Anarchism, Social Possibility, & Utopia

Samuel Clark

Submission for the degree of PhD, Department of Politics, University of York, November 2003.

Abstract

Anarchism has often been marginalised and misunderstood by mainstream political thought and practice. I show that anarchists actually have a valuable and distinctive contribution to make to politics, by showing that some reasons for marginalisation are mistakes. Anarchists are said to be: 1) terrorists; 2) nihilists; 3) skeptics; 4) primitivists; and 5), to demand an impossible utopia. I deal quickly with the first two of these reasons for marginalisation, by showing that they are historically inaccurate. Chapter 2 shows that anarchists are not in general skeptics, by analysis of the misrepresentation of historical anarchism and skepticism in some recent philosophical literature. Chapter 3 shows that anarchists are not in general primitivists, by analysis of two representatives of the tradition, William Godwin and Peter Kropotkin. Chapter 4 explains the mistaken accusation of primitivism, and discovers in that explanation a common anarchist rhetorical trope of comparison between different human social forms. The main body of the thesis then theorises and deploys a form of argument, based on this trope, to show that the anarchist utopia is possible. Chapters 5 to 8 develop a conceptual toolkit for the comparative analysis of human sociability; chapters 9 to 13 deploy it to analyse and compare some exemplary social forms, and to discover in them real fragments of anarchic sociability. I conclude that, because humans really have lived in these amongst many other ways, an anarchist utopia, which I construct from these fragments, is one social possibility for creatures like us.

Contents

2 Abstract

3 Contents

8 Acknowledgements

9 Declaration

10 Epigraph (Geertz 2000: 87)

11 **1 Introduction**

11 1.1 Five marginalisations

14 1.2 Anarchists and academics

14 1.3 Norms and facts

15 1.4 Hope, possibility and probability

16 1.5 The variety of anarchism

27 1.6 Philosophical minimalism

28 1.7 Using traditions

30 1.8 Neglected riches

31 1.9 A sketch utopia

32 1.10 A road map

34 **2 Anarchism and Skepticism**

36 2.1 Contexts

36 2.1.1 Philosophical anarchism and Rawlsianism

42 2.1.2 Philosophical skepticism and epistemology

44 2.2 Homogenisation

47 2.3 Variation

47 2.3.1 Anarchisms and philosophical anarchism

49 2.3.2 Skepticisms and philosophical skepticism

51 2.4 Conclusion

54 **3 Primitivism**

56 3.1 Anarchism and human nature primitivism

59 3.1.1 Godwin's idea of human nature

61 3.1.2 Kropotkin's idea of human nature

64 3.2 Anarchism and golden age primitivism

65 3.2.1 Godwin on the shape of history
67 3.2.2 Kropotkin on the shape of history
69 3.3 Generalisations about anarchism
71 3.4 Summary and conclusion
73 **4 Criticism and Social Possibility**
73 4.1 The accusation of human nature primitivism
75 4.2 The accusation of golden age primitivism
77 4.3 The comparative trope
79 4.3.1 Kropotkin's guild city
81 4.3.2 Godwin's future
83 4.4 The trope as a form of argument
84 4.4.1 A taxonomy of the trope
84 4.4.2 Criticism
87 4.4.3 Social Possibility
88 4.5 The problem with the trope as a form of argument
89 4.6 Summary
91 **5 Tools, Maps and Landmarks**
91 5.1 Tools and essentially contested concepts
94 5.2 Making maps
96 5.3 Reflective equilibrium
97 5.4 Landmarks
98 5.5 A minimalist account of human nature
100 5.6 Summary
102 **6 Power**
104 6.1 Lukes' three dimensions of power
109 6.2 Parsons and Mann: creating and distributing power
113 6.3 Philp's questions
113 6.4 Power: a summary
115 6.5 Creating power
116 6.6 Changing and maintaining power distributions
117 6.6.1 Violence
118 6.6.2 Authority discourses
120 6.6.3 Property discourses
123 6.7 Summary

124 **7 Equality**
125 7.1 The purpose of my concept of equality
126 7.2 Why equality?
127 7.3 Equality of what?
128 7.4 Equality: a summary
128 7.5 Freedom
130 7.6 Summary
132 **8 The Network Model**
132 8.1 Description and comparisons
134 8.1.1 Against social totalities
136 8.1.2 Against cultural evolution
141 8.1.3 Against the state of nature
145 8.2 Equality between whom?
146 8.3 Some general features of human social networks
148 8.4 Networks: a summary
149 8.5 The toolkit: summary and conclusion
152 **9 States**
155 9.1 Two distinctions of state from non-state
157 9.2 Pristine states
163 9.3 Modern states
164 9.3.1 The background and rise of absolutism
168 9.3.2 Surveillance
172 9.3.3 Nationalism
175 9.3.4 The spread of modern states
178 9.3.5 Modern states: summary and morals
181 9.4 States: summary and conclusion
183 **10 Slavery**
183 10.1 A general characterisation of slavery
186 10.2 A brief history of the Atlantic system
188 10.3 The distinctiveness of Atlantic slavery
190 10.4 Slavery and civil society
190 10.5 Resistance
193 10.6 Slavery: a summary
194 10.7 States and slavery: a comparison

196 10.8 A record of crimes
197 **11 The Nuer**
200 11.1 The Nuer: a sketch
208 11.2 Leopard-skin chiefs
209 11.3 Primitivism, again
211 11.4 Morals
213 **12 Spanish Civil War Anarchism**
213 12.1 Primitive rebels?
221 12.2 The Spanish civil war: a sketch
224 12.3 Anarchic organisation
226 12.3.1 Military organisation
229 12.3.2 Urban organisation
232 12.3.3 Rural organisation
236 12.4 Spanish anarchists and the Nuer: a comparison
236 12.5 Morals
237 12.6 Summary and conclusion
239 **13 Utopia**
239 13.1 A defence of utopianism
240 13.1.1 Utopianism and utopias
242 13.1.2 Common attacks
245 13.1.3 Criticism
246 13.1.4 Imagination and social possibility
250 13.1.5 Stories
254 13.2 Some features of my anarchist utopia
255 13.2.1 Equal-power networks
255 13.2.2 Production and distribution
256 13.2.3 Federal coordination
256 13.2.4 Conflict resolution
257 13.2.5 The division of labour
257 13.2.6 Networking
258 13.2.7 Siba
259 13.3 What shall we do with utopia?
263 13.4 Conclusion

264 **14 Conclusion**
264 14.1 Reasons not to marginalise anarchism
266 14.2 Anarchists and academics, again
266 14.3 Utopianism and political philosophy
267 14.4 Some roads not taken
268 14.5 The negotiated settlement
269 14.6 Our general situation
270 14.7 Our current arrangements
270 14.8 Our possibilities
270 14.9 Our predicament
271 14.10 Human anarchy
272 **References**
272 1 Articles and books
295 2 Music
295 3 Film

Acknowledgements

Over the three years it's taken me to write this thesis, I've had help from friends, fellow-students, teachers and family. Thankfully, these aren't mutually exclusive categories.

Friends outside the academy, including especially Eric Howard, Vix Lowthion, David Martin and Nick Spicer, friends and fellow-students inside it, including Derek Edyvane, Sarah Marshall, Alex Rossiter, Matt Sleat and Rob Wavre, and my sisters Alex and Verity Clark, gave of their company, conversation, and various expertises. Dave and Derek read the entire thesis in its final draft, and gave intelligent and occasionally worrying comments.

Teachers including Matt Matravers, Sue Mendus and Jon Parkin disagreed with me, pushed for clarity, and helped create a rigorous but friendly working culture. Peter Nicholson, who was my supervisor until his retirement, made doing a PhD psychologically possible for me. Alex Callinicos, who then took over, has been thoughtful, supportive, and a pleasure to work with.

My parents Gillian and Stephen Clark gave enormous personal, professional and financial support, despite occasional misgivings about my joining the family firm. They also read and commented on my final draft, with their usual precision and warmth.

My wife Emily supported us both, put up with my lows and absences, and gave of her good sense, determination and love. This would have been impossible without her; so would everything else.

- SC, 19th November 2003

Declaration

Some of the work here has been presented in earlier versions, as follows:

- Chapter 3, under the title "Are Anarchists Primitivists?", paper to the Graduate Theory Workshop, Department of Politics, University of York, 2001.

- Chapter 4 section 4.2 and Chapter 13 section 1, "A Defence of Utopianism", Graduate Theory Workshop, 2002.

- Chapter 6 sections 1-4, "Power as a Conceptual Tool for Anarchists", Morrell Graduate Conference on Political Theory, University of York, 2002.

Thanks are due to the many people who commented helpfully on these papers.

If we wish to be able capaciously to judge, as of course we must, we need to make ourselves able capaciously to see.

Clifford Geertz

1 ◇ Introduction

Anarchism has often been marginalised and misunderstood by mainstream political thought and practice. I show in this thesis that anarchists actually have a valuable and distinctive contribution to make to politics. But first, I consider some of the reasons for marginalisation.

1.1 Five marginalisations

I suggest that there are five important reasons for the marginalisation of anarchism, and that all are mistakes. The first two are culturally-sanctioned images of anarchists which distort our perception. First, there is an image immortalised and satirised by Joseph Conrad in *The Secret Agent* (1993; first published 1907). Conrad's 'Professor' expresses his pathological hatred for everything with calculated violence. He carries a bomb with him at all times, so as never to be taken alive by the police; he hands out explosive to anyone who asks for it, for whatever purpose; he devotes his life to a search for "The perfect detonator" (Conrad 1993: 61). His only interests are bomb-making and the violent destruction of everything around him. There certainly have been anarchist terrorists: Francois-Claudius Ravachol, Emile Henry, perhaps Alexander Berkman. But they are in the minority; their activity was largely confined to the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly in France and the United States[1]; many other anarchists repudiated their actions; and in any case, what political position can claim that no-one has ever committed violence in its name? Supporters of states, in particular, need to recognise that far more violence, including terrorist

[1] For sensationalist contemporary accounts, see Schaack (1889) and Vizetelli (1911); for the era of propaganda by deed in historical context, see for instance Joll (1979: chapter 5).

violence, has been done by states, through their institutions, and in their names, than by anarchists. This is not a new point:

> For every bomb manufactured by an Anarchist, many millions are manufactured by governments, and for every man killed by Anarchist violence, many millions are killed by the violence of States. We may, therefore, dismiss from our minds the whole question of violence, which plays so large a part in the popular imagination, since it is neither essential nor peculiar to those who adopt the Anarchist position. (Russell 1918: 38)

But the image of the wild-eyed, bearded anarchist with the Tom-and-Jerry bomb has not disappeared. Nonetheless it is not an accurate picture of most anarchists, nor of the claims and results of anarchist theory.

Second, there is an image immortalised and satirised in "Anarchy in the UK":

> I am an antichrist,
> I am an anarchist,
> Don't know what I want,
> But I know how to get it,
> I wanna destroy… (The Sex Pistols 1977, my transcription)

In this image, the anarchist is a pathetic and ineffectual nihilist, vehemently rejecting everything but lacking any idea of how to replace it. If asked what a better world would be like, she has no answer. Again, there have been self-described anarchists who are like this. But again, they are in the minority. Anarchist literature – the work of William Godwin, Peter Kropotkin, Colin Ward or Murray Bookchin, to note a few examples – shows that anarchists have not lacked ideas of what they want, and have not typically been much enamoured of destruction for its own sake (which is not to say that some have not argued, like many Marxists, that violent revolution is the only effective way to change our world).

These false images are easily refuted, but less easily removed: myths have their own historical momentum, and a reasoned argument that they are mistaken is not always enough to lay them to rest. The other three reasons for marginalisation are harder to refute, and my responses to them will make up the bulk of this thesis. The third and fourth reasons are of the same type: both picture anarchists

as holding some theoretical position so obviously wrong, or so problematic in practice, as to be immediately unacceptable. The third reason for marginalisation is the claim that anarchists are extreme political skeptics who deny the possibility of legitimate authority or order, just as epistemological skeptics deny the possibility of legitimate knowledge-claims. The assumption is that, despite the hermeneutic utility of the figure of 'the skeptic' or 'the anarchist' as an imagined interlocutor, no-one could reasonably endorse her position. I refute this reason for marginalisation in chapter 2. The fourth reason is that anarchists are primitivists: nostalgic for a mythical golden age, or over-optimistic about human nature, or both. I refute and explain it in chapters 3 & 4.

The fifth reason for the marginalisation of anarchism is perhaps the most obvious and I think the most interesting, and a large part of this thesis is devoted to responding to it. It is the belief that anarchist utopianism is unacceptable, because of both the weakness of utopian argument-forms, and the unavailability to us of the anarchist utopia. Anarchists are relegated to the margins of political discourse because they use a marginal form of political argument, and demand and work for something which we cannot attain. This second is an accusation which some anarchists have gleefully appropriated: in Paris in 1968, "Street posters declared paradoxically 'Be Realistic: Demand the Impossible" (Marshall 1993: xii). I will argue: 1) that utopianism (of a specified form) is a reasonable way of carrying out political thinking and intervention; and 2) that the anarchist utopia is in fact possible. Humans are capable of organising themselves in the way that anarchists have typically demanded and worked for, and utopianism is one reasonable way of arguing and working for that possibility.

1.2 Anarchists and academics

Anarchists have often been marginalised in and even excluded from academic conversation, for at least these five reasons; they have often isolated themselves by refusing to deal with thinkers compromised by working for states. As an anarchist in an academic context, I think both reasons for not talking to one another are mistakes. Academics can learn something from anarchists, and vice versa, and nobody need be called an extremist or a lackey.

My main purpose here is to display the value of, and to extend, the anarchist tradition, by correcting some mistakes about anarchism, and most importantly by showing that the anarchist utopia is possible. But while carrying out that purpose, I also intend to show that anarchists and mainstream academics can learn from, and benefit by talking to, each other.

1.3 Norms and facts

Like most political theories and ideologies, anarchism involves both normative and factual elements. The two are not always easily distinguishable, because one claim can do both jobs. If, for instance, we claim that humans are all equally God's creatures, we make both an assertion of fact about the world, and a moral demand about how we should treat one another. However, to the extent that the two sides are distinguishable, I concentrate on the factual elements of anarchist thought. Anarchist moral demands are not particularly distinctive, and anarchists have not typically been much interested in doing moral philosophy: most anarchists, like many other people, believe that domination, violence, inequality and slavery are bad things, that equality, freedom, self-determination and peace are good things, and that there are more pressing tasks than finding a formal justification of these claims. The distinctiveness of anarchism, and for me its main interest, is in the factual claims that anarchists make about the possibilities of human sociability. So, my project here is to

elaborate and defend these factual claims about how humans can live together, not to defend a moral theory. I answer the critic who argues that the anarchist utopia is impossible, but not the critic who argues that it would be a morally bad way to live.

1.4 Hope, possibility and probability

I think that the anarchist utopia is possible, and hope that it will be realised. Hope can be analysed as involving the belief that its objective is (logically and perhaps physically) *possible*, or as also involving the further belief that it is *probable* (see for instance Day 1969; I am indebted to Catriona McKinnon for this point). Like any other theorist with moral and political commitments, who hopes for a better world, I am involved in a difficulty. We want to say much more than that our preferred state of affairs is merely possible: many things are possible. But judging how probable it is that some social form will be realised, or that some social change will happen, is very difficult. The conditions for either are extremely complex, and include tiny, contingent, unknown and perhaps unknowable elements. Many realisations and changes which seem on their face quite unlikely – including, as I suggest in chapter 9, the current ubiquity of states – nevertheless happened. So, I avoid the probability question about the anarchist utopia. I do not know how to answer it, and doubt that anyone else does, either. I argue that the anarchist utopia is possible, meaning that it is within the real social, as well as the logical and physical, range of possible human ways of life, but without making any claims about how likely it is to be realised, now or at any particular time.

My point in making this distinction of the implications of hope is, first, to disclaim three ambitions. I do not intend to write about: 1) revolutionary tactics; 2) the direction or telos of current or general social change; nor 3) our chances of creating an anarchist utopia, now. Second, to distinguish my project: I am concerned here to argue for the availability to us of an anarchist way of life, where 'us' is

understood as 'humans' and 'availability' as 'being within the joint social experience of humanity'. Minimally, then, my hope for the anarchist utopia's realisation can be analysed as involving the claim that such a way of life is socially possible for humans, which I support in later chapters by showing that it is within the joint social experience of humans.

1.5 The variety of anarchism

This thesis is about anarchism. But the problem with that statement is that it is not immediately obvious what anarchism in general is. As James Joll remarks, "Anyone who has tried to write about anarchism sometimes comes to a point at which he wonders just what it is he is writing about" (Joll 1976: 1092). Noam Chomsky may be right that "It would be hopeless to try to encompass all of these conflicting tendencies [of anarchism] in some general theory or ideology" (Chomsky 1970: vii). Or, as Michael Freeden expresses the point, perhaps 'anarchism' is just an "Umbrella term that covers a cluster of concepts whose totality can be made to pull in entirely different ideological directions" (Freeden 1996: 311). 'Anarchism' may be nothing more than a catch-all name for a disparate collection of fringe theorists, extremists and cranks, with little in common. In order to give shape to that thought, and to provide materials for chapters 2 & 3, I now display some of the generalisations which have been made about, and the characterisations and taxonomies which have been made of, anarchism.

In the 1790s, the French Republican Directory attacked its political enemies as 'anarchists':

> By 'anarchists' the Directory means these men covered in crimes, stained with blood, and fattened by rapine, enemies of laws they do not make and of all governments in which they do not govern, who preach liberty and practice despotism, speak of fraternity and slaughter their brothers...; tyrants, slaves, servile adulators of the clever dominator who can subjugate them, capable in a word of all excesses, all basenesses, and all crimes. (quoted in Woodcock 1963: 8-9).

Most anarchists would want to dispute this definition. But what might they, or even an equally unfriendly commentator, offer in its place? Characterisations of anarchism and of anarchists have varied in the common character they identify, in the claims they take to be central, and in the thinkers and movements they include or emphasise. According to Isaac Kramnick, anarchists are distinguished by their "Common conviction of superiority":

> Above the mediocre, the petty, the base, the dull, and the deceived, stands the anarchist... convinced of his superiority of intellect or feeling. No surprise, then, that as political thought anarchism has traditionally been the expression of an intellectual or artistic elite. Like Abbie Hoffmann, the anarchist has always stood apart from the "Pig Nation," which he sees so mindlessly unaware of its misery and mediocrity. (Kramnick 1972: 114-5)

According to Cesare Lombroso, they are distinguished by a peculiar physiology. In the nineteenth century:

> Professor Lombroso of Turin University was able to solve the problems of definition and categorisation. After having studied many anarchists he concluded that anarchists possessed certain well-defined physiological characteristics which were easily discernable; for example, exaggerated plagiocephaly, facial asymmetry, cranial abnormalities (ultrabrachycephaly), large jaw bone, exaggerated zygomas, enormous frontal sinus, anomalies of the eyes, ears, nose and teeth, anomalous coloration of the skin, and neuro-pathological anomalies. (Carlson 1972: 6-7)

These are only a few examples. Anarchists have been characterised by their enemies in a wide variety of incompatible ways.

However, those enemies may just be confused. In 1897, E V Zenker noted that "Since the extraordinary danger of anarchist doctrines is firmly fixed as a dogma in the minds of the vast majority of mankind, it is apparently quite unnecessary to obtain any information about its real character in order to pronounce a decided, and often a decisive, judgement upon it" (Zenker 1897: v). John Clark made a similar point nearly a century later, regretting that "It is not unusual for academic 'scholars' to gather no more evidence about the nature of anarchism than the derivation of the term, after which they can ascend to the heights of abstraction, paying attention neither to social history nor to the history of ideas" (Clark 1984: 117). Perhaps,

then, the conflicting negative characterisations I have quoted arise from ignorance or even malice. But the difficulty with this claim is that sympathetic commentators, and even anarchists themselves, have disagreed just as much as have their enemies about how to characterise anarchism.

Anarchism "May be described as *the doctrine that all the affairs of men should be managed by individuals or voluntary associations, and that the State should be abolished*" (Tucker 1972: 16). But then again, a "Mental shift into a timeless world, out of progress and freed from material temptations" has been seen as "The necessary leap of faith for the true black anarchist" (Woodcock 1963: 344). According to Alan Ritter, anarchists seek:

> To combine the greatest individual development with the greatest communal unity. Their goal is a society of strongly separate persons who are strongly bound together in a group. In a full-fledged anarchy, individual and communal tendencies, now often contradictory, become mutually reinforcing and coalesce. (Ritter 1980: 3)

Peter Kropotkin introduces anarchism as "The no-government system of socialism" (Kropotkin 1993: 72); Eric Hobsbawm, as "The libertarian tradition of communism" (Hobsbawm 1999a: 67). According to Alan Carter, anarchism centres on both "Normative opposition to certain substantive political inequalities and the empirical belief that they principally derive from, are preserved by, or are embedded within, certain centralized forms of power" (Carter 2000: 232). Or, according to commentators including the influential Paul Eltzbacher, the only thing anarchists have in common is "That they negate the State for our future", and this negation "Has totally different meanings" (Eltzbacher 1960: 189) for different anarchists!

Some analysts and anarchists present anarchism as a permanent phenomenon and human tendency. Max Nettlau, for instance, believes the context of anarchism to be the whole history of the "Continuous struggle to shake off authoritarian chains and restraints":

> The history of anarchist ideas is inseparable from the history of all progressive developments and aspirations towards liberty. It

> therefore starts from the earliest favourable historic moment when men first evolved the concept of a free life. (Nettlau 1996: 1)

This account allows him to include, for instance, Zeno of Citium (336-264 BCE), the founder of the Stoic school, as a proto-anarchist. Peter Marshall spreads his net as widely, tracing anarchism's "Origins and development from ancient civilisations to the present day" and hoping that "A study of anarchism will show that the drive for freedom is not only a central part of our collective experience but responds to a deeply felt human need" (Marshall 1993: xiii; xiv). He includes, for instance, Lao Tzu (born around 604 BCE). Nettlau and Marshall were perhaps influenced by Peter Kropotkin's article "Anarchism" in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Kropotkin 1995a; first published 1911), in which he argues that anarchism's "Conception of society… and the tendency which is its dynamic expression, have always existed in mankind, in opposition to the governing hierarchic conception and tendency" (Kropotkin 1995a: 236). Kropotkin is particularly concerned to show the anarchic tendency at work in Christian heresy, as is James Joll (1979), who begins his survey of anarchism with Gnosticism.

This account of anarchism as a permanent tendency has been attacked by a number of authors. George Woodcock, for instance, argues that:

> Anarchist historians have confused certain attitudes which lie at the core of anarchism… with anarchism as a movement and a creed appearing at a certain time in history and having specific theories, aims and methods. The core attitudes can certainly be found echoing back through history at least to the ancient Greeks. But anarchism as a developed, articulate, and clearly identifiable trend appears only in the modern era of conscious social and political revolutions. (Woodcock 1963: 37)

Andrew Vincent similarly suggests that those "Who claim that anarchism is… an all-pervasive universal and ahistorical libertarian disposition" betray "An intellectual weak-mindedness… that ignores historical and sociological factors" (Vincent 1992: 116). Both Woodcock and Vincent attribute the attempt to show anarchism as

permanent to a desire for a mythical ancient lineage for a modern phenomenon: "Even a cursory study of the writers claimed shows that what has so often been represented as the prehistory of anarchism is rather a mythology created to give authority to a movement and its theories" (Woodcock 1963: 36-7)[2]. These and other authors have presented anarchism as a distinctively late-eighteenth and nineteenth century phenomenon, which "Began to emerge as a relatively coherent theory at about the time of the French Revolution" (Carter 1971: 1) and was first clearly expressed in William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1985; first published 1793). Or, perhaps, not until the European Revolutions of 1848, which:

> Saw the rise of separate working-class political movements. In that year Utopian socialism died a more or less natural death, and in its place appeared the beginnings of the Communist, Socialist and Anarchist movements of our own day. (Woodcock 1948: 5-6)

Or, for that matter, not until around 1880, by which time there was a self-conscious anarchist movement within the International.

Even if we ignore supposed forerunners like Lao Tzu, Zeno, or the Anabaptists, there is still a difficulty about who counts as an anarchist. Eltzbacher, for instance, bases his characterisation on seven anarchist sages: William Godwin, Peter Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Leo Tolstoy, Max Stirner and Benjamin Tucker. His "Assumption that anarchist theoretical wisdom is crystallised in his seven subjects" (Eltzbacher 1960: 182, editor's note[3]) has both influenced and been challenged by later analysts. Fowler (1972) replaces Tucker with Alexander Herzen, but otherwise leaves the list unchanged. Ritter limits himself to Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, "Whose contributions to anarchist theory are universally regarded as most seminal", and rejects Stirner on the grounds that "His argument lacks the cogency it needs to be included in this analytic study of anarchist thought" (Ritter 1980: 5; 6).

---

[2] The phenomenon of political myth-making is not confined to anarchism: see for instance Tudor (1972) and 12.1.

Crowder (1991) follows him. Carter (1971) invokes Eltzbacher's seven, but insists on the importance of Errico Malatesta, Josiah Warren, Henry David Thoreau, Elisée Reclus and Emma Goldman, and of anarchist movements in Russia with Nestor Makhno and in Spain with Buenaventura Durutti. Any complete account of anarchism also ought to take account of more recent work by, for instance, Colin Ward, Paul Goodman, Murray Bookchin and Hakim Bey.

However widely the net is cast, many taxonomies have been developed to categorise the different anarchisms it catches, which can be split along various faultlines between different movements, theorists and episodes. For instance, there is an often rancorous division between libertarian (right-wing) and socialist (left-wing) anarchists. For another instance, "There has always been a conflict within anarchism between the two traditions of determinism and utopianism" (Otter 1966: 305). And having started, we can identify fractures between millennialist and progressivist, violent and pacifist, sacral and atheist, activist and philosophical, gradualist and revolutionary, and conspiratorial and educational anarchisms. Horowitz (1964) distinguishes anarchism into utilitarian, peasant, anarcho-syndicalist, collectivist, conspiratorial, communist, individualist and pacifist forms.

Another possible division is geographical. According to Gerald Brenan, American and non-industrial European anarchisms are entirely different, grounded in different economic circumstances: "American anarchism [is] an ultra-liberal doctrine suited to industrial countries with a middle-class standard of life, [but] Bakunin is the creator of the peasant anarchism of Southern and Eastern Europe" (Brenan 2000: 131-2). Similarly, according to Max Nettlau, "There was very little mutual knowledge" between the American and European anarchists, and "Ample room for both movements to function without any interference on either side, so that one was hardly aware of the existence of the other" (Nettlau 1996: 39).

---

[3] To be fair to Eltzbacher, he does not *assume* this: he makes a complex attempt at a logical proof of it.

Specifically *Spanish* anarchism has sometimes been presented as radically different from other anarchisms, much as Spain has sometimes been presented as radically different from the rest of Europe (Brenan 2000).

Once we have started to divide anarchism up, it is difficult to stop, because individual anarchists differ so much from each other. Godwin's utilitarian, gradualist anarchism, shaped by dissenting Christianity, is a world away from Bakunin's revolutionary rhetoric, love of conspiracy and pan-Slavic nationalism. Stirner's egoism has little in common with Kropotkin's evolutionary communism, and indeed Stirner is "The epitome of almost everything which revolutionaries of Kropotkin's tradition came to oppose" (Fleming 1979: 20). "Stirner's consuming egoism, Herzen's elegant ambiguities, and Kropotkin's breathless positivism apparently lie far apart" (Fowler 1972: 739)[4]. Once we realise that we also have to take into account, for instance, the Japanese anarchist movement (Crump 1993), or anarchist involvement in working-class activism in Brazil during the First World War (Wolfe 1991), we may decide that anarchism is not a single phenomenon at all. Perhaps there are many anarchisms, sharing little but the name.

Even the name may be problematic. Godwin never used it, and many of Proudhon's followers have preferred to call themselves 'mutualists'. The pacifist Tolstoy did not call himself an anarchist, on the grounds that 'the anarchists' preached violent revolution and attempted "To destroy violence by violence, by terrorism, dynamite bombs and daggers" (Tolstoy 1990: 69). Worse, acceptance of the name has often been ironic, temporary or unwilling. As Daniel Guérin points out, Proudhon took "Malicious pleasure" (Guérin 1970: 12) in the confusion he caused by using 'anarchy' and 'anarchist' in both positive and pejorative senses, and he abandoned the name entirely in later life, instead calling himself a 'federalist'. James Guillaume

---

[4] "Breathless positivism" is, incidentally, a bizarre characterisation of Kropotkin's character and measured, empirically grounded writing. See chapters 3 & 4.

spoke for many when he "Argued in 1876 that the terms 'anarchist' and 'anarchy' expressed only a negative idea 'without indicating any positive theory' and led to 'distressing ambiguities'" (Fleming 1979: 16).

It may be argued that I am needlessly complicating the issue by ignoring the most obvious characterisation of anarchism: anarchists are anti-statists. This claim is often grounded on the observation that 'anarchism', 'anarchy' and 'anarchist' are derived "From Medieval Latin *anarchia*, from Greek *anarkhia*, from *anarkhos* without a ruler, from AN- [not; without] + *arkh-* leader" (*Collins English Dictionary*). So, 'anarchy' must be the condition of lacking a ruler, 'anarchism' the position which demands and works for that condition, and an 'anarchist' a person who holds that position. But etymology does not govern meaning. That anarchism has come to be called 'anarchism' by some long series of borrowings, baptisms, extensions and creative misunderstandings does not tell us anything about the beliefs and activities of the people who are now called anarchists. Consider how much can be discovered about modern western liberals by noting that 'liberal' derives "From Latin *liberalis* of freedom" (ibid), or about Pope John Paul II by noting that 'Catholic' derives "From Latin *catholicus*, from Greek *katholikos* universal, from *katholou* in general, from *kata-* according to + *holos* whole" (ibid). This etymological information does not enable us to derive the Pope or the Catholic Church's position on the trinity, or on gay marriage, or on any other particular issue. Similarly, that 'anarchy', 'anarchism' and 'anarchist' have the etymology they do tells us next to nothing about anarchism and anarchists.

That the 'obvious' answer is often derived in this faulty way does not show that it is false, but there are other reasons to think that it is, at best, not very useful. 1) Anarchists very often are opposed to states, but they are not the only people who are. Many Marxists look forward to states' obsolescence and destruction (Engels 1969; Lenin 1992; Marx 1977). Recent anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation protesters attack states amongst other institutions: "The

core institutions of global capitalism are the multinational corporations, the leading capitalist states and the international institutions that reflect their interests" (Callinicos 2001: 111). So, being against states is not a distinguishing characteristic of anarchism. 2) Anarchists are often opposed to states as (large and important) examples of some more general category, such as oppressive institutions, which also includes other features of our current arrangements, such as capitalism and organised religion. So, being against states is not a complete characterisation of anarchism. 3) Although anarchists do perform the negative act of opposing states, they also spend a great deal of time and effort on the positive acts of discovery, analysis and celebration of alternative social forms (a practice which I take up in later chapters), and of working for anarchic organisation and justice. So, even if all and only anarchists could be characterised as anti-statists, that would again not be a complete characterisation of anarchism. It would be no more useful than a characterisation of humans as featherless bipeds: as it happens true, but uninteresting.

Finally, 4) the 'obvious' answer may be suspect because it has not always seemed so obvious. Until comparatively recently, the 'intuitively obvious' characterisation of anarchists was that they are nihilistic terrorists (that is, the *Secret Agent* characterisation I gave as the first reason for the marginalisation of anarchism, in 1.1). Zenker (1897), Eltzbacher (1960) and Russell (1918; quoted in 1.1) all warn against this simplistic characterisation. That the supposedly obvious answer to the problem of characterising anarchism has such a short history should, at least, make us wonder how firmly grounded it is. The characterisation of anarchism as anti-statism is at best unhelpful.

I do not intend to make the peculiar claim that anti-statism has nothing at all to do with anarchism, but only to argue that 'anti-statism' is not a particularly useful answer to the complex historical question, What is anarchism? It does not catch enough of anarchists' concerns or claims.

In this section I have sketched the variety of anarchism by noting some of the various and contradictory characterisations and taxonomies of anarchism which have been given, and then argued that one common solution to the problem of variety fails. I do not offer an alternative solution. Anarchism is various, and there are no clear central claims that one must accept, or activities in which one must take part, in order to be an anarchist (see further 3.3). So, this thesis cannot be 'about anarchism' in the same way that it could, perhaps, be 'about being a member of the Church of England'; for a partial account of the claims and activities involved in that, see for instance *The Book of Common Prayer*. But this is not a problem unique to anarchism: being a liberal or a socialist, for instance, involves similar ambiguities. There is no *Book of Common Liberalism*, either.

This negative claim – that it is not obvious what anarchism in general is – is intended as a starting point. I have not argued that there is no unity to the anarchist tradition, but only that we should not be confident that we know in what that unity consists. I will have more to say in later chapters about what we can and cannot say about anarchism in general.

Despite the variation of anarchism, we can make some taxonomic generalisations, and it is helpful to do so here in order to distinguish my mode of argument from others. Arguments for anarchism (the position) or for the possibility of anarchy (the way of life) have often fallen into four broad types.

First, and perhaps most familiarly, they have taken the form of a radical polemic which appeals to hazy concepts of freedom and human solidarity, which is often more passionate than coherent, and which can be found in pamphlets available at meetings, gigs and protests. It is one form of a much wider political phenomenon, also involved in many other radical causes and traditions, and not to be despised, but not considered further here.

Second, and perhaps most familiarly to academic political philosophers, there is the 'philosophical anarchism' discussed by

UNIVERSITY
OF YORK
LIBRARY

Robert Paul Wolff and others[5], which takes anarchism to be skepticism about the justification of the state or about political obligation. I consider it, and the way in which it has distorted perception of the broader anarchist tradition, in chapter 2.

Third, there is a strand of argument exemplified by William Godwin (1985), which supports both anarchism and the possibility of anarchy with a progressivist account of human history as tending towards an anarchist utopia, and with a picture of human nature which emphasises our potential for transformation. I discuss Godwin in chapter 3, progressivist and other monolineal accounts of history in chapters 8 and 9, and concepts of human nature in chapters 3 and 5.

Fourth, and finally, there is strand of argument which I unearth from the work of Godwin and of Peter Kropotkin in chapter 4, and which I extend and theorise in much of the rest of the thesis. It uses accounts of, and comparisons between, a variety of human social forms to display the possibility of anarchy and to criticise our own arrangements by comparison with these alternatives. The form of argument I deploy to prove the possibility of the anarchist utopia is grounded on and extends this strand of the tradition, but is distinctive in two ways: 1) I use and refine resources from other traditions, especially academic political philosophy, to theorise the comparative strategy and to defend it against possible criticisms; and 2) I do not adopt the occasional tendency to romanticise some of the social forms, and especially the non-state social forms, used for comparative purposes.

---

[5] R P Wolff (1998), De George (1978), Frankfurt (1973), Ladenson (1972), Martin (1978), Pennock & Chapman (1978), Reiman (1972), Simmons (1996), J Wolff (1996).

