the purpose of art should not be the mere representation of reality.'' For an idealist like Landauer, a naturalist work like Hauptmann's Die Weber, dedicated to the accurate representation of the actual world, can only confirm the actual to which it refers, not challenge or transcend it.[26] Rather than naturalism, what Proudhon and Kropotkin propose is an aesthetic premised on the reciprocal, dialectical relationship between actuality, potentiality, and reality. To mistake the actual for the real is to mistake a part for the whole, and therefore to be mistaken indeed; it is quite literally to reify the status quo. The error of which anarchists are accused—that of taking the potential for the actual—is

[25] Kropotkin, Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature, 86; Woodcock, The Writer and Politics, 183, italics mine; Ward, Anarchy In Action (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973), 22.

[26] Lunn, Prophet of Community, 44-45, emphasis mine.

act of violence it bears witness—in order to pull the rug out from under them, to call their attention to the inescapable mediation of textuality, the limits of representation. O'Brien offers his postwar American audience what seems to be a straightforwardly realistic narrative of the Vietnam War, with all the emotional authority that a veteran's firsthand account commands for that audience, in order to induce a receptive state of listening, an openness to experience, before it systematically undoes all of its major premises: ''I'm forty-three years old, true, and I'm a writer now, and a long time ago I walked through Quang Ngai Province as a foot soldier.

. . . Almost everything else is invented.'' The reader is seduced into identification with the suffering narrator, only to find this identity shaken and called into question: the booby-trapped or self-destroying story ''embarasses'' us into a more difficult act of imagination by catching us in our most self-deceptive moment, in our wish to appropriate the disorder and terror of a body in pain to our project of making a tidy sense of order, selfhood, and historical meaning. However, once having been pulled in, we find ourselves unable to detach ourselves from the narrative so easily: ''you can tell a true war story,'' as O'Brien writes, ''by the way it never seems to end.''[79] Instead, we are left with a knowledge of our own complicity in the effort to forget the unaccept- able or unpresentable in history, an effort disguised as the Stoic remem- brance of honorable sacrifice. Rather than writing off the unpresentable as unrepresentable and therefore inaccessible, however, the novel charges us with a responsibility for striving to imagine the unimaginable.

Or so it would seem. In fact, O'Brien's use of traumatic authority is at times abusive, or at least self-defeating. As Lorrie N. Smith points out, the novel's repeated gesture of destroying its own closure, gesturing toward endlessness or limitlessness, obscures the degree to which it reinscribes firm boundaries and limits, even

[79] Tim O'Brien, The Things They Carried (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 203, 77, 83.

We are not assaulted by a closed, nonrepresentational formal exercise that refuses us entrance, nor are we soothed by a conventional representation that affirms what we already know; instead, we are seduced into a meditation on the actual, the necessary, the impossible, and—the missing term in this series—the possible. Through se-duction, Magritte achieves surprise, pulling us away (-ducto) from our supposed hold (-prehensum) on things: he draws us in before blowing our minds.

This effect of surprise, wonder, astonishment, can also be performed in the mode of trauma: it can be, as Ben Marcus writes, not only an ''art of making life less believable''—that is to say, the particular form of life that we passively receive from our society—but also ''the calculated use of language, not to alarm but to do full harm to our busy minds and properly dispose our listeners to a pain they have never dreamed of.''[77] That is, it can get around our habitual defenses, that ''accustomed'' or mimetically dulled consciousness, built from a repetitive ''stereotyped use of language,'' which is ''so fearful of any feeling that might work a change that it freezes against giving in to unsafeguarded experience.'' Against these centripetal forces, a radical art seeks not simply to épater les bourgeoises, to ''to confuse, confound, bewilder, piss off, and generally blow the fuses of ordinary citizens,'' as McCaffery has it, but ''to find at just what point the freezing occurs and to sensitize that point.''[78] It finds this point, as a surgeon might, not via a crude assault, but through a subtler exploration.

I have seen this kind of effect demonstrated by Tim O'Brien's The Things They Carried, which almost unfailingly uses the appeal of verisimilitude and immediacy—the ''true war story,'' the testimonial writing whose right to speak is so identified with the suffering body that to question it would seem like a repetition of the

[77] Ben Marcus, The Age of Wire and String (Narmal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), 78.

[78] Goodman, Creator Spirit Come!, 85.

equally an error from the standpoint of the dialectic; as Bookchin puts it elsewhere, ''even in the seemingly most subjective projections of speculative reason . . . the 'what- should-be,' is anchored in a continuum that emerges from an objective potentiality, or 'what-is.' ''[27] Mere potentiality, unanchored to the actual, divorced from the material matrix of possibilities produced by historical development, is unreal in its ephemerality—only an ''abstract universal,'' in Hegel's terminology, rather than a ''concrete universal''—and images representing such phantom potentials will produce only escapism (moreover, an escapism that, as Bakunin noted in the case of the French romantic poets, complements and even justifies the most ruthlessly pragmatic and materialistic forms of brutality).[28]

This balancing of the potential and the actual, the subjective and the objective, is paramount for social anarchist aesthetics. Goodman warns not only against binding imagination to actuality, but against severing the one from the other, against ''the pathology of living too much in the world of speech.'' The seeming freedom of pure subjective idealism, the refusal of any truth other than internal truth, is in fact only a solipsistic slavery-in- freedom, for like Bakunin, Goodman regards freedom as a social condition, to be found only in community with others. This community can only be rooted in a shared experience of the shared ecological reality in which it is embedded; solipsistic dreaming, even in the form of a rêve à deux or ''shared psychosis,'' is not enough. Both Bakunin and Goodman thus regard the social as situated in, though never identical to, the natural, the material universe and its concreteness, which is not the same as our representations: the world of first nature still grounds us, interrupting our monologues, giving us the reality principle in the form of error, ''facts and failures.'' When we shelter ourselves too thoroughly from the world, we trap ourselves in ''the box of panlogism,'' the state in which ''everything

[27] Bookchin, ''Philosophical Naturalism.''

[28] Bakunin, God and the State, 80-81.

can be made up, [and] finally nothing is given,'' so that there are no errors, no gaps or differences between signs and things—and no freedom either.[29] So far does Bookchin go in countering Bey's subjective idealism that one might think his social anarchism entirely wedded to a materialist ontology. However, as Kingsley Widmer might caution, this would be to mistake countering, a maneuver, for a dogma, a fixed position. The point is not to deny that ideas and signs are part of the real; even Bakunin, in his bold declaration at the outset of God and the State that ''undoubtedly the idealists are wrong and the materialists right,'' modulates this to say that the idealists are wrong in descending from the ''ideal'' to the ''material'' rather than the other way around, and he insists that ''the negation'' of the existing material injustices that should occupy revolutionary thought, the overturning of material conditions that is the destination of revolutionary action, ''must be . . . ideal.''[30] The only accurate or even adequate accounts of reality, from an anarchist standpoint, are those that apprehend it as perpetually moving, changing, developing and transforming itself from within, actualizing some potentialities, leaving others unactualized. A way of seeing that ''imagines what might be, taking account of what is,'' would provide a way toward the radical transformation of society.[31]

It is to the potentialities dormant inside the real that an anarchist aesthetics directs us.

Conservative ideology, on the contrary, would consist, from a dialectical standpoint, in perceiving reality as simply self-identical. The mind-set that declares that things are what they are and that

[29] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 81-82. I am reminded here of Ellen Spolsky's suggestion that the ''gaps in nature,'' the slippages or misfits between words and things, are what allow and indeed ultimately force us to be creative, not ''merely adapting to culture'' but actively reshaping it (Gaps In Nature: Literary Interpretation and the Modular Mind [Albany: SUNY Press, 1993], 205-6).

[30] Bakunin, God and the State, 9, 48.

[31] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 241.

is not only the capacity to feel another's pain, but the ability to anticipate, and so to desire, the other per- son's pleasure. The seductive text is nonetheless ''didactic,'' purposive: it instructs by delighting.[75] As such, it draws on what is on the other side of alienation—the infinite fascination of a world that has lost its banal familiar- ity. It is in terms of this sensation of ''profound interest'' and ''excitement'' that Read attempts to define his appeal to sensuous ''play'' and imaginative ''subjectivity'' in opposition to Marxist objectivism and productivism:

> standing . . . on the edge of the abyss . . . [one] surveys the scene, the little speck of protoplasm which is man, the universe, finite or infinite, on which he finds himself, and, if he thinks of the universe as finite, the dreaded gulf of nothingness beyond... He sees Fire and Air, Earth and Water, elementary qualities giving birth to all sorts of contrarieties—hot-cold, dry-moist, heavy-light, hard-soft, viscous-brittle, rough-smooth, coarse-fine—sees these combining and inter- acting and producing worlds and life upon these worlds, and is lost in wonder.[76]

This sense of wonder, this ecstasy or boggling of the imagination, is the kind of feeling evoked by Magritte's apple, which visually seduces us with its trompe-l'oeil waxy surface, bewitching our eyes with its dappled red-and- green skin, its volume, its palpable weight, only to disenchant our eyes at a second turn, to reveal that its apparent actuality, even its seeming necessity, is in fact an impossibility: it is an apple that has replaced a man's head, or fills an entire room, or that bears the caption, ''Ceci n'est pas un pomme.''

[75] Ibid., 57.

[76] Read, ''Existentialism, Marxism and Anarchism,'' in The Essential Works of Anarchism, ed. Marshall Shatz, 530-31 (New York: Bantam Books, 1971).

it cannot be radical for anyone (except perhaps the filmmakers). Some kind of empathetic response is wanted after all.

Along these lines, Wilson also arraigns the ''pornographic effect'' of fiction in the horror genre, from Bram Stoker to Stephen King, which encourages us to identify not only with repressive ''heroes'' (e.g., the ''priests and cops'' whose function it is to police the boundaries of the ''normal'' world) but also with equally repressive monsters (e.g., ''rippers, slashers, toothed vaginas . . . those who cannot caress without a razor, who cannot desire without desiring someone else's misery''), thereby combining a certain expression of ''sexuality,'' even a sublimated ''masturbation-fantasy,'' with self- punishing ''body-hatred'' and ''sexual disgust.'' ''In the Nietzschean sense,'' finally, ''Horror is anti-life,'' a product of ressentiment. Instead, Wilson urges, text should function as ''propaganda'' for ''life.'' Where Horace saw fiction as instruction, Wilson writes,

> I prefer now to look on fiction as seduction. Literally my ideal text would draw to me someone to embrace. I also want to seduce readers into meditations on the nature of freedom and influence them to imagine the possibility of their own free- dom; I enjoy the game, and I also hope to create a world closer (by some perhaps infinitesimal but real degree) to my desires. The best seductions are very stylish and of course never boring. They're tricky and multi-layered. They result in plea- sure for both seducer and seduced, otherwise the true artist would consider them flops. Orgasm for both partners as it were.[74]

By rethinking romantic identification in terms of the metaphor of ''seduc- tion,'' Wilson emphasizes the eroticism of otherness, the playful and sensual faculties of the imagination; what one wants

[74] Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 56-57.

what you see is what you get insists that appearance and essence, actuality and reality, are one and the same. This is the mind-set that, as George Trow so aptly puts it, excludes all meaningful context. Where a formative conception of reality places the actual in the context of the larger scope of potentiality (including the potentials that could have been but were not historically actualized, for good or ill), the conservative conception removes the actual from all real context, freezing and isolating it, so that a particular moment in history is seen as the end of all history. Particular acts and agents within this reified scene likewise appear through the distorting lens of reification: deeds are seen as the individual doings of individual doers, so that larger processes—social and ecological systems, as well as the forms of systematic violence being done to them—become effectively invisible, as if unreal. Thus, Bookchin tells an anecdote about a certain ''environmental presentation'' at the Museum of Natural History in New York, ''in which the public was exposed to a long series of exhibits, each depicting examples of pollution and ecological disruption'':

The exhibit which closed the presentation carried a startling sign, ''The Most Dangerous Animal on Earth,'' and it consisted simply of a huge mirror which reflected back the human viewer who stood before it. I clearly recall a black child standing before the mirror while a white school teacher tried to explain the message which this arrogant exhibit tried to convey. There were no exhibits of corporate boards or directors planning to deforest a mountainside or government officials acting in collusion with them. The exhibit primarily conveyed one, basically misanthropic, message: people as such, not a rapacious society and its wealthy beneficiaries, are responsible for environmental dislocations—the poor no less than the personally wealthy, people of colour no less than privileged whites,

women no less than men, the oppressed no less than the oppressor.[32]

The exhibit, in Bookchin's interpretation, suggests a meaning both by what is excluded from the mimetic frame and by what is unified by inclusion within it. The mirror makes certain things invisible by what it makes visible; even though the image it gives back is a true image, a literal reflection of whoever stands before it, it lies. The lie is not enunciated only in the falsifying caption, supplied to make sure we interpret the mirror image in the terms that have been preselected for us (Man, look into this mirror of life, it seems to say; Go ye, atone and make good); it is also manifest in the way that the mirror frames its subjects. To ''mirror privileged and underprivileged people in the same frame'' is to disguise real differences as fundamental sameness, politics as biology, the social as the natural. As an ideologically inflected ''message,'' it operates, Bookchin finds, by a logic of replacement: in the unified image, ''A mythical human 'species' had replaced classes; individuals had replaced hierarchies; personal tastes (many of which are shaped by a predatory media) had replaced social relationships; and the disempowered who live meagre, isolated lives had replaced giant corporations, self-serving bureaucracies, and the violent paraphernalia of the State.''[33] The mirror lies by presenting individuals rather than social systems, political institutions, economic forces, and, more fundamentally, the power with which they are invested: ''There were no exhibits of corporate boards or directors planning to deforest a mountainside or government officials acting in collusion with them.'' Adding these images would not be sufficient to politicize the exhibit, however, for it is not only the planners that the viewers need to see, but their activity of planning; not only officials, but officials colluding with the very businesses they

[32] Bookchin, ''Society and Ecology,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 18 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031118102234687/ (accessed).

[33] Ibid.

intellectual and ethical registers, to engage the ''ethical and social self.''[72] If, as Wilson argues, ''images of horror'' tend to give play to das Es (in sadistic fantasies of violence) and das Über-Ich (in masochistic fantasies of punish- ment), a sounder aesthetic would speak to the rational agency of das Ich, the responsible adult among other adults in the world, who is free to choose how to act.

Paradoxically, however, this enlistment of the cognitive and moral subject by means of a distancing effect also has to overcome the distance between the space-time of representation and that of everyday life. The problem is that ''the conditions of fantasy and the habits of the audience are so discontinuous with behavior in the waking public world that the shock of strong images is sentimentalized: the rationalizing sorrow and regret is used to insulate the experience from any possible action.'' A sentimental-fantasy framework neutralizes its contents, turning what would otherwise be powerful, motive affects of ''revulsion,'' ''compassion,'' or ''political indignation'' into merely passive ''pity''—much in the manner, Goodman notes, of ''Christians who exhaust their neighbor-love in the sentimentality of the Cross. The next step is for the sentimentalized horror to be taken as matter- of-course in the public world, just as for those Christians the poor must always be with us, so Christians can be charitable.''[73] It is not only the case that the viewers who thrill to the dramatic illusion naturalize its contents, falsely exporting its narrative structure to the world outside the theater, but that they fail to export important contents to that outside world—in particular, the moral feelings represented in the drama, and those aroused in the course of their involved, compassionate response to it. An avant-garde approach that merely alienates the audience, confusing and repelling it, does not solve this problem if it leads the audience to reject the whole experience, closing it out. If the experience is not internalized,

[72] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 70-71, 79.

[73] Ibid., 71-72.

welter of gore), and I will be seen as a decent fellow and a grand entertainer.[70]

One need not speculate about authorial motives to recognize that what Wilson imagines here is readily applicable to the functions that such narratives might fill for the audience, which very well might be seeking safe thrills and a certain imaginary license to break social rules, combined with the security and sense of self-righteousness that comes with the reaffirmation of conventional morality.

We could also extend these observations by noting the way that sympathetic narrative treatments of cultural or racial others aimed at an ethnically homogeneous audience tend to represent otherness in terms of the familiar, assuring the privileged audience that differences are merely superficial, that underneath it all, they are just like us—a reductive representation that, in the guise of respect, surreptitiously appropriates and colonizes the other. As Bakhtin asks rhetorically, ''In what way will the event be enriched if I succeed in fusing with the other?'' Rather than seeking to ''love one's neighbor as one loves oneself'' through an art of empathy, it is better that one should come to respect one's neighbor as one's neighbor, as ''another consciousness, with the same rights, and capable of responding.''[71]

Accordingly, like Brecht, Goodman proposes a distancing (estrangement, Verfremdung) of the audience from the action to ''neutralize'' violent images via a kind of ''factual and analytic handling'' that counters the ''pornographic effect'' of the ''cinematic conditions of bright screen and dark theater'' themselves, a non-ordinary context that affords viewers safe anonymity and a kind of dream-like passivity: since, in this setting, ''images of horror easily detach themselves from the kind of intellectual and ethical framework in which they are usually presented,'' a radical film has to speak in the

[70] Wilson, ''Amoral Responsibility,'' 55.

[71] Bakhtin, quoted in Todorov, Mikhail Bakhtin, 108, 97, 107.

are meant to regulate. Actions, processes, are not visible in the mirror, which dumbly reflects back the spectator's inertia: we can wave our hands and shift from side to side, but the mirror only reflects a moment, however extended, of our standing in front of the mirror, and cannot encompass what we did before we arrived nor after we leave. Our own capacities for action are placed outside the frame.[34]

The final layer of falsification, then, is in the way that the mirror replaces an unfolding process of change and development over time with a spatially fixed image. The mirror lies by presenting a static object—the observer, arrested by the exhibit—instead of ongoing historical and natural processes:

''Nature . . . is not a scenic view we admire through a picture window—a view that is frozen into a landscape or a static panorama. Such 'landscape' images of nature may be spiritually elevating but they are ecologically deceptive. Fixed in time and place, this imagery makes it easy for us to forget that nature is not a static vision of the natural world but the long, indeed cumulative, history of natural development.''[35] What is ''ecologically deceptive'' when applied to nature is politically deceptive when applied to social relationships. If landscape or panorama representations of nature disguise evolutionary development a changeless state (to be ''conserved,'' no doubt, in keeping with the ''natural resources'' perspective of mainstream liberal environmentalism), surely it similarly disguises the dialectical development of human societies as an unchanging (bad, destructive, guilty) essence. By creatively omitting the facts of elite power and economic motives, in effect naturalizing the destruction of the earth, the exhibit both delivers a sternsounding moral lecture to the visitor and lets its corporate sponsors off the hook.[36]

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

While life itself is inherently ''relational'' and ''contextual,'' representations can encourage us to forget relationships and contexts.[37] In ecocidal representations, the scene appearing before us disappears as a scene: in the absence of any notion that things have been or could be otherwise, the way that things are cannot be questioned. The logic that destroys nature thereby naturalizes its own destructiveness. An anarchist critique of art would be a fortiori a critique of this suicidal logic.

''CRITICAL IDEALISM'' AS SOCIAL ANARCHIST AESTHETIC

The emphasis placed by art historians on the contribution of individualist varieties of anarchist theory to modernist avant-garde aesthetics has largely obscured the contribution of another stream of anarchist thought—in fact, its main stream: social anarchism. As Bookchin writes in the opening lines of his 1995 manifesto, ''anarchism—a very ecumenical body of anti-authoritarian ideas—developed in the tension between two basically contradictory tendencies: a personalistic commitment to individual autonomy and a collectivist commitment to social freedom.'' The first tendency was always a minority current in the movement as a whole; as Bookchin notes, ''anarcho-individualism was largely marginalized by mass socialistic workers' movements, of which most anarchists considered themselves the left wing.''[38] The most vigorous and historically significant tendencies in anarchism were always collectivist and socialist, articulated in the form of anarcho-syndicalism (the anarchist trade union movement) and anarcho-communism (the tradition of which Bookchin is an inheritor). In practice, anarchist history is largely the history of social anarchism; however,

[37] Bookchin, The Murray Bookchin Reader, ed. Janet Biehl (London: Cassell, 1997), 41.

[38] Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 4, 7.

is ''only natural'' and ''will always be so.''[67] Thus, faced with a narrative that indicts war as an abomination against humanity, a sufficiently corrupt audi- ence will ''identify with the actors of the story and take sides,'' or one attack- ing the death penalty as cruelty, instead of evoking ''revulsion,'' encourages the audience to ''identify with the victim, get involved in the suspense, thrill to the horror, and weep with pity.'' In this event, the ultimate ''effect'' is merely ''entertainment,'' delight without instruction. ''To be entertained by such a theme is itself damaging,'' Goodman warns, since such films may act as ''excitants'' that have a ''pornographic'' or ''titillating effect,'' aestheticiz- ing or eroticizing ''images of violence, horror, and waste,'' inciting the audi- ence to mimetic ''repetitions.''[68]

One thinks here, on the one hand, of the limitations of certain well- intentioned Spielberg films such as Saving Private Ryan and The Green Mile, which tend to sentimentalize their subjects rather than provoke critical thinking, and, on the other hand, of thrillers like Dirty Harry or 15 Minutes, which eroticize scenes of rape or the murder of prostitutes and then allow viewers to ritually purify themselves of the guilt of voyeuristic complicity by enjoying the extermination of the rapist-murderer as righteous retribution: ''the 'message,' '' writes Goodman, ''is then employed as rationalization,'' as an alibi.[69] ''In Horror fiction,'' as Wilson observes,

The author frequently derives vicarious kicks galore, letting the Id run rampant, creating a truly scary monster or villain who kills exactly the sort of people the author's Id would like to kill, in its most vindictive and slavering moments. But, says the SuperEgo (who's usually in control of the typewriter, or at least the final draft), all this is EVIL. And for a grand finale, here in my world, GOOD will triumph, the monster will be destroyed (in one last

[67] Bertolt Brecht, ''Theatre for Learning,'' in European Theories of the Drama, ed. Barrett Clark, 309 (New York: Crown Publishers, 1965).

[68] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 70, 72-73.

[69] Ibid., 71.

whole universe in himself,'' worthy of narrative curiosity, attention, and respect.[65]

And yet, by employing decentered, polyphonic, or rhizomatic narrative, substituting a collage of juxtaposed multiple voices for the single controlling perspective of a narrator, protagonist, or first-person point of view, this kind of strategy may risk reproducing a relativism for which objectivity disappears into an infinity of self-enclosed subjective worlds—the opposite of the sort of intersubjectivity and interdependence that Ryman, Linklater, Sayles, and Moore seem to be striving to capture. Moreover, it will not always be enough to represent ordinary subjects with whom a proletarian audience can identify, as Baginski suggests; the political consequences of identifying representations can be difficult to foresee or control.

Goodman is sensitive to just such ambiguities in his cinematic writing. ''Bad audiences,'' he notes, ''will select . . . what suits their own repressions, and interpret according to their own prejudices''; thus, ''the lovely is taken as dirty, the horrible as sadistically thrilling.''[66] It seems that the act of poaching on the text, inserting one's own messages into it, is not always auto- matically liberatory, as de Certeau would hope; it can just as easily be the way that the audience defends itself from whatever would threaten its com- placency, its sense of self-containment. Where Shelley and Tolstoy hoped that identification (empathy, Einfühlung) would be the means by which that closure could be breached, Goodman, like Brecht, argues that certain kinds of selective identification can serve to maintain it. When the bad audience of traditional theater identifies with the struggles of the characters onstage, Brecht complained, this results in the intuition that what is represented

[65] Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art (Northampton, MA: Kitchen Sink Press, 1993), 74; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 119.

[66] Goodman, Utopian Essays, 72.

Bookchin argues, some individualist tendencies have persisted in anarchist theory: ''Anarchism's failure to resolve this tension, to articulate the relationship of the individual to the collective, and to enunciate the historical circumstances that would make possible a stateless anarchic society produced problems in anarchist thought that remain unresolved to this day.'' It is altogether natural that Bookchin should illustrate this problematic with a discussion of Proudhon:

Pierre Joseph Proudhon, more than many anarchists of his day, attempted to formulate a fairly concrete image of a libertarian society. Based on contracts, essentially between small producers, cooperatives, and communes, Proudhon's vision was redolent of the provincial craft world into which he was born. But his attempt to meld a patroniste, often patriarchal notion of liberty with contractual social arrangements was lacking in depth. The craftsman, cooperative, and commune, relating to one another on bourgeois contractual terms of equity or justice rather than on the communist terms of ability and needs, reflected the artisan's bias for personal autonomy, leaving any moral commitment to a collective undefined beyond the good intentions of its members.

Indeed, Proudhon's famous declaration that ''whoever puts his hand on me to govern me is an usurper and a tyrant; I declare him my enemy'' strongly tilts toward a personalistic, negative freedom that overshadows his opposition to oppressive social institutions and the vision of an anarchist society that he projected.[39]

Bookchin's invocation here is apt. To read Proudhon is to read the whole history of this unresolved antinomy in miniature. More than Bookchin's summary would indicate, Proudhon is founding for the socialist character of anarchist theory and practice: he is the man whose political career begins with the famous proclamation, ''Property is theft!'' and ends with the publication of his De la capacité politique des classes ouvrières (On the Political Capacity

[39] Ibid., 4-5.

of the Working Classes). For his opposition to all fixed and inflexible abstract systems, his embrace of motion, change, and flux, and his recognition that ''man is a group,'' Daniel Colson has hailed Proudhon as a poststructuralist avant la lettre;[40] in his combination of an attack on the bureaucratic State and an individualistic defense of the small proprietor with elements of anti- Semitism and patriarchal moralism, he has also been read as a prophet of the New Right. His extreme philosophical mobility, which allows him to shuttle back and forth between the most innovative and the most backward positions, makes all of these readings partially true. Proudhon is almost a microcosm of the entire continuum of anarchist theory.

Even the most enthusiastic of Proudhon's anarchist readers today must look back at much of his work with profound disappointment. Even if one overlooks his sometimes ludicrous pretensions (his ambition to build an encyclopedic theory encompassing chemistry, history, mathematics, aesthetics, linguistics, and political economy) and his misguided eclecticism (his attempts to blend Kant's notion of antinomy with Hegel's dialectic and Fourier's ''series''), Proudhon ultimately fails to produce a form of socialism completely free from authoritarianism or a form of anarchism completely free from capitalist ideology. The very element of moral commitment that transcends Proudhon's individualism, the zeal for ''Justice'' that makes Proudhon a socialist, is tightly bound up with ''provincial'' and ''patriarchal'' elements—indeed, the prejudices of a Franche-Comtois peasant (e.g., against Jews, and particularly against women). The libertarian element in Proudhon's thought, meanwhile, is permeated with a capitalist mythology (of the sanctity of the free contract, the dignity of the independent small proprietor, etc.).

Thus, much of Proudhon's writing on art is inflected with his prejudices: his prudery (''If modesty and love were to be taken

[40] Colson, ''Lectures anarchistes de Spinoza,'' translation mine.

lighted, a hypertextual link to some trivial or crucial fact of another character's life: a woman's passing fantasies about a photograph of Saddam Hussein in The Independent leads us to the next car, where the thoughts of a man reading today's Independent turn to a fantasy about the man he saw ducking into a massage parlor, which leads us to the sordid recollections of an actual masseuse sitting a few rows behind the driver; a Turkish travel agent who works in Kennington Road is linked to a Punjabi man (sitting behind the woman dreaming of Saddam), whose dry- cleaning shop happens to be located there, which in turn connects to the life of a young Armenian immigrant who has just taken a job in a new dry cleaner's . . . and so on, indefinitely.[63]

There is something about this kind of writing that is deeply anarchic, embodying on a number of different levels the worldview described by Kropotkin, in which ''the center'' is ''scattered and disseminated,'' and the life of each intricately bound up with those of the others.[64] I am also reminded, here, of Richard Linklater's film Slackers, John Sayles's film City of Hope, and Alan Moore's graphic novel Watchmen, all of which employ a kind of horizontal or paratactic narrative move that associates seemingly unrelated characters by juxtaposing them in space and time—via the tracking shot in Slackers that takes us from one character to another with whom the first crosses paths (whom we then follow instead), via the ensemble casting and intertwining plotlines of City of Hope, and in Watchmen, via transitions from subject to subject—metaphysically and ethically promoting each and every subject to the status of ''a

[63] Geoff Ryman, 253: Or Tube Theatre: A Novel for the Internet About London Under- ground In Seven Cars and a Crash, http://www.ryman-novel.com (accessed 26 July 2003), 169, 49, 17, 136, 168, 202.

