Chapter 1
What is Anarchism?

There cannot be a history of anarchism in the sense of establishing a permanent state of things called 'anarchist'. It is always a continual coping with the next situation, and a vigilance to make sure that past freedoms are not lost and do not turn into the opposite ...
(Paul Goodman, in A Decade of Anarchy, p. 39)

What do we anarchists believe? ...we believe that human beings can achieve their maximum development and fulfilment as individuals in a community of individuals only when they have free access to the means of life and are equals among equals, we maintain that to achieve a society in which these conditions are possible it is necessary to destroy all that is authoritarian in existing society.
(Vernon Richards, Protest Without Illusions, p. 129)

Anarchism is a doctrine that aims at the liberation of peoples from political domination and economic exploitation by the encouragement of direct or non-governmental action. Historically, it has been linked to working-class activism, but its intellectual roots lie in the mid-nineteenth century, just prior to the era of mass organization. Europe was anarchism's first geographical centre, and the early decades of the twentieth century marked the period of its greatest success. Yet the influence of anarchism has extended across the globe, from America to China; whilst anarchism was widely believed to have disappeared after 1939, when General Franco crushed the Spanish revolution to end the civil war, today it is again possible to talk about an anarchist movement or movements. The origins of contemporary anarchism can be traced to 1968 when, to the delight and surprise of activists — and disappointment and incredulity of critics — student rebellion put anarchism back on the political agenda. There is some dispute in anarchist circles about the character and composition of the late-twentieth and twenty-first-century anarchism and its relationship to the earlier twentieth-century movement. But all agree that anarchism has been revived and there is some optimism that anarchist ideas are again exercising a real influence in contemporary politics. This influence is detectable in numerous campaigns — from highly publicized protests against animal vivisection, militarization and nuclear arms, to less well-known programmes for urban renewal, the development of alternative media, free education, radical democracy and co-operative labour. Anarchist ideas have also made themselves felt in the anti-capitalist, anti-globalization movement - sometimes dubbed by activists as the movement for globalization from below.

Anarchists are those who work to further the cause of anarchism. Like activists in other movements, those who struggle in the name of anarchism fall into a number of categories ranging from educationalists and propagandists to combatants in armed struggle. Anarchists work in local and international arenas, building networks for community action and showing solidarity with comrades locked in struggles in areas like Palestine and the Chiapas region of Mexico.

Because anarchists eschew party politics, their diversity is perhaps more apparent than it is in other organizations. The development of discrete anarchist schools of thought will be examined in some detail later on in the chapter. But as a starting point, it is useful to indicate three areas of difference to help to distinguish the concerns of contemporary anarchists. Some of those calling themselves anarchist consider anarchism to be a political movement directed towards the liberation of the working class. In the past, this struggle was centered on urban industrial workers, though in places like Spain it also embraced rural workers. Today, anarchists in this group also make appeals to women and people of colour within the working class and combine their traditional concern to overcome economic oppression with an interest to combat racism, sexism and fascism. Anarchists in this band include groups affiliated to the International Workers' Association (IWA): the Solidarity Federation in Britain and the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) in Spain. In contrast, other anarchists see anarchism as a vast umbrella movement, importantly radicalized by
Anarchists in this group, often suspicious of being categorized by any ism, tend to see anarchism as a way of life or a collective commitment to a counter-cultural lifestyle defined by interdependence and mutual support. Variations of this idea are expressed by anarchists linked to the journal Social Anarchism as well as by European 'insurrectionists' like Alfredo Bonanno. A third group similarly downplays the idea of working-class struggle to emphasize the aesthetic dimension of liberation, building on an association with art that has its roots in the nineteenth century. For these anarchists, anarchism is a revolutionary movement directed towards the need to overcome the alienation, boredom and consumerism of everyday life. Its essence lies in challenging the system through cultural subversion, creating confusion to highlight the oppressiveness of accepted norms and values. Anarchists in this group include anti-anarchists like Bob Black and primitivists like John Moore.

Anarchy is the goal of anarchists: the society variously described to be without government or without authority; a condition of statelessness, of free federation, of 'complete' freedom and equality based on rational self-interest, co-operation or reciprocity, or of resistance built on continuous action. Though there are fewer conceptions of anarchy than there are anarchists, the anarchist ideal has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. What holds them together is the idea that anarchy is an ordered way of life. Indeed, the origin of the familiar graffiti - the 'A' in a circle — derives from the slogan 'Anarchy is order; government is civil war', coined by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in 1848 and symbolized by the revolutionary Anselme Bellegarrigue. Notwithstanding the regularity with which Bellegarrigue's graffiti appears on bus shelters and railway lines, anarchists have not been able to communicate their ideas very effectively and, instead of being accepted as a term that describes a possible set of futures, anarchy is usually taken to denote a condition of chaos, disorder and disruption. Indeed, 'anarchy' was already being used in this second sense before anarchists like Proudhon adopted it to describe their ideal. Whilst studies of the origins of the word 'anarchy' are part and parcel of most introductions to anarchist thought, this well-trodden territory helps to explain the difficulty anarchists have had in defining their position. As G.D.H. Cole noted, 'the Anarchists ... were anarchists because they did not believe in an anarchical world.' Common language, however, has always suggested otherwise.

Anarchism is an unusual ideology because its adopted tag has peculiarly negative connotations. Most ideological labels embrace positively valued ideas or ideals: liberalism is the ideology of liberty or freedom, socialism is associated with notions of sociability or fellowship, and conservatism with the conservation of established or customary ways of life. Even fascism has a positive derivation — from fascio, a reference to the symbol of Roman authority. In contrast, anarchism is the ideology of anarchy - a term that has been understood in both the history of ideas and in popular culture to imply the breakdown of order, if not violent disorder. Even after the mid-nineteenth century when the label was first adopted as an affirmation of belief, anarchy was used in political debate to ridicule or denounce ideas perceived to be injurious or dangerous. For example, in a seventeenth-century defence of absolute monarchy, Sir Robert Filmer treated calls for limited monarchy as calls for anarchy. In general usage the term is commonly used to describe fear and dread. The 'great Anarch!' in Alexander Pope's The Dying Christian to his Soul is the 'dread empire, Chaos!' that brings 'universal darkness' to bury all. The eighteenth-century philosopher Edmund Burke considered anarchy as the likely outcome of the brewing American conflict and identified freedom as its cure. From his rather different political perspective, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley drew on 'anarchy' to describe the violent duplicity of government, yet like Burke he still conceived the term in a wholly negative sense to describe disorder and injustice. Writing in the nineteenth century, the social critic John Ruskin aptly captured the common view: '[g]overnment and co-operation are in all things the laws of life; anarchy and competition the laws of death'. This conception was the very reverse of Proudhon's.

The anarchist idea of anarchy has its roots in a critique of revolutionary government advanced in the course of the French Revolution. In 1792, a group of revolutionaries known as the enrages...
(the fanatics), because of the zeal with which they entered into their campaigns, demanded that the Jacobin government introduce draconian measures to protect the artisans of Paris from profiteers. Banded around Jacques Roux, an ex-cleric, and Jean Varlet, a man of independent means, the group did not call themselves anarchists. Yet their programme (a call to the people to take direct action against profiteers and the demand that the government provide work and bread), was labelled anarchist by their Jacobin opponents. During their battle with the Jacobins, moreover, Varlet and Roux rejected the idea of revolutionary government as a contradiction in terms, importantly associating anarchism with the rejection of revolution by decree. As the revolution ran its course the revolutionary government continued to apply the term 'anarchist' as a term of political abuse and to discredit those political programmes of which it disapproved. Nevertheless, the idea that anarchy could be used in a positive sense and that anarchism described a political programme was now firmly established. The first four editions of the Dictionary of the French Academy (1694—1762) defined anarchy as an unruly condition, without leadership or any sort of government. The exemplification was taken from classical philosophy: 'democracy can easily degenerate into anarchy'. In the fifth edition (1798) the definition of anarchy remained the same, but it was supplemented for the first time with an entry for 'anarchist' that distinguished 'a supporter of anarchy' from 'a trouble-maker'. It was now possible to speak of 'anarchist principles' and an 'anarchist system'.

The revolutionary movement created by the enrages left its legacy in the history of ideas. Less than 100 years after the outbreak of revolution, the association between anarchy and the idea of popular revolution inspired the French writer Pierre-Joseph Proudhon to label himself an anarchist. In his first book, What Is Property? (1840, where he famously coined the phrase 'property is theft') he appropriated the term anarchy to define his egalitarian and libertarian ideal. Proudhon introduced the term in the following dialogue:

What is to be the form of government in the future? I hear some of my younger readers reply: 'Why, how can you ask such a question? You are a republican!' 'A republican! Yes; but that word specifies nothing. Res publica; that is, the public thing. Now, whoever is interested in public affairs - no matter under what form of government - may call himself a republican. Even kings are republicans.' - 'Well! You are a democrat?' - 'No.' - 'What! you would have a monarchy?' — 'God forbid!' — 'You are then an aristocrat?' - 'Not at all.' - 'You want a mixed government?' - 'Still less.' - 'What are you, then?' - 'I am an anarchist.'

'Oh! I understand you; you speak satirically. This is a hit at the government.' - 'By no means. I have just given you my serious and well considered profession of faith. Although a firm friend of order, I am (in the full force of the term) an anarchist ..."

As George Woodcock noted, Proudhon delighted in paradox and fully appreciated the ambiguity of the term 'anarchy' when he adopted it to describe his politics. Tracing the origin of the word to the ancient Greek (anarkhos) he argued that anarchy meant 'without government', or the government of no one. Far from implying social ruin, it suggested progress and harmonious cooperation. Anarchy was the natural counterpart to equality: it promised an end to social division and civil strife. In the nineteenth century some anarchists inserted a hyphen between the 'an' and 'archy', in an effort to emphasize its derivation from antiquity, whilst also drawing implicit comparison with the better-known alternatives, monarchy (the government of one), and oligarchy (the government of the few). By hyphenating the word in this manner they hoped to challenge their detractors whilst encouraging the oppressed to re-examine their ideas about the nature of political organization and the assumptions on which these ideas were based.

Some anarchists have shared Proudhon's delight in the paradox of 'anarchy' and played up the positive aspect of chaos associated with the term. Michael Bakunin famously described the disordered order of anarchy in the revolutionary principle: 'the passion for destruction is a creative passion, too'. Another nineteenth-century activist, Peter Kropotkin, followed suit. Order, he argued, was 'servitude...the shackling of thought, the brutalizing of the human race, maintained by the sword and the whip.' Disorder was 'the uprising of the people against this ignoble order, breaking its fetters, destroying the barriers, and marching towards a better future.' Of course anarchy spelt
disorder for it promised 'the blossoming of the most beautiful passions and the greatest of devotion': it was 'the epic of supreme human love'. Other anarchists have been less comfortable with the connotations of 'anarchy'. Indeed, much anarchist literature suggests that the ambiguity of 'anarchy' has forced anarchists onto the defensive. As many anarchists have pointed out, the problem of Proudhon's paradox is not only the confusion to which it lends itself, but its broadness: disorder can imply anything from disorganization to barbarism and violence. One of the most persistent features of introductions to anarchism is the author's concern to demythologize this idea. Examples from three different authors are reproduced below. The first is taken from Alexander Berkman's *ABC of Anarchism*:

... before I tell you what anarchism is, I want to tell you what it is not. That is necessary because so much falsehood has been spread about anarchism. Even intelligent persons often have entirely wrong notions about it. Some people talk about anarchism without knowing a thing about it. And some lie about anarchism, because they don't want you to know the truth about it ...

Therefore I must tell you, first of all, what anarchism is not. It is not bombs, disorder, or chaos. It is not robbery and murder. It is not a war of each against all. It is not a return to barbarism or to the wild state of man. *Anarchism is the very opposite of all that.***

The second comes from the Cardiff-based Anarchist Media Group:

There is probably more rubbish talked about anarchism than any other political idea. Actually it has nothing to do with a belief in chaos, death and destruction. Anarchists do not normally carry bombs, nor do they ascribe any virtue to beating up old ladies...There is nothing complicated or threatening about anarchism ...

Finally, Donald Roodm offers this in his introduction to anarchism:

Besides being used in the sense implied by its Greek origin, the word 'anarchy' is also used to mean unsettled government, disorderly government, or government by marauding gangs ... Both the proper and improper meanings of the term 'anarchy' are now current, and this causes confusion. A person who hears government by marauding gangs described as 'anarchy' on television news, and then hears an anarchist advocating 'anarchy', is liable to conclude that anarchists want government by marauding gangs.

Of course, anarchists have moved beyond these disclaimers to advance fairly detailed conceptions of anarchy and to highlight the success that anarchy has enjoyed, albeit on a temporary and proscribed scale. Yet anarchy remains a problematic concept because, unlike liberty for example, it so readily lends itself to the evocation of an unattractive condition. And whilst anarchists are happy to discuss the possibility of moving beyond existing forms of state organization they have been wary of employing 'anarchy' as an explanatory concept, preferring to define anarchism in other ways. The remainder of the chapter examines three alternative approaches to anarchism: the first looks at key personalities, the second at schools of thought and the third at history.

**Anarchist thought: key personalities**

One popular approach to the study of anarchism is to trace a history of anarchist ideas through the analysis of key texts or the writings of important thinkers. Paul Eltzbacher, a judge and scholar, was amongst the first to adopt this approach. His 1900 German-language *Der Anarchismus* identified seven 'sages' of anarchism: joining Proudhon were William Godwin (1756-1836), Max Stirner (1806-1856), Michael Bakunin (1814-1870), Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), Benjamin Tucker...
Eltzbacher's list has rarely been treated as definitive, though George Woodcock's Anarchism (1962), which remains a standard reference work, largely followed Eltzbacher's selection, dropping only Tucker from special consideration in the family of key thinkers. Nevertheless, Eltzbacher's approach remains popular. Its discussion both provides an introduction to some of the characters whose work will be examined during the course of this book and, perhaps more importantly, raises an on-going debate about the possibility of defining anarchism by a unifying idea.

Arguments about who should be included in the anarchist canon usually turn on assessments of the influence that writers have exercised on the movement and tend to reflect particular cultural, historical and political biases of the selector. For example, in Anglo-American studies, Bakunin and Kropotkin are normally represented as the most important anarchist theorists; in Continental Europe, especially in France, Proudhon and Bakunin are more likely to be identified as the movement's leading lights. In recent years selectors have tended to widen the net of those considered to be at the forefront of anarchist thought. In Demanding the Impossible (1992), Peter Marshall not only restored Tucker to the canon, he expanded it to include Elisee Reclus (1830-1905), Errico Malatesta (1853-1932) and Emma Goldman (1869—1940). The same tendency is apparent in anthologies of anarchist writings. Daniel Guerin’s collection, No Gods, No Masters, makes no reference to Godwin, Tucker or Tolstoy but includes work by Casar de Paepe (1842—90), James Guillaume (1844-1916), Malatesta, Ferdinand Pelloutier (1867-1901) and Emile Pouget (1860-1935), Voline (the pseudonym of Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eichenbaum, 1882-1945) and Nestor Makhno (1889-1935). George Woodcock's Anarchist Reader shows a similar diversity, though it leans far more towards the North American tradition than Guerin's collection and also includes twentieth-century figures like Rudolf Rocker (1873-1958), Murray Bookchin (1921-2006), Herbert Read (1893-1968), Alex Comfort (1920-2000), Nicholas Walter (1934-2000), Colin Ward (b.1924) and Paul Goodman (1911-1972).

The popularity of Eltzbacher's approach owes something to Kropotkin - one of his subjects - who in 1910 endorsed Eltzbacher's study as 'the best work on Anarchism'. One measure of the method's success is the distinction that is now commonly drawn between the 'classical' theoreticians of anarchism, and the rest. This distinction is particularly marked in academic work. Even whilst nominating different candidates to the rank of classical theorist, by and large academics treat nineteenth-century anarchists as a body of writers who raised anarchism to 'a level of articulation that distinguished it as a serious political theory' and disregard the remainder as mere agitators and propagandists. In a less than hearty endorsement of anarchism, George Crowder maintained that the "great names" are indeed relatively great because their work was more original, forceful and influential than that of others. Some writers from within - or close to - the anarchist movement have also supported the idea of a classical tradition. Daniel Guerin's guide to anarchism, No Gods, No Masters, includes only writings from those judged to be in the first rank of anarchist thought. The contribution of 'their second-rate epigones' is duly dismissed.

Movement pamphlets and broadsheets focus on the work of Makhno, Kropotkin, Bakunin and Malatesta; and reprints of original work by this intellectual elite can be readily found at anarchist book-fairs and on websites. Some activists are also happy to publish as anarchist literature the work of leading academic social critics — notably Noam Chomsky — establishing a new tier to the intellectual hierarchy.