1.6 Philosophical minimalism

My general argumentative strategy, throughout this thesis, is to claim as little as possible, and to involve myself in debates only where there is a clear benefit in doing so. In line with this minimalist strategy, I will in many cases indicate and avoid a debate or claim which lies close to my discussion, but which is not relevant to it, or not a helpful resource for my stated purposes. I do not intend, for instance, to resolve all the worries we might have about the concept of equality. My chapter on that concept (chapter 7) is a necessary piece of conceptual apparatus, tailored to my particular purposes and goals, and not a general intervention in the analysis of equality (see further chapter 5). So, for instance, a criticism on the grounds that I do not consider the ongoing debate about the relationship between equality, luck and responsibility would only be telling if the critic could show that not considering it damages my conceptual toolkit for analysing human sociability, of which chapter 7 forms a part, such that I cannot use it for my stated purposes.

This parsimonious strategy has two major advantages: first, a theory of everything is probably impossible, and so theories which tend towards them are probably snark-hunts. Rather than taking that risk, I specify the claims I prove and the issues I consider, and use only those arguments and data which are relevant to them. Second, and as already noted, a large part of this thesis (chapters 5-8) is devoted to developing a conceptual toolkit for analysing human sociability. As I argue by analogy with mapmaking in chapter 5, any such toolkit distorts its object in some way. But this is not a problem so long as we are aware of the distortion, and have chosen the right mapping for our purposes. My general strategy requires me to stipulate my purposes clearly, and so allows me to pick the right map projection for my task.

1.7 Using traditions

This thesis is a work of political philosophy, which uses philosophical methods and draws on selected academic literature to correct misapprehensions of and to support (one version of) anarchism. I also draw on selected anarchist literature for the same purposes. In particular, I draw on the work of William Godwin and Peter Kropotkin, to correct misreadings of anarchism, to suggest forms of argument, and to characterise an anarchist utopia. Sometimes, the academic and the anarchist literatures overlap: the mutual exile I described in 1.2 is not complete.

I also make use of literature from disciplines and traditions in which I am not involved, whose methods I do not for the most part use, and to whose canons I do not intend to contribute. In particular, I use empirical and theoretical material from history, sociology and anthropology to justify my claim that the anarchist utopia is within the range of human social possibility. This use may seem opportunistic: but there are precedents in both the anarchist and the academic traditions. Kropotkin, for instance, made considerable use of biology and (early) anthropology (see 3.1.2 & 3.2.2). G A Cohen (1978) made use of evolutionary theory as part of his reconstruction of Marx's theory of history. Barrington Moore's *Inequality* (1978) and *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1991) are simultaneously moral philosophy and historical sociology, written by a sociologist (on the moral character of Moore's work, see Skocpol 1994).

In general, the boundaries between traditions, disciplines and literatures are not sharp, and we can have good reasons to cross them. Certainly, people with different educations and expertises will often have different concerns, methods and vocabularies, and we may have to guard against misunderstanding and gullibility outside our own fields. But that does not entail that we should always stay inside them. Where we have reason to believe that the best test of some claim is evidence of a kind generated by another discourse, we have

reason to use that evidence; wherever we come across a relevant argument, we have reason to discuss it.

One likely criticism of this boundary-crossing strategy is that the claims generated by particular disciplines are so bound to their particular practices and idioms that they cannot simply be cherry-picked in this way. The thought is that the claims of, for instance, history, can only be understood and used from within the practices of the discipline; history is or has a culture, and as Peter Winch has argued, a culture can only be understood from inside (Winch 1988). But this thought is inappropriate here, for three reasons. 1) It might be the case that four arbitrarily chosen disciplines were so distinct in their practices that their practitioners found each other incomprehensible, but I deny that this is so for philosophy, history, anthropology and sociology. I suggest that as a matter of empirical fact these disciplines already overlap considerably, such that 'boundary-crossing' is actually an overstated description of the activity of using one another's results and conceptual tools. 2) I further suggest that, also as a matter of empirical fact, these disciplines are embedded in a larger practice, which we might label 'humanistic scholarship', the concepts and operating procedures of which are available to and used by all of them. So, 'boundary-crossing' is an even less appropriate description of my activity. 3) There is an alternative Winchean thought available, which better describes that activity: "Seriously to study another way of life is necessarily to seek to extend our own" (Winch 1970: 99). Above, I noted precedents for my practice. I now want to add a final one: Clifford Geertz suggests that the transformation of anthropology in which he was involved, from the 1950s onwards, was partly made by the adoption and use of "Tools made elsewhere, in philosophy, linguistics, semiotics, history, psychology, sociology, and the cognitive sciences" (Geertz 2000a: 13). Geertz and other anthropologists did not merely cherry-pick ideas and results from other disciplines, but changed their own discipline by crossing its boundaries. Less

ambitiously but relatedly, my practice here is changed by the practices and results of disciplines other than my own.

1.8 Neglected riches

In *Liberty Before Liberalism*, Quentin Skinner suggests that one task for intellectual historians is "To uncover the often neglected riches of our intellectual heritage and display them once more to view" (Skinner 1998: 118-9). His archaeological activity has a double purpose, somewhat analogous to my purposes here. First, and explicitly, the recovery of more or less alien thought can help us "To stand back from, and perhaps even to reappraise, some of our current assumptions and beliefs" (ibid: 112). For Skinner, the recovery of a "Neo-roman theory of free citizens and free states" (ibid and passim) might challenge or force us to reflect on the "Hegemony in political philosophy" (ibid: 113) of liberalism. For me, the recovery of some anarchist thought from marginalisation is similarly useful. That thought may at least challenge, or force us to reflect on, some current assumptions and beliefs about human sociability and about political philosophy. Skinner's second, implicit purpose is political. Although he stops short of actually recommending the neo-roman theory of liberty he exhumes, he is in other contexts openly a republican, and the strong implication of the last chapter of *Liberty Before Liberalism* is that he thinks the neo-roman theory superior to its hegemonic liberal competitor. I am more explicit: I openly argue that the version of anarchism which I develop partly out of the uncovered past anarchist thought I consider, is correct.

I am a political philosopher, not an intellectual historian. My interest in anarchist texts is, first, to correct some misreadings and false images, but second, and more importantly, to make use of some of the ideas and arguments those texts express. I pick up and use part of their riches for current philosophical and political purposes. I do not intend to produce, for instance, a Skinnerite account of what Kropotkin understood himself to be doing by writing and publishing

texts in his cultural context (on this methodological stance, see Skinner 1988; on Kropotkin, Kinna 1995). My interest is in uncovering and using some buried ideas, not in recovering the past for its own sake. I do not claim that my readings of the texts I consider are the final or only possible ones. They are within the range of reasonable readings, while the misreadings I correct are not.

I emphasise that I do not intend to weave the threads of the anarchist tradition I uncover into some claimed 'real' or 'core' anarchism, opposed to other pretenders to that crown. The threads I do not pick up have as good a claim to be real anarchism as the ones I do. I intend to come to a negotiated settlement with, and thereby sympathetically to extend, the tradition, not to present myself as its one true heir.

1.9 A sketch utopia

In chapter 13 I use some anarchist thought, and the material gathered in previous chapters, to describe an anarchist utopia and prove it possible. But in order to give some idea of where we are heading, I now anticipate that chapter and briefly sketch my utopia.

In his article "Anarchism", in the eleventh edition of the *Enclopaedia Britannica*, Kropotkin defines the term. I have given reasons in 1.5 to be suspicious of his confidence, but his account is a good beginning description of my anarchist utopia:

> [Anarchism is] the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government – harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being. In a society developed along these lines, the voluntary associations which already now begin to cover all the fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the state in all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and international – temporary or more or less permanent – for all possible purposes:

> production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defence of the territory, and so on; and, on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever-increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary and sociable needs. (Kropotkin 1995a: 233-4).

My anarchist utopia consists of multiple interwoven networks of social humans pursuing their huge variety of interests, from the most basic in making a living, to the most subtle in art, science and communication. Power is equally distributed in and between these networks. Coordination between networks is achieved, not by an attempt to unify them into a single territorial hierarchy, but by federalisation and agreement. Conflict is not absent, but is limited and resolved by mediation and negotiation. Individuals' activity is various and varying, not limited to particular tasks by the division of labour.

Much of this sketch is at present unclear: its individual features will be examined and further characterised in later chapters. All I intend, by giving it here, is to indicate where we are going. I now indicate how we are going to get there.

1.10 A roadmap

The chapters of this thesis, and their purposes, are as follows. In chapter 2 I correct one common misreading of anarchism, which takes it to be extreme political skepticism. In chapter 3 I correct another, which presents anarchists as primitivists. In chapter 4, I explain this second mistake, and discover in the explanation a common anarchist rhetorical trope of critical and exemplary comparison between social forms. This trope suggests a form of argument, which I go on to use to prove my main thesis. However, there is a serious problem with that form, and its solution requires some theoretical apparatus. Chapters 5-8 provide that apparatus: chapter 5 characterises it in general; chapter 6 develops a concept of power; chapter 7, a concept of equality; and chapter 8, a model of human sociability. Chapters 9-13 then carry out the main argument for the possibility of the anarchist utopia by deploying the tools developed in chapters 6-8 to

describe some selected examples of human social forms. Chapter 9 describes states, in their pristine and modern forms; chapter 10, the Atlantic slave system; chapter 11, the social form of the Nuer people of the Southern Sudan; chapter 12, the anarchic social experiments in Spain during its civil war; and chapter 13 describes and proves possible the anarchist utopia, and defends utopianism as a form of politics. Finally, chapter 14 recapitulates my project and considers its results.

2 ◇ Anarchism and Skepticism

There is a common analogy between anarchism and skepticism, made by Robert Ladenson (1972), Jeffrey Reiman (1972), Rex Martin (1978) and Jonathan Wolff (1996), amongst others. It is often used to ground criticism: anarchists are marginalised on the grounds that extreme political skepticism is so peculiar, or so unacceptable in practice, that like extreme epistemological skepticism it can immediately be rejected. Skepticism and anarchism can be useful hermeneutic devices, and 'the skeptic' and 'the anarchist' useful imaginary interlocutors, but their positions cannot reasonably be endorsed.

In this chapter I pursue an alternative analogy: even if there are forms of anarchism and of skepticism which are structurally analogous, each is only one form of a much wider and more various tradition, which is misrepresented in particular philosophical discourses. To the (considerable) extent that anarchism and skepticism in general are understood by reference to these specific forms, a fundamental mistake is being made about both. So, first, the analogy between anarchism and skepticism in general is that philosophical discourses create and use false images of them. Second, and more importantly for my overall project: even if skepticism in general or in this particular form are unacceptable, this tells us nothing about anarchism in general.

The targets of the double attack on anarchism and skepticism are, in fact, philosophical anarchism, particularly as represented by Robert Paul Wolff, and what we can call philosophical skepticism.

According to Ladenson:

> An analogy more appropriate than the [Kantian] one drawn by Wolff would be between his doubts about the existence of morally legitimate political authority and the radical doubts about the existence of an external world which Kant was also concerned to refute. The parallel with radical scepticism in the realm of epistemology is almost exact. According to this kind of scepticism, even after we have checked all the considerations which, even in

> the widest sense, count as evidence for empirical knowledge, it still does not follow that the existence claims one makes about physical objects, presumably on the basis of this evidence, are well founded. If one asks the sceptic what would be needed in order to have good grounds for such claims, over and above the normal evidence of sight, touch and so forth, he tells us that nothing would or even could do the job. Likewise with Wolff, if asked what would be needed to establish the moral legitimacy of a given state's authority, over and above showing that it does a tolerably good job of serving purposes such as those enumerated in the Preamble to the United States Constitution (i.e., the sorts of things one would naturally think of as relevant for deciding the issue) he would say that nothing could do this. On his view, no state, in principle has had or could have the right to rule. Now the beliefs which the radical sceptic about the external world seeks to undermine are so basic that they cannot be rejected. Accordingly, the fact that a given epistemological theory leads to radical scepticism about the external world is a sufficient reason for rejecting it. The same is true of Wolff's account of legitimate political authority. The fact that it leads to the kind of scepticism that it does shows his account to be unacceptable. (Ladenson 1972: 337)

This argument relies on at least two dubious claims: first, that we have a good idea of what "one" (who?) would "naturally" think relevant to the question of legitimacy; second, that difficulties in putting a conclusion into practice refute the argument that led to it. But the interest of Ladenson's claims here is the understanding of anarchism and of skepticism which they express, not their cogency. Ladenson supposes that (Wolff's) anarchism and (philosophical) skepticism are so analogous, and so unacceptable, that both can be refuted in a paragraph.

In 2.1, I display specifically philosophical anarchism (2.1.1) and skepticism (2.1.2) as distinctive projects. In 2.2, I show that in each case, a particular form of anarchism or skepticism is often taken to be representative of the whole tradition. In 2.3, that this understanding is a mistake, because both anarchism (2.3.1) and skepticism (2.3.2) are considerably more various than it allows. I conclude in 2.4 that the marginalisation of anarchists on the ground that they are extreme skeptics is a mistake, regardless of whether or not skepticism is acceptable, because that ground is in general false.

2.1 Contexts

Philosophical anarchism and philosophical skepticism are minority positions, stalking horses and subjects of debate in particular academic contexts and discourses. In this section I characterise them in those contexts.

2.1.1 Philosophical anarchism and Rawlsianism

Philosophical anarchism appeared in political philosophy with the publication of Robert Paul Wolff's *In Defence of Anarchism* in 1970 (R P Wolff 1998[1]). There are few other self-declared philosophical anarchists. James Buchanan and A John Simmons can be claimed. Simmons lists "Others… who are frequently identified as defenders of some form of philosophical anarchism" (Simmons 1996: 34 note 2) as including M B E Smith, Leslie Green, Donald Regan, A D Woozley, David Lyons and Joel Feinberg. We might add Jan Narveson. William A Edmundson, Chaim Gans, John Horton, Robert Ladenson, David Miller, Jeffrey Reiman and Jonathan Wolff have also been involved in the debate, but as critics rather than supporters.

Philosophical anarchism is not the only species of recent academic anarchist writing, or of academic writing about anarchism. It is distinct, for instance, from Michael Taylor's work on social order without states (Taylor 1976, 1982 & 1987); from Alan Carter's attempt to found an 'analytical anarchism' to match analytical Marxism (Carter 2000); and from the work of Anthony de Jesay (1985). I discuss it here because it has produced a distorted image of anarchism in general in the thought of many political philosophers.

Philosophical anarchism centres on an issue often thought fundamental to political philosophy, the justification or legitimacy of the state:

---

[1] In order to avoid confusion, I reference Robert Paul Wolff as R P Wolff and Jonathan Wolff as J Wolff, throughout this chapter.

> Why is there a state at all? Or rather, why *should* there be a state at all? What is the justification of the state? The sense that these are real questions has come and gone and come again at various times; when that sense is present, the questions step in as the basic or first questions of political philosophy. (Williams 1982: 27)

So, Wolff formulates "The fundamental problem of political philosophy" as "How the moral autonomy of the individual can be made compatible with the legitimate authority of the state" (R P Wolff 1998: xxvii). Wolff's work is an extremely negative contribution to this wider debate.

The context in which philosophical anarchism is performed is not just political philosophy, but specifically the modern tradition of contract theory instigated and exemplified by John Rawls. Rawls is widely credited with initiating "A renaissance in social philosophy unparalleled in this century" (Blocker & Smith 1980: vii), and many pieces of work in the field since are "Best understood in terms of their relationship to Rawls" (Kymlicka 2002: 10).

The post-Rawlsian consensus has three distinctive themes. 1) The legitimate form of 'the state'[2] is universal: that is, right for all people at all times, regardless of culture, history, faith or circumstance. 2) The normative ground of this universal state is individuals abstracted from most features which might individuate them. For the Rawls of *A Theory of Justice*, the individual is an idealised decision-maker behind a veil of ignorance. She is a rational deliberator who knows nothing about her capacities and tastes, her society, or her place in it. She does "Understand political affairs and the principles of economic theory… the basis of social organization and the laws of human psychology" (Rawls 1972: 137). That is, she does not know a great deal that we do, and does know a great deal that we do not. She has no particular allegiances, tastes or history, and is unformed by any particular life or social form. Rawls does not suppose that real individuals are actually like this: characterising his decision-

---

[2] By which is meant some major social institutions; I give a different account of states and 'the state' in chapter 9.

makers in this way is a heuristic device for working out the demands of justice. But he does suppose that what is relevant about people in working out those demands is these characteristics, not the characteristics of more familiar individuals. Most importantly, 3) the task of political philosophy is to *justify* some universally legitimate state. Rawls' justificatory project uses the device of imagining negotiations between his 'individuals' over a state-creating contract, as a way of achieving "Reflective equilibrium" (Rawls 1972: 20) between our most firmly-held moral intuitions and theoretical principle (see also 5.3). The justificatory argument is that this device gives content to, and morally justifies, a notion of "Justice as fairness" (ibid: 11 and passim).

This consensus holds even across what are often regarded as deep oppositions: Robert Nozick, for instance, is often thought of as Rawls' antithesis, but the central disagreement between them is far shallower than is often claimed. Rawls is for, and Nozick against, redistribution of wealth. But Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* shares the three themes I identified above. 1) He also regards the legitimate form of the state as being right for all people at all times. 2) He grounds its legitimacy on abstract individuals. For Nozick, the individual is essentially a rights-holder: "Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights)" (Nozick 1974: ix). 3) Nozick's justificatory project involves him in constructing a hypothetical history explaining how self-interested, rational 'individuals' in a "State of nature" (Nozick 1974: 10 and passim) might come to construct a minimal state "Limited to the functions of protecting all its citizens against violence, theft, and fraud, and to the enforcement of contracts" (ibid: 26). The justificatory argument is that if each move towards that state could be expected of such 'individuals' – because it can be shown to be in their interests – and would not violate anyone's rights, then the state is justified. Equally, any state for which such a hypothetical history cannot be constructed is unjustified. The implied critical conclusion is

that no state which does more than Nozick's minimal state, and in particular no redistributive state, is justified.

In general, then, the business of this tradition of political philosophy is to investigate the justification of a universal state by using theoretical devices involving abstract individuals, even though particular theorists differ strongly in the conclusions they reach through these shared practices. I now show that philosophical anarchism is a part of this tradition.

Wolff explicitly describes his conception of political philosophy in the first edition preface to *In Defence of Anarchism*. He presents himself as a seeker after a justification for the state who has both failed and shown the failure of other attempts at justification:

> During my first year as a member of the Columbia University Philosophy Department, I taught a course on political philosophy in which I boldly announced that I would formulate and then solve the fundamental problem of political philosophy. I had no trouble formulating the problem - roughly speaking, how the moral autonomy of the individual can be made compatible with the legitimate authority of the state. I also had no trouble refuting a number of supposed solutions which had been put forward by various theorists of the democratic state. But midway through the semester, I was forced to go before my class, crestfallen and embarrassed, to announce that I had failed to discover the grand solution. At first, as I struggled with this dilemma, I clung to the conviction that a solution lay just around the next conceptual corner. When I read papers on the subject to meetings at various universities, I was forced again and again to represent myself as searching for a theory which I simply could not find. Little by little, I began to shift the emphasis of my exposition. Finally - whether from philosophical reflection, or simply from chagrin - I came to the realization that I was really defending the negative rather than looking for the positive. My failure to find any theoretical justification for the authority of the state had convinced me that there was no justification. In short, I had become a philosophical anarchist. (R P Wolff 1998: xxvii-xxviii)

Wolff's project, which he understands as the "Fundamental problem of political philosophy", is to justify the authority of the state. The state in question is not a particular, historical institution, but the state in general. Wolff's project is the Rawlsian project of justifying a universal state, the "Distinctive characteristic" of which, for him, is its "Supreme authority" (ibid: 4).

Wolff's negative position in this justificatory project is the double claim that, first, all extant attempts to justify the state fail; second, and more radically, that no such attempt could succeed. His argument for these claims is grounded, as is the Rawlsian project, on abstract individuals. Again, these 'individuals' have no particular tastes, allegiences or history. Their vital characteristic is their moral autonomy: "The primary obligation of man is autonomy, the refusal to be ruled" (ibid: 18).

Wolff's *anti*-justificatory argument works as follows: what is required in a justification of universal state authority is a way of making the autonomy of the 'individual' consistent with the right to command and to be obeyed. That is, a demonstration that an 'individual' can obey a command, because it is a command and not for any prudential or separate moral reasons, and still be autonomous. Wolff denies that there can be any such demonstration, and therefore claims that 'legitimate authority' is analogous to 'round square' or 'married bachelor': "A morally legitimate state is a logical impossibility" (ibid: vii).[3]

Writers in the Rawlsian tradition, including Wolff, are concerned to contribute, by innovation and by criticism, to their shared project of justifying a universal state by appeal to abstract individuals. Wolff's contribution to this project is extremely negative, but in using the tactics and idiom of the debate, he identifies himself as a member of the tradition. Wolff's philosophical anarchism is performed as part of the Rawlsian tradition, in that Wolff is engaged in its project, uses its tactics, and regards its concerns as central to the whole enterprise of political philosophy.

Of course, there are disanalogies between Wolff and Rawls' activities. While both are involved in the project of justifying a universal

---

[3] Writers including Harry Frankfurt (1973) and Rex Martin (1974) have pointed out that Wolff vacillates about this conclusion. Sometimes he makes the strong self-contradiction claim; sometimes he seems to be claiming only that legitimate authority is so unlikely to occur in practice that the possibility can be disregarded. Nonetheless,

state, they conceive states somewhat differently. Different Rawlsians, including philosophical anarchists, focus on concepts of varying inclusiveness, and using varying terminology, within their justificatory project. Rawls regards the subject of justice and therefore of justification as "The basic structure of society", by which he means:

> The way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation. By major institutions I understand the political constitution and the principle economic and social arrangements. (Rawls 1972: 7)

Wolff defines the state in Weberian terms as "A group of persons who have and exercise supreme authority within a given territory" (R P Wolff 1998: 3) and regards the legitimacy of that authority as the central concern of political philosophy. But all I need, in order to show that philosophical anarchism appears within the Rawlsian tradition, is to show that Wolff and others concerned with philosophical anarchism are involved in the same general project of justifying some universal state by using theoretical devices involving abstract individuals. No more specific claim of similarity, for instance the dubious claim that Wolff's concern with political obligation is a special case of Rawls' concern with basic structure, is needed. I am identifying a shared project and shared tactics, not claiming that Wolff and Rawls' arguments are the same.

Others debating philosophical anarchism can be shown to be involved in the Rawlsian tradition in the same way. They too are involved in its justificatory project. Richard De George, for example, claims that "The anarchist argues first that no satisfactory external justification of the state, law, and government has ever been given (hence they have not been justified), and secondly that they cannot be justified and so are unjustifiable" (De George 1978: 93). For him too, anarchism is a negative position in the justificatory project which intends to ground the legitimacy of the state.

On the grounds of shared project and tactics, I have shown that philosophical anarchism appears within the Rawlsian tradition. I now go

---

Wolff himself still endorses the strong version (R P Wolff 1998: 2nd edition preface).

on to show that philosophical skepticism similarly appears within modern epistemology.

2.1.2 Philosophical skepticism and epistemology

I show the location of philosophical skepticism in the modern epistemological project by considering a representative textbook, Jonathan Dancy's *Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology* (Dancy 1985)[4]. Dancy describes his approach to epistemology as being one of two available in his "Anglo-American tradition" (ibid: 1). This approach, "Associated with Descartes, starts by considering the challenge of scepticism, the claim that knowledge is impossible; and hopes in answering this challenge to be driven to expose the nature of what it is to know, from which the possibility of knowledge will follow" (ibid: 1-2). Descartes was not a skeptic, and neither are Dancy or other modern epistemologists who consider skepticism. But skepticism performs a vital role as a foil to their arguments, in the person of 'the skeptic'.

Descartes's project, which he carried out in the context of the theological debate sparked by Luther's "New criterion of religious knowledge" (Popkin 1979: 3), was to set knowledge on firm foundations, once and for all. His metaphor for this process is architectural. When rebuilding one's house, one needs to pull the old building down, "Plan carefully", and provide "Materials and architects" and "Some other accomodation in which to be lodged conveniently while the work is going on" (Descartes 1968: 45). When rebuilding one's knowledge, one pulls down the old work with skeptical arguments, and provides a method for building the new, certain science and "A provisional moral code" (ibid) to guide action until one can use the rebuilt science to do so. Descartes used a wide variety of skeptical arguments, both his own and borrowings from classical and contemporary writers, to tear down the old, rickety knowledge. His aim

---

[4] Thomas Kuhn analogously considers science textbooks which "Implicitly... define the legitimate problems and methods of a research field" (Kuhn 1996: 10).

was to win the argument against 'the skeptic' in the most crushing way possible, and he therefore used the most corrosive skeptical arguments he could find, in an "Extreme dramatization of uncertainty" (Williams 1983: 338).

Descartes's plan was: 1) to pull down the old, uncertain 'knowledge' with the strongest skeptical arguments available; 2) to rebuild in such a way that the new, certain structure of knowledge would be resistant to such attacks; and 3) to ground his life and actions on this certain knowledge. Dancy's plan, and the plan of the modern epistemologists whom he represents here, is: 1) to attack common claims of knowledge with skeptical arguments mostly derived from Descartes; and 2) to rebuild in such a way that some or all common-sense and scientific claims of knowledge are reinstated. The absence of 3, the practical results of the exercise, is interesting. Descartes's project was an intervention in the reformation debate by a radical Catholic, with personal and political consequences. By contrast, modern epistemologists are rarely interested in skeptical results for their or our ordinary lives. The possibility that, given skeptical arguments, we should in reason put less trust in common-sense beliefs and scientific proofs, is hardly considered: "If moderns discuss the thought that our present life is a dream it is as a problem in epistemology, to be neutralized" (Clark 1990: 173).

There are even fewer self-declared philosophical skeptics than there are philosophical anarchists (Unger 1975 is one of the few examples). Dancy is far from confident that he has completed his Cartesian project: he ends his book with the thought that "Scepticism may continue more durable, more seductive and more secure than any reply we have found so far" (Dancy 1985: 241). But he does not therefore conclude that he actually ought to doubt common sense, science, or the existence of the external world. The role of 'the skeptic' is to be a character in the project of rebuilding knowledge, but the skeptic's position is not seriously entertained. It is part of the modern epistemologist's project.

Philosophical skepticism is part of the modern epistemological project in the same way that philosophical anarchism is part of the Rawlsian project. It is used in the Cartesian project of setting knowledge on firm foundations, once and for all. This project, as is implied by its central role in Dancy's influential and widely-used textbook, is regarded as the defining activity of modern epistemology: its central justificatory business. The philosophical skeptic, like the philosophical anarchist, appears in a project for which each is a foil and character.

•

I have so far shown that philosophical anarchism is a minority position, stalking horse and subject of debate in Rawlsian political philosophy, and that philosophical skepticism is similarly located in modern epistemology. This is not a criticism of either of these positions, or of the theorists who consider them. The problem is that, all too often, writers confidently discuss or criticise *philosophical* anarchism and skepticism as if their understandings and attacks applied to anarchism and skepticism *in general*. I now show this, before going on to consider the variation of anarchism and skepticism which makes their confidence misplaced.

2.2 Homogenisation

As Myles Burnyeat points out, "The modern philosopher feels free to construct skeptical arguments of his own and to describe them as 'what the skeptic says', without worrying whether any historical skeptic did make himself vulnerable to the crushing refutation which then follows" (Burnyeat 1983: 1). I have already quoted John Clark's remark that "It is not unusual for academic 'scholars' to gather no more evidence about the nature of anarchism than the derivation of the term, after which they can ascend to the heights of abstraction, paying attention neither to social history nor to the history of ideas" (Clark 1984: 117; see 1.5). In both cases, a lack of historical sense,

knowledge or interest leads to a confident but mistaken homogenisation of complex, various traditions.

In the case of anarchism, this homogenisation sometimes occurs quite subtly, by a slide from talking about 'philosophical anarchism' to talking about just 'anarchism'. For example: A John Simmons begins with a potentially useful distinction between the positive and the negative sides of anarchism. The former involves "A vision of autonomous, noncoercive, productive interaction among equals, liberated from and without need for distinctively political institutions, such as formal legal systems or governments or the state" (Simmons 1996: 19). The latter, either "A general critique of the state" or a "More limited critique of the specific kinds of political arrangements within which most residents of modern political societies live" (ibid). Philosophical anarchism, in Simmons' initial formulation, is a specific version of the negative side of anarchism. But he then moves from presenting philosophical anarchism as a particular and limited kind of anarchism, to writing as though all anarchisms shared its central characteristics:

> Commitment to one central claim unites all forms of anarchist political philosophy: all existing states are illegitimate. *I take this thesis to be an essential, if not the defining, element of anarchism*. (ibid: 19-20, my emphasis)

Although he is aware that philosophical anarchism is a particular, limited form of anarchism, Simmons still takes its main characteristic, the concern with the justification or legitimacy of the state, to be characteristic of all anarchism.

Simmons' account of the "Essential… element" of anarchism assimilates anarchism in general to philosophical anarchism. It allows him rapidly to move from his stated intention of discussing the second, to talking about the first. So, for example, "The minimal moral content of *anarchist judgements of state illegitimacy*" is that "The subjects of illegitimate states have no political obligations" (ibid: 22, my emphasis); or, for another example, "*Like other anarchists*, philosophical anarchists can defend their central judgements about state illegitimacy on either a priori or a posteriori grounds and, *like*

others, they take this judgement to entail the nonexistence of general political obligations" (ibid: 23, my emphasis). The difference between philosophical and other anarchists is thus smoothed down to a difference in practical results (a difference which may remind us of the difference between Descartes and Dancy):

> What is distinctive about philosophical anarchism is that its judgement of state illegitimacy... does not translate into any immediate requirement of opposition to illegitimate states. This is what leads many to contrast philosophical anarchism to political anarchism. (ibid: 23)

This admission of difference disguises a large and implausible claim of similarity. For Simmons, the only contrast between philosophical and other anarchisms is between their consequences for anti-state action. Anarchism in general is thus homogenised with philosophical anarchism. The philosophical anarchist concern, which is the Rawlsian concern, with justifying a universal state, is extended to cover the activity and thought of anarchists in general. The only difference, apparently, is that *philosophical* anarchists are quietists.

Simmons is more subtle, and more sensitive to variation within anarchism, than many writers in the debate about philosophical anarchism. But even he slides from consideration of specifically philosophical anarchism to claims about anarchism in general which have little to do with the practices or concerns of most anarchists. Modern epistemologists typically talk of 'the skeptic', and Rawlsian practitioners of the 'the anarchist', without reference to the historical variation and complexity of skepticism and anarchism. I now go on to show that this talk misrepresents both.

2.3 Variation

In this section I use the material already gathered in 1.5 on the variation of anarchism, and a parallel sketch of the variation of skepticism, to show that philosophical anarchism and skepticism are distinctive and unrepresentative forms of these wider traditions.

2.3.1 Anarchisms and philosophical anarchism

Anarchism is various: anarchism has been characterised in various incompatible ways; divided by many taxonomical schemes; and is not easily characterisable in general. Philosophical anarchism is distinctive as a particular form of this various tradition in at least three ways.

First, philosophical anarchism is performed in the institutional context of universities. By contrast, most other anarchists have been writers and activists outside academia. This is not a criticism of philosophical anarchists: I am an anarchist in an academic context, think that is a reasonable thing to be, and want to foster communication across this boundary (see 1.2). But the institutional context of philosophical anarchism does make it distinct from many other anarchisms, and means at least that we should be wary of supposing that what interests some anarchists in this context also interests others outside it.

Second, philosophical anarchists are involved in the Rawlsian project of justifying a universal state by appeal to abstract individuals, but this is not typical of anarchists in general. None of the various anarchisms and characterisations of anarchism I described in 1.5 were concerned with this issue or this tactic. Neither the word 'justification' nor the word 'legitimacy' even appears in the index to George Woodcock's classic *Anarchism*, or to Peter Marshall's more recent *Demanding the Impossible*. Anarchists, as can be seen from such histories and compendia, have been involved in a wide range of projects. Legitimacy has occasionally been an issue for anarchists, as for instance in arguments over the propriety of anarchist involvement

in the Republican government in Spain, before and during its civil war (see further chapter 12). But this is not the central, only, or even a particularly common anarchist concern.

Third, and as noted in 2.2, philosophical anarchists have typically been quietists (there does not seem to be any entailment from philosophical anarchism to political inaction, but the two have historically gone together). Robert Paul Wolff attempts to show that the state is unjustified, not to justify or even to suggest any possibility of stateless or otherwise anarchist society. Even though he attacks the legitimacy of states, he regards them as useful, and has no account of what might carry out their functions in their absence:

> Men's almost universal belief in the legitimacy of the states which rule them serves the largely positive social function of coordinating the economic and social behaviour of large numbers of people in complex, functionally differentiated and integrated societies. The fact that their belief is false does not diminish the social usefulness of the belief. It is perfectly appropriate to ask: if men cease to believe in the authority of the state, what besides force and threats will maintain an adequate level of social coordination?... I have no pat answer, and I am not even possessed of the optimistic faith that an adequate answer can be found. But it should be clear that this issue has no direct bearing on the correctness of the argument in my book. (R P Wolff 1973: 304)

Anarchism, as Wolff understands the term, can be defended without any account of anarchic sociability. It is purely a conceptual attack on the justification of the state, without any immediate implications for social life or action. In contrast, many other anarchists have taken the positive side of their anarchism – developing descriptions, and working towards the realisation, of an anarchic utopia – to be central to their projects, and have spent much of their time and effort on activities – pamphleteering and speech-making, founding schools and reading groups, conspiracy and fomenting revolution – directed towards these aims.

In these three ways, philosophical anarchism is not representative of anarchism in general. My point is not that other anarchists disagree with philosophical anarchists in, for instance, believing that some universal state *can* be justified; it is that other

anarchists have not taken part in this project at all. They have not used its terminology or tactics, have not considered its questions, and have not been concerned with its results. I emphasise that I am not arguing that Robert Paul Wolff, for instance, is 'not really an anarchist'. I have no monopoly on the use of words: if Wolff chooses to call himself a (philosophical) anarchist, he is welcome. My point is only that too many thinkers take philosophical anarchism to be representative, or its project and concerns to be typical, of anarchism in general, and therefore suppose that a refutation of Wolff is a refutation of anarchism in general. This is a mistake.

2.3.2 Skepticisms and philosophical skepticism

As discussed in 2.1.2, Descartes used recently rediscovered classical skeptical arguments, tactically, as part of his intervention in the Reformation debate about knowledge. He intended to rebuild knowledge, and his tactical use of skepticism for that purpose has been adopted by modern epistemology. But these two appearances of skeptical arguments do not exhaust the range of skeptical projects, nor of projects making use of skepticism. This section, analogously with 1.5, displays the variation of skepticism, and then, analogously with 2.3.1, shows that the generalisation assumed in the use of 'the skeptic' as a foil for the Cartesian project fails.