[64] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 117-19, 150.

essence, nor to the working of a mysterious and unchangeable fate; now they can indict the society itself. By including ''ordinary'' people, they widen the number of possible ''actors'' in more than one sense; now, Baginski argues, other kinds of individual can take the center stage, and we can identify with them without thereby subscribing to a Stoic falsehood.

There is something to this argument. It goes some way toward explaining how and why I find myself struck by the way that Geoff Ryman's novels, even while conventionally centered on a protagonist whose mental world we are allowed to explore in depth, also tend to feature numerous little incidental encounters with people drawn from the register of the ordinary, the kinds of everyday encounters that are normally reduced to the single dimension of utility—in The Child Garden, for instance, we watch Milena receiving mail from the postal carrier, paying the fare to a driver, asking for directions from a desk clerk—that are invested with an unusual depth of attention: the person who would ordinarily appear to us as a more or less useful object, a function, an It, manifests instead the sort of qualitative dimensions and independent subjectivity of a You, before vanishing back into the textual background. The glimpsed fragment of another life prompts us to imagine the unimaginable plurality of lives unread, of worlds unseen by us. Ryman carries this attempt to what is perhaps a kind of limit in his hypertext novel 253: Or Tube Theatre, whose title refers to the total number of passengers on a London Underground train (plus, significantly, the driver), which narrates an ordinary journey from the point of view of every single person on the train, each of whom is also described as an object (from the point of view of others on the train), both in the present moment and in terms of ''inside information'' about their personal history, frequently with important reference to social and political history (''sadly,'' Ryman remarks, ''people are not always what they seem''). Moreover, while reading about any one passenger, we are likely to find that some part of their description, internal or external, past or present, is high-

away from youth, and lust put in their place, young people would very soon lose all sense of morality''), his mistrust of modernity (''as everyone knows, it is true that we are living in an age of decadence, in which civic courage has been annihilated, personal virtue cast aside, the race trodden down, all sentiments falsified and depraved''), and particularly his mixture of patronizing contempt for and fear of women (in his reply to the feminist challenge issued by Jenny d'Hericourt, he asserts that her refusal to accept his arguments amounted to an inability to ''comprehend'' them—an inability that, he gently explains, ''results precisely, as I have told you, from your sexual infirmity''[41]).

This deep misogyny is particularly noticeable and lamentable, and it frequently mars his philosophy of art. Proudhon seems to think of art, metaphorically, as a female presence, and he conceives of women (when decoupled from their rightful and necessary ties to men) as deceptive, irrational, foolish, and sexually depraved: d'Hericourt quotes his claims that the feminine subject is composed of ''disconnected ideas, contradictory reasonings, chimeras taken for realities, unreal analogies erected into principles, a tendency of mind inclining inevitably towards annihilation,'' that ''by her nature she is in a state of constant demoralization,'' that ''without a man, who is to her prophet and word, she would not emerge from the bestial conditions,'' that ''he who wishes to preserve entire the strength of his mind and body will fell her,'' and that ''her emancipation is the same thing as her prostitution.''[42] Bad art has the same faults as bad women; good art is like the good woman, who is pure and virtuous—''bathed clean, with nails and hair trimmed.'' Presumably, cleansed of its impurities, with its animal nature and libidinal impulses trimmed away, art will make

[41] Proudhon, Selected Writings, 255, 215; Jenny d'Hericourt, A Woman's Philosophy of Woman; or Woman Affranchised: an Answer to Michelet, Proudhon, Girardin, Legouve, Comte, and Other Modern Innovators, Sunshine for Women, http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/book-sum/hericour.html (accessed).

[42] Proudhon, quoted in d'Hericourt, A Woman's Philosophy of Woman.

a good helpmeet for the more properly masculine sphere of labor and material production: ''The role (of art) is one of an auxiliary; it is a faculty more feminine than virile, predestined to obedience, and whose development must in the last analysis be determined by the legal and scientific development of the species.''[43] When art, like woman, does not remain chaste and in her proper place, it assumes the role of a harlot, drawing on the base impulses of the audience and calling us to do wrong: just as Proudhon declares, in La Pornocratie, that woman's ''power [puissance]'' is that of ''fascination'' (rather than the male ''puissance d'action''), he also expresses a fear that art ''has power over us in the same way that the magnetiser has power over the magnetised.'' Untamed art, like untamed sexuality, is dominating (''pornocratic''), destructive, deadly.[44]

When sex is decoupled from its proper marital function, when it appears outside the sphere of its proper goal (reproduction), then it assumes the form of masturbation, which Proudhon, like Rousseau, fears and despises as ''unnatural''; likewise, art decoupled from its proper goal and function as the reproductive supplement to production—''art for art's sake''—is an aesthetic ''vice'': ''love for love's sake leads to unnatural vice, onanism, and prostitution; art for art's sake ends in Chinese knickknacks, caricature, the worship of the ugly.'' In short, Proudhon's disdain for ''the principle of art for art's sake'' or the ''autonomy of judgment'' is closely coupled to his fear of sexuality, particularly his fear of women's sexuality, and to his desire to control and discipline a threatening female presence.[45]

[43] Proudhon, quoted in Crapo, ''The Anarchist as Critic,'' 462-63, 464; translation mine.

[44] Proudhon, Oeuvres Complètes, 11.354; Proudhon, quoted in André Reszler, ''Peter Kropotkin and His Vision of Anarchist Aesthetics,'' Diogenes, no. 78 (Summer 1972).

[45] Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions, 227; Proudhon, quoted in Raphael, Proudhon, Marx, Picasso, 4-5.

palaces were seen from afar; their statues were erected everywhere; their edicts were read; but they never showed themselves.''[61]

Much of the measurable progress achieved by radical experimentation in the arts has been in usefully broadening what can acceptably be included within the representational frame. Thus, Baginski's ''The Old and the New Drama'' is partially a critique of traditional dramatic modes of representation, but it is also a celebration of the ''modern drama'' of Hauptmann and Ibsen, which in his opinion ''represents the World'' more accurately, reflecting rather than deflecting certain crucial moments of this world experience.

Baginski hails these works as great achievements of naturalism, steps toward the progressive ''reproduction of nature in all its phases.'' In them, a mirror is held up to life that does not exclude what was previously excluded, and so does not distort and deform the image of life in the name of a narrow, class-prejudiced moralism:

The old conception of the drama paid little or no attention to the importance of the influences of social conditions. It was the individual alone who had to carry the weight of all responsibility . . .

The growth of the scope of the drama has increased the number of the participants therein. Formerly it was assumed that the fate of the ordinary man, the man of the masses, was altogether too obscure, too indifferent to serve as material for anything tragic

Because of that assumption, the low and humble never gained the center of the stage; they were only utilized to represent mobs.[62]

By including the social context within the frame, the new representations avoid attributing misery or failure to the merit or worthlessness of an individual's mysterious and unchangeable

[61] Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 76; Clayton Koelb, Kafka's Rhetoric: The Passion of Reading (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 94; Reclus, ''Evolution and Revolution.''

[62] Baginski, ''The Old and the New Drama,'' 38-39.

This attitude toward art is not altogether distinct from that of the Soviet theorists of socialist realism and Proletkult. Indeed, in the embattled revolutionary Spain of the late 1930s, anarchist aesthetics became almost indistinguishable from those of the authoritarian Left: ''even as anarchosyndicalists and Communists killed each other on the streets of Barcelona in May 1937,'' Michael Seidman notes ironically, they manifested an ''aesthetic unity . . . accepting similar representations of their supposed constituencies.'' These ''humorless and sometimes menacing'' focalizing representations of bodies as machines in motion, designed to glorify the workers, ''never depicted the workers and soldiers of the posters as tired, hungry, or ill.'' Anarcho-syndicalist poster art, functioning as ''persuasive and coercive images that were designed to convince them to work harder,'' was meant to instill a productivist ethos in the sometimes reluctant Spanish proletariat; in short, it constituted an entirely utilitarian art. Not surprisingly, this aesthetic tended to represent human beings in terms of their utilitarian dimension, their ''productive capacities,'' to the exclusion of any other dimension, using ''the arm and particularly the hand'' as synecdoche for the whole body to indicate that the entire person is defined by the activity of labor; the posters leveled bodies, truncating or omitting gender and facial features, since ''what was important was neither the qualities nor the character of the individual portrayed but his or her function as soldier or worker.'' Here, behind the apparent egalitarianism of the androgynous female figure, we can see the return of Proudhon's ideal representation of the clean, chaste woman. The idealized kitsch universe of these images, envisaging a ''future society'' that ''would not revolve around religion, sex, art, or play'' but around the dignity and glory of work itself, corresponds rather closely to Proudhon's ''workplace utopianism.''[46]

[46] Michael Seidman, Workers Against Work: Labor in Paris and Barcelona during the Popular Fronts (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft5h4nb34h/ (accessed), 4, 14.

In its affirmation, art social continues, in its own way, the realist pursuit of a critique of existing conditions. It does not do this by excluding or denying the ''essentially unacceptable in human existence,'' which would evidence a rejection of the world, a dualistic perception that ''one must go beyond life,'' more than any monistic ''agreement with being.'' ''The earth is infinitely beautiful,'' writes Elisee Reclus, but in order for there to be ''born between earth and man a harmony kind to the eye and comforting to the spirit,'' contrary to the primitivist intuition of a pre-symbolic unity between humanity and its ecological context, we have always needed to constructively ''associate ourselves'' with it through art.[60] A revolutionary art can only do this by willingly undertaking the testimonial task of representing what is humiliating and painful both in nature and in history, while refusing to reify these experiences into the supposedly eternal facts of human nature or the human condition.

EFFECTS: EMPATHY, DISBELIEF, LAUGHTER

It is not the case, then, that representation per se is oppressive and that liberation consists in the nonrepresentation of silence. Power inheres just as much in the dominant set of agreements about what cannot be represented—in the negativity of what I have called focalizing representation—as in the positivity of the work of art. Silence, just as well as speech, bears the mark of power; Reclus points out that the monarchs' aura of authority consisted not only in ostentatious representations of themselves, in plenitude, but in the restriction of representations, in silence and absence: ''Their

[60] Reclus, ''Art and the People.''

Although Proudhon certainly had an influence on the Spanish anarchists, it is a stretch to blame him for their aesthetic failures, which can be more directly traced to the brutalizing influences of war and economic rationing.

However, it is certainly true that to the extent that Proudhon's aesthetics are strictly mimetic and utilitarian, obeying his own misogynist and authoritarian impulses, he subordinates the pleasure principle to the reality principle, dictating that art should not self-indulgently play with form at the expense of content, but that it should serve its proper social function by reproducing reality. However, as Paul Crapo notes, Proudhon also develops a rather different thesis about art (if not, unfortunately, about women). Indeed, this second, contrary thesis develops to the point that it reveals something far more fertile and significant than the sum of his ideological limitations: the prototype of a program for art that is consistently anarchist and socialist, the two poles of his thought held together in a moment of synthesis.

While Proudhon spends much energy denying any ''autonomy'' to the aesthetic sphere, Paul Crapo argues, he also ''attempts to recognize, far more than is apparent, the independent status of the arts and their inherent value.''[47] Indeed, at times he even reverses the priority of terms, declaring that art, like ''morality'' itself, is ''above the realm of the useful,'' greater than the mere production of necessities—undoing his hierarchy of utility over beauty: ''If utilitarianism, which fights here for the principle of the reality of the spirit, of poetry, of science and of art . . . had been able to triumph, all would have been lost.'' For this Proudhon, art ''should be totally and completely free and reject any kind of control''; indeed, ''art is liberty itself, recreating under its guise, and for its own glorification, the phenomenality of things,

[47] Crapo, ''The Anarchist as Critic,'' 466.

If this sort of realism is a dead end for Lazare, so is Mallarmé's Symbolism, which is an ''idealist reaction against Zola and naturalism'': the Symbolist ''error,'' he asserts, ''was to turn one's back on life, it was to return to the old romantic theory, whose basis [fond] is christian: life is abject, one must go beyond life [il faut aller hors la vie]. Starting from this point, one cannot but end up in the mystico-decadent swamp [au marais mystico- décadent].''[57] The same revulsion with life that is evoked by objectivist representation is the starting point for an antirealist, subjectivist aesthetic—a flight away from representation. In place of Naturalist reification of reality, all Symbolism can offer is mystification. Neither aesthetic offers enough to revolution.

The alternative to Naturalism and Symbolism, for Lazare, is a ''social art,'' ''neither realist nor idealo-mystical,'' whose starting point is an affirmation ''that life is good and that its manifestations are beautiful,'' while ''uglinesses are the product of the state of society,'' and which ''represent[s] not stable beings, fixed in a chosen pose, but beings in evolution''; this art, in accordance with Proudhon's critical idealism, ''must not content itself with photographing the social milieux . . . it must release from them the ideas which they contain.''[58] In short, social art is a representational aesthetic, a modified realism that embraces both of those aspects of reality that are polarized and isolated by Naturalism and Symbolism: where Naturalism excludes the dimension of potentiality and Symbolism excludes the dimension of actuality, social art insists on including both, activating the dialectic between them. In so doing, it provides a stimulus to revolt, engaging both writer and reader in a historical process of change, thereby overcoming the ''artistic egotism'' that results from the alienation of artists from their community context.[59]

[57] Ibid., 28-29.
[58] Ibid., 29-30.
[59] Ibid., 19.

executing . . . variations on the concrete theme of nature.''[48] This more properly libertarian vision of art and the aesthetic retains the notion of mimesis, but without the connotations of servile imitation, showing its autonomy in introducing ''variations'' on the given. Proudhon here steps far outside the narrow conception of anarchism as essentialism, declaring that man does nothing according to nature: he is, I daresay, an animal who likes to make improvements [un animal façonnier]. He likes nothing on which he has not left his mark…

For the pleasure of his eyes, he invented painting, architecture, the plastic arts, . . . none of the utility of which he can explain, except that they satisfy the needs of his imagination, and they please him. For his ears, he polishes his language, counts syllables, and measures rhythm. Then he invents melodies and chords, assembles orchestras . . .[49]

Since art, on this account, is precisely that which enables human beings to develop a realm of freedom within the realm of natural necessity, it is no hyperbole to identify it with ''liberty'' per se. In this mood, Proudhon affirms a certain material sensuality, elevating an aesthetic pleasure principle above and beyond the utilitarian or naturalist reality principle. Thus, in his System of Economic Contradictions, Proudhon declares that ''art consists in rendering things, not as nature made them, but as it should have made them.'' In this last comment, we can begin to see how two mutually incoherent, contradictory moments in Proudhon's aesthetic thought—a moment that affirms the sensuality of form and a moment that negates it in the interest of moral duty and the utility of content—converge in a surprising moment of coherence.

[48] Proudhon, Selected Writings, 185; Proudhon, quoted in Crapo, ''The Anarchist as Critic,'' 467, translation mine; Rubin, Realism and Social Vision, 136; Proudhon, quoted in Rubin, Realism and Social Vision, 66.

[49] Proudhon, quoted in Rubin, Realism and Social Vision, 148n10.

rial world. Where Romanticism mystifies reality, Naturalism reifies it.

For Kropotkin, as for Bookchin, it is the dialectical relationship between material and ideal that is indispensable to any genuine realism in art or politics. Kropotkin is arguing for an aesthetic that is neither Romantic nor Naturalist, neither idealist nor (in the corollary sense) realist—an aesthetic that Proudhon, while carefully positioning himself against both ''idealist'' and ''materialist'' metaphysics, was willing to call ''critical idealism.'' This is Kropotkin's ''realistic description'' in the service of an ''idealistic aim.''[54]

In fin-de-siècle Paris, we find another group of social anarchists working along very similar lines: the art social group of Paris, with Bernard Lazare as one of its brightest lights. Against the Symbolist aesthetes, partisans of ''social art'' maintained, with Proudhon, that art has a ''social mission,'' but like Kropotkin, they rejected Naturalism as an ''incomplete'' program. In his 1896 manifesto, Lazare declared that ''the reproach which had to be made to naturalism lay in its incompleteness, its . . . considering only bodily functions and not mental functions to be real; also its disfiguration [enlaidir] of pleasure with ugliness [laid], instead of showing real things under their aspect of perfection.''[55] Naturalist representation, by privileging the material over the ideal, renders a picture of life in which there are objects, but no subjectivity; insofar as Zola's coal miners seem to live a merely ''animal life,'' Germinal endorses that bourgeois ideology that depicts the working classes as mindless brutes, incapable of rational self-governance.[56] Moreover, by subordinating pleasure to ugliness, Naturalist writing encourages us to turn away from life in disgust at least as much as it encourages us to revolt against social conditions.

[54] Rubin, Realism and Social Vision, 94; Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions, 16-17; Oeuvres, 11.59; Kropotkin, Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature, 86.

[55] Lazare, L'Écrivain et l'art social, 5, 27-28.

[56] Ibid., 29.

This is the locus of an aesthetics that Proudhon names ''critical idealism.''[50]

For Proudhon, art can and should represent nature as it is, performing its mimetic function of rendering things, but at the same time present an image of things as they should be—a potential that exists in a dialectical relation to the actual within which it is always embedded. Art that cleaves to one pole or the other of this dialectic is a failure: since, as Proudhon remarks in Du principe de l'art, ''the real is not the same as the truth,'' it is possible to transcend reality by telling the truth, what Theodor Adorno called the truth of ''the possible in opposition to the actual that suppresses it.'' The reverse is also true: to merely reproduce the real (as in Zola's Naturalism) would be to fail to tell the truth, i.e., to lie. ''If [art] is limited to simple imitation, copies or counterfeits of nature,'' Proudhon warns, it will end up ''dishonoring the same objects that it would have imitated.''[51] If art can represent the actual, performing its mimetic function, but at the same time unfold some part of the manifold potential dormant within actuality, then in the moment that it frees itself from mere imitation, it can fulfill its deepest moral commitment, realizing the principle of justice in revealing the ''should be'' within the ''is.'' The ''social destination'' of art, in the end, is not only to reproduce what exists, but also to criticize what exists by reference to what can and should exist—the realm of possibility that is implied but concealed by the actual. This is what Peter Kropotkin seems to have in mind when he calls for an aesthetic of realist description to serve an idealist goal.

Bookchin's definition of reality as comprising potentials as well as the actual is kin to Kropotkin's assertion that ''realistic description'' should be ''subservient to an idealistic aim,'' particularly when this is read in context.

Kropotkin is discussing the shortcomings of a particular kind of realism— that of French writers, particularly Émile Zola, for whom realism means ''a description only of the lowest aspects of life''— the bestial misery of coal miners, alcoholics, streetwalkers. First of all, Kropotkin argues that Zola's Naturalism, which purports to render a panoptical ''anatomy of society,'' offers only a myopic view of that society: ''the artist who limits his observations to the lowest and most degenerate aspects [of society] only . . . explores only one small corner of life. Such an artist does not conceive life as it is: he knows but one aspect of it, and this is not the most interesting one.'' Moreover, Zola's focus on the ''degeneracy'' of life under capitalism is merely the mirror image of ''the . . . romanticism which he combated.'' The idealism of the Romantic poets led them to avert their gaze from the ugly present, fleeing into a mystical beyond; however, the Naturalists seem no more than their Romantic counterparts to recognize that the ''highest'' manifestations of ''life'' are to be found ''beside and within its lowest manifestations.''[52] Kropotkin judges Zola's Naturalism to be ''a step backwards from the realism of Balzac'' because it so rigorously adheres to the actual that it appears to exclude any sense of the possible.[53] The social anatomy that Zola renders in Germinal is one in which everything is driven by fatal necessity: rebellion appears futile. Zola's anatomy of capitalist exploitation may indict the cruelty of the system, but it inadvertently defends that system by making it appear unchangable—even natural. It evokes pathos, but not revolt. Ultimately, an ultra-materialist representation that freezes living men and women into immobile objects produces the same lousy results as an ultra- idealist representation that turns away from the mate-

[50] Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions, 434; Rubin, Realism and Social Vision, 94.

[51] Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions, 434; Proudhon, quoted in Rubin, Realism and Social Vision, 94; Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, trans. and ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 135; Proudhon, quoted in Crapo, ''The Anarchist as Critic,'' 461, translation mine.

[52] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 86.

[53] Ibid.

epiphenomenal to material development anyway.[32] Even a brilliant later Marxist such as Gramsci, whose Marxism emphasized the priority of practice, could only imagine a Marxist ethics in terms of ''a search for the conditions necessary for the freedom of the will in a certain sense, aimed at a certain end, and the demonstration that these conditions exist.'' Until these conditions pertain, the primary question is what means will most efficiently produce the required ends—a technical question, not an ethical one.[33]

Lewis Hyde is not entirely wrong when he describes anarchism as rooted in ethics rather than in politics as such: anarchist politics have always been centered simply in an opposition to domination in all its forms (whether emanating from capital, state, church, family, or from other institutions, social conventions, or features of everyday life).[34] Various analyses of the specific forms of domination have followed from this principle, but it is the principle itself that is determining in the development of the thought of the movement.

Anarchist theory distinguishes itself from other political theories by its distinct relation to the ethical.[35] In general, where the relative emphasis in Marxist discourse is on a description of the ac-

[32] This is one of the loopholes exploited by the creators of the twentieth century's ''actu-ally existing socialisms,'' who found it convenient to simply redescribe whatever they were doing as building the communist future.

[33] Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, 409-10.

[34] Hyde, The Gift, 90. The consistency with which this perhaps never-present ''all'' has been critiqued has improved particularly following the feminist, ecologist, and antiracist interventions that determined the reconstruction of theory in the sixties and seventies. These interventions affected all varieties of radical theory, but as Murray Bookchin points out, anarchism has been more structurally flexible, hence more readily able to respond to and incorporate the theoretical demands of the ''new social movements.''

[35] By the same token, paradoxically, it has a particularly close relation to some varieties of feminism that have never been comfortably situated within Marxist or postmodern theoretical frameworks, and that also center on a negation of hierarchy or domination per se as opposed to any particular instantiation of them (capitalist or precapitalist, Western or non-Western, and so on). See, for instance, Carol Ehrlich's essay in Women and Revolution: A Discussion of ther

thest toward releasing artists from the situation in which they are frustrated gift-givers, locked in a hopeless antagonism with a distant and recalcitrant audience.

Thus, Kropotkin suggests a workable solution to the sterile dilemma propounded by Read, for whom the freedom of the artist means that ''he must be left alone'' by society. This demand is accompanied by the recognition that ''a person is not left alone if he has a cupboard full of cares'' (as Virginia Woolf well understood, ''one cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well''). Thus, the artist ''must be left alone with sufficient food and shelter to safeguard his health, and he must be left alone with sufficient material to work with''—but this now presupposes a considerable debt to society. To leave the debt unpaid would be to suppose what is contrary to the hypothesis, that the artist's freedom is bought at the expense of others' freedom. Here Kropotkin gently intrudes the promise of an entente, the hypothesis of social reciprocity: ''If everyone took his share of production, and if production were socialised . . . then more than one half of the working day would remain to everyone for the pursuit of art, science, or any hobby he or she might prefer.'' Moreover, he suggests, ''work in those fields would be the more profitable'' if one ''spent the other half of the day in productive work'' for the common store. In releasing art from commercial, institutional, and even popular pressures, so that ''free pursuit in new branches of art and knowledge, free creation, and free development thus might be fully guaranteed,'' communist economics at the same time encourages the reintegration of art and community.[31]

[31] Read, To Hell With Culture, 23; Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1981), 4, 18; Read, To Hell With Culture, 23; Kropotkin, Fields, Factories, and Workshops, 408.

ALTERNATIVE CULTURE

Goodman, as is his wont, insists that this reintegration can begin here and now: ''a circle is not vicious if it is big enough, because then there is plenty of room to maneuver and live on a little.'' Instead of surrendering to the elitist populism of mass culture or resigning oneself to the populist elitism of a private art, he proposes ''direct action'' to bypass the elite cultural ''intermediaries'':

> Let actors get themselves a cellar and act and forget about the critical notices; let writers scrape together a few dollars and print off a big broadside and give it away to all likely comers on 8th Street; forget about Hollywood movies—they don't exist—and how surprising it is to find one can make a movie for a couple of hundred dollars and show it off in a loft . . . ''What's this? he speaks of popular culture, mass-media, the state of society, and he ends up pleading for a little night-club where he and his friends and their hangers-on can display themselves!'' Listen, here is my concern: I want to be happy . . . and I am fighting for happiness in the ways an artist can. If you, audi- ence or artist, take care of yourselves, the intermediary somethings will get less take at their box-offices, and we'll have a popular culture.[32]

This is, in effect, a proposal for the creation of what we would now call ''alternative media''; it would include 'zines, Web sites, poetry slams, public- access cable TV shows, community radio stations, artists' co-ops, housing co-ops, book groups, and indie filmmakers. It is not a panacea, and it does serve the immediate purpose of satisfying the expressive needs of small groups of artists (bound by what the Spanish anarchists called afinidad), leaving outsiders

[32] Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 77, 87.

practice that creates groupings and instills desires is symbolic action (persuasion, identification, propaganda in the broadest sense). Accordingly, anarchist discourse tends to manifest itself as a series of propositions of the form: Let us . . . where Marxist discourse tends to take on the form of declarations beginning: It is… Where vanguardist theory ''offers a comprehen- sive analysis of the world situation,'' as David Graeber writes, ''anarchism has tended to be an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice.''[28]

But what of the last line of the Communist Manifesto, ''WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE''? Surely this is a constructive project of subject-formation, as well as an act of persuasion with prescriptive overtones?[29] It is true that Marx and Engels sometimes understand what they are doing in writing as a form of material social practice, performative ''interventions'' in history;[30] however, their tendency is to regard any instance of ethical talk as another lapse into the idealist ''social reformer'' mind set, a failure to think in terms of the ''inevitable event'' rather than what ''might'' be. This is part of why Marx frequently and forcefully declined to sketch out a model for the communist future, a reticence that Kropotkin impugned as foolish: ''To tell people, 'First let us abolish autocracy or capitalism, and then we will discuss what to put in its place,' means simply to deceive oneself and others.''[31]

When there is no question about a ''choice'' in history, then there is no sense in imagining or planning a future—and particularly no sense in exploring the question of what kinds of political institutions might be suitable to such a life, since politics are

[28] Graeber, ''Twilight of Vanguardism.''

[29] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 500.

[30] Paul-F. Tremlett, ''Borg: A Critical Encounter,'' Anarchist Studies 7, no. 2 (October 1999): 172.

[31] Frank E. Manuel, A Requiem for Karl Marx (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 158; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlet, 156.

tal possibilities offered by the civic and cooperative models on the one hand and the national and marketplace models on the other simply illuminates the sense in which there have been ''choices between rational and irrational alternatives in history'': ''it is quite unclear that an industrial capitalist development of the kind that exists today was preordained by history . . . capitalism, like the nation-state, was neither an unavoidable 'necessity,' nor was it a 'precondition' for the establishment of a cooperative or socialist democracy.''[26]

Just so, where Marxists see socialism as the product of capitalist development—Marx declares that ''the hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist''—for anarchists like Abad de Santillan, ''the negation of the principle of authority of man over man is not bound up with the realisation of a predetermined economic level.'' While anarchism requires ''a certain level of culture, consciousness of power and capacity for self-government,'' these desiderata are not positively tied to technological forces of production: ''anarchism can exist in penury or in abundance.'' More forcefully, Landauer insists that: ''Socialism ...is possible at all times and with any kind of technology... no socialism at all must come . . . [but] socialism can come and should come—if we want it, if we create it.''[27]

In the absence of an historical ''must,'' social anarchists from Proudhon to Bookchin have had to theorize the utopian hope of what can come by specifying practices through which what we want may be elicited. If the collective subjects and desires that make history happen are not produced in clockwork fashion by a linear developmental process, then it follows that they can be formed by human action. Just as the kind of practice that articulates and activates the desires of groups is direct democracy, the kind of

[26] Bookchin, Remaking Society, 76, 88, 119, 89.