Yet Eltzbacher's method has not been accepted without criticism. Indeed, its success has prompted a good deal of debate and his approach has been attacked on a number of grounds. As Guerin noted, one problem with Eltzbacher's approach is that it can tend towards biography and away from the analysis of ideas. When the work of the masters is given less priority than the details of their lives, the danger is that the meaning of anarchism can be muddled by the tendency of leading anarchists to act inconsistently or sometimes in contradiction to their stated beliefs. Another problem is the apparent arbitrariness of Eltzbacher's selection. Here, complaints tend in opposite directions. Some have argued that the canon is too inclusive, composed of fellow travellers who never called themselves anarchists and those who adopted the tag without showing any real commitment to the movement. Others suggest that the approach is too exclusive and that
it disregards the contribution of the numberless, nameless activists who have kept the anarchist movement alive.

The problem of inclusion has been exacerbated by the habit of some writers to treat anarchism as a tendency apparent in virtually all schools of political thought. Armed with a broad conception of anarchism as a belief in the possibility of society without government, anarchists from Kropotkin to Herbert Read have pointed to everything from ancient Chinese philosophy, Zoroastrianism and early Christian thought as sources of anarchism. The father of Taoism, Lao Tzu, the sixteenth-century essayist Etienne de la Boetie, the French encyclopaedist Denis Diderot, the American Transcendentalist David Henry Thoreau, Fydor Dostoyevsky and Oscar Wilde, and political leaders like Mohandas Gandhi, have all been included in anthologies or histories of anarchism. As Nicolas Walter argued, this inclusiveness can be misleading:

> The description of a past golden age without government may be found in the thought of ancient China and India, Egypt and Mesopotamia, and Greece and Rome, and in the same way the wish for a future Utopia without government may be found in the thought of countless religious and political writers and communities. But the application of anarchy to the present situation is more recent, and it is only in the anarchist movement of the nineteenth century that we find the demand for a society without government here and now.  

The reverse complaint, that the canon is too exclusive, is in part a protest about the restrictedness of the choices. Who decides which anarchists have made the most important contribution to anarchist thought or to history? In his account of the German anarchist movement Andrew Carlson criticizes theorists of anarchism like Eltzbacher for wrongly suggesting that the German movement produced no writers of repute and that anarchist ideas exercised only a marginal influence on the German socialist movement. Neither view is supportable. Equally misleading is the view, sustained by the canon, that women have made little contribution to anarchism. The anarchist movement has boasted a number of women activists, apart from Emma Goldman, including Louise Michel (1830-1905), Lucy Parsons (1853-1942), Charlotte Wilson (1854-1944) and Voltairine de Cleyre (1866-1912). These women have made a significant contribution to anarchism and their exclusion from the canon is a sign of unreasonable neglect.

In the other part, the complaints about exclusivity touch on the abstraction involved in the process of selection. Many anarchists resent the way in which the study of anarchist thought has been divorced from the political context in which the theory was first advanced. Such a distinction, they argue, legitimizes the intense scrutiny of a tiny volume of anarchist writings and encourages the achievements of the wider movement to be overlooked or ignored. Some anarchists, it's true, have worked hard to elaborate a coherent anarchist world view: Kropotkin made a self-conscious effort to present himself as a philosopher. But he recognized that anarchism was defined by the countless newspapers and pamphlets that circulated in working-class circles, not by the theories spawned by people like himself. The vast majority of anarchists have worked as essayists and propagandists and it seems unreasonable and unnecessarily restrictive to assess anarchism through the examination of a tiny, unrepresentative sample of literature. The point is made by Kingsley Widmer:

> The parochialism of thinking of anarchism generally just in the Baukunin-Kropotkin [sic] nineteenth-century matrix, even when adding, say, Stirner, Thoreau, Tolstoy or ... what tuned-you-on-in-a-libertarian-way, just won't do - not only in ideas but in sensibility, not only in history but in possibility ... Either anarchism should be responded to as various and protean, or it is the mere pathos of defeats and the marginalia of political theory.

Leaving the problem of arbitrariness aside, other critics have directed their fire at the conclusions Eltzbacher drew from his study. At the end of his book, Eltzbacher attempted to distil from the wide and disparate body of work he surveyed a unifying idea or core belief that would serve to define anarchism. The idea he settled upon was — as the French Academy suggested —
the rejection of the state. Anarchists, Eltzbacher famously argued, 'negate the State for our future'.\textsuperscript{18} In all the other areas Eltzbacher pinpointed — law, property, political change and statelessness — anarchists were divided. The controversy generated by this conclusion has centred on two points. For some critics Eltzbacher was right to identify anarchism with the rejection of the state, but mistaken in his attempt to classify anarchist families of thought by an apparently scientific method which imposed on anarchism concepts - of property, the state and so forth - that were drawn from legal theory. As one critic put the point, Eltzbacher's 'analysis and presentation possessed the finality of a court judgement'. Other critics have been more concerned with Eltzbacher's general conclusion than with the means by which he purported to distinguish schools of anarchist thought. From this point of view, his mistake was the attempt to identify a common thread in anarchism. Marie Fleming has forcefully advanced the case. In her study of Elisee Reclus - a writer conspicuous by his absence from Eltzbacher's study - Fleming argues that the study of sages imposes a putative, yet meaningless, unity of tradition on a set of ideas that are not only diverse but also often incompatible. As she points out, Eltzbacher himself admitted that his defining principle — the rejection of the state - was filled with 'totally different meanings'. In his insistence that anarchists be drawn together in one school of thought, he wrongly prioritized philosophy over history. He encouraged the idea that 'anarchism embodied a peculiar way of looking at the world' and overlooked the extent to which it was 'a movement that ... developed in response to specific social-economic grievances in given historical circumstances'.\textsuperscript{19}

Fleming's criticism of Eltzbacher's method is important but it has not undermined the appeal of classical anarchism and should not be taken as a rebuttal of Eltzbacher's leading conclusion that anarchism implies a rejection of the state. Individual anarchists will of course continue to centre their anarchism on a range of different concepts - usually more positive than the state's rejection. Nevertheless the rejection of the state is a useful ideological marker and one that resonates in popular culture. Moreover, it's possible to find a corrective for the general unease created by Eltzbacher's legalism in two alternative methods of analysis. The first seeks to understand anarchism by distinguishing between different schools of thought. The second is based on a historical analysis of the anarchist movement. These approaches shed a more subtle light than Eltzbacher was able to do on the nature of anarchist anti-statism. Specifically, the analysis of schools has helped to illustrate the broadness of this concept, and the historical approach its relationship to anti-capitalism.

**Anarchist thought: schools of anarchism**

Anarchists have appended a dizzying array of prefixes and suffixes to 'anarchism' to describe their particular beliefs. Anarchism has been packaged in anarcho-syndicalist, anarcha-feminist, eco-anarchist and anarcho-communist, Christian, social, anarcho-capitalist, reformist and primitivist varieties.

Some anarchists treat these divisions lightly. One sympathizer, the writer Harold Barclay, dubs himself an anarcho-cynicalist. Others find them more problematic. Some dismiss the seemingly endless subdivision of anarchism on the grounds that the labels are excessively sectarian and that they obscure the important bonds that exist between different groups. Others have been fearful that the divisions conceal an un-anarchist intolerance towards others. In the 1880s the Spanish anarchist Ricardo Mella called for an anarchism 'pure and simple', 'anarchism without adjectives' in an effort to avoid strait-jacketing the aspirations of the oppressed in a post-revolutionary situation.\textsuperscript{20} Voltairine de Cleyre endorsed Mella's position. Since '[l]iberty and experiment alone can determine the best forms of society' she called herself "[a]narchist" simply. Taking the different tack, some anarchists have argued that the division of anarchists into schools exaggerates the insignificant differences between anarchists whilst blurring the really significant ones. For example, Voltairine de Cleyre mapped her anarchism pure and simple onto a distinction between anarchism 'old' and 'young', where the old were those who had lost their enthusiasm for the cause, and the young were the often quite elderly comrades who continued to live 'with the faith of hope'.\textsuperscript{21} Writing from a rather different perspective John Moore invoked a similar distinction. Finding the existing '57
varieties’ of anarchism unedifying, he encouraged anarchists to adopt a new bi-polar categorization which distinguished the minimalist, reformist, nostalgic ‘politics of “if only ...”’ from the maximalist, revolutionary, dynamic ‘anti-politics of “[w]hat if...?”’.22

Yet for all these complaints, anarchists continue to identify themselves by their particular affiliations and beliefs. In response to the question 'Who are the anarchists? What do they believe?' six interviewees for a 1968 BBC radio programme responded:

I consider myself to be an anarchist-communist, in the Kropotkin tradition. I think ... I would say I was an anarchist-socialist, or libertarian socialist ...
I would describe myself as an anarcho-syndicalist ...
I don't call myself an anarcho-syndicalist. I could be called an anarcho-pacifist-individualist with slight communist tendencies ...
I'm an anarchist ... and also think that syndicalism is the anarchist application to organising industry.
I describe myself as a Stirnerite, a conscious egoist.23

The remainder of this chapter will consider what these and other labels mean, and the relationship between anarchist schools. It begins with a review of some of the traditional typologies and then considers the development of some modern schools. At creation of a society of egotists. Theirs was a doctrine of ‘complete "a-moralism"’ and their ethic was 'mind your own business'.

Kropotkin argued that collectivism was closely aligned with communism and that it shared the same morality. Yet collectivism was particularly associated with the demand that state organization be replaced by a system of decentralized federation constructed through the free agreement of autonomous communities. Collectivism suggested that each collective in the federation would own its own property and the means of production — the land, machinery and so forth used to produce goods and services. It also suggested that each collective would be able to decide how goods and services would be distributed to individual members. This was a confusing idea, as Kropotkin recognized, since collectivism was usually understood by non-anarchist socialists to imply the principle of ‘distribution according to work’ — i.e. a system of individual, differential reward. However, Kropotkin's controversial view was that anarchist collectivism need not necessarily describe a collectivist system in this sense and that it was possible within the federal framework for collectivists to adopt the communist principle of distribution according to need.

Christian anarchism, as the name suggested, took its lead from Biblical teachings and was associated with an idea of fellowship and individual moral regeneration. Notwithstanding its religious foundation, Kropotkin believed that its vision of Christian fellowship dovetailed with anarcho-communism and that its moral principles could as easily be derived from reason as from God. Kropotkin's final school, literary anarchism, was by his own admission hardly a school at all, but a collection of intellectuals and artists — including J.S. Mill, Richard Wagner and Heinrich Ibsen — whose outpourings illustrated the receptiveness of the cultural elite to anarchist ideas. In other words, literary anarchism was an indication of the interpenetration of anarchist ideas with advanced thought.26

Subsequent writers have considerably extended and modified Kropotkin's classification. Rudolf Rocker represented anarchism as an evolutionary system of thought. Whilst he accepted Kropotkin's idea that anarchist schools were based, at least in part, on a range of different 'economic assumptions as to the means of safeguarding a free community', he also suggested that they collectively described a progressive movement in thinking. Tracing the evolution of anarchism, he believed that there had been a shift from individualism to collectivism and communism culminating in yet another school of thought: anarcho-syndicalism. This school inherited from collectivism and communism a concern to liberate industrial and rural workers from economic exploitation. What was distinctive about anarcho-syndicalism is that it linked the workers' struggle directly to post-revolutionary organization. Co-operating in unions, or syndicates, workers were organized both to fight against employers and to develop the skills required for them to assume direct control of their factories, workshops and land. In other words, syndicalist - or union - organizations were intended to provide a framework for anarchy.27
Aligning himself more closely to Kropotkin than Rocker, Nicolas Walter preferred to see the schools of thought as alternatives rather than aspects of a single idea. However, he questioned Kropotkin’s inclusion of individualism (or what he called libertarianism) in anarchism and added syndicalism and another new category - philosophical anarchism — to Kropotkin's original list. This category, Walter argued, appeared in the 1840s, but its most famous modern statement is Robert Paul Wolff's *In Defense of Anarchism*. Wolff’s version purported to provide a 'pure theory' of anarchism without any consideration of 'the material, social, or psychological conditions under which anarchism might be a feasible mode of social organization'.\(^{28}\) In other words, it identified anarchism with a commitment to individual decision-making (sometimes called private judgement) and divorced this commitment from the struggle to realize a particular socio-economic arrangement. Walter had a pithier view. Philosophical anarchism described a partial commitment to anarchy, the idea that 'society without government was attractive ... but not really possible ... anarchism in the head but not in the heart'.

What emerges from these treatments of anarchism? At first glance, the answer seems to be very little. In the matrix below some of the common typologies have been mapped onto the classical thinkers who have been identified by different writers with particular schools. Though there is some commonality in the table, what emerges from this matrix is a picture of confusion. The tendency of each new generation of writers is to have expanded the number of anarchist schools and to have redefined their membership, making the boundaries between schools increasingly diffuse.

Yet for all the confusion, the analysis of anarchist schools helps to shed some light on the nature of anarchism. The significance of the analysis lies in understanding the causes of the differences between the schools rather than their detailed delineation.

In his 1964 reader, *The Anarchists*, the sociologist Irving Horowitz explained the fluidity of the boundaries between anarchist schools and their proliferation with reference to the different social, economic and political contexts in which anarchism operated. Anarchism had developed in response 'to changing social circumstances' and/or 'the internal tensions and strains of doctrine'.\(^{29}\) Horowitz identified eight historic schools of thought: utilitarian, peasant, syndicalist, collectivism conspiratorial, communist, individualist and pacifist anarchism to support his analysis. But he argued that his explanatory framework had an application that extended beyond this system of classification. These schools did not describe separate doctrines but alternative responses to particular historical, cultural and political conditions.

Horowitz’s approach helps to explain why the same anarchist can be classified by others in completely different ways and it makes sense, for example, of the difference between Kropotkin's and Voltairine de Cleyre’s conception of individualism. Kropotkin's immersion in Continental European philosophy suggested that anarchists like Voltairine de Cleyre were mutual-ists, not individualists. With her background in American radicalism and dissent, she classed herself as an individualist.

The emergence of new anarchist schools can also be explained by drawing on Horowitz's model. One of the striking features of much contemporary anarchism is the conviction that political and cultural conditions have altered so radically in the course of the twentieth century that the traditional schools of thought - those listed in the table - have become outmoded. As a result, as Horowitz suggests, anarchists who associate themselves with new schools believe that the struggles of the past must be jettisoned so that the challenges of the present can be confronted.

New anarchism, like classical anarchism, is an umbrella term. In 1968, George Woodcock described newness by the rejection of nineteenth-century models of revolutionary action and the armed struggle for an anarchist Utopia. New anarchism, he argued, was defined by a commitment to non-violence, civil disobedience and continuous resistance to repressive uniformity. Murray Bookchin voiced similar criticisms of historical anarchism but his idea of newness was linked to urban and civic renewal and the tailoring of anarchist decentralisation to natural ecology, countercultural experimentation, creativity and community. Recent conceptions of new anarchism revise classical anarchism's philosophical underpinnings, in addition to its political ideals or strategies for change.\(^{30}\) The ‘twenty-first century’ anarchism discussed by Jon Purkis and James Bowen:
... is firmly rooted in the here and now ... The terrains of theory and action have changed, and now there are generations of activists operating in many fields of protest for whom the works of Kropotkin, Malatesta and Bakunin are as distant ... as the literary classics of ... Charles Dickens. The industrial age from which anarchism emerged operated on very different temporal and spatial levels from the present one, spawning political movements that addressed mostly issues of economic injustice and the instrumentalism of making sure that everyone had enough to eat. The dominant anarchist political vision of change was an insurrectionary one (the Revolution, on the barricades)...

Modern anarchism has long since needed a major overhaul ...  

John Zerzan, America's leading anarcho-primitivist, identifies the fundamental shift in anarchist thinking from 'traditional, production/progress-embracing outlook, toward the primitivist critique or vision and its Luddite/feminist/ decentralization/anti-civilization aspects'. John Moore, another primitivist, argued that this kind of anarchism 'critiques the totality of civilisation from an anarchist perspective'. In contrast to traditional forms of anarchism, it does not 'worship the abstraction called "the proletariat"'.

'New' anarchists are no more homogeneous in their response to these changes than their predecessors were in their treatment of class struggle. Indeed, new anarchists have little regard for each other and often profess a deep antipathy for each other's work (anti-anarchists like Bob Black have been involved in very public disputes with Bookchin, as well as with 'old' style thinkers like Chomsky). Moreover, they point to a range of different sources of inspiration in developing their views. Writers like Bookchin have emerged from the rise of the New Left and second wave feminism. His social ecology developed from a desire to probe the relationship posited by Marx between industrial development and political progress and from a concern to uncover the atomizing effects of the liberal market. Social ecology is about personal identity, the quality of the natural environment and building community in a way that allows individuals to live in harmony with each other and with nature.