Descartes's use of skepticism is a watershed in its treatment, and we might, initially, divide the history of skepticism into two periods: before and after Descartes. That is, we might claim that there are two skeptical projects. First, classical skepticism, which was a therapeutic project intended to show that there was equal rational support for particular opposing truth claims, so leading both practitioner and interlocutor to suspension of judgement on their contest, and from there to tranquillity. Second, the Cartesian project already discussed, which uses skeptical arguments to knock down all but some privileged source of legitimation for belief, so leaving the ground clear for a reconstruction of knowledge on certain foundations,

once and for all. Where the classical project attempted to revalue knowledge, Descartes and his followers attempted to renovate it.

However the proposed classical project is itself various. It can be divided into Academic and Pyrrhonian projects, distinguished in particular by their different institutional contexts. The Academic project, as represented by Arcesilaus, operated in a pedagogical context where:

> A pupil would be asked to argue some positive current thesis, usually one emanating from the Stoa, and Arcesilaus would produce counter-arguments, while allowing the pupil to maintain a defence. The intended result was a stalemate, and the withholding of assent both from the thesis itself and from its denial. (Sedley 1983: 10)

On the other hand the Pyrrhonian project, as represented by Sextus Empiricus, was a personal discipline to be carried on while living:

> In accordance with everyday observances, without holding opinions – for we are not able to be utterly inactive. These everyday observances seem to be fourfold, and to consist in guidance by nature, necessitation by feelings, handing down of laws and customs, and teaching of kinds of expertise. (Sextus Empiricus 1994: 9)

Sextus' interlocutor was not a pupil but himself. How can these two be the same project when the locations, activities and stated intentions of their practitioners are so different?

We can go on to note that Descartes is only the best remembered of a number of users of the rediscovered skepticism of his time:

> Figures such as G F Pico, Omer Talon, Fransisco Sanches, Pedro de Valencia, Gentian Hervet, and Michel de Montaigne put skepticism to exceedingly different uses. In common with many other philosophical doctrines… those of skepticism were interpreted, used, modified, and indeed perverted in many different ways. (Schmitt 1983: 241)

There is a wide range of historical and possible skeptical projects, and the confident association of skepticism and 'the skeptic' with the character in Descartes's project is an unwarranted generalisation.

The association of 'the skeptic' with Cartesianism is not even appropriate to the modern, common-speech use of 'skepticism'. In

ordinary use, that notion is subject to as many changes of sense and emphasis as is the related notion of 'realism'. 'Skeptic' can have the pejorative implication of cynicism, but also the approving implication of tough-minded refusal to accept a claim on authority. A 'skeptic about religion' has 'seen through all the rubbish'. Sometimes this means not that she has suspended judgement, but that she dogmatically rejects religious claims as obvious lies. More positively, a skeptic maintains a cautious open-mindedness, guarding herself against dangerous enthusiasm. Or, skepticism is a conscious technique of scholarship, intended as a guard against wish-fulfilment and propaganda, without which "We are apt to slip into complacent self-deception and dogmatism" (Kurtz 1992: 9). 'Skeptical' can be used both of the claim that X does not exist or is not so – there is no God, there is no solution to the problem of political obligation, freemasonry has no historical link with the Templars – and of the claim that we do not, or cannot, know whether or not X exists or is so.

Skepticism has been too varied in its history to support the simple generalisation assumed in the confident use of 'the skeptic' in modern epistemology. What alternative generalisation it might support is an open question. But the Cartesian tactical use of 'the skeptic' as a foil is only one, distinctive form of skepticism, and cannot represent the whole.

2.4 Conclusion

Philosophical anarchism and philosophical skepticism are distinctive forms and not representative of anarchism and skepticism in general, and are somewhat analogous, as minority negative positions and stalking horses in the context of particular, academic justificatory projects. Justification is both a moral and an epistemic notion: we may expect institutions including states to be morally justified, and claims of knowledge to be rationally justified. So, we should not be surprised that a position understood as attacking the moral

justification of the state is thought analogous to a position understood as attacking the rational justification of knowledge. Where the analogy is between specifically philosophical anarchism and skepticism, it is harmless and may be helpful. But no such limitation is made. The analogy is extended, quickly and frequently unnoticed, to cover anarchism and skepticism in general, and this is not only unwarranted, but serves to maintain the misrepresentation of both in modern philosophy.

I have not attacked Wolff, Dancy, philosophical anarchism or philosophical skepticism for adopting their particular projects and tactics. I have argued only that those projects and tactics distinguish them from anarchism and skepticism in general, in such a way that refutations cannot touch these wider traditions.

I have not intended to argue that the Rawlsian tradition is monolithic or unchanging. My purpose has been to discover the source of an image of anarchism in a particular historical moment: the transformation of political philosophy in the 1970s. Many more recent contributions to political philosophy, including contributions by Rawls himself (e.g. 1996), have criticised or modified the emphasis and tactics of the project I have described. The thought of Robert Paul Wolff is not currently a central concern in political philosophy. However, the image of anarchism which was one of the minor products of this distinct moment has survived, and was in need of criticism.

I have taken no position on the cogency of specifically philosophical anarchism, nor on whether extreme skepticism really is unacceptable. My tactic against the marginalisation of anarchists, on the grounds that they are skeptics (or that their position is significantly analogous to skepticism), has been to show that anarchists are not in general (philosophical) skeptics. So, even if skepticism is unacceptable, anarchism escapes the diagnosis.

There is an analogy between anarchism and skepticism: both are various traditions which have been mistakenly homogenised by particular projects and debates. Within the Rawlsian project,

anarchism is homogenised as philosophical anarchism, and thought analogous to philosophical skepticism. But this has little to do with anarchism in general: the accusation falls at the first hurdle of associating it with extreme skepticism.

3 ◇ Primitivism

Anarchists are commonly supposed to hold deeply optimistic views about human nature, and to be nostalgic for 'primitive', as opposed to 'civilised', societies. "Traditionally, anarchists are seen to possess an optimistic conception of human nature, an optimism essential to the success of their vision of a stateless society" (Morland 1997: vii). According to James Joll, "The fundamental idea that man is by nature good and that it is institutions that corrupt him remains the basis of all anarchist thought" (Joll 1979: 16), and anarchism shares the mental pathology of Christian heretical movements which demand and expect "A return to the Golden Age of the Garden of Eden before the Fall" (ibid: 6). Roger Scruton claims that "Typical anarchist beliefs" include that "Men are benign by nature and corrupted by government" (Scruton 1983: 15). Irving Horowitz, that "Anarchism has as its theoretical underpinning an idealization of natural man in contrast and in opposition to civilized man... What is offered is a belief in 'natural man' as more fundamental and historically prior to 'political man'" (Horowitz 1974: 16). Norman Barry, that "Communitarian [as opposed to libertarian or propertarian] anarchism depends upon an optimistic view of human nature as essentially benign and cooperative" (Barry 1991: 5). I argue here that these are false generalisations.

Claims that anarchists think like this have often been used to ground criticism. Robert Dahl, for instance, offers as "A critique of anarchism" (Dahl 1989: 43) the thought that "While some romantic anarchists may imagine our returning to the tiny autonomous groups of some preliterate societies, short of a cataclysm that no sane person wants, a return to the infancy of the species looks to be impossible or, if not impossible, highly undesirable" (ibid: 46). Benjamin Barber, for another instance, attacks anarchists because:

> Their view of actual men is wildly romanticized. Hunger, greed, ambition, avarice, the will to power, to glory, to honour, and to

> security which have played some role in all traditional ethnologies find no place in the anarchist portrait of man. (Barber 1972: 18)

Barber directs this attack specifically against American hippy anarchists like Abbie Hoffman, but is explicit that he believes the tradition from William Godwin onwards to be implicated in this wild romanticism. His evidence in fact consists of unsupported claims about the elitist psychology of individual anarchists, and a few out-of-context quotations. As another example, the only support Horowitz can give for his characterisation of anarchism comes from Denis Diderot, who, in Horowitz's own words, "Advocated a parliamentary monarchism in which representation would be elected by propertied classes" (Horowitz 1964: 65-6), and was therefore clearly not an anarchist. It is therefore tempting to dismiss the whole line of attack as a self-sustaining polemic.

However, there are two forms of criticism of this type which require a more detailed response. I call them accusations of 'primitivism', for convenience and because each can be related to one of the various meanings of 'primitive'. This chapter will display, analyse and refute two important forms of the assertion of anarchist primitivism.

'Primitive' is a complex term. It can mean unsophisticated, savage, stupid or childish; pure; original or primary; low or simple; an early stage of evolution; a relic or survival in a world that has moved on. It can refer to people or societies without sophisticated technology or state-like institutions. 'Primitive' stands in some complex relation to a cluster of terms including 'savage', 'native', 'aboriginal', 'undeveloped' and 'prehistoric', and also to opposing terms like 'civilised', 'developed', 'complex', 'sophisticated' and 'modern'. We should note the term's ideological weight. Calling societies or people 'primitive' has often been involved in, or even stood for, justifications of marginalisation, oppression, and extermination. The term can also be used in a less extreme but still polemical way, to indicate a comfortable value judgement: 'we are civilised, they are primitive'.

The two meanings of the term which relate to the two criticisms of anarchism I discuss here are, 1) primitive as pure, and 2) primitive as original or primary. The criticisms which involve these meanings are: 1) the claim that anarchism depends on an unrealistic notion of uncorrupted human nature; and 2) the claim that anarchists are nostalgic for a mythical golden age. I call these the accusations of 'human nature primitivism' and 'golden age primitivism', respectively, and define and respond to each in turn.

3.1 Anarchism and human nature primitivism

Ideas of human nature are various, important and contested. The range of such ideas includes, for instance, Christian, liberal, conservative individualist, Rousseauian, Darwinian, Freudian, existentialist and feminist human natures (for accounts of these and more examples, see Chaney 1990 & Loptson 1995). They are important, first, because so much can depend on them: "For individuals, the meaning and purpose of our lives, what we ought to do or strive for, what we may hope to achieve or to become; for human societies, what vision of the human community we may hope to work toward and what sort of social changes we should make" (Stevenson & Haberman 1998: 3). That is, because very different individual and political aims and understandings can be based on different accounts of human nature. Second, because claims about human nature are often an effective means of criticism, both of current arrangements (ibid: 9) and of schemes for their reform (Duncan 1983: 5). They are contested both because of their variety and their importance. David Morland claims that human nature is in fact "An *essentially* contested concept" (Morland 1997: 3, my emphasis; for more on essential contestation, see 5.1). We can accept at least that the idea is a locus of continuing argument, both in its own right and as a battleground of political ideologies which involve particular claims about human nature. Existentialist and other negative claims about human nature – at the limit, that there is no

such thing – can also perform these functions of grounding aims and analysis, and of criticism.

Historically and typically, an idea of human nature is a set of claims that some specified character: 1) is real or permanent or transhistorically present in humans; 2) is shared by all humans; 3) distinguishes humans by kind and not just by degree from the rest of the world, and especially from (other) animals; 4) is separate from the distortion and masking which can be created by current circumstances; and 5) stands as a moral, social or political norm for humans. These components are not necessarily connected. What is real or permanent rather than merely apparent or transitory in a human might not be shared by all or only other humans, what is shared by all humans might not have any normative force, and what distinguishes humans from other animals might precisely be the distortion of current circumstances. Different ideas of human nature make this set of claims about different characters; negative ideas deny that some or all of these claims are true of any character. Some ideas of human nature have both positive and negative elements: some post-Darwinian ideas, for instance, have made the negative claim that humans are not distinct in kind from other animals, because all are creatures evolved by natural selection, and the positive claim that what is shared by humans and other creatures is being vehicles for 'selfish genes' (see for instance Dawkins 1989).

If anarchists are in general human nature primitivists, then their shared idea of human nature must be that what is real, permanent, ahistorical, shared, distinguishing, separate and normative in humans is a nature which is wholly pure and good, meaning virtuous, benevolent, altruistic, reasonable, peaceable, cooperative or loving (or some combination of some or all of these), and not vicious, malicious, selfish, irrational, aggressive or hateful. Even if this is the anarchist idea of human nature, that is a criticism of anarchism only if the idea is inaccurate, and its inaccuracy is such as to make it unusable as a norm. That a claim or story is literally false does not necessarily make it useless: it need not be the case that

someone called Raphael Hythloday really visited a place called Utopia for the idea of Utopia to be a standard of criticism for the real world. Similarly, that an account of human nature is literally false does not necessarily mean it is unusable.

There are three ways of defending anarchism against the critical accusation of human nature primitivism: first, to show that anarchists do not in fact share such an idea of human nature; second, to show that this idea is true; or third, to show that although it is false it is still useful as a moral, social or political norm. I take the first path, and show by counter-example that the accusation is false.

Some anarchists think it enough, in stating their views of human nature, to distance themselves from other anarchists who, they suppose, do hold the human nature primitivist view. Jacques Ellul (1991), for instance, distinguishes himself from mainstream anarchism on two grounds. First, he is a Christian. Second, he does not believe that "An anarchist society – with no state, no organisation, no hierarchy, and no authorities – is possible" (Ellul 1991: 19). This anarchist "Vision or hope of a society with neither authorities nor institutions rests on the twofold conviction that people are by nature good and that society alone is corrupt" (ibid), but Ellul does not accept that account of human nature. He thinks that the "Anarchist fight" (ibid) is worth fighting, but that its goal is unreachable, because of flawed (that is, fallen) human nature. Ellul shows that his Christianity differentiates him from other anarchists with a concrete example. Guy Debord and his Situationist comrades refused to let him join: "Since I was a Christian I could not belong to their movement" (ibid: 3). But in the case of Ellul's view of human nature, the parallel evidence is unsupported attribution of the view with which he disagrees to the unnamed "True anarchist" (ibid: 19).

Other and more famous anarchists, who perhaps wrote before the accusation of human nature primitivism became widespread, simply state quite different ideas of human nature. The accusation is the generalisation that anarchists, as a group, share and use the particular idea of human nature defined above. One counter-example

is enough to falsify a generalisation, but to make the point more strongly, and for further purposes described in 3.3, I give two: the ideas of human nature in the works of Godwin and of Kropotkin.

3.1.1 Godwin's idea of human nature

William Godwin was born in 1756, brought up in his family's dissenting Christianity, and initially followed his father and grandfather into Presbyterian ministry. After a period as minister to a congregation of dissenters in Ware, he renounced his faith and, in 1783, moved to London. He would spend the rest of his life there, supporting himself by writing novels, plays, political tracts and journalism, and by borrowing money from, amongst many, his son-in-law Percy Shelley. (Godwin 1992; Marshall 1984; Marshall 1986; Woodcock 1946.)

Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (1985; first published 1793), which made Godwin first famous, then caricatured, and finally (in combination with his frank memoirs of his wife Mary Wollstonecraft) reviled, is a long, confusing and perhaps self-contradictory text. It can be read as utilitarian, as extreme rationalist, as the effort of a lapsed Christian to restate his faith in secular terms, as a celebration of the French revolution, and as a founding work of anarchist theory (for discussion of these possible readings, see Philp 1986, especially part 1). What is important here is the idea of human nature which it asserts.

Godwin's idea of human nature is twofold, and essentially critical. He makes two claims, and in each case its value is that it refutes an objection to his prescription for and prediction of future human sociability:

> I shall attempt to prove two things: first, that the actions and dispositions of mankind are the offspring of circumstances and events, and not of any original determination that they bring into the world; and, secondly, that the great stream of our voluntary actions essentially depends, not upon the direct and immediate impulses of sense, but upon the decisions of the understanding. (Godwin 1985: 97)

That is, first, "The characters of men originate in their external circumstances" (ibid: 96), and not in any innate characteristics; and second, "The voluntary actions of men originate in their opinions" (ibid: 116), and not in their passions. So, first, there are no innate bars to the transformation of human character; and second, "Our prospects of melioration depend on the progress of enquiry and the general advancement of knowledge" (ibid: 117). This means that through progress in social and political knowledge, the exercise of individual judgement, and the transformation of political institutions, Godwin's anarchic utopia is realisable.

It is irrelevant whether or not that claim, or the critical claims about human nature which support it, are believable. Anarchists are supposed, according to the accusation of human nature primitivism, to hold a particular idea of human nature, but Godwin's stated idea is utterly unlike it. For him, the only things which are permanent and shared in humans are the absence of innate limitation and the possibility of true and motivating judgement. This idea of human nature does moral and political work only in that it supports the practical possibility of a utopia of rational, sincere, mutually censorious neighbours always working without partiality for the greatest total happiness. That utopia does further work in providing both a target for social change and a critical comparison with our current arrangements. Godwin not only makes no assertions about the innate purity and goodness of humans, but explicitly denies that any such claim about innate character could be true. For Godwin, pure humans exist only in the imagined future, and only as a result of the transformation of current humans and their social institutions, through the progress of knowledge.

This is my first counter-example to the generalisation that anarchists are human nature primitivists: Godwin was not.

3.1.2 Kropotkin's idea of human nature

Peter Kropotkin was born in 1842, a younger son of the Russian aristocracy. A geographer, naturalist and mathematician, at nineteen a personal page of the Tsar Alexander II, and in the 1860s a military administrator in Siberia, he repudiated his privilege and scientific career to become a revolutionary, political exile and anarchist theorist. The major influences on his life and activity were his older brother Alexander; the serfs on his family estate; the socialist movements, and in particular the Bakuninite Jura Federation, which he encountered in Europe; and, most importantly here, Charles Darwin, as understood through the Russian evolutionist tradition which rejected Darwin's Malthusian metaphor of individualist struggle. (Avrich 1988; Kropotkin 1899; Miller 1976; Todes 1987; Woodcock & Avakumović 1990.)

Kropotkin approaches the idea of human nature in two main ways: first, as a defender of the possibility of anarchism and communism; and second, as a Darwinian naturalist.

In the first case, Kropotkin notes that it is a common objection to "Communism, and socialism altogether" that:

> The idea is so old, and yet it has never been realised. Schemes of ideal states haunted the thinkers of ancient Greece; later on, the early Christians joined in communist groups; centuries later, large communist brotherhoods came into existence during the reform movement. Then, the same ideals were revived during the great English and French Revolutions; and finally, quite lately, in 1848, a revolution, inspired to a great extent with socialist ideals, took place in France. 'And yet, you see,' we are told, 'how far away is the realization of your schemes. Don't you think that there is some fundamental error in your understanding of human nature and its needs?' (Kropotkin 1995: 4)

We might expect a human nature primitivist to respond to this pseudo-historical derivation of an idea of human nature – the idea that it renders us incapable of communism – with a positive counter-assertion. We might expect an anarchist primitivist, in particular, to respond with the assertion that real, pure and good human nature,

which is capable of communism, has only been corrupted and thwarted by state reaction.

Kropotkin does nothing of the sort. Instead, he suggests a more careful reading of history which leads him to two conclusions. 1) That "Hundreds of millions of men have succeeded in maintaining amongst themselves, in their village communities, for many hundreds of years, one of the main elements of socialism – the common ownership of the chief instrument of production, the land, and the apportionment of the same according to the labour capacities of the different families" (ibid). And 2) that "All we are authorized to conclude is, that mankind has not yet found the proper form for combining, on communistic principles, agriculture with a suddenly developed industry and a rapidly growing international trade" (ibid: 5). Far from asserting any permanent characteristic of human nature, Kropotkin tentatively interprets the empirical evidence of human history. His interest is not in permanent characteristics at all, but in some temporary, changing and potentially changeable features of human social activity, as they have appeared. Human nature appears here only in a criticism of communism, in order that Kropotkin can refute that criticism. This concern with history, and with the tentative conclusions that can be drawn from it, appears throughout his work.

In the second case, Kropotkin approaches human nature as a naturalist and Darwinian. For Kropotkin, humans are part of the wider natural world, and in *Mutual Aid* (1989; first published in book form 1902) he attempts to show that cooperation within species including the human is a major factor in evolution (not, as has sometimes been asserted of him, the only factor). The details and force of this argument are irrelevant here. What is important is that far from asserting a permanent and pure human nature, Kropotkin uses detailed empirical evidence of change and its causes to derive tentative conclusions about current humans and their social characteristics. Humans are understood in *Mutual Aid* as part of the wider and changing system of nature (and, in typical nineteenth-century evolutionist terms, as high in a hierarchy of development). In

an evolutionary world, there can be no human nature in the strong sense defined in 3.1, because nothing is permanent or transhistorically present in humans. Kropotkin is interested in what humans and other creatures have come to be, and how. His central conclusion is that humans, as they have evolved, have tendencies both to egalitarianism and mutual aid - good characteristics - and to hierarchy and selfishness - bad ones. That is, that they are not wholly pure and good, but have both good and bad tendencies, "Now the one and now the other taking the upper hand at different periods of history" (Kropotkin 1995a: 236).

Kropotkin is not particularly interested in permanent, shared, distinguishing, separate and normative characteristics in either of his approaches to human nature. Nor does he assert that human nature is pure and good. He investigates the nature of current humans as an empirical fact and as a moment in a long transformation, discoverable by research in biology and history, and admitting only tentative conclusions.

This is my second counter-example to the generalisation that anarchists are human nature primitivists: Kropotkin was not.

•

It is unlikely that partisans of the accusation of human nature primitivism literally and formally mean the generalisation 'all anarchists are human nature primitivists'. If any do, they have been proved wrong twice over, unless they are prepared to argue that neither Godwin nor Kropotkin was really an anarchist. If, as is more likely, they mean only that most anarchists are human nature primitivists, or that anarchism tends to partake of that primitivism, then the formal way to test the claim would be to go through all anarchists, testing each: but how are we to list 'all anarchists'? The two counter-examples given above must, at least, throw doubt on the accusation. Godwin and Kropotkin are widely recognised to be anarchists, and are among the most important theorists of anarchism. If they were not human nature primitivists, stronger evidence than I can find will be needed to make the general accusation and derived

criticisms stick. In the absence of that further evidence, we must accept that anarchists are not in general human nature primitivists.

3.2 Anarchism and golden age primitivism

Golden age primitivism is centrally a value claim about a general picture of human historical development. In that general picture, humanity or human society are envisioned as having changed from some primary, natural or foundational state to some elaborated or artificial one. This change is understood as both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative change, at its simplest, is from 'primitive' to 'civilised', but has been further divided in various ways. The quantitative change is typically measured on a scale of complexity (from simple to complex), or of height (from lower to higher forms), or both. I consider this kind of 'evolutionary' picture further in 8.1.2. For the moment, I note that such pictures are common, and used for a wide variety of purposes. Various kinds of evidence can be used to characterise the primary state, but typically the theorist will use historical and archaeological evidence about past social forms, or anthropological evidence about current social forms which are conceived as relics of the primary state, or both.

A golden age primitivist claims that "The highest degree of excellence or happiness in man's life existed at the beginning of history" (Lovejoy & Boas 1973: 2). That is, that the qualitative and quantitative change was for the worse, whether it is thought of as gradual (the golden age lapsing into silver) or sudden (the fall and expulsion from Eden). This type of primitivism's central normative metaphors are return (or its tragic impossibility) and the dismantling or destruction of the elaboration which moved us away from the primary state. Its normative focus is on an ideal past. Golden age primitivism is in direct competition with theories or stories which use the same picture of history, but make the opposite value claim: that the qualitative and quantitative change was for the better.

We can now see that although human nature and golden age primitivism are analytically distinct, it is possible to hold both positions, or a position involving elements of both. Apart from archaeological or anthropological evidence, another way of supporting a characterisation of a golden age is to use claims about an uncorrupted human nature, which was fully expressed before whatever elaboration produced our current arrangements occurred. Or, we might support a characterisation of human nature as wholly good with claims about how humans lived in a primary, natural, or undistorted state.

The possible practical results of accepting golden age primitivism are various. We might, for instance, try to return to the golden age, whether individually or collectively; or lapse into quietist nostalgia; or take the ideal as a reason for bitter rejection of the current world. Whatever practical conclusions anarchists are supposed to draw from their alleged primitivism, the critics' central assertions must be that: 1) anarchists hold such an idea of a past golden age or Eden, and use the metaphors of return and dismantling or destruction; and 2) this idea invalidates their theories because it is false in such a way as to make it useless as a norm.

As in 3.1, there are three ways of defending anarchism against the critical assertion of golden age primitivism: first, to show that anarchists do not in fact share this idea; second, to show that it is true; or third, to show that, although false, it is still useful as a norm. And, as in 3.1, I take the first path and disprove the critics' generalisation by counter-example.

3.2.1 Godwin on the shape of history

Godwin begins his scattered consideration of history by repeating the "Old observation that the history of mankind is little else than a record of crimes" (Godwin 1985: 83). If we consider the repeated war, torture and despotism which historians record, we may believe that little has changed or will change:

> An opinion has been extensively entertained 'that the differences of the human species in different ages and countries, particularly so far as relates to moral principles of conduct, are extremely insignificant and trifling; that we are deceived in this respect by distance and confounded by glare; but that in reality the virtues and vices of men, collectively taken, always have remained, and of consequence,' it is said, 'always will remain, nearly at the same point'. (ibid: 156)

But, he says, this opinion is shown to be false by "A summary recollection of the actual history of our species" (ibid: 156-7). For Godwin, that history shows "Man" gradually improving "As an intellectual being" (ibid: 157). He deduces from this intellectual improvement, together with his argument that "The voluntary actions of men originate in their opinions" (ibid: 116, discussed in 3.1.1), that human moral improvement keeps and will keep pace with it. "Man in his original state" was "A being capable of impressions and knowledge to an unbounded extent, but not having as yet received the one or cultivated the other" (ibid: 157). Godwin contrasts the history of pain and oppression that he has noted with "All that science and genius have effected" (ibid), his major examples being the development of language and of writing. Far from harking back to a golden age from which we have descended, Godwin pictures history as recording upward progress in knowledge and consequently in value.

The conclusion which Godwin draws from this record of progress is that humans are "Susceptible of *perpetual* improvement" (ibid: 156, my emphasis). The derivation is surely invalid, but that is not the criticism we are dealing with here, and Godwin is only one of many who have made that perfectionist claim (see Passmore 2000). Godwin, as an anarchist, is accused of golden age primitivism, but what he actually says is that:

> There is no science that is not capable of additions; there is no art that may not be carried to a still higher perfection. If this be true of all other sciences, why not of morals? If this be true of all other arts, why not of social institution? ...This is the temper with which we ought to engage in the study of political truth. Let us look back, that we may profit by the experience of mankind; but let us not look back as if the wisdom of our ancestors was such as to leave no room for future improvement. (ibid: 163)

That is, he gives as explicit a rejection of golden age primitivism as could be expected from someone who had not had the criticism put to him. The central normative metaphors of golden age primitivism are return and dismantling or destruction; Godwin's are (perpetual) improvement and further building. Where its normative focus is an ideal past, his is an ideal future.

This is my first counter-example to the generalisation that anarchists are golden age primitivists: Godwin was not.

3.2.2 Kropotkin on the shape of history

I have already noted Kropotkin's interest in natural and social history (3.1.2). In *Mutual Aid* he treats the two as continuous, moving from mutual aid amongst animals (Kropotkin 1989: chapters 1 & 2), to mutual aid amongst 'savages' (3), amongst 'the barbarians' (4), and in medieval cities (5 & 6), to mutual aid amongst 'ourselves' (7 & 8). This natural and social history has a double purpose. First, Kropotkin intends to show that mutual aid is a factor in evolution. That is, to show that one of the things which must be taken into account in order to explain the facts of current animal and human nature, and their development, is mutual aid. For him, our current world cannot be explained only as the evolutionary result of individualist struggle. Second, he intends to display and celebrate the successes and continuing existence of that tendency towards mutual aid, despite undeniable division, self-assertion and oppression.

Kropotkin concludes *Mutual Aid* with two claims, one general and the other more specific. The general claim is that:

> The animal species, in which individual struggle has been reduced to its narrowest limits, and the practice of mutual aid has attained the greatest development, are invariably the most numerous, the most prosperous, and the most open to further progress. The mutual protection which is obtained in this case, the possibility of attaining old age and of accumulating experience, the higher intellectual development, and the further growth of sociable habits, secure the maintenance of the species, its extension, and its further progressive evolution. The

> unsociable species, on the contrary, are doomed to decay. (Kropotkin 1989: 293)

That is, that evolution has given rise to a tendency to mutual aid, because that tendency is adaptive, while the opposite tendency is maladaptive. The more specific claim is that:

> The periods where institutions based on the mutual-aid tendency took their greatest development were also the periods of the greatest progress in arts, industry, and science. In fact, the study of the inner life of the mediaeval city and of the ancient Greek cities reveals the fact that the combination of mutual aid, as it was practised within the guild and the Greek clan, with a large initiative which was left to the individual and the group by means of the federative principle, gave to mankind the two greatest periods of its history – the ancient Greek city and the mediaeval city periods; while the ruin of the above institutions during the State periods of history, which followed, corresponded in both cases to a rapid decay. (ibid: 296-7)

That is, that the expression of the mutual aid tendency has good social and political consequences, while its eclipse by the equally real opposing tendency has bad ones. In this second conclusion Kropotkin certainly does claim that there have been better times than now (or rather, than the late nineteenth century). But he does not place these better times at the beginning of history or of a single value-gradient, either for the better or for the worse. Indeed, he does not appear to recognise the notion of a beginning to specifically human history, since he treats human as continuous with natural history. Instead, Kropotkin pictures history as a dialectical process between egalitarian mutual aid and hierarchical self-assertive tendencies and social forms, sometimes the one and sometimes the other gaining the upper hand. That first tendency, although now in eclipse, has not disappeared: "Neither the crushing powers of the centralized state nor the teachings of mutual hatred and pitiless struggle... could weed out the feeling of human solidarity, deeply lodged in men's understanding and heart, because it has been nurtured by all our preceding evolution" (ibid: 292). The continuing existence of this mutual aid tendency entitles us to (cautious) optimism about the future.

Again: the central normative metaphors of golden age primitivism are return and dismantling or destruction; its focus is an ideal past. Kropotkin does not recommend return to any earlier state, but the expression of one continuing tendency of human life over another. He does recommend dismantling one set of social forms – states and capitalism – but he wants to replace it with another, better one, not to dig back down to some simple or primary foundation. And his focus is a better future, not an ideal past.

This is my second counter-example to the generalisation that anarchists are golden age primitivists: Kropotkin was not.

•

As with my argument against the accusation of human nature primitivism in 3.1, it is unlikely that partisans of the accusation of golden age primitivism literally and formally mean the generalisation '*all* anarchists…'. And again, the counter-examples above throw doubt on, but do not completely disprove, the looser claim they probably do mean.

These interpretations of Godwin and Kropotkin are not intended as defences of their arguments. I have no brief here to show that either was correct. All I need to show, and have shown, is that they do not hold the views attributed to them by the accusations of human nature or of golden age primitivism. This must, at minimum, make us doubt that those accusations are in general true of anarchism, and I suggest ought to make us reject them altogether. Anarchists are neither human nature nor golden age primitivists.

3.3 Generalisations about anarchism

In 1.5, I sketched the variety of anarchism by noting some generalisations and internal distinctions which have been made about it and between different forms of it. In chapter 2 I used that sketch to show that the central, Rawlsian concern of philosophical anarchism, the impossibility of justifying a universal state or its authority, is not the central concern of anarchism more generally. There is an often-

made generalisation that anarchism is a political form of skepticism, but it is false. I have shown here that two further often-made generalisations are also false: anarchists are not, in general, either human nature or golden age primitivists.

I emphasise that these negative claims are about generalisations. I have not argued that no anarchist is a primitivist (nor that no anarchist is a philosophical anarchist). Anarchism is various, and some self-described anarchists may hold an idea of human nature as wholly pure and good, or admire and even desire to emulate 'primitive' (primary, natural or foundational) social forms. It is also open to future anarchists to do so. However many anarchists are not primitivists in either of these ways, and so being an anarchist does not entail being a primitivist. According to Sébastien Faure, "There is not, and there cannot be, a libertarian *Creed* or *Catechism*" (Faure 1977: 62). But if we imagine that there could be an anarchist catechism, it would not include a statement of primitivist belief.

Nor would such an imagined catechism include *any* particular claims about human nature. The point of giving two counter-examples to the accusation of human nature primitivism was, first, to make the point against that generalisation more strongly than one example could, but also, second, to suggest that anarchists do not share some other, non-primitivist account of human nature. Godwin and Kropotkin not only do not share that idea, they do not share any idea of human nature. For Godwin, humans are rational and motivated by their judgement, have no innate bars to transformation through education, and are subject to perpetual improvement. For Kropotkin, humans are evolved creatures, related to the rest of the natural world, and as a result of that evolution have opposed tendencies towards different kinds of sociability. So, there is no orthodox anarchist view of human nature. Even if accepting some set of claims is necessary to be called an anarchist in the ordinary sense of the term, those claims do not include a view of human nature.

Nor would the catechism include a particular view of the shape and moral direction of history. For Godwin, history is a gradual

upward progress driven by the increase of knowledge. For Kropotkin, a dialectic of anarchic versus hierarchical tendencies. Both focus more on the future than on the ideal past of the golden age primitivist, but where Godwin celebrates an inevitable and ideal future, Kropotkin merely argues for the possibility of a better one. So, again, even if an anarchist must accept some orthodox claims, they do not include a view of history.

3.4 Summary and conclusion

I began by noting the common accusation that anarchists are in general deeply optimistic about human nature, or nostalgic for 'primitive' society, or both. I then tested these two generalisations by specifying the claims primitivists of these two sorts make, and comparing them to the claims of two major anarchist theorists, William Godwin and Peter Kropotkin. I showed that neither of them hold the views attributed to them by the accusations of human nature or golden age primitivism. So, the generalisations are false: anarchists are not in general either kind of primitivist. I also noted that Godwin and Kropotkin not only do not hold and share primitivist ideas, but that they do not share any idea about either human nature or the moral direction and shape of history. So, being an anarchist does not require accepting any one view on either of those topics. Anarchism is not in general characterised by any particular view either of human nature or of history.

My analyses of Godwin and Kropotkin have more general consequences for how we should think about anarchism. Godwin and Kropotkin were intensely involved in major intellectual currents of their times. Godwin was shaped by nonconformist Christianity and especially by (one strand of) Enlightenment thought. Kropotkin, by the political and theoretical ferment that followed the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859. So, anarchists are not in general the marginal or isolated figures they are sometimes painted.

The conclusion that anarchists are not primitivists also has consequences for how we think about anarchism. The force of primitivist arguments of both kinds is that they hold out the promise that if only our current institutions and arrangements, however conceived, could be removed, then everything would be fine. Human nature primitivism promises that once some distorting influence is removed, real and good humanity will express itself; golden age primitivism, that once the elaboration of the decline or fall is removed, we will be left with a good, simple life; combinations of the two, that the distortion is the elaboration, and that once it is gone, we will return to the good and natural life with which we began. I call this powerful form of polemic 'post-apocalyptic', for convenience and after the genre of fiction which imagines the aftermath of some disastrous destruction of current social forms and institutions[1]. Anarchists are not in general primitivists, and do not typically share the post-apocalyptic faith. The anarchist utopia is one specific social form among many possible ones, not merely the absence of states, or capitalism, or any of the other features of our current arrangements which anarchists criticise. Anarchists claim that an anarchic utopia is a possible social form, not that it is a golden age to which we might return, nor that it would be the result of the undistorted expression of a wholly good human nature. Much of the rest of this thesis will be devoted to theorising and supporting that claim about possibility.