[27] Abad de Santillan, After the Revolution, 93; Marx, Poverty of Philosophy, 109; Landauer, For Socialism, 74-75.

to their own devices. However, it does have the effect of removing a certain amount of aesthetic production from the domain of the marketplace, whether from the luxury marketplace constituted by institutions such as galleries, concert halls, museums, private architects' firms, and collectors' auctions, or from the mass marketplace constituted by broadcast media franchises, movie studios, and real-estate developers, and thereby liberates it from the domination of exchange-value. The trick is then to progressively widen the constituency for alternative media projects—not only the audience, but the pool of creative labor, more and more, until what is by itself merely an inward-looking bohemian community becomes another form of what Harry Cleaver calls ''the self-activity of labor.''[33]

VERNACULARIZATION

There is also something to the notion of infusing art into all production and into everyday life itself, Camille Pissarro's utopian dream of a society in which ''everyone will be an artist,'' which bears further exploration.[34] Proudhon imagined it in Du principe de l'art, lamenting that ''today we no longer sing,'' that industrialization has de-aestheticized life. ''We cannot live in this barbarity,'' he declares; ''we must relieve it... There are other means to employ, other forms to create, other arrangements to imagine. The earth must become, through culture, like an immense garden, and work, through its organization, a vast concert.'' Nor is Proudhon's speculation here merely utopian: it is based on recollections of the peasant culture he knew in childhood—''once one sang at the harvest, at the hay-making, at the grape- gathering, in the sowing-time, in

[33] Harry Cleaver, ''Kropotkin, Self-Valorization and the Crisis of Marxism,'' www.eco.utexas.edu/facstaff/Cleaver/kropotkin.html (accessed March 21, 2004).

[34] Pissarro, quoted in Hutton, Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground, 7.

the school, in the workshop''—and, less distantly, of the resistance culture he participated in as a prison inmate:

> During my captivity at Sainte-Pélagie, in 1849, there were around eighty political prisoners, at a minimal estimate, if one thinks of the thousands of deportees of that sad period. Every evening, half an hour before the closing of the cells, the detainees gathered in the courtyard and sang the prière; it was a hymn to Liberty attributed to Armand Marrast. One sole voice spoke the strophe, and the eighty prisoners gave back the refrain, which then was taken up by the five hundred unfortunates detained in the other section of the prison. Later the songs were forbidden, and this made the pain of the prisoners worse. That was a real music, realistic, applied, situated art [art en situation], like the songs of the church, the fanfares of the parade, and no music pleases me more.[35]

Here, surely, the metaphysics of art—its powers of making groupings and divisions through a ''meaning'' that is not purely ''mental'' or private, but that, in some important respects, ''is the unifying tendency in the on-going situation, the coping''[36]—are made supremely visible: music can create unities among people, ''concert'' in the double sense of social agreement and aesthetic harmony. ''Realism'' of such a sort does not consist in mere copying of a landscape from which one stands back, as the artist, or which one stands back to admire on the wall, as a viewer; the prisoners' hymn is ''real'' art because it is ''art en situation,'' because one is ''situated'' within it, and because it changes one's relationship to one's ''situation,'' even when that situation is in all other respects inescapable and unchangeable. It is not only

[35] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 12.334-335, 12.332, translation mine.

[36] Goodman, Speaking and Language, 97.

The growth of towns could have revived the federal spirit, especially if they had drawn their inspiration from the Flemish commune rather than the Roman municipality: but they were absorbed by the monarchy.''[23] Note the use of phrases such as could have . . . rather than and if they had . . . but they were: these indicate a far different manner of thinking about history than that evidenced by, say, Engels's Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, which mocks Fourier, Saint-Simon, and Owens for their ostensible assumption that

If pure reason and justice have not, hitherto, ruled the world, this has been the case only because men have not rightly understood them. What was wanted was the individual man of genius, who has now arisen and who understands the truth.

That he has now arisen, that the truth has now been clearly understood, is not an inevitable event, following of necessity in the chains of historical development, but a mere happy accident. He might just as well have been born 500 years earlier, and might then have spared humanity 500 years of error, strife, and suffering.[24]

Proudhon opposes to this necessitarian logic not a repudiation of all determinism or of any notion of historical circumstances as conditioning action for the people operating within them, but a sense that the same set of circumstances could have conditioned other outcomes, because a plurality of forces are always at play. Peter Kropotkin evokes just such a perspective in his history of the medieval cities, which emphasizes the astounding conquest of freedom achieved by municipal and guild structures before their eventual corruption and subjugation.[25] Murray Bookchin takes up this chronicle in his account of certain crucial ''turning points in history.'' On the terms of Bookchin's history, the extent to which ''Europe genuinely vacillated for a time'' between the developmen-

[23] Proudhon, Principle of Federation, 77.

[24] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 685.

[25] Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, chs. 5 and 6.

''Government is the species,'' Proudhon says, but ''ORDER is the genus . . . there are many ways of conceiving order.''[20] Human order is invented, not discovered, but it is invented within historically given situations from the material deposited there by history, and this history unfolds within parame- ters controlled to some extent by nature. Where this diverges from the tradi- tional sense given to Marx's declaration that ''men make their own history . . . under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past'' is in the perception that these ''circumstances'' almost always permit a wider range of choices than is readily apparent from certain perspectives.[21]

The claim that anarchism is ''impractical,'' argued Goldman, is tautologically derived from the reformist definition of ''a practical scheme'' as ''a scheme that could be carried out under the existing conditions,'' when ''it is exactly the existing conditions that one objects to, and any scheme that could accept these conditions is wrong and foolish''; a revolutionary path understands anarchist practice as ''a living force . . . constantly creating new conditions.''[22] The genetic perspective that views ''existing conditions'' as a structure that makes agency impossible is no truer than a quantum perspective from which the revolution is always already happening, if only in your head.

In The Principle of Federation, for example, as Proudhon outlines the historical precedents for his project of the free federation of communes, he discovers a ''Federalist Gaul'' that posed at one time an alternative to ''Monarchical France'': ''After the fall of the Western Empire, Gaul, conquered by the Franks, recovered under Germanic influence something like a federal form which, being rapidly corrupted, became the feudal system.

[20] Proudhon, General Idea, 129.

[21] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 595.

[22] Goldman, Anarchism, 49, 63

that the ''meaning'' of the song is specified by the ''situation'' in which it is sung; the song also changes ''the on-going situation'' for the prisoner whom it helps to cope, to survive. ''Like the songs of the church, the fanfares of the parade,'' art en situation is an occasional poetry that serves to evoke community, to give community strength, to turn even captivity, for a moment, into concert.

The other crucial ingredient of an art en situation is that it is created by those whom it is for; in this case, the hymn is ''attributed to Armand Marrast,'' but it is sung by the prisoners who are its hearers. This participatory aspect, the durational and spatial overlapping of the categories of ''artist'' and ''audience,'' is an important part of what makes this kind of art liberatory, not because it overcomes representation by simple self-presence, but because of its re-presentational character. As Goodman says, as active poiesis or ''making,'' art ''repeats the meaning and revives the spirit of past makings, so they are not a dead weight, by using them again in a making that is occurring now.'' To create art, then, is to experience an important part of the truth of one's being human, since the human being is not only ''the one who is made by his culture'' but ''the animal who makes himself''; it is to recall one's agency, one's capacity for self-making and self-organization.[37]

It is important, then, that in an anarchist society, not only should everyone be immersed in an aesthetically rich, sensuous environment, but that everyone should in some way participate in the making and remaking of that environment, selecting means, creating forms, imagining arrangements that suit their own tastes and inclinations, in concert with others. One need not imagine that specific practices of artistic creativity, such as the writing of novels, will disappear in order to imagine a certain dissemination of that creative quality—say, a novelistic quality, in the sense

[37] Goodman, Creator Spirit Come, 268.

Bakhtin gave to that word— into what is now the excessively quantitative experience of everyday life.

From Proudhon on, anarchism looks forward to what could be called a vernacularization of art, its diffusion into everyday practice. In Read's words, ''the arts must return to a popular basis and from that basis, by a process of education, be raised to a new universal level such as the world has never known.''[38]

One favored model for such a vernacular art, of course, is the medieval model favored by Morris and Ruskin. In looking forward to ''the works of future artists,'' which ''will not be destined for sale'' but ''will be part of a living whole that would not be complete without them, any more than they would be complete without it,'' Kropotkin also looks backward to that ''mediaeval art'' that, ''like Greek art, did not know those curiosity-shops we call a National Gallery or a Museum. A picture was painted, a statue was carved, a bronze decoration was cast to stand in its proper place in a monument of communal art. It lived there, it was part of a whole, and it contributed to give unity to the impression produced by the whole.'' However, it was not only public access to art in the Middle Ages that made it closer to the social: as Kropotkin points out, paraphrasing ''Ruskin and his school,'' ''Greek and mediaeval art were daughters of handicraft''—just as the discoveries of Enlightenment science were the product of glass-grinders like Newton, gardeners like Linnaeus, and instrument-makers like Watt. The project of reuniting art and society, for Kropotkin, is part and parcel of a larger project, the undoing of the division of labor in the reunification of manual and intellectual work.[39]

[38] Read, Poetry and Anarchism, 27-28.

[39] Kropotkin, Conquest of Bread, 135; Mutual Aid, 213n1; Fields, Factories, and Workshops 405, 363-64.

absolute ''truth'' or ''objectivity.'' In addition, he insists that the historical and ecological ''totality'' opened for investigation ''is no teleological referent, whose evolving components are merely parts of a predetermined 'Absolute.''' Instead, he defines ''an objective potentiality'' as a something within a given actuality which ''may or may not be actualized, depending upon the conditions in which it emerges.''[18] Thus, in numerous works, Bookchin makes a bid ''to examine those turning points in history which could have led people to either achieve a rational, ecological society, or an irrational, anti-ecological one'': for instance, in the era that immediately preceded the formation of the nation-state, Europe stood poised at a fork in the historic road. Depending upon the fortunes of the Comuneros and the sans culottes who packed the Parisian sections of 1793, the future of the nation-state hung very much in the balance. Had the continent moved in the direction of urban confederations, its future would have taken a socially more benign course, perhaps even a more revolutionary, democratic, and cooperative form than it was to acquire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By the same token, it is quite unclear that an industrial capitalist development of the kind that exists today was preordained by history . . . capitalism, like the nation-state, was neither an unavoidable ''necessity,'' nor was it a ''precondition'' for the establishment of a cooperative or socialist democracy.[19]

In so denying representations of history and nature a ''teleological referent,'' Bookchin opens himself to the traditional Marxist accusation of a relapse into idealism, as if rejecting an historical telos meant placing the fulcrum of historical change outside of history altogether. On the contrary: for Book- chin, as for the classical anarchists, no force comes from outside of the uni- verse or even outside of humanity to impose a specific social order on us.

[18] Bookchin, ''Reply to Moore''; ''History, Civilization, and Progress.''

[19] Bookchin, Remaking Society, 76, 89.

seeking the ''objective potentiality'' for further developments within the actuality of that historical and ecological matrix.[14]

This revalorization of the radical intellectual has drawn sharp challenges from others in the anarchist community, wary of a return to any vanguardist notion of ''the intellectual or party as ruler-legislator, as privileged interpreter of the direction of history.''[15] Regina Cochrane sees Bookchin as surreptitiously reinstating the ''scientific authority'' of the classical Marxist theorist, who claimed a panoptical knowledge of history or nature as the basis for leadership: ''By precluding the questioning of central political 'truths' and imposing closure on consideration of alternate possibilities, such 'objectivity' acts in direct opposition to the democratic process . . . contributing, even if inadvertently, to the rise of new forms of political hierarchy.

Those with insight into the liberatory 'truth' become the new elite on the basis of their expert understanding of natural tendencies.''[16] Indeed, Book- chin avers, ''I believe in a 'vanguard,' '' since ''a minority social project that advances views in opposition to the conventional wisdom of a time is usually an avant-garde, or a vanguard.''[17]

However, Bookchin's acceptance of vanguardism is not unqualified. To begin with, he balks at anything that looks too much like ''a Leninist 'general staff' that functions politically like a military organization.'' Secondly, his embrace of a certain version of Adorno's ''non-identity'' limits intellectual pretensions to

[14] Bookchin, ''History, Civilization, and Progress; Outline for a Criticism of Modern Relativism,'' Anarchy Archives: An Online Research Center on the History and Theory of Anarchism, 15 Feb. 1994, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/hiscivpro.html (11 March 2005).

[15] Ojeili, ''The 'Advance Without Authority.' ''

[16] Cochrane, ''Left-Libertarian Ecopolitics and the Contradictions of Naturalistic Ethics: The Teleology Issue in Social Ecology,'' Democracy & Nature 6, no. 2 (July 2000): 163-64.

[17] Bookchin, ''Reply to Moore,'' Social Anarchism, no. 20 (1995), http://www.socialanarchism.org/sa20/20bookchin.html (accessed 11 March 2005).

CONCLUSION: THE ONTOLOGY OF AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION

Neither the tradition nor the future of anarchist aesthetic theory is exhausted by modernism and postmodernism. A reintegration of the social and the aesthetic is possible—but not through a simple negation of one or the other half of the representational relationship. Negations of representational authority have their own authoritarian implications: a modernist elevation of irrational intuition, spontaneous action, and muscular force over intellectuality, reflection, and communication is incipiently fascist, and a postmodern dissolution of bodily materiality into the depthless play of self-reflecting images and floating signifiers neatly averts our eyes from the ongoing technocratic takeover of everyday life and subjectivity itself. Both strategies are founded on a misbegotten metaphysics, a dualism to rival Descartes', in which signifier and signified or soul and body can never touch one another.

From this perspective, it is almost a foregone conclusion that art cannot be of any help in social transformation, since it is merely a mirror, helpless to do anything but reflect what is before it; either it must be smashed to reveal what is behind it, or it must be played before, as one plays with one's own infinite reflections in a hall of mirrors. For de Cleyre, as we have seen, it is possible for the mirror image to talk back to the body it reflects; signs and spectacles are forces that structure life. Since it contributes, for better or worse, to the formation of subjects, the aesthetic looking glass is not merely a materially ineffective illusion.

Projects of aesthetic antirepresentationalism could only be meaningful if it were in fact possible to ''refuse'' representation, as Kasimir Malevich's painting of a black square on a white background promises to do. It is not so. When Arthur C. Danto writes that Black Square ''represents'' a ''great breakthrough,'' this is not merely an accident, an embarrassment due to the common

use of the verb ''to represent'' as a synonym for ''to be,'' as his own theory of the ''artworld'' should help to make clear. This artworld, the institution of ''art'' as a set of coordinated practices of creating, viewing, remembering, and judging is the context, the ''ongoing situation,'' as Goodman has it, in which any work of art, no matter how antirepresentational, represents something, acquiring a significance, accreting language—in particular, as a ''rejection of representation,'' a reaction against other works in the tradition. Other situations emerge and disappear as well. In its original exhibition in 1915, Black Square was ''mounted in an upper corner of the gallery, diagonally connecting two walls'' in the manner of a Russian Orthodox ikon, aligning it with the tradition of Byzantine antirepresentationalism.

Even Malevich's last gesture, having a black square decorate his tomb, is representational, as the persona of the artist fills the blank space: ''He clearly identified himself with the black square.''[40] As Stephen David Ross notes, every work of art, every text, ''whatever can be discriminated,'' is always to be found in ''an order,'' a set that it reciprocally modifies and makes to mean something different—or, as Proudhon would say, a ''series'' (''What I call ORDER,'' he writes, is anything that is ''seriated,'' and conversely, ''the series'' is an ''order,'' an ''ensemble of relations''). It does not matter that the ambition of Black Square is to present a painting that is not ''a picture,'' that is, a representation of any ''external reality''; its very durational and sensual being, its relationality, makes it representational.[41] The wish to escape from representation is a wish for an escape from all relationships, which is to say, an escape from life, a self-annihilating wish. This is the deeper sense of Moore's observation that antirepresentationalist artworks are ''suicide notes.''

[40] Arthur C. Danto, ''Paint It Black.'' The Nation 277, no. 5 (August 18-25, 2003): 48-49.

[41] Ross, A Theory of Art, 62; Proudhon, Oeuvres, 5.33, 5.141; Danto, ''Paint It Black,'' 48-49.

critique of historical representation, social anarchists have proposed not an ahistorical idealism, but an ecological conception in which history is represented neither as formless (taking place in a void of ''quantum'' indeterminacy) nor as rigidly teleological (''genetically'' deterministic). Evolutionary ''development,'' in this conception, is neither the unfolding of a biological ''essence'' nor mere quantum ''fluctuation'': in a development, every new moment is conditioned—not rigidly determined or foretold, but dialectically potentiated—by what came before. As Bookchin writes, ''It is fatuous to challenge dialectical reason with promiscuous 'what-ifs' that have no roots in a dialectical continuum. Every intelligible 'if' must itself be a potentiality that can be accounted for as the product of a development. A hypothetical 'if' that floats in isolation, lacking roots in a developmental continuum, is nonsensical.[13] Accordingly, Bookchin criticizes the sort of ''quantum'' view of history as something formless that passively awaits but is equivocal toward all our ''narratives'' as unacceptably ''relativistic,'' ''a skepticism that denies any meaning, rationality, coherence, and continuity in History.'' The dissolution of ''History'' by these analyses ''into eclectically assembled 'histories' made up of a multiplicity of disjointed episodes,'' into ''a series of 'accidents' '' without either causality or significance—''or even worse, into myths that belong to 'different' gender, ethnic, and national groups,'' a collection of mere ''imaginaries,'' all of which are held to be ''ideologically equatable'' and ''essentially discontinuous from one another''—is merely a form of ''ideological prophylaxis'' devised by disillusioned leftists ''to protect themselves from the still-unexorcised demons of a tragically failed past.'' Instead, Bookchin advises, intellectuals should face the necessity of investigating the ''dialectical continuum'' within which we are situated,

[13] Bookchin, ''A Philosophical Naturalism.''

''the unconscious'': it can only function by means of a not-knowing, a deception.

To propagate such a narrative would be to take Baudrillard's nihilist option, refusing ''representation'' in favor of ''simulation''—admitting ''that the real is no longer real''; it would mean little more than a twist on the existing society of simulation or spectacles.[10] Since means tend to determine ends in political practice, the selection of such manipulative tools would seem to foredoom Rorty's politics to the reproduction of a technocratic form of life in which people are instrumentalized, treated as tools.

An instrumentalist conception of history as tabula rasa hardly seems preferable to a teleological conception of history as progress toward a goal. However, if historical narratives cannot be founded on any objective reality, and if there is no way for us to meaningfully compare them to other narratives in terms of truth or utility, one wonders if any narrative is preferable to no narrative at all. The problem is that contemporary theory of almost every variety points to the inescapable narrativity of life: ''we all live a great proportion of our lives in a surrender to stories about our lives, and about other possible lives,'' as Wayne Booth summarizes; ''we live more or less in stories.''[11] The gloomy conclusion to be drawn would appear to be that we are left to ''surrender'' to any story whatsoever; as White ominously remarks, even ''nationalist discourse,'' while ''in one sense . . . fictitious,'' is ''real'' to the degree that it is ''fulfilled'' in collective practice.[12]

While ''suspicious'' of scientism and vanguardism, however, ''most anarchists have not rejected the aspirations of classical social theory,'' as Ojeili writes: ''A rational, even scientific, social theory has therefore remained an important goal for numerous anarchists.'' In opposition to an ultimately less- than-critical

[10] Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulations, 13.
[11] Wayne C. Booth, The Company We Keep, 14-15.
[12] White, ''The Ironic Poetics of Late Modernity.''

There remain better things to do than to commit aesthetic suicide, or to continue the aesthetic game in bad faith. The trajectory of the last three chapters, tracing a line from the consideration of the aesthetic in itself to a broader view of art in the context of social transformation, leads us to the difficult questions of representation in its fully political dimensions, which the next section will explore.

Part III: Politics

Even Rorty, after all, in his recourse to ''causal pressures'' that mysteriously occasion practice, recognizes that ''objectivity is a useful goal when one is trying to calculate means to ends by predicting the consequences of action,'' but prediction is a matter of relating what has happened in the past to what is likely to happen in the future—and this what-has-happened has already been evacuated from Rorty's system.[9] No belief that tax cuts for the suburban middle class empower the urban poor, no matter how fervently embraced and put into action, is likely to help empower urban poor people, because such a belief is unrelated to historical actuality.

Moreover, it is not clear how the sort of Narrative of National Greatness that Rorty's ''strong poet'' would construct could have the salutary effects Rorty anticipates, given his pragmatist beliefs about the nature of interpretation. If it is simply true that all we ever do with texts is use them, so that texts never determine their interpretations, then the poet could not possible exercise any control over how readers of this Narrative would use it. Perhaps they would read it in precisely the same fashion as the existing Narratives of National Greatness (the reigning ideologies of American exceptionalism, the classless society, individual freedom and opportunity, etc.)—that is, as a pretext and justification for continued inequalities, imperial adventures, and so on.

Even if the poet could somehow ''predict'' what kind of ''causal pressures'' his or her Narrative would exercise over people, it could only have an effect on them to the extent that they took it for an accurate representation of the sort Rorty takes to be impossible and unreal. No one will be willing to act on the basis of beliefs that he or she believes to be completely without relation to reality; therefore, if people were aware of the artificiality of this Narrative, they would reject it as false. In fact, a Narrative of National Greatness functions in almost exactly the same manner as what Žižek calls

[9] Rorty, Achieving Our Country, 11.

tation, but rather attempts to forge a moral identity.''[6] Instead of guiding political practice via an ''accurate representation'' of history, one tells prophetic ''stories'' about history that one ''fulfills'' in action: ''fulfillment,'' as White explains, ''has to do with someone in the present choosing something in the past and fulfilling it by that choice in the present.''[7] In this way, political progress will be spurred by the positive construction of what might be called Narratives of National Greatness.

This pragmatist deployment of performativity does not sit well with everyone, however. Nancy Fraser worries about a certain ''Romantic impulse'' that makes itself felt in Rorty's political writing, despite his personal preference for social democracy. Indeed, his ''deification of the strong poet'' and ''fetishization of creation ex nihilo'' carry strongly ''individualist, elitist, and aestheticist'' connotations: ''It takes only the squint of an eye to see here the vision of a Georges Sorel: a 'sociology' that classifies humanity into 'leaders' and 'masses,' a 'theory of action' whereby the former mold the latter by means of a sheer 'triumph of the will,' a 'philosophy of history' as an empty canvas awaiting the unfettered designs of the poet-leader.''[8] It is, in fact, the notion of history as ''empty canvas'' that licenses the manipulation of ''the masses'' via what Sorel called revolutionary ''myth.'' If this antirepresentationalist politics is, as Rorty avers, a form of antiauthoritarianism, then it is perilously close to Sorel's incipiently fascist variety.

Apart from ethical qualms we might have about these Narratives of National Greatness, Rorty's substitution of utility for truth begs an epistemological question: if these narratives represent nothing ''true,'' if they have no relation to an objective history, then how can they possibly be ''useful?''

[6] Rorty, Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 11, 13, 15.

[7] White, ''The Ironic Poetics of Late Modernity.''

[8] Fraser, Unruly Practices, 96.

9. The Critique of Democracy as Representation

> Even more radical and ''anarchist'' anti-plans such as Bookchin's proposals . . . suffer from the same basic vice: anticipating and planning a future for ''others.''
>
> —Midnight Notes Collective, ''Strange Victories: The Anti-Nuclear Movement in the U.S. and Europe''

> The trouble with this good instinct—not to be regimented in one's inti- mate affairs by architects, engineers, and international public-relations experts—is that ''no plan'' always means in fact some inherited and fre- quently bad plan.
>
> The best defense against planning—and people do need a defense against planners—is to become informed about the plan that is indeed existent and operating in our lives; and to learn to take the initiative in proposing or supporting reasoned changes.
>
> —Paul and Percival Goodman, Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life

READING AND WRITING ARE POLITICAL; AT THIS POINT IN THE ARGUMENT, HOW- ever, it seems necessary to address the political per se. Many contemporary theorists seem to flee the crisis of representation by means of a retreat to the political realm, which is seen as the safe place where a certain kind of epistemological objectivity, ethical universality, and cognitive rationality are

restored, imposed on one by necessity, without the need for any philosophically risky embrace of objectivism, universalism, or rationalism on one's own part; after one takes the step into politics, its seems, one is relieved of having to decide about such things. For Diana Fuss, ''politics operates as the privileged, self-evident category'' in which questions of ontology (do ''women'' form a real ''class''?) disappear in the pragmatic questions of coalition building; for Colin MacCabe, one simply finds that ''particular identities, whatever their provisionality, impose themselves in specific practices.''[1] These expressions of relief at being relieved of decisions imply a wish to avoid questions, to retrieve some innocent, intuitive grounding in everyday life.

Instead of seeing politics as an exit from theoretical questions of representation, we ought to demand theories capable of articulating concepts of objectivity, universality, and rationality robust enough to actually provide a political compass—a liberatory ethics.

Marx's rejection of German idealism forced him to push his historical materialism in the direction of science, a move that effectively meant substituting rational appeals to knowledge (based in the measurable world of objects) for emotional appeals to justice (based in the felt experience of subjects).

For all that this strategy has revealed, its price was a fundamental concealment of the matter of ethics. As a theory of how the system does operate and (to a certain extent) how it must transform itself, Marxism has never been able to adequately explain why those who suffer from the system should act within their situation to transform it. This reading of Marxism has by no means been universally accepted; Guy Debord, for one, insists that Marx makes no distinction between descriptive and prescriptive modes.[2] Numerous radicals, from Rosa Luxemburg and Antonio Gramsci to

[1] Diana Fuss, Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference (New York: Routledge, 1989), 36; Colin MacCabe, ''Foreword,'' in Spivak, In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics (New York: Routledge), xvii, emphasis mine.

[2] Debord, Society of the Spectacle, 95.

If revolutionary metanarratives, no less than others, are now placed under the sign of incredulity, then the suggested alternative is performativity.

Rather than a theory that constatively represents historical situations, one constitutes theory as a practice, a brick to be hurled at the forces of authority, ''an instrument for combat,'' as Deleuze has it. This pragmatist alternative is not far from an older irrationalist theory of revolution as a ''myth'' through which one organizes subjects for action. Perhaps with an uncomfortable awareness of the history of that term, Rorty prefers the term ''image'' to ''myth'' or ''ideology,'' insisting that ''calling a story 'mythical' or 'ideological' would be meaningful only if such stories could be contrasted with an 'objective' story''; since there is no ''nonmythological, nonideological way of telling a country's story,'' such pejorative language has no bearing. Indeed, objectivity is beside the point: ''Nobody knows what it would be like to try to be objective when attempting to decide what one's country really is, what its history really means, any more than when answering the question of who one really is oneself, what one's individual past really adds up to.'' Instead, what is important is ''deciding what we will do next, what we will try to become.'' From this perspective, Rorty condemns objections among the neo- Marxian intellectuals of ''the academic Left'' to idealistic representations of American identity as a useless distraction from meaningful political work.