The inspiration for Purkis's and Bowen's anarchism celebrates philosophies which revel in the 'breakdown of absolute and mechanistic interpretations of society', drawing anarchism to postmodernism, chaos theory, ecologism and feminist post-structuralism. Their anarchism is not as holistic as Bookchin's and is more strongly centred on the individual than the group. Moreover, it places a greater premium on the need to challenge prevailing habits and traditions of thought than it does on the necessity of remodelling the political environment. Indeed, in contrast to Bookchin who advocates the replacement of existing systems of political power with participatory, democratic forms ('municipal government'), Purkis and Bowen see anarchism as a perpetual process of struggle that brings individuals together in complex networks of action, facilitating the expression of their differences rather than seeking finally to resolve them. This brand of anarchism, sometimes called post-anarchism, is much influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, Giles Deleuze and Jean-Francois Lyotard, and takes as one of its principal themes the avoidance of 'totalizing systems' - in both thought (the privileging of theories of knowledge; the search for theoretical certainty; the desire to design models for living) and in action (the imposition of rules or norms of behaviour; the formalization of patterns of organization). Todd May, Saul Newman and Lewis Call are its best-known advocates.

Primitivists have found their inspiration in Stirner's individualism and the surrealist politics of the Situationalist International (SI) - a French neo-Marxist current of thought associated with Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem — that highlights the commodification, cultural repression and psychological manipulation ('spectacle') of individuals in capitalism. Their politics, like much new anarchism, is ecological. Yet their blending of ideas results in a brand of anarchism that disavows technology in favour of the 'feral': the condition of wildness, 'or existing in a state of nature, as freely occurring animals or plants; having reverted to the wild state from domestication'. For many years, some women's groups have complained about the denaturalization of childbirth. Primitivism offers a similar critique of modern life, but extends it to the whole experience of life, to denounce 'civilization':
Civilization is like a jetliner, noisy, burning up enormous amounts of fuel. It filters the air, plays muzak, creates a false sense of security. People sit on the plastic seats, staring at a movie screen with little awareness of their true situation. Civilization is like a 747, filled beyond capacity with coerced volunteers—some in love with the velocity, most wavering at the abyss of terror and nausea, yet still seduced by advertising and propaganda.

Like post-anarchists, primitivists reject systems of thought which purport to describe reality in terms of linear, progressive development. But rather than emphasizing theoretical diversity and rejecting the idea of certainty, primitivists argue that it is possible to grasp reality and to judge it. Moreover, where post-anarchists look to multiple and endlessly shifting communities as a basis for anarchism, primitivists reject the possibility of realizing community in the body of the hegemon: technology.

Many of the currents of thought now associated with new anarchism have been equally inspirational to 'old' anarchist schools of thought. For example, Daniel Guerin combined an anarcho-syndicalist enthusiasm for workers' control with a deep admiration for Stirnerite individualism. Nonetheless, there has undoubtedly been a shift in anarchist thinking since the 1960s. The relationship of new to old anarchist schools is represented in the diagram on p. 29.

What light does Horowitz's framework shed on Eltzbacher's idea that anarchism can be defined by a unifying idea? The strength of Horowitz's approach is that it admits the possibility of such a definition whilst directing attention to the interpretative debates that have surrounded this idea. It supports Eltzbacher's claim that anarchist schools have something in common but it divorces this claim from the legalistic analysis which Eltzbacher applied and suggests, instead, that core values might be expressed in a variety of different ways, depending on the historical, cultural, political and philosophical contexts in which they are advanced. Moreover, it advances the examination of anarchism's positive content. As Murray Bookchin argued, anarchism is anti-statist but cannot be defined 'merely in terms of its opposition to the state' and should instead be regarded as a 'historical movement ... a social movement' operating 'in specific social contexts'.

As well as helping to delineate the spaces between anarchist schools, Horowitz's model also helps to define the parameters of anarchism in relation to other ideologies. The usefulness of his approach can be gauged by two recent boundary disputes. The first has revolved around the possibility of accommodating radical Marxism (sometimes called left-libertarianism) within the anarchist fold and erupted in the late 1960s and '70s when disaffection with Soviet communism raised the profile of anarchist ideas within the New Left. The problem of libertarianism was identified by a range of anarchists, from communitarians like Murray Bookchin to individualists like George Woodcock and it acted as a catalyst for the establishment of the Anarchist International (AI). The complaint of these anarchists was that 'the children of Marx' (student leaders like Daniel Cohn-Bendit) were presenting 'basically Marxist ideas as anarchism'. George Woodcock levelled the charge against Noam Chomsky and Daniel Guerin, accusing both men of selecting 'from anarchism those elements that may serve to diminish the contradictions in Marxist doctrines' and 'abandoning the elements that do not serve their purpose'. Their work enriched Marxism but impoverished anarchism.

The second dispute came to prominence in the following decade and turned on the apparent openness of anarchism to 'anarcho-capitalism' or right-wing libertarianism. Anarcho-capitalism is no more a cohesive movement than any other school of anarchist thought. Its leading proponents, Murray Rothbard and Ayn Rand, had little regard for each other's work — indeed, Rothbard dismissed 'aynarchism' as an irrational and intolerant cult. What unites anarcho-capitalists is the idea that the market is a natural form of organization in which individuals co-operate, productively, to their mutual benefit. From this starting point, Rothbard argued for the liberation of economic markets from political controls and Rand called for minimal government to protect and preserve capitalist markets. Unlike collectivist and communist schools of thought anarcho-capitalists suggest that the market is self-regulating and that the inequalities that result from exchange can be justified.
The boundary problem identified by left-leaning anarchists in the 1980s turned on the association between anarcho-capitalism and the doctrine 'rolling back the state' adopted by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. 'Aynarchism' was most easily linked to this platform, not least because Randian libertarians worked with the Reagan administration — notably Alan Greenspan who was appointed in 1987 as chair of the US Federal Reserve. In contrast, Rothbard was highly critical of the administration and ridiculed the suggestion that the Reagan revolution to 'get government off our backs' expressed an anarcho-capitalist view. But as John P. Clark notes, both versions of anarcho-capitalism had a historic root in anarchist thought, particularly in America: Benjamin Tucker, one of Eltzbacher's classical anarchists, had argued that '[a]narchism is consistent with Manchesterism' (or laissez-faire economics) and, at least in his early work, had defended the equal individual right to property. Indeed, Clark concluded, there were no clear boundaries between anarcho-capitalism and anarchist individualism. A good number of anarchists find this conclusion unpalatable. Jose Perez Adan argues the individualist case, representing what he calls reformist anarchism and anarcho-capitalism (particularly its Randian variant) as two distinct moral systems. Peter Marshall takes a broader view but arrives at a similar conclusion. Anarcho-capitalists, he argues, prioritise self-interest and market rationality over voluntary co-operation and mutual support, alienating traditional anarchist individualists as well as anarcho-communists. He concludes, 'few anarchists would accept the "anarcho-capitalists" into the anarchists camp'.

The blurring of the boundaries between anarchism and Marxism on the one hand, and right-libertarianism or anarcho-capitalism on the other, has so disturbed some anarchists that they have attempted to define anarchism in a manner which marginalizes those schools deemed too close to the competing ideology. For example, in her dispute with George Woodcock, Marie Fleming argued that Woodcock emphasized the importance of anti-statism in anarchism precisely because he wanted to distinguish it from socialism. On the other side of the divide, anarcho-communists have sometimes defined anarchism as an anti-capitalist doctrine in order to divorce it from the perceived taint of individualism. Horowitz’s approach to anarchist schools suggests a different response: if anarchism is defined by an opposition to the state, as Eltzbacher suggests, anarchist anti-statism can be understood to refer to a spectrum of beliefs extending towards Chomsky and ‘68ers like Cohn-Bendit on one end of the spectrum and libertarians like Murray Rothbard on the other.

A number of important anarchist writers have endorsed such a view. For example, Rudolf Rocker found in anarchism ‘the confluence of the two great currents which during and since the French Revolution have found such characteristic expression in the intellectual life of Europe: Socialism and Liberalism’. Nicolas Walter suggested that anarchists were like liberals in respect of freedom and like socialists in their demand for equality. Asked in 1995 whether he understood anarchism to be the ‘equivalent of socialism with freedom’, Chomsky echoes Rocker: anarchism draws from the ‘best of Enlightenment and classical liberal thought’. For each of these writers, the relationship of anarchism to liberalism and Marxism provides a useful route into the study of anarchist thought. History provides the most useful tool for analysing this relationship.

**Anarchist Thought: History**

In 1989 David Goodway bemoaned the poverty of anarchist historiography, which he felt tended towards the uncritical hero-worship of the classical anarchists and the failure of social historians to direct their attention to the anarchist movement. Little was known, he argued, about this popular movement and what was known was written by those who were hostile to it and/or who adopted theoretical approaches which were likely to shed only critical light on its activities. Goodway’s observations usefully highlight the polemical nature of the historical debate about anarchism, the vehemence with which Marxist historians, in particular, have attacked the anarchist movement and the consequent interest that non-Marxist historians have shown in the ideological division between anarchists and Marxists. This division remains central to historians of anarchism. For example, Nunzio Pernicone's recent work is based on the 'simple premise' that 'Anarchism not
Marxism, was the ideological current that dominated and largely defined the Italian socialist movement during its first fifteen years of development. Through such historical analyses it is possible both to illustrate the issues on which old-style anarcho-communists (and others) split from other socialists and to frame the changing relationship between anarchism and liberalism.

The relationship between anarchists and Marxists has never been happy. The historical antagonism is often personalized: after rebuffing Marx's request in 1846 that the two co-operate, Proudhon became the target for Marx's wrath. In 1847 he published *The Poverty of Philosophy*, using all his intellectual powers to publicly ridicule Proudhon's economic theory. In the 1860s, Bakunin took the lead as Marx's anarchist opponent. He and Marx battled for control of the First International (International Working Man's Association, or IWMA), an organization that brought together European radicals and socialists, falling out spectacularly in 1871. As if to emphasize their personal enmity, Proudhon, Marx and Bakunin happily heaped scorn on each other in the course of their disputes. Yet the personalization of the debates between them is misleading since it wrongly suggests a uniform and entirely hostile anarchist critique of Marxism. Predictably, anarchists have assessed Marxism in different ways and been willing to adopt some of Marx's positions as their own. To give one example: in his review of Proudhon's dispute with Marx, Bakunin argued that there was 'a good deal of truth in the merciless critique he [Marx] directed against Proudhon'.

Relations between anarchists and Marxists remained fluid until 1921, when socialists decided whether or not to adhere to the Bolshevik International (Comintern). However in the nineteenth century socialists divided on a range of important issues about political organization and revolutionary strategy. These divisions came to a head in the congresses of the Second International, which had been established on the centenary of the French Revolution in 1889. Nevertheless, it is possible to trace the roots of the argument to the dispute between Marx and Bakunin in the IWMA.

After 1871, when the First International effectively collapsed, socialists were split into two broad groups: 'centralists' and 'federalists' (or in later anarchist parlance 'authoritarians' and 'anti-authoritarians'). The followers of Marx were grouped in the first category and the followers of Bakunin in the second. The centralists supported in principle the formation of a workers' party, committed to involvement in the political process as a prelude to the seizure of power in revolution. They also argued for the tight control of IWMA's General Council to co-ordinate the revolutionary activity of the federated local sections. The federalists did not believe that socialist revolution could possibly succeed through political activity and were keen to maintain the autonomy of the IWMA's local sections. At a conference held in 1872 at St Imier, Switzerland, the federalists rejected totally the idea of revolutionary government as a means of securing socialist change, echoing the complaints that the *enrages* had made against the Jacobins.

The resolution marked a watershed in the development of European socialism, but it did not yet establish a clear distinction between anarchists and Marxists. The groups who split along federalist and centralist lines were themselves very diffuse: supporters of federalism included English trade unionists, for example. And not even those who had enjoyed the closest relations with Bakunin necessarily felt themselves bound by a distinctive programme. At the same time, as the followers of Marx in Europe began to organize working-class political parties in the 1870s and '80s, some activists within these organizations continued to adopt apparently 'anarchist' positions. Socialists turned out to be anarchists only when expelled from Marxist parties. Johann Most was one example, thrown out of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in 1880 when he refused to toe the party line on political action. It was not until after his expulsion that Most called himself an anarchist.

The anarchist-Marxist divide was solidified in the Second International when adherence to the policy of political action - which meant participation in parliamentary politics — was adopted as test of the International's membership. Those who were caught in this policy net represented a still diverse body of opinion. As Lenin noted, “the ‘practical’ socialists of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully reasonable ground, they denounce all criticism of parliamentarism as “anarchism”!” Yet the division was now supported by a good
deal of theoretical embellishment and in countries like Japan, where socialist ideas took root later than in Europe, it became the central cleavage between anarchists and non-anarchists. This was not surprising for in the course of the 1880s anarchists and Marxists had spent considerable time arguing about the parliamentary strategy and, in the process, both sides had developed coherent alternative understandings of the revolution and of the post-revolutionary society. By the 1890s the differences between the two sides were so visible that some Marxists felt able to argue that anarchism was not a form of socialism at all and that it described a competing ideology. The suggestion was contested fiercely by writers like Augustin Hamon. But in response to revolutionaries like Lenin, who argued that socialists agreed on the 'ends' of revolutionary struggle and disagreed only on the question of 'means', the anarchists also insisted that Marxist strategies revealed a faulty conception of the state.

Anarchist critiques of Marxist state theory had a number of dimensions. One set of arguments focused on the relationship between the state and capitalism. Bakunin's understanding was close to Marx's and he credited Marx with having demonstrated that the state's purpose was to uphold economic exploitation. Other leading theorists shared this view. Rudolf Rocker's version of the thesis was that as long as within society a possessing and a non-possessing group of human beings face one another in enmity ... the state will be indispensable to the possessing minority for the protection of its privileges. Bakunin and Rocker also agreed that Marx had shown how the state's origins and development could be explained with reference to changes in the economic system. In Rocker's words, the modern state was just a consequence of capitalist economic monopoly, and the class divisions which this has set up in society, and merely serves the purpose of maintaining this status by every oppressive instrument of political power. So where had Marx gone wrong? Bakunin's answer was that Marx's view of the state was too narrow and he had wrongly overplayed the role that economic forces had played in shaping the state to the detriment of others. As a result, Bakunin argued, he had overlooked the extent to which the state had developed as an independent force in history, separate from the system of economic exploitation that it functioned to uphold. Bakunin explained the difference between his position and Marx's in the following terms:

[Marx] holds that the political condition of each country is always the product and the faithful expression of its economic situation ... He takes no account of other factors in history, such as the ever-present reaction of political, juridical, and religious institutions on the economic situation. He says: 'Poverty produces political slavery, the State.' But he does not allow this expression to be turned around, to say: 'Political slavery, the State, reproduces in its turn, and maintains poverty as a condition for its own existence; so that to destroy poverty, it is necessary to destroy the State!'

Kropotkin had a slightly different understanding of the state's rise. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the eighteenth-century philosopher, once claimed that government had been founded on the naive willingness of the masses to accept the legitimacy of landowners' claims to the exclusive enjoyment of their property. Kropotkin's story was similar:

The desire to dominate others and impose one's own will upon them ... the desire to surround oneself with comforts without producing anything ... these selfish, personal desires give rise to...[a] current of habits and customs. The priest and the warrior, the charlatan who makes a profit out of superstition, and after freeing himself from the fear of the devil cultivates it in others; and the bully, who procures the invasion and pillage of his neighbors that he may return laden with booty and followed by slaves. These two, hand in hand, have succeeded in imposing upon primitive society customs advantageous to both of them, but tending to perpetuate the domination of the masses.