However, first: given that anarchists are not primitivists, the obvious question is, Why have they so often been accused of primitivism? I take up that question in my next chapter.

---

[1] I do not mean to suggest that post-apocalyptic literature in general claims that everything would be fine after the disaster. *Some Will Not Die* (Budrys 1964), for instance, is extremely pessimistic about post-disaster society, possibly because of Budrys' equally pessimistic view of human nature; *The City, Not Long After* (Murphy 1990) offers both good and bad possibilities. For analyses of the apocalyptic trope in science-fiction, see Seed (2000).

4 ◇ Criticism and Social Possibility

This chapter has two purposes. First, to explain why anarchists have so often been falsely accused of primitivism. Second, to discover in that explanation a common anarchist rhetorical trope, which I will theorise and deploy in later chapters in order to prove my main thesis, that the anarchist utopia is possible.

4.1 The accusation of human nature primitivism

It is difficult to explain why anarchists have so often been characterised as human nature primitivists, when they have so often denied it and so often given clearly non-primitivist accounts of human nature. I tentatively suggest three possible explanations.

First: the accusation may derive from misinterpretation of anarchist correctives to extreme pessimism about human nature. Someone who believes that humans are wholly self-interested may read anarchist claims that humans are also or sometimes altruistic as expressing unbounded optimism. But as I showed in chapter 3, that reading is a mistake. Kropotkin, for instance, believes that humans have evolved both self-interested and altruistic tendencies. Godwin, that whether humans are selfish or altruistic depends on their education and rational judgement, and not on any innate character. While these claims do not entail human nature primitivism, the misreading is understandable in the context of extreme pessimist assumptions about human nature.

Second: the accusation may derive from a tacit assumption that *only* a picture of human nature as wholly good could justify belief in the possibility of the anarchic utopia. As I noted in 3.1, ideas of human nature are important for many political purposes and theories. But that does not mean that all such purposes and theories need to invoke some picture of human nature. I will show in later chapters

that belief in the possibility of the anarchic utopia can be justified by an empirical investigation of human sociability as it has appeared, with reference only to a minimalist and non-normative idea of human nature. So, this mistake rests in the first place on a failure of argumentative imagination. In the second place, even if an anarchist did base her position on some rich and normative account of human nature, it is not obvious that it would have to be wholly good. To anticipate chapter 13: the anarchist utopia does not involve a total absence of conflict or selfishness. So, even an anarchist who did base her belief in the possibility of utopia on such an account of human nature would not have to picture it as wholly good.

Third: that the accusation of human nature primitivism is so widespread may be to do with the way characterisations of anarchism have been written. Perhaps most such accusations are based not on readings of anarchist texts, but on characterisations in earlier textbooks, themselves based on still earlier ones. If this is the case, then the accusation is just an artefact of scholarship: a meme[1] rather than a misreading *of anarchism* at all.

These three possibilities are not mutually exclusive, and particular accusations of human nature primitivism may be grounded on combinations of some or all of them. But the problem with them as explanations is that there is no conclusive evidence for any in the literature on anarchism. In 4.2 I will suggest an explanation of the accusation of golden age primitivism which might also help explain this accusation, but for the moment, I leave it as an admitted puzzle.

---

[1] 'Meme' is Richard Dawkins' (1989) term for a putative unit of cultural transmission, analogous to genes, which are supposed to explain cultural 'evolution' by their differential survival. I use it here only as shorthand for the idea that the apparently high *survival* value of the belief that anarchists are human nature primitivists may be to do with how it 'reproduces' itself, not with its *truth* value.

4.2 The accusation of golden age primitivism

There are better reasons for the mistaken accusation of golden age than of human nature primitivism: its reasonable element is the recognition of a rhetorical trope or figure of speech widely used by anarchists. In the style which appears to support the accusation, this trope characterises some past or contemporary non-hierarchical, non-urban, 'primitive' social form or group in rosy terms, and then unfavourably compares our own current arrangements with it. So, for instance, Kropotkin characterises 'savage' sociability by using both the archaeology and the anthropology of his day. It is worth repeating the point made in 3.2, that 'evolutionary' pictures of history are typically supported by archaeological evidence about past social forms, or anthropological evidence about current ones conceived as relics, or both. It is also worth noting, however, that the combined use of such archaeological and anthropological evidence is also common practice in modern archaeology, without commitment to 'evolutionary' pictures, and is known as "Ethnoarchaeology" (Fagan 1995: 24; see also David & Kramer 2001). So, Kropotkin's use of these forms of evidence does not in itself convict him of golden age primitivism.

In the first, archaeological case, Kropotkin argues against Hobbes and against T H Huxley that past, stateless humans did not, as a matter of fact, live in a state of war of each against all[2]. According to Kropotkin, past stateless humans were not isolated individuals or families, but tribes and clans with complex ethics and institutions of mutual support:

> Now, if we take into consideration that this complicated organization developed among men who stood at the lowest known degree of development, and that it maintained itself in societies knowing no kind of authority besides the authority of public opinion, we at once see how deeply inrooted social

---

[2] It is irrelevant that Hobbes need not be read as claiming that humans lived like this at some past time: the point is that both Kropotkin and Huxley did read him in this way. See Paradis 1989 (while noting that Paradis perpetuates the false image of Kropotkin as a primitivist).

instincts must have been in human nature, even at its lowest stages. A savage who is capable of living under such an organization, and of freely submitting to rules which continually clash with his personal desires, certainly is not a beast devoid of ethical principles and knowing no rein to its passions... The very persistence of the clan organization shows how utterly false it is to represent primitive mankind as a disorderly agglomeration of individuals, who only obey their individual passions, and take advantage of their personal force and cunningness against all other representatives of the species. (Kropotkin 1989: 86-8)

As this passage makes clear, Kropotkin does hold an 'evolutionary' picture of human history, involving a developmental scale starting at 'low' or 'primitive'. He also believes that this 'primitive' life was in some ways better than his and our own: "Unbridled individualism is a modern growth, but it is not characteristic of primitive mankind" (ibid: 88).

In the second case, Kropotkin uses anthropological research on Bushmen and Hottentots[3], amongst other groups, further to characterise 'primitive' sociability. The first "Used to hunt in common, and divided the spoil without quarrelling"; "They never abandoned their wounded, and displayed strong affection to their comrades"; they were "Goodhearted, disinterested, true to their promises, and grateful" (ibid: 89). On the second, Kropotkin quotes the early anthropologist Kolben: "If anything is given to a Hottentot, he at once divides it amongst all present"; a Hottentot "Cannot eat alone, and, however hungry, he calls those who pass by to share his food" (ibid: 90).

As a general characterisation of 'primitive' life on the basis of both of these forms of evidence, Kropotkin says that "When Kolben wrote that [Hottentots] 'are certainly the most friendly, the most liberal and the most benevolent people to one another that ever appeared on the earth'..., he wrote a sentence which has continually appeared since in the description of savages" (ibid: 91). Again, it is

---

[3] 'Bushman' is a generic term, originally from Afrikaans, for the hunting and gathering peoples of southern Africa, especially the Kalahari region; 'Hottentot' is the English name for a now almost extinct people who occupied the area around the Cape of Good Hope.

clear that Kropotkin thinks this 'savage' way of life superior in some ways to his and our own.

Kropotkin is not a primitivist. He does not have the required view of human nature; does not think that the past social forms he considers represent a golden age from which we have descended; does not recommend a return to them; does not believe that the contemporary social forms he also considers are relics of such a golden age. He does think that the anarchic mutual aid tendency which past and contemporary 'savages' display still exists, even though it is currently eclipsed by the opposing hierarchical and oppressive tendency. But when he and other anarchists write in this style, it is easy to see how they might be mistaken for primitivists. Kropotkin's discussion of 'savages' sounds like golden age primitivism, and if we add the assumption that people at the start or low point of a scale of human development also have an uncorrupted human nature, it may also sound like human nature primitivism.

But this is only part of the story. Anarchists use the same rhetorical trope with non-'primitive' social forms both past and present, and with imagined future social forms, for several important purposes. So, in order to read such rhetoric as primitivist, we would need to read it out of context. Before showing this to be true specifically of Kropotkin and Godwin, I analyse the trope in general.

4.3 The comparative trope

The rhetorical habit of comparison between social forms is common in anarchism and particularly in Kropotkin's work. He displays it, for instance, in a remark about modern division of labour: "The division and subdivision – the permanent subdivision – of functions has been pushed so far as to divide humanity into castes which are almost as firmly established as those of old India" (Kropotkin 1985: 23). His point is to attack a widely accepted feature of his and our current arrangements, by a comparison which discovers a similarity with a social form for which, he assumes, his readers share his dislike. The

remark's argumentative tactic is to criticise our social form by comparing it with a disapproved one, and thereby extending that disapproval. In other instances of this rhetoric, the comparison discovers a difference instead of a similarity, and the argumentative tactic is to attack our social form by displaying its poverty compared to some real or imagined alternative, or to display possible alternatives to it.

Kropotkin's description of 'savages' is of this second type, which in general has the following structure: 1) characterise some social form, which differs from our own, and then 2) compare it with our social form, with the triple purpose of 3) deriving criticism of our social form from that comparison, 4) asserting the variety of human sociability, and 5) giving an example of the possibility and availability to us of the different social form, or of particular features of it. Kropotkin, then, uses a description of the 'savage' social form (whether accurate or not) to criticise his and our current arrangements, to assert that ours is just one among many varied social forms, and to give an example of an alternative to our social form, or at least to particular features of it (he recommends abandoning modern self-aggrandisement and hierarchy, but not modern technology, for instance).

I now display two further, clearly non-primitivist instances of this rhetorical trope, in order to show that this, and not primitivist belief, is the context in which Kropotkin and other anarchists' descriptions of 'primitive' peoples ought to be read. I display: 1) from Kropotkin, an instance of the trope which makes use of a past but non-'primitive' social form; and 2) from Godwin, an instance which makes use of an imagined future social form.

4.3.1 Kropotkin's guild city

Kropotkin pictures history as a dialectical process involving two opposing tendencies, the anarchic and the hierarchical, "Now the one and now the other taking the upper hand at different periods of history" (Kropotkin 1995a: 236). The "Free mediaeval city" (ibid) is the last time the anarchic tendency had that upper hand:

> Wherever men had found, or expected to find, some protection behind their town walls, they instituted their "co-jurations," their "fraternities," their "friendships," united in one common idea, and boldly marching towards a new life of mutual support and liberty. And they succeeded so well that in three or four hundred years they had changed the very face of Europe. They had covered the country with beautiful sumptuous buildings, expressing the genius of free unions of free men, unrivalled since for their beauty and expressiveness; and they bequeathed to the following generations all the arts, all the industries, of which our present civilization, with all its achievements and promises for the future, is only a further development. And when we look to the forces which have produced these grand results, we find them – not in the genius of individual heroes, not in the mighty organization of huge States or the political capacities of their rulers, but in the very same current of mutual aid and support which we saw at work in the village community, and which was vivified and reinforced in the Middle Ages by a new form of unions, inspired by the very same spirit but shaped on a new model – the guilds. (Kropotkin 1989: 163-4)

Kropotkin recommends and celebrates "The very same spirit", and the victory of the anarchic over the hierarchical tendency.

The purpose of this celebration of the last time that happened, and perhaps of the whole of *Mutual Aid*, is threefold. First, Kropotkin foregrounds what is wrong with our current arrangements by comparing them with the creativity and resistance to authority of these past arrangements. Second, he asserts the variety of human sociability: not long ago, people lived very differently from us. Third, he uses the example of the guild city to argue for the possibility of a better, alternative social form. Because we had it once, we can have it again. That is, he performs the trope I described in 4.3: he 1) characterises medieval guild cities' social form, and then 2) compares it with our social form, with the triple purpose of 3) deriving criticism

of our social form, 4) asserting the variety of human sociability, as at least including both our and the medieval guild city forms, and 5) giving an example of the possibility and availability to us of this life of "Mutual support and liberty", with its good results.

This use of the trope is clearly non-primitivist. Medieval cities were not 'primitive' in any ordinary sense of the term. They were not a golden age at the start of an 'evolutionary' hierarchy, nor a relic of such a golden age. Kropotkin does not conceive them as expressing a pure and good human nature. They did not lack sophisticated technology (Kropotkin even suggests that our "Arts" and "Industry" are grounded on theirs). Kropotkin's account of medieval guild cities, then, is a non-primitivist instance of the trope, which makes use of a real past social form, for purposes of critical comparison, assertion of human social possibility, and exemplification of the possibility of an alternative social form to ours.

As with Kropotkin's accounts of 'savage' sociability (4.2) and of human nature and history (3.1.2 and 3.2.2), it does not matter here whether his characterisation of medieval guild cities is accurate. The question is: What is Kropotkin doing argumentatively with this material? The answer, first, is that he is *not* doing primitivist argument or polemic. Second, that he *is* using an account of medieval cities' social form to criticise our arrangments by comparison, to assert the variety of human social possibility, and to (attempt to) exemplify one better social possibility[4].

---

[4] Kropotkin is not the only person, indeed not the only nineteenth-century socialist, to use an account of the medieval for political and especially critical purposes. William Morris, for instance, found in such an account "A place, not to which he could retreat, but in which he could stand and look upon his own age with the eyes of a stranger or visitor, judging his own time by standards other than its own" (Thompson 1976: 28).

4.3.2 Godwin's future

Godwin's faith in the perfectibility of humans is at the centre of his theory, and all of *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* orbits his imagined perfect future. His purpose is in part to convince his readers to work towards their own perfection, but that future also stands in critical comparison to our own arrangements, as an assertion of the variety of human social possibility, and as an exemplar of one alternative social possibility, as does the guild city for Kropotkin.

Godwin's account of the "Dissolution of Government" (Godwin 1985: 552) is one of many instances of this use of his imagined future. He considers the question of whether a future national assembly, and by extension future district assemblies and juries, would command or only suggest: "The former of these might at first be necessary. The latter would afterwards be sufficient" (ibid). The point is, first, that "Authority and violence" (ibid: 553) are necessary evils for current humans, but that continuing improvement will remove that necessity. Our current arrangements encourage one "To conceive that, while his neighbour, his parent, and his political governor pretended to be actuated by a pure regard for his interest or pleasure, they were, in reality, at the expense of his, promoting their own" (ibid). But in the imagined future society, everyone will know that this is not the case, and will accept reasonable arguments about what she ought to do, from neighbours or whomever else, without compulsion. Here and all through *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, Godwin criticises our current arrangements (in this case the necessity of force to compel just action) by foregrounding what is wrong with them by comparison with his imagined future.

The second part of Godwin's point is to assert the possibility of a better society as one among a variety of humanly possible social forms. That assertion is supported by arguments that humans are perfectible and that the source of action is rationally modifiable opinion (see chapter 3.1.1 and 3.2.1), and is made again and again

throughout *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*. In the case of assemblies and juries, Godwin is particularly rapturous in making it:

> If juries might at length cease to decide, and be contented to invite, if force might gradually be withdrawn and reason trusted alone, shall we not one day find that juries themselves and every other species of public institution may be laid aside as unnecessary?... This is one of the most memorable stages of human improvement. With what delight must every well informed friend of mankind look forward to the auspicious period, the dissolution of political government, of that brute engine which has been the only perennial cause of the vices of mankind, and which, as has abundantly appeared in the progress of the present work, has mischiefs of various sorts incorporated in its substance, and no otherwise removable than by its utter annihilation! (ibid: 554)

As in my discussion of Kropotkin, it does not matter whether this account of our future is true or even slightly believable. The question, What is Godwin doing argumentatively with this material?, and its answer, are the same. Godwin is not doing primitivist argument or polemic. He is making use of an imagined future to criticise our arrangements by comparison, to assert the variety of human social possibility, and to (attempt to) exemplify one better social possibility.

•

To summarise: I have displayed three instances of a common anarchist rhetorical trope. In the first instance, Kropotkin makes use of an account of past and contemporary 'savage' social forms; in the second, he makes use of an account of medieval guild cities; in the third, Godwin makes use of an imagined future. All three: 1) characterise some social form, which differs from our own, and then 2) compare it with our social form, with the triple purpose of 3) deriving criticism of our social form from that comparison, 4) asserting the variety of human sociability, and 5) giving an example of the possibility and availability to us of the different social form, or of particular features of it. That is, all three make the same argumentative and polemical move using different social forms, whether real or imagined.

So, the context in which Kropotkin and other anarchists' use of accounts of 'primitive' peoples ought to be read is not primitivism, but

this rhetorical trope. Anarchists typically make use of real and imagined alternative social forms to criticise our current arrangments, to assert the variety of human social possibility, and to exemplify particular, better possibilities. That is, both to perform a radical criticism of current arrangements and to celebrate the "Social genius" (Kropotkin 1989: 154) of humans.

4.4 The trope as a form of argument

All three purposes of the trope are typically but not uniquely anarchist. The first, criticism by comparison, is also present in some utopian and satirical literature, and I use that similarity to characterise this kind of criticism in 4.4.1. The second and third jointly express a common (and perhaps even characteristic) anarchist belief, which I call the belief in 'social possibility'. It is the double belief that 1) the range of social forms possible for humans is extremely wide, and 2) includes the anarchist utopia, as well as the particular forms our current sociability takes, and the other ways humans have organised themselves in the past and elsewhere. The descriptions of social forms or groups which the trope deploys are used to support both parts of the belief in social possibility. The value of anarchists' uses of the trope "Is that they bring to light modes of social life which show that the present mode is not eternal" or universal, and which "Reveal people's capacity for co-operative living" and for the other features of the anarchist utopia (Miller 1984: 76).

In later parts of this thesis I argue in a similar way to the instances of the trope I have discussed, with the same purposes. But as it stands, what I have discovered is just a trope, and not anything as strong as a form of argument. So, I need to theorise it as a way of arguing. The first two parts of that necessary conceptual machinery are more precise accounts of the different styles of the trope and the argument-form I am developing from it, and of the ways their three purposes are carried out.

4.4.1 A taxonomy of the trope

One obvious way to distinguish the different styles of the trope is according to what kind of social form is described and used by them. I have given three instances of the trope, and they divide as follows. In the first instance, which could be mistaken for primitivism, the social form which Kropotkin describes and uses is non-urban, non-hierarchical and 'primitive', and involves mutual aid. It existed in the past and still exists on the margins of states and other current institutions. In the second, Kropotkin describes and uses an urban, technically sophisticated social form which is also non-hierarchical and also involves mutual aid. It existed in the recent past, and has left its mark on our social and urban landscape. In the third, Godwin describes and uses an imaginary future, which is non-hierarchical and non-coercive, and is inhabited by rational, impartial maximisers of the good. The fundamental distinction is between those instances of the trope which use (supposedly) real and those which use (openly) imaginary social forms.

These two major forms are both used by anarchists for the three purposes of criticism, assertion of variety, and exemplification of alternative possibility. However, each is more effective for some of those purposes than for others.

4.4.2 Criticism

Criticism is a significant purpose and feature of many political acts, including political writing. What is criticised and on what grounds vary greatly, but we can usefully map that variation. The first boundary to draw is between internal and external criticism. Internal criticism claims that its subject is internally flawed, perhaps by containing 'contradictions', as Marxists have claimed of capitalism (Bhaskar 1991; Elster 1985); or by being self-defeating, as Derek Parfit (1985) has claimed of some moral theories; or by being hypocritical, as we sometimes claim of each other. External criticism attacks its subject

by unfavourable comparison with something else, and it is this kind of criticism which the trope, in common with some utopian literature, makes.

External criticism can further be divided according to the kind of thing with which its object is compared. Probably, there can be no complete list of possible comparisons, but we can list some common types. They include comparison with: 1) a theoretical structure or ideal, as when John Rawls (1972) constructs a description of a just society, against which our own arrangements can be measured; 2) a statement or set of statements about what would be good, perhaps in the form 'everyone has a right to X'; 3) some real alternative which exists now or existed in the past; and 4) an account of or story about some imaginary better thing. 3 is the kind of external criticism made by the trope in its first, Kropotkinite style, which uses a real alternative social form. 4 is the kind it makes in its second, Godwinite style, which uses an imagined future social form.

We can now see that the trope in both its styles has some further similarities with utopias. Utopias often are or can be read as broad external criticism, in the form of a story. That is, they criticise a large subject – an entire social form, country or world – by unfavourable comparison with a narrative fiction[5] about an equally large subject. "Utopia can serve as a mirror for society, a mirror in which it can see its own defects more clearly" (Morrison 1984: 139). Similarly, the trope criticises a subject, often but not necessarily a large one (as in the instances I described in 4.2, 4.3.1 and 4.3.2), by unfavourable comparison with an anthropological or historical or imaginative account of some alternative social form. That alternative social form can also serve as a mirror.

Thomas More (1992) uses Raphael Hythloday's travelogue and reports of discussions with Utopians to make a broad external criticism of his society. It is so broad, indeed, that it also applies to

---

[5] This is not a tautology, at least because narratives do not have to be fictional: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (Douglass 1982) is a true story, for instance.

our society. We the readers are continually invited to compare our own living arrangements with the Utopians', and to find ours wanting. In their efficiency, justice, security, philosophy, art, technology and piety, the Utopians are a standing rebuke of ours. On this reading, one of the central things that *Utopia* does is criticise. Similarly, William Morris attacks what is wrong with his society by dramatic comparison with the future England where William Guest wakes up one morning, after an argument with his comrades about "What would happen on the morrow of the Revolution" (Morris 1993: 43); H G Wells (no date), by comparison with the other planet, physically identical to ours, where his lecturer and botanist inexplicably find themselves after descending from the Alps; Thomas Campanella (1889), by comparison with the City of the Sun. In general, utopianism can be characterised as "A style of political theorising that develops a critique of the existing order by constructing a model of an ideal or perfect alternative" (Heywood 1998: 193).

Similarly, Kropotkin uses descriptions of 'savages' and medieval guild cities to criticise his and our social arrangements. In their mutual affection, support and altruism, his 'savages' are a rebuke to our selfish individualism. In their creativity and resistance to authority, his guildsmen are a rebuke to our cowardice. The similarity is even stronger in the case of Godwin. His future utopia is described in theoretical rather than literary terms, but is nonetheless an imagined ideal which he uses to criticise his and our social arrangements.

Utopias can be a polemically effective tool for criticism, just because the comparison is so extreme. An ideal can be designed precisely to foreground what is thought wrong with our current circumstances, and to make them look unpalatable by comparison. The Godwinite style of the trope, which makes use of an imagined future social form, can be similarly effective (assuming, in both cases, that we do find the described ideal more attractive than our own arrangements). The Kropotkinite style, which makes use of real past or present social forms, is less effective. The messy reality of human

sociability is unlikely to throw up neat ideals for comparison, unless it is seriously misdescribed.

The first purpose of the anarchist trope is criticism, which I have analysed as external criticism by comparison, and as in some ways analogous to one purpose of utopias. I have suggested that the style of the trope which is most suited to this purpose is the second, Godwinite style.

I stated in 1.3 that I am more concerned with the factual than the normative elements of anarchism. So, although I do intend to imply a critical comparison between our and alternative arrangements, I am more interested in the second and third purposes of the anarchist trope: the assertion of social possibility.

4.4.3 Social possibility

The second and third purposes of the trope are assertion of the wide range of human social possibility, and of the specific possibility, within that range, of an anarchic alternative to current arrangements. This assertion of variety is valuable as a corrective to the careless, and perhaps widespread, assumption that how we now live is universal, obvious or natural. As I argue for states in chapter 9, our current arrangements began recently in a particular place, and replaced other, quite different arrangements. Although many humans do now live like us, many others did not, and there is no reason to suppose that humans always will. In later chapters, I will use accounts of some real human social forms to exemplify the possibility of particular features of the anarchist utopia.

The trope in its second major form, which uses a description of an imaginary social form, is certainly a dramatic way of asserting wide social possibility and particular alternatives. But it is not a particularly convincing one: that we can imagine some radically different way of life does not mean that it is possible, nor therefore that human social possibility is wide enough to include it. In its first form, which uses real social forms, the trope is much more convincing for these two

purposes. One good way of showing that human social possibility is wide is to display different social forms which humans have been able to adopt. One good way of showing that some particular feature of the anarchic utopia is possible for humans is to display humans living it.

4.5 The problem with the trope as a form of argument

In 4.4 I did some initial marking out of the forms the trope takes and of the ways its purposes are carried out. I characterised the critical and social possibility-asserting purposes of the trope, and noted that the form of the trope which uses an imagined social form is more effective for the former than the latter, while the form which uses a real one is more effective for the latter than the former.

In later chapters I use a combination of both forms of argument based on the trope. That is, I make use both of accounts of real and of imagined social forms. My purposes are the same as those of the trope, and especially to show that the imagined social form – my anarchist utopia – is possible, by exemplification of its features in real social forms. But that ambition is problematic: there is a major difficulty with comparisons of the kind the trope performs. If humans are capable of a wide variety of different social forms, it may be that those forms are too different to be directly compared. Perhaps any comparison between, for instance, modern states and the Nuer (on which see chapters 9 and 11) would be meaningless. In another context, Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes write that:

> It is as if scientific paradigms and theoretical frameworks were strung out in time like islands across an archipelago. Other minds, other cultures, other languages and other theoretical schemes call for understanding from within. Seen from within, they make us doubt whether there is anything universal under the sun. This doubt is also a challenge to the very idea of a single world. Is not the world, as interpreted in our scheme of things, but one of many? (Hollis & Lukes 1982: 1)

Similarly, different social forms might be strung out like islands, and there might be no way to compare them. The best way to show that

such comparison is possible is to do it. But in order to do that, we will need good conceptual tools designed to handle, dissect and compare sociability-stuff[6]. Chapters 5-8 provide those tools, which allow comparison by showing some features of different social forms as different ways of doing the same thing: creating, distributing and deploying power in social networks. In chapters 9-13 I use my tools both to perform comparisons between some features of some selected social forms, and to construct an anarchist utopia out of some exemplified, anarchic forms of sociability.

4.6 Summary

I began by offering explanations for the common but false accusation that anarchists are primitivists. I argued that the accusation of golden age primitivism (and perhaps also the accusation of human nature primitivism) is explained by an understandable misreading of a common anarchist rhetorical trope. In one style, exemplified by Kropotkin's description of 'savages', this trope can look like primitivism. But that and similar instances ought to be read in the context of other clearly non-primitivist uses of the same trope. The trope in general compares our living arrangements with some other real or imagined ones, in order to criticise ours, to assert the wide range of human social possibility, and to exemplify anarchic alternatives. As it stands, what I have discovered is only a polemical habit of comparison, a trope or figure of speech. But it can be made into a form of argument which I will use to prove my main thesis. After making some initial distinctions and characterisations of the various forms of the trope, I noted a major problem with its use in argument form: that the comparison it requires may not actually be possible. Chapters 5-8 will provide tools for that comparison, before I

---

[6] I allude here to E Adamson Hoebel's comment that the difficulties of studying 'primitive' law rest on "The fact that the anthropologist has not been supplied with good, sharp conceptual implements designed to

go on to use them in chapters 9-13 to carry out a number of trope-like arguments which together prove that the anarchist utopia is possible.

---

handle lawstuff" (Hoebel 1942: 951). I return to Hoebel's implements in 6.6.3.

5 ◇ Tools, Maps and Landmarks

This chapter and the three following it develop the conceptual toolkit for handling sociability-stuff, which allows the comparative arguments I use to prove my main thesis. This chapter introduces and explains that toolkit. Chapter 6 develops a concept of power as a tool for analysing and comparing social forms; chapter 7, a concept of equality; and chapter 8, a model of human sociability. This chapter will also explain the nature and purpose of the descriptions of various social forms in chapters 9-13, and indicate my general strategy in the rest of this thesis.

5.1 Tools and essentially contested concepts

The point of using the metaphors of a 'toolkit' and 'tools' is that these chapters develop concepts designed and optimised for one particular task, at the expense of others. A screwdriver is no use for cutting wood, but not therefore useless. The tools I develop here are designed to describe some examples of human sociability, in order to compare them, and thereby serve the three anarchist purposes I identified in chapter 4: criticism, assertion of variety, and exemplification of alternative possibility. That is, to solve the problem I identified with the comparative rhetorical trope as an argument form, and so allow me to use it to prove that the anarchist utopia is possible. My tools are intended to supplement and direct, not to replace, detailed description and analysis of particular cases. They are not intended, and not necessarily useful, for all other purposes.

Power and equality, the first two of the three concepts I develop, are common in philosophical and political discourses, and I make use of selected theoretical literature as a foil and help in characterising my use of these terms. I do not claim to discover the 'natural' meanings of 'power' or 'equality': I doubt that words have

natural meanings. Nor do I attempt to win an argument about how we ought always to understand or apply these terms. All I argue is that we can, and that I will, use 'power' and 'equality' in particular, stated senses. But I am not merely stipulating the meaning of jargon: I am marking out a particular area of the range of meanings these terms can have given their historical and cultural situation. My selection of that area is guided by my explicit purposes, and not by an ambition, for instance, to correct other people's uses of these terms, or to end dispute about them.

In an influential article, W B Gallie (1956; see also Gallie 1964: chapter 8) introduced the idea of essentially contested concepts. The point of Gallie's discovery and definition of this class of concepts is to open up some free territory between two other possible understandings of continuing argument about the meaning and use of a concept: 1) that the argument can and should be won by a single, correct meaning and use; or 2) that the argument is interminable and therefore pointless. According to Gallie, argument about an essentially contested concept is necessarily interminable, but not pointless, because its meaning is made up of the various competing positions on its application, and their continuing dispute. Theorists including Connolly (1993) and Freeden (1996) have challenged Gallie's criteria for admission to, while continuing to assert the existence of, this free territory. My definitions of the two concepts are intended to inhabit it: I describe and argue for them in the context of contestation, and make use of some competing understandings as foils and as help; I do not intend or expect them to win the contest; but I do not ignore their contexts by stipulating mere technical senses. My choice of definitions is directed by the task for which my conceptual tools are intended. "Until we consider the point or purpose in grouping a set of elements under the rubric of 'politics', we lack a basis for deciding that one proposed definition is superior to another" (Connolly 1993: 16). Similarly for power and equality. My point and purpose in giving definitions of them is to solve the problem of comparability between different social forms, and so be able to use comparative arguments

to prove that the anarchist utopia is possible. Each of my definitions can be thought of, in Freeden's term, as a particular, purposive "Decontestation" (Freeden 1996: 76 and passim) of a contested concept.

The third concept I develop for my purpose, the idea of a social network, is not (essentially) contested and does not need to be placed in the free territory. I use it to characterise human sociability in general, and to draw the other conceptual tools together. I do parallel my use of alternative definitions as foils in chapters 6 and 7 by opposing my account of sociability to some alternative ones. This is in the first place an explanatory device: I characterise my concept partly by saying what it denies. However in some cases I do also argue that these foil positions are actually false, not merely inappropriate for my purposes.

My choice of definitions for these three concepts is largely conditioned by my main purpose, but I also apply two further conditions: 1) my concepts of power, equality, and network sociability are intended to be useful not only for my specific, but for more general, anarchist purposes. I therefore argue for some of their features by drawing on the tradition and on anarchist practice. 2) As already noted, 'power' and 'equality' are important concepts in political and philosophical discourses. The concept of a 'network' has become important in sociological discourse in part through the work of Michael Mann (1986 & 1993). So, my use of particular versions of them also helps me carry out my subsidiary purpose, indicated in 1.2, of getting anarchists and academics to talk to one another.

I have given reasons to *choose* to understand my concepts in the wider context of their contestation. Finally, however, we should note that there may be no other way of understanding them:

> A use of terms without attention to the theoretical assumptions and historical contexts which underlie them can lead us to adopt unanalyzed concepts and drag along their mystifying connotations into further work. Tracing out a history of our concepts can also make us aware of the extent to which they incorporate intellectual and political efforts that still reverberate in the present. (Wolf 1999: 21-2)

If this is (even partly) true, the choice available to us may be, not between understanding in context and stipulation, but between being conscious and being unconscious of the inescapable effect of context. Historically developed concepts already structure our thought, so an attempt to stipulate in a vacuum may be, at best, unproductive.

5.2 Making maps

I have so far used the metaphors of tools and a toolkit to describe what I do in chapters 6-8. I now want to introduce another metaphor: mapmaking. A 'projection' is a technique, whether actually a geometrical projection or not, for representing the Earth's spherical surface (or a portion of it) on a flat surface[1]. Among the properties a map needs to represent are: the direction any one point bears to another; the distance between any given points; the shape of the region; and the area of the region. "When *small* areas are being mapped, it is possible to obtain sensibly accurate representation of all properties, but in the case of *large* areas, something must be sacrificed" (Kellaway 1949: 5). Any projected map of a sufficiently large area will accurately represent some properties at the expense of distorting others. There are many possible projections, and different projections have different advantages and disadvantages. Gnomonic zenithal projections (on which see ibid: 7-11), for instance, have the following advantages: 1) the relative positions of places are clearly shown; and 2) direction from the centre is always true. They have the following disadvantages: 1) away from the centre, distances rapidly become distorted; 2) the shape of the regions is distorted; and 3) the area of the regions is exaggerated, the more so the further from the centre they are. "The problem is thus really a matter of selecting the

---

[1] The other element of mapmaking is scaling: a map needs not only to be flat, but to be small enough to carry. I ignore this complication here, and assume, following Kellaway (1949), that projection is carried out from a scaled globe of the earth. It may be overstretching the metaphor to note, however, that I do in a sense choose a 'scale',

projection which best satisfies the requirements in each particular case" (ibid: 5).

All flat maps of the Earth distort some of its properties. But this is not a problem, so long as we know what and how they distort, and have chosen the right mapping for our purposes. The analogy I want to make is that my conceptual toolkit can be thought of as perfoming a mapping of human sociability. That mapping distorts in a variety of ways: 1) by focussing on some features, notably equality and inequality of power, and the logistics of social interaction; 2) at the expense of other features, notably culture, subjectivity, and their hermeneutic interpretation; and 3) by for the most part avoiding consideration of the causes or explanations of the forms of sociability I describe. But this is not a problem if we are aware of those distortions, and have chosen the right mapping for our purposes.

It may be, at best, that a non-distorting mapping of human sociability is unlikely because it would have to cover such an immense number and complexity of features. It may be, worse, that all mappings – all interpretations – are necessarily distorting because they are carried out using tools (concepts, theories, perceptual and cognitive mechanisms) which structure the data in particular ways. That is, because some version of what Eric Wolf calls the "Neo-Kantian postulate" (Wolf 1999: 3) that we have no transparent, unmediated access to a world outside us, is true. But again, this is not a problem to the extent, first, that we can be aware of the distortions and structuring imposed by our own tools of thought and knowledge-gathering, and second, that we can design such tools.