Rather than contrasting a merely ''ideological'' conception of America as the bearer of a democratic dream with its ''real'' history of colonial depredations and cruel inequalities, he argues, we should reinforce that American mythos in the service of its own realization: ''there is no point in asking whether Lincoln or Whitman or Dewey got America right. Stories about what a nation has been and should try to be are not attempts at accurate represen-

representation of the objective structure of history—its stages of development, its central conflicts, its protagonists, and its ultimate conclusion—such that the possessors of this theory are in at least some sense entitled to represent the class whose victory history assures. Leninists, of course, assumed the privilege of speaking for the proletariat, but Kautsky's Second International also asserted its duty to teach workers ''their historical function'' and ''goals,'' and even its own spontaneist opposition engaged in agitation toward the revolution that they regarded as inevitable.[3]

Accordingly, Ojeili sees the greatest ''post-modernist challenge to socialist theory and practice'' as ''its sharp critique of representation,'' which is not only an ''attack on the metaphor of the mind as a mirror of nature'' but also ''on the aspiration for totalising theories of social order and history.''

For Foucault, the very notion of a totalizing ''revolution,'' as opposed to local and tactical ''revolts,'' appears in retrospect to have been part of a bid ''to domesticate revolts within a rational and controllable history.''[4] In its incredulity toward grand historical narratives, on this account, ''postmodernism is not delivering another narrative about history, just denying that history is in any sense story-shaped''; as Hayden White puts it, ''a historian . . . who tries to represent reality as if it had the kind of coherence that the well- found, rounded story does, is really lapsing into some kind of fictivism, fictionalism.''[5]

[3] Ojeili, ''The 'Advance Without Authority.' ''

[4] Ibid.; Foucault, Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984, vol. 3, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (New York: New Press, 2000), 450.

[5] Eagleton, Illusions of Postmodernism, 31; Hayden White, ''The Ironic Poetics of Late Modernity: An Interview With Hayden White,'' Historein: A Review of the Past and Other Stories, no. 2 (2000), http://www.historein.gr/vol2_interview.htm (accessed 11 March 2005).

Cornel West, have tried to address or compensate for this structural lacuna in Marxist thought. Such efforts have been frustrated by the degree to which Marx's inability to address the ethical has permitted cynical readings for which justice is merely ideological—and so has become a valuable weapon for instrumentalists from Lenin and Stalin to Mao.

Poststructuralism, meanwhile, shares the same difficulty in a different fashion. Instead of centering itself on an analysis of history, post-structuralist theory is animated by an ethical imperative demanding respect for the other (for difference, plurality, heterogeneity) in the face of forces that reduce otherness to sameness (uniformity, the common, the universal). This releases critique from the Marxist attachment to a fixed set of analytical categories and makes it more readily capable of addressing a wide variety of other forms or sites of domination. However, while stepping away from a monological or scientific model of knowledge, poststructuralist theory, too, describes the world in terms of perpetual warfare. It is because there can be nothing more substantial behind one story people happen to tell about the world (about what is true, necessary, right, good, just, etc.) than there is behind any other story, because the choice between them is always arbitrary, that stories are inevitably weapons, instruments of coercive power. Resistance to coercive power means calling into question claims to authority allegedly based on universal truths. This implies that since any ethics comes with a claim to universal validity, no ethics can claim legitimacy, for each will be only another exercise in coercive power, an imposition of sameness on otherness. However, as May points out, a resistance to ethical universality, unless heavily saddled with qualifications and caveats—e.g., ''as much as possible,'' ''all things being equal''—is self-contradictory, for the demand to respect the other universalizes. While May resists drawing this conclusion, it would seem that even on his account, poststructuralism encounters serious difficulties in clarifying its relation to the

ethical—difficulties that are not merely contingent but structural, insofar as its very ''avoidance'' of ethics is ''ethically motivated.''[3]

Anarchist theory, as we have already seen, distinguishes itself from other political theories by its special relation to the ethical. Anarchist politics has always centered on an ethical opposition to domination in all its forms, whether emanating from capital, state, church, family, or other institutions, social conventions, or features of everyday life.[4] This is exactly what Marx found so obnoxious about Bakunin as a theorist: ''He understands absolutely nothing about social revolution…

For him its economic requisites do not… exist. Since all hitherto existing economic formations, developed or undeveloped, have included the enslavement of the working person (whether in the form of the wage worker, the peasant, etc.), he thinks that a radical revolution is possible under all these formations… Will power and not economic conditions is the basis of his social revolution.''[5] Although Marx exaggerates the element of voluntarism in Bakunin's thought, his comments reflect what George Woodcock calls ''a fundamental split between moral and material views of history and society.'' If oppression is wrong everywhere, both undesirable and unnecessary, then any group of oppressed subjects that becomes conscious of its own oppression can revolt against it, including the

[3] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 130, 130-31, 33. Notably, May also premises his Moral Theory of Poststructuralism on a distinction between ''moral'' and ''semantic'' forms of antirepresentationalism, and ultimately on a distinction between performative and constative, which other poststructuralists are often inclined to reject in the strongest terms (21-22, 48).

[4] Colson, Petit lexique, 108; Hyde, The Gift, 90. The consistency with which this per- haps never-present ''all'' has been critiqued has improved particularly following the feminist, ecologist, and antiracist interventions that determined the reconstruction of theory in the sixties and seventies. These interventions affected all varieties of radical theory, but as Murray Bookchin points out, anarchism has been more structurally flexible, hence more readily able to respond to and incorporate the theoretical demands of the ''new social movements.''

[5] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 544.

11. The Critique of History as Representation

AS CHAMSY OJEILI EXPLAINS, CLASSICAL MARXISM PROPOSED, ON ALTERNATE occasions, two possible accounts of how historical materialist theory relates to the history it attempts to understand. One account dictates an essentiall contemplative position, for which theory, as a prisoner of the social context in which it is born, is ''always arriving too late,'' understanding events fully only in retrospect, rather than looking ahead to direct the movement; in this case, since ''communism is not an ideal,'' but an outcome of the historical process, so that ''revolutions cannot be made,'' all that theory can prescribe is ''attentisme'' or ''revolutionary waiting''—the deterministic official dogma of the Second International, but also a key element in the left-wing spontaneist heresies of Rosa Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek, Karl Korsch, the early Lukács, and others. The other account specifies an active ''leading role'' for theory as ''head of a coming emancipation'':[1] since, in this essentially Leninist conception, the intellectual vanguard ''[has] over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement,'' the possessors of scientific theory, as Marx says, ''have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole,'' and so are entitled to a position of leadership.[2] In either case, correct, scientific theory is taken to be an accurate

[1] Ojeili, ''The 'Advance Without Authority.' ''

[2] Marx, quoted in Ojeili, ''The 'Advance Without Authority.' ''

cannot deny it in economy.''[52] Even earlier, in 1892, the Italian anarchist Saverio Merlino had suggested that ''Pacts of association can differ much from each other'': ''In one association the workers will pledge themselves to give a certain number of hours of work, in another to carry out a given task in a definite time. The workers in one association will prefer to put the products of their labour in common; others to take a part proportionate to their work.'' What is essential, as Malatesta emphasized, ''is that all should possess the means of production'' so that none may ''control the natural wealth and the instruments of production and . . . thus oblige others to work for them.''[53] According to Guérin, the CNT put this principle into practice in the collectivization of farmland: in Catalonia, where ''slightly better off'' peasants chose ''individualism,'' this choice was respected, whereas in Aragón, ''more than three-quarters of the land was socialized'' with such popular enthusiasm that even a forced decollectivization imposed by Stalinist ministers was partially undone by rebellious peasants who destroyed the deeds of ownership.[54] The economic ''all,'' then, was appropriated both by and for the popular ''all,'' and the horizon of a communismo libertario was not so terribly distant at all.

[52] Abad de Santillan, After the Revolution, 97.

[53] Merlino, quoted in Joll, The Anarchists, 163; Malatesta, Life and Ideas, 102-3.

[54] Guérin, Anarchism, 131, 133, 140-41.

peasants and members of the lumpenproletariat, for whom Marx had little or no use.[6]

They do not require representatives; they are capable, or potentially capable, of articulating their own experiences, the materials of which they are constructed, into a critical response to their own circumstances—of representing themselves. So Proudhon asks: ''What need have I of proxies, any more than of representatives, [to] specify what I want . . . can I not explain it without the aid of anybody?'' It is in this sense that anarchists have regarded political representation as inherently dominatory.[7]

This rejection of representation has particularly entailed repudiating the vanguardism that some Marxists have authorized with selective quotations from the master, such as Marx's famous comment on the peasantry: ''They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.'' Where such Marxists pronounce the proletariat a universal class (representative of humanity, by virtue of its relation to the means of production) and themselves a universal party of the proletariat (representative of the representative, as Lenin declared, by virtue of its possession of an accurate theoretical representation of history), anarchists insist on a nonhierarchical society as an end and non- hierarchical organization as the only appropriate means to that end. In reaching the same conclusions, post-structuralist ethics imply a new anarchist politics.[8]

The problem is that a post-structuralist critique of representation makes it difficult, if not impossible, to answer the pragmatic questions of politics: if the political, as Simon Critchley says, is ''the realm of the decision,'' then how should decisions be made, if not through representational means? There can no longer be any question—in theory, let alone in practice—of achieving political representation in terms of the Enlightenment model summed up

[6] Woodcock, The Writer and Politics, 47; Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 294.

[7] Proudhon, General Idea, 140; Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan, 102.

[8] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 608; May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 21, 46-47, 155.

by John Adams's declaration that the Congress should present ''in miniature an exact portrait of the people at large''; there is no ''people'' to sit for such a portrait.[9] Seitz denies that the subjects of political representation preexist the representational system that claims to reflect their wishes; instead, they can be seen as its product. If this subject-producing representation is portraiture, it is less like Jan Van Eyck's The Arnolfini Marriage and more like Magritte's The Human Condition.[10]

At its extremes, warns Pauline Rosenau, ''post-modern anti-representationalism'' not only deflates progressive ambitions, it effectively ''erases any normative preference for representative democracy.''[11] If this is true, it is most untimely, for representative democracy as it has been practiced is now under serious strain. The pervasive cynicism with which many Americans viewed the 2000 presidential election is understandable. Indeed, as Win McCormack argues, nothing seems to describe the postelection wrangling so accurately as Foucault's conception of representation as a field of struggle.

While McCormack overstates his case that, in effect, the Republican post- election strategy used Foucauldian arguments against conventional concepts of truth and objectivity to discredit the recount—after all, James Baker's suggestion that ''the more often ballots are recounted, especially by hand, the more likely it is that human errors, like lost ballots and other risks, will be introduced'' appeals to notions of correctness and recollected presence versus error and loss—what allowed this strategy to work was the public's

[9] Simon Critchley, ''Is There a Normative Deficit in the Theory of Hegemony?'' Centre for Theoretical Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, http://www.essex.ac.uk/centres/TheoStud/Laclauessay.doc, 2; Brian Seitz, The Trace of Political Representation (Al- bany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 2; John Adams, quoted in Seitz, The Trace of Political Representation, 2.

[10] Seitz, The Trace of Political Representation, 25, 5.

[11] Rosenau, Post-Modernism, 107.

ungraspable totality—the individual subject disappears into a multitude, an ''all'' that refuses to be represented.

Or rather, this totality refuses to be represented as a series of isolated ''individuals.'' For Kropotkin is not an antirepresentationalist. Indeed, the point of The Conquest of Bread is that the community can adequately know and name its own collective needs, desires, and capacities—in all the richness of its own diversity: ''We know, indeed, that the producers . . . even now produce such quantities of goods that a certain degree of comfort could be brought to every hearth.''[51] The Conquest of Bread upends the logic of the laissez-faire economists who piously condemn all ''planning,'' no matter how decentralized, democratic, open, and participatory, as ''authoritarian'' and ''irrational'': where Hayek would insist that the community cannot represent itself as a social whole, delegating this task of naming and knowing to ''individual'' acts of sale and purchase, Kropotkin shows that this fragmentation of a functional ''all'' into so many atomized ''individuals,'' of the durational ''environment'' into so many private spaces or ''domestic interiors,'' is the real falsehood. My part-time freedom as a consumer is bought at the expense of someone else's part-time slavery as a producer (as well as, ultimately, my own). Here, then, an anarcho-communist representational strategy echoes that of Proudhon's mutualism in encouraging the identification of consumption and production, bringing these two moments of identity and action as durationally and spatially close to one another as possible.

Ultimately, many anarchists have refused to make any one of the three anarchist economic systems into an absolute, pragmatically preferring to envision a variety of anarchist mixed economies. ''In each locality,'' predicted Abad de Santillan, ''the degree of communism, collectivism or mutualism will depend on the conditions prevailing. Why dictate rules? We who make freedom our banner,

[51] Ibid., 51.

sums up as the ''institutions of mine and thine.''[47] In the opening pages of The Conquest of Bread, Kropotkin insists that ''There is not even a thought, or an invention, which is not common property, born of the past and the present . . . thousands of philosophers, of poets, of scholars, of inventors, have themselves been supported by the labour of past centuries . . . upheld and nourished through life, both physically and mentally, by legions of workers and craftsmen of all sorts.''[48] This interdependence and continuity are masked by a capitalist system that displaces the politics of time into a politics of space, which it divides into private and public, self and other, homeland and colony, interior and exterior, domestic life and work life. As Ruth Chandler remarks, the ''virtuous'' of capitalist class society are made to ''feel so good'' about their supposedly independent, individual accomplishments that ''they fail to see the durational politics, the multitudes so to speak, running right thorough their 'domestic interior.' ''[49]

Kropotkin is clear on this point: these accomplishments ''have drawn their motive force from the environment.'' The upshot of his argument: ''By what right then can any one whatever appropriate the least morsel of this immense whole and say—This is mine, not yours?'' In the end, it is because ''it is not possible to evaluate every one's part in the production of the world's wealth'' that the only truly just economy is communist: ''All belongs to all.''[50]

So anarcho-communists such as Kropotkin and Berkman, perhaps more profoundly than Stirner, launch a critique of representation: they insist that no system of labeling representation can adequately capture the essentially collective productive activity of subjects. Seen from the standpoint of the ''environment''—an ecological way of naming community, that ''impossible'' object, that

[47] Berkman, Now and After, 212; Kropotkin, The Wage System (Johannesburg: Zabalaza Books, n.d.), 12.

[48] Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, 45.

[49] Ruth Chandler, e-mail to postanarchism listserv, March 2, 2003.

[50] Kropotkin, The Conquest of Bread, 45-46, 49.

acceptance of the disconnection between the electoral system and the popular will.[12] One did not have to read Baudrillard to conclude that ''it is as if everyone voted by chance, or monkeys voted,'' that ''the parties in power . . . represent nothing.''[13] In the face of such cynicism, where are the theoretical resources to mount a defense of democratic representation?

One response has been to give up on democratic representation. If truth is conceived as correspondence between a signifying representative and a signified constituency, then there can be no question of truth in political representation, there is no truth, only power—no right, only might. The arena of democratic politics, in Foucault's famous inversion of Clausewitz, is only a sublimated version of the battlefield. Where democracy promises to transform an ''unworkable (dangerous, anarchic) multiplicity . . . into workable plurality through representation,'' Seitz proposes, it can never do so; what is presented as peaceful persuasion and public deliberation is actually warfare, in which the object is not to persuade one's equals but to anni- hilate the enemy.[14] Post-structuralism conceives the true character of a democratic society, as of any other society, in terms of a ''war model . . . characterized by constant antagonism, rift, and dislocation.'' In this sense, Koch writes approvingly, ''the potential to reach consensus without decep- tion or force becomes impossible.''[15]

While Newman cautions that the description of society and the political as warfare is to be understood figuratively rather than literally, the selection of violence as a metaphor invites the kind of

[12] Win McCormack, ''Deconstructing the Election,'' The Nation, 8 March 2001, www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20010326&s=mccormack&c=1 (accessed 7 Aug. 2003); James Baker, quoted in McCormack, ''Deconstructing the Election.''

[13] Baudrillard, Simulacra and Simulations, 132.

[14] Seitz, The Trace of Political Representation, 25, 13; Alan Wolfe, ''A Fascist Philosopher Helps Us Understand Contemporary Politics,'' The Chronicle of Higher Education 50, no. 30 (April 2, 2004): B16.

[15] Newman, From Bakunin to Lacan, 50; Koch, ''Poststructuralism,'' 343.

objection recently voiced by May in a review of Newman's work: if theory is a tool, this tool seems designed less to help people build a cooperative society on egalitarian relationships than to disrupt and prevent any form of cooperation. Anarchism requires something more solidary to guide its practice.[16] Koch and Newman nonetheless claim that their war model is an anarchist conception of political life, no more, no less; when we call all representation into question, stripping the polis of its essentialist trappings, we are left with a power struggle that will go on irrespective of whatever social order is in place—liberal, theocratic, social-democratic, monarchical, fascist, anarchist, communist, etc.

One can choose to wear blinders or not, that is all.

Is the war model, as Newman and Koch contend, an anarchist alternative to a representational model of politics? The tradition seems to offer some support for this interpretation: Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin all de- nounce representative democracy as a mask for domination.[17] But we have also seen that the social anarchist critique of representation takes subtler forms than blanket acceptance or blanket rejection, both of which end in practical and theoretical incoherence. In confronting every form of hierarchy and domination, social anarchists from the nineteenth century on had to develop more ethically consistent and epistemologically sophisticated critiques of representation, specifying which kinds of representational practices are to be tolerated, endorsed, adopted. In hermeneutics, interpretive practices that either submit blindly to the text or impose a reifying schema onto it are equally to be shunned in favor of a dialectical encounter, a dialogue in which both parties can be challenged. In art, this

[16] May, ''Lacanian Anarchism and the Left,'' review of From Bukunin to Lacan: Anti- Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power, by Saul Newman, Theory and Event 6, no. 1 (2003): 11.

[17] Proudhon, System of Economical Contradictions, 50-51; Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 220-21; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 188.

the CNT ''claimed to represent'' were ''often more interested in pleasure than in labor . . . [which] meant that workers' desires sometimes conflicted with those of the organizations that claimed to represent them.'' The very ''productivist'' bias of CNT analyses, in which relations of production were made to represent the totality of social relations, were all too easily converted into a ''supervisory'' and ''disciplinary'' practice of speaking-for, one that provoked its own ''workers' resistance to work,'' manifested in ''indifference, slow-downs, indiscipline, lateness, absenteeism, theft, and even sabotage and outright violence.'' Finding itself in charge of a large part of the Spanish economy (a function thrust on it in part by its pragmatic decision to enter the Popular Front government, a move denounced by many anarchists then and since), the CNT became the new agent of labor discipline, using representations of value—wages and prices—to promote productivity, so that in the end, ''the anarchosyndicalists . . . were forced to jettison their theories of workers' democracy and participation to make the rank and file work harder and produce more.''[46]

If, as Seidman indicates, the very logic of productivist representation, focalizing on the productive deed and a labor theory of value, is the source of anarcho-syndicalism's unfortunate destiny, perhaps the anarcho-communist attention to needs and consumption is an antidote. For Berkman, use-value, situationally defined by the needs of the user, is paramount. The unrepresentability of labor-value is one of the considerations that indicates, for Berkman, the superiority of ''social ownership and use; that is, to Communism, as the most practicable and just economic system.'' The other is the unrepresentability of rights. The ''right of every one to the product of his toil,'' Berkman points out, assumes that ''there is such a thing as an individual product''—a naïve realist ontology undergirding certain practices of labeling representation that Kropotkin

[46] Seidman, Workers Against Work, introduction, 13.

Ackelsberg notes, the lingering workerist biases of the CNT in Spain, through its ''emphasis on economic structures as the root of social organisation,'' generated a focalizing representation of the political field that, ''particularly in a society charac- terised by a sharp sexual division of labour, raised serious questions for women'': namely, ''How would women be involved?'' By taking the workplace as the basic ''organism of representation,'' the syndicalist analysis left ''domestic work,'' including ''arrangements for childcare or child-rearing,'' out of the picture.[43] In this respect, it suffers a serious disadvantage even in comparison to the reductivist representational practices of Marxist tendencies such as Autonomism that have attempted to ''economize'' housework, situating women's activity within the context of a ''social factory.''[44] The very strengths of anarcho-syndicalism as a strategy for transformation—its ability to simultaneously engage with and challenge existing capitalist structures outside the State—prove a liability when it comes to non-monetarized forms of practice, activities whose value has not already been quantified by those structures. Thus, even the best-intentioned cenetistas were left with nothing more to contribute than the repeated claim that men and women would be equalized through coeducation and the entry of women into the sphere of men's work.

Even that sphere, in the Spanish experience, was no idyll. During the tempestuous time of the revolution, the CNT's syndical structure was occasionally the scene of real disputes over wages. James Joll notes that ''there were quarrels in Valencia over the arrangements for marketing the orange crop, when one orange-growing village revolted . . . because they claimed they were not getting a fair price from the syndicalist committee which sold their crops.''[45] Seidman argues that the Spanish working classes whom

[43] Ackelsberg, Free Women of Spain, 8-9.
[44] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 36.
[45] James Joll, The Anarchists (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), 269.

translates into representational practices that seek to open up this dialectic of engagement and contestation. In both fields, a politics of ecological relatedness and evolutionary development holds sway. What about the political field proper?

The anarchist tradition offers something a good deal more complex than a simple refusal of or skepticism about political representation. True, Proudhon declares that government by representatives is simply incompatible with freedom, but in his General Idea of the Revolution he modifies this judgment, allowing that electoral democracy is at least better than more autocratic systems, such as constitutional monarchy.[18] Nevertheless, the representational system of the Second Republic, like our own, is at best merely ''quasi-democratic,'' offering the general population only brief moments of self- governance, ''forty-eight hours at the most for each election,'' after which the normal order of domination and submission resumes: ''the President and the Representatives . . . are the masters; all the rest obey.''[19]

Such are the considerations that lead Bookchin to propose a stricter definition of democracy: only the direct crafting of policy by assemblies of the people, rather than by elected representatives, can be called truly democratic. Bookchin therefore favors the replacement of representative democracy with participatory forms of direct democracy in which, instead of electing representatives empowered to legislate independently from their constituents, people would gather in small popular assemblies to craft their own legislation, sending recallable delegates with imperative mandates to represent their decisions to larger bodies.[20] For Proudhon, however, this approach is dangerous. Direct democracy on the Greek model would be better than an electoral system, but where representative democracy is all but closed to citizen initiative, the direct

[18] Proudhon, quoted in Woodcock, Writer and Politics 52; General Idea, 135.
[19] Proudhon, General Idea, 158-59.
[20] Bookchin, Remaking Society, 174-75.

form is so wide open that it might equally function as a means by which despots like Bonaparte can be restored to power by popular vote on the strength of charisma. Even if direct government fails to vote itself out of existence, it remains ''a recipe by which . . . the abstract collectivity of the people can still be used for maintaining the parasitism of the minority and the oppression of the greater number''— another mask for domination.[21]

Even the ideal democracy, in which universal suffrage is not turned to advantage by a dominant class, is majoritarian, which for Proudhon constitutes the worst form of oppression, since it conceals its oppressive nature behind the perfect ideological screen, ''the name of the people.''[22] Between popular majority opinion and truth is a gap through which the irrational can enter into the rational, quantified world of democratic politics: if indeed ''the People'' can be treated as a collective subject with its own cognitive capacities, then just like any other subject, its cognitive capacities can fail it. Quite apart from the question of how authentically this collective cognition is expressed by any individual representative, then, Proudhon questions the content of the cognition itself, which may well be compromised by ''the domination of prejudices,'' ''the contradiction between ideas and interests,'' ''the variability of opinion,'' and ''the drives of the multitude'': ''Who will make triage of the ideas and fantasies of the People? To whom can we appeal from this possibly erroneous, and consequently despotic will?''[23] If, for Proudhon, humanity is equipped with a faculty of reasoning, it by no means excludes the possibility of a populist fascism; people free from political constraints but not from moral error can manifest a despotism, recreating the State in terrifying new forms.

The possible domination of minorities by majorities is also of primary concern for Malatesta and Goldman. Goldman, conscious

[21] Proudhon, General Idea, 110, 119, 135.

[22] Proudhon, Solution du problème social (Paris: Éditions Lacroix, 1868), 56, translation mine.

[23] Ibid., 42-46, translation mine.

what needs to be done and what can be done, making and discussing proposals, casting votes and giving instructions: ''there, where everybody knows everybody, the practice of democracy is possible.''[41] Taken in toto, this system seems to capture Fraser's notion of a democratic procedure for negotiating the articulation of human needs admirably.

Anarcho-communists, however, note that collectivist economics retains a wage system, and therefore the possibility of distributive injustice. As Proud- hon had warned, even wages that are subject to majority vote may be a reward of ''90'' units to someone's ''100'' units of effort. Thus, Berkman warns that ''there is no way by which value can be measured,'' since ''worth'' is relative to all parties in a situation:

> Suppose the carpenter worked three hours to make a kitchen chair, while the surgeon took only half an hour to perform an operation that saved your life. If the amount of labor used determines value, then the chair is worth more than your life. Obvious nonsense, of course. Even if you should count in the years of study and practice the surgeon needed to make him capable of performing the operation, how are you going to decide what ''an hour of operating'' is worth? The carpenter and mason also had to be trained before they could do their work properly. Even Proudhon's banking system, with its exchange of products for products and labor for labor, is vulnerable to this criticism: ''Since the value of a commodity cannot be adequately determined, no barter is equitable.''[42]

This would be an abstract point if it were not a serious handicap for at least some moments of anarcho-syndicalist practice. As

[41] Ibid., 50, 58, 64, 80, 87-88.

[42] Berkman, Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism (New York: Vanguard Press, 1929), 196, 212.

> a market, independent of the real needs of the people, but would be in line with these needs; and so long as a single Spaniard did not have sufficient clothing, there would be no reason to close a single textile factory, or to make idle a single worker.

Thus, the collectivist approach takes the challenge of determining ''needs'' and coordinating plans seriously, while rigorously requiring plans to be made in a bottom-up, participatory manner, via a decentralized federation of ''representative organisms.''[40]

Proudhon's Bank of the People reappears in this scheme as a ''Council of Credit and Exchange'' that issues and regulates the monetary ''symbol of exchange'' and provides ''credit . . . based on the economic possibilities of society and not on interests or profit,'' and through which ''products are bartered for machines, tools, clothing, food, etc., in accordance with the requirements and needs of producers and consumers,'' as well as ''Councils of Economy'' that tabulate ''the necessities of the various guilds and of the consumers'' in order to ''increase and reduce and even suppress production in accordance with needs.'' However, in Abad de Santillan's scheme, this considerable enterprise of economic information gathering, analysis, and planning would not only be the work of the specialized Councils, but would be constantly initiated and intervened in by all the other ''representative organisms'' at work in society, including collectives of consumers as well as of producers: for instance, he envisions ''neighbourhood committees, which in representing the residents, would propose improvements, reforms and other necessities. This would give the population in general due expression of their needs and would afford them the opportunity of solving their own problems.''

Everywhere, in this society, in every part of everyday life, individuals are engaged in small, face-to-face groupings, assessing

[40] Ibid., 19, 50.

of the conservative and conformist forces at work in society as well as the majoritarian claims of the working class, criticizes what she calls, in the words of Ibsen's individualistic protagonist, Dr. Stockman, the ''compact majority,'' the privileged collective subject-object of an instrumentalist politics in which only numbers matter, in which the performative value of electoral ''success'' overrides serious consideration of all other values.[24] The rule of quantity is not neces- sarily operative, Malatesta argues, even in modern liberal societies, where majority rule is more often ideological appearance than effective reality.