But he agreed that the state existed to 'protect exploitation, speculation and private property' and characterized it as 'the byproduct of the rapine of the people'. Kropotkin pinpointed Marx's error in his confusion of 'state' with 'government'. Because he defined both as reflections of
economic power, Marx was wrongly led to believe that it was possible to abolish the state simply by changing the form of government — by placing the control of government in socialist hands. Unlike Marxists, he argued, anarchists were not merely opponents of the transitory power of a particular regime or constitution. They opposed the decision-making apparatus or system of rule that all these regimes monopolized. His practical concern was that Marx had underestimated the threat of what Bakunin had called 'red bureaucracy': the potential for socialism to create a new form of oppression based on the control by workers' representatives of the state apparatus. Malatesta explained:

Social democrats start off from the principle that the State, government, is none other than the political organ of the dominant class. In a capitalistic society, they say, the State necessarily serves the interests of the capitalists and ensures for them the right to exploit the workers; but that in a socialist society, when private property were to be abolished, and ... class distinctions would disappear, then the State would represent everybody and become the impartial organ representing the social interests of all members of society.52

A second set of criticisms examined the state role as an instrument of revolutionary change. These critiques had two variations: one focused on the idea of dictatorship and the other on the theoretical assumptions that underpinned the parliamentary strategy. The first line of attack followed as a corollary to the Bakuninist critique of bureaucracy. Anarchist critics noted that the dictatorship of the proletariat, endorsed by Marx as a necessary means of securing the victory of the workers, was supposed to be both temporary and non-dictatorial. Yet by placing workers' representatives in a position where they could use violence against designated class enemies, critics argued that it would inevitably become a permanent form of oppression. As Rocker argued:

Dictatorship is a definite form of state power ... it is the proclamation of the wardship of the toiling people, a guardianship forced upon the masses by a tiny minority. Even if its supporters are animated by the very best intentions, the iron logic of facts will always drive them into the camp of extremest [sic] despotism ... the pretence that the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat is something different ... is only a sophisticated trick to fool simpletons. Such a thing as the dictatorship of a class is utterly unthinkable, since there will always be involved merely the dictatorship of a particular party which takes it upon itself to speak in the name of a class ... 53

Turning to the second variation, critics like Gustav Landauer and Kropotkin's friend, Varlaam Cherkezov, argued that the parliamentary strategy was posited on an idea of historical development that was overly mechanistic. Marx, Landauer argued, had wrongly believed that he had discovered a law of economic development from which the inevitable collapse of capitalism and victory of socialism could be deduced. Faith in his law had misled Marxists to believe that they could play a waiting game in state legislatures, building up their political strength until such time that the moment of crisis arrived and they could use their party machines to socialize the economic system. As Cherkezov put it, Marxists believed that it 'is enough that the workers should vote for members of parliament who call themselves Socialists, that the number of these MPs should increase to the extent of a majority in the House, that they should decree State Collectivism or Communism'. The idea was ludicrous for it supposed that 'all exploiters will peaceably submit to the decision of parliament' and that 'capitalists will have no choice but unresisting submission'.54

A final set of criticisms focused on the class bias of Marx's state theory. Here, the focus of the anarchist critique was Marx's preoccupation with proletarian liberation and his disregard of rural workers and the underclass — the unemployed, the outcast and the dispossessed - as subjects for liberation. Bakunin's worry was that Marx's scientific theory was exclusively focused on the liberation of the urban working class and that the communist revolution would lead to the oppression of all other workers in the name of economic progress. Landauer shared Bakunin's fear and against Marx's view argued: 'The struggle for socialism is a struggle for the land; the social question is an agrarian question'.55
Many anarchists believe that these nineteenth-century debates were finally played out in the Russian Revolution. In his eyewitness account of events, Voline remembered how in 1917 the Bolsheviks launched 'slogans which until then had particularly and insistently been voiced by the Anarchists: Long live the Social Revolution!"

For the anarchists this call described 'a really social act: a transformation which would take place outside of all political and statist organizations...'. It meant 'destruction of the State and capitalism at the same time, and the birth of a new society based on another form of social organization'. For the Bolsheviks, however, the slogan meant 'resurrection of the State after the abolition of the bourgeois State — that is to say, the creation of a powerful new State for the purpose of "constructing Socialism"'.

Whilst many modern anarchists — from anarcho-syndicalists to postmodernists — classify themselves as anti-capitalists rather than anti-statists, the experience of the revolution and the subsequent creation of the Soviet State have added weight to the view that anarchism revolves around the rejection of the state, since this is the point on which anarchism and Marxism divided. In 1922 in a bad-tempered exchange with the 'left Bolshevik' Nikolai Bukharin, Luigi Fabbri argued:

> The state is more than an outcome of class division; it is ... the creator of privilege ... Marx was in error in thinking that once classes had been abolished the state would die a natural death ... The state will not die away unless it is deliberately destroyed, just as capitalism will not cease to exist unless it is put to death through expropriation.

> ... And, let us say it again, the anarchists have pointed this out - in their polemics with social democrats - times without number from 1880 up to the present day.\(^57\)

One of the effects of the formal division of socialists into anarchist and Marxist camps has been to encourage anarchists to re-evaluate their relationship to liberalism. Bruised by their knowledge of the tyranny of Soviet socialism, twentieth-century anarchists in particular reasserted their commitment to the philosophy of liberalism and offered robust defences of the civic freedoms with which liberals are traditionally associated.

The theoretical alignment of anarchism with liberalism has a historical root. William Godwin's anarchism was firmly grounded in a tradition of radicalism informed by scientific reason. Bakunin, too, celebrated the idea of reason and identified in liberalism a principle of rationality and of scientific thought that he linked with emancipation and progress. Though he complained that the benefits of scientific knowledge extended to 'only...a very small portion of society', he believed that liberal science would provide the foundation for integral or all-round education in anarchy.

Developing this idea, the Spanish anarchist Francisco Ferrer commented:

> Those imaginary products of the mind, a priori ideas, and all the absurd and fantastical fictions hitherto regarded as truth and imposed as directive principles on human conduct, have for some time past incurred the condemnation of reason and the resentment of conscience ... Science is no longer the patrimony of a small group of privileged individuals; its beneficent rays more or less consciously penetrate every rank of society. On all sides traditional errors are being dispelled by it; by the confident procedure of experience and observation it enables us to attain accurate knowledge and criteria in regard to natural objects and the laws which govern them. With indisputable authority it bids men lay aside for ever their exclusivisms and privileges, and it offers itself as the controlling principle of human life, seeking to imbue all with a common sentiment of humanity.\(^58\)

The relationship between anarchism and rational science blossomed in the 1880s and '90s, largely under the influence of Kropotkin and Reclus who extended Bakunin's ideas to develop an empirically based theory of anarchism. In their various geographical and sociological writings they developed Bakunin's argument, that prevailing methods of scientific investigation held the key to well-being, in an attempt to demonstrate the rooted-ness of anarchism in existing social practice. Anarchists like Malatesta complained in existing social practice that Kropotkin confused science with morals and that his anarchism was too mechanistic. But the idea that anarchism had a foundation in empirical science was difficult to resist. Indeed, the claim that Marx had founded
'scientific' socialism provided an additional spur for anarchists to appropriate liberal science and harness it to their own cause because it provided a means to undermine and ridicule this claim. Notwithstanding Malatesta's reservations the scientific model dominated twentieth-century anarchism. In a discussion of Alex Comfort's work, David Goodway comments:

Historically ... anarchists have ... regarded science as a force for progress: being the revelation of the structure of the natural world ... and hence in opposition to the mystifying claims of religious superstition, of class rule and, after 1917, of ideology. It has only been in the late twentieth century that science and radical politics have become uncoupled ... 59

Anarchists continue to work within this paradigm. The Anarchist International represents itself as a 'non-sectarian' and 'non-dogmatic' organization, open to 'all libertarian tendencies'. But it is also 'non-dialectical and non-metaphysical', committed to 'the method of modern science, introduced by Kropotkin ... in short the anarchist scientifical way of thinking' (Bulletin of the Anarchist International). In his well-known pamphlet Listen, Anarchist! Chaz Bufe also defends science, rationality and technology as the only permissible tools of anarchist dissent. The 'post-objectivist' George H. Smith captures a similar idea. Anarchism, he argues,

is grounded in the belief that we are fully capable, through reason, of discerning the principles of justice; and that we are capable, through rational persuasion and voluntary agreement, of establishing whatever institutions are necessary for the preservation and enforcement of justice. 60

The theoretical alignment of anarchism with liberal science was paralleled by a reassessment of liberalism's political value. Some anarchist schools had long seen a positive element in liberal thought and like liberals claimed liberty as one of their primary goals. Yet not all groups of anarchists have asserted the priority of liberty with equal force. So-called individualists — particularly in America - have tended to be the most vocal advocates of liberty, identifying anarchism firmly with the defence of rights. Indeed, some writers have argued that liberal anarchism is a peculiarly American phenomenon. In her analysis of the relationship of anarchism to American political culture Voltairine de Cleyre argued that independence of thought, freedom from the tyranny of arbitrary government and the guarantee of civic rights were the hallmarks of both anarchist and liberal traditions. The patriots of the Revolution 'took their starting point for deriving a minimum government upon the same sociological ground that the modern Anarchist derives the no-government theory; viz., that equal liberty is the political ideal'. 61 Ayn Rand also argued that American anarchism had been shaped by the revolutionary tradition. Europeans, she added, had never 'fully grasped' the American philosophy of the Rights of Man and remained firmly wedded to the competing principle of the common good. The Scottish anti-parliamentarian, Guy Aldred, offered a less culturally determined account, extending the American tradition back to the English homeland. The 'English-speaking race, on both sides of the Atlantic, have by persecution at the stake, by jail, and exile, made the English tongue the tongue of liberty and of freedom', 62

Traditionally, European anarcho-communists have been rather more cynical about the value of liberal rights in the absence of economic equality. Proudhon defined liberty in terms of the necessity to maintain 'equality in the means of production and equivalence in exchanges'. 63 Similarly, whilst Bakunin famously declared himself a 'fanatical lover of liberty', he also argued that workers told about political freedom would rightly reply, 'Do not speak of freedom: poverty is slavery'. 64 In the 1870s Kropotkin contrasted the formal rights guaranteed by liberal states with the effective rights yet to be claimed by the oppressed. The first were tools of oppression and the second powers to be extracted from the state. There was a clear gulf between the two.

The rise to power of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution was not the only event that led anarchists to re-evaluate the significance of liberal rights. The emergence of fascism has also helped to reinforce anarchist commitments to liberal freedoms and strengthened the belief that these freedoms can only be realized in a non-exploitative stateless society. Indeed, many European anarchist groups — particularly in France, Spain and Italy - continue to identify their
struggle for freedom with a commitment against fascism. Nevertheless the Russian Revolution certainly helped to concentrate anarchist minds on the independent value of these freedoms. As Voline argued:

A true revolution can only take its flight, evolve, attain its objectives, if it has an environment of the free circulation of revolutionary ideas concerning the course to follow, and the problems to be solved. This liberty is as indispensable to the Revolution as air is to respiration. That is why ... the dictatorship which leads inevitably to the suppression of all freedom of speech, press, organization, and action — even for the revolutionary tendencies, except for the party in power - is fatal to true revolution.\(^65\)

Reviewing, in 1926, the old distinctions between individualists and communists, Malatesta still maintained that the former attached too much importance to ‘an abstract concept of freedom’ but nevertheless arrived at a unified conception of anarchism as ‘all and only those forms of life that respect liberty’.\(^66\)

Anarchists have continued to develop this interest in political liberty in the post-war period. British anarchists in the Freedom group paid special attention to the issue of censorship, particularly on the grounds of indecency. Writers for the journal Anarchy opposed with equal conviction calls to ban works from Mara Bryant's recording, Please, Mister, Don't You Touch My Tomato, to D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover because they supported freedom of speech and expression. In a similar vein, one of the declared objectives of the French Federation Anarchiste is ‘the absolute right for all individuals to express their opinions’.\(^67\) Recently one anti-globalizer has offered the memorable definition of anarchism as 'liberalism on steroids'.

The relationship between anarchism, Marxism and liberalism helps to contextualize two recent anarchist debates. The first revolves around the relative importance of individual expression and creative experimentation, and/or the desirability of bringing individuals together in community over the need to engage in class struggle against exploitation. New anarchists typically emphasize the importance of the first two whilst ‘old’ anarchists give greater weight to the last. The second debate reflects a recent shift amongst primitivists and postmoderns against liberal rationalism and science. For primitivists, liberal rationality expresses a faulty approach towards reality: one that asserts the superiority of the intellect over sense and feeling. For post-anarchists it represents a mistaken idea of truth and reality: neither intellect nor feeling can capture either, there are only diverse and multiple interpretations. Yet both groups are hostile to the scientific, rationalist tradition that has dominated anarchist thought. Lawrence Jarach's critique of Chaz Bufe's 'ultra-rationalist and moralist perspective' and his 'liberal leftist' commitment to "civil liberties" is one example of the recent trend.\(^68\) ‘Joffs’ poststructuralist / postmodern critique of Bookchin's developmental, naturalistic science is another.\(^69\)

In addition, the history of the relationship between anarchism and liberalism places anarchism on a broader spectrum of ideas than the bi-partite division of Marxism and anarchism allows, fleshing out anarchism's ideological content. Drawing on this history Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer situated anarchism in a framework that distinguished between 'individualistic' and 'totalitarian' ways of life, and 'capitalistic' and 'socialistic' forms of work.\(^70\)

**Summary**

This chapter has examined three different approaches to the analysis of anarchist ideas, the first focusing on core concepts abstracted from the writings of 'classical' anarchists, the second based on the division of anarchists into schools and the third examining the history of anarchist ideas. Through these analyses I have argued that anarchism should be considered as an ideology defined by the rejection of the state. This core idea should not be treated in abstract, but as a principle, first articulated in the course of a particular historical debate between socialists, that can be filled in a variety of different ways. The next chapter considers in more detail some of the ways in which anarchists have conceptualized their rejection of the state and the ideas of freedom that they have drawn from their critiques.
Further reading


The following anarchist texts (and more) can be accessed at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives

Noam Chomsky, *Notes on Anarchism*

Emma Goldman, *Anarchism: What it Really Stands For*

Peter Kropotkin, *Anarchism*

Errico Malatesta, *Anarchy*

Elisee Reclus, *Anarchy by an Anarchist*

Links


Online anarchy: http://www.infoshop.org

Primitivism: http://www.primitivism.com/primitivism.htm

Kate Sharpley Library (anarchist history and research): http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net


Social anarchism: http://www.socialanarchism.org

Notes


3. *Dictionnaire de L’Academie Franfaise* at http://colet.uhicago.edu/cgi-bin


34. J. Zerzan, Future Primitive and Other Essays (New York: Autonomedia, 1994), 144.
50. Kropotkin, Revolutionary Pamphlets, 203.
53. Rocker, Anarcho-syndicalism, 44.
63. Proudhon, What is Property?, 272.
65. Voline, Unknown Revolution, 188.
Chapter 2
Anarchist Rejections of the State

Anarchism ... is more than anti-statism. But government (the state) because it claims ultimate sovereignty and the right to outlaw or legitimate particular sovereignties, and because it serves the interests, predominantly, of those who possess particular spheres of power, stands at the centre of the web of social domination; it is appropriately, the central focus of anarchist critique.

(David Wieck, in Reinventing Anarchy, p. 139)

... the modern State is the organizational form of an authority founded upon arbitrariness and violence ... It relies upon oppressive centralism, arising out of the direct violence of a minority deployed against the majority. In order to enforce and impose the legality of its system, the State resorts not only to the gun and money, but also to potent weapons of psychological pressure. With the aide [sic] of such weapons, a tiny group of politicians enforces psychological repression of an entire society, and, in particular, of the toiling masses, conditioning them in such a way as to divert their attention from the slavery instituted by the State.

(Nestor Makhno, The Struggle Against the State and Other Essays, p. 56)

Some anarchists resist the suggestion that anarchism can be defined by the rejection of the state or, indeed, any single position; others argue that to reduce anarchism to anti-statism points to a misleadingly stark contrast between two alternative conditions - state or anarchy - and undermines the possibility of thinking about resistance within the body of the state. Yet it is possible to recognize that anarchists have defined the state and its rejection in very different ways; that these ideas have changed over time; and anarchists are no less able than non-anarchist activists to combine a principled commitment - however it is interpreted - with pragmatic judgements about political action in an imperfect world. The usefulness of the conception is that it underlines the radicalism of the anarchists' approach to questions of social order: if, as some writers have argued, anarchist ideas of liberty resemble liberal ideas, the important difference between them is that anarchists have tried to elaborate their notion by imagining the absence of externally imposed rules and systems of enforcement - the very thing that non-anarchists assume as a necessary condition for freedom. Moreover, the rejection of the state helps explain the apparent contradictions of anarchist thought - why, for example, anarchists have claimed both a commitment to 'absolute liberty' - meaning the absence of external authority - and the acceptance of 'natural authority' - that is, the legitimacy of constraints that emerge from ordinary, everyday social interactions.

The state has generated some of the most powerful images in anarchist writing. Following the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, Emma Goldman described the state as a 'cold monster', an inhuman and murderous being. Fredy Perlman, a writer associated with primitivism, used the image of Leviathan, referring to the idea of the state outlined by the seventeenth-century British philosopher Thomas Hobbes, to describe it as 'a monstrous body ... without any life of its own ... a dead thing, a huge cadaver'. In whichever way they choose to describe it, the distinctive claim that anarchists make about the state is that it is undesirable and unnecessary.