That my mapping of human sociability distorts it is not a problem, so long as we know what and how it distorts and what it accurately represents, and have chosen the right mapping for our purposes. What my mapping accurately represents will be shown in developing the conceptual toolkit, in chapters 6-8, and when I put it to work in chapters 9-13.

---

that is a particular breadth of reference and level of detail, justified by my particular purposes.

The negative point of using this metaphor is to emphasise that I am not involving myself in a reductive project: I do not claim that the features of human sociability on which I focus are real, fundamental or deep in comparison to other features. Nor do I claim that they are uniquely or finally explanatory. I am suggesting a particular and purposive projection of human sociability, not a reduction.

5.3 Reflective Equilibrium

John Rawls designs his initial situation or original position (on which see chapter 2) by a process of reflection leading to what he calls "Reflective equilibrium" (Rawls 1972: 20; see also 48-51). A particular description of the initial situation will give rise to particular claims about justice, and is justified by the reflective process, which works as follows:

> In searching for the most favoured description of this situation we work from both ends. We begin by describing it so that it represents shared and preferably weak conditions. We then see if these conditions are strong enough to yield a significant set of principles. If not, we look for further premises equally reasonable. But if so, and these principles match our considered convictions of justice, then so far well and good. But presumably there will be discrepancies. In this case we have a choice. We can either modify the account of the initial situation or we can revise our existing judgments, for even the judgments we take provisionally as fixed points are liable to revision. By going back and forth, sometimes altering the conditions of the contractual circumstances, at others withdrawing our judgments and conforming them to principle, I assume that eventually we shall find a description of the initial situation that both expresses reasonable conditions and yields principles which match our considered judgments duly pruned and adjusted. This state of affairs I refer to as reflective equilibrium. (ibid: 20)

A particular description of the initial situation is justified by being able, as a result of this reflective process, to accommodate "Both reasonable philosophical conditions on principles as well as our considered judgments of justice… fitting together into one coherent view" (ibid: 21).

I borrow the notion of reflective equilibrium, in the following form. The relationship between the tools I develop in later chapters and the utopia I eventually prove possible by using them is analogous to the relationship between considered intuitive judgements and theoretical principle in Rawls' argument. The utopia and tools were designed together, by a similar reflective process of going back and forth, sometimes altering the tools, sometimes the description of the utopia. Although the tools are designed to prove the possibility of the utopia, the requirements of accurately describing (some features of) human sociability sometimes modified the utopia.

Rawls does not, "Of course, actually work through this process" (ibid) of reflection. Nor will I. But I want to note that the tools were designed with the utopia in mind, and the utopia modified by the process of investigation of human sociability which allowed me to design them. I did not begin with a 'self-evident' fixed utopia, and then attempt to design concepts which would make it look possible. The reflective process leading to equilibrium about the design of the tools and the utopia is what convinces me that I have chosen the right mapping for my purposes. That I have will be shown by the success of my argument for the possibility of utopia.

5.4 Landmarks

My toolkit or projection is designed to allow comparative arguments making use of accounts of human social forms. So, of course, performing those arguments requires several such accounts. Chapters 9-13 provide them, and having used the metaphor of mapmaking, I call the entire section 'Landmarks'. Landmarks rather than a complete map, because I do not attempt to describe anything like the entire sphere of human sociability, nor to fill in every detail. The landmarks I describe in these chapters are chosen for my particular purposes: to criticise current arrangements and, especially, to assert human social possibility.

My exemplification of utopia's possibility consists of a series of fragments of it, displayed in some real social forms. These fragments are the best available empirical evidence for its possibility, because the anarchic utopia has never existed as a whole. But why use empirical evidence at all? In chapter 4 I stated that the possibility of utopia could be supported without reference to any rich, normative idea of human nature: but why not use such an idea? Because, first, the question, What is the range of possible human sociability? is an empirical question, not a conceptual one. And, second, because given that, an idea of human nature in the context of that question can only be tested empirically. In order to support the possibility of utopia by asserting a rich idea of human nature, we would have to support that idea by showing empirically that it was correct. That would be an unnecessary further argumentative step: we can support claims about human social possibility directly by displaying empirical examples of possible social forms.

5.5 A minimalist account of human nature

I do appeal to a minimalist and non-normative account of human nature. In 3.1 I argued that, historically and typically, an idea of human nature is a set of claims that some specified character: 1) is real or permanent or transhistorically present in humans; 2) is shared by all humans; 3) distinguishes humans by kind and not just by degree from the rest of the world, and especially from (other) animals; 4) is separate from the distortion and masking which can be created by current circumstances; and 5) stands as a moral, social or political norm for humans. My account of human nature is minimalist in that I do not make all of these claims about the character I describe, and, in particular, is non-normative in that I do not make claim 5. That is, I do not take my account of human nature to stand as a moral or other norm, but only as imposing empirical demands on the possibilities of human sociability.

My account is as follows: humans are evolved creatures, related, in some cases very closely, to other animals. This does not entail that everything about humans or human groups can be explained by post-Darwinian evolutionary theory; it does mean that such theory is one useful explanatory resource among others. Because we evolved from creatures both like and unlike us, over time, there is no permanent or fully distinguishing human nature (that is, claims 1 and 3 do not apply). However human characteristics have been relatively stable over historical time (and perhaps for much longer), and therefore we can assume that if some humans live or lived in particular ways, then other humans can also live in those ways. There could be counter-evidence to this initial assumption, but the onus is on someone who claims that one human group is sufficiently different from another for this not to be the case, to prove it.

Evolved humans share a number of general capacities, which can be expressed (or fail to be expressed) in a variety of socially and environmentally conditioned ways[2]. They include capacities: to learn and use language; to create, understand and use symbols; to create, understand and act in social networks; to reason; to make and use tools; to make decisions; to be selfish or altruistic; to be violent or friendly; to create and challenge hierarchies; to have and act on a variety of emotional and dispositional states; to perceive oneself as a self in the context of other selves; and to create, internalise and perform rituals. Many of these capacities are shared in some form or degree by our close relatives, including Chimpanzees, Gorillas, Orang-Utans, and other primates.

For the same reason that we are a particular kind of evolved creature, humans also share some general interests. They include interests in food, shelter, company, continued life, the respect of peers, and the absence of violence. These interests can be trumped

---

[2] Compare Rom Harré's claim that "All human beings have various generic capacities to acquire skills, which, though they differ in their

by other, often socially constructed ones, but are typical of humans and very strong. So, an appeal to such interests, to a stranger, can often be effective. Individual humans' interests can clash in at least two ways, because: 1) they sometimes differ; and 2) even when they are shared, as with the typical interest in food, our situation of scarcity means that my interest in food may clash with yours.

This account of human nature is not original. It is to some degree controversial, and I assume rather than attempt to prove it here. My central assumption is that, despite the obvious fact that different human groups have different social forms, languages, self-understandings and rituals, we are sufficiently alike that there is some possibility of comparing those groups, because our differences are in part different expressions of shared capacities, and because we share some general interests. This minimalist account of human nature is non-normative (that is, claim 5 does not apply) in that it does not entail any claims about the best, right or just way for humans to live. That humans have some capacity does not mean that it is a duty, or even praiseworthy, to express it: Marvin Harris (1989), for instance, has argued that human parents have a widely expressed capacity for infanticide.

The point of this section is not to say anything original about human nature, but to stipulate a naturalist, realist, and internationalist perspective as a grounding assumption of my project.

5.6 Summary

I have set out a plan for most of the rest of this thesis. In a first section, the Toolkit, chapters 6-8 describe the conceptual tools, which allow the comparative arguments, which prove the possibility of my utopia. I use two central metaphors for what this section does: tools and mapmaking. Part of the point of both is to bring out the idea of something designed for one purpose, at the expense of others.

---

specific forms from tribe to tribe, are nevertheless of the same general kind" (Harré 1993: 3).

Another part is to emphasise that what I am creating is a purposive way of looking at, not a reductive account of, human sociability. I do not claim that the features on which I focus are the real (as opposed to illusory) or deep (as opposed to surface) features of human social life.

In a second section, Landmarks, chapters 9-13 set out the materials for and perform my comparisons. I borrow Rawls' notion of reflective equilibrium to describe the relationship between the toolkit and the last of the landmarks, utopia, and claim that the empirical evidence set out in the Landmarks section is the best available evidence for the possibility of utopia, which is jointly proved by the two sections. Finally, I assume a minimalist and non-normative account of human nature, which grounds my accounts of particular human social forms and the possibility of comparing them.

The overall strategy of the rest of this thesis is: 1) to create a conceptual toolkit for the comparative analysis of human social forms; 2) to use it to describe some landmark social forms; and 3) to construct and prove possible a utopia built from the fragments of anarchic sociability I discover.

6 ◇ Power

What is power? Even if we consider the concept only as part of political and philosophical discourse, we are unlikely to be able to find a universally acceptable definition:

> It would be good to approach our theme starting from a widely shared, generic concept of social power or indeed of power in general. Unfortunately, no such concept exists. (Poggi 2001: 1)

If we also consider power as part of such other discourses as physics or engineering, for instance, then finding a single, universally acceptable definition looks even less likely. We are unlikely to be able to invent such a definition, either. According to Steven Lukes, the concept of power is both "Ineradicably evaluative" and "Essentially contested" (Lukes 1974: 9). We can accept that the concept of power is now and historically has been contested, at least: 1) for the pragmatic reason that, like ideas of human nature (on which see 3.1 and 5.5), ideas of power often have a significant role in political and ideological disputes; and 2) for the theoretical reasons that, when we consider the definition of power, "It is not clear (a) what is to be defined; (b) what a definition of power should clarify; and (c) what kind of components one is looking for to constitute a definition" (White 1972: 480). We can also accept that someone's definition of power is likely to be evaluative at least in that it will be chosen, in part, for reasons to do with her political purposes. Lukes links three views of power to three political stances:

> The liberal takes men as they are and applies want-regarding principles to them, relating their interests to what they actually want or prefer, to their policy preferences as manifested by their political participation. The reformist, seeing and deploring that not all men's wants are given equal weight by the political system, also relates their interests to what they want or prefer, but allows that this may be revealed in more indirect and sub-political ways – in the form of deflected, submerged or concealed wants and preferences. The radical, however, maintains that men's wants may themselves be a product of a system which works against their interests, and, in such cases, relates the

> latter to what they would want and prefer, were they able to make the choice. (Lukes 1974: 34)

These three stances map onto Lukes' one, two and three-dimensional views of power, respectively (see 6.1).

In the face of these problems, and for the reasons given in chapter 5, I do not attempt to find or create a universally acceptable or evaluatively neutral definition of power. The concept of power given here is developed in response to the question: What concept of power will be useful for my and other anarchist purposes?

I begin by assuming a loose definition of power, as follows: power is the present capacity to attain future goods (cf Hobbes 1994: 50). I define a 'good' as anything, whether tangible or intangible, in which someone has a subjective interest. I do not imagine that this beginning definition is wholly neutral, although it may be closer to neutrality than some other possibilities. I do think that it is widely acceptable, because it is loose and general, and could be made more precise in a variety of incompatible ways. We should note two features of this beginning definition. First, it defines power as a capacity, and therefore as something which can be held without currently being exercised (I leave open the methodological question of whether we will be able to *identify* a power-holder in any way other than by observing her exercising power). Second, and unlike some others, my definition does not limit power to attaining goods by affecting, or against the opposition of, other agents.

Before continuing, and in order further to distinguish my task here, I want to identify two alternative projects with which mine might be confused, but which I am not attempting. First, I am not attempting to show that anarchists have or need a distinctive concept of power, different from those used or needed by other political positions. Although my concept is explicitly designed for my and other anarchist purposes, the suggestion is not that it will be the exclusive possession of anarchism, nor that distinctively anarchist demands or normative claims will follow from it. All that it is intended to do is to pick out some features of human sociability which are relevant to my

wider project. Second, I am not attempting to distinguish situations of power from situations of its absence. As I go on to argue, all human social situations display power; the relevant questions, for me, are: How is it created, How is it distributed, By whom, and To whom?

In order further to specify my concept of power in the context of contestation, and to make it useful for my and other anarchist purposes, I now consider and arbitrate some selected claims and debates about the definition of power. I do not consider all major debates, and do not intend to produce a history or a literature survey. I do not, for instance, consider how to specify an operational definition of power, nor whether power should be analysed as a form of causality (see for instance Simon 1969 and Nagel 1975, respectively). I consider only those claims and debates which help me to specify power as a conceptual tool for the purposes I have described.

6.1 Lukes' three dimensions of power

Lukes' analysis of the concept of power takes the 'one-dimensional' pluralist position of Robert Dahl (1961) and others as its starting point; follows through the influential critique of Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962), which results in what he labels the 'two dimensional' view; and then develops his own 'three-dimensional' view by further criticism of that position.

The one-dimensional view concentrates on the observed success of an actor in getting her own way in a conflicted decision, made by or in a political institution. That actor who most often succeeds in having decisions on particular issues made in line with her explicit preferences, against the explicit preferences of others, is, according to this view, the one with the most power[1]. It is not entirely clear whether the pluralists intend to make an ontological or only an epistemological claim: that is, whether the claim is that this is the

---

[1] Or influence: as Lukes points out, "Among pluralists, 'power', 'influence', etc., tend to be used interchangeably" (Lukes 1974: 12).

only situation in which power exists, or merely that this is the only situation in which we can reliably identify power. Lukes summarises the one-dimensional view as involving "A focus on *behaviour* in the making of *decisions* on *issues* over which there is an observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation" (ibid: 15).

As Lukes characterises it, the central point of the two-dimensional view is a qualified critique of the one-dimensional focus on political decision-making between explicit preferences. Bachrach and Baratz accept that power on the one-dimensional view is a form of power, but not that it is the only (identifiable) form. They claim and Lukes accepts that when "A person or group – consciously or unconsciously – creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts, that person or group has power" (Bachrach & Baratz 1962 quoted in Lukes 1974: 16). Power has two faces. The first is success in *explicit* policy conflicts. The second is 'mobilisation of bias' to prevent some policy conflicts from becoming explicit. As Lukes summarises it, the two-dimensional view "Allows for consideration of the ways in which *decisions* are prevented from being taken on *potential issues* over which there is observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as embodied in express policy preferences and sub-political grievances" (Lukes 1974: 20).

Lukes develops his own three-dimensional view of power via a critique of the two-dimensional view. He accepts that both the one and the two-dimensional views identify forms of power, but argues that they miss further forms. The two-dimensional view is inadequate in three ways.

First, it focuses on individual behaviour. Lukes asserts against this methodological individualism that, in two cases, "The power to control the agenda of politics and exclude potential issues cannot be adequately analysed unless it is seen as a function of collective forces and social arrangements" (ibid: 22). The first case is collective action, where the policy or activity of a collective is observable, "But not attributable to particular individuals' decisions or behaviour" (ibid).

The second case is when the mobilisation of bias results, again not from the behaviour of particular individuals, but from the form of organisation in which decision-making takes place.

Second, the two-dimensional view sticks too close to the one-dimensional view's association of power with actual and observable conflict. Lukes argues against that association that "The most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict arising in the first place" (ibid: 23). While power is exercised in getting its object to do what she does not want to do, it is also exercised in shaping her wants such that no conflict with the wants of the powerful arises.

Third, the one and two-dimensional views both consider only *subjective* interests, whether explicitly formulated or held as grievances which are excluded from political decision-making. Lukes argues against this limitation that power is also exercised in preventing the articulation or satisfaction of *real* interests. The objects of the exercise of power "May not express or even be conscious of their interests" (ibid: 25).

I have followed through Lukes' development of his concept of power in order to specify part of mine, and the lessons I draw from him are as follows. Power is identifiable: 1) when an actor succeeds in getting conflicted policy decisions made in accordance with her subjective preferences or interests, in political institutions; 2) when an actor succeeds in excluding some subjective preferences or interests from consideration; 3) in collective action and organisational form; and 4) in the transformation of subjective preferences or interests to avoid conflict and facilitate exploitation.

Anarchists must and do recognise all of these forms of power, as, for instance: 1) when they join other radicals in attacking the influence of corporate interest groups on the policies of western states; and 2) fight for the recognition of the voiceless poor outside those states and the non-persons inside them. 3) The fact that power conceived in this way can be wielded by collectives, and through organisational forms, importantly expresses the anarchist belief that it

is not only individual tyrants but 'the system' which must be challenged. The organisation of all human social life, not just of government, is able of itself to oppress, and therefore the transformation needed is more than a change of government. Finally, 4) that power can be identified in the transformation of subjective preferences or interests, expresses the belief that the required transformation is deeper than a change of organisational form. Not only the way we organise ourselves but what we have come to want and believe possible may be the result of power-relations.

Lukes asserts the importance of real as opposed to merely subjective interests, and I now want to say something about that idea. The idea of real interests is understood and used in various ways, and can often be polemically effective. Its uses include liberation, paternalism and even oppression:

> Lukes' 3-D view of power (albeit unintentionally) supports the paternalistic political practice of Marxism/Leninism. If the proletariat does not perceive its own real interests, then it is others who must speak, or act, or make their decisions for them. If the Party claims to be privileged in having the scientific theory which enables it to identify the real interest of the proletariat, or claims to have a privileged epistemological standpoint from which it is able to impute to the proletariat what it *should* identify as its real interests, then it can claim to know better than the proletariat what the latter ought to do in order to realize its real interests. And if the proletariat has been prevented from perceiving its real interests (if it only has a 'trade-union consciousness'), it is but a short step to argue that the proletariat ought to obey the Party if it is to realize its real interests. (Carter 1992: 194)

Among the many ways in which the idea of real interests can be understood, two are of particular significance. First, real interests can be understood as the common interests of humans, which transcend our particular and often clashing subjective interests. I have already claimed, in 5.5, that there are such interests. My account of them is not particularly strong, since I allow that the interests which humans typically share, in food, shelter, company, continued life, the respect of peers, and the absence of violence, can be trumped by other particular interests. Perhaps they could be called 'more real' or 'less

subjective' interests, since an appeal to them will often but not always be effective with any human.

The second significant understanding of real interests is involved in the possibility of criticising and even attempting to change people's current subjective interests. Someone's immediate subjective interest may be in staying in the pub all afternoon, but we might say that she is mistaken: she has a real interest in going to the library instead. We might attempt to convince her of this, perhaps by appeal to the long-term satisfactions of that over the short-term satisfactions of the pub. Less trivially, we might say of or to a slave who is happy with her lot, that no matter what she now thinks, she has a real interest in freedom. We might attempt to convince her of this by appealing to two types of counterfactual: 1) by appeal to the choice she would make, if she could experience both the satisfaction of her current interests, and the satisfaction of (what we claim are) her real interests, and then pick one; or 2) by appeal to the interests she would have in an ideal situation of perfect information and undistorted rationality. The possibilities of being mistaken about our interests, and of being convinced that we are so mistaken, are morally and politically important. They also raise considerable technical and political difficulties. But I do not need to consider them further, here: my concern, as part of my project, is in power as the capacity to attain future goods, whatever they are, and therefore whatever interests the power-holder happens to have. I do not mean to suggest that the idea and problem of real interests is in general insignificant. But given my specific project, and in line with my policy of philosophical minimalism (see 1.6), I can avoid further consideration of real interests here.

6.2 Parsons and Mann: creating and distributing power

I have so far followed the fairly common anarchist practice of assuming that power, as such, is domination and an evil. So, all of the forms of power identified by Lukes, and included by me, are kinds of control or domination, and I include them in part to respect anarchist resistance to them. However anarchists, in other ways, need to and do celebrate power, particularly the collective power of people against or in the absence of oppression. I now consider some parts of Talcott Parsons' (1957, 1967a, 1967b) account of power, in order to allow for that celebration in my concept of power, as well as to serve my specific purposes.

Lukes' account of power begins with the pluralist view, which was itself developed in response to elite theory. Parsons' account is also a response to elite theory, and was first stated in a review of C Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* (Mills 1956; Parsons 1957). His later theory (Parsons 1969a & 1967b) is complex, suggestive and eccentric, and I do not give a complete account of it here. Instead, I consider two major features of the theory, accept one and reject the other.

The final section of Parsons' critique of Mills begins with an analogy between power and wealth, and his later account of power elaborates that analogy into one between the analysis of political and of economic 'sub-systems'. According to Parsons, "To Mills, power is not a facility for the performance of function in and on behalf of the society as a system, but is interpreted exclusively as a facility for getting what one group, the holders of power, wants by preventing another group, the 'outs', from getting what it wants" (Parsons 1957: 139). For him, this is metonymic: it confuses a "Secondary and derived" (ibid) aspect of power with the whole phenomenon. Certainly, there is such power, but that is not the whole story. This is where the analogy with wealth first appears:

> There is obviously a distributive aspect of wealth and it is in a sense true that the wealth of one person or group by definition cannot also be possessed by another group. Thus the *distribution*

> of wealth is, in the nature of the case, a focus of conflicts of interest in a society. But what of the positive functions of wealth and of the conditions of its production? It has become fully established that the wealth available for distribution can only come about through the processes of production, and that these processes require the "co-operation" or integration of a variety of different agencies... Wealth in turn is a generalized class of facilities available to units of the society – individuals and various types and levels of collectivities - for whatever uses may be important to them. But even apart from the question of where each share goes, the fact that there should be wealth to divide, and how much, cannot be taken for granted as given except within a very limited context. (ibid: 139-40)

Parsons' point is that power is not necessarily or even normally "Zero-sum" (Parsons 1967a: 337). Power, like wealth, is not subject to anything like the law of conservation of energy: it can be created and destroyed as well as redistributed.

In Michael Mann's terms, power can be either "Distributive" or "Collective" (Mann 1986: 6; Mann's analysis is explicitly indebted to Parsons'). In the first case, for A to gain power over B, B must lose power over A. We can think of there being a fixed amount of power available for distribution between two agents, just as we can think of there being a fixed amount of money, perhaps from an inheritance, similarly available. In the second case, "Persons in cooperation can enhance their joint power over third parties or over nature" (ibid). I accept this distinction, while expanding the second type, for my own concept of power. Power can be created by cooperation, but while that is one important way of creating power, it is not the only one. A group of people can increase their power by collaborating; someone marooned on an empty planet can increase her power by intelligent use and development of her resources and skills (see 6.5). So, power in my sense includes 'created' as well as 'distributed' power.

Most social situations and activities have aspects of both created and distributed power. States, for instance, both create massive amounts of power and distribute it in a highly unequal way (see chapter 9). Which aspect we emphasise in a particular situation will depend on our purposes in making the description. For my purposes, it is important to include both the distributive and the

creative aspects of power, while noting the distinction between the two. Anarchists recognise and celebrate the creation of power in, for instance, Spain during its civil war. There, collective action kept trams, trains, factories and food production going without supposedly-necessary hierarchy, as well as organising militias to resist Franco's attempted coup (see chapter 12).

Parsons' comparison between power and wealth, which begins as an illustrative conceit, expands in his later theory into an elaborate analogy between political and economic 'sub-systems': "The initial assumption is that, within the conception of society as a system, there is an essential parallelism in theoretical structure between the conceptual schemes appropriate for the analysis of the economic and the political aspects of societies" (Parsons 1967a: 299). It would not be to the point here to give a complete account of this parallelism. Instead, I use one feature of it, which derives from the overarching analogy, further to specify my own concept of power. But before doing so, it is worth remembering that I have described Parsons' theory as 'eccentric', and justifying the description by noting some of the odd things it leads him to claim: 'authority', for instance, is analogous to 'property', and regular elections are analogous to banks' opening hours! (ibid: 319-21; 339).

For Parsons, one of the important analogies between political and economic sub-systems or aspects is that power and money are both 'generalised'. Power "Is a generalised capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of collective organization" (ibid: 308); money transactions are unlike barter in being generalised. That is, in the second case, the medium of exchange is good for all economic activity, because both parties to a particular exchange understand that everyone else will also accept money, where they might not accept some particular item in barter (because, for instance, they already have as many carrots or shoes or oil-paintings as they want).

> Securing possession of an object of utility by bartering another object for it is not a monetary transaction. Similarly, by my definition, securing compliance with a wish, whether it be defined

> as an obligation of the object or not, simply by threat of superior force, is not an exercise of power. (ibid)

So on Parson's definition, what we might be tempted to call the power of a mugger to take my mobile phone, because she can credibly threaten violence, is not power. Parsons is of course free to define power in this way, for his own purposes. I have brought the point up in order to specify that my concept of power is not limited in this way. *Any* capacity of an agent to attain a good (against the conflicting preferences of another) is (distributed) power in my sense of the term. A mugger can have power, and so can a state. This point is important for my concept of power in part because without it, we will be unable to make much sense of, and therefore unable to assess, many anarchist claims, including, for instance, the common polemical tactic of comparing states, corporations and religious organisations to well-organised bandits.

My analysis of Parsons' theory of power has helped to specify my own concept in two ways. First, we have recognised the distinction between, and included both of, created and distributed power. This is useful in part because anarchists' attacks on power can often be understood as attacks on unequally distributed power, and their celebrations of the power of the people as celebrations of (cooperatively) created power. More importantly, it is also useful in describing my Landmarks in chapters 9-13. Second, we have rejected the limited characterisation of power as only a *generalised* social phenomenon, and can therefore recognise power in single, personal interactions as well as generalised systems, and compare the two.

6.3 Philp's questions

Mark Philp (1996) uses two questions to distinguish, and produce a taxonomy of, different concepts of power. They are: 1) "Whether power is exercised over B whether or not the respect in which B suffers is intended by A"; and 2) "Whether power is properly restricted to a particular sort of effect which A has on B, or whether it applies in any case in which A has some effect on B" (Philp 1996: 658).

In answer to 1, I stipulate that (distributed) power in my sense can be exercised by A over B whether or not A intends the effect she has. It is a common polemical habit of anarchists and other radicals to attribute malicious intent to power-holders. But the point of such attacks is not that, if a power-holder does not intend the effect she has on the object of her power, then nothing is wrong. The point is to personify and to increase effort against injustice. For my and other anarchist purposes, it will be useful to talk about power even when its effects are unintended (because, for instance, they are the results of collective action and not attributable to the intentions of any individual agent).

In answer to question 2, I stipulate that power provisionally covers all effects, not just some sub-class of 'non-trivial' effects. I suggest that which effects are trivial is a matter of case-by-case analysis in the light of particular purposes, not of conceptual fiat.

6.4 Power: a summary

My anarchist concept of power has developed from my initial assumption, via consideration of Lukes, Parsons, Mann and Philp, as follows. Power is the present capacity to attain future goods. It can be exercised in explicit policy conflicts, in suppressing potential conflicts, and in modifying the preferences of the 'outs' so that no conflict arises (following Lukes). It can be a property both of individuals and of groups (following Lukes and Parsons). The concept covers both of,

and distinguishes between, created and distributed power (following and expanding on Parsons and Mann), and covers both individual and generalised cases (against Parsons). Power can be exercised whether or not the power-holder intends her effect, and provisionally applies to all effects (in answer to Philp).

I emphasise that I do not think power analogous to, for instance, energy: it is not a real independent stuff which takes different forms. Rather, 'power' names a generalised aspect of human activity, and covers a wide variety of particular capacities. The means used to create power condition what power it is; the means used to distribute it condition what powers are distributed. 'Power' is a metaphor, not a substance.

What this concept of power does, in relation to my wider project, is to pick out some important aspects of human sociability, which (I suggest) can be identified in all social forms, and which I will identify in the particular forms I consider in the Landmarks section. The concept, first, allows us to identify similarities between different social forms, in that it allows us to see them as different ways of doing the same thing: creating, distributing and deploying capacities to attain goods. Second, it provides us with axes against which we can give accounts of their differences, for instance in allowing us to compare the distribution of capacities in Atlantic slavery with that in the Nuer social form (see chapters 10 & 11). So, it is a major first step towards being able to carry out the comparative function of the trope identified in chapter 4. It is also a step towards the constuction of my anarchist utopia in chapter 13: by seeing features of different social forms as different ways of doing the same thing, we can start to separate them (at least in imagination) from their local and particular contexts, and to see them as part of the joint, and jointly available, experience of humanity.

•

I now have my first conceptual tool: a specified, broadly inclusive but differentiated concept of power, tailored to my particular purposes and responsive to other anarchist concerns. The rest of this chapter

will consider some similarly tailored and responsive general ways in which power can be created and distributed.

6.5 Creating power

Power as I have defined it is not subject to anything like the law of conservation of energy: it can be created and destroyed as well as distributed. In this section I briefly consider two major ways, already noted, in which power can be created. First, two remarks: 1) I do not suppose that there is some unit of, nor some universal objective way of measuring, power, such that we can always unambiguously identify which of two social situations exhibits more power and by how much. All that is required for my purposes is that we can often say that some change in sociability involves the creation, and some other the destruction, of power. 2) It will occasionally be useful to distinguish between creating *extra power* and creating *new powers*. Which of these we want to say has happened in some change will depend, at least in part, on our purposes in making the description.

I have already noted in 6.2 that a group of people can increase their power by collaborating, and that someone marooned on an empty planet can increase her power by intelligent use and development of her resources and skills. These are the two different ways of creating power which I want to pick out.

The first way of creating power is cooperation. By working together, humans can attain more good(s) than any could attain individually. Further: imagine for a moment that we could sum individuals' powers, and precisely measure differences in power. I suggest that the sum of the individual powers of x humans would be less than the power of x humans working together. In practice, even if a wall is said to take one thousand person-hours to build, this does not mean that one person could build it in a thousand hours (nor, of course, that one thousand people could do it in an hour: some tasks have practical upper limits on the number of people who can cooperate on them). Many goods require cooperation to be attainable

at all. So, cooperation creates power, and does not merely redirect or redistribute a fixed amount of power. I mean 'cooperation' to cover all cases of humans working together, and not for instance to be limited to voluntary collaboration.

The second way of creating power can be called 'expertise' or 'technique'. An increase in knowledge about how things work and in technique in applying that knowledge increases someone or some group's capacity to attain good(s), by increasing the amount of good attainable, or by lessening the effort required to attain the same amount. So, the development of technique creates power. I will consider some ways in which humans and especially states have used technique to create extra power and new powers, in later chapters.

Technique and cooperation are analytically distinct, but often appear intertwined and codependent in real social situations. Much development of technique is and must be cooperative; much cooperation depends on particular kinds of technique.

6.6 Changing and maintaining power distributions

Power can be distributed in a wide variety of ways, from equality to slavery. In this section I consider three ways in which power can be redistributed or some distribution of power maintained (I call both processes 'distribution' from now on). They are: 1) violence and the threat of violence; 2) authority discourses; and 3) property discourses. These are not the only ways to distribute power, but they are widespread and effective ones, and distinguishing them will be useful for the descriptions of particular social forms I give in the Landmarks section (chapters 9-13). During that section I will also discover some further ways in which humans can distribute power. We should note that, since I have defined power as the capacity to attain some good, the capacity to use these or other ways of distributing power is itself power.

First, two remarks about distributing power: 1) as already noted in 6.5, I do not suppose that there is some unit of, nor some

universal objective method for measuring, power. All that is required is that we can often identify and describe a power distribution to the extent of being able to say, for instance, that A has more power than or power over B. 2) I stipulate that for my concept of power, there is no groundstate or state of nature for power distributions. No one distribution of power, be it equality, patriarchy or slavery, is natural or original. We can say about different power-distributions that they differ, and in what way, and we can make judgements about which is better on a variety of moral and other grounds. But we cannot suppose that one is more natural than another, nor make moral judgements about them on that ground. For further argument against 'groundstates', see 8.1.3.

6.6.1 Violence

Violence and the credible threat of violence (from now on called just 'violence') are effective and common ways of distributing power. I call violence used to change a power distribution 'revolutionary', without intending to imply that the change is necessarily sudden, and its opposite, therefore, 'counter-revolutionary'. It has sometimes been argued, as for instance by John Hospers (1971), that states' power-distributions are centrally or solely maintained by violence, in the form of publically known coercive sanctions, up to and including (the threat of) death, monopolised by state institutions. That is, that violence is a state's only means of counter-revolution. This is simplistic: as I show in 6.6.2 & 6.6.3 and chapters 9 & 10, there are other ways in which states and other organisations can and do maintain particular power-distributions. But it is undeniable that states and other organisations do make considerable use of this way of maintaining their distributions of power.

6.6.2 Authority discourses

It is fairly common practice among anarchists and their critics to characterise anarchism as anti-authoritarianism. On the face of it, the gloss has some force: anarchists do devote much of their time and energy to activities, from research to pamphleteering to rioting, which can easily and plausibly be described as anti-authoritarian. However there are good reasons not to focus anarchist theory too strongly on the concept of authority, especially given my particular purposes.

First: the arguments in 1.5 against characterising anarchism as anti-*statism* also apply to a characterisation of it as anti-*authoritarianism*. Such a characterisation is not distinguishing, complete or helpful.

Second: I have shown in chapter 2 that the philosophical anarchist concern with the justification or legitimacy of authority is not typical of anarchism in general.

Third: we can distinguish between at least two kinds of authority. Someone can be: 1) *an* authority *on* some*thing*, that is respected in, an expert on, or worth listening to about, some subject or domain; or 2) *in* authority *over* some*one*, that is in an institutional position which is supposed to confer the right to command, and to impose a corresponding duty to obey, in some domain (see for instance Flathman 1980). Anarchists sometimes explicitly, and very often implicitly, accept and even celebrate authority of the first kind. Kropotkin, for instance, is widely remembered by anarchists with respect and affection, and his work is still read for more than nostalgic reasons (as by me). Anarchists certainly do set themselves against the second kind of authority, whether held by teachers, sergeants, priests or politicians. But at least some anarchist attacks on this kind of authority can be read as meaning that the people *in* authority can be condemned because they are not authorities *on*, for instance, the right way to live.

Fourth: anarchists are typically opposed to anyone having authority over other people, but also typically *for* everyone having

authority over herself. So, again, the anti-authoritarian gloss misrepresents anarchism.

Fifth: anarchists are certainly worried about authority of the second kind distinguished above. But they are also typically just as worried about power over people which does not involve any concept or pretence of authority. For anarchists, a powerful bully is just as bad as an authoritative drill-sergeant.

For all these reasons, authority is not a particularly useful focus for my or other anarchist purposes. For the fifth reason in particular, power is a better focal concept, because authority can be brought in derivatively, as here, as one way among others of changing or maintaining power-distributions.

By an 'authority discourse' I mean a shared vocabulary and habit of social action which makes use of, and is justified and motivated by, a concept of (legitimate) authority. To take one example: the shared vocabulary and habit of social action of democratic politics involves a concept of authority. The idea of people and politicians' authority is used to maintain the power distribution in which they are involved, and to justify and motivate their use of power. This is not a necessary, but is apparently a widespread and effective, way to maintain power-distributions in which one group of people have power over others. It is also a widespead and effective way to challenge power-holders. Because democratic politicians' authority is discussed in terms of their representation of 'the people', their power can be challenged by discourse about their loss of authority through failing to be representative. Further, authority discourse can be a way of attempting to move towards a situation of (more) equal power. Claiming my authority over my own person is one way to resist a distribution of power where someone else has power over, for instance, my sexual choices (this is the way in which the idea of authority is used in anarchist moves of the kind described in my fourth reason not to take authority as focal). So, using the terms I introduced for violence in 6.6.1, authority discourse can be both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary.