Still, even in the ideal case, authentic majority rule would only present an order ''in which a part of the members, albeit the majority, has the right to impose its own will on the others.'' Although majoritarianism is at least preferable to the rule of an elite minority, he writes, ''we do not recognise the right of the majority to impose the law on the minority, even if the will of the majority in somewhat complicated issues could really be ascertained''—for this will is not simply and purely present, not even to itself, not even in some imaginable ideal speech situation.[25]

But if collective wills cannot be ascertained, be they minority or majority, how can they be coordinated for consensual action on a large scale? One proposition recurring in anarchist theory is to avoid the necessity of coordinating action, relying instead on the small, tightly knit group in which consensus is most readily available. As Colin Ward summarizes, ''organization should be voluntary, functional, temporary and small.''[26] One recent anarchist polemic, adopting the language of Deleuze and Guattari, adds another item to this list of desiderata: where the ''constituted or transcendent power'' of State and capital ''cuts us off or separates

[24] Goldman, Anarchism, 69-70.

[25] Malatesta, The Anarchist Revolution: Polemical Articles, 1924-1931, ed. Vernon Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1995), 74; Life and Ideas, 72-73.

[26] Colin Ward, quoted in April Carter, The Political Theory of Anarchism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 109.

us from our active power'' by instituting a mediating distance between ''the moment of decision'' and ''the act of its realization,'' anarchism ''calls for decisions to remain immanent to the situation at hand.'' Retrieving the Spanish anarchist tradition of grupos de afinidad—small, ideologically unified bands of friends who can act as one to accomplish a goal—the current proliferation of ''affinity groups'' in the global anticapitalist movement privileges immediacy over the slower deliberative processes of organizations.[27]

For Proudhon, it is true that organization should be voluntary, functional, and temporary. However, organization by ''mental affinities,'' as he describes Charles Fourier's utopian system, falls prey to the fallacy of ''the principle of association,'' in which ''a secret intention of robbery and despotism'' is couched; association, ''a bond which is naturally opposed to liberty,'' inevitably ''places fetters on the liberty of the laborer'' by substituting fraternity for utility, confusing function with affection. Affections are specific and localized, not generalizable or iterable like the principle of contract; you can make contracts between three people or three hundred, but not bonds of love. Love reduced to utility, iterable love, is perverse promiscuity or ''prostitution,'' while labor that is organized on a non-iterable basis, without utility for those involved, is an irrational exchange of something for nothing: ''association formed without any outside economic consideration, or any leading interest, association for its own sake, as an act of devotion, a family tie, as it were, is an act of pure religion, a supernatural bond, without real value, a myth.''[28] In Fourier's union of labor with love, then, Proudhon finds a return of the sacred and sacrifice—irrationality, mystification, mental bondage. Colin Mercer illuminates this distrust of Fourier's '' 'sexualisation' of the social sphere'' and '' 'aestheticization' of politics'' when he

[27] ''The Anarchist Ethic in the Anti-Globalization Movement,'' (CUSTOMER: copy from bib. into note form).

[28] Proudhon, General Idea, 78-79, 83-84, 87, 88, 131.

in this land of fruit, is a luxury; half of the inhabitants of cities live in slums, and on the land, in caves and hovels… Half of Spain is dressed in rags and textile workers cannot find anyone to employ their skill and competence, while factories close and machinery rusts.''[37] Such poverty is obviously artificial, the product of a deranged economy rather than of any natural scarcity. The ''supplies'' concretely existed; the ''demands'' also clearly existed; yet the exchange economy could not manage to connect the one with the other, since not enough investment could be found to develop the national resources, and the peoples' needs and wants could not be voiced in the vocabulary of money. Here, for Abad de Santillan, the distinction between nature and culture, reality and representation, must be vigorously reaffirmed: ''No one would say that wheat would not grow in fields well cultivated without land titles and police.''[38] The juridical and police function is a waste of money, labor, and time: ''If all the armed forces and government employees alone were set to work on reforestation, construction of canals and waterworks,'' he estimates, ''the present arid territories of Spain would become a potent source of agricultural wealth,'' but instead, they are engaged in nothing more useful than the protection of private property; indeed, there is no other work for them. Hence, as Proudhon had argued, money is in no real sense ''a productive factor.''[39] In the case of Spain, a system of ownership and profit had proved a massive barrier to production, ''an obstacle to progress and even to the very maintenance of life.'' Hence, the lesson to be drawn:

> Under capitalism there is nothing unusual in this state of affairs because capital is incapable of utilising all the resources of nature, science and human labor… In a socialised economy, this spectacle would be impossible because production would not follow the needs of

[37] Ibid., 18-19.

[38] Ibid., 13.

[39] Ibid., 13, 23.

describes certain ''operatic events'' staged by Mussolini in which ''women swapped their gold wedding rings (in the interests of the production of armaments) for iron bands symbolizing their marriage to Il Duce.''[29]

The more rational solution to the problem of majorities and minorities, Proudhon argues, is to conclude voluntary, temporary, functional agreements between individuals and groups of individuals: ''representation,'' no less than the State itself, ''must be renounced'' in order ''that I may govern myself . . . everything in the government of society which rests on the divine must be suppressed, and the whole rebuilt upon the human idea of CONTRACT.'' Every contract is to be a free agreement between consenting parties, limited to mutual advantage: ''I am ready to bargain, but I want no laws.'' He is convinced that this model can be universalized: ''If the social contract can be solved between two producers . . . it can as well be solved among millions, as it relates always to a similar engagement.''[30]

Nevertheless, there is some real resistance among anarchists to this contractual model of social relations. It is not only, as Bakunin insisted, that ''any contract with another individual on any footing but the utmost equality and reciprocity'' would be just another form of exploitation;[31] this is no more than a restatement of Proudhon's own criteria. Proudhon's willingness to dispense with the passional energies of solidarity as the complement to the more cognitive values of freedom and equality seems rather coldly rationalistic and masculinist—and implausible as well, in light of the feminist observation that ''the emotional substrate of caring is prerequisite for a rights- based ethic to function at all—an invisible 'feminine' underbelly, whose social labour makes possible the pub-

[29] Michèle Barrett, The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 59.

[30] Proudhon, General Idea, 131, 133, 205.

[31] Bakunin, Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Works, 68-69.

The many and various attempts, in the mutualist tradition, to ''ensure that money truly represents the useful work performed by its possessors,'' as Ma- latesta observes, stem from the recognition that while ''money is a powerful means of exploitation and oppression . . . it is also the only means (apart from the most tyrannical dictatorship or the most idyllic accord) so far devised by human intelligence to regulate production and distribution automatically.''[35]

The key term is ''so far.'' The collectivist economics developing from the tradition of Bakunin continues Proudhon's trajectory away from the essentially small-scale organizational form of the contract and toward that of federation, which permits much larger combinations of individual and group effort, as well as a greater systematization and coordination of decision mak- ing, while preserving individual freedoms and local initiative. The anarcho- syndicalist program sketched by Abad de Santillan aims at creating a more coherent economic system, taking advantage of the economic transparency that can be achieved by excluding the arbitrary factors of aubaine. Under capitalism, the real factors of production—''Nature'' (i.e., ''raw material'' and ''natural forces''), ''Human Labor, manual and intellectual,'' and ''Machinery''—were coupled with a host of unnecessary mediations: thus, agricultural production could only be accomplished via ''rent,'' ''interest on the capital,'' ''wages,'' ''profits,'' and ''government defence of private property'' to keep the product from passing, unpaid-for, into the hands of those the system had effectively pauperized.[36]

Such must have seemed particularly clear from the point of view of Spain in the 1930s—a perpetually poor cousin of the family of Europe, in which sheer lack of capital had created the intolerable paradox of tremendous potential economic capacity and actual stagnation: ''Today, half of the people of Spain dress raggedly and depend for food on a piece of black bread; for half of Spain, fruit,

[35] Malatesta, Life and Ideas, 101.

[36] Abad de Santillan, After the Revolution,11-13, 48.

lic world of fraternal relations.''[32] The more this substrate is eroded, the more the game of contract and exchange encourages cheaters. Moreover, there are real problems in generalizing the contractual model to all social relations—particularly when it comes to the noneconomic, traditionally ''feminine'' sphere of family life. Certainly among the things that ought not to be quantified or arbitrated is the nurturance of people who are not ideally independent, productive, rational agents: the very young, the sick, the drastically disabled, the very old.

The deeper critique of contract theory comes from a recognition that a society in which individuals are constantly forced to be on their guard against the possibility of any exploitation, nervously policing their transactions, is both fundamentally impoverished and intrinsically fragile. In Proudhon's system, Bookchin argues, ''the craftsman, cooperative, and commune, relating to one another on bourgeois contractual terms of equity or justice rather than on the communist terms of ability and needs'' preserve their individual freedom at the expense of community and solidarity, ''leaving any moral commitment to a collective undefined beyond the good intentions of its members.''[33] Ultimately, he argues, Proudhon's contractualism ''can scarcely be distinguished from bourgeois conceptions of 'right,' '' based on a narrow, ledger-book morality of equal exchange.[34] A contractual representation of social relations is too antagonistic and individualistic to be sustainable.

In the absence of a State, ''aside from mere individual contracts,'' Bookchin asks, ''how . . . would society make dynamic collective decisions about public affairs''? One frequently pro-

[32] Ariel Salleh, ''Social Ecology and 'The Man Question,' '' Versions of Freedom: An Anthology of Anarchism, Visions of Freedom Collective, 1996, http://

[33] Bookchin, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, 4-5.

[34] Bookchin, ''Deep Ecology, Anarcho-Syndicalism and the Future of Anarchist Thought,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 17 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031117103758945/.

> value, which . . . will itself be a pledge of the products or real values that these obligations represent.[32]

This creates a new instrument of exchange, a new form of monetary represen- tation firmly tied to use-value through a mediation that is constitutionally prevented from assuming the exploitative privilege of a middleman: as Lan- dauer put it, ''the exchange bank'' would allow you to ''sell your products among all the mutually cooperating workers, without the intrusion of an ex- ploiting intermediate.''[33]

Some extensions of the ''labor cheque'' idea are visible in various attempts to create currencies that represent labor-time, such as Edgar S.

Cahn's ''Time Dollar'' (which can be earned by providing a service to other community participants and spent in exchange for a similar service, allowing even unemployed and propertyless people to create and circulate wealth) and Ithaca, New York's ''Ithaca HOUR'' currency (each of which represents ten U.S. dollars or one hour of labor at that wage). Michael Linton's ''Local Exchange Trading System'' (LETS) demonetarizes the exchange of labor altogether, creating a community-controlled database of services performed.

An even more inventive introduction of duration and materiality into monetary representation is that of the early twentieth-century Proudhonian economist Silvio Gesell, whose proposed ''stamp scrip'' currency (via a system of monthly stamps, each of which represents one percent of the bill's value) loses value over time, builds in the systematic incentive of ''negative interest'' to motivate individual consumers to spend their notes quickly, keeping wealth circulating, and punishing rather than rewarding those who hoard wealth in order to accumulate it.[34]

[32] Proudhon, Solution of the Social Problem, 67.

[33] Landauer, quoted in Lunn, Prophet of Community, 216.

[34] Hyde, The Gift, 259-60.

production can be owned by a few, that they can become ''property,'' and so reduce the propertyless many to servitude; hence his famous formula, ''property is robbery.''[29]

What has to be prevented is the concentration of wealth through the accumulation of aubaine.

Several economic institutions have been derived from these fundamental mutualist postulates. Proudhon himself promoted the concept of free credit—the socially provided loan ''with a nominal interest rate to cover the cost of administration''—as an instrument with which to destroy the regime of property; his ''People's Bank,'' opened in 1849 (''it quickly gathered 27,000 members'') and closed down by police repression, was also to facilitate ''the exchange of products among workers, based on labor cheques.''[30]

In allowing workers to trade labor for labor and products for products, the Bank would realize the principle of equality, in view of which ''utility equals utility,'' ''function equals function,'' ''service pays for service,'' and ''one day's work equals another day's work'':[31]

> What must we do to make possible direct exchange, not only among three, four, six, ten or one hundred traders, but among one hundred thousand, between all producers and all consumers? Simply this: centralize all the operations of commerce by means of a bank in which all the bills of exchange, drafts and sight-bills representing the bills and the invoices of the merchants, will be received. Then generalize or convert these obligations into paper of equivalent

[29] Ibid., 12.

[30] Woodcock, Anarchism, 120.

[31] Proudhon, Selected Writings, 64.

ferred method, as Bookchin notes, ''is the practice of consensus.''[35] For Graeber, the anarchist model of deliberation simply is ''consensus decision-making,'' which encourages mutual respect:

''Where voting encourages one to reduce one's opponents positions to a hostile caricature, or whatever it takes to defeat them, a consensus process is built on a principle of compromise and creativity where one is constantly changing proposals around until one can come up with something everyone can at least live with; therefore, the incentive is always to put the best possible construction on other's arguments.''[36] Certainly, consensus eliminates the problem of a purely quantitative domination of majorities by minorities.

However, it may leave the door open to some kinds of informal domination, as is perhaps demonstrated by the experience of the Clamshell Alliance, which was formed to oppose the construction of a nuclear reactor in New Hampshire in the late 1970s. There, Bookchin claims to have witnessed a ''small, tightly knit faction'' manipulating the process, which was open and amorphous enough that a well-organized group of participants ''unified by its own hidden agendas'' could ram its decisions through de facto, while the de jure egalitarianism of the process made their power effectively invisible.

In this case, the faction made particularly effective use of the practice of ''standing aside'': ''minority dissenters were often subtly urged or psychologically coerced to decline to vote on a troubling issue, inasmuch as their dissent would essentially amount to a one-person veto.'' The very climate of solidarity and friendship that made consensus possible served to reinforce this psychological coercion, since the dissenting parties were made to feel that they were being disruptive or selfish for holding out against the major-

[35] Bookchin, ''What Is Communalism?: The Democratic Dimension of Anarchism,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 18 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=200311181130165/.

[36] Graeber, ''The Twilight of Vanguardism.''

ity opinion, and therefore ''nullified themselves as participants in the process'' for the greater good. As a result, egalitarian power relations became more a matter of appearance than reality.[37]

The notion that specific practices of consensus decision making are rooted in an anarchist tradition seems simply ahistorical. As a writer for the activist journal Clamor notes, the Clamshell Alliance was one of the first attempts to use consensus in mass organizing on the radical Left; before this, it was confined to liberal and religiously based movements. Anarchist groups, conversely, have had a long record of using majoritarian voting to make decisions. For example, the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, Spain's anarcho-syndicalist union, put its policies to the vote, as it did in 1919, ''the year that it unanimously endorsed 'libertarian communist principles.'''

ANARCHISM AND THE CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION

Granted, this was not necessarily without contestation: at the International Anarchist Congress of 1907, a significant gathering attended by such declared enemies of majoritarian tyranny as Emma Goldman and Errico Malatesta, one delegate argued against taking votes on ethical grounds.

Nonetheless, other delegates, including Malatesta himself, argued with Pierre Monatte that there was nothing ethically inconsistent about voting within a voluntary organization of this kind; besides, ''voting was a regular practice inside the unions.'' Thereafter, motions were voted on by the congress.[38] ''For an anarchist organization,'' Malatesta explains, congresses, in spite of all the dis-

[37] Bookchin, ''What Is Communalism?''; Midnight Notes Collective, ''Strange Victories,'' 14-15.

[38] Skirda, Facing the Enemy, 83; M. Treloar, ''The Tyranny of Consensus,'' Clamor 20 (May-June 2003): 39.

change his location, he exchanges this field for an equivalent. But if, putting another in his place, he says to him, 'Work for me while I rest,' he then becomes unjust, unassociated, unequal. He is a proprietor.''[25] Possessive land tenure is not abstract ownership, permitting an absentee owner to command rent from a tenant farmer via his ''nominal and metaphysical occupancy,'' separating labor from its product, but ''the right of occupation.''[26]

The distinction between possession and property, then, in favoring concrete particularity over abstract equivalence, aims at preventing what Ruthrof would call the ''intersemiotic'' inflation of monetary signs. Linguistic signs cut off from any physical reference become self-referential; just so, as Landauer suggested, ''money under the capitalist system'' becomes a floating signifier whose exchange-value, which ought to be subordinate or ''relative'' to use-value, becomes an end in itself, taking the form of ''interest-bearing capital . . . which gains products of labor and services without having done any labor itself.'' ''Absolute money'' ceases to represent labor and its product and seems to become an autonomous representation.[27] However, just as Bakunin sees God, free from every concrete determination, as the ultimate empty signifier, referring to nothing, so for Proudhon, this autonomy of economic representation is a lie, for ''property is not self-existent,'' a fact, but a social convention: ''An extraneous cause—either force or fraud—is neces- sary to its life and action. In other words, property is not equal to property: it is a negation—a delusion—NOTHING.''[28]

For Proudhon, what conditions the coexistence of formal equality with substantive inequality is the possibility that the means of

[25] Duranton, quoted in Proudhon, What is Property?, 43; Proudhon, What Is Property?, 285, 234.

[26] Proudhon, What Is Property?, 154, 54.

[27] Lunn, Prophet of Community, 215-16; Landauer, quoted in Lunn, Prophet of Community, 215-16.

[28] Proudhon, What Is Property?, 223.

''property'' and ''possession'': where the institution of ''property'' gives a proprietor the right to own, and therefore to buy and sell, more than he or she can use, decoupling exchange-value from use-value, one can only ''possess'' what one can actually use. It is only the right to own as property more than one can possess that makes it possible for an owner to reap aubaine—a French term which Stewart Edwards explains as referring to what in English is variously called ''rent,'' ''profit,'' or ''interest.'' This ''droit d'aubaine,'' which Tucker translates as ''the right of Increase'' or ''the right of escheat,'' is a unitary phenomenon that ''receives different names according to the thing by which it is yielded: if by land, farm-rent; if by houses and furniture, rent; if by life-investments, revenue; if by money, interest; if by exchange, advantage gain, profit.''[23] This ''increment or excess'' is, in short, the ''surplus-value'' that, snipped from the worker's wages, sets Marx's ''General Formula for Capital'' going. As ''the right of increase,'' property confers on the proprietor the mysterious ability ''to produce without labor,'' or ''to make something from nothing,'' as when Bill Gates claims to have created wealth simply by permitting thousands of workers to perform labor. The essential operation of finance is then a modernized, rationalized version of ''royal prerogative'' or ''homage'' given by a borrower, a tenant, or an employee to the proprietor for ''permission'' to use some capital upon which the owner's ''seal is set''; the very ''source of profit'' is ''extortion'' backed by State muscle.[24]

Where property is a ''right'' that must be protected by laws and police, possession is ''a matter of fact, not of right.'' Respect for this ''fact'' amounts to a ''principle'' that founds a new ''right'': ''By this principle, the man who takes possession of a field, and says, 'This field is mine,' will not be unjust so long as every one else has an equal right of possession; nor will he be unjust, if, wishing to

[23] Proudhon, Selected Writings, 125; Oeuvres, 4.182; What Is Property?, xviii, 75, 154.

[24] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 329-32; Proudhon, What Is Property?, 155.

advantages from which they suffer as representative bodies, are free from authoritarianism in any shape or form because they do not legislate and do not impose their deliberations on others. They serve to maintain and increase personal contacts among the most active comrades, to summarize and encourage programmatic studies on the ways and means for action; to acquaint everybody with the situation in the regions and the kind of action most urgently needed; to summarize the various currents of anarchist opinions at the time and to prepare some kind of statistics therefrom. And their decisions are not binding, but simply suggestions, advice and proposals to submit to all concerned, and they do not become binding and executive except for those who accept them and for as long as they accept them.[39]

The anarchist congress is a representative body in that it involves many people sending a few delegates to meet in their place, to speak in their place at a meeting and report back to them afterward. What does this entail? It means that the delegates, as instructed representatives, make representations of ''the situation in the regions'' for the benefit of those who have not been there to witness it at first hand, as well as making generalizing representations of ''the various currents of anarchist opinions'' and exchanging ''suggestions, advice and proposals.'' All of this means the creation of symbolic representations in order to avoid political representation, in order to coordinate action and negotiate agreements without resorting to the kind of representation in which the decisions of a few do become ''binding and executive'' for others who have had no authentic opportunity to democratically participate in making those decisions.

Such is traditional anarchist practice, for which the revolution itself is nothing less than ''the forming and disbanding of thousands of representative, district, communal, regional, national bodies which, without having any legislative power, serve to make

[39] Malatesta, Life and Ideas, 87.

known and to coordinate the desires and interests of people near and far and which act through information, advice and example.''[40] It is motivated by the assumption that the ''desires and interests'' of people separated by space will be diverse and manifold, in need of ''coordination'' rather than unification. This pluralistic outlook is centered on a traditional anarchist value elided by consensus practice: that which Bookchin calls ''dissensus.''[41] More than a century before Bookchin's experiences in the Clamshell Alliance, Proudhon wrote that ''when the group is called upon to vote, it should not vote as one man as a result of one individual feeling having become generally accepted. This can only lead to large-scale fraud . . . [and] is contrary to reason.

Instead let us lay down this principle: the impersonality of the public rea- son presupposes as principle, the greatest possible contradiction; as means, the greatest possible multiplicity.''[42] Similarly, while Bookchin grants the appropriateness of consensus among the band of friends, joined by affinity, he insists that in the larger, more diverse collectivity presupposed by the very concept of a polis, consensus can ''stifle the dialectic of ideas that thrives on opposition, confrontation and, yes, decisions with which everyone need not agree and should not agree, lest society become an ideological cemetery.'' While such a stalled dialectic does not necessarily end in the creeping domination of a minority, it may nonetheless produce a deadening conformism, in which the agonism of ''passionate dialogue'' is subdued by ''dull monologues'' and an essentially conservative political process that tends to favor ''the least controversial or even the most mediocre decision.''

Rather than the pluralism Proudhon hoped for, we evoke ''the metaphysical 'one' of the 'consensus' group.'' Ultimately, the con-

[40] Ibid., 153.

[41] Bookchin, ''What Is Communalism?''

[42] Proudhon, Selected Writings, 121-22.

this obligation by seeking whatever profits the market would bear, over and above this fair price, as could workers' associations motivated by ''petty union interests.'' For Proudhon, the solution lay in making relations between merchant and customer a matter of durable contracts rather than sporadic exchanges; such a contract was exemplified by the appearance of the first producer-consumer cooperatives, in which, as described by an article explaining the operation of a tailors' cooperative, ''direct communication between producers and consumers'' allowed fair prices to be fixed and fair wages assured in long-term agreements.[20] Here, then, is the sort of negotiation that Fraser calls for under the terms of ''procedural'' equality.

What about ''consequential'' or substantive equality, however? Does not Proudhon's market system leave open the possibility that some individuals, or even some cooperatives, will so profit by their de jure free and equal exchanges with others that they will become, de facto, the owners of the means of production and therefore of the necessities of life, able to dictate to the others the terms of their existence? In such a case, as Chomsky argues, the representation of these outcomes as compatible with freedom and equality, via a Hayek- or Mises-style ''entitlement theory of justice'' that focalizes attention on the apparent fairness of the procedure from which injustice results, ''has all the merits of a proof that 2+2=5.''[21]

However, Proudhon is not a mere proponent of laissez-faire, nor is he careless of substantive equality. In What Is Property? he argues that if a purchase, in registering ''demand'' for some commodity in the market system, is analogous to a vote in the electoral system, then ''under the régime of property . . . one may have several hundred votes, while another has only one.''[22] Here, his critique of ''property'' becomes salient. Proudhon distinguishes between

[20] Proudhon, General Idea, 91-92, 92-93, 98, 220.

[21] Chomsky, The Chomsky Reader, 187.

[22] Proudhon, What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government, trans. Benjamin R. Tucker (New York: Dover, 1970), 207.

his needs'': ''Who then,'' he asks, ''shall determine his capacity? who shall be the judge of his needs?''

What we should anticipate is not a spontaneous accord about capacities and needs, but a series of disputes: ''You say that my capacity is 100: I maintain that it is only 90. You add that my needs are 90: I affirm that they are 100.

There is a difference between us of twenty upon needs and capacity. It is, in other words, the well-known debate between demand and supply. Who shall judge between the society and me?''[18] Without any ''guaranty . . . that the member will work according to his capacity'' or ''that the association will reward him according to his needs,'' we are forced to find a way to allow ''demand and supply'' to play out their dialectic and find their equilibrium in each case. Hence the role of the marketplace in Proudhon's economic system, which he called, after the name of a worker's association in Lyon, ''mutualism.''[19]

It is ''precisely because Value is in the highest degree difficult to formulate,'' for Proudhon, that ''it is eminently transactional.'' So far, his theory of value sounds much like standard capitalist economics. However, he argues, the justice to be achieved between buyers and sellers cannot be merely decided by the outcome of the exchange, whatever its parties agree on; he regards ''the producer'' as standing under a moral ''obligation . . . toward the consumer to deliver his products at cost price.'' The ''just price for all kinds of service or merchandise,'' Proudhon argues, ''is that which represents with exactitude . . . the total cost of production, according to the average experience of free producers . . . [and] the wages of the merchant, or indemnity for the advantage of which the seller deprives himself in parting with the thing sold.'' In a fluctuating capitalist marketplace, greedy individuals could transgress against

[18] Proudhon, General Idea, 96. George Woodcock, Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements (New York: New American Library, 1962).

[19] Ibid., 97; Woodcock, Anarchism, 108.

sensus process, proposed as an antidote to crude majoritarianism, ''honors no minorities, but mutes them.''[43]

Moreover, consensus process in groups of even moderate size can raise the problem of mediation and immanence again, since it can be slow and unresponsive, particularly in emergencies, when quick decisions are called for. Even among the activists who have so enthusiastically embraced consensus process since the Seattle protest of 1999, there have been ''numerous cases when facilitators and meetings threw out consensus process in order to accomplish what was necessary.'' For instance, on the evening of Wednesday, December 2, 1999 at the convergence space in Seattle . . . hundreds of people representing the remnants of many of the affinity groups that had seized the downtown a day earlier, along with the Peoples' Assembly and Seattle youth, were attempting to figure out what to do next. The mayor of Seattle had declared a state of emergency and any marches downtown would risk mass arrest.

While the facilitators skillfully attempted to keep hundreds of people on topic, people choking from the tear gas outside came into the meeting with what proved to be false reports that the police were coming to attack the space. Calls of ''We've got to take the whole meeting to the streets'' arose.

Presumably, this course of action would have been not only unnecessary (since the information turned out to be erroneous) but dangerous, since the streets outside were the scene of a police riot, and even taking the time to consider this proposal would have distracted those meeting from their more urgent purposes. According to consensus protocol, those urging the meeting to take to the street should have been ''considered to be blocking any proposals then on the floor and urging a counter-proposal''; fortunately, however, the facilitators at this gathering were not overly scrupulous about their observance of the rules and simply disregarded the pro-

[43] Proudhon, Problème social, 51; Bookchin, ''What Is Communalism?''

posal.[44] In the event, the process worked only by violating its own procedural principles; a more rigorous and coherent application of those rules would certainly guarantee that in some situations, unacceptable delays would safeguard ''the unconditional right of a minority,'' even ''a 'minority of one,' '' at the expense of the active power of the whole group.[45]

Majoritarian voting, by contrast, can be accomplished more quickly when need be. Importantly, participants can also take the length of time necessary for real deliberation, persuasion, canvassing, and opinion forming over matters of long-term and broad-scope policy, as is demonstrated by the recent experience of the ''consultas'' in the federation of autonomous muncipalities created by the Mexican EZLN rebels. Reserved for ''major decisions, such as peace or war,'' these entail ''intense discussions in each community'' that ''take months and have been a great source of annoyance to the Mexican government, which always wants an answer to its proposals on the spot or within days.''[46] Such a process, it can be argued, sustains a pluralistic dissensus more effectively than consensual processes can: even in defeat, dissenting minorities remain… ''free to openly and persistently articulate reasoned and potentially persuasive disagreements'' and can continue to op- pose policies through ''unimpaired discussion and advocacy.''[47]

The objections to direct democracy raised by Proudhon, Malatesta, and Goldman, however, remain to be addressed. Here, as Proudhon himself came to argue in his shift from contractualism to federalism, the anarchist practice of decentralization becomes terrifically important. What had most concerned Proudhon about direct democracy, what makes it most open to demagogic manipulation by well-organized minorities (even in a society where other

[44] Treloar, 38-39.