Anarchists have analysed the state in a number of ways. Proudhon pioneered a sociological account, setting the state in the context of the European international system. Kropotkin examined state formation. His is probably the best-known historical account of the state's development but in recent years John Zerzan and Fredy Perlman have also returned to its history. Others have looked at the state's functions, typically identifying the state with exploitation or monopoly. A significant number have attempted to describe the state by looking at the abstract concepts with which it has been associated in the history of ideas.

This chapter reviews some of these analyses, first looking at the ways anarchists have defined abstract ideas of government, authority and power. There are a number of reasons for starting here. First, the analysis of these ideas has occupied a central place in anarchist theorizing —
indeed, anarchists have often defined anarchy in terms of their abolition. Second, because anarchists have defined and combined these ideas in a variety of ways, their analysis helps to capture the scope of anarchist critiques. Third, anarchist critiques of government, authority and power help to establish the limits of the anarchists' rejection of the state, pinpointing the difference between illegitimate and legitimate rule. Finally, anarchist critiques of these ideas provide a context for the discussions of liberty. Some theorists — and many anarchists — have argued that the commitment to liberty defines anarchist thought. However, in contrast to liberal thought, to which anarchism is indebted, anarchists do not believe that liberty requires law. To the contrary, anarchist conceptions of freedom are posited on the state's abolition.

Government, Authority, Power and the State

Critics of anarchism have sometimes suggested that anarchists use concepts of government, authority and power as synonyms for the state rather than tools of analysis. When they call for the abolition of the state, critics argue, they also mean to reject government, authority and power. This critique of the anarchist position is not entirely groundless since anarchists have often rejected these concepts in blanket terms, habitually defining anarchy in terms of their abolition. Anarchy, Malatesta argued, 'comes from Greek and its literal meaning is WITHOUT GOVERNMENT: the condition of a people who live without a constituted authority, without government'. Sebastien Faure substituted authority for government. An anarchist, he argued, is someone who 'denies Authority and fights against it'. Likewise John Zerzan defines anarchism as a synonym for anti-authoritarianism. For George Woodock, anarchism was about giving 'men ... the bread of brotherly love, and not the stones of power - of any power'. John Moore also identified anarchism with the rejection of power. In a careful analysis of anarchist poststructuralism, he rejected the possibility of distinguishing between 'suppressive' and 'productive' forms of power, insisting that 'no relationships of power are acceptable'.

What do anarchists mean by these claims? What are their specific concerns? By government, anarchists tend to think of a particular system of rule, based on violence. In authority they consider the social relationships sustained by this system, and in power they consider the means by which government secures its authority. Each concept is considered in turn.

Government and the State

Many anarchists argue that the characteristic feature of government in the state is violence. The raw view of this relationship is that governments, be they 'absolute or constitutional, monarchy or republic, Fascist, Nazi or Bolshevik', rule by the use of physical force. The qualified view is that governments prefer not to rely on the open use of force and that the ability of governors to secure popular consent usually makes physical coercion unnecessary.

Some anarchists define the state in terms very similar to those offered by the sociologist, Max Weber. Moreover, like Weber, anarchists tend to explain the actual incidence of government violence in Machiavellian terms. As a writer in Freedom put it, '[e]very government governs by a combination of deceit and coercion. The crude ones more by coercion, the clever ones more by deceit'. In constitutional and democratic regimes, where governments feel secure, they 'allow a greater degree of latitude to their subjects' and govern through fraud. Where they lack popular support and 'are too afraid to allow any measure of liberty at all', deceit fails and government relies on violence to force the people into submission. Anarchists point to the behaviour of governments in moments of tension or crisis to support this thesis. For example, British anarchists argue that the 1984-5 miners' strike provided graphic illustration of the government's willingness to crush dissent by force. More recently, activists have pointed to police actions at anti-globalization rallies to make the case. Protests at the Genoa G8 summit in July 2001 made headlines after the killing of Carlo Giuliani, a young protestor, and the beating of journalists and protestors in a night-raid led by the Italian Carabinieri. One anarchist gives this account of events:
The police entered: the media and the politicians were kept out. And they beat people. They beat people who had been sleeping, who held up their hands in a gesture of innocence and cried out, 'Pacifisti! Pacifisti!'

They beat the men and the women. They broke bones, smashed teeth, shattered skulls. They left blood on the walls, on the windows, a pool of it in every spot where people had been sleeping. When they have finished their work, they brought in the ambulances ... This really happened. Not back in the nineteen thirties, but on the night of July 21 and the morning of July 22, 2001. Not in some third world country, but in Italy: prosperous, civilized, sunny Italy.

The conclusion drawn by this activist is

That the police could carry out such a brutal act openly ... means that they do not expect to be held accountable for their actions. Which means that they had support from higher up, from more powerful politicians ...\(^7\)

Noting that a number of leading anarchists - Bakunin, Kropotkin and Tolstoy - were Russians, the American political scientist Paul Douglas argued that anarchism was a response to autocracy and that its 'surest cure' was 'for the states to lead the good life'.\(^8\) Yet the surprising conclusion drawn by some anarchists is that the latent violence of constitutional government is worse than the overt violence of dictatorial rule. In the constitutional state citizens enter into a sort of Faustian pact, consenting to violence in return for civil rights and welfare benefits. John Zerzan has recently put this case. As taxpayers to government 'we're all implicated' in the violence committed in our name. Giving the lie to Douglas, Tolstoy offered a similar view, contrasting the position of subjects and citizens:

A subject of the most despotic Government can be completely free although he may be subjected to cruel violence on the part of the authorities he has not established; but a member of a constitutional State is always a slave because, imagining that he has participated or can participate in his Government, he recognizes the legality of all violence perpetrated upon him ...\(^9\)

Government violence is not restricted to the internal sphere - it also has an external aspect. As Emma Goldman argued, government is 'an instrument of competitive struggle' which strives constantly to expand its influence and prestige. The anarchist analysis of inter-state relations does not feature prominently in much modern literature but nineteenth-century anarchists were centrally concerned with international politics and the burgeoning process of state-formation, the emergence of national liberation movements and the role and nature of war. Proudhon pioneered this approach to the state and Bakunin, Kropotkin and Tolstoy all shared his interest. Indeed, Kropotkin's concern with international politics and the ramifications of Prussia's domination in Europe helps to explain his decision to back the Allied war effort in 1914. What remains of this interest is a conception of the inherent violence of the international state system. Proudhon explained it in the following terms:

It is the governments who, pretending to establish order among men, arrange them forthwith in hostile camps, and as their only occupation is to produce servitude at home, their art lies in maintaining war abroad, war in fact or war in prospect. The oppression of peoples and their mutual hatred are two correlative, inseparable facts, which reproduce each other, and which cannot come to an end except simultaneously, by the destruction of their common cause, government.\(^10\)

Noam Chomsky's long-standing critique of US foreign policy describes inter-state competition as a form of terrorism which has as its aim the preservation of 'the Fifth Freedom': 'the freedom to rob, to exploit and to dominate, to undertake any course of action to ensure that existing privilege is protected and advanced'. There is, he argues, a fundamental hypocrisy at the heart of the liberal
state: its legitimacy is based on the respect of freedoms of speech, worship, want and freedom from fear but its external policy is predicated on a systematic abuse of these principles. States enter into external competition in the same way as they secure domestic dominance: by a combination of force and fraud. In the 1980s, Chomsky observes, US administrations systematically bombed and massacred civilian populations in Central America and the Middle East to guarantee their interests. In Cuba, it used trade sanctions 'to crush peoples'.

Anarchists have offered psychological and material explanations for the violence of government. The nineteenth-century writer Charlotte Wilson argued that government was an expression of a 'tendency towards domination', a natural though destructive instinct present in all individuals. The psychological explanation has a number of variations. Anarcha-feminists examine the issue of violence through the prism of feminist critique. On these accounts, Wilson's observed tendency becomes gender-specific. Flick Ruby argues that government violence turns on men's willingness and ability to dominate women. In her reflections on the role of women in anti-war campaigns she comments: '[i]f the peace movement is to be successful in putting an end to war, it must work to eliminate the sex role system which is killing us all by rewarding dominating aggressive behaviour in men'. The Guerrilla Girls explore a similar theme, imagining an estrogen-bombed world where troops in conflict zones 'throw down their guns, hug each other, say it was "all their fault", and clean up the mess'. Perlman, too, understands government as an expression of maleness. With the rise of Leviathan, he argues, 'women become debased, domesticated, abused and instrumentalized, and then scribes proceed to erase the memory that women were ever important'.

Since the 1960s anarchists have increasingly added an ecological dimension to the argument. Murray Bookchin associates the emergence of government-systems with the historic re-casting of the natural world as a sphere of irrationality, animality and womanhood and with the withdrawal of men from the domestic sphere to the realm of public affairs ('civil society'). Primitivists, though no friend of Bookchin's, identify a similar process. Perlman describes the subjugation of women as the subjugation of Mother Earth and he counts the cost of the state's rise in terms of the destruction of biosphere. Government has its origins in God's instruction to the people of Israel to 'replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth'. Zerzan's explanation is that governmental forms of rule arose when human beings lost their 'awareness of belonging to an earthly community of living beings' and discovered a desire to domesticate ('bring under control for self-serving purposes') the natural world. Once humans had embarked on this process, the next step was to control and dominate each other through the habitual use of violence.

The material explanation of violence is that government must use coercive methods in order to maintain economic inequality. Anarchists are divided about the causes of inequality. Proudhon traced the roots of inequality to the right to property. However he distinguished between two types of right. The first was a right of dominion which allowed individuals to own property whether or not they occupied it and to derive rent, interest and profit from their ownership. This form of property was 'theft' and it contrasted with the second type of right, the right of ownership based on use or possession. These two forms of property were incompatible: the existence of one made the other 'impossible'. For example, if landowners were able to claim rights to collect rent from tenants, tenants had to give up their rights of possessions in order to meet the demands. In Proudhon's view, the minority wielded economic power because the first form of property had been treated, wrongly, as an inalienable right. The recognition of this right, enshrined in liberal constitutions, gave an elite dominion over the land worked by the toilers.

Proudhon's theory supported the individualist idea that exploitation was based on monopoly rather than ownership itself and it contrasted with the communistic theory advanced by Reclus, Kropotkin, Malatesta and others. They argued that economic inequality was in part caused by natural inequalities of talent and, in the other part, by the uneven quality of land and materials
available to individuals. This analysis suggested that the right to property — even as possession — would always generate inequalities and, therefore, the existence of class division, supporting exploitation and government.

Both sides to this dispute agreed that economic inequality was a form of enslavement in which the propertyless mass was forced to work for the benefit of the owners. The choice was simple: either work on terms set by the owners or go without wages and the means of life. As Kropotkin noted, nobody freely consented to such an arrangement. Inequality could only be supported by coercion and deceit.

... how can the peasant be made to believe that the bourgeois or manorial land belongs to the proprietor who has a legal claim, when the peasant can tell us the history of each bit of land for ten leagues around? ... how make him believe that it is useful for the nation that Mr. So-and-so keeps a piece of land for his park when so many neighboring peasants would be only too glad to cultivate it?

... how make the worker in a factory, or the miner in a mine, believe that factory and mine equitably belong to their present masters, when worker and even miner are beginning to see clearly through scandal, bribery, pillage of the State and the legal theft, from which great commercial and industrial property are derived?15

Kropotkin also believed that inequalities between states explained the aggressiveness of the international system. Here the problem was that the most powerful industrialized European states competed with each other for markets, prestige and/or the control of raw materials. The system was inherently unstable. In Kropotkin's view, the 'reason for modern war is always the competition for markets and the right to exploit nations backward in industry'.16

Modern anarchists — though not anarcho-capitalists — continue to associate economic inequality with government violence. For example, the London Anarchist Communist Federation argue, '[t]he state is mainly a system of organized violence to maintain the domination of the capitalist ruling class. However, order is best-achieved and maintained through people's consent rather than naked force'.17 Yet modern anarchists are increasingly concerned with global inequality and the operation of international capitalism. Moreover, in their concern to look beyond the issue of class inequality, they tend to highlight the cultural and ecological impact of the global market economy — the destruction of traditional and indigenous cultures and the depletion of the earth's resources - rather than concentrate on its economic consequences. However, anti-capitalist theorists of globalization do not reject entirely the thrust of the traditional analyses of government. For example, Karen Goaman replicates the class divide that anarchists like Kropotkin posited between the propertyless mass and the owners in a division of global workers and multi-national corporations, the latter supported by states operating through international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Union (EU) and the World Bank. Her view is that

Globalisation is the final drive for the control of the world's peoples and 'resources'. As a system based on competition, rapid change and the pursuit of profit through a particular set of social relationships based on wage labour (people with no other access to livelihood than to sell their labour) and machinery, it is predicated on the destruction of the commons, expansion and search for new markets, cheaper labour and ready access to the earth's (finite) riches.

Like the earlier forms of inequality, global capitalism breeds violence. Goaman continues:

The difference between those processes as they affected us in the period from the 18th-20th centuries, and those carried out by world leaders and those in the 'driving seat' of the globalisation process, lies in the massive amount of power now held by both states and corporations, particularly those in the US and the West, and all backed up by advanced technologies of repression, coercion and weapons of mass destruction.18
Some anarchists - Nicolas Walter, for example - acknowledge that 'every normal person would prefer to live under a less authoritarian rather than a more authoritarian' government. Yet anarchist critiques of government violence tend to encourage anarchists to blur the differences, sometimes to the point of blindness, between forms of government and to discount consideration of the motivations or consequences of government action in favour of prioritizing the analysis of means. Arguments like Chomsky's reinforce the idea that the difference between constitutional and democratic governments, on the one hand, and tyrannies, on the other, is only a matter of degree. A familiar cry of anarchist pamphlets is that governments pay lip service to human rights in order to legitimize external aggression and exploitation, just as they use welfare and democracy as instruments of internal coercion. The critique has had two lasting effects on anarchist practice. The first is on the identification of anarchist sites of struggle. The only campaigns with which anarchists readily identify are those based on grass roots rebellion - for example, the struggles of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and of Zapatistas in Mexico. Kropotkin's decision to support the Franco-British war effort in 1914 was the exception to prove the rule: since his action, the idea that anarchists might involve themselves in disputes between states is treated as anathema. Equally abhorrent is the idea that anarchists might attempt to harness the power of the state to ameliorate the effects of the free market. This rejection of the state is one of the hallmarks of anarchist anti-globalization protest. One voice puts the view succinctly:

Too much of the time anti-globalization amounts to an appeal to the state to take account of the wishes of some of its 'citizens' and return to the good old days of social democracy and national sovereignty when the nation state protected us against the worst excesses of the corporations ... these sort of calls and complaints are quite simply reactionary ... states and governments are complicit in the process of globalization. We should understand this and act accordingly.20

The second practical effect of the critique concerns the permissible means of anarchist change. Here, anarchists are divided into two camps. On the one hand stand those who argue that change can only be won through non-violent methods. On the other are those who contend that organized violence can only be destroyed by violence. This division will be discussed in Chapter 4. The more immediate issue to consider is how anarchists explain the success of government. The answer, in large part, lies in their conceptions of authority.

Authority and the State

If government describes the mechanism of the state's rule, authority is the principle that legitimizes the capacity to rule. According to Bakunin:

Every logical and sincere theory of the State is essentially founded on the principle of authority - that is to say on the ... idea that the masses, always incapable of governing themselves, must submit at all times to the benevolent yoke of a wisdom and a justice, which one way or another, is imposed on them from above ... 21

Anarchist conceptions of state authority centre on three ideas: that authority is commanding, controlling and corrupting. Anarchists tend to discuss these ideas critically, linking command to the suspension of reason ('private judgement'); control to the stifling of initiative and creativity; and corruption to the inhibition of harmonious social relations.