Two remarks: 1) as I have characterised it, authority discourse involves the related concept of duty. Authority to command is understood to convey a reciprocal duty to obey. I am aware that the idea of duty is not in general restricted to this role (and describe another of its roles in 6.6.3), but do not need to consider it further here, for my purposes. 2) By focusing on the idea and discourse, rather than the fact, of authority, I do not mean to imply acceptance of the philosophical anarchist position that there is logically no such thing as real or legitimate authority. I do not have or need an opinion about that claim. I focus on authority discourse rather than real authority because I am interested here in the ways in which we can distribute power, and authority discourse appears effective for that task, whatever view we take of the reality of its subject, so long as it is understood by, and at least partially convincing to, the people involved in it.

6.6.3 Property discourses

Although the justice of property-ownership has often been a topic of interest for anarchists, property, unlike authority, is not a potential focus for anarchism. So, I do not need an argument analogous to the one in the previous section against so using it instead of power.

By a 'property discourse' I mean a shared vocabulary and habit of social action which makes use of, and is justified and motivated by, a concept of (legitimate) property. It is worth analysing the elements of such concepts in some detail.

Property-ownership is minimally a triadic relation between two (individual or collective) agents and some (tangible or intangible) good: "A owns B against C" (Hallowell 1967: 239). If I say that this is *my* copy of *Leviathan*, I am asserting a complex relationship between A) me, B) this tangible object, a book, and C) some (perhaps all) others. The relationship asserted by property discourse is not single, and can profitably be analysed into a bundle of relations. This Hohfeld-Honoré analysis has been widely used and modified in legal

and philosophical accounts of property (see for instance Becker 1977, Christman 1994, Munzer 1990 and Waldron 1988).

The bundle of relations, variously asserted and socially instantiated by particular property discourses, in relation to particular goods, is as follows:

Elements	Correlatives	Opposites
Claim-right	Duty	No-right
Privilege (liberty)	No-Right	Duty
Power	Liability	Disability (no-power)
Immunity	Disability	Liability

(Munzer 1990: 19; cf Hoebel 1942: 951).

This "Analytical vocabulary" (Munzer 1990: 18) allows us to unpick particular examples of property-talk. So, for instance, if I own a farm, I have a power to transfer that ownership, and some other people have a corresponding liability to receive it. Or, if I owe you £10, you have a claim-right for £10 from me, and I have a corresponding duty to give it to you (both examples after Munzer 1990). The vocabulary does not give any guidance on how to resolve particular disputes about property, but merely allows us to describe particular property-claims and their differences. Nor does it necessarily identify all of the possible relations we might want to include in a description of some property discourse. However it does identify some important and common ones.

Although the Hohfeld-Honoré analysis was originally designed as a conceptual toolkit for lawyers and judges working in a "Mature system of law" (Honoré 1961: 108), it has wider application. Hoebel (1942), for instance, puts it to use in describing the property discourse of the Yurok Indians of Northern California. Whether or not a property discourse is enacted in the context of a formal legal system, and whatever legal, customary or other sanctions are used to support it, the vocabulary is useful in describing the ways in which people understand, claim and dispute the various claim-rights, privileges, and so on, which make it up.

So, property as a discourse and social institution can profitably be analysed into a bundle of distinct incidents which may attach to one person, be shared by a group of people, or be divided amongst several people. Modern western property law has tended to attach most or all of these incidents to one legal person, the owner of the object in question. However there is nothing necessary or universal about that agglomeration. The different incidents of ownership which are involved in property discourses can be distributed between people in many different ways, for many different practical, traditional and moral reasons. So, for instance, "In the early middle ages, land in England could not plausibly be said to be 'owned' because" the various relations of power, privilege and so on "Were so divided between lord and tenant that the position of neither presented a sufficient analogy with the paradigm case of owning a thing" (Honoré 1961: 109).

Property discourses are a means of distributing power because, where a particular discourse is understood, mostly convincing and sanctioned in a social form, it is an effective way of controlling access to and the use of particular goods. Again: if I own a farm in the social context of "The 'liberal' concept of 'full' individual ownership" (ibid: 107), then I am involved in a bundle of relations with other people with respect to it, including the power to transfer that ownership (with others' correlative liability to have it transferred to them), the privilege of making use of the farm in various ways (with others' correlative no-right to use), and so on. If I have a subjective interest in the money I get from the sale, or the products of the farmland (that is, if they are goods for me), then my capacity to exercise my powers and privileges is power in the sense developed in this chapter.

Property discourse can be both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary. For instance: the workers on my farm might argue that, because the wheat crop is the product of their labour (while I sit in the farmhouse counting my money), they rather than I own it. I might respond by asserting a legal property discourse and by calling on the sanctions with which the state backs it up.

As in my account of authority discourse as a way of distributing power, I do not mean to imply any view on the reality of property by concentrating on the social effectiveness of property discourses. For my purposes, I do not need a position on that question. The significance of property discourse, here, is that it is apparently a widespread and effective way of distributing power, whatever view we take of property's reality, or of the justice of the particular property distributions which a particular discourse supports or challenges.

•

All three of the ways of distributing power I have noted are common and apparently effective. They also commonly appear intertwined and in concert, at least in our current arrangements. States in particular use all three, and support one with another (see chapter 9).

6.7 Summary

In this chapter I have defined a concept of power, in the context of contestation, for the purposes stated in chapter 5 and in response to some more general anarchist concerns. It is summarised in 6.4. In the rest of the chapter I considered some widespread ways in which power is created (by technique, cooperation and combinations of the two) and distributed (by violence, authority discourses, property discourses, and combinations of some or all of the three). My definition, and my accounts of the creation and distribution, of power are tested in 8.5 in relation to a simplified example, and then put to use in the Landmarks section. My next two chapters complete my conceptual toolkit.

7 ◇ Equality

Like power, equality fails Gallie's test for being essentially contested (see 5.1). But as with power, we can accept that it is now and historically has been contested, as a matter of fact if not of necessity, and for similar practical and theoretical reasons[1]. Equality's contestation revolves around four questions: 1) For what purpose should we use a concept of equality? 2) Why equality? 3) Equality of what? And 4) Equality between whom? I postpone consideration of question 4 until chapter 8; here, I give answers to 1, 2 and 3 in the light of my purposes, in the context of contestation, and in response to more general anarchist concerns.

As with power, I do not consider all claims and debates about equality, and do not intend to produce a history or a literature survey. I do not consider, for instance, the question of whether the demands of justice, and therefore of equality, apply only to the basic structure of society (Rawls 1973; Cohen 2000); nor the question of whether to apply different standards of justice to inequalities which result from luck as opposed to those which result from choice (for a useful sketch of this ongoing debate, see Matravers 2002); nor concerns about whether we should be egalitarian about people's whole lives, or about portions of them (McKerlie 1989; Temkin 1993: chapter 8). Again, I consider only those claims and debates which help to specify my concept of equality.

[1] For a subtle account of the various decontestations of equality, see Rae (1981).

7.1 The purpose of my concept of equality

Concepts of equality have been and can be used in a number of different ways. Equality can be used, first, as a demand of morality or justice, which takes its place in the arena against various other competing and perhaps incompatible demands, including demands for freedom, for getting what one deserves, for happiness, and for not having one's rights violated. This is probably the most common use of equality, at least in the philosophical and political literature. Second, as a factual claim about humans, as by Hobbes:

> Nature hath made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind as that, though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another, yet when all is reckoned together the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself. And as to the faculties of the mind… I find yet a greater equality amongst men than that of strength. For prudence is but experience, which equal time equally bestows on all men in those things they equally apply themselves unto. (Hobbes 1994: 74-5)

We could call this the egalitarianism of fear: no matter what small inequalities you benefit from, others can always gang up on you, and they know where you sleep. Other possible factual claims about human equality include, for instance, that humans are equally valuable, or equally God's children, or have equal rights, or equal ownership of the world. Factual claims can further be used to support demands for equality: if, for instance, humans have equal ownership of the world, we might derive a demand for equal access to its resources. Third, as part of a project of political egalitarianism, defined in opposition to luck egalitarianism, as follows:

> The proper negative aim of egalitarian justice is not to eliminate the impact of brute luck from human affairs, but to end oppression, which by definition is socially imposed. Its proper positive aim is not to ensure that everyone gets what they morally deserve, but to create a community in which people stand in relations of equality to others. (Anderson 1999: 288-9)

Fourth, equality can be used as a measuring device, and this is how I will use it.

My concept of equality is part of a toolkit for comparing different social forms. For me, equality is a metrical concept, and my interest is in the extent to which and ways in which particular social forms instantiate or fail to instantiate it. So, to anticipate chapter 13, one major feature of the anarchist utopia is equality, and many of the real fragments of that utopia which I discover will display the possibility of that equality.

So, for me, describing some state of affairs as equal or unequal is not in itself a normative claim. It might form part of an external criticism by comparison with some other, more or less unequal, state of affairs: but in that case, the normative work is done by the comparison and not just by the fact of equality or inequality.

Using a concept of equality for this limited purpose is justified, first, by the anarchist habit of attacking current arrangements as unequal, by comparison with possible utopian equality. My use of the concept is thus responsive to anarchist concerns and the anarchist tradition. Second, this use is justified by being in reflective equilibrium with the utopia (see 5.3). Third, and most importantly, using equality in this way helps me to make the descriptions and comparisons of my Landmarks in chapters 9-13.

7.2 Why Equality?

When equality is used as a demand of morality or justice, the pressing question is, Why equality rather than some other demand? I have already noted that other possibilities include demands for freedom, for getting what one deserves, for happiness, and for not having one's rights violated. A theorist who focuses on equality needs some justification for prioritising it, and some argument against others who argue for prioritising, for instance, freedom, which is often thought to be incompatible with equality.

I do not need such a justification or argument. I am using equality as a metrical concept, not as a demand, for particular comparative purposes. So, for me, the Why equality? question is practical rather than normative, and answered by its help in carrying out my purposes.

7.3 Equality of what?

The Equality of what? question was put in that form in an influential article by Amartya Sen (1982), but was pressing long before. It is pressing at least because: 1) if we use a concept of equality, what it is equality *of* will clearly make an enormous difference to what we are demanding, claiming, or measuring, and therefore to our subsequent argument and practice; and 2) when we use equality as a demand, "The inherent diversity of human beings means that treating them equally with respect to one… 'focal variable' may lead to considerable inequalities in other dimensions" (Callinicos 2000: 52).

Suggested, attacked and defended currencies of equality have included equality of welfare, resources (Dworkin 1981a and 1981b attack the first and defend the second), primary goods (defended by Rawls 1972), opportunity (attacked by Radcliffe Richards 1998), access to advantage (defended by Cohen 1989), and capabilities (first suggested by Sen 1982). I adopt a different currency: power.

The proximate source of the idea that equality of power is an appropriate focus for anarchism is Alan Carter (2000; see also Carter 1999: chapter 3). However, he uses that idea very differently from me, as part of an attempt to found an analytical anarchism to match and challenge analytical Marxism (on which see, for instance, Callinicos 1989). The idea of equality of power also appears in a debate begun by Dworkin (2000: chapter 4) and continued, for instance, by Brighouse (2001) and Armstrong (2003), about whether equality of specifically *political* power is an appropriate focus for egalitarians, or an appropriate understanding of democracy, but this debate is not relevant to my purposes.

For my metrical purposes, I use the concept of equality of power, and therefore, derivatively, of *in*equality of power, with power defined as in chapter 6, and specifically understood as distributed power.

As with my other stipulations about equality, my use of power as the currency of equality is primarily justified by this particular concept of equality's use for my comparative purposes, to be displayed in later chapters. But I show in 7.5 that it is also, to some extent, responsive to the anarchist tradition.

7.4 Equality: a summary

I have answered three of the four questions around which the contestation of equality revolves, as follows. I use a concept of equality as a measuring device, for my comparative purposes (7.1). Given those purposes, I need only a practical rather than a normative answer to the Why equality? question (7.2). My currency of equality is distributed power as defined in chapter 6 (7.3). I have postponed consideration of the fourth question, Equality between whom?, until chapter 8. I now have my second conceptual tool: equality (and inequality) of power as a measuring device to allow comparison between my Landmarks. I will use it throughout the Landmarks section, as for instance in characterising Atlantic slavery as a social form in chapter 10. I now define a useful derivative concept: freedom.

7.5 Freedom

Freedom is very obviously an important concept for anarchists. They are not alone: "Almost every moralist in human history has praised freedom" (Berlin 1969: 121). Anarchists and others therefore share a problem, because freedom is one of the most contested concepts available to writing, speech and action: "The meaning of this term is so porous that there is little interpretation that it seems able to resist" (ibid). The problem of freedom may indeed be worse for anarchists

than for some others, because freedom is a systematically ambiguous term in anarchist discourse. For all the references to it in anarchist thought and polemic, freedom most often appears as something lost, buried and unknown. Consider Proudhon's rallying cry for anarchists:

> To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, regimented, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded... Government means to be subjected to tribute, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, pressured, mystified, robbed... Then at the first sign of resistance or word of complaint, one is repressed, fined, despised, vexed, pursued, hustled, beaten up, garroted, imprisoned, shot, machine-gunned, judged, sentenced, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed, and to cap it all, ridiculed, mocked, outraged, and dishonoured. (quoted in Marshall 1993: 1)

Freedom does not explicitly appear in this often-quoted passage, but the idea is there as something lost, stifled and betrayed. Freedom in that form of something lost and desired is a significant but often ghostly presence in anarchist thought. Given these facts that freedom is (even) more contested than power or equality, and that it appears in anarchist texts and speech almost entirely as something desired but unknown, we have good reason to reject freedom as a focal concept for anarchism, at least for my particular purposes.

Nonetheless, a decontested and derivative concept of freedom will be useful for those purposes. I stipulate that here, to be free is not to be at the sharp end of an inequality of power. Free people have equal power; I am unfree to the extent, and in the particular ways, that others have power over me. This definition of freedom does not, and is not intended to, solve many of the problems associated with this contested concept. It focusses, to the exclusion of other issues, on freedom *from domination*. It will, however, be useful in describing my Landmarks.

I have argued that freedom is not an appropriate focus for my anarchist project. But we should note that unfreedom, and in particular that variety of unfreedom which results from social domination, is a typical focus of anarchist polemic. Since this kind of unfreedom is usefully defined as being at the sharp end of an inequality of power, my use of power as the currency of equality is responsive to this feature of

the anarchist tradition. My point is not the (dubious) claim that anarchists 'really mean' inequality of power when they criticise and resist lack of freedom, but that this is a useful general analysis of a persistent anarchist theme, using new terminology.

•

In this section I have argued against using a concept of freedom as a focus for my anarchist project, and instead stipulated a derivative concept which relies on the prior definition of equality. In 6.6.2 I did something similar for the concept of authority, by arguing that we have good reason not to focus anarchist theory on it and not to characterise anarchism as anti-authoritarianism, but nonetheless including an account of authority discourse as one way of changing and maintaining power distributions. These concepts of authority and freedom will be useful for my particular purposes. Considering and rejecting them as focal for anarchist thought, but including derivative versions of them, is another way in which my toolkit is responsive to general anarchist concerns. Authority and freedom are important concepts for anarchists, and I have responded to that fact in these sections.

7.6 Summary

I have described my second conceptual tool by responding to the first three of four questions about equality: 1) For what purpose should we use a concept of equality? 2) Why equality? 3) Equality of what? And 4) Equality between whom? I turn to question 4 in chapter 8. For the moment, I have answered that I will use equality of power as a measuring device for the practical reason that doing so is useful in carrying out my comparative task (in answer to questions 3, 1 and 2, respectively). I have also rejected freedom as the focal concept of my anarchism, and instead stipulated a derivative concept of freedom: to be free is not to be at the sharp end of an inequality of power. I have not intended a general intervention in the problems of equality or of freedom, but only to specify one conceptual tool, for my particular

purposes. In chapter 8, I pull this tool and my concept of power together, by describing a model of human sociability.

8 ◇ The Network Model

Chapters 6 & 7 developed decontested concepts of power and of equality, in the light of my purposes, in the context of contestation, and in response to more general anarchist concerns. In this chapter I complete and draw together my conceptual toolkit by developing, and arguing for the adoption of, a model of human sociability. My model is adapted from the work of Michael Mann (1986 & 1993) and I call it the network model, for reasons which will become clear as I describe it[1].

This chapter has five sections: in 8.1, I describe and argue for the network model, partly by comparison with some other ways of thinking about human sociability; in 8.2, I answer the question Equality between whom?, postponed from chapter 7; in 8.3, I note some general features of human social networks; in 8.4, I summarise the network model; and in 8.5, I summarise the toolkit as a whole.

8.1 Description and comparisons

Humans, pursuing a wide variety of interests, create, discover, modify and destroy social organisations. These organisations consist of networks of humans interacting in ways including cooperation, negotiation, production, exchange, coercion, hierarchy, friendship, emnity, violence, ritual, and play. Interactions are carried out both face-to-face and through various media. Almost all humans are involved in many such networks, in many roles, and these networks overlap, interpenetrate and sometimes include one another. Networks change in response to changes in or discoveries of interests, to the effects of other networks, and to changing environments and the opportunities and demands they create.

Although it is perhaps possible that some humans could organise themselves into a single, unified and discrete organisation in and through which they carried out all of their social activity, this has never in fact happened. There are and have been no social totalities: "We can never find a single bounded society in geographical or social space" (Mann 1986: 1). Society is best thought of as an activity, apparently natural for humans as for many other animals. It importantly involves both the creation and the distribution of power. So, human social life is "Constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting networks of power" (ibid). Accounts of particular forms of that life must therefore recognise and describe "Overlapping networks of social interaction" which are also "Organisations, institutional means of attaining human goals" (ibid: 2), and which involve the creation of power by, and its distribution between, some individuals or groups.

Because human social life has historically been both various, and sometimes quite stable, I use 'social form' as a term of convenience for any relatively stable and persistent bundle of networks, where it is useful to have a shorthand for such a distinguishable way of life. I refer to the Ik social form in 8.1.3, and the Nuer social form in chapter 11, for instance. However I do not intend to imply that any such social form is fully discrete, nor that it is a higher-order entity than the individuals and networks of which it consists.

I now fill out and argue for this model, by contrasting it with three other ways of characterising human sociability, chosen to emphasise and support those aspects of the model which are important for my purposes. I do not make use of Mann's work in order to claim him as an anarchist, which he certainly is not; nor to attempt to answer his central question, "Are there one or more core, decisive, ultimately determining elements, or keystones, of society?"

---

[1] The term 'network' has also been used in recent work by Manuel Castells (e.g. 2000). His use of it differs from mine, but his project, so far as I can see, can happily coexist with mine.

(ibid: 3); nor to take on his project of writing a history of power. My plan here is to adopt and where necessary adapt his work as part of my own project.

8.1.1 Against social totalities

To the extent that it is not simply a casual way of talking or a traditional theoretical assumption, the assertion of the existence of social totalities is the claim that humans are typically found in discrete, unified social 'boxes', which have boundaries, subsystems, levels or dimensions, and perhaps an internal 'evolutionary' dynamic. On this view, social change and conflict can be divided into endogenous and exogenous types, human behaviour can be explained by reference to "Social structure as a whole" (ibid: 1-2), and there are two distinct but analogous problems for political theory: one about how individuals *within a society* should or do organise themselves, and the other about how *distinct societies* should or do organise *their* interrelations. These problems have been thought sufficiently analogous by Kant (1991) and by Rawls (1999a), for instance, that they have attempted to answer both with the device of a hypothetical contract. These claims can be empirical ones about how humans now or always live. But they are empirically false. As Mann argues:

> Empirical proof can be seen in the answer to a simple question: In which society do *you* live? Answers are likely to start at two levels. One refers to national states: My society is "the United Kingdom," "the United States," "France," or the like. The other is broader: I am a citizen of "industrial society" or "capitalist society" or possibly "the West" or "the Western alliance." We have a basic dilemma – a national state society versus a wider "economic society." For some important purposes, the national state represents a real interaction network with a degree of cleavage at its boundaries. For other important purposes, capitalism unites all three into a wider interaction network, with cleavage at its edge. They are both "societies." Complexities proliferate the more we probe. Military alliances, churches, common language, and so forth, all add powerful, sociospatially different networks of interaction. We could only answer after developing a sophisticated understanding of the complex interconnections and powers of these various crosscutting

> interaction networks. The answer would certainly imply a confederal rather than a unitary society. (Mann 1986: 16)

The argument so far is that we in particular do not live in unified and discrete societies, despite the enormous power and reach of modern states which try to divide us up into such boxes (see chapter 9). This is shown especially by the overlapping coexistence of two different kinds of social network, national states and capitalism, and emphasised by the range of other sociospatially different networks in which we are also involved. Mann continues by arguing that this confederal situation is typical of human life:

> The contemporary situation is not exceptional. Overlapping interaction networks are the historical norm. In prehistory, trading and cultural interaction was of enormously greater extent than could be controlled by any "state" or other authoritative network... In most ancient empires, the mass of the people participated overwhelmingly in small-scale local interaction networks yet were also involved in two other networks, provided by the erratic powers of a distant state, and the rather more consistent, but still shallow, power of semiautonomous local notables... Increasingly there arose within, outside and across the boundaries of such empires more extensive, cosmopolitan, trading-and-cultural networks, which spawned various "world religions"... Social relationships have rarely aggregated into unitary societies – although states sometimes had unitary pretensions. "In which society do you live?" would have been an equally difficult question for the peasant in Roman North Africa or twelfth-century England... Or again, there have been many "culturally federal" civilizations, like ancient Mesopotamia..., classical Greece..., or medieval and early modern Europe..., where small states have coexisted in a wider, loosely "cultural," network. The forms of overlap and intersection have varied considerably, but they have always been there. (ibid: 16-17)

It is not only we who live in a confederal situation: most humans have always lived like that. The belief in unified and discrete societies badly misrepresents the current and historical experience of social humans, and should therefore be abandoned. In its place, we need to recognise the typical human situation of being involved in multiple, crosscutting networks of interaction with particular and different spatial and social reaches, tactics and dynamics. Humans "Are social, but not societal, animals" (ibid: 14).

8.1.2 Against cultural evolution

Since the nineteenth century, evolutionary rhetoric and metaphor has colonised our political and historical imagination, partly in the form of a discourse of 'cultural evolution'. It is not a single position, but a cluster of notions and research projects which differ in their purposes, claims and results. Its unity may rest on little more than the rhetorical heft of the idea of evolution after Darwin, and a shared and reasonable ambition to focus on social change and its explanation. However the members of this cluster also tend to share some contingently associated central ideas and plans, as follows. Cultural evolution stories typically involve: 1) A recognition that human social life has changed over prehistorical and historical time, and a resulting ambition to describe and explain that change at a fairly high level of generality. 2) A division of human social forms into a small number of ideal types. L H Morgan, for instance, distinguished savages, barbarians, and the civilised (and influenced Engels); V Gordon Childe, hunter-gatherers, farmers and the civilised; Elman Service, bands, tribes, chiefdoms and states; Morton Fried, egalitarian society, ranked society, stratified society and states. 3) A mapping of these ideal types onto a scale running from low to high, from primitive to civilised, from less to more evolved, or, most commonly, from simple to complex, bringing with it the not always admitted normative baggage of those oppositions. Marshall Sahlins, for instance, claims that:

> Higher cultural forms arise from, and surpass, lower. Culture produces successively higher *levels* of organisation as new forms capable of harnessing increasing amounts of energy emerge. In popular terms, this is culture's movement towards complexity, the general, progressive aspect of evolution. (Sahlins 1961: 324)

4) Unilinealism, that is "The view that societies (most or all) pass through the same sequence of stages of social types, irrespective of what these may be" over time (Gellner 1986: 80). And some of the time, 5) Metaphors of organic growth, as for instance when Eric Hobsbawm claims that Mafia are "A sort of embryo" of "More highly

developed movements" (Hobsbawm 1971: 30; see further 12.1). Particular examples of cultural evolutionary projects and interventions include Abrahamson (1969), Childe (1963), Eisenstadt (1959), Engels (1972), Lomax & Arensberg (1977), Morgan (1877), Sanderson (1995) and Service (1962). For histories and literature surveys, see Earle (1994), Lewellen (1992) and Sanderson (1990). My examples are all from anthropology, not because anthropologists are especially prone to tell such stories – they seem currently to be out of fashion in the discipline – but because these examples display this cluster of ideas with particular starkness.

Individually, these ideas and plans are interesting and may be useful. But we have good reason to reject their contingent association in a research project, certainly for my particular purposes and perhaps in general.

First, and following on from 8.1.1, there is no tendency for societies to grow up through different ideal types from low to high (or primitive to civilised, or simple to complex), because there are no unified, discrete societies. So, societies are not born, they do not age, and they do not die. The activity of society involves many changing and overlapping networks of individuals. The multiple networks which make up human social activity are not coextensive in space, in time, or in the set of individuals involved in them. Particular people create new relationships, detach themselves from old ones, move away, die, and are born and initiated, or not initiated. Individuals grow up, but societies do not.

Second, the cultural evolutionary project involves a "Disastrous tangle between the ideas of time, height, and value" (Midgley 1995: 153), and that tangle makes important kinds of comparison between different social forms difficult or impossible. In the first place, being more recent is not the same as being more valuable (and just as importantly, being in the future is not, either). If we suppose that it is, our ability to make moral comparisons between social forms is hamstrung. Why would we want to limit the possibility of judgement about which of the ways in which people can live is better (higher,

more civilised, more evolved, more complex) in this way? It is of course possible that some social form existing now is better than some past one. It is equally possible that it is worse, and we need to be able to make that judgement without begging the question. In the second place, the relationship between time and height is obscure. Time does not move up, or in any direction: it passes[2]. And in the third place, height is a strange metaphor for value, as Ursula Le Guin dramatises in *The Dispossessed*. Her central character Shevek, who is from the anarchist world Anarres, is en route to Urras, whose politics are more familiar to us, and has been talking to his doctor:

> Kimoe flustered easily. He had the physician's brisk self-assurance, but Shevek continually upset it. All his explanations ended up, after two or three of Shevek's questions, in floundering. Each took for granted certain relationships which the other could not even see. For instance, this curious matter of superiority and inferiority. Shevek knew that the concept of superiority, of relative height, was important to the Urrasti; they often used the word 'higher' as a synonym for 'better' in their writings, where an Anarresti would use 'more central'... It was one puzzle among hundreds. (Le Guin 1975: 20)

My point is not that centrality is a better metaphor than height, but that the equation of height with value would be inexplicable to someone who had not been brought up casually making it. Height is perhaps a passable synonym for status, and makes metaphorical sense in the context of a hierarchy: but it is not the same as value.

The confused association of height, time and value may, as Midgley argues, be a hangover from pre-evolutionary modes of thought:

> Before anyone thought of evolution, [the idea of height as value] was expressed in the idea of a Great Chain of Being – a scale of creatures reaching from the least to the most important. From inanimate matter the chain led through the simpler living things

---

[2] V Gordon Childe claims that the association of height with time is borrowed from stratigraphical geology: "'Later than' means 'higher up than' in an undisturbed sequence of sedimentary deposits. So the terms 'higher' and 'lower' in organic evolution acquired an objective meaning and were emancipated from their anthropocentric subjectivity. *Homo Sapiens* became the highest mammal not only by his own prejudice, but as the latest species to emerge" (Childe 1963: 14).

> to the more complex, then on through man and the Heavenly Beings to God. It was eternal and unchanging. When, however, people began to think about evolution, they made (as commonly happens) no more changes in their ways of thinking than they were forced to. They did not scrap the Great Chain of Being. Instead, they simply unhooked the top end from Heaven and slung it into the Future. Its axis now was time. But its associations with value did not vanish. (Midgley 1995: 152)

Whatever its source, this three-stranded knot should be cut. To take one important case: states are not 'higher' than other social forms. They appeared later than some (nomad bands, chiefdoms and male outgroups, for instance) and earlier than others (trade-unions, environmental pressure groups, and rock bands). This order of appearance is a matter of interest, and may not be coincidental: large, widespread and powerful states probably had effects on what other forms were possible or likely in their shadows. But that tells us nothing about their value. In general: lateness in time is not value; nor is it height; nor is height value.

Third, and following on from this, we should remember that my purposes here involve comparison. So, more generally, an account of human (pre-)history which already builds in a number of comparisons of relative height, complexity and so on, between social forms, is a bad idea for those purposes. It begs too many questions.

Fourth: cultural evolutionary projects' ambitions to describe and explain change (1) and to produce a typology of human social forms (2) work against one another, in two ways. In the first place, change in human social forms does not happen as if a switch has been flicked, but gradually, with new forms of interaction emerging out of and competing with surviving older ones. So, if we focus on change in human sociability, we are focussing on the point where the boundary between two types of sociability is most blurred. In the second place, at least some social change is not change from one type to another, but within social forms which are in other ways relatively stable. So, if we focus on change from one of a small number of ideal types to another, we ignore some of the changes we had intended to investigate. For both reasons: it is a reasonable research project to

distinguish, for instance, the chiefdom as a type of human social form, and to investigate whether non-tautological generalisations hold of all examples of that type. It is also a reasonable project to investigate the nature and causes of social change. But trying to do both at once limits our ability to do either.

Fifth, unilinealism is a very strong claim about the pattern of human history, and at best unproven. Even supposing what is not in fact the case, that we can, for instance, distinguish unified and discrete Spanish and Maya societies (from each other and from all the other networks in which their members were also involved), is it plausible that the two went through "The same sequence of stages of social types"[3] (Gellner 1986: 80)? Even if we perversely ignore the fact that Spanish and Maya people had enormous and complex effects on each other (on which see for instance Clendinnen 1987), I suggest that the unilinealist claim requires very strong empirical evidence, not so far forthcoming, to be plausible.

Sixth, and finally: cultural evolutionary stories typically invoke, and map their typologies of social forms to, a linear scale from simple to complex. A representative textbook, for instance, offers "A classification of early states based on degree of complexity" (Lewellen 1992: 21). But the idea of complexity is at best ambiguous, and may well be worse than that: "The concept of complexity includes too much which makes it a lumpen catch-all that explains everything but signifies nothing" (Gamble 1986: 28-9). I return to the question of simplicity and complexity, in relation to states and their appearance in history, in chapter 9. For the moment, I note that the unexplained introduction of a scale running from simple to complex, and its unargued application to typologies of social forms and to the passing of time, is at best problematic. I further suggest, and will show in chapter 9, that complexity is an ambiguous and non-distinguishing,

---

[3] The claim would perhaps be that 'the Maya society' was at a (lower, more primitive, less evolved, less complex) stage already passed by 'the Spanish society', and that it was cut off before it could complete its 'natural growth'.

and therefore bad, metrical concept for analysing change in human sociability, and especially the development of states.

I have given six objections to cultural evolutionary projects involving the contingent association of five ideas or plans: 1) an ambition to describe and explain human social change at a high level of generality; 2) a typology of human social forms; 3) a linear scale of height, civilisation, evolution or, most commonly, complexity; 4) unilinealism; and 5) metaphors of organic growth. These objections can be taken to support either a strong or a weaker claim. The first is that the association of these ideas and plans has been in general a mistake, and ought to be abandoned. I believe that this strong claim is true, but am not convinced that I have proved it, and do not need to insist on it for my purposes. All I need, and therefore all I take on from this section, is the weaker claim that we should not use this cluster of ideas for my anarchist and comparative purposes. The network model does not assert or use, in particular, 2, 3, 4 or 5, either individually or in concert. I do describe, but for the most part do not attempt to explain, some social changes, in particular the development of modern states and Atlantic slavery (chapters 9 & 10).

8.1.3 Against the state of nature

The idea of a state of nature is one motif of the social contract vocabulary, which can be and has been used in a wide variety of ways (Höpfl & Thompson 1979). States of nature and their analogues can be hypothetical scenarios, or (attempts at) realistic descriptions of historical or contemporary circumstances; they can refer to pre- or apolitical or even pre- or asocial forms of life; and the individuals in them can be presented as driven only by appetite, or as rational and self-interested (either because the theorist believes that humans are really like that, or because doing so allows morality or justice to be derived from or justified by minimalist amoral assumptions). Other past variations could be noted, and there seems no reason to bar future reuses and modifications of the notion of a state of nature.

I oppose the network model to the state of nature in only one of its meanings. The state of nature is sometimes thought to be an empirically real groundstate, in which humans naturally live, up from which societies and especially states can be built like skyscrapers, and back down to which the collapse of fragile social institutions might throw us. The groundstate can be described in various ways, and be positively or negatively assessed, but it is typically thought of as simple by comparison with our complex arrangements, and associated with past and contemporary 'primitive' groups.

I deny these claims. Almost all humans live in social networks, of various kinds, between which we can make moral and organisational comparisons. Particular networks have particular histories, and that two social forms are in some ways similar does not mean that they have the same history, nor, in the case of 'primitives', the same or any 'lack of history'. If there are some similarities between, for instance, aboriginal Australian and Amazonian hunting and gathering groups, this tells us very little about how they got to those somewhat similar forms, and certainly does not show that they got there in the same way, nor that either are relics of a natural groundstate. The distinction between nature and artifice does not cut at these joints. All human social networks are natural in the sense that we could not make them, and would not make the particular ones we do, without being the particular evolved creatures we are, and having the natural capacities we have. And we do deliberately *make* social networks, although not always according to explicit plans, at least in part because that is a natural thing for us to do. We are naturally social artificers. So, for instance, a human brought up by wolves would not be a natural human, untainted by culture, but an incomplete one, deprived of the conditions of her natural development and of the exercise of some of her natural capacities, including language, conceptual reasoning and human social interaction. This is not because humans are higher, or more evolved, or more complex than wolves, but just because they are different (despite also having many similarities).

Similarly, Colin Turnbull's claim that the Ik, the once-nomadic, then starving, disintegrating and callous tribe he studied in northern Uganda, show us that "Our much vaunted human values are not inherent in humanity at all, but are associated only with a particular form of survival called society, and that all, even society itself, are luxuries that can be dispensed with" (Turnbull 1972: 294), is false. The Ik are not without society, but trapped, at least partly by environmental and political factors outside their control, in a particular and disastrous social form. Humans are capable of creating and maintaining other disastrous social forms, from abusive marriages to fascist dictatorships. But this does not show that humans are 'really', 'fundamentally' or 'in the state of nature' like that, and that better ways of life are artificial or just window-dressing. It shows only that these are human social possibilities.

In general: humans are capable of a wide variety of different social forms, and we can and often must make moral and other comparisons between them, but no one form is more natural than another. Change, including the collapse of particular institutions, may take us in various directions, and it may for better, for worse, or neutral. There is no single, simple social form into which we naturally fall, or which is a groundstate on which we might build more complex ones.