[45] Bookchin, ''What Is Communalism?''

[46] ''The Zapatistas, Anarchism, and 'Direct Democracy.' ''

[47] Bookchin, ''What is Communalism?''

> opportunity to play the piano ten hours a day may be an overwhelming personal need; for another, not. As material circumstances permit, these differential needs should be satisfied in a decent society, as in a healthy family life. In functioning socialist societies such as the Israeli kibbutzim, questions of this sort constantly arise. I cannot imagine that it is possible to formulate very strong general principles to resolve conflicts and measure individual opportunity against social demands. Honest people will differ in their assessments and will try to reach agreement through discussion and sympathetic consideration of the needs of others. The problems are not exotic ones; they arise constantly in functioning social groups, such as the family.[16]

Wilkin concurs: ''although needs-based accounts of social justice such as Chomsky's are grounded in a universalistic claim, they do not lead (as strong anti-essentialists fear) to homogeneity and the suppression of difference.

Logically, need satisfaction should produce the opposite.'' In Bookchin's words, it is when the most universal, biologically based needs are satisfied, abolishing the domination of ''scarcity,'' that more nuanced, varied, individualized ''desires'' come fully into play.[17] The question is how to put Fraser's egalitarian representation of needs and use-values into practice outside of the family sphere.

Proudhon, at first glance, seems rather hostile to this project, given his antagonism toward Louis Blanc's communist distributive ethic, ''From each according to his capacity; To each according to

[16] Noam Chomsky, The Chomsky Reader, ed. James Peck (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 192.

[17] Wilkin, ''Chomsky and Foucault on Human Nature and Politics,'' 198; Bookchin, Post-Scarcity Anarchism, 274.

body else's'' is to arrogate to someone else the power to adjudicate needs, ends, values—to practice patronizing representation, speaking for others. Ultimately, where ideological propaganda fails to convince the represented that the economic plan has properly represented their interests and goals, compliance with the plan must still be mandatory—by ''open or concealed force.'' The argument fundamentally turns on the tropes of antirepresentationalism: incalculability, unknowability, the uncloseable gap between the finite part and an infinite, unavailable, never-present totality, ''intellectual humility'' versus ''intellectual hubris.''[14] Once again, economic policy is a violent imposition on the many by the few, its claims to legitimacy nothing more than deception or delusion.

Against these antirepresentationalist claims, Fraser argues that ''we can distinguish better from worse interpretations of people's needs'' and proposes a theory of ''interpretive justification'' that balances ''procedural considerations concerning the social processes by which various competing need interpretations are generated'' with ''considerations of consequences''; the best representations would be generated through an ongoing process that unites formal (''procedural'') equality with substantive (''consequential'') equality.[15] The antirepresentationalist bogeyman of reductivism—the fear, shared by poststructuralists and laissez-faire economists, that equality means the leveling of differences, the imposition of uniformity—is by no means a necessary outcome of such a project. As long as the dialogism of Fraser's interpretive method is put into practice, Chomsky writes, satisfying ''the necessary requirements of every member of society'' need not amount to imposing an ''equality of condition'' irrespective of differences:

> Individuals will differ in their aspirations, their abilities, and their personal goals. For some person, the

[14] Ibid., 37, 56-59, 166.

[15] Fraser, Unruly Practices, 181-82.

sorts of inequality, e.g., unequal access to media and the means of information, have been eliminated) is the durational and spatial problematic of centralization: in Proudhon's Principle of Federation, it is the federative division of communities that reduces the danger of demagogy.[48] When decisions are to be made quickly, and the decision-making body is of a size and scale that does not permit face-to-face discussion among its members, then indeed the process can be most easily hijacked by successful minorities, which then gain power at the expense of other minorities who can be effectively ignored and marginalized. To be genuinely rational, rather than merely populist or bureaucratic, the decision-making process must involve the actual, participatory, public exercise of reason in the form of information, proposition, discussion, and deliberation—not only voting. Moreover, this must take place not only in impersonal, anonymous electronic forums, where vertical and monological communication often supercedes horizontal dialogue, but in the sort of face-to-face community setting in which individuals can feel empowered to speak to others who are similarly empowered, and in which it is genuinely possible for one person to have an effect on the decisions made by the whole voting body. As Bookchin writes, ''libertarian institutions are peopled institutions . . . structured around direct, face-to-face, protoplasmic relationships, not around representative, anonymous, mechanical relationships.

They are based on participation, involvement, and a sense of citizenship that stresses activity, not on the delegation of power and spectatorial politics.''[49]

The challenge is to make direct participation and involvement practically feasible.

The best solutions to this problem come from decentralized systems in which decision making is kept as close to the base as possi-

[48] Proudhon, Principle of Federation, 62.

[49] Bookchin, Ecology of Freedom, 336.

ble, and as close as possible to those directly concerned. In order to be functional, this decentralization cannot only be political, embodied in federated structures of decision making; it must also entail a material decentralization of infrastructure, so that smaller territorial areas, such as regions, municipalities, and even neighborhoods, can enjoy considerable functional independence as a material guarantee of their considerable political autonomy. This means undoing the ''subordination'' of producer and consumer alike, under globalized capitalism, ''to a vast economic machine which can become deranged in different parts and leave him without elementary necessities'' by bringing production and consumption together.[50] When producers and consumers are in close contact with one another, they can reach mutually satisfactory agreements more quickly and less formally, and where conflicts arise, rather than disappearing into a bureaucratic administrative maze, they can be more easily and rationally resolved;[51] as Fourier recognized, to the extent that ''the conditions and process of work'' are under the worker's direct control, and the satisfactions to be derived from productive labor are made immanent to the productive act itself, ''work becomes play'' and ceases to require formal discipline or extrinsic incentives. Ultimately, the entire mentality of exchange and instrumentality is undermined, since one is no longer ''producing commodities primarily to be exchanged for something else.''[52] The more decisions can be effectively reserved to the same specific groups of people who are to carry them out and experience their results, the more individual freedom—''not an abstract right,'' Malatesta insists, ''but the possibility of acting''—is realized in everyday life.

Functional and political decentralization thereby helps to address the problem of mediation and immanence: as Rocker notes,

[50] Goodman and Goodman, Communitas, 155, 181.

[51] Goodman, People or Personnel, 197.

[52] Howard J. Ehrlich, ''Anarchism and Formal Organization,'' in Reinventing Anarchy: What Are Anarchists Thinking These Days? ed. Howard J. Ehrlich, Carol Ehrlich, et al. (Bos- ton: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 111.

von Mises's ''calculation argument,'' the most efficient allocation of resources simply is whatever the marketplace encourages; the self-interested practice of a multitude of rational actors produces the best outcomes for everyone.[12] For Hayek, it is not only the case that marketplace competition makes socialized planning redundant, but that such planning ''deprives competition of its power of bringing about an effective co-ordination of individual efforts, because price changes then cease to register all the relevant changes in circumstances and no longer provide a reliable guide for the individual's actions.'' The attempt to replace exchange-value with use-value therefore ends in the minimization of utility and the creation of a useless bureaucracy; worse, it calls into being a political hierarchy that produces its own self-justifying ideology: ''to make a totalitarian system function efficiently, it is not enough that everybody should be forced to work for the same ends. It is essential that the people should come to regard them as their own ends.''[13]

It requires some effort for us to see this argument for what it is: a critique of representation. Economic planning, no matter how democratically arranged, inevitably entails identifying representation, directing the socioeconomic totality toward a ''unitary end,'' a ''common good'' or ''general interest'' that is inevitably a reduction of the ''infinite variety'' of goods and interests conceived by the people whose welfare is to be planned for; it is a focalizing representation that presents an inevitably partial and incomplete ''scale of values'' as if it were or could represent the totality, when in fact ''it is impossible for any man to survey more than a limited field, to be aware of the urgency of more than a limited number of needs.'' To fail to recognize this limitation by allowing individuals ''to follow their own values and preferences rather than some-

[12] Ludwig von Mises, Economic Calculation In The Socialist Commonwealth, trans. Alder (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1990), 9.

[13] Friedrich A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), 37, 33, 153.

vidualism: insofar as production must be ''planned in advance and proportioned to needs,'' it is necessarily made ''social.''[9] As Malatesta remarks, ''production and distribution must be controlled, that is, one must ascertain which commodities are needed and in what quantities; where they are needed and what means are available to produce them and distribute them.'' Since this requires ''that each should know not only what he can produce and what he requires, but be aware of the needs and capabilities of others as well,'' we are faced with the question of how to ''distinguish better from worse interpretations of people's needs''—a question that seems unsolvable from an antirepresentationalist standpoint.[10] Even the practice of ''classifying policies . . . as 'good', 'better', or 'best,' '' Rosenau argues, is open to question from a standpoint that ''questions . . . the possibility that data can arbitrate between policy positions or allow us to conclude that one policy is superior to another''; inevitably, these judgments ''claim legitimacy by reference to external, universally truthful propositions that are really self-referential.'' If representations can refer to nothing but themselves, they cannot help us to manage our affairs as the pragmatists would like: even such unquestioned concepts of mainstream economics as measurement, control, and predictability are to be suspended or bracketed. Lacking justification, ''policy suggestions'' are reduced to ''policy imposition'' by the few at the expense of the many.[11]

As radically au courant as these notions sound, they have been anticipated by neoliberal economists, particularly the laissez-faire ''Austrian School'' of Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, which set out in the period between the World Wars to challenge the legitimacy of socialist economic planning. On the terms of

[9] James Guillaume, quoted in Francis Feeley, The French Anarchist Labor Movement and ''La Vie Ouvrière,'' 1909-1914 (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 85.

[10] Malatesta, Life and Ideas, 96; Fraser, Unruly Practices, 181.

[11] Rosenau, ''Anticipating a Post-Modern Policy Current?'' Policy Currents 3, no. 2 (May 1993), http://www.fsu.edu/ spap/orgs/apsa/vol3_no2/rosenau.html (accessed 6 August 2003).

where States favor centralization as conducive to the systematization of command and obedience, anarchist organization locates the ''power of decision'' as close to the ''immediate action'' as possible.[53] In this sense, May misunderstands the significance of the ''strain in anarchist thought that views decentralization as an alternative to the current social structure of centralization,'' which he sees as founded on a hopelessly ''strategic'' conception of power that traces it to a spurious ''source''; while it is true that power relations are always immanent to society, present everywhere, it is not the case that this power is everywhere and always recognized, felt, and actualized.[54] Instead, quite frequently, the power to decide is abdicated to the Invisible Hand of the economy (and its supposed Laws), or it is ceded to social and political superiors, who in turn are subordinate to other superiors, and so on, until the final justification for decisions is traced to some founding principle (Law, God, Fate, Nature, etc.) that is beyond negotiation, a ''center elsewhere.''[55] This displacement is not just a psychological quirk, nor even some linguistic illusion; we incarnate it in our behavior, embody it in our social relationships, and reproduce it in our everyday lives, so we cannot simply dispel it through analysis. Where it prevails, power is not only apparently but effectively ''invisible.''[56]

Goodman describes this crucial operation of representational power as a ''pattern of [organizational] behavior'':

> In short, the pattern is as follows: 1. The organization reduces its agents to personnel who carry out the organizational goals and policy. 2. If something goes wrong and an agent is publicly exposed in an outrageous act, he suddenly becomes an individual again and is so penalized. 3. The organization takes

[53] Rocker, Anarcho-Syndicalism (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 92.

[54] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 13, 52.

[55] Derrida, Writing and Difference, 279.

[56] Critchley, ''Is There a Normative Deficit in the Theory of Hegemony?'' 3.

> no responsibility whatever, saves face, makes no public apology, makes no amends, does not look retroactively into similar past outrages that it has committed. 4. Nevertheless, the organization blandly comes before the public as a morally responsible agent, with a right to regulate itself.[57]

First, an individual officer of the rational organization—Goodman's exam- ples are the New York Police Department and CBS—is endowed with the authority of the organization itself via the magic of identifying representation, and then this identification is undone through the magic of focalizing representation, which excludes the institutional and historical context of the act from view. In this way, the bureaucracy's power is made effectively invisible, and responsibility is infinitely deferred.

Clearly, as Kropotkin writes, postrevolutionary political life will ''have to be more popular, more decentralized, and nearer to the folk-mote self- government than representative government can ever be.''[58] However, this does not simply amount to a simple embrace of antirepresentationalism.

What we oppose are practices in which representational power is made to appear only on special occasions, in which the represented are prevented from speaking for themselves or intervening in decision making outside of a tightly controlled ''electoral'' format. Such a bureaucratic form of representation truly does preserve the outward form of democracy while concentrating power in the hands of representatives; it is intrinsically hierarchical. What we endorse is a decentralized, directly democratic process in which power is always visible and contestable, in which the signified can always object to, revise, or replace its signifier. In this way, Proudhon writes, the functions of governance will be reduced to ''a delegation, a convention, a federation, in a word, a free and sponta-

[57] Goodman, People or Personnel and Like a Conquered Province, 192.
[58] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 184.

Marx writes, ''where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic.''[7]

Carter notes that the phrase ''just as I have a mind'' seems to indicate individual choice about what to do, which seems to contradict the claim that ''society regulates the general production.'' The utopian vision founders on ''the apparent irreconcilability between individual freedom and social planning''—unless, that is, one is to infer a far more participatory style of decision making than the command system we might otherwise assume. Thus, Carter proposes, one could envision a system in which ''individuals could 'hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon,' etc. ultimately as each chose, but within the framework of a general plan that stated which activities were necessary, and that had been arrived at through a process whereby the commune eventually reached a consensus. As long as such communes were on a small scale so as to facilitate such a procedure, then the individual's control over his or her own labour would be maximized without any loss with regard to planning.'' Such a system, of course, is not Marx's, but Proudhon's: it is the structure of ''workers' control'' in which relatively autonomous communes coordinate decisions through a ''federal system.''[8]

It is true that decisions about production must be coordinated to some degree, and this means that people must come to some agreement about what is needed and desired. It is this affirmation of a federalist planning-from- below that, as James Guillaume deduced, distinguishes Proudhon's mutualist system from mere indi-

[7] Marx, quoted in Alan Carter, Marx: A Radical Critique, 11.
[8] Carter, Marx: A Radical Critique, 11-13.

everyday life that, in Thorstein Veblen's words, ''live somehow in the shadow of the large-scale coercive rule that killed [them].''[5]

A critical economics, however, is merely descriptive, and anarchism's primary modality is the prescriptive. Kropotkin suggests that the task for anarchists is not only to critique formal economics for disguising the existing order as the natural order, but to reconstruct economics as ethics—which it already was for Proudhon—and as technique, a method of analyzing needs, capabilities, and resources that aims at ''the discovery of means for the satisfaction of these needs with the smallest possible waste of labor and with the greatest benefit to mankind in general.'' That is to say, ''in political economy attention must be directed first of all to so-called 'consumption' . . . the first concern of the revolution must be to reorganize that so as to provide food, clothing and shelter for all,'' and then to reorganize production accordingly.

The questions for such an economics are no longer spectatorial, but practical: ''What are the means to satisfy the needs of all with the least loss of power? How can a society guarantee to each, and consequently to all, the greatest sum of satisfaction?''[6]

This is, in large part, a question about the relationship between individual agency and social structure. In Marx: A Radical Critique, Alan Carter opens up this question in subjecting the famous passage in the German Ideology about the postrevolutionary life to a close reading. ''In communist society,''

[5] Ibid. Ward, Social Policy: An Anarchist Response (London: Freedom Press, 2000), 83; de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 30; Veblen, quoted in Staughton Lynd, Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 169.

[6] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 122, 180. For Kropotkin, as for Goodman, ''technology, the use of instruments,'' should be considered ''a branch of moral philosophy,'' involving more criteria than pure efficiency or utility (Goodman, Drawing the Line, 55), including ''transparency of operation'' and ''repairability by the average well- educated person'' (Goodman and Goodman, Communitas, 171).

neous assent by all the individuals which comprise the people, each one stipulating and canvassing for the guarantee of his interests. So that the government, if government there be, instead of BEING the AUTHORITY, as before, will represent the relation of all the interests . . . and consequently will itself have only a representative value, as paper money has value only by that which it represents.'' Here, Proudhon imagines anarchy as the end of a series in which electoral democracy is not the end, but a phase: an anarchist polis must be more ''democratic and representative'' than the kinds of government we currently call democratic and representative. For Proudhon, this is made possible by the transparency of the contract, a representation of mutual obligations in which all parties recognize their own wills and interests; for Bookchin, it happens through direct democracy, in which all parties can recognize their active role in shaping policy (in the words of Laclau and Mouffe, ''a representative,'' under conditions of direct democracy, ''can be subjected to such conditions of control that what becomes a fiction is the very fictitiousness of representation'').[59]

This supercession of representation that takes place through the realization of representation is truly the disenchantment of political life, the rational destruction of the magical thinking by which the power that really belongs to everyone everywhere seems to come from somewhere else, so that little by little, the government, instead of being regarded as the representation or personification of the social relationship, which is only a materialist and idolatrous conception, is conceived as being this RELATIONSHIP itself . . . the government, no longer distinguishing itself from interests and freedoms in so far as they place themselves in relation with one another, ceases to exist… A relationship is a pure idea . . . which has no other reality than that of the objects which are in relationship.[60]

[59] Proudhon, Oeuvres 9.289; Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (New York: Verso, 1985), 119.

[60] Proudhon, Oeuvres 9.289, italics mine.

That is to say, order is reconceived as the relationship formed by human beings in a free society, as immanent, rather than something that emanates from a transcendent beyond. At the same time, in Goodman's words, decentralization is about ''increasing the number of centers of decision-making and the number of initiators of policy,'' producing forms of power that are not disseminated into invisibility but exercised in situations of ''face-to-face association'' with full consciousness of their workings on the part of those involved.[61] For popular power to appear as what it is, the State, a body separate from and set over against society indeed must disappear into the net- work of social relationships from which it emerged so long ago. As Proudhon writes, ''The negation of government emerges thus from its definition: whoever says representative government, says relationship between interests; whoever says relationship between interests, says absence of government.''

This negation, for Proudhon, is the product of a dialectic of undoing, in which the first term in a series logically yields its own opposite. In radical democracy, the center elsewhere becomes a center everywhere.[62]

However, Goodman acknowledges, populist decentralism has historically shown two faces: emerging in reaction to the unprecedented concentration of power into closed and rigid structures—''the alliance of government and monopolists, the manipulation of credit, the growth of the trusts, the squeezing of the farmers by railroads, packers, and manufacturers, the centralization and alienation of the political parties''—the Populists met these not only with practical ingenuity and prophetic fervor, but also with ''a paranoiac and know-nothing suspicion of all strangers, who belong to the diabolic enclosing forces: the

[61] Goodman, Drawing the Line: The Politcal Essays of Paul Goodman, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: Free Life Editions, 1977), 185.

[62] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 9.288-90, translation mine; Proudhon, General Idea, 282.

European military supe- riority is not a factor in any equation, a world where the CIA does not install puppet régimes, a world where imprisoned labour is not used in the produc- tion process, a world where carpet bombings of defenceless civilian popula- tions do not occur, a world free of apartheid, concentration camps and special economic zones . . .'' Such are the dirty realities hidden by the clean abstractions of economics. Economists' ''Platonic underworld of mathemati- cal certainty'' is ''an ahistorical supposition lacking reference to reality,'' a mere pretense.[4]

Since the market is not the gloriously self-regulating mechanism advertised by the focalizing representations of official economics, critical anarchist economics must not only attend to the excluded political context—military and police intervention in labor disputes, State management of economic crises, social welfare as a defensive response to workers' movements, colonial exploitation of peripheral nations by metropolitan powers, and direct and indirect manipulation of the electoral system by the wealthiest actors, e.g., by means of campaign financing and the threat of the ''capital strike''—but also, as Colin Ward reminds us, to the informal economies that subsist alongside the official one: the largely feminized household economy of unpaid labor on which the male-dominated capitalist economy is parasitic; the un- registered economies of barter and unlicensed enterprise; the black-market and criminal economies that are capital's shadowy twin; the mutual aid networks that still proliferate among the poor as a practice of survival, ''the very ancient art of 'making do' ''; the resistance economies of squatting and scavenging; and all the other ''half-anarchistic'' practices of ''use and wont'' in

[4] Birrell, ''Some Notes For an Anarchist Theory of Trade.'' The Raven 8, no. 31 (Autumn 1995), http://www.spunk.org/library/pubs/freedom/raven/sp001755.html (accessed 11 March 2005).

10. The Critique of Economy as Representation

ANARCHISM BEGINS WITH A REJECTION OF ECONOMICS AS A ‘‘SCIENCE’’ THAT observes events and represents their relationships as ‘‘laws.’’[1] The lawful- ness of the economy, Kropotkin argues, is mere appearance; even in nature, ‘‘law’’ is always of ‘‘a conditional character,’’ so that when the conditions subtending a given set of laws change, the laws change as well. For example, as Richards writes, ‘‘the problem is not that when the minimum wage goes up it is harder to find work . . . [it] is that the structure of the system is such that when the minimum wage goes up it is harder to find work.’’[2] Canonical ‘‘academic political economy’’ omits these structural conditions from its fo- calizing representations, thus disguising them as nature: ‘‘having described the facts which arise in our society under these conditions, they represent to us these facts as rigid, inevitable economic laws.’’[3] Birrell, too, attacks economists’ use of the theoretical fiction of ‘‘all things being equal’’: ‘‘The world of economics is a world of theories . . . where

[1] Takis Fotopoulos claims otherwise, arguing that for Proudhon, too, economics is a ‘‘science.’’ However, as he acknowledges, ‘‘Proudhon goes on to assert that he does not regard as a science the ‘political economy’ of Adam Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, and J. B. Say . . . which he sees as an ‘incoherent ensemble of theories’ and aptly characterises as ‘the organization of robbery and poverty’ ’’ . Takis Fotopoulos, ‘‘Beyond Marx and Proudhon,’’ Democracy & Na- ture 6, No. 1 (March 2000) http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol6/takis_proudhon.html In other words, for Proudhon, official economics is just an ideological mask for class interests, not the objective study that it claims to be.

[2] Richards, Letters From Quebec, 1.8.11.

[3] Kropotkin, Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets, 179.

absentee owners are Jews, the poor immigrants are allied with them. At first the Negroes are equally oppressed brothers; but then they are diabolically strange. The East consists of Cities of Sin.’’[63] Ultimately, the racism of ‘‘States’ Rights’’ transforms American populism into a tool of the same interests it once opposed: the right adopts populist rhetoric as a weapon against universalizing federal regulatory regimes. As Biehl warns, merely formal decentralization without a democratic content can ‘‘become regressive… Homophobia, anti-Semitism, and racism as well as sexism, may be part of a parochial ‘communitarian ethos.’ ’’[64]

In short, as Goodman acknowledges, ‘‘decentralizing has its risks,’’ and populist calls for local control are not always liberatory or just. For instance, he invites us to ‘‘suppose that the school system of a Northern city were radically decentralized, given over to the control of the parents and teachers of each school. Without doubt some of the schools would be Birchite and some would be badly neglected.’’ One answer to this problem is simply to deny that it is a problem, at least as long as individuals have freedom of movement between communities: ‘‘If each locality indeed had its option, the counties where Negroes are in the majority would have very different rules! And they would provide a meaningful choice for other Negroes to move to.’’[65]

However, those who are not relatively free to choose between communities— particularly children, who are not only much more dependent on the immediate community for nurturance but that much more open to its influence, receptive to its values—would still be subject to the tyranny of the local regime. A small but quite vicious statism could easily reemerge.

Some structural safeguards are therefore desirable and necessary. Any free federation of communities should include an artic-

[63] Goodman, Drawing the Line, 181.

[64] Goodman, People or Personnel and Like a Conquered Province, 13, 48; Janet Biehl, Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 134.

[65] Goodman, People or Personnel and Like a Conquered Province, 12-13.

ulate constitutional agreement as to the minimal requirements for membership (as the charter of the Federation of Egalitarian Communities, a network of intentional communities, does today) and, in effect, a political pact that specifies conditions under which the cooperating communities can or even must intervene in the affairs of a particular community within or even outside the federation in order to defend the equality, the freedom, and/or the lives of individuals there. However, any truly egalitarian politics must finally depend on an egalitarian culture that fosters mutuality; the abstract system of rights and responsibilities must ultimately be grounded in emotional ties of solidarity, concern, and care.[66] Democracy in the political sphere depends on a climate of tolerance and respect that can only be the product of the social sphere, without which it remains an empty form without content.

Two forces could converge to produce such a culture of solidarity-with- diversity. The first is the result of a more anarchic circulation of information, images, ideas, and people between communities, which tends to make cultural homogeneity more and more a thing of the past and to foster new hy- bridities and diversities of identification. The second is what Biehl and Bookchin, again drawing on the Greek tradition, call paideia—the cultural role of education in producing a citizenry ready to act democratically in the political sphere. Presumably the paideia that would train children to work in groups, articulate ideas, and take initiative would also equip them with a multicultural understanding of the world and the values that sustain a diverse society.

In any case, it is certain that there is no certainty, no safeguard against injustice, elsewhere than in the willingness of human beings, as drawn into relationships by some set of social and political structures, to treat one another fairly. Thus Goodman argues that

[66] Salleh, ''Social Ecology and 'The Man Question.' ''

''we must avoid concentration of power precisely because we are fallible…

The moral question is not whether men [and women] are 'good enough' for a type of social organization, but whether the type of organization is useful to develop the potentialities of intelligence, grace, and freedom in [women and] men.''[67] We have become used to living in a situation where rights are guaranteed by law and upheld by force, but in which it is foolish to trust others to respect these rights as a matter of custom, compassion, and conscience. The governmental Leviathan by no means puts an end to Hobbes's bellum omnia contra omnes: we are more or less always in a state of war against anyone outside our little spheres of kinship and friendship, largely because we have no place to meet to settle our differences openly, no experience dealing with strangers outside of the media of exchange and command. As Adorno and Horkheimer show, the prevalent forms of modern rationality, for all their universalism, allow the most irrational, atavistic forms of particularism to survive and even thrive.

To trust one or another bureaucratic, authoritarian structure to promote and maintain justice is perhaps more foolish, in the long run, than taking the risks of decentralization and radical democracy.

[67] Goodman, People or Personnel and Like a Conquered Province, 19.

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tual and an appeal to necessity, we can find in anarchist discourse an emphasis not only on a denunciation of the actual, but on an evocation of the possible that pushes the discourse into a prescriptive mode.

Does anarchist historical narrative succeed in articulating a relationship between description and prescription that avoids the extremes of Kautskyan descriptivism and Sorelian prescriptivism? Philip Winn sees a return of Kautskyism in Bookchin's appeal to evolution, which he sees as a discourse with its own hierarchical implications. By situating culture within nature, attributing dialectical patterns of development simultaneously to both, Bookchin seems to lend support to his own version of a teleological (and inevitably ethnocentric) historical narrative, complete with stages of development and a final goal.[36]

However, things are not quite this simple. From Bookchin's perspective, ''primitive'' societies, despite their constitutive weaknesses (namely, their attachment to the ethnic particularism of ''the blood-tie''), have a lot to teach ''advanced'' industrial societies about social solidarity and ecological economy: in fact, since monocultural industrialism has produced a destructive ''homogenization of the social environment and the so-called individuals who people it,'' the very notion ''that our society is more complex than earlier cultures'' is laughable. Nor is any Marxian return of ''primitive'' communism at a ''higher'' stage inevitable; the final product of capitalism and statism may be ecocide.[37] However, without quite endorsing a rigid teleology, Bookchin argues that ''there is some kind of directionality toward ever- greater differentiation or wholeness insofar as potentiality

Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism, ed. Lydia Sargent (Boston: South End Press, 1981) and essays in Reinventing Anarchy, Again.