The first idea, that authority is incompatible with private judgement, was at the heart of Godwin's anarchism. It also formed the core of Robert Paul Wolff's essay, In Defence of Anarchism. Wolff characterized the authority of the state as 'the right to command' and the 'correlative obligation to obey the person who issues the command'. When subject to authority individuals act certain ways not because they believe their actions to be justified or right, but merely because they have been commanded to do so. The exercise of authority 'is not a matter of doing what someone tells you to do. It is a matter of doing what he tells you to do because he tells
Wolff contrasted authority with autonomy: the 'freedom and responsibility' that define dignified human behaviour. Autonomy allows individuals to do what others tell them to do, but only because they have made a judgement about the tightness of the instruction, and not because they are commanded to do it. Running these ideas together, Wolff argued that authority was incompatible with autonomy. Because he also held that individuals had a duty to be autonomous, he concluded that the concept of a legitimate state was a contradiction in terms. Wolff's argument about the duty to be autonomous has been widely disputed. Yet his main point - that command is incompatible with reason and that the state, by inhibiting individuals from acting in accordance with their conscience and stripping them of responsibility for the choices and judgements they make - holds whether or not individuals are said to have this duty. And though Wolff's position was strictly philosophical, his critique of state authority has a broad appeal. As Emma Goldman argued '[a]narchism urges man to think, to investigate, to analyze every proposition'. The authority of the state prohibits and frustrates this endeavour.

In sum: anarchists since Godwin have complained that state authority forces individuals to do things they believe to be wrong and commands them to do things that they might otherwise agree to do. It not only makes hypocrites of its citizens but infantilizes them in the process.

The second critique, that authority stifles creativity, has two dimensions. Both focus on the notion of individuality, but one critique is concerned with issues of dependency whilst the other examines questions of expression. Falling into the first category, Kropotkin understood the problem of individuality as a problem of 'free initiative and free agreement'. In his view, the exercise of state authority - reinforced by the Church - had so disciplined and organized individuals that they had lost the habit of acting for themselves. The state had become 'the master of all the domains of human activity'. Individuals had little sense that they were independent beings, and still less that they could cooperate inter-dependently to achieve common goals. In response to the critics of anarchism who argued that authority was necessary to secure order, Kropotkin replied:

*We are told we are too slavish, too snobbish, to be placed under free institutions; but we say that because we are indeed so slavish we ought not to remain any longer under the present institutions, which favour the development of slavishness.*

In recent years Kropotkin's critique has been revived by social anarchists — amongst others - interested in stimulating grassroots, community initiatives designed to bypass the authority of the state. However, many anarchists - particularly modern anarchists — are as exercised with the issue of expression as they are the problem of dependency. From this perspective authority is linked to the inculcation of moral values and behavioural norms. It is said to inhibit individuals from exploring their uniqueness and to mould them in ways that make them more likely to conform to the state's commands. This understanding of authority draws on a number of sources, notably Stirner, Nietzsche (notwithstanding Nietzsche's dismissal of anarchism as a moralizing creed) and the Situationist International (SI). For example, Daniel Guerin turned to Stirner to appeal against conformity with family values and, more specifically, to resist the homophobic and repressive sexual morality of bourgeois rule. The feminist and egoist Dora Marsden also drew on Stirner's work to assert her continuous rebellion against all standards of thought and behaviour. By authority she understood the desire to categorize thought and purpose through the imposition of abstract ideas - 'society', 'community', 'property', even 'anarchy'. Her anti-authoritarian creative urge was a refusal to sacrifice her individual rebelliousness to any of the common causes these categories expressed. Consequently, Marsden distinguished the 'phenomenal advance' that individual women had made in liberating themselves from categories like 'woman' from the 'stationaryness and ... stagnation' of the 'Woman Movement'. The first was driven forward by the energy of separate egos; the latter by an authority that sapped those 'streams of living energy'. Although she eventually rejected anarchism, she argued that the important lesson taught by anarchism was that the 'individual soul's development' was 'the supreme concern of its possessor'.

Anarchist Nietzscheans include writers as different as Emma Goldman and Herbert Read. Goldman's account of the battle against authority was that it was a battle against 'uniformity' and
public opinion, not just oppression or persecution. For Read, Nietzsche had importantly defined the
individual as 'a world in himself, self-contained and self-creative', a 'freely giving and freely
receiving, but essentially a free spirit'.25 Though Read believed that Nietzsche had not clearly
understood how individuals could live together creatively, he argued that he had been right to
conceive the struggle against authority as an existential revolt. Read thus endorsed Albert Camus'
characterization of the modern struggle as a 'metaphysical revolt, the revolt of man against the
conditions of life, against creation itself.26

Anarchists drawing inspiration from the SI include insurrectionists like Alfredo Bonanno and
primitivists. Taking up some of the ideas of the SI anarchists, they have attempted to show how the
structures of the state hinder expression, or what surrealists term the realization of 'the Marvelous'.
As Zerzan explains, the contribution of the SI lies particularly in the notion of the spectacle and in
the analysis of the commodity-developed world. Individuals, in what Zerzan pejoratively calls
'civilization' or 'symbolic culture', understand the world indirectly, 'by blocking and otherwise
suppressing channels of sensory awareness'. Technology compels them 'to tune out' most of what
they could otherwise experience. Life is drained of real meaning and '[m]assive, unfulfilling
consumption ... reigns as the chief everyday consolation'. In the 'horror-show of domination' people
relate to each other through 'entertaining, easily digestible images and phrases'. They become
illiterate and fatalistic, 'indifferent to questions of origins, agency, history or causation'.27 Too many
estimate their own worth by the standards of the perfect consumer goods that surround them.
Some, as Nicki Clarke suggests, become self-haters: 'I'm starving myself, watching my breasts and
hips disappear - you know I understand the hatred of this body, this sexualised body, this
packaged consumer product body that exists for someone else's enjoyment, someone else's eye.
Not mine.'28 Others are driven to insanity. Alfredo Bonanno picks up the story. Individuals who
manage to escape 'the commodity code' and fall "outside" the areas of the spectacle ... are
pointed at. They are surrounded by barbed wire ... they are criminalized. They are clearly mad!” He
continues: 'It is forbidden to refuse the illusory in a world that has based reality on illusion,
concreteness on the unreal'.29

The final critique, that authority is corrupting, focuses on the relational qualities of state rule.
This critique is a complaint about the state's falsity and the way in which it stirs antagonism in
society. Tolstoy's version of this thesis was based on a moral view, linked to his Christianity. He
declared authority as 'the means of forcing a man to act contrary to his desires' and contrasted it to
'spiritual influence'. Authority, he argued, encouraged hypocrisy. In this context, hypocrisy is not
merely about being forced to act against conscience or to act in ways contrary to professed belief
but, borrowing a theatrical metaphor, about playing a part and concealing true character. Tolstoy's
view was that authority did not just subject individuals to command, but that the issuing of
commands led them to think and behave in ways that were alien and destructive. Authority
'hypnotized' individuals, convincing them 'that they are whatever character is suggested to them'.
When subject to authority individuals lose the 'power of reflecting on their actions' they 'do without
thinking whatever is consistent with the suggestion to which they are led by example, precept, or
insinuation'.

Notable hypocrites in the political system are heads of states, military commanders and priests.
But the hypocrites are not just the figureheads or leaders in society or even those who occupy
official positions in the state - in the armed forces or police, for example. Some anarchists are quick
to condemn people in these positions. After the London poll tax riot, one anarchist described the
police as 'the first line of defence for the system' concluding that they 'deserve everything they
get'.30 According to Tolstoy, however, hypocrisy has 'entered into the flesh and blood of all classes
in our time'. Anyone can be hypnotized to play a role by authority. Hypocrites not only include
regular soldiers who kill, maim and torture their fellow-beings by order; but peasants and workers
who meekly submit to conscription; 'tradesmen, doctors, artists, clerks, scientists, cooks, writers,
valets, and lawyers' who wrongly assume that they occupy benevolent or useful social roles.
Hypocrites refuse to acknowledge their roles. Indeed, hypocrisy is so deeply embedded in the state
that it is even possible, Tolstoy noted sourly, for a man to 'remain a landowner, a trader, a
manufacturer, a judge, an official in government pay, a soldier or an officer, and still be not merely humane but even a socialist and a revolutionary.³¹

Perlman shared Tolstoy's belief that authority structures social relationships, but detached the analysis from spirituality. For Perlman, authority was a form of ideology, in the sense in which Jason McQuinn defines the term: a particular use of ideas, designed 'to subordinate and control' and involving 'the adoption of theories constructed around abstract, externally-conceived subjectivities ... to which one feels in some ways obliged to subordinate ... aims, desires and life'.³² In Perlman's account, individuals are not so much corrupted by authority, but nevertheless manipulated and mentally programmed as if hypnotized. In Leviathan's grip 'the individual's living spirit shrivels and dies' and the 'empty space is filled ... with Leviathan's substance'. Individuals become aggressive, antisocial beings. Leviathan's historic mission was 'to reduce human beings to things, to remake men into efficient fighting units'. And it succeeded in its task. Individuals had learned to experience joy 'from the fall of an enemy and the gushing of blood from a wound'. Drawing on theatrical metaphor, Perlman continued:

... the tragedy of it all is that the longer he wears the armor, the less able he is to remove it. The armor sticks to his body. The mask becomes glued to his face. Attempts to remove the mask become increasingly painful, for the skin tends to come off with it. There's still a human face below the mask, just as there's still a potentially free body below the armor, but merely airing them takes almost superhuman effort.³³

Critics often claim that anarchists have an overly optimistic view of human nature. Yet Tolstoy's and Perlman's critiques of authority do not suggest that the individuals are naturally 'good'. They argue that the state has made us artificially 'bad'. What's the difference? From this perspective the problem of the state is not that it creates social conflicts between peoples who otherwise live harmoniously, but that it habitually relies on violence to resolve differences between individuals who might otherwise rely on reason. With its authority the state variously conditions individuals to follow instructions, encourages herd-like instincts and brutalizes citizens by moulding their responses to others. And how does authority work? The answer is: through power. As Rocker remarked, power 'is active consciousness of authority'. Anarchist analyses of power highlight the ways in which authority manifests itself in daily life.

**Power and the State**

Anarchist analyses of power focus on the instruments that governments use to enforce authority. Some anarchists have understood these instruments to refer to the visible legal and political structures of physical repression. Others have looked at covert forces of control: the power of ideology - particularly nationalism - and, more recently, concepts like time, work and school.

The most obvious way in which the state uses power is through the legal system and its supporting institutions. Anarchists acknowledge that these systems and supports can be more or less developed and that the relationship between the machinery of law and the enforcing institutions is balanced in different ways. States governed by 'coercion' are more likely than those governed by 'deceit' to have very well-developed systems of enforcement and will rely more heavily on these systems to secure compliance than on the rule of law. In his classic analysis of the Okhrana, the Tsarist secret police, Victor Serge showed how the autocracy had employed a range of powers, from surveillance techniques to systematic execution and disappearance, to defend itself against revolution. In the inter-war period Alexander Berkman raised a similar case, this time showing how Tsarist methods had been imported into Bolshevism in defence of Lenin's revolution. The view famously developed by Proudhon is that these instruments of power are a necessary feature of all government:

To be GOVERNED is to be kept in sight, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, estimated, valued, censured, commanded ... to be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted,
registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized,
admonished, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is ... to be placed under
contribution, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, squeezed, mystified,
robbed ... to be repressed, fined, despised, harassed, tracked, abused, clubbed, disarmed,
choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and, to
crown it all, mocked, ridiculed, outraged, dishonoured.34

Tolstoy (who also borrowed from Proudhon the title of his masterwork, War and Peace]
similarly emphasized the physical aspect of power:

The possibility of exercising physical violence is given by organization of armed men,
wherein all act in unison, submitting to one will. Such assemblies of armed men submitting to
one will constitute the army. The army has always been and is still the basis of power. Power
is always in the hands of those who command the army, therefore all rulers, from Roman
Caesars to German and Russian Emperors, are engrossed in cares for the army, whom they
flatter and cajole, for they know that if the army is with them, power also is in their hands.35

Altering the focus of discussion, Kropotkin identified law as one of the most effective
instruments of government power. His attack on law consisted of three claims: that the law had
been imposed, that it discouraged social experimentation and that it was dehumanizing. The first
claim was directed against liberals who argued that the origins of law lay in agreement, and
conservatives who suggested that it was the result of an organic process of development. Both
were wrong. The law, Kropotkin argued, was ‘a product of modern times’ and of modern civilization.
It was introduced to replace those ‘customs, habits and usages’ that once regulated human
relations in Europe and which continued to, do so in other geographical areas. Its introduction,
though presented as a social achievement, was in fact the result of the cynical manipulation of the
people by the ruling class. Law, Kropotkin argued, originated in the desire of the ‘ruling class to
give permanence to customs imposed by themselves for their own advantage’.

Kropotkin’s second claim was that law regimented human life and inhibited innovation. Law was
an efficient instrument of change, but not necessarily an effective one. Law-makers legislated
without knowing what their laws were about. For example, they passed laws ‘on the sanitation of
towns, without the faintest notion of hygiene’; they made ‘regulations for the armament of troops,
without so much as understanding a gun’; and they made laws ‘about teaching and education
without ever having given a lesson of any sort, or even an honest education to their own children’.
Moreover, whilst legislators failed to improve social conditions, the law stifled efforts to initiate real
reform from below. Echoing his critique of authority, Kropotkin argued that any residual enthusiasm
that individuals in the state nurtured for social change or improvement was dampened by the
prospect of having to jump through endless legal hoops. Under law, Kropotkin concluded, society
was characterized by the ‘spirit of routine ... indolence, and
 cowardice’.

Kropotkin’s final charge, that the law was alienating and dehumanizing, was based on his
understanding of the corrupting tendency of power. The corruption Kropotkin associated with the
law was not the power to abuse legislative responsibility - as liberal critics feared — but the
tendency to encourage mistrust, suspicion and vindictiveness in the individuals who were caught
up in its systems of enforcement. Law required regiments of people to staff its offices and
encouraged in them the most abject behaviour. Amongst the law enforcers was the ‘detective
trained as a blood-hound, the police spy despising himself. In the law, Kropotkin continued,
informing, was ‘metamorphosed into a virtue; corruption, effected into a system. All ‘the vices, all
the evil qualities of mankind’ were ‘countenanced and cultivated to insure the triumph of law’.

For anarchists like Kropotkin, the power of the state was something that could be seen in its
institutions - police stations, law courts and prisons — and in the observable behaviour of those
ruled by them. Developing a slightly different approach, some anarchists have defined the power of
the state as the ability to manipulate. These anarchists do not deny that power changes the way in
which people behave, but find power located in invisible sources. For example, writing in the inter-
war period Rudolf Rocker identified nationalism as a source of manipulation. He traced the roots of nationalism to the early nineteenth-century patriotism and, in particular, to Giuseppe Mazzini's romantic aspirations for Italian unity. Patriotism was inspired by a 'sincere love of the people' and sprang from a genuine desire to achieve social unity through emancipation. But it was undermined by the patriots' misconception that the state was the proper vehicle for the achievement of solidarity. As a result it gave way to late or modern nationalism, which was entirely manipulative, 'wholly lacking in ... love' and 'genuine feeling'. Nationalism was a vehicle for a particular philosophy of the state that Rocker identified with the Italian Hegelian, Giovanni Gentile. Gentile's idea was that the state had an ethical character. It was the instrument through which humanity realized its potential, bringing disparate individuals together in community, and it was an expression of human reason. And it achieved this end by imposing uniformity and legitimizing the state's domination of every field of human activity: the arts, religion, philosophy and morality. Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin eagerly applied Gentile's ideas.

Modern nationalism is only will-toward-the-state-at-any-price and complete absorption of man in the higher ends of power ... modern nationalism has its roots in the ambitious plans of a minority lusting for dictatorship and determined to impose upon the people a certain form of state ...  

Fredy Perlman's critique of nationalism picks up some of Rocker's themes. In his view nationalism is a dynamic process of state formation which has its roots in the American and French revolutions. Like Rocker, Perlman associated nationalism with militarism and argued that both fascism and Bolshevism were exemplars of nationalist ideology. The heirs of Lenin, Perlman argued, were people 'like Mussolini ... and Hitler, people who, like Lenin himself, cursed their weak and inept bourgeoisies for having failed to establish their nation's greatness'. Yet in contrast to Rocker, Perlman argued that nationalism predated the idea of the nation. On his account nationalism was never about patriotic self-determination or emancipation, but always about domination and control. To those who defined the nation as 'an organized territory consisting of people who share a common language, religion and customs', Perlman argued:

This is not a description of the phenomenon but an apology for it, a justification ... The common language, religion and customs ... were mere pretexts, instruments for mobilizing armies. The culmination of the process was not an enshrinement of the commonalities, but a depletion, a total loss of language, religion and customs; the inhabitants of a nation ... worshipped on the altar of the state and confined their customs to those permitted by the national police.  

Perlman's conclusion, like Rocker's, was that nationalism served only to draw the people closer to Leviathan and that its success could be measured by their willingness to regard others with hostility as outsiders. 