•

I have described and argued for the network model by comparing it with some alternative ways of thinking about human sociability, and emphasised the points that: 1) humans do not live in social totalities (8.1.1); 2) at least for my purposes, we should not adopt cultural evolutionary projects' contingent association of the cluster of ideas described in 8.1.2; and 3) there is no state of nature, in the sense that there is no single, fundamental, natural groundstate on which societies are built or 'down' to which we might fall (8.1.3).

Finally in this section, we should note a consequence of accepting the network model: there is no such thing as a 'primitive' society (hence my use of scare-quotes around the term throughout

this thesis). Other social forms differ from and can be compared with our own, but the forms we are sometimes inclined to call 'primitive' are not low or simple, not necessarily older or less valuable than our own, and not the natural groundstate of human life. The changes which perhaps turned some social forms like them into ones like ours were not like organic growth. Even if we are correctly identifying similarities between different 'primitive' groups, this does not mean that they have the same history or the same or any lack of history. (On the history of the illusion of 'primitive society' in anthropological theory, see Kuper 1988.)

I emphasise in particular that there are no relics. Elman Service expresses his opposite view as follows:

> If the aboriginal culture of the Arunta of Australia [for instance] is not a form of adaptation to a particular kind of (total) environment made long, long ago and preserved into modern times because of its isolation, then what is it? Does a people have whatever kind of culture it might dream up at any given time? Obviously not… What else can explain such a culture, then, but that there have been survivals into the present of ancient cultural forms which because of relative isolation have maintained a relatively stable adaptation. Many primitive societies have changed greatly in modern times and all ultimately will be changed, assimilated or obliterated, but that only makes the point more clear. Where an Arunta-like way of life is not yet significantly altered by modern influences it is a culture that is primitive, ancient, and preliterate. And it has a very long history, too, for the Arunta culture is paleolithic in type, although the paleolithic *era* ended when and where higher stages arose – a long time ago. (Service 1962: 8)

On my view, first, what explains Arunta culture (if it or any other culture is explicable) is that the Arunta are people making a living and pursuing their other interests in a particular, historically and environmentally conditioned but not determined way, just as we are. Second, the claim that all Arunta-like cultures will ultimately be "Changed, assimilated or obliterated" – and how could we be sure of that? – is irrelevant to the question of whether they are relics. Third, the derivation of the claim that the Arunta have a very long history from the assertion that their culture is paleolithic in type assumes that no group could have adopted a paleolithic lifestyle any later than the

'paleolithic era'. Why should we believe this? And fourth, "Higher stages" is either meaningless or bald self-congratulation: 'Hooray for us!'.

No social form stands to ours or to any other as a child does to an adult, and still less as a child does to the particular adult she will become. And in any case, that child is not lower or less valuable than that or any adult. 'Primitive' is a term of contempt, or occasionally of praise, but not of understanding.

8.2 Equality between whom?

In chapter 7, I postponed consideration of the fourth question around which the contestation of equality revolves: Equality between whom? I can now stipulate that I am concerned with equality and inequality of distributed power between individuals in social networks. The response to this stipulation may be to point out that it misses too much of traditional egalitarian concern: What about inequalities between people who have no social interactions, perhaps because of a deliberate refusal on the part of those who benefit from them to consider those on their sharp end? But this response misunderstands my concept of equality. I am not using equality as a demand of morality: if I was, inequalities between non-interacting people would certainly be an object of concern. To the extent that I assert a moral demand at all in this thesis, it is a demand for the anarchist utopia, which includes but is not limited to equality of power as a demand. So, I stipulate equality of power between individuals in networks as a metrical device, not as a (too limited) demand of morality. Since networks typically crosscut and include one another, and since most humans are connected with each other through multiple networks of interaction, this in fact covers a great deal of traditional egalitarian concern.

8.3 Some general features of human social networks

In 6.4, I summarised my concept of power as follows. Power is the present capacity to attain future goods. It can be exercised in explicit policy conflicts, in suppressing potential conflicts, and in modifying the preferences of the 'outs' so that no conflict arises. It can be a property both of individuals and of groups. The concept covers both created and distributed power, and both individual and generalised cases. Power can be exercised whether or not the power-holder intends her effect, and provisionally applies to all effects. In 7.6, I stated that I use equality of distributed power as a measuring device for the practical reason that doing so is useful in carrying out my comparative task.

I now want to say something about how networks of power have manifested themselves in human social history. First, and following directly from my definition of power, we should note that power is a feature of all human interaction. Power in my sense inhabits or infests the whole of human life.

Second, human social networks and forms typically both create and distribute power. Indeed creating power entails maintaining or changing its distribution, because there is no state of nature: no groundstate in which power is naturally the property of the strongest, or of the heads of households, or of the heirs of Adam. In general, there are no human social situations which do not involve the creation and distribution of individual and collective capacities to attain goods.

Third, one of the important features of human social networks is that we often create mechanisms for their maintenance, for regulating the relationships between different networks, and thereby for maintaining a particular mode of the creation and distribution of power. In particular, we tend to create not just social networks but institutions, which are formal, rule-guided and ritually-performed networks or bundles of networks. They often involve the idea of roles, including king, priest, minister and managing director, which can survive the removal of their current incumbents. Institutions are also

often regarded as having (legal) personae of their own, separate from any of the individuals involved in them (cf Hobbes 1994: chapter xvi). Institutionalisation is perhaps distinctively human: certainly, no other animals institutionalise to the extent that we do.

However, fourth, the tendency to institutionalise is continually challenged by another human tendency, to create new networks and power distributions:

> In pursuit of their goals humans further develop these networks, outrunning the existing level of institutionalization. This may happen as a direct challenge to existing institutions, or it may happen unintentionally and "interstitially" – between their interstices and around their edges – creating new relations and institutions that have unanticipated consequences for the old. (Mann 1986: 15)

There are tendencies both to deliberate resistance and to what Mann calls 'interstitial emergence'. In general, there is a tendency to try to create stable, unified and discrete social forms which embody particular equal or unequal power distributions, but "Underneath, human beings are tunneling ahead to achieve their goals, forming new networks [and] extending old ones" (ibid: 16). Human social forms have never been sufficiently institutionalised to prevent all resistance or to resist all interstitial emergence. Further, institutions are vulnerable to many changes which are not the result of either: one can collapse, for instance, because of environmental change, natural disaster, disease, or because it exhausts a resource on which it relies.

Fifth, human social networks are "Functionally promiscuous" (ibid: 17). By this, I mean that even when deliberately created for some particular purposes, they tend: 1) also to perform other actions; and 2) to be available for use for other purposes. Having set up or discovered some network or bundle of networks, individuals often use them for new purposes, and find that they do more (and sometimes completely other) things than expected or intended.

I have made five general points about the ways in which networks of power manifest themselves in human social life: 1) power is a feature of all human social networks and forms; 2) all such forms

involve both the creation and the distribution of power; 3) there is a tendency to institutionalise; but 4) that tendency is never completely successful, because there is also a tendency towards resistance and interstitial emergence, as humans create new social networks, and because institutions are fragile; and 5) networks frequently perform or come to be used for new and unexpected actions and purposes.

8.4 Networks: a summary

Humans, pursuing various ends and interests, create, discover, modify and destroy social organisations, which consist of networks of humans interacting in various ways, creating power and distributing it equally or unequally. These networks overlap and interpenetrate each other. Networks change in response to changes in or discoveries of interests, to the effects of other networks, and to changing environments and the opportunities and demands they create. Humans have not historically organised themselves into unified and discrete social totalities, but have lived in multiply confederal social situations. At least for my purposes, human history is not best understood by cultural evolutionary stories, and there is no single, simple groundstate of human social life.

We can note some quite general features of human social life as it has historically appeared: all social networks create and distribute power, whether equally or unequally; display opposing tendencies to institutionalisation and to resistance and interstitial emergence; and are functionally promiscuous.

Humans have lived in a wide variety of different social forms, and can change them in a wide variety of ways. We can create power in many different ways, including but not limited to technique and cooperation. We can distribute power in many different ways, from equality to extreme inequality, and by many different means, including but not limited to violence, authority discourses and property discourses. We can also create new ways to distribute power

in response to our interests and our social and environmental situations.

This is my third, final, and synthesising conceptual tool: the picture of human sociability as consisting of overlapping and interpenetrating networks of humans creating power, and distributing it equally or unequally, by a variety of means.

8.5 The toolkit: summary and conclusion

In chapter 4 I explained the false accusation that anarchists are primitivists as a misreading of a common anarchist rhetorical trope. I stated my plan to use an argument-form derived from that trope to prove my main thesis, that the anarchist utopia is possible, and admitted a dangerous problem with that ambition: the comparison between different social forms which it requires may not be possible. In chapter 5 I set out a plan to solve that problem by developing a conceptual toolkit or projection, in the light of my purposes, in response to more general anarchist concerns, and in the context of the contestation of some of its conceptual elements. Chapters 6 & 7 and this chapter have together carried out that plan. I now have the tools to analyse and compare some selected, Landmark examples of human sociability, and do so in chapters 9-13.

As a first, simplified example of the toolkit in use, consider the social form of some humans in a (modern, western-style) factory. This group of individuals are involved in a bundle of networks of interaction with each other. Some of them are friends, some colleagues, some boss-and-worker. Most are involved in many such relationships, in different roles. They are also involved in networks with others outside the factory: with family, friends, neighbours, the people who work in or frequent the shops and pubs they visit, and so on. The various tasks which make up their manufacturing activity are divided, fairly stably, between them: A runs a lathe, B programs a computer, C advertises the factory's products. Some of them form an elite. They have positions in a hierarchy, understood and mostly

accepted by everyone, which give them various powers to control the activity of others, and which are rewarded with more money than other people get (money, since it is a means for gaining goods like food, shelter, and so on, is a form of power). That is, power is unequally distributed in their favour. They certainly have distributed power in the one-dimensional sense: they typically get their way in conflicted decisions, probably by calling on an authority discourse ('We are in charge'). They probably have power in the two-dimensional sense: many of the people involved in the factory do not have a voice in decision-making, and so potential policy conflicts do not become explicit. They may have power in the three-dimensional sense, whether or not they realise that they are involved in a system which transforms the preferences of the 'outs' (recall that on my definition of power, it can be exercised whether or not the power-holder intends her effect). The factory social form also exemplifies created power: by cooperating, all of the individuals involved in it create capacities to do things, and thereby to attain goods, which they could not individually do and attain. This creation of power makes the unequal distribution of power in the factory possible. Without the cooperation of all, neither the elite's control nor their differential rewards are possible. It may be supposed that the reverse is also true: that without the hierarchy and the elite's control, perhaps even without greater rewards for the elite, the cooperation which creates this power would be impossible. But this is false, as I will show in later chapters. The tactics of organisation and distribution of power which the factory exemplifies are one, but not the only, way of creating its power.

In general, humans are extremely socially creative and plastic. Some social forms create more power than, and different powers from, others. Social forms distribute power in many different ways, by many different means. The range of possible power, powers, distributions and means of distribution is large, but not infinite. The question, What are the limits of that range?, is an empirical question,

and I give a partial answer to it by showing that it does include the anarchist utopian social form, amongst many other possibilities.

In chapter 9 I describe the state social form, concentrating on two of its types: pristine and modern states. In chapter 10, the Atlantic slave system. In chapter 11, the social form of the African Nuer people as the best-documented example of acephalous society. In chapter 12, the briefly successful anarchic experiments during the Spanish Civil War. And in chapter 13, my anarchist utopia.

9 ◇ States

States are not the only, but are the pre-eminent, power-creating and distributing institutions in our world (despite challenges by and partial integration with multinational corporations and international organisations). Although I argued in 1.5 that anarchism should not be characterised as anti-statism, it is undeniable that anarchists are against and interested in states, amongst other things, and also undeniable that they ought to be, on their principles. Here I consider two anarchist distinctions and definitions of states (9.1), before going on to analyse two important kinds of state: pristine (9.2) and modern (9.3) states. But first, I describe states in general.

The question, What is the state? invites the response, Which one? Derbyshire and Derbyshire (1996) list nearly two hundred currently existing states, and even if we ignore past ones and limit ourselves only to those, are we asking about the Republic of the Ivory Coast, or the Kingdom of Thailand, or the Federation of Malaysia, or the United States of America? Post-colonial states or superpowers? "Modern states come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and they arrived by different routes" (Anderson 1986: 1). Even that list assumes that we can separate states from the nations or forms of production or other networks in which they are embedded or with which they compete. Are armed forces part of the state? Are corporations based in its territory? We might come to agree with A J P Taylor that "One of the great blunders of modern political thinking is to invent an abstract entity called the State" (Taylor 1967: 131).

State is "Undeniably a messy concept" (Mann 1986a: 112), and names a large set of ideas, institutions, organisational tactics and social networks with a complicated history of invention, change, interaction and collapse. In one sense, a history of the state would be a history of humanity: "Most questions about the origins of the state could be answered very simply: discover the origin of *Homo sapiens*

sapiens" (Gamble 1986: 22). In another, the states we find around us now are no more than, and often very much less than, seven hundred years old. They appeared in the latest moments of a human history stretching back perhaps one hundred thousand years (see Leakey 1995: chapter 5 on the debate over the age of modern humanity; estimates range between forty thousand and two hundred thousand years).

However, we can note some general characteristics of states. Michael Mann, for instance, gives this beginning definition: "The state is a differentiated set of institutions and personnel embodying centrality, in the sense that political relations radiate outward to cover a territorially demarcated area, over which it claims a monopoly of binding and permanent rule-making, backed up by physical violence" (Mann 1986: 37; Mann 1986a gives an almost identical definition). States operate, first, in a geographically defined area, a territory, where they fairly successfully claim a monopoly in the control of many (potentially all) human activities; and second, usually, in an international arena made up of other sovereign states. The territory is organised around an administrative centre containing or representing the elite in whose favour power is unequally distributed. That elite consists of a network or several networks of power-holders including, for instance, kings, parliamentarians, aristocrats, bureaucrats, the wealthy, and military and religious leaders. Elite networks are typically hierarchically organised, and claim permanent authority over the citizens or subjects of 'the country', usually for their defined roles rather than for the particular individuals who happen currently to inhabit them. They have and exercise distributed power in all three of the dimensions I identified in 6.1: they frequently get their way in explicitly conflicted decisions, suppress potential conflicts, and modify the preferences of the governed such that conflict does not arise. All of the individuals involved in interaction with and governed by states cooperate in creating the power which is distributed in favour of the state elite, and the social form in which all are involved.

States (and especially modern states) are highly institutionalised bundles of networks which direct the creation of enormous power and distribute it unequally, and which have successful, but not completely successful, unitary pretensions. These pretensions are of two kinds, and tend to be unsuccessful in two ways. First, states attempt to create unified and discrete societies in defined territories, which contain their subjects and physically or administratively exclude others, and which have precise cleavages at their boundaries. But humans – gypsies, traders, asylum-seekers, internationalists and the members of diasporas – keep forming new networks across such boundaries. Second, states attempt to turn themselves into single power organisations, but are in fact internally differentiated: "States have multiple institutions, charged with multiple tasks, mobilizing constituencies both through their territories and geopolitically" (Mann 1993: 75). States typically involve unstable compromises between different institutions, all attempting to gain primacy and to unify on their own terms. However despite these two kinds of failure, states have been more successful than any other social form in making their subjects and territories tend towards unity and discreteness.

State power is available, and has been used, for an enormous variety of purposes: codification and control of behaviour; redistribution of resources; organisation of warfare; imposition or encouragement of some and suppression of other kinds of social network; promulgation of some and suppression of other kinds of speech and claims; maintenance or transformation of patterns of ownership; maintenance or transformation of social hierarchies; organisation of knowledge-gathering, exploration and colonisation; and the simplification of lives and networks through tactics of legibility. All of these purposes have also been carried out by non-state networks and institutions, despite state attempts to monopolise them.

In general, there seem to be no limits set by the structure of states on the uses to which their immense power can be put. Because

of the functional promiscuity which is characteristic of them as of all human networks and institutions, states are available to be used by any individual or network which can get hold of their reins. Left-wing anarchists can in fact approve of some of the uses to which they have been put: state power has been used by socialist political parties in particular to redistribute some kinds of power more equally by redistributing wealth to the poor and by extending the franchise in democratic states, to set up welfare and socialised health systems, and to limit the influence of elites like aristocracies and wealthy capitalists (on the history and successes of parliamentary socialist parties, see for instance Sassoon 1997). Most anarchists would be likely to argue that even these achievements are poisoned by their use of state tactics and forms including authority and property discourses, (the threat of) violence, hierarchy and attempted national unification, but there is no denying that there are worse uses for states. To note some obvious examples: state power is available, and has been used, for the personal benefit of dictators and their cronies, for repression, to start and prosecute wars, and for genocide. The Holocaust required, amongst other preconditions, the use of a state (on Nazi infiltration, use and transformation of the state, see for instance Burleigh 2001, particularly part 2; on the bureaucratic detail of extermination, Dawidowicz 1976).

I now consider how and why some anarchists have separated states from non-states, before filling out my general characterisation of states for two of their particular kinds: pristine and modern states.

9.1 Two distinctions of state from non-state

Anarchists have often made and argued for a distinction between states and other forms of human social activity, both concurrent with and previous to the existence of states. Kropotkin, for instance, notes that:

> There is the German school that likes to confuse the *State* with *Society*. This confusion is to be met even among the best German thinkers and many French ones, who cannot conceive

> society without State concentration; and thence arises the habitual reproach cast on Anarchists of wanting to "destroy society" and of "preaching the return of perpetual war of each against all." (Kropotkin 1943: 10)

The point of this distinction between state and society is that "The State is but one of the forms taken by society in the course of history" (ibid), and that humans are capable of organising themselves in other ways. Kropotkin goes on to define the state as involving a governing power, territorial concentration, and "A concentration of many or even all of the functions of the life of society in the hands of a few" (ibid). His distinction is useful for at least two purposes. First, to make the argumentative point that anarchists want to remove the state (amongst other things), not social organisation and cooperation, and therefore that the common equation of anarchy with chaos cannot stand (without further argument to show that the state is the only way to avoid chaos). Second, to make the historical point that current states are only one, recent human social form amongst many other possibilities. That is, to serve the second purpose of the anarchist comparative trope, as identified in chapter 4: to assert the variety of human sociability.

Another example of anarchist separation of state from non-state:

> This latest form of the state, based on the pseudo-sovereignty of a sham popular will, supposedly expressed by pseudo-representatives of the people in sham popular assemblies, combines the two main conditions necessary for [capitalists'] success: state centralization, and the actual subordination of the sovereign people to the intellectual minority that governs them, supposedly representing them but invariably exploiting them. (Bakunin 1990: 13)

Bakunin's separation of the state from the people is intended, first, to attack the false identification of the interests of the capitalists and governors with the interests of the oppressed people. Second, in this particular case, to assert a continuity of function between democratic and non-democratic states. "Sham popular assemblies" do not, on this account, change the fundamental character of the state, which Bakunin goes on to decribe as organised exploitation of "The people's

labour" maintained by "Constant coercion and compulsion" (ibid), and as necessarily expansive and aggressive.

Both of these distinctions and characterisations have their uses for particular purposes. For my purposes, I now go on to describe two kinds of state and their histories in more detail. First, pristine states.

9.2 Pristine states

A 'pristine' or 'primary' state is one which got started without influence from other states. They are very unusual: there have probably been six pristine states in the history of humanity. The exact count depends particularly on whether the Minoan state on Crete is included; the generally accepted members of the set are, in Eurasia, the Sumerian, Egyptian, Indus Valley and Yellow River, and in America, the Mesoamerican and Peruvian, states (Mann 1986: 74; for a map of their distribution, see Lewellen 1992: 49)[1]. Every other state formed at least partly under influences from states, including but not limited to conquest, colonisation, secession, importation of skilled state bureaucrats, and deliberate mirroring intended to share in the perceived advantages of statehood, or to fight an invading state effectively.

What I have to say about pristine states is necessarily tentative, for three reasons. 1) With just six examples, our sample size is too small to support anything else. We can say something about how these particular states in fact got started, but cannot support many firm claims about how pristine states must get started. 2) The available evidence is fragmentary and often difficult to interpret. And 3), although we can make some generalisations, the six pristine states differ from one another in a number of ways. For

---

[1] Debate about this list of pristine states has often been of two kinds: first, about diffusionist theories which argue that the transition to a state happened only once, probably in the Middle East, and that the form then spread to the other supposed pristine states; and second, about monocausal theories which argue that transitions to states had

instance, they appeared in differing environments: Mesopotamia and Egypt are "Basically great arid river valleys with little of the ecological variability of the New World regions" (Service 1975: 203), and the New World lacked the large domesticable animals of the old (for discussion of the significance of environmental differences, see Diamond 1998).

The background to the appearance of pristine states is not a gradual climb through lower or simpler stages towards the pinnacle of statehood. Humans had complex and various social arrangements before they had states, and went through a long history of cycles of the creation and collapse of various social organisations and distributions of power. People "Would freely give collective, representative authority, to chiefs, elders, and bigmen for purposes ranging from judicial regulation to warfare to feast organisation" but those figures "Could not convert that into permanent, coercive power" (Mann 1986: 63). Not only did the conditions of such conversion, discussed below, not usually obtain, but "Human beings devoted a considerable part of their cultural and organisational capacities to ensure" (ibid: 39) that stable institutionalised power-distributions could not be created, or were rapidly destroyed. People without states, on the archaeological and ethnographic evidence, live complicated lives; make their livings in many different ways (as hunters and gatherers, herders, farmers, or various combinations of these modes); know a great deal about their environments and each other; interact in highly mediated and complex ways, and across very large distances; and very rarely create states.

There are two major, necessary but not sufficient conditions for the creation of a pristine state. First, "The population not only had to be large (about 10,000 to 30,000 people), but it had to be 'circumscribed'" (Harris 1989: 388). Circumscription means that people who would prefer not to submit to an incipient state are either unable to leave, or think the costs of doing so too high. This may be

---

one shared cause across all of these cases. I do not need to consider these problems for my purposes.

because of a lack of empty fertile land to move to; because of their investment in the land, often over generations, by planting, building and irrigation; or because they lack the technologies and skills necessary to make a living elsewhere. That is, for these or other reasons, they do not or cannot use one major tactic by which people have typically avoided state-formation: moving away. Second, some technologies, including writing, accounting, and techniques for long-term food storage, had to exist. Once a state had got going, these technologies were further developed, particularly by the bureaucratic, aristocratic or priestly class which unequal distribution of resources could be used to support.[2]

These conditions did not guarantee the creation of a state, which was, it must appear from the small number of times it actually happened, extremely difficult. On such rare occasions, the typical features of the state were: 1) ceremonial and administrative centralisation; 2) institutionalised unequal distribution of power and especially of control of resources; 3) the maintenance of classes of aristocrats, bureaucrats, priests, and soldiers; 4) the organisation of war and conquest in search of new territory, slaves, tribute or sacrificial victims; 5) conscription of labour for large public works and monumental projects; 6) the codification of law; 7) the creation and administration of central stores of goods for redistribution; and 8) the ability to maintain itself past the death of particular individuals, by the creation and use of roles – king, priest, champion – separate from the people who happen currently to inhabit them. These features may or may not have appeared simultaneously, and they may individually have developed slowly or suddenly.

Pristine states maintained their institutional structures, and the ways of creating and distributing power they operated, especially by

---

[2] It has sometimes been thought that there is a third condition: the existence of a food surplus over subsistence level, allowing a community to support political and ritual specialists who do not produce their own sustenance. This claim has been attacked especially on the ground that 'subsistence level' is not and perhaps

calling on 1) authority discourses (on which see 6.6.2), and 2) ritual and mythical discourses relating political to cosmic order, and often attributing divine attributes and ancestors to power-holders. This second is another general mode of distributing power, and also used elsewhere.

It is not clear to what extent the redistributed power involved in this new social form was taken, and to what extent given:

> One school of thought concerned with the origin of the state rejects the idea that ruling classes gained control over commoners as a result of a violent conspiracy carried out by the chiefs and their militia. In contrast, they see commoners submitting peacefully out of gratitude for the services that ruling classes provided. These services included emergency rations in times of famine, protection against enemy attacks, and construction and management of agricultural infrastructures such as dams and irrigation and drainage canals. Also, people believed that the rituals carried out by chiefs and priests were essential for everyone's survival. (Harris 1989: 383)

Harris plausibly suggests that "Both voluntaristic submission and violent repression were present" (ibid: 384); we can add that there were probably different mixtures in different cases. Administrative centralisation would seem or be a good idea for the organisation of, particularly, the irrigation agriculture which was so important for the Eurasian river-valley civilisations, and such centralisation would then be pre-adapted for the other features of pristine states, or for coups by would-be kings. But simultaneously, once a ruling mafia organisation had settled itself, it could come to be used and valued by the commoners for purposes the rulers did not intend.

In summary: humans can organise and have organised themselves in a wide variety of ways, and for most of the time there have been humans, there have not been states. People can distribute power in various ways, for various purposes, but most of the time "Authority was freely conferred, but recoverable; [distributed] power, permanent and coercive, was unattainable" (Mann 1986: 39), not least because people often deliberately resisted or moved away from

---

cannot be defined (see Harris 1959). Again, I do not need to consider this debate for my purposes.

unequal (or more unequal than they had been used to) power distributions. But on a few occasions, in somewhat unusual circumstances, a new social form appeared: a pristine state. This centralised, administrative, expropriating institution made use of several tactics and technologies, for a variety of purposes, but particularly for war, the creation and maintenance of class divisions, the codification of behaviour, and the organisation of large collective projects. In general, it both allowed the creation of extra power and new powers, and distributed them in a distinctive, unequal way.

What I have said here is an account, not an explanation, of the appearance of pristine states. For recent reviews of explanatory theories of that appearance, see Fagan (1999: chapter 8) or Lewellen (1992: chapter 3).

What morals and interest can I and anarchists in general derive from this account of pristine states, and their separation from the vast majority of human history? First, it reiterates, expands on and gives evidence for Kropotkin's point, noted in 9.1, that the state is just one of many possible human social forms. Moreover, it is not a commonly created one. States have appeared only rarely without influence from other pre-existing states. Second, seeing how pristine states got started may be helpful in suggesting how to avoid their formation in the currently, but not necessarily or normally, unusual situation of being stateless. Third, the rarity of pristine states suggests an interesting question: Given that states are so hard to start, why are they currently ubiquitous? An answer to that question, which I approach in 9.3.4, may provide useful information on how states spread and therefore on how we might prevent their doing so.

Fourth: perhaps the most obvious characteristic of pristine states was their violence. Non-state groups do carry out limited and often formalised wars, and individuals obviously hurt each other, but only states maintain an army, carry out long campaigns, or hold onto and exploit conquered territory. While this does not show that (pristine) states are necessarily violent, violence does seem, as a

matter of fact, to be one of their typical characteristics. War is historically a practice of states, not of humans in general.

Fifth, and finally: the appearance of a pristine state is not an increase in complexity. In many ways, pristine states *simplify* their territories and the interactions of the people involved in them. According to Kent Flannery, states may typically be associated with deliberately simplified ecosystems (Flannery 1972: 399 note 1). More importantly, in place of interactions between mutually known individuals with complex kinships, friendships and other relationships, pristine states put, or try to put, stereotyped interactions between roles: king, priest, farmer, slave. In place of an often-immense web of trade and gift-giving negotiated by individuals and overlapping groups: a simple, central store of goods administered by rulers. In place of a lifestyle often involving a wide range of skills and activities: craft specialisation, the division of labour, and the narrowing of individuals' activity and knowledge (this last did not begin with, but was increased and formalised by pristine states).

The last point will become important in chapter 13: although division of labour is now widespread, and is a tactic available in the absence of states, it is not a human universal. Humans have not always organised their production by assigning (ever-smaller) sub-tasks within some larger project to individuals who perform only that task. I take up the point about complexity again in discussing modern states, in the next section.

These pristine states did not turn into modern states: all six collapsed long before modern states appeared. In between, many other human social forms including universalist religions and their heresies, empires, communes, guild-cities and monasteries appeared, were transformed or absorbed, and collapsed. Some are still extant. I move from considering pristine to modern states not in order to write a history of states in general, but to describe two types of state which are important for my purposes.

9.3 Modern states

Modern states are not the result of any general tendency, but a historically unique occurrence, and so, to describe them, we need to understand their unique background and development. They appeared quite gradually, in Europe, from the early fourteenth century. It took them several hundred years to develop their repertoire of organisational, technical, social and ideological means, and to spread across the world (I adopt this long perspective, including absolutist states as modern, in order to indicate continuities between then and now; for other purposes, absolutist states are often regarded as mere ancestors of modern states – see, for instance, Anderson 1986a). I now sketch their background, development, nature and spread.

By definition, individual pristine states appeared in a stateless context. We should note, first, that modern states did not: they appeared and developed in a European and eventually a world state system, in competition and consort with each other. The system we now find ourselves in consists of modern states with sovereign legal personalities in relation to one another, not of 'the' modern state.

In order to simplify a complex story, I divide my account into four sections: The background and rise of absolutism (9.3.1); Surveillance (9.3.2); Nationalism (9.3.3); and The spread of modern states (9.3.4). The division is based on Martin Van Creveld's *The Rise and Decline of the State* (1999). Although these sections do roughly follow the temporal order of appearance of the major features of modern states, I am more interested in analysing them than in reviewing their precise histories. I divide the spread of modern states from the rest of the story not because it happened afterwards – it did not – but in order to see the methods of that spread clearly.

Again in order to simplify a complex story, and to focus on the points which are important for my purposes, I deliberately exclude consideration of two other important developments over roughly the same period as the development of modern states: the economic transformation of western Europe and then the rest of the world; and

the development of scientific, technical and other knowledge, together with institutions which maintain and produce more of it. I do not suppose that these developments were independent of the rise of modern states, or of each other. But, first, their interdependence is extremely complex, and very unlikely to be resolved into the causal primacy of any one of the three; and second, to consider them would be to tend towards writing a general history of our last thousand years, which, quite apart from its length, would obscure the points I want to make.

A final exclusion: I do not treat liberal democracy as typical of modern states, for the simple empirical reason that it is not. Derbyshire & Derbyshire's markers for identifying a liberal democracy are:

> 1 Evidence of constitutional government.
> 2 Evidence of free elections for assemblies and executives.
> 3 The active presence of more than one political party.
> 4 Evidence of checks and balances between the three elements of government: executive, legislative, and judicial.
> 5 Evidence of an independent judiciary.
> 6 Evidence of the protection of personal liberties through constitutional or other legal guarantees.
> 7 Evidence of stability in liberal democratic government [defined as the system having been in place for at least the decade up to 1996]. (Derbyshire & Derbyshire 1996: 24-5)

Only 73 of the 192 states considered by Derbyshire & Derbyshire meet even these, quite weak, criteria. So, liberal democracy is one form, but not typical, of modern states.

9.3.1 The background and rise of absolutism

The background to the gradual development of modern states is the social form usually known as feudalism. The name is problematic, for three reasons. First, feudalism was not static, but an unstable compromise changing and eventually collapsing under a variety of pressures. Second, the term is ambiguous: feudalism can mean not only "A lot of different things" (Reynolds 1994: 1), but may, as Reynolds goes on to argue, be so multivalent as to mean nothing

useful. Third, the idea of feudalism may, as Brown (1974) argues, be an artefact of nineteenth-century historiography, an ideal type without application to concrete history. I continue to use the term for convenience, and as better than clumsy phrases like 'the social form which prevailed in Europe before the rise of absolutism', while bearing these caveats in mind, and without intending to imply either that feudalism was monolithic, or that the term covers everything important about European life in this period.

Feudalism was "The outcome of the violent dissolution of older societies" (Bloch 1961: 443), and characterised by fragmentation and by various attempts at reunification. In a narrow sense, feudalism involves the exchange of allegiance for a grant of land, with conditions on its use and linked duties of service and protection on both sides of the bargain. In an even narrower sense, it applies only to such a relation between nobles (Reynolds 1994: 2). More broadly, it is characterised by: "A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement (i.e. the fief) instead of a salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialised warriors; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man…; [and] fragmentation of authority" (Bloch 1961: 446). The features I want to emphasise are that feudalism involved: 1) a deep fragmentation of power and of the incidents of property; and 2) a proliferation of overlapping and competing institutions and power-holders. The major players in this competition were the Church, the Holy Roman Empire, the nobility, the self-governing towns, and the monarchies which would become modern states.

Absolutist states appeared out of a long struggle between these players, which some of the monarchies eventually won. So, for instance, the Church was strong at the start of the period, having a near-monopoly on literacy, estates all over Europe, and the sophisticated financial, judicial and administrative apparatus required to manage them. But by the end of it, the Church had been weakened by the papal schism, humanist scholarship, and the Reformation, all encouraged or utilised by the monarchies to consolidate their own

power (Van Creveld 1999: 62-75). The victory of the monarchies may have depended in part, as Van Creveld argues, on the multiplicity of power-holders, who could be played off against one another, Church against Empire and towns against nobles. It was not complete: although nobles and towns lost their political independence, the former retained their privileges and monopoly on government positions, and the latter's merchants and manufacturers were "Able to flourish as never before" (ibid: 119). However some monarchs did manage to unify many of the feudal fragments and networks in particular territories into single, hierarchical structures. The social form which resulted is usually called absolutism (perhaps with similar caveats as for feudalism).

The central features of absolutism were: 1) its territoriality. Although feudal power-holders did claim and operate in bounded physical spaces, their powers and reach did not typically coincide with those spaces, because others also had claims within them, and because they had equally important claims and links outside them or unrelated to physical boundaries (in particular, bonds of service and formal kinship). The absolutist states importantly linked both their internal hierarchies and their external powers to territory. Rather than a map of (theoretically) distinct territories, feudal Europe was a web of overlapping familial, communal, fealty and authority relations. As Hendrick Spruyt puts the point, the vital transformation from feudalism to absolutism was the development and realisation of the "Principle of territorial exclusivity", involving "Internal hierarchy" and "External autonomy" in relation to other sovereign states (Spruyt 1994: 3). 2) The sedentarisation of the monarch and centralisation of the administrative apparatus, increasingly in elaborate palaces with large staffs, as opposed to the near-nomadism of earlier monarchs. 3) The increasing isolation of the monarch from commoners and from traditional tasks. Kings were less and less easy to approach personally, and more and more required to socialise and marry only within a very limited group. They stopped being active war-leaders: where earlier monarchs had led their armies personally, absolute

monarchs retired to their palaces and left the fighting to others. This isolation was accompanied by an increasing heroisation of the monarch, often involving comparisons with pagan exemplars like Hercules and superstitions about the ability to cure disease. Finally, 4), a symbolic theatre of power: elaborate court ritual, etiquette, costumes, triumphs and celebrations (for a vivid description of such theatre, see Yates 1975: chapter 1; on rituals of power in a variety of contexts, see for instance the studies in Cannadine & Price 1987 and Theuws & Nelson 2000). These features, and the power-distribution at their heart, were supported by violence, by discourses of authority and property, and by ritual.