[36] Philip Winn, ''Social Ecology—Some Concerns,'' The Anarchist, no. 1 (October 1994), http://www.spunk.org/texts/pubs/theanarc/1/sp000740.txt (accessed 11 August 2003).

[37] Bookchin, Ecology of Freedom, 42-43, 46-48, 53, 138, 366.

is realized in its full actuality.'' When this development assumes a morally intelligible shape—when what emerges is not only causally explicable, but ethically justified—we can retrospectively call this development ''rational.''[38]

Human history, from this point of view, is not simply a catalogue of events, nor even a structure of cause-and-effect explanations, but the rational content and continuity of events . . . that are grounded in humanity's potentialities for freedom, self-consciousness, and cooperation, in the self-formative development of increasingly libertarian forms of consociation. It is the rational 'infrastructure,' so to speak, that coheres human actions and institutions over the past and the present in the direction of an emancipatory society and emancipated individual.''[39] In other words, events may produce evil outcomes, but to the extent that this is the case, they are, on Bookchin's terms, irrational, an ''incomplete, aborted, irrational 'what-is' '' in place of a ''complete, fully developed, rational 'what-should-be' ''—and thus, by definition, ahistorical. Thus, while Bookchin eliminates the metaphysical concept of an end of history, let alone a final synthesis in which all merely particular differences are abolished, he appeals to ''the vision of an ever-increasing wholeness, fullness, and richness of differentiation and subjectivity.''[40]

This revision of Hegelian dialectics has prompted some confusion and attracted criticism. Joff Bradley reads Bookchin's appeal to notions of ''wholeness'' as evidence of an unconscious complicity with ''Hegel's grand narrative of the unfolding and omnivorous 'Spirit.' ''[41] Likewise, Cochrane points out that Bookchin sometimes uses an insidiously teleological language in which ''what

[38] Bookchin, ''A Philosophical Naturalism.''

[39] Bookchin, ''History, Civilization, and Progress.''

[40] Bookchin, ''A Philosophical Naturalism.''

[41] Joff Bradley, ''The Possibility of an Antihumanist EcoAnarchism,'' Research on Anarchism Forum, 14 September 2004, http://raforum.apinc.org/article.php3?id_article=1765/ (accessed 10 March 2005), 5.

he refers to as 'real' human 'potentialities' '' are distinguished from '' 'monstrous' and 'episodic' human 'capacities' ''; within this scheme of definitions, it is tautologically true that ''humans have a capacity but no potential to deliberately inflict harm on others.'' While Bookchin does not postulate any guarantee that our capacities for self-destruction won't overwhelm our potentials for self-rule, he nonetheless disqualifies the former as part of ''history'' per se; the story of their unfolding is merely a record of meaningless ''events,'' ''accidental or eccentric'' contingencies, social ''failures,'' political ''setbacks,'' ''aberrations,'' or ''horrors,'' an endless list of ''aborted or distorted'' developments.[42]

Granted, at his weakest moments, Bookchin seems to imagine that ''nature itself'' could somehow '' 'write' natural philosophy and ethics.''[43] However, anarchists need not make any profound ontological distinction, as Bookchin chooses to do, between a good potentiality and a bad capacity, nor need we think of either potentiality or capacity in the singular. The more traditional anarchist assumption, shared by Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, is that we have many potentials and capacities, some good, some bad. We can still agree with Bookchin that nothing is ''predetermined'' and that any dialectics that issues in an end of history is really a form of Platonic idealism that is incompatible with ecology.[44] We can also agree that while much of human history is ''merely a series of revolting crimes,''[45] it still manifests a certain developmental logic in which what should be is conditioned by what can be, which in turn is causally conditioned by what is and what has been. Even more importantly, we can accept Bookchin's critical observation that historical narratives that give events a retrospective

[42] Cochrane, ''Left-Libertarian Ecopolitics,'' 168-69; Bookchin, quoted in Cochrane, ''Left-Libertarian Ecopolitics,'' 168.

[43] Bookchin, quoted in Cochrane, ''Left-Libertarian Ecopolitics,'' 169.

[44] Bookchin, ''History, Civilization, and Progress''; ''A Philosophical Naturalism.''

[45] Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 134.

appearance of necessity frequently mask any number of alternative potentials—and moreover, that among these counterfactual could-have-beens are any number of should- have-beens whose recovery and remembrance alone serves as a rebuke to the inadequacies of the status quo that came to be in their place. Bookchin's overall historiographical project—to make ''the historic unconscious'' conscious by distinguishing a posteriori between the ''legacy of domination'' and the ''legacy of freedom,'' legacies that have become so densely ''intertwined'' that ''the language of freedom becomes interchangeable with that of domination''—is still sound. It is not far from Kropotkin's proposal for something like a genuinely social ''history of the origin and development of past revolutions,'' which would liberate these histories from the conservative ideological representations that mediate between them and ourselves, and in which ordinary working people would occupy the foreground rather than merely serving as a backdrop to great men.[46]

It would be misleading to attribute Bookchin's views to the entire social anarchist tradition, which is certainly theoretically diverse enough. Proudhon's engagement with Hegel was complex and ambiguous, to say the least, and Kropotkin rejected Hegel's ''dialectic method'' altogether as a form of metaphysics.[47] Still, for all his quarrels with Hegel, Proudhon could still write that ''the dialectical series is the queen of thought,''[48] and Kropotkin's own conception of a human species constituted, both in its needs and capacities, by an evolutionary process (which thereby conditions but does not predestine what we can become) is for the most part contiguous with Bookchin's use of dialectics. Neither Proudhon, Bakunin, nor Kropotkin would resist the general thrust of Bookchin's argument toward an affirmation—colored by an understanding of ecology and evolutionary biology unavailable to Hegel— that ''Being

[46] Bookchin, Ecology of Freedom, 41; Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 186.

[47] Kropotkin, Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 151-52.

[48] Proudhon, Oeuvres, 5.193, translation mine.

is not an agglomeration of fixed entities and phenomena but is always in flux, in a state of Becoming,'' and that any transformative politics must elaborate its project in terms of a logical development from a potential subsisting in the objectively existing present.[49]

There certainly is a strain within anarchism, particularly in times when a dramatic upheaval seems imminent, that sees all history as culminating in the Revolution conceived as a single event, a total break with the past—the Grand Soir, as it was called in the nineteenth century. However, most anar- chist theory, eschewing such a monological and linear history, articulates a far more open-ended and unpredictable notion of progress and change.

Malatesta, among others, scoffed at the idea that we must ''remain passive spectators, awaiting the right moment to present itself'';[50] in fact, the development of anarcho-syndicalism was an effort to dispense with such revolutionary waiting—the revolutionary trade union, refusing to play by the rules set by the State, would win such concrete victories as it could here and now, while building up an independent workers' power in preparation for general strikes and general political contestation.[51] April Carter offers a useful summary of anarchist political strategy when she observes that the apparent reformism of engaging in labor struggles is really one of two general anarchist strategies: just as important as a campaign of resistance ''to erode the power of those at the top—a power in reality springing from the co-operative action of the social group as a whole—by withdrawing co-operation and refusing to obey orders'' is the constructive effort ''to build up independent communities and organizations within the existing State, and so create a new society in embryo''—that is, ''forming the new society within the

[49] Bookchin, ''A Philosophical Naturalism.''
[50] Malatesta, The Anarchist Revolution, 80.
[51] Rocker, Anarcho-Syndicalism, 86-89.

shell of the old,'' in the words of the IWW Preamble.[52] An anarchist ''process of revolution,'' as described by Staughton Lynd, would not be reducible to a single event, an Opening of the Bastille or a Storming of the Winter Palace; it starts when by demonstrations or strikes or electoral victories in the context of supplementary direct action, the way a society makes its decisions is forced to change. This is something very real even when the beginnings are small. It means, not just that a given decision is different in substance, but that the process of decision-making becomes more responsive to the ordinarily inarticulate. New faces appear in the group that makes the decision, alternatives are discussed in advance, more bodies have to be consulted. As the revolutionary situation deepens, the broadening of the decision-making process becomes institutionalized. Alongside the customary structure of authority, parallel bodies—organs of ''dual power,'' as Trotsky called them—arise. All that had been closed and mysterious in the procedure of the parent institution becomes open and visible in the workings of its counterpart . . . a new structure of representation develops out of direct democracy and controlled by it.[53]

This reconstructive project was elaborated through theories of historical change that dissolved the absolute opposition between sudden political ''revolution'' and gradual social ''evolution'': these were, Reclus argued, really only the same phenomenon taking place at different speeds.[54] ''When a dam bursts,'' as Malatesta put it, ''it is either because the pressure of the water has become too great for the dam to hold any longer or because of the gradual disintegration of the molecules of which the matter of the dam is made. In the same way revolutions break out under growing pressure of those forces which seek social change and the point

[52] Carter, Political Theory of Anarchism, 107; IWW Preamble, quoted in Patrick Renshaw, The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1967), 1.

[53] Lynd, Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism, 171-72.

[54] Reclus, ''Evolution and Revolution.''

is reached when the existing government can be overthrown and when, by processes of internal pressure, the forces of conservatism are progressively weakened.''[55] Thus, far in advance of May's suggestion that when power is no longer seen as emanating from a single source, we dispense with the reformist/revolutionary binary, Malatesta declares that ''anarchism has and always will be reformist'' and that, as anarchists, ''we are revolutionaries.''[56]

As Arendt points out, it was Proudhon, not Trotsky, who coined the term ''révolution en permanence.''[57] By speaking of the revolution as a permanent state of affairs, he put a distance between the Jacobin notion of a final and definitive overturning of social relations and a far less foreseeable evolution- ary/revolutionary process, a never-complete progrès toward a future that is always other.[58]

[55] Malatesta, Anarchist Revolution, 81.

[56] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 55; Malatesta, Anarchist Revolution, 80.

[57] Proudhon, quoted in Hannah Arendt, On Revolution (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 51.

[58] Gareth Gordon, ''Horizons of Charge: Deconstruction . . .'' 55-56.

12. The Critique of Identity as Representation

AS JAMESON INDICATES IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO LYOTARD'S POSTMODERN Condition, a major component of the crisis of representation in politics is the demise of collective subjects. Without an all-encompassing ''human nature'' or ''class interest'' to produce unity among people (in the form of a ''human'' or ''proletarian'' subject), it would seem that the New Social Movements fill this gap with group identities organized by constellations of affinity (gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, ability, age, etc). In place of an opposition between ''the ruling class'' and ''the working class,'' we can distinguish regions along a continuum of identities, from those occupying a cultural ''center'' to those relegated to the social ''margins.'' However, since these identities are not essential but contextual, the center/margins scheme is ambiguous at best: one may be privileged in terms of some identity (say, gender or race) while marginalized in other respects (e.g., sexuality). Thus, ''identity politics'' fractures almost from the beginning, as each group—Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, Black Power, etc.—finds its own apparent homogeneity crisscrossed by all the others, inaugurating the ''differences among women'' period in feminism. The resulting reshuffling of categories translates ''identity politics'' into ''coalition work.''[1]

[1] Jo Freeman, The Politics of Women's Liberation: Case Study of an Emerging Movement and its Relation to the Policy Process (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1975), 57, 99; Bernice Johnson Reagon, ''Coalition Politics: Turning the Century,'' in Changing Our Power: An Introduction to Women Studies, ed. Jo

Woolf, Virginia. A Room of One's Own. USA: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1981.
Yeats, William Butler. The Poems. Edited by Richard J. Finneran. New York: Macmillan, 1983.
''The Zapatistas, Anarchism and 'Direct Democracy.''' http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/ andrew/zap_asr.html (accessed 11 August 2003).
Zarrow, Peter. Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
Zerzan, John. ''Abstract Expressionism: Painting as Vision and Critique.'' Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed 17, no. 1 (Spring/ Summer 1999): 36-43.
———. Elements of Refusal. USA: Left Bank Books, 1988.
———. Future Primitive and Other Essays. Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1994.
———. ''Who Is Chomsky?'' http://www.primitivism.com/chomsky.htm (accessed 1 July 2002).
Zimmerman, Bonnie. ''What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Criticism.'' In The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory, edited by Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.
Žižek, Slavoj. ''I Am a Fighting Atheist: Inteview With Slavoj Zizek.'' Bad Subjects 59 (Febru- ary 2002). July 14, 2003. http://eserver.org/bs/59/zizek.html.
———. On Belief. UK: Routledge, 2001.
———. The Sublime Object of Ideology. New York: Verso, 1989.
———. Welcome to the Desert of the Real! Essays on September 11 and Related Dates. New York: Verso, 2002.

While in important respects this process was a necessary, perhaps even a ''dialectical'' reconstitution of unity through difference, it has too often produced this unity in the form of unstable alliances and single-issue reformist activism. The promise of empowerment through diversity has yet to be realized. In this sense, what some more traditional leftists dismiss as identity politics is the product of a general collapse of concepts of identity,[2] and it cannot be transcended by any amount of wishing for the good old days when we all supposedly knew that ''in the last analysis,'' class counted for the most. As long as large, stable collective identities can be rejected as false, reductivist representations of the Many as the One, no amount of pining for a lost ''hierarchy'' of absolute political priorities, à la Eagleton, will convince others to return to them.[3] How, then, can universals be formulated without subsuming diversity into sameness, without annihilating difference for the sake of collective action?

One response is to deny that any such need for universality exists. In this case, universals as such appear to be a form of domination, perhaps the form of domination, against which one must struggle; that is, we could embrace a politics of difference, a positive multiculturalism. If universalizing claims always place one in the position of speaking for others, then, as May writes, ''the first ethical principle to which poststructuralism is committed is that practices of representing others to themselves—either in who they are or in what they want—ought, as much as possible, to be avoided.'' Of course, May amends this sweeping maxim when he

Whitehorse Cochran et al. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/ Hunt Publishing Co., 1991), 312.

[2] Barbara Foley, review of Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism, by Paula L. M. Moya and Michael Hames-Garcia, eds., in Cultural Logic: An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory and Practice 4, no. 2 (Spring 2001), http://eserver.org/clogic/4-2/foley.html (accessed 11 March 2005).

[3] Eagleton, The Illusions of Postmodernism, 113.

denies that ''the problems of telling people who they are'' should prohibit us from ''telling people what—at least in some cases—they ought to do.'' However, this distinction between ''ought-claims'' and ''is-claims'' is as fragile as the entire distinction between fact and value, since what one is and can be bears on what one can and ought to do. Moreover, since there is no hard and fast distinction between claims about what is the case and claims about who one is (e.g., if the Holocaust is a real historical event, then one who denies it is a liar), it is not clear that the seemingly modest injunction against ''telling people who they are'' is modest enough to avoid sliding into an epistemological relativism that prohibits one from telling people what is the case. Thus, while May wishes to stop short of a ''full-blown relativism . . . that would recommend withholding all ethical judgment on those who do not share our discourse,'' which he regards as an ''unpersuasive'' stance, he does find ''a certain kind of cultural relativism . . . compelling.''[4]

Some, of course, have gone much further, arguing that discarding the category of the ''human'' entails scrapping the universalizing concepts of ''human rights''—and about time, too, since what was dressed as universality was really just another historically local, culturally particular set of notions, appropriate to modern Western societies, but inappropriately forced on non-Western people, who if left to themselves would apply their own canons of judgment. This line of argument, of course, falls into the familiar traps of cultural relativism: to say that ''nothing must impair difference'' is to contradict oneself immediately, for the totalizing concept of ''difference'' is at war with the ''nothing'' that makes it total, so that one must either betray the principle by imposing it on others in practice or by failing to put it into practice at all. In this sense, Reiner Schürmann would argue, May's antirepresentational ''principle'' is a contradiction in terms, not only because such a principle would compel one to

[4] May, Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism, 132, 133, 151.

Webster, Roger. Studying Literary Theory. UK: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

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von Mises, Ludwig. Economic Calculation In The Socialist Commonwealth. Translated by S.
Alder. Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1990.
Wallace, David Foster. The Broom of the System. New York: Avon Books, 1997.
Walzer, Michael. ''The Politics of Michel Foucault.'' In Foucault: A Critical Reader, edited by David Hoy, 51-68. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
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respect, for instance, the self-serving relativism of a dictator like Daniel Arap Moi (who claims that democracy is a Western value, culturally inappropriate for African tribal societies), but also since antirepresentational ''an-archism'' is directed against the very notion of first principles or ''arché'' from which all else is to be derived as from an origin or foundation.[5]

Another response, apparently more ethically robust, is to see universals not as a bad political practice, but simply as the form in which political practice has to take place. Just as, for Foucault, the play of power cannot be eliminated but is coextensive with life, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau regard the struggle of universalizing discourses to capture the discursive field as inescapable—indeed, as inherent in the very definitions of discourse and universality: ''Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre.'' Every universal, they argue, is an instrument of power, a means of creating unity among people—for better or for worse. As Hayden White remarks, a nationalist ideology can be an effective unifying force just as easily as can, say, a proletarian internationalism or a culturalist regionalism.[6]

Likewise, Best and Kellner note, apropos of Deleuze and Guattari's libidinal politics, that desires can produce their own repression when it is incorporated into fascist assemblages instead of those representing its real ''interests''—a strange criterion to apply, since on their own terms, desire cannot be accurately represented. Since desire doesn't seem equipped with any immanent preference for one form of investment over another, it is difficult for Deleuze and Guattari to explain why radical investments of desire are better than conservative or reactionary ones; from a purely ''machinic''

[5] Ibid., 133; Reiner Schürmann, Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy, trans. Reiner Schürmann and Christine-Marie Gros (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 49.

[6] Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, 112; White, ''The Ironic Poetics of Late Modernity.''

point of view, a functional unity is a functional unity, regardless of what that function happens to be.[7]

Laclau and Mouffe's theory of hegemony unmasks all these forms of unity as false and incomplete: the postulated ''centre'' of social relations is always imaginary, and a ''final'' stitching-up or ''suture'' of differences into unity is impossible. Every idea of the social as a completed whole is a fantasy. Ultimately, the ''impossibility of closure'' means ''the impossibility of 'society.' ''

The ''representation'' of unity is based on nothing, but this fictitious unity is ''at the same time . . . a principle organizing actual social relations.'' Therefore, the radical task is to produce a new organizing principle, to suture a disparate collection of forces into a functional unity, an ''articulation,'' for the purposes of socialist transformation.[8]

This is a clever end-run around the problems accruing to class theories; rather than searching for a solid ontological basis for political action, Laclau and Mouffe take political action as what organizes an ontological field that is formless in itself. As Fuss puts it, this constitutes a reformulation of coalition work as normative for politics, rather than an available but impaired mode of political action in the absence of a unified class subject—in short, ''an anti-essentialist reading of 'class' as a product of coalition.'' Even if the class called women is without ontological purchase, a representation of no preexisting subject, it can take on reality by calling a subject into existence:

''Fictions of identity . . . are no less powerful for being fictions.''[9]
Instead of seeing politics as the epiphenomenal appearance of a material struggle centered on the economic category of class, we can see it as a properly political struggle over representation. Moreover, as Althusser wished, Mouffe and Laclau avoid the embarrassments

[7] Best and Kellner, Postmodern Theory, 94, 108.

[8] Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, 86, 105, 119, 122, 136.

[9] Fuss, Essentially Speaking, 36, 104.

———. ''The Question of Philosophy and Poiesis in the Posthistorical Age: Thinking/Imagining the Shadow of Metaphysics.'' boundary 2 27, no. 1(2000): 151-74.

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Sorapure, Madeleine. ''The Detective and the Author: City of Glass.'' In Beyond the Red Note- book: Essays on Paul Auster, edited by Dennis Barone. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.
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Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
———. ''Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and the Hermeneutic Circle: Towards a Postmodern Theory of Interpretation as Disclosure.'' In Martin Heidegger and the Question of Literature: Towards a Postmodern Literary Hermeneutics, edited by William V. Spanos, 115-48. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.
———. ''Martin Heidegger and the Question of Literature: A Preface.'' In The Question Of Textuality: Strategies of Reading in Contemporary American Criticism, edited by William Spanos, Paul Bové, and Daniel O'Hara. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

of Hegelian idealism, with its inherent essentialism. For Hegel, as Geras explains, ''the apparent complexity of the social whole was merely apparent since its multiple aspects were always traceable and therefore reducible in the end to an original common essence, itself a moment or stage in the development of the world spirit. The diverse and manifold appearances of the Hegelian totality were expressions of this unique spiritual essence, which was present and more or less legible in them all. The outwardly complex thus gave way to the essentially simple.''[10] The theory of hegemony, by contrast, affirms ''the openness of the social as the constitutive ground or 'negative essence' of the existing.''[11] Contrary to orthodox political theories, the social does not require a totalizing representation, an essence, in order for political action to go forward.

Or does it? Is a negative essence not still an essence? Geras denies that Laclau and Mouffe have actually transcended totalization. Instead, like Althusser, they produce their own reductivism: every politics is guilty of essentialism. The differences among political positions are leveled, erased. In short, Althusser, Mouffe, and Laclau each reduce all politics to ''reductionist error,'' the reiteration in different forms of ''the reductionist assumption of an original essence.'' Within their theory, ''a quite enormous variety of ideas, idioms, philosophical and cultural lineages, may be seen to derive from, for having been all but reduced to, a single common essence, that species of error that Laclau and Mouffe today freely call 'essentialism.' ''[12]

Apart from the logical problems of this position—an antiessentialist politics that essentializes politics—Laclau and Mouffe also face an ethical problem. If all politics is the invention of identity ex nihilo through discourse, why form this kind of hegemonic identity instead of another? Why suture A to B and not to C, D, or E?

[10] Norman Geras, Discourses of Extremity: Radical Ethics and Post-Marxist Extravagances (London: Verso, 1990), 68.
[11] Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, 95.
[12] Geras, Discourses of Extremity, 70.

It is telling that the theory of suture comes to them from Lacan by way of film theory: it is an aesthetic concept, not an ethical one. They risk the same Sorelian trap that Rorty falls into, in which the decision that forms a social constellation seems to be everything, so that it matters not whether one decides, as the anarchists did, to constellate workers' power and struggle against the state with racial equality, or to constellate, as Sorel did, workers' power and the struggle against the state with anti- Semitism. The choice of organizing myths seems arbitrary, relative. As if aware of this, Laclau now seems to be seeking an ethos within the theory of hegemony: what is ethical and democratic, he contends, is not to hide the instrumentality of hegemonic articulation, so that what is really a political decision appears as a decision rather than as a natural given: as Critchley explains, while ''a naturalizing or essentializing politics'' is ''tacitly hegemonic,'' constantly engaged in rendering ''invisible'' its own discursive ''operations of power and force,'' a truly ''democratic'' political practice would be ''explicitly hegemonic.''[13]

This would seem to make sense. If, as Richards puts it, the deconstruction of identities seems to imply that ''the game is over,'' a more optimistic way of reading these findings would be to conclude that deconstruction simply teaches us ''how they were put together'': ''Now we can put symbolic structures together, as humans have been doing for centuries . . . using all the resources and techniques humans have ever used.''[14] But to construct a symbolic structure in the clear light of the awareness that one is constructing it does not guarantee that this structure will be democratic or ethical; perhaps one is behaving in a Machiavellian fashion, without illusions, in one's own naked self-interest, so that one may stand at the center of the structure while relegating others to its margins. But such a decision cannot be made noble by the cynical

[13] Critchley, ''Is There a Normative Deficit in the Theory of Hegemony?'' 3-5.

[14] Richards, Letters From Quebec, 2.50.13.

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admission that one is pursuing power for its own sake: Sorel’s suturing of syndicalism to anti-Semitism, exploiting the revolutionary myth of the Jew as capitalist, is no less an egregious case of scapegoating for being committed in the awareness of its mythical function. The problem remains that Laclau and Mouffe have lamely positioned themselves as simultaneously insisting that there are no real universally shared interests, only effectively persuasive political identities—and that we should construct a universally shared political identity from this nothing. Hence the ‘‘normative deficit’’ that Critchley perceives in their theory.[15]

Genuinely radical movements require a firmer ethical grounding than this.

The decision to suture workers’ power to antistatism cannot be persuasively justified by a shrug and the admission that one has simply chosen to because one has chosen to. If political identities are only effective insofar as they are taken to be real, natural, given, rather than merely made-up, then we have no reason to expect that such a fiat would be any more effective than Rorty’s openly artificial Narratives of National Greatness; as fantasies of unity, they take place within the unconscious, which is what has to hide itself in order to take effect. Politics is the operation of power, and power is constantly trying to pass itself off as something else, to make itself invisible.

The ethical problems entailed in Laclau and Mouffe’s antirepresentation- alism have an epistemological corollary as well. If, as Geras argues, ‘‘an ‘essence’ will always be discoverable’’ in any ‘‘principle or principles of explanation,’’ then every ‘‘explanatory project’’ will always be vitiated by essentialism, a priori. Indeed, this is implicit in the very antirepresentationalist thrust of their program, since an ‘‘explanation’’ is a ‘‘representation’’ of how things are; an unrepresentable ‘‘society’’ is, by the same token, unknowable, and its operations of power are

[15] Critchley, ‘‘Is There a Normative Deficit in the Theory of Hegemony?’’ 20.

inexplicable. This claim goes considerably beyond a mere revision of Marxist categories, a principled objection to the economic reductivism of claims to the effect that ''class position is the primary historical determinant of social and political identities'' or that ''relations of production'' have ''explanatory primacy''; it is tantamount to denying ''that society can be rendered intelligible'' at all. Ultimately, Geras argues, Laclau and Mouffe seem unable to distinguish between a specific argument that discourse helps to shape the political field and a generalized claim that ''there is no pre-discursive objectivity or reality, that objects not spoken, written, or thought about do not exist.''[16] This, in turn, leads to more ethical problems. First of all, it is questionable whether such an extreme antirealism is compatible with any kind of political action at all, since it seems to preclude any reference to nondiscursive, nonarbitrary, nonvoluntary conditions, thereby threatening to collapse into a linguistic solipsism that calls the very need for political action into question.[17] Secondly, if the theory of hegemony itself constitutes a set of totalizing ''explanatory categories,'' its denial of any efficacy to such totalization is doomed to the self- refuting '' 'this is how it is' with which the relativist tells you why you cannot say 'this is how it is.' ''[18] Finally, since society is, on this account, finally unintelligible, power relations seem so intrinsically opaque that no conceivable set of power relations could meet Laclau's ethical standard of transparency. An antirepresentationalist canon of ethics and politics seems neither available nor realizable.

[16] Geras, Discourses of Extremity, 66, 71, 97.

[17] If nothing is outside of representation—or, more precisely, if nothing is anything apart from how it is described—why not avoid the work of emancipation and simply redescribe oneself as ''free''? This calls to mind the Wittgensteinian solution to the crisis of Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado, in which those under the Mikado's death sentence convince him that (a) he is all-powerful, so that (b) what he says is as good as done, in which case, (c) why not just pretend that what he's said is done, and let that be an end to it?

[18] Geras, Discourses of Extremity, 66, 163.

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Laclau and Mouffe's theorization of hegemony closely resembles Latour and Callon's postmodern sociology of knowledge or ''Actor Network Theory,'' which Mike Michael recommends as a useful supplement to anarchist political theory. In a recent issue of Anarchist Studies, Michael suggests that where anarchist theories of ''power'' have tended to ''take it for granted that the functioning of the state entails an admixture of coercion and ideological indoctrination, the bottom line being the former,'' Actor Network Theory offers a more accurate and sophisticated picture of how power operates. Instead of viewing power as hierarchical organization backed by violence, he writes, anarchists ought to regard it in Foucauldian fashion as an all-pervasive ''network,'' an ensemble of forces ''seeping through the multiplicity of relations amongst people.'' Rather than a ''violent'' theory of power, in fact, they ought to embrace a ''consensual'' conception: power is the organization of consent, and even the State's ''coercive forces'' are themselves called into being in the first place by consensus-creating processes of ''persuasion.''