Rather than concentrating on nationalism, others have identified the power of the state with what appear to be the blander -but also more insidious - aspects of ideology. For example, one of Zerzan's concerns is the notion of time. In 1944 George Woodcock wrote an essay denouncing as a tyrannous abstraction the domination of mechanized time. Zerzan develops a similar view, comparing linear to cyclical time. Linear time orders and constrains us by structuring our activities — in the workplace, forcing the pace of production and organizing the routine of daily life — and our consciousness. It has no connection with the rhythms of the natural world. In linear time life is understood as a simple progression in which each individual waits for its end. It is the measure of 'history, then progress, then an idolatry of the future that sacrifices species, languages, cultures, and ... the entire natural world on the altar of some future'.  

The anti-anarchist Bob Black attacks the idea of work which, drawing on the thought of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, he equates with discipline. Work, he argues, is a site for 'totalitarian' control: 'surveillance, rote work, imposed work tempos, production quotas, punching-in and -out'. In Black's view, workplaces — factories, offices and shops — are no different in kind
from prisons, though they have a different ambience. Work might not be as regimented as prison life, but it is imposed like a prison sentence and workers believe it to be necessary and willingly spend the best part of their lives in burdensome jobs that turn them into automata. Black does not suppose that work, any more than time, has been created by the state. What he argues is that work is something that has arisen with the state's development. And like other ideologies, work is considered a form of state power because it helps to maintain a condition that the state uses to justify its own existence. Most important, work supports and is supported by education or, as Zerzan defines it, 'knowledge production'. In schools, children learn 'that they are always being observed, monitored and evaluated'. The apparent blandness of ideology thus describes the insidiousness of the state's command of daily life.

Returning to Rocker's remark that power 'is active consciousness of authority', the table below summarizes the ways in which Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Zerzan and Perlman have encapsulated this relationship. Though anarchists have defined power and authority - and the violence it supports - differently, the relationship that anarchists posit between this triad forms the bedrock of their critiques of the state. The next section considers why anarchists reject the state: the first looks at the negativity of the state, and the second at its redundancy.

**Anarchist Critiques of the State**

It is possible to draw some of the grounds of the anarchists' objections to the state from their definitions of government, authority and power. For example, anarchists variously claim that the state is immoral (breeding violence and aggression), repressive (stifling creativity), and inefficient (dampening local initiative). Anarchists have used all and any of these complaints to call for the state's abolition. But perhaps the most persistent complaint is that the state is unjust. This claim turns on the charge that the state exists to maintain inequality and it has two aspects. Some anarchists argue that the state is exploitative, others that it is alienating.

The idea that the state is an instrument of exploitation has two variants. The first, associated with individualists like Rothbard, is based on the coercive and parasitical nature of the state's relationship with its citizens. According to this view, the state is a 'vast engine of institutionalized crime' that steals property from individuals by threat of aggression. It's a racket, little different from the Mafia. The second view, advanced by anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists, extends from the observation of the class inequalities that government defends. In Kropotkin's words, exploitation divides 'mankind into two camps; the poor on the one side and on the other the idlers and the playboys with their fine worlds and brutal appetites'. The London Anarchist Communist Federation provide a more recent account:

Though capitalism is a global system of exploitation and banditry with huge multinational companies operating everywhere, the basis of it is quite simple. Basically, wealth is created by people who use tools to adapt the raw materials provided by nature. In order to survive, workers are forced to sell their labour ('wage slavery') at the market price. In their work, workers make the goods which are part of everyday life and provide services. However, the rewards workers receive in the form of wages are less than the value of the products and services they bring about.

On this understanding, exploitation is not straightforward extortion, as Rothbard would have it, but a form of cheating. Capitalists employ workers to produce goods that they can sell at a profit. To do this, they invent ways of lowering their production costs and maximizing worker productivity. Thus exploitation involves, on the one hand, low wages, investment in areas where labour is cheapest and deskillings ('the McDonaldization of labour') and, on the other, the mechanization of production, shift systems, the division of labour and the strict scheduling of production tasks ('Taylorism'). In addition, anarcho-syndicalists associate exploitation with a set of managerial and political structures. A SolFed pamphlet argues:
of the economy. Our basic rights to a decent life are dependent on our ability to generate income.

It is the few who decide who gets to work for these basic rights and who doesn't. It is the few who do the hiring and firing, and determine the conditions in which we are forced to work...

With the excess profits they get from our work, capitalists have undisputed economic power...

... it is the nature of capitalism which makes people 'have to' act in their interest and against other's and the environment. It's not a few bad people, it's a bad system. Capitalism concentrates power - in political parties, in company and state hierarchies. All this leads to misuse, mistrust and abuse.\(^{44}\)

Anarcho-communists and anarcho-syndicalists argue that exploitation affects the quality of social relations. It undermines co-operation and encourages competition between workers, thus breeding mistrust. Workers become prey to 'false divisions' — manipulated by sexist, racist and homophobic ideas. Disunited, workers feel isolated and insecure.

Alienation is a theme linked to post-Situationist anarchism and has been explored by writers including Permian and Zerzan. Though it is linked to exploitation, in their hands it describes the impact that the production process - and the technology it supports - has on individuals rather than the mechanisms through which capitalists make their profits. Perlman described alienation in terms of 'reproduction'. He argued that the principle of reproduction is the same in all types of economy - so reproduction in slavery is not very different from capitalist reproduction. In the former, slaves reproduce 'the instruments with which the master represses them, and their own habits of submission to the master's authority'. In the latter, wage-labourers 'reproduce ... the social relations and the ideas of their society; they reproduce the social form of daily life'.\(^{45}\) In both cases the essence of reproduction is that it perpetuates forms of cultural or psychological domination. As Perlman argues: 'compulsive and compulsory reproduction' is responsible for the 'cadaver's life'. Leviathan, he notes elsewhere, is 'an excretion' of the reproductive process. The exploited are alienated because they spend their time recreating the complex social, economic and political structures responsible for their domination and oppression.

Zerzan develops his view of alienation from Marx but suggests that Marx defined the concept too narrowly as a 'separation' from the means of production. Being alienated, Zerzan argues, means being 'estranged from our own experiences, dislodged from a natural mode of being'. Like Perlman, Zerzan argues that exploitation lies at the heart of alienation because it has brought into being a colossal industrial system that forces individuals to regard the world as an object of consumption. Dependent on industrial technology to provide for their wants, people destroy the only thing that they really need: the natural world. In America the effect has been to create a jarring contrast between reality and what is said about reality'. People are encouraged to think in terms of 'dreams' but are frustrated by the impossibility of their achievement. The 'nightmare scenario' is that the contrast can go on forever: people ... won't even notice there's no natural world anymore, no freedom, no fulfilment, no nothing. You just take your Prozac everyday, limp along dyspeptic and neurotic, and figure that's all there is.\(^{46}\)

The scenario, Zerzan argues, is aptly captured in Ted Kaczynski's \textit{Unabomber Manifesto}. Kaczynski distinguishes between three 'human drives' - those that can be satisfied 'with minimal effort', those that can be satisfied 'at the cost of serious effort', and those that cannot be 'adequately satisfied no matter how much effort one makes'. In a healthy society, human drives are channelled into the second group: individuals must make some effort to secure their physical and social needs. Modern industrial society pushes these drives into the 'first and third groups'. Physical necessities are provided with minimal effort and, to compensate for the loss, the market invents artificial needs which 'modern man' [sic] feels obliged but unable to satisfy. The result is a profound sense of 'purposelessness'.\(^{47}\)
These critiques of exploitation and alienation provide an important bridge between anarchism and non-anarchist schools of socialism. The strength of the anarchists' commitment to end state exploitation and put an end to alienation is acknowledged by non-anarchists to play an important part in contemporary protest. As Michael Albert argues, anarchists 'fight on the side of the oppressed in every domain of life, from family, to culture, to state, to economy ... and ... do so in creative and courageous ways ...' Yet non-anarchists have long argued that the anarchists' rejection of government, authority and power raise difficult questions about the functioning of anarchy and its realization. How can people co-operate in the absence of rules? How can individuals enter into agreements with others if they refuse to be bound by authority? How can they realize their aims without exercising power? Closer inspection of anarchist thought provides some answers to these questions and suggests that the anarchists' unqualified rejections of government, authority and power are misleading. For the most part, anarchist theories indicate that some forms of government, authority and power can be legitimated. What they deny is that these legitimate forms can flourish in the state.

Self-Government, 'Natural' Authority and 'Social' Power

In response to their critics, anarchists demonstrate the redundancy of the state by showing how systems of government and authority can be incorporated into anarchy in a manner that provides social order without repression, uniformity or social division. In addition, they argue that the locus of power distinguishes its legitimate from its illegitimate exercise.

Anarchism and Government

The incorporation of government into anarchy rests on a distinction between government and self-government. Anarchists have interpreted this distinction in myriad ways. Kropotkin's version was grounded on the suggestion, developed through his critique of Marxism, that government could be abstracted from the state. Kropotkin's argument was that Marxists had wrongly defined both government and state in terms of class. As a result, they had adopted a too narrow view of revolutionary change and limited their ambitions to the alteration of the government's class character. In his essay *The State: Its Historic Role* Kropotkin argued:

> It seems to me ... that State and government represent two ideas of a different kind. The State not only includes the existence of a power placed above society, but also a territorial concentration and a concentration of many or even all functions of the life of society in the hands of a few. It implies new relations among the members of society.  

Malatesta took up the point. The word 'state', he argued, referred to

> ... the impersonal, abstract expression of that state of affairs personified by government: and therefore the terms abolition of the State, Society without the State, etc., describe exactly the concept which anarchists seek to express, of the destruction of all political order based on authority, and the creation of a society of free and equal members based on a harmony of interests and the voluntary participation of everybody in carrying out social responsibilities.

Whereas the state described the framework within which government operated, government described a transitory set of political arrangements that could take a number of different forms - democratic, monarchical, aristocratic and so forth. Admittedly, the state coloured the operation of all the forms of government functioning within it. Nevertheless, it was possible to imagine forms of government without the state. Kropotkin supported this suggestion with a historical analysis of the state's rise, which he located between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries in the collapse of the medieval city-states, the concentration of monarchical power in newly centralized governing institutions and the rise of capitalism. Kropotkin did not suggest that the medieval cities •were
anarchies. Indeed he classified them as states. Nonetheless, he argued that they differed fundamentally from modern states. The 'essential point' about them was that the inhabitants had jurisdiction over their own affairs. In contrast to the modern state, power was not concentrated but dispersed through systems of self-administration. Though these systems ultimately failed, they nevertheless demonstrated the possibility of self-government.

In the 1960s and '70s, anarchists excited about cybernetics (the study of communication and control mechanisms, primarily in machines, but also in living things) found the distinction between illegitimate and legitimate government in the concept 'self-organization'. In contrast to government control mechanisms, self-organizing systems were controlled from within the organism and could respond to their ever-changing diversity. As John McEwan argued, the latter were potential models for anarchist organization:

The basic premise of the governmentalist - namely, that any society must incorporate some mechanism for overall control - is certainly true ... The error of the governmentalist is to think that 'incorporate some mechanism for control' is always equivalent to 'include a fixed isolatable control unit to which the rest, i.e. the majority, of the system is subservient'. This may be an adequate interpretation in the case of a model railway system, but not for a human society.51

To give a final example: modern Kropotkinites have captured the distinction between government and self-government by contrasting two understandings of the word 'rule'. In the Bulletin of the Anarchist International Scandinavian anarchists argue that one is referring to the settlement of disputes 'in an orderly way' and the other to 'regulation'. The English language, they continue, has only one word to describe these ideas. As a consequence, anarchists have wrongly been encouraged to consider both illegitimate. In their view, the English standard must be rejected in favour of the Scandinavian language model, which captures these different meanings in separate words. Anarchism, they believe, is open to the first idea of 'rule' and closed only to the idea of regulation.

The identification of the state with the centralization of power and a particular, top-down, bureaucratic system of organization makes sense of the anarchists' desire to 'abolish' it. For the demand is based on the belief that statism describes a set of tangible political institutions and the conviction that it is possible to develop alternative principles of organization and decision making. However, the call to 'abolish' the state does not exhaust the anarchist critique since the concept of state also describes a set of relations, based on authority, which can only be renegotiated or redefined, rather than abolished or destroyed.

Anarchism and Authority

The possibility of incorporating authority into an anarchist framework turns on the distinctions anarchists sometimes draw between types of authority. There are two strands to the arguments. The first is based on a distinction between being in and being an authority, and the second between natural and artificial authority.

In the first instance, anarchists classically associate 'in' authority with the authority of the state. As Jeremy Westall writes: to be 'in authority is to have powers of coercion'. Being an authority can mean a variety of things. Westall's idea is that it describes a form of advice. A person with authority is 'a person who is competent and well versed in a specific subject'.52 Bakunin, however, identified legitimate authority with instruction as well as advice. In a discussion of education he argued that 'authority ... is legitimate, necessary when applied to children of a tender age, whose intelligence has not yet openly developed itself. Its purpose was 'the formation of free men full of respect and love for the liberty of others'. On advice, the general rule was that:

In the matter of boots I refer to the authority of the bootmakers; concerning houses, canals, or railroads I consult that of the architect or engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a savant. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the
architect nor the savant to impose his authority upon me. I accept them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism and censure.\textsuperscript{53}

Bakunin was aware that legitimate authority could always degenerate into an illegitimate form. He was particularly critical of the authoritative rulings of scientists and although he celebrated the application of scientific knowledge to alleviate suffering and improve the condition of human life, he so feared the possibility that scientists might abuse their capacity to advise, that he declared himself to be in revolt against the 'government of science'.

The second distinction, between natural and artificial forms of authority, is perhaps the most important, for it establishes the grounds on which anarchists secure voluntary agreement. The distinctive feature of natural authority is that it is deemed to be internal or to issue from below rather than from the command of an external body. Anarchists have described this kind of authority in different ways. To the disgust of anarcho-feminists Proudhon contrasted the legitimacy of patriarchal authority in the family with the illegitimate political authority in the state. Bakunin distinguished 'the divine, theological, metaphysical, political, and judicial authorities, established by the Church, and by the State' from the 'natural and rational', 'wholly human' authority of the 'collective and public spirit of a society founded on the mutual respect of its members'. This authority sprang from the 'natural and inevitable' sense of solidarity that held society together. It commanded respect and ensured compliance with social rules. Yet it could not enslave since it was not imposed 'from without'. Herbert Read distinguished between 'a discipline imposed on life, and the law which is inherent to life'. Drawing on his wartime experiences, he exemplified the first in 'mechanical routine of the barrack square' and associated the second with the 'tyranny' of the 'law of nature'.\textsuperscript{54}

Similar distinctions can be found in new anarchist schools of thought. Admittedly, primitivists tend to be more concerned to investigate the reasons why authority has become necessary than they are with analysing the ways in which anarchists might secure agreement. Moreover, they are extremely critical of those 'old' anarchists who have sought to find alternatives to state authority without questioning the conditions - industrial technology, work and the division of labour - deemed responsible for bringing this authority into being. Nevertheless, primitivist writings support an idea of authority as self-regulation. Perlman contrasts the 'voice of Leviathan' which 'speaks of Commandments and Punishments' to the voice of Nature that 'speaks of ways, of paths to Being'. Leviathan has 'laws ... closed gates' and says: 'Thou shalt not'. In contrast Nature springs from an 'inner voice' and says:  'Thou canst and Thou shalt Be'. Leviathan is disciplining, Nature enabling. Some primitivists prefer to distinguish between government authority and persuasion. In a variation on this theme Zerzan contrasts persuasion to domination. Like legitimate authority, persuasion requires that individuals comply with certain internally imposed standards of behaviour. Above all it requires them to be honest and to refuse the opportunity to manipulate others to achieve personal goals.

In whichever way anarchists choose to describe the idea, 'authority from below' enables them to distinguish between types of commitment and to argue that anarchism is consistent with some forms of binding agreement. Specifically, it allows them to reject as artificial the authority of the state on the grounds that it forces individuals to uphold agreements that have not been entered into freely, but to defend the naturalness of promising. Like commands, promises create obligations that individuals must respect. Once a promise has been made, individuals are expected to place it beyond review. Yet, unlike commands, the binding obligations that promises create are legitimate, because promises are made voluntarily. The important point here, as Proudhon argued, is that promising is an expression of natural authority and it provides a basis for social order in anarchy.

Do you promise to respect the honour, the liberty and the property of your brothers?
Do you promise never to appropriate for yourself by violence, nor by fraud, nor by usury, nor by interest, the products or possessions of another?
Do you promise never to lie nor to deceive in commerce, or in any of your transactions?
You are free to accept or refuse. If you refuse, you become a part of a society of savages. Excluded from communion with the human race, you become an object of suspicion. Nothing protects you ... If you agree to the compact, on the contrary, you become a part of the society of free men. All your brothers are bound to you, and promise you fidelity, friendship, aid, service, exchange.

A notable objection to this position comes from Stirnerites like Dora Marsden. In a bad-tempered dispute with Benjamin Tucker about Proudhon, she denounced the idea of voluntary contract as impossible and dangerous and contrasted the anarchist vision of society to her own ideal, the union of egoists. Probably more anarchists align themselves with Proudhon than Marsden on this issue. And whether or not they like to identify anarchy with authority, some version of the idea usually underpins the concepts of trust, mutual support, voluntary cooperation - and, indeed, liberty - commonly identified with this order.

**Anarchism and Power**

Anarchists usually understand power to encompass a range of actions, from physical coercion to influence and persuasion and that it can be exercised both openly and in covert ways. Some anarchists suggest that power is a possession of individuals. Even if it happens to be exercised through the institutions of government, power is associated with the people who run those institutions rather than being vested in the institutions themselves. Other anarchists argue that power is best seen as a feature of the social system or structure. From this point of view, power is not wielded by individuals, but is something that permeates the institutions they inhabit. The first view is associated with 'classical' anarchism but is also preferred by some primitivists. The second tends to be associated with postanarchism.

Anarchists have developed their ideas of power with reference to the state's abolition, transcendence or destruction. Because they regard the nature of government in different ways, they also disagree about power and its legitimate use. Emphasizing the exploitative function of the state, anarcho-communists and syndicalists tend to identify the legitimate use of power with the collective or combined force of the oppressed. Primitivists, on the other hand, complement their view of state alienation with a view that power is legitimate only when exercised by the individual. The postanarchist view is that power has no real centre and that, rather than being possessed by collectives or individuals, it permeates social relationships. From this perspective, power can manifest itself in positive and negative ways, but cannot be captured in legitimate or illegitimate spheres.

As representatives of the first view, Rocker and Kropotkin imagined that the abolition of power would be achieved through the expropriation of private property and the realization of common ownership by the movement of workers and peasants. The state, Kropotkin argued, would be abolished when 'the workers in the factories and the cultivators in the fields march hand in hand to the conquest of equality for all'. Indeed, Kropotkin argued that 'in the task of reconstructing society on new principles, separate men, however intelligent and devoted they may be' were sure to fail. He continued: '[t]he collective spirit of the masses is necessary for this purpose.' Rocer's syndicalist idea was that the struggle against the state 'must take the form of... the solidaric [sic] collaboration of the workers ... through taking over the management of all plants by the producers themselves,...' Modern anarcho-syndicalists similarly discuss the necessity of developing a 'culture of solidarity', of creating 'a new ... sense of community through the practice of solidarity'.

Primitivists do not deny the important role that mass actions might have in undermining the state, but shy away from the idea that individuals might be made subject to collective force. Zerzan advocates wildcat strikes and factory occupations on the model of the May 1968 uprising in France, political vandalism, roaming riots and militant protest. However, unlike Kropotkin, his ambition is not to organize workers to expropriate owners and dismantle the means of industrial production. It is to encourage each individual - separately - to engage in the struggle against the 'domination of nature, subjugation of women, war, religion...and division of labor'. United, mass
actions emerge from the impulse to individual rebellion. John Moore offered a similar view. He argued that the struggle against the state should be waged by individuals, communicating through the arts - particularly poetry. His hope was that anarchists would be able to touch popular passions and irrationalities, reach out and communicate with others and 'realize' and 'supercede' the arts beyond their 'alienated and commodified' form. The struggle would involve many people. But Moore's underlying conviction was that it was a self-creative revolt, taking 'radical subjectivity as the basis for resistance'. It was about 'the subject-in-process...the subject-in-rebellion'. Elsewhere, Moore argued that struggle was about the possibility of 'becoming' and 'the emancipation of life from governance and control' by the 'exploration of desire and the free, joyful pursuit of individual lines of interest'.

Either way, it was not really about solidarity or collective action.

This idea of individual should not be confused with the libertarian position. One of Rand's great cries is that rational individuals ought not be made subject to the actions of collectives. The important difference between the two positions is that whereas primitivists like Moore adopt an expansive view of the individual, Rand takes an insular view. For her, struggle is not about becoming, it's about securing a realm of action for the individual, free from interference. To this extent, Moore's position has more in common with Read's or Tolstoy's than it does with Rand's. Indeed, though their work had a spiritual dimension which Moore's lacks, they shared his belief that struggle was about regeneration and that art was a touchstone for awakening the unconscious.

The postanarchist view also has something in common with the primitivist position. Like primitivists, postanarchists identify struggle with notions of becoming, with creativity and expression. For postanarchists, however, struggle is a continual process that is not so much focused on the individual as it is on networks of individuals and their movements. The dominant image - borrowed from the French philosophers, Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari — is of the rhizome: a root which sends out shoots in different directions and which connects with others in complex and unpredictable ways. The rhizome describes the nature of human interactions and it suggests that struggle is not about breaking free from constraints, but about defining identity and discovering diversity within the root system.

Some anarchists — Moore was not amongst them — are prepared to define their approach to the state's abolition in terms of a conception of power. For example, Bakunin identified solidarity as a source of moralizing and humanizing 'social power' and called for social revolution to destroy the institutions responsible for disabling this power. SolFed similarly argue that solidarity is a means of overcoming powerlessness, in other words, of empowering workers. On the primitivist side of the debate, the Unabomber Manifesto positively celebrates power. 'Human beings have a need...for something that we will call the "power process"'. This process is not the same as a lust for power — which might be linked to state domination - and it does not exist in all people to the same degree. Nevertheless the power process is about 'goal, effort...attainment of goal' and 'autonomy' and it is properly satisfied when individuals have the opportunity to fulfil meaningful, moderately difficult 'drives'. This kind of power is usually denied in civilization but can be realized through engagement with civilization's destruction. Perlman, who finds revolution in remembrance, similarly defines the state's abolition with reference to power. The memory of the past, of the time before Leviathan, is 'a power...a power to remove [man's] Leviathanic mask while still enmeshed in a Leviathanic web'.

Anarchists influenced by postmodern and poststructuralist thought adopt a similarly open approach to power. However, rather than seeing power as something to be claimed by workers from the state or as an essential human drive, they conceptualize power within the context of the rhizome. Here, power might be arranged hierarchically and it might be concentrated at particular sites. Yet power is transgressive and transformative. As Todd May explains, it can be 'suppressive' or 'productive', it 'suppresses actions, events, and people, but creates them as well'. Power is neither to be abolished nor possessed. To think of power in these conflictual ('binary') terms is to misunderstand it. Power must be utilized in new and different ways, not relocated.

Anarchists often argue that their critique of power is a distinctive mark of their ideology and they regularly compare their understandings to competing Marxist ideas. Yet it does not follow from
their denunciation of state power that they reject the use of power in support of anarchist change and/or the development of anarchy. The significant division between anarchists on the issue of power is where it should be located. Power is not to be despised, whatever anarchists claim to the contrary.

**Anarchism and Liberty**

Anarchist theories of government, power and authority suggest that the state is an unnecessary evil. There are good reasons to seek its abolition and, contrary to the fears and suspicions of the state's supporters, there is no reason to link its disappearance to savagery and disorder. On the contrary, the abolition of the state will enable groups and individuals to resolve differences by themselves and herald a new - more harmonious - social order. Moreover, by releasing individuals from the constraints of authority anarchy will enable them to enjoy their freedom.

It is possible to extrapolate three anarchist conceptions of freedom from the critiques of authority. For example, the critique of command supports an idea of liberty as autonomy: the condition in which individuals determine their own affairs and subject their decisions to conscience or reason. The critique of control supports a concept of individuality: the liberty individuals enjoy to explore their creative potential and to develop their particular talents and capabilities. Finally, the critique of corruption supports a notion of altruism or brotherhood, in which individuals are able to fulfil their social roles and relationships through association with others. Anarchists combine these conceptions of authority and liberty in different ways. For example, Tolstoy linked his critique of authority as a form of moral corruption to an idea of freedom as autonomy. The only true liberty, he argued 'consists in every man being able to live and act according to his own judgement.' Similarly, Kropotkin tied his critique of authority as dependence to an altruistic conception of liberty inspired by the idea - which he called the principle of mutual aid — that individual freedom is inextricably linked to the freedom of the whole.

Moreover, anarchists tend to regard these different conceptions of liberty as interconnected ideas, not discrete categories of thought. For example, Malatesta argued that anarchists supported communism because they believed it to be 'the realisation of brotherhood, and the best guarantee for individual freedom'. Likewise, Kropotkin argued that the solidarity that characterized altruism supported both private judgement and individuality. In his extended essay, *Modern Science and Anarchism*, he argued:

> Free play for the individual, for the full development of his individual gifts - for his *individualization*. In other words, no actions are *imposed* upon the individual by a fear or punishment; none is required from him by society, but those which receive his free acceptance. *In a society of equals* this would be quite sufficient for preventing those unsociable actions that might be harmful to other individuals and to society itself, and for favoring the steady moral growth of that society.  

In the 1970s the Kropotkinite Roel Van Duyn also drew altruism together with individuality, though his project was to show that individuality should support altruism. The 'marriage between aggression and co-operation, between receptiveness and activity, between creativity and love can provide us with a way forward, a way towards the true freedom which is nothing less than every man's creative participation in universal solidarity and love'.

In a recent polemic, Murray Bookchin has argued that anarchist contestations of liberty reflect a deep philosophical division in the movement. He traces the roots of this division to two incompatible views of the individual. The first, 'focuses overwhelmingly on the abstract individual... supports personal autonomy, and...celebrates the notion of liberty from [constraint]'. The second is an 'ethical' idea, encapsulated in the notion of "freedom for. It 'seeks to create a free society, in which humanity as a whole - and hence the individual as well - enjoys the advantages of free political and economic institutions'. Bookchin calls the first 'lifestyle' anarchism, because he thinks that its advocates believe 'that liberty and autonomy can be achieved by making changes in personal sensibilities and lifeways, giving less attention to changing material and cultural
conditions'. He calls the second 'social anarchism'. His terminology is confusing, not least because anarchists associated with the journal *Social Anarchism* define themselves by a commitment to a 'political philosophy and personal lifestyle'.

Nevertheless, identifying himself with the social anarchist position Bookchin argues that social anarchists respect 'the importance of gaining individual freedom and personal autonomy' but that they believe that 'the truly free individual is at once an active agent in and the embodiment of a truly free society'.

The argument has been fleshed out in a debate between L. Susan Brown (put by Bookchin in the lifestyle corner) and the social anarchist Janet Biehl. Brown defines liberty as private judgement and individuality, sometimes running these ideas together. Anarchism, she argues, 'asserts that human individuals are best suited to decide for themselves how to run the affairs of their own lives' and affirms 'the individual's freedom to use and develop his or her capacities'. She calls her idea 'existential individualism' on the grounds that an idea of 'becoming' is superior - and more useful to anarchists — than the more straightforwardly liberal conception of freedom as the absence of constraint. However, *pace* Bookchin, she argues that existential individualism leads neither to introspection nor to an egotistic regard for the self. It supports a strong notion of voluntary cooperation. Indeed, existential individualism is compatible with social anarchism: it provides an impetus for voluntary association and, in communism, a basis for individuality.

Biehl's critique suggests that this last assertion is mistaken and she traces the roots of Brown's error to her treatment of the individual as an abstract entity, divorced from its social background. Because Brown considers the individual as a self-determining entity, Biehl argues, she wrongly posits association on a notion of 'choice'. Whilst it's possible that autonomous individuals might decide to associate, Biehl believes that the priority Brown attaches to the individual makes the choice of communism an unlikely one. Moreover, because the individuals Brown describes are 'constitutionally unable to recognise a basic connectedness with one another' the quality of any resulting association will be significantly impaired.

In a review of the Brown-Biehl debate, Thomas Martin argues that the differences between anarchists on the question of liberty are not philosophical. Whilst Bookchin is right to highlight the difficulty of imagining a situation in which individuals might choose lifestyles free from external influences, he is wrong to suggest that Brown's concern - to defend the individual's freedom to determine how to live her life - requires her to treat individuals in this abstract manner. However, he admits that the issue between 'lifestyle' and 'social' anarchists revolves around the different and 'incommensurable' ways in which they understand the relationship between the individual and the community. In other words 'social' and 'lifestyle' anarchists have different sociological theories about the ways in which free individuals enter into social relationships. Bookchin's 'social' view is strongly communitarian, Brown's 'lifestyle' conception, libertarian.

The communitarian view, supported by Biehl and Bookchin, is that individuals are legitimately shaped by the moral, social and cultural mores of their communities. In Bookchin's view 'the making of that "whole" we call a rounded, creative, and richly variegated human being crucially depends upon community supports'. Individual socialization does not inhibit individuals from leading autonomous lives. To the contrary, it provides them with the wherewithal to exercise their freedom. Without community, 'there would be no real self to distort - only a fragmented, wriggling, frail, and pathological thing'. His pithy conclusion is that 'the making of a human being...is a collective process'.

For libertarian or 'lifestyle' critics like Brown, Bookchin's collective processes threaten to cut down the individual's realm of free decision-making and are sources of potential oppression.

The sociological differences between anarchist communitarians and libertarians do not necessarily inhibit political agreement. To give an illustration, there is a long tradition in anarchist thought which defines individuality in terms of sexuality. The general insight is that 'sex undermines Authority'. More precisely, as Alex Comfort argued, 'anti-sexualism of authoritarian societies' springs from 'the vague perception that freedom here might lead to a liking for freedom elsewhere'; and that '[p]eople who have eroticised their experience of themselves...are...inconveniently unwarlike'. This tradition of anti-authoritarianism has a number of dimensions, but is strongly associated with feminism. In this context, 'lifestyle' and 'social' anarchists have been able to
develop a common politics. For example, Emma Goldman's view (which was founded on the broadly existentalist idea that woman's emancipation depended on 'her inner regeneration' and her ability 'to cut loose from the weight of prejudices, traditions, and customs') was that anarchy would liberate women from the subordinate social role associated with marriage and enable them to find fulfilment in heterosexual, family relationships. From a starting point that is closer to 'social' anarchism, the Anarcha-feminist International arrives at a similar conclusion. Liberation requires that the 'traditional patriarchal nuclear family should be replaced by free associations between men and women based on equal right to decide for both parts and with respect for the individual person's autonomy and integrity'.

Where anarchists have had political disagreements it is often because they dispute the sources of domination or oppression in the state, not because they have different ideas about what constitutes 'woman' (though this is an important debate in other feminist circles). Anarcha-feminists like Nicki Clarke link liberation to overcoming the alienation exhibited in and through the pornographic objectification of women in commodity culture. Anarchists associated with Class War divorce 'middle class' feminist concerns with pornography from the power relations that support capitalist forms of exploitation: the problem is not the 'pictures of naked adults having sex', it is the 'damaging, hierarchical and sexist class society that introduces the idea of sexual abuse and male power and dominance over women'.

The debate between communitarians and libertarians adds an important dimension to anarchist discussions of the state and the organization of anarchy but it does not suggest any particular mapping between state critiques and anarchist ideals; and in this respect Bookchin's dichotomy was unhelpful. It is possible to argue - as Guerin did - that the collective struggle against exploitation will support libertarian ends or, as Tolstoy held, that life in community - Christian fellowship - is based on the exercise of individual conscience.

**Summary**

This chapter has examined some leading conceptions of government, authority, power and liberty. There are three key findings:

1. Anarchists reject the state because they believe it to be iniquitous and unnecessary; because it inhibits the expression of freedom, most importantly, through exploitation and alienation.
2. Anarchists typically reject all forms of government, authority and power but accept the possibility of self-government, acknowledge the role of natural authority and rely on notions of collective or individual power and empowerment in thinking about resistance to the state.
3. Anarchists typically identify anarchism with liberty, but have different ideas about what it means to be free and combine communitarian and libertarian concepts in different measures to explore the best conditions for the realization of liberty.

**Further reading**

Michael Bakunin, *God and the State*, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives


Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*

http://www.spunk.org/texts/writers.debord/sp000547.txt

Peter Kropotkin, *The State: Its Historic Role*, http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives


Links

Anarcha-feminism (index): http://www.spunk.org/library/index/index_a.html
Black Flag (anarcho-syndicalist and communist ideas): http://flag.blackened.net/blackflag
John Moore: http://lemming.mahost.org/johnmoore
The Zabalaza Site (Anarchist, revolutionary syndicalist and anti-authoritarian movements in South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland): http://www.zabalaza.net/archive.htm

Notes

20. 'What is globalization?' from Do or Die, Voices of Ecological Resistance, 8, http://rts/gn/apc/org/glob/htm
55. Perlman, *Against His-story*, 57.