These persuasive processes, in which certain agents seek to persuade other agents to participate in their ''network'' of agreement, are fundamentally representational. Latour identifies three phases in the construction of this representative-represented relationship, which he calls interressement, enrolment, and translation. In interressement, ''one aims to convince actors that, rather than maintain a particular set of self-understandings that are derived from their relationships with other actors . . . they should really be conceptualizing themselves through the categories that you provide.'' Translating follows when ''the 'enrolling actor' sets itself up as the spokesperson of others,'' acquiring the power of representation. Finally, in the phase of enrolment, the target of persuasion takes on the ''identities and practices'' that the persuader wants. In sum, the ''actors'' in this drama offer their audience something like a logical syllogism—or, more accurately, a teleological narrative:

This is what you want to be. (Interressement)

We are the ones who can help you become that. (Translation)

Grant your obedience by your own consent. (Enrolment)[19]

What the actor (falsely) promises is that she or he can faithfully represent the audience: ''The 'translator' attempts to persuade others that it can repre- sent them and their interests. To do this, it must convince others that its and their identities and interests coincide''[20] —something that, it is tacitly assumed, could never happen in reality.

Here, once again, ethical and epistemological antirepresentationalisms converge. Like Baginski, Michael takes a position against the implicit mimetic claim of dramatic narrative, the pretense that the world of the drama holds up a mirror to the audience in which it can see its own true nature, which appears to be yet another form of the generalized social con game in which unrepresentable individuals are seduced into adopting identities that assure their participation in representational networks of command and obedience. Resistance and rebellion happen when these ''roles and identities assigned by one entity to another'' are ''challenged, undermined or betrayed''—e.g., when the claim of one individual or group to represent others is rejected or deconstructed.[21] Unlike Baginski, however, Michael assumes that there is no potential for narrative to tell a truer story about subjects, no legitimate form of representation. On the terms of Actor Network Theory, every identification is a priori false, the assertion of sameness where there can only be limitless difference. The individual is unrepresentable because it is essentially mysterious, unique,

[19] Michael, ''The Power-Persuasion-Identity Nexus,'' 27-28, 30-31, 32.
[20] Ibid., 31.
[21] Ibid., 32.

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original. Couched in the assumptions of this discourse, in other words, is an appeal to origins. What is at the origin is difference, not sameness. The first of these is real and substantial; the other is an illusion added on to the real, falsely imposed on it. We can have nothing in common but a false pretense of having something in common. Individuality is prior and superior to community; freedom would consist in difference without unity.

Michael belatedly acknowledges that this conception of freedom precludes its own realization in practice, since individuals are incapable of waging a revolutionary struggle in isolation from one another. For actors to effectively ''betray their spokespersons and reject their designated roles,'' he writes, ''it is not simply the case that associations need to be broken. Rather new associations need to be forged and, in consequence, new identities need to be generated.'' At the same time, he has made it impossible for himself to differentiate between those forms of identity and representation that revolutionary actors might find instrumental in achieving their ends and those that entail the actors themselves being instrumentalized. In fact, Michael collapses Hannah Arendt's distinction between ''power'' and ''violence,'' insofar as violence, in her classic definition, is ''distinguished by its instrumental character,'' while power is ''the human ability . . . to act in concert'';[22] as for Stirner, instrumentality is the sole remaining category. ''Even at the heart of the anarchist group,'' Michael warns, ''we can see these processes of persuasion at work''; indeed, what seem to be '' 'spontaneous' collectives'' are inevitably ''the product of just those processes . . . [involved in] the operation of the coercive state.''[23]

Which processes of persuasion are so entailed, we might ask. Are these necessarily monological, closed processes, staged in a climate of fear and intolerance, in which social pressure is the never-articulated but always- present guarantor of stasis? Or might they

[22] Arendt, On Violence (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1970), 46, 44.
[23] Michael, ''The Power-Persuasion-Identity Nexus,'' 40, 39.

also be processes that involve open dialogue, that presume communities of diversity, that allow for democratic dissent as well as consensus, change as well as stability? Michael can only speak of all forms of persuasion en bloc. Thus, as he coyly hints, even his own persuasive rhetoric is not to be trusted: there can, on the terms of his own theory, be no difference between his offer to ''provide the reader with a possible critical tool'' and an attempt ''to enrol you into my network.''[24] Birrell's memetics returns, not as a circulation of convivial tools as gifts, but as germ warfare.

If much contemporary political theory sees a slippery slope between notions of ''totality'' and ''totalitarianism,'' anarchists have been less certain of this. On the one hand, anarcho-primitivists like Moore regard the will to ''represent'' others as inherently authoritarian. For Moore, the problem of domination is largely ''the problem of representation'': ''because ideology claims to represent the interests of many,'' he explains, ''it does not truly represent any single individual,'' even ''when it is able to persuade individuals of its representative legitimacy.'' Representation is a means of repressively policing the infinite multiplicity of desires into unity.[25] On the other hand, social anarchists like Bookchin have insisted that we have a positive duty to ''try to speak for dominated people as a whole.'' Collective action, Bookchin argues, must come neither from the self-interests of isolated individuals, nor from the sectional interests that constitute us as ''class beings,'' but from our species interest as ''human beings'' in an ecological matrix; only a revolutionary project that appeals to a ''general human interest'' can succeed.[26]

[24] Ibid., 40.

[25] Moore, ''Prophets of the New World: Noam Chomsky, Murray Bookchin, and Fredy Perlman,'' Social Anarchism 20 (1995), http://www.nothingness.org/sociala/sa20/20moore.html (accessed 1 July 2002).

[26] Bookchin, The Modern Crisis (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986), 155; To Remember Spain, 31; Remaking Society, 184.

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However, as Goldman put it, anarchism cannot ‘‘comprise an iron-clad program to be carried out under all circumstances’’; rather, it ‘‘must grow out of the economic needs of each place and clime.’’ For Bookchin, likewise, universality must always be rearticulated in and through the diversity of the ‘‘lived traditions’’ and ‘‘problems’’ faced by specific communities at particular historical moments. In fact, the anarchist practice of hermeneutics as dialogue is part of this political practice. It is a process of negotiation through which one not only modifies and revises one’s concept of the universal through particulars but also comes to articulate the universality implicit within each particular tradition, developing warrants or grounds in terms of which one culture can make ethical sense to the other.[27]

Thus, describing the community development efforts that made the Loisaida neighborhood the center of New York’s community gardening movement between the end of the 1960s and the ascendancy of Mayor Giuliani—a process sponsored and inspired by a Puerto Rican community group called Charas, which was influenced by Paul Goodman—Daniel Chodorkoff contrasts their grassroots approach with that of ‘‘the War on Poverty model,’’ in which communities are represented as ‘‘battlefields’’ to be targeted for the deployment of ‘‘strategic resources.’’ Rather than focusing on ‘‘the delivery of services to a needy population by professionals,’’ a strategy that inevitably ‘‘degenerates into a form of social control,’’ anarchist intervention seeks to develop what is already present within the community: its own capacities for making value from itself. Rather than create new functioning social structures from scratch, Charas attempted to make use of whatever ‘‘traditions of mutualism and cooperation’’ were already at hand, whenever possible: for instance, a number of ‘‘youth gangs’’ were engaged in the process, becoming part of the constructive forces. Vacant lots

[27] Goldman, Anarchism, 63; Bookchin, Remaking Society, 165; Colson, Trois Essais Trois Essais de philosophie anarchiste (Paris: Éditiors Léo Scheer, 2004), 26.

were transformed into a children's playground, a cultural space for locally produced poetry, music, and theater, and, most imaginatively, an experimental food garden, which not only led to the establishment of a new local enterprise producing ''commercial rooftop greenhouses,'' but created ''gardening groups'' that ''drew on the traditions of the Jivaro, the Puerto Rican peasantry from which many of the Loisaida's residents hail.'' Implicit in the knowledge base and survival practices of the neighborhood were most of the building blocks of a functioning self-managed society. Anarchism did not have to be imported or imposed from the outside, but evoked from within.[28]

It was in a similar manner that anarchism spread through Spain between the mid-nineteenth century, when Pi y Margall translated Proudhon into Spanish, and the present moment (in which it still survives with some vigor, despite decades of fascist repression).[29] Even ''the puritanical traditions of the country'' served as material for the faístas (members of the Federación Anarquista Iberica, the political wing of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT union), who wrote in 1936: ''We want to reconstruct Spain materially and morally.

Our revolution will be both economic and ethical.''[30] At times this reconstruction was incomplete, to say the least: in the period of the revolution, ''hot-headed young fanatics belonging to the Libertarian Youth organization'' made a practice of assassinating ''pimps and male prostitutes'' as well as the politically complicit clergy, and a 1936 CNT congress ''proposed popular assemblies to discipline those who 'do not fulfill their duties either in the moral

[28] Daniel Chodorkoff, ''Social Ecology and Community Development,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 25 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=1125144547551 (accessed 30 March 2004).

[29] Max Nettlau, A Short History of Anarchism, trans. Ida Pilat Isca, ed. Heiner M. Becker (London: Freedom Press, 1996), 50.

[30] Bookchin, To Remember Spain, 13; FAI, quoted in Paul Berman, comp., Quotations From the Anarchists (New York: Praeger, 1972), 102.

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order or in their functions as producers.' ''[31] At its best, however, anarchist cultural ''reconstruction'' managed to substantially convert what was a terrifically patriarchal Catholic culture into a culture of resistance in which ''working men and women'' alike, as ''obreras conscientes'' or militant workers, could mutually accord one another respect, independence, and dignity.

Out of this resistance culture, in which ''self-imposed mores'' combined abstention from tobacco, alcohol, prostitution, bullfighting, '' 'foul' language,'' and use of ''the word 'god' '' in conversation (in the streets of anarchist Barcelona, ''nobody said 'Señor' or 'Don' or even 'Usted,' '' Orwell observed; ''everyone called everyone else 'Comrade' and 'Thou' and said 'Salud!' instead of 'Buenos días' '') with the abolition of marriage in favor of ''lifelong 'free unions' '' came a ''historically unprecedented'' expression of revolutionary feminism: Spanish women were not only ''liberated from all the constraints of a highly traditional Catholic country, be it the prohibition of abortion and divorce or a degraded status in the economy'' and active members of the anarchist militias but created their own independent organization, the Mujeres Libres, rather than simply entering male-dominated radical institutions.[32]

[31] Woodcock, Anarchism, 367; Seidman, Workers Against Work, 56.

[32] Bookchin, To Remember Spain, 14; Orwell, Homage to Catalonia(New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952), 5; Bookchin, To Remember Spain, 44. Ironically, Proudhon's ''contractual'' morality could also lend itself to forces for sexual liberation in the Spanish anarchist community. Thus, his distinction between free ''possession'' and dominatory ''property'' (which he somewhat flippantly explains by the analogy: ''a lover is a possessor, a husband is a proprietor'' [What Is Property?, 43]) is neatly echoed in the ''critiques of both chastity and monogamous marriage'' that were made by some Spanish anarchists in the 1920s and 1930s, which argued ''that monogamy itself was a product of the desire for possessiveness, rooted in private property and in the subordination of women, and that it would disappear in a future anarchist society'' (Ackelsberg, Free Women of Spain, 29); thus, in 1934, Amparo Poch y Gascón, a founder of the Mujeres Libres, proposed to replace the institution of marriage, which would force a woman to remain with her husband ''whether she was still in love or not,'' with a monog-

Ultimately, Spanish anarchism did not simply reproduce or reinforce existing social structures, but ''tried to sift the more positive features of the pueblo from its reactionary social characteristics'' and ''to create libertarian organizational forms that could synthesize as the precapitalist collectivist traditions of the village with an industrial economy and a highly urbanized society,'' combining the industrial ''solidarity'' of urban workers with a certain retrieval of ''the mutualism of village life.''[33] Here, Chodorkoff's typically anarchist insistence that ''human development and cultural evolution are not linear processes'' can be importantly contrasted with what Laclau and Mouffe disparage as the ''stagist paradigm'' of Marxism.[34] As in the case of Loisaida, where cultural ''nonsynchrony'' juxtaposes modern, postmodern, and premodern realities, the Spanish CNT-FAI took advantage of ''the fact that many Spanish workers were either former villagers or were only a generation or so removed from the countryside.''[35] Thus, even before Mao's culturalist revision of Marxism allowed Chinese communists to redescribe the peasants as a revolutionary ''proletarian'' class, Bakunin's appreciation of their revolutionary potential was embraced by Chinese anarchists such as Liu Shipei, who ''called for the entire people—men, women, peasants, [and] workers—to revolt.'' Likewise, Sam Mbah and I. E. Igariwey propose an ''African anarchism'' that is both ''forward-looking,'' a ''way out'' of the impasse of ''arrested development and stagnation,'' and a radical ''return to the 'anarchic elements' '' that are

amous sexual contract that ''does not mean 'forever,' but as long as . . . the will and feelings of the lovers last'' (quoted in Ackelsberg, Free Women of Spain, 29).

[33] Bookchin, To Remember Spain, 11; Spanish Anarchists, The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years, 1868-1936 (New York: Free Life Editions, 1977), 36.

[34] Chodorkoff, ''Social Ecology and Community Development''; Laclau and Mouffe, He- gemony and Socialist Strategy, 100.

[35] Emily Hicks, ''Cultural Marxism: Nonsynchrony and Feminist Practice,'' in Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism, ed. Lydia Sargent, 221 (Boston: South End Press, 1981); Bookchin, To Remember Spain, 14

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''indigenous to Africa,'' where tribal societies successfully resisted the internal threat of emergent hierarchy as well as the external impositions of empires and states for thousands of years.[36]

In its intensely ''localist'' articulations and embrace of historical nonlinearity and nonsynchrony, anarchist universality avoids becoming a rigid schema to be imposed on situations from above and beyond them, a purely abstract representation apart from every concrete historical particular. At the same time, it does not render itself temporally and spatially immobile, ethnocentrically limited to any one ''location,'' nor does it hesitate to seek every opportunity to draw specific forces into functional and lasting unities based on shared needs, desires, interests, and affinities. This dialectic of universalism and pluralism inflects its very ethics; for Kropotkin, ethics evolve. Nevertheless, this process of transformation is not merely a meaningless fluctuation, ''mere accident''; it poses a metaethical, ecological problem, an evolutionary conflict between individual and species survival tropisms, which will either be solved by the development of cultures that dissolve the conflict or will ''lead man to ruin''—the misery of perpetual war and social brutalization, made all the more painful and destructive, as indicated all too clearly by the ''acts'' Kropotkin witnessed during WWI (e.g., ''poisonous gases, submarines, Zeppelins attacking sleeping cities, complete destruction of abandoned territories by the conquerors'') by our increasing technological sophistication.[37] For Bookchin and other anarchists of the late twentieth century, theorizing in the shadow of genocide, ecocide, and the Bomb, this shared threat is one important source of the necessity that drives us into the identity of ''human beings.'' Only the predominance

[36] Bakunin, Bakunin on Anarchy, 208-9; Peter Zarrow, Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 106; Sam Mbah and I. E. Igariwey, African Anarchism: The History of a Movement, Anarchist People of Color Website, www.illegalvoices.org/apoc/books/aa/toc.html (accessed).

[37] Kropotkin, Ethics, 336-37.

of sufficiently egalitarian, solidary, and free societies will answer what Richards calls the ''ecological imperative'' by establishing sufficiently stable relationships among ourselves and our planet.[38]

Such societies must also constitute their social and political life in terms that synthesize universality with multiplicity. If, as Read argues, ''the mistakes of every political thinker from Aristotle to Rousseau have been due to their use of the abstract conception man''—an assumption of ''substantial uniformity'' underlying the manifold that, in practice, licenses priest and prince to ''enforce uniformity'' on it—then an anarchist social order cannot impose such a spurious unity, but must embrace cultural, aesthetic, even religious and political diversity: ''The political unitarian or authoritarian conceives society as one body compelled to uniformity. The anarchist conceives society as a balance or harmony of groups, and most of us belong to one or more such groups. The only difficulty is their harmonious interrelation.''[39] Thus, Kropotkin describes an anarchist society as constituted by ''free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being . . . harmony would (it is contended) result from an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium between the multitudes of forces and influences.''[40] Here is a pluralist vision—a heterotopian society indeed. However, how is this harmonious interrelation, this heterotopian equilibrium, to be attained?

Different schools of anarchist theory have promoted different solutions to this problem. The Proudhonian mutualists envisaged an exchange-based economy in which associations of workers and consumers would negotiate contractual agreements to exchange goods and services. Abad de Santillan proposes to organize work-

[38] Richards, Letters From Quebec, 1.25.8.

[39] Anarchy and Order, Herbert Read, Anarchy and Order: Essays in Politics (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 132-33, emphasis mine.

[40] Kropotkin, KRP, 284, emphasis mine.

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ers in a federation of collectives with the workplace as its fundamental unit, not unlike the system of ''workers' councils'' created by Russian, German, and Italian workers between 1917 and 1922.

To ensure the best possible coordination of production, this federation would take the form of two parallel syndicates, one organized by locality, cutting across trades, and the other by trade, cutting across localities.[41] Bookchin argues that an exclusively economic organization ''takes a part of society— its economic component—and reifies it into the totality of society''; this totality, however, must include the entire continuum of convivial relationships that are brought into being by our geographical arrangement in space, by the fact of community. Accordingly, a society without the state should constitute itself communally as a network of municipalities constituted by neighborhood assemblies, rather than by workers' councils. On this ''libertarian municipalist'' model, production must be regulated by policies that are implemented by self-managing producers' cooperatives but crafted by the entire community.[42] Municipal organization is designed both to prevent the emergence of new sectional interests that can divide the community and re- concentrate power and to institutionalize a distinction between the ''social sphere'' in which informal relationships of kinship, workplace solidarity, love, sexuality, and friendship are rooted and the ''political sphere''

[41] Darrow Schecter, Radical Theories: Paths Beyond Marxism and Social Democracy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 50; Rocker, Anarcho-Syndicalism, 148-50; Abad de Santillan, After the Revolution, 48-51.

[42] Bookchin, To Remember Spain, 31. According to Andrew Flood, ''The Zapatistas, Anarchism, and 'Direct Democracy.' '' The libertarian muncipalist system is not much different from that implemented in the rebel ''autonomous muncipalities'' of Mexico, in which ''collectives that carry out particular tasks within the community . . . are set up by and answerable to the assembly but are otherwise autonomous.'' http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/andrew/zapasr.html.

that emerges only where strangers who do not share passional or cultural affinities need to come together to make decisions.[43]

We can recognize in Bookchin's division between the political and social realms a return of the old dichotomy between public and private life, but with a difference: the social realm bridges what we think of as personal or private experiences, such as family life, with what we think of as the public spaces of the workplace and the street. However, separating political decision making from personal life and informal interactions seems wise in view of the tendency of genuinely totalitarian politics to monopolize every sector of life. The problem is that the division of powers between a policy-making council and policy-executing cooperatives seems to place nearly all initiative in the hands of the council, leaving little or none to the workers at the point of production. This is, once again, a problem of representation, a question of how collective interests are to be represented. It might be argued against libertarian municipalism that the imposition of ''community'' as a single representational system cannot be much of an improvement on the divide-and-conquer strategy of capitalism, which declares with Margaret Thatcher that only individuals exist.

[43] Bookchin, ''Libertarian Municipalism: An Overview,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 17 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031117110637888/ (accessed 4 April 2004); Bookchin, ''A Politics for the Twenty-First Century,'' Institute for Social Ecology, 18 November 2003, http://www.social-ecology.org/article.php?story=20031118095526728/ (accessed 4 April 2004). Even Diego Abad de Santillan confessed, some years after the defeat of the revolution, that he ''was uneasy about the widespread tendency to take the line that ownership of the instruments of labor and the land would devolve upon the workers and peasants Land, factories, and the means of transportation belong to the community and must perform social functions. If, in our hands, they fail to perform these functions, the new form of ownership would be as unacceptable as its predecessor'' (''Two Views of 'Libertarian Communism': Utopia or Economic Integration,'' in No Gods No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism, vol. 2, ed. Daniel Guérin, trans. Paul Sharkey [Oakland, CA: AK Press, 1998], 102).

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Graeber, David. ''The Twilight of Vanguardism.'' 18 May 2003. http://www.dualpower.net/print.php?sid61 (accessed 2 June 2003).
Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.
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The broadest agreement among anarchists seems to favor balancing plurality with universality by means of a multiplicity of representational systems, relatively autonomous but mutually interanimating, none enjoying a complete hegemony or representational monopoly. One has a ''territorial'' being as ''citizen'' of a community that must be represented through such spatially defined bodies as the neighborhood assembly, municipal council, and regional and global federations, and one has a ''professional'' being that must be represented through bodies such as the workers' council and the syndicate; one also has a being as ''consumer'' whose needs and desires can be articulated through federations of cooperatives and collectively run distribution systems. In addition, anarchists postulate an endless series of organizations based on less natural and more genuinely social kinds of ''affinity,'' expressing the desire to celebrate an identity or perpetuate a cultural tradition, to innovate art and ideas, to disseminate knowledge, to share pleasures and desires, to entertain, and so on. Only experimentation can determine what works best, but perhaps a key to preventing the development of entrenched sectional interests and intractable conflicts is to constitute these systems of representation, and the identities dependent on them, not as separate or as unified but as overlapping. Thus, Kirkpatrick Sale suggests that worker and community organizations might create a special ''representative arrangement'' for one another, so that a certain number of worker delegates would have votes in a community council and a certain number of community delegates would have votes at the workers' council.[44] The

[44] Kirkpatrick Sale, Human Scale (New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1980), 382-84. I have seen this solution implemented, with what seems to be some success, in one instance. At the State University of New York in Binghamton, a democratically run school bus collective was locked in conflict with the administration over the issue of late-night service on the weekends, which the drivers had decided to curtail after some incidents of passengers' drunken misbehavior. The administration (perhaps illegally) seized the buses and attempted to run them with scab labor until outraged drivers and student riders managed to force negotiations. What eventually resulted was a compromise that reinstated

governing assumption must be that everyone will have many overlapping group memberships and that one's ''full individualization'' is possible in part through the uniqueness of the intersection one occupies between these groups: as Kenneth Burke writes, ''the so-called 'I' is merely a unique combination of partially conflicting 'corporate we's.' ''[45] One is not only a worker but also a Jew, not only a Jewish worker but also a woman, not only a Jewish working woman but one who enjoys dancing, lives in New York, and so on.

From this perspective, no collective identity should enjoy uncontested ''hegemony''—not even that of ''humanity.'' Thus Landauer protested against the excesses of a ''humanism'' that had, at least since the French Revolution, proposed the solution of ''the Jewish problem'' by what Marx called ''the social emancipation of the Jew'' in ''the emancipation of society from Judaism''—the essentially ''liberal'' project that seeks ''to separate the Jew from his religion, from his family, from his ethnic community, in order to plunge him into the democratic crucible whence he will emerge naked and alone, an individual and solitary particle like all the other particles''—in short, the position that declares that ''there are no Jews.''[46]

''Why,'' Landauer asked, ''should one . . . preach the ending of all bonds and therefore of all differences in the world?'' Instead of the representational monopoly of humanism, one could embrace ''every imponderable and ineffable thing that brings about exclusive bonds, unities, and also differentiations within humanity''

the drivers' collective, but that also set aside a few seats on the board for representatives of the undergraduate and graduate student unions as well as disabled riders.

[45] Kropotkin, Kroptkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets, 285; Burke, Attitudes Toward History, 264.

[46] Marx and Engels, The Marx-Engels Reader, 52; Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, 57.

———. The History of Sexuality, vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1986.
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without confounding peaceful ''differentiation'' with aggressive ''opposition.''[47]

It is on this basis, as elaborated by Jewish anarchists such as Landauer

and Lazare, that Jews for some time envisaged and practiced a secular, non- chauvanist form of Zionism, one that might have led to genuinely peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine (where young members of the Hashomer Hatzair movement circulated Hebrew translations of pamphlets by Kropotkin and Landauer) and that was a serious competitor for the loyalties of Jewish settlers in the territory through the mid-1920s. In the midst of a fresh wave of anti-Semitic persecutions, Landauer described this project of cultural reconstruction:

> The movement going through the world of Jewry, generally under the name Zionism, should have, whatever its external forms and fluctuations, the following purpose: that Jews, under the leadership of spiritual and strong individuals, mold purely and creatively that particular nature which they, like every Nation, have developed over thousands of years; that in the battle for that which is holy they save their souls from the chaos of misunderstanding and superficially mechanical custom; that they fill their souls with urgent life and present themselves and their nature to developing mankind, which can as little stand to do without the Jews as it can any other level or

[47] Landauer, quoted in Lunn, Prophet of Community, 263. I cannot resist also quoting from Bernard Lazare's magnificent riposte to the old Jacobin cry, ''no state within the state!'': ''I find that there are not enough states within the state, that is to say, to make myself clearer, that there are not within modern states enough free groups bound to each other. The human ideal does not seem to me to be political and intellectual unification. Only one unification seems to me necessary: moral unification'' (Job's Dungheap, ed. Hannah Arendt [New York, 1948], 60-61).

> gradation of humanity. Humanity does not mean identity; humanity is the union of the manifold.[48]

Such is the concept of culture and of plurality given to anarchism not only by the generalizing minds of theorists like Proudhon and Bakunin—who were themselves limited by the prevailing bigotry of their time and place—but by the living experiences of countless ordinary men and women, among whom a good many, in the decades following the pogroms of 1880, were Jews, people familiar with the position of being the particular in a world of vicious universalities.

CONCLUSION: THE ONTOLOGY OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

What is real, Proudhon writes, is the ceaseless self-transformation of nature, and nothing else. Anarchist political visions, despite their variety, all share this recognition. It is not only the case that so-called representative democracy has been justified by the cult of expertise and contempt for the demos;[49] it has also been built on the assumption that punctuated elections or referenda are adequate means for public expression, that these representational practices are joined to a representable world by relations of reference and justice. If the groupings that constitute the people and their will are constantly developing, however, then systems of representation that impose inflexible formats on the formation and articulation of this will must misrepresent it, producing a set of floating signifiers unanchored to any referent— the separate power of the state. By substituting recallable delegates for elected legislators, consensus and direct democracy not only make it possible for members of the base assemblies to create

[48] Landauer, quoted in Maurer, Call to Revolution, 82.

[49] Bookchin, Ecology of Freedom, 132.

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policy themselves in conditions of face-to-face encounter, but perpetually keep open the possibility of their intervening in their own representation, allowing them to quickly withdraw the authority of an errant signifier and replace it with a better one. In this sense, as Bookchin remarks, anarchist practices constitute an antibureaucratic institutionalization of ''direct action,'' the ''unmediated intervention of people'' in the decisions that affect their lives.[50]

In opposition to the politics of representationalism, then, anarchism ultimately proposes not a simple rejection of representation, but a representational politics of duration and difference, motion and multiplicity. Anarchist politics recognize the reality of duration and motion by creating institutions that can be developed and modified as necessary, making structures of representation mobile and responsive (particularly via provisions that allow base assemblies to craft policy directly, coordinating with other assemblies via recallable delegates, instructed by mandates), and by using temporary, task-based organization when possible. They recognize the reality of difference and multiplicity by promoting deliberation and sustained dissensus, using decentralized structures to keep decision making as close as possible to the immediate occasion and those immediately affected, and by constituting identity through a plurality of overlapping representational systems (via consumption as well as production, spatial community as well as all the varieties of affinity) so that one is free to manifest and develop one's self in all of its all-sidedness.

It is to this legacy that I would call the attention, not only of academics concerned by the ongoing crisis of representation in the humanities, but also of sincerely committed women and men of the contemporary anarchist movements.

[50] Ibid., 132n.

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