Territoriality is perhaps the most significant feature of absolutist, and an important feature of modern, states. During the feudal period, an individual became considerable by forging or maintaining multiple, overlapping networks of fealty, duty and power. In the modern state, these networks are effaced by one loyalty, to the state. An individual normally belongs to only one state. She is either physically and administratively inside it, or outside it. Considerable efforts are made to sedentarise "People who move around" (Scott 1998: 1) like nomads, refugees, slash-and-burn agriculturalists and gypsies, who are hard to fit into this scheme. More, becoming stateless – a refugee or asylum-seeker – is now a disastrous fate, and to be without a territorial state is to be 'primitive', without history, a non-person.

Although they involved the first appearance of features characteristic of modern states, absolute monarchies were not yet our states. In particular, they lacked the vast apparatus of management and control of more recent states. That missing feature is considered in my next section. Absolute states contained the germ of their own transformation:

> Other things being equal, the more absolute any monarch the greater his dependence on impersonal bureaucratic, military, and legal mechanisms to transmit his will and impose it on society at large. In the end, those mechanisms showed themselves capable of functioning without him and were even destined to take power away from him. (Van Creveld 1999: 125)

I focus on this transformation and its results next.

9.3.2 Surveillance

Surveillance, involving both information-gathering and supervisory discipline, is a central feature of modern states (Dandeker 1990: 37-8). It involves: 1) the creation and empowerment of bureaucratic institutions, which allow and are further empowered by, 2) the formalisation of law, 3) the creation of legal tender, and 4) the monopolisation of internal and external violence.

1) Bureaucracies are institutions made up of salaried administrators filling a hierarchy of professional roles, which: survive the removal or promotion of their current incumbents, ideally on impersonal criteria of competence; have clearly defined functions; and are enacted according to prescribed rules (this definition is based on Beetham 1987: 3 and Mann 1993: 444, and ultimately, through both, on the work of Max Weber). They create and distribute a great deal of extra power and many new powers. Having appeared, they gradually created internal functional distinctions into treasuries, foreign ministries and so on, at the same time as the monarch's personal property and household were gradually distinguished from the territory and administration of the state. Bureaucracies took over many of the activities of absolute monarchs, and created many of the distinctive features of modern states (for a detailed account of one such development, see Elton 1953; on the process in general, Mann 1993: chapter 13).

"Bureaucracy both presupposes the existence of information – the indispensable grist to the administrator's mill – and enables more of it to be generated" (Van Creveld 1999: 143). The new bureaucracies made use of or created a variety of techniques for the creation, storage and application of information, in order to facilitate control and taxation. In particular, they made use of cartography, both for describing the resources and defences of the state's territory

and for defining boundaries with other states; of statistics, particularly from population censuses; and of standardisation in names, measures, customs of land tenure, and ways of recording births, deaths, and transfers of property. "In each case, officials took exceptionally complex, illegible, and local social practices… and created a standard grid whereby it could be centrally recorded and monitored" (Scott 1998: 2). More, these maps, literal and figurative, were intended to remake as well as to record: "A state cadastral map created to designate taxable property-holders does not merely describe a system of land tenure; it creates such a system through its ability to give its categories the force of law" (ibid: 3). These bureaucratic "Attempts at legibility" (ibid: 2) were tactics of rule and means of creating and distributing power, and their development and spread allow modern states their extraordinary reach into the details of the lives of their subjects. (On one example of the development of taxation structures, see Braddick 1996; on some examples of the developing uses of cartography, the studies in Buisseret 1992; on the developing use of statistics in various countries, the studies in Koren 1918; on these developments in general, Tilly 1975).

Over the history of modern states, there has been a great increase in their technical and social powers of surveillance. Early bureaucratic states attempted to make their subjects and territories legible, but there were still many areas which were outside states' reach and oversight, because of technical difficulties or lack of interest. More recent states have tended towards conquering these difficulties, and increasingly left nothing invisible: sexual behaviour, private assembly and knowledge are now all at least theoretically matters of interest to and legible by states. In twentieth-century totalitarianisms an attempt was made to read and control all of these in practice (a trend satirically extended by George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*).

2) Law can in general be defined as "The body of rules, *whether formally enacted or customary*, which a particular State or community recognises as governing the actions of its members and which it may

enforce by imposing penalties" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, my emphasis). Probably, no human community has ever lacked law in this wide sense. But many human communities have certainly lacked what we might think of as paradigmatic law, which is defined, written down and procedurally enforced by states which fairly successfully claim a monopoly on doing so in their territories (on the relationship between and study of common and state law, see Knafla & Binnie 1995). There are of course many different kinds of law, including for instance business, comparative, constitutional, criminal, family, international, military, procedural, tax, tort, sumptuary and immigration law, and they have their own specific histories and interactions (see for instance Hunt 1996 on sumptuary law; Radzinowicz & Hood 1990 on criminal law in Victorian and Edwardian England; Garland 2001 on the transformation of criminal justice in Britain and the United States over the last thirty years). But the central change which the surveillance state brought about was to transform law from customary to formal, and to monopolise its definition and enforcement. This process is not and probably cannot be complete, for two reasons. First, humans continue to create, maintain and modify rules and sanctions outside state control. And second, the promise of an effective monopoly on social control may never have been realistic:

> In crime control, as in other spheres, the limitations of the state's capacity to govern social life in all its details have become ever more apparent, particularly in the late modern era. So, having arrogated to itself control functions and responsibilities that once belonged to the institutions of civil society, the late modern state is now faced with its own inability to deliver the expected levels of control over crime and criminal conduct. (Garland 2001: 110)

But modern states' control of social activity, through the techniques of formal law and its enforcement, is deep and effective even if necessarily incomplete.

3) "Unlike their successors, premodern rulers and communities did not themselves *create* value by fiat; instead, all they could do was confirm, by adding their seal, that *existing* valuable commodities… did

in fact conform to a certain standard of purity, weight, etc." (Van Creveld 1999: 225). Modern states, in order both to increase their power and to claim the immense resources required to support themselves, had not only to increase taxation to previously impossible and unimagined levels, but to redefine the meaning of money by inventing 'legal tender'. That is, tokens issued or licenced by states which must legally be accepted for all debts. Once this confidence trick has succeeded, states' control of the economy is greatly deepened. Modern states literally do have a licence to print money.

4) Over the course of the development of modern states, war has been transformed from a "Vocation of the upper classes" (Van Creveld 1999: 155), via being an activity of temporary, entrepreneurial bands of mercenaries, to being conducted by professional armed forces, recognised by the enemy as servants of a state doing their duty, and formally entitled to consideration if captured or wounded. This transformation created not only the armed forces themselves, with a culture, tradition and organisation of their own, and distinguished by wearing uniform, but two other excluded categories: the state which conducts the war, distinct from those who fight and die in it; and the civilian population. (On the development of modern armed forces, see Howard 1976.)

Permanent armed forces both require elaborate bureaucracies to manage their hierarchy, pay, training and supply, and are tools of bureaucratic surveillance. They are used to monopolise internal violence, crush rebellions and control subject populations, through the development of networks of roads, garrisons, forts and ordnance survey maps, as much as to fight external wars. Functional distinctions within these institutions were gradually created: police, including secret police, became distinct from armies, navies and eventually airforces, and prisons were built and staffed.

After these transformations, the institutional structure of modern states was largely in place. Their apparatus of control of space, sociability and violence, and many of their means of creating

and distributing power, were in place, but in order for our states to come into being, one further element was needed.

9.3.3 Nationalism

Nationalism is a successful "Form of politics" (Breuilly 1994: 2) which appeared in the late eighteenth century, and by the twentieth had become "Easily the most powerful political phenomenon in the contemporary world" (Gray 1995: 13). A political movement is nationalist when it seeks or exercises state power and justifies such action with "Nationalist arguments" (Breuilly 1994: 2), which are built on three basic assertions:

> (a) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.
> (b) The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.
> (c) The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of sovereignty. (ibid)

The third of these is perhaps the most important, encapsulating as it does the doctrine that state territorial boundaries ought to be coterminous with often imaginary linguistic, cultural and/or ethnic boundaries (which of these supposed boundaries is emphasised depends on how the character of the nation is conceived). That is, that "The only legitimate type of government is national self-government" (Kedourie 1960: 9).

This definition of nationalism is not the only one available: for discussion of alternatives, see Smith (1971) and Guibernau (1996). I adopt this short and political perspective for two reasons. First, although some elements of nationalism can be discovered long before the late eighteenth century, they did not appear together. For instance: while part of the powering doctrine of the Hussite revolution in Bohemia, in the fifteenth century, was "Linguistic nationalism" (Lambert 1977: 319), it was not linked to a demand for a linguistically unitary *state.* The Hussites demanded a vernacular liturgy, and the reservation of judicial and academic positions for Czech-speakers, but wanted a reformed church, or in some cases a universal 'primitive'

church in place of the papacy, not a Czech state. Second, I am considering nationalism in the context of modern states, and it did not become a mass political project, and therefore significant in that context, until the recent date I have set for its beginning. Nationalism as a mass form of politics appears in consort and competition with modern states, and is best understood in that context: "The key to an understanding of nationalism lies in the character of the modern state, which nationalism both opposes and claims as its own" (Breuilly 1994: 15; for further argument for this perspective, see ibid: appendix).

The territorial boundaries which are justified or attacked by nationalist movements often pre-exist those movements, having appeared several centuries earlier with absolute states. These administrative cleavages may even have helped to form nationalist consciousness, by creating a fracture in communication: communicative possibilities were greater inside these boundaries than across them, which created a sense of something shared inside the boundary which excluded those outside (Deutsch 1953). However nationalist movements often attack existing states. Opposition nationalism takes three major forms: reform nationalism, which "Accepts existing state territory as approximately coterminous with national territory" but disputes "The non-national basis of state legitimacy and sovereignty"; unification nationalism, which "Regards the existing states as occupying fragments of the national territory"; and separatist nationalism, which "Regards the existing state as an imperial power" (Breuilly 2001: 771).

Nationalist movements very often oppose the particular states in which they find themselves, and attempt to take them over in order to transform them. Nationalism is often a central force in, especially, secession and decolonisation movements, and is in general an effective form of political opposition. Since its appearance, states have either been split, absorbed or ousted, or have tamed nationalism:

> Rising to the challenge, the state, embracing nationalism, deliberately sought to turn the situation to its own advantage and began to sing its own praises by every means at its disposal. Gone were the days when such things as national food, national costume, and national habits could be left to the care of mere patriotic societies; by means of its education system... the state sought to harness not only them but also "culture" in the form of history, painting, sculpture, literature, drama, and music... As one of the greatest expressions of human freedom and spontaneity, sport too became nationalised. Previously it had been organised on a purely local scale...; now, however, it was taken over by the state which turned it to *its* ends, including above all preparations for war... From Argentina to Spain, the second half of the nineteenth century also saw the invention of a whole series of new festivals: such as Independence Day, National Day, Armed Forces Day, Jubilee Day, Flag Day, Heroes' Day, Memorial Day, Victory Day, Great Trek Day... During the last few decades before 1914, the existence of any state without such celebrations had become almost unthinkable. Dreaming about a future Jewish homeland, Theodore Herzl as the founder of Zionism became fascinated with the problem; his diary is peppered with descriptions of imaginary spectacles, the more grandiose the better. (Van Creveld 1999: 201-3; on Herzl, see Laqueur 1989: chapter 3)

These spectacles were part of the broader category of national symbolism, which also includes, particularly, the investment of flags with an immense if ambiguous weight of meaning (Smith 2001).

After World War 1, the world was reorganised according to nationalist principles: "The 'peoples' entitled to exercise the right to [national] self-determination, according to the Paris Peace accord of 1919, were ethnic groups which had become nationally mobilized, and numerous states were carved out of the ruins of the Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires along broadly ethnic lines" (Moore 1998: 3). States which could or would not turn nationalism to their advantage were soon replaced with ones which did. The post-World War 1 settlement gave "Sixty million people a state of their own, but it turned another twenty-five million into minorities" (Mazower 1998: 41) inside nation-states characterised by an (imagined) exclusive identity to which they were aliens.

Nation-states and nationalist challenges to states are now ubiquitous, and "Nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value

in the political life of our time" (Anderson 1983: 12). The success of nationalism has had two consequences, one major and one minor. The minor consequence is that its doctrine of national self-government has become a presupposition of diplomacy and of political thought: "The existence of nations is a tacit presupposition of most current discourse in political theory" (Canovan 1996: 13). Its major and disastrous consequence is that it makes possible and to some extent causes the mobilisation of whole populations and economies for total war, which "Involves all citizens and mobilizes most of them... is waged with armaments which require a diversion of the entire economy to produce them, and which are used in unimaginable quantities... produces untold destruction and utterly dominates and transforms the life of the countries involved in it" (Hobsbawm 1995: 44), as well as being involved in numerous smaller but equally terrible civil wars and ethnic cleansings. The twentieth century was the era of nation-states, and one of the most violent in human history: during it, something like 187 million people were "Killed or allowed to die by human decision" (ibid: 12; the estimate is Zbigniew Brzezinski's).

Nationalism is both a way of creating power, by motivating and channelling particular kinds of cooperation, and a way of maintaining or challenging power distributions and the elites which benefit from them. It is also an example of the general fact about human sociability, noted in 8.3, that there is a persistent tendency both to resist particular institutions, and towards the interstitial emergence of new networks. States did not create nationalism, but had to deal with it.

9.3.4 The spread of modern states

Modern states began in Europe, and for the first century of their existence "Occupied only between 2 and 3 percent of the earth's surface" (Van Creveld 1999: 263). They are now ubiquitous: nearly all of the earth's land area is the territory of nation-states, and what little is not, like Antarctica, is managed, together with the oceans, by

collaborating nation-states. The spread of states differed in detail in each case according to local conditions, decisions, mistakes and chance, but can broadly be divided into four forms. Modern states spread by: 1) deliberate mirroring; 2) colonisation of sparsely populated spaces; 3) colonisation of densely populated spaces; and 4) commercial contact (this division follows Van Creveld 1999: chapter 5). I use the spread of modern states into Russia, North America, South America and India, respectively, as exemplary cases of these forms. I do not suppose that any of these cases were really as simple or monocausal as my accounts may suggest: I intend only to provide illustrative sketches.

Before considering the spread of states in more detail, we should note that in no case did modern states expand into entirely empty spaces. In the rare cases where there were no human inhabitants, states still encountered and made immense changes to native ecosystems, typically in order to exploit their resources. In no case did states meet isolated 'savages' in a 'state of nature': "European expansion everywhere encountered human societies characterised by long and complex histories" (Wolf 1997: x).

1) The Russian monarchy initially failed to consolidate itself into an absolute state, when several western European monarchies succeeded. But Peter the Great deliberately mirrored those western states in his reforms, turning a powerful independent nobility into part of a hierarchy whose titles were granted by him, becoming de facto head of the Russian church, and reforming and greatly enlarging taxation and the armed forces. In many cases these reforms were carried out "At the hands of western experts, both civilian and military, specifically imported for the purpose" (Van Creveld 1999: 281; see ibid: 264-81; for a detailed account of Peter's life and reforms, see Anisimov 1993).

2) In North America (and Australia), the British and other states expanded into vast but very sparsely populated spaces. These new territories were initially administered as extensions of the colonising states, but later became sovereign modern states.

Typically, this form of expansion has involved the near-extermination of the native populations, and the assimilation of the survivors into the expanding state culture. In the specific case of North America, it involved the population and exploitation of the territory by huge numbers of mostly African slaves. (Van Creveld 1999: 281-97; on North America, Taylor 2002; on Australia, Hughes 1987; on slavery, chapter 10.)

3) In South America, the Spanish, Portuguese and other states expanded into a densely populated, resource-rich space. Again, the territory was initially administered as an extension of the colonising state, but has become a complex system of often military-run, sovereign modern states. In this form of spread, the native population was typically enslaved rather than exterminated. (Van Creveld 1999: 298-314; on Mexico, Thomas 1994; on the anthropologies developed to explain and in some cases to justify colonisers' encounters with and treatment of native populations, Pagden 1986.)

4) In India, the British and other states expanded by commercial contact backed by state power. Initially, trade was carried out by organisations like the East India Company, which technically were not organs of their home states. But in practice the personnel of states and companies were often interchangeable; they collaborated in particular by lending each other military personnel and equipment; and the companies used many state forms and tactics, especially including modern armed forces and bureaucratic techniques of reading and control. Companies traded with local power-holders, and therefore had an incentive to encourage or create distributions of power structured for their advantage, and power-holders sympathetic to them. Their help to such power-holders typically involved the loan or supporting use of their military and bureaucratic expertise for the creation of state-like surveillance, taxation and armies. In many cases, this process was accompanied by deliberate mirroring by local power-holders of the companies' techniques for creating and distributing power, which were so obviously effective, often to resist the company or company-backed rivals. So, in trying to structure the

social space they operated in to their commercial advantage, the companies helped to spread state forms and tactics. (Van Creveld 1999: 315-32; on India, James 1997.)

The result of these processes, separately or in combination and modified by local circumstances, was our social world. Nation-states structure the lives of all humans, create enormous amounts of power, and distribute it extremely unequally. Complex social networks of state power-holders exercise their power over the entire earth. States are not the only powers or structures in the world: but they are large and important ones.

9.3.5 Modern states: summary and morals

In 1200, there were no nation-states: now, they are everywhere. The world and its human population are structured and controlled by a system of centralised, territorial institutions, making use of elaborate techniques of surveillance and taming or being challenged by nationalism. In general, the appearance of modern nation-states was the development and use of a collection of effective techniques for organising human social networks, creating immense power, and unequally distributing it in favour of bureaucratic elites. As with pristine states, I have given an account, not an explanation, of the development and nature of modern states: for attempts at explanation, see for instance Tilly (1992) and Spruyt (1994); for a recent review of explanatory theories of the modern state, see Axtmann (1993). Now, what morals and interest can I and other anarchists draw from my account of modern states?

First, and as with pristine states, the account reiterates, expands on and gives evidence for Kropotkin's point that this is just one of many forms of social organisation possible for humans. We have not always organised ourselves in this way, did not until recently, and such organisation is therefore not necessary for us.

Second, the account emphasises the fact that modern states are differentiated. That is, that they consist of several different

structures and techniques, including a centre, a territory, a bureaucracy (or even several competing or collaborating bureaucracies), law, armed forces, nationalism and an apparatus for its control. These elements are not necessarily linked: they are currently found together, but need not be.

Third, and again as for pristine states, we have noted the immense capacity for violence of modern states. Nothing I have said shows that they must be violent, but it is clear that they have as a matter of fact been so. Probably, no other kind of institution or social form in human history has had the power to mobilise whole populations for war, for years at a time; probably, no other has killed or been responsible for the deaths of so many people.

Fourth: I argued in 9.2 that the appearance of pristine states was not necessarily an increase in the complexity, and was in some ways a simplification, of human social life. The point needs further discussion in relation to modern states. There are senses of 'complex' in which the appearance of modern states was, or accompanied, an increase in complexity. For instance, we might choose to follow Randall McGuire (1983) in defining complexity as involving two variables: heterogeneity and inequality. Heterogeneity describes "The frequency of individuals among social parameters" of two kinds: nominal, "Such as sex, kinship and occupation" which "Define roles and are categorical groupings that have distinct boundaries and lack inherent rank ordering"; and graduated, "Such as age, power and wealth" which "Define status and are inherently rank ordered and continuous" (McGuire 1983: 101). Inequality describes "The extent of differential access to material and social resources, such as wealth and power" and "Measures how much difference there is between comparable levels of access" (ibid: 102; Blau 1977 gives a nearly identical two-variable definition of complexity). The point of this definition, for McGuire, is to help answer the question "What changes separate Pleistocene hunter-gatherers from the modern industrial world system?" (ibid: 101), and his answer is that the central change is an increase in heterogeneity and inequality, which he proposes to

call 'complexity'. This is reasonable for his purposes. But here our question is whether or not the appearance of modern states was an increase in complexity, and we need not deny that it was an increase in heterogeneity and inequality. So, this definition is question-begging for my purposes.

McGuire's definition of complexity is not intended to, and does not, catch all we might mean by the term. For example: in his novel *Big Planet*, Jack Vance (1977) imagines Kirstendale, which appears on its surface to be a somewhat feudal city of aristocrats and their servants. Its secret is that everyone plays both kinds of role: a porter in the morning, a duke in the afternoon, and "Every man a millionaire" (Vance 1977: 77) some of the time. In an ordinary sense of 'complex', this social form is more complex than the feudal one it appears to be, a change from the latter to a Kirstendale-like form would be an increase in complexity, and the lives of the Kirsters are more complex than the lives of people who are only and always porters. But McGuire's definition of complexity cannot catch this difference. Because the social roles remain the same, while being played by different people at different times, there is no difference between the ordinary feudal and the Kirster heterogeneity or inequality.

Further, there are three important senses in which modern states create or are accompanied by a simplification of human life. First, bureaucracies typically simplify complex local social forms for purposes of legibility. Second, modern states have partially effaced complex and overlapping webs of association with simpler, exclusive, hierarchical ones. Third, while our networks of interaction in modern states often involve a larger number of people than networks in other known social forms, they do so by making use of technologies which simplify our interactions, often by making many people (and objects) interchangeable. In a strange town, I do not have to form any complex relationship in order to get food and a bed for the night, just so long as I have the simplifying tool: money. In a strange landscape,

I can read the roadsigns. And these simplifying technologies, of course, were created or are maintained by modern states.

On the grounds of the multivalence of 'complexity', and the fact that in some ordinary senses of the term, the appearance of modern states involves a simplification of human social life, I suggest that it is not helpful or particularly meaningful to regard the appearance of states as an increase in complexity. Only confusion is added to McGuire's useful point about heterogeneity and inequality by involving the term 'complexity'. So, we should abandon the scale of simple to complex in comparing states with other social forms.

9.4 States: summary and conclusion

I have characterised states in general as one particular social form among the many possible for humans. They are centralised, territorial, differentiated institutions, which create immense power and distribute it unequally by using a variety of techniques. In the common human situation of being without and uninfluenced by states, we very rarely create them, and when we do, the transformation is not an unambiguous increase in complexity. Our modern states are a recent, historically unique development, which adds further techniques and forms, including bureaucracies, armies and nationalism, to the basic pattern of the state. Again, their appearance is not best thought of as an increase in complexity, both because 'complex' is multivalent and because there are senses of the term in which that appearance is a simplification of human life.

I argued in 1.4 that it is difficult to say much about how likely the realisation of some social form is or was. But we should note that anyone who wants to claim that states, and especially our current state-infested arrangements, were very likely, must deal with three strong counter-arguments: 1) pristine states have appeared only very rarely; 2) the development of modern states involved a series of apparently adventitious victories and inventions; and 3) for most of the time there have been humans, there have not been states. This

does not entirely preclude an argument that (modern) states were actually likely: it does make such argument difficult.

I have analysed states, using my conceptual toolkit, by considering their historical development in the context of human history and states' particular historical situations. As I have emphasised throughout this chapter, states are just one of many ways humans can organise and have organised themselves. Further, the alternative to having a state is not chaos. There are multiple and differently ordered alternatives to the state social form (I consider two of them in more detail in chapters 11 & 12).

As I argued in 1.5, anarchism cannot be characterised merely as anti-statism. But anarchists certainly are against states, as one disastrous and currently ubiquitous social form, among other possibilities. In chapter 10, I consider another non-state social form against which anarchists should and do set themselves.

10 ◇ Slavery

On the historical evidence, any complete list of the general capacities of evolved humans (see 5.5) would have to include the capacity to enslave. According to Peter Kolchin, "Throughout most of human history, slavery and other forms of coerced labour were ubiquitous" (Kolchin 1993: xi). According to Orlando Patterson:

> There is nothing notably peculiar about the institution of slavery. It has existed from before the dawn of human history right down to the twentieth century… There is no region on earth that has not at some time harboured the institution. Probably there is no group of people whose ancestors were not at one time slaves or slaveholders. (Patterson 1982: vii)

But the world-spanning form slavery took between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries is distinctive in a number of ways, and I concentrate on it here. I follow common practice in calling it 'Atlantic slavery' or 'the Atlantic system'. Before considering it further, I characterise slavery in general.

10.1 A general characterisation of slavery

Slavery is extreme and institutionalised inequality of power, in favour of masters, over slaves. Centrally, it is created and maintained by violence and the threat of violence: people are violently enslaved, and then held in subservience by the use and threat of corporal and ultimately capital punishment. But slavery also involves other modes of creating and maintaining power distributions. It involves authority discourses, grounded in various ways, including the use of ideas of an authority derived from having spared the slave's life in battle, or from natural superiority, or from an unpaid debt (all of which can be stretched far into metaphor or formal fiction). It involves property discourses. A slave is the object of many of the incidents of property, including being something someone has an exclusive right to use and a right to sell to some others.

A slave is also an object in another sense: masters attempt to make slaves non-persons, in a number of ways. First, slaves are natally and culturally alienated:

> Not only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligations to, his parents and living blood relations but, by extension, all such claims and obligations on his more remote ancestors and on his descendants. He was truly a genealogical isolate. Formally isolated in his social relations with those who lived, he also was culturally isolated from the social heritage of his ancestors… Slaves differed from other human beings in that they were not allowed freely to integrate the experience of their ancestors into their lives, to inform their understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of their natural forebears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory. (Patterson 1982: 5)

Slave families are typically broken up, or always afraid of being broken up, by their masters. The escaped American slave and abolitionist campaigner Frederick Douglass, for instance, records that "My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant – before I knew her as my mother", that it was "Common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age", and that "I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial" (Douglass 1982: 48-9; I use Douglass illustratively as an especially articulate slave-voice; for many other voices and testimonies, see for instance Blassingame 1977 & Gates 1987).

Second, masters attempt to limit slaves to having a social personality only through them. Slaves are dishonoured and nameless. In Atlantic slavery specifically, according to Robin Blackburn:

> Planters gave slaves names normally used for dogs, horses, donkeys or cows ('Jumper', 'Gamesome', 'Ready', 'Juno', 'Caesar', 'Fido', and so forth). Alternatively, the adult slave would be known by a diminutive and would often lack any family name. (Blackburn 1997: 325)

In general, a slave has "No name of his own to defend. He can only defend his master's worth and his master's name" (Patterson 1982: 10-11).

Third, masters attempt to stop slaves joining and forming new social networks of their own, for whatever purpose. Douglass records that when he and other slaves set up a Sunday-school, mostly so that he could teach the others to read, "Messrs. Wright Fairbanks and Garrison West… in connection with others, rushed in upon us with sticks and stones, and broke up our virtuous little Sabbath school, at St. Michael's – all calling themselves Christians!" (Douglass 1982: 120). In some cases this prevention is rhetorically justified or really motivated by a (rational) fear of conspiracy to revolt or to escape. But it is also a more general part of the maintenance of slavery: if slaves form social networks of their own, in their own interests, they become less socially and psychologically dependent on their masters, and therefore less enslaved.

Fourth, masters attempt to keep slaves as tools created for their purposes, instead of people who create themselves for their own purposes. In a slave, the skill of reading and the consequent ability to gain knowledge, for instance, is dangerous. Douglass, with the help of his mistress Sophia Auld and despite her later, corrupted attempts to stop him, learned to read. Both he and his owners recognised the liberating power of education. According to Sophia's husband Hugh:

> "Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world… If you teach that nigger… how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave". (ibid: 78)[1]

And according to Douglass himself, "From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom" (ibid): "Education and slavery were incompatible with each other" (ibid: 82).

These four ways of trying to make slaves animals or objects instead of people all lead towards Patterson's definition of slavery: a slave is "A socially dead person" (Patterson 1982: 5). She is metaphorically dead because alienated from familial and community

---

[1] "Some of the language in this book may disturb readers; it disturbs me. Whenever 'nigger' appears in the sources, it has been retained… The word is offensive, but I believe that its omission would only anesthatize subject matter infinitely more offensive" (Genovese 1974: xvii).

networks, prevented from having a social personality except through her master, prevented from forming new social networks, and prevented from recreating herself as anything other than a tool of others' purposes and interests.

None of these attempts to make slaves non-persons could succeed completely, for at least three reasons. First, because of the technical difficulty of continuous surveillance and control. Second, because even the extreme and supposedly permanent social divisions between slave and master are to some extent permeable. David Brion Davis, for instance, notes the case of the slave April Ellison, who:

> Won his freedom after learning how to build and repair cotton gins. After changing his first name to William, buying the freedom of his wife and daughter, and winning a legal suit against a white man who had failed to pay a debt, Ellison became a wealthy planter and owner of sixty-three slaves, a statistic that placed him by 1860 among the upper 3 percent of the slave holders in South Carolina. (Davis 1998: ix-x)

Third, because resistance of various kinds is a permanent feature of slavery, of which masters are always afraid. I consider some of the forms this permanent resistance took against Atlantic slavery in particular, in 10.5. First, I sketch the Atlantic system and consider its distinctiveness.

10.2 A brief history of the Atlantic system

In 9.3.4 I considered the spread of state social forms into North and South America. But this was not the only spread of networks and forms, or the only social activity, going on there. At the same time as states were spreading, the Atlantic system was being created. These two changes were related, but not identical.

The immediate sources of the Atlantic slave trade are in the Portuguese and Spanish trade with and exploitation of West Africa, especially in search of gold and spices, and in their increasing colonisation of Atlantic island-groups including the Canaries and Azores, beginning in the fifteenth century. The import of fairly small numbers of African slaves to these islands, to South America, and

especially to the Caribbean, began in the early sixteenth century; African slaves were first brought to North America in the early seventeenth century. (Blackburn 1997: chapter 2; Wolf 1997: 196-7.)

Atlantic slavery reached its peak in the eighteenth century, and involved two interlinked networks and institutions, apart from slavery itself: the triangular trade and the plantation mode of production. A trading ship would set out from a home port, for instance Liverpool, for the African west coast, carrying trade items including rum, firearms and cotton goods. These would be exchanged for slaves procured from a deep African hinterland, mostly by other black Africans, at factories along the coast. These slaves were taken to the islands or the American continent (the 'middle passage') and sold, usually to be workers on plantations. The ship would then return home loaded with the products of those plantations, including tobacco, coffee, rice, cotton and especially sugar. (Eltis 1998; Rawley 1981; Unsworth 1992 gives an impressive fictional account of the triangular trade.)[2]

By 1860, there were approximately four-and-a-half million slaves in North America alone. Altogether, perhaps eleven or twelve million black people were transported (the first estimate is from Rawley 1981 and the second from Eltis 1998; a widely-accepted earlier estimate of fifteen million now seems to have been ill-grounded; for further estimates and consideration of the difficulty of making them accurately, see Curtin 1969). "It is thought that 20 to 40 percent of the slaves died while being transported to the [African] coast, another 3 to 10 percent died while waiting on the coast, and about 12 to 16 percent of those boarded on ships died during the voyage" (Cohn 1998: 290), mostly from disease. The slave mortality rate for the middle passage, which is probably the most accurate of these estimates, is approximately six times higher than the mortality rate for free immigrants to the Americas (ibid).

---

[2] This account of the triangle is in fact a simplification: as Blackburn (1997: 530) points out, much plantation produce was brought to

The Atlantic slave trade was immensely profitable, and a major condition of the industrial revolution and the development of capitalism, especially in Britain (Blackburn 1997: chapter 12; Inikori 1998; Wolf 1997: 199-200). It ceased in the nineteenth century: why it did so is a matter of controversy, focussed in particular on the relative weight of moral and political campaigns, shifting ideas of progress, and changing economic, social and geopolitical factors (Blackburn 1988: chapter 13; Davis 1984; Eltis 1981; Engerman 1998; Steckel 1998).

10.3 The distinctiveness of Atlantic slavery

The Atlantic system of slave procurement, transportation and exploitation partook of the general character of slavery, as described in 10.1, and had many continuities with other forms of slavery. To note one example: as in many other forms, the central implement of punishment and physical threat in Atlantic slavery was the whip. But Atlantic slavery was also distinctive, in four major ways.

First, slaves in this form were very largely used only for a limited range of menial tasks. In other slaveries, slaves:

> Served a multitude of diverse purposes. To those accustomed to thinking of slaves as agricultural laborers and house servants, it may be startling to learn that slaves have also served as warriors, government officials, wives, concubines, tutors, eunuchs, and victims of ritual sacrifice. In many pre-modern societies there were high-status slaves who exercised considerable authority; such elite slaves ranged from stewards who managed vast agricultural estates in China and early-modern Russia to high government officials in Rome and the Ottoman Empire. Throughout much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, slaves served in the armed forces, at times – especially in the Islamic world – achieving high rank and wielding considerable power. (Kolchin 1993: 4)

But Atlantic slaves were almost entirely used as agricultural workers on the plantation, "A productive unit ideally suited for the regimentation of agricultural labor and hence the large-scale

---

Europe by ships which specialised in that commerce, and which did

cultivation of staple crops" (ibid: 5). The profitability of the Atlantic system, and therefore part of the demand for slaves, depended on the demand in the old world for these staples from the new.

Second, Atlantic slavery involved a racial discourse dividing white European masters from black African slaves. Institutions of slavery have typically required some division of 'us' from 'them', grounded in varied ways including differences of religion, of 'level' of culture, of origin, and of mythical lineage. But Atlantic slavers created and used a complex, political discourse of race to distinguish (potential) slaves from (potential) masters. Atlantic slavery "Was predicated on new, unequal relationships between Europe and Africa and between white and black" (ibid: 6). With few exceptions, slaves were black Africans and their descendants, and masters were white Europeans and their descendants. This racial discourse is another means of distributing power to add to the list I gave in 6.6.

Third, Atlantic slavery was "Intensely commercial" (Blackburn 1997: 3). Slavery was largely powered by desire for profit, and not, for instance, for status, or for the maintenance of traditional social hierarchies. Slavers used and developed new techniques of bookkeeping, long-distance exchange, insurance and business planning.

Fourth, and as I have already suggested with some statistics in 10.2, the Atlantic system was distinctive in its sheer size and global effects. Atlantic transport of slaves populated the new world and transformed the old. Not only Europe, and especially the developing capitalist nation-states of Europe, and not only America, were changed by the trade: "The demand for African slaves reshaped the political economy of the entire [African] continent" (Wolf 1997: 230).

---

not visit Africa. However, the point about the flow of goods stands.

10.4 Slavery and civil society

The Atlantic system appeared in the context of (developing) modern states, and the spread of its institutions was simultaneous with the spread of theirs, but it was not created nor wholly maintained by states. "Modern states bore their share of responsibility for the cruelties of the Atlantic slave traffic" and "The process of colonisation itself was to a greater or lesser extent state-sponsored" (Blackburn 1997: 6; 7), but the Atlantic system was created and maintained by commercial organisations and networks of slave-owners, not by states. The vast infrastructure required to procure and distribute slaves, the plantation mode of production, and the racial justification of slavery, were "Invented by European traders and settlers with little prompting from state functionaries" (ibid: 12). Indeed it appears that "Slavery was inversely proportional to the exercise of metropolitan authority" (Blackburn 1988: 17) by colonising states.

For anarchists, the moral of this point is that states are not the only institutions worth criticising and resisting. Even if I am wrong that historical anarchism cannot be characterised merely as anti-statism (see 1.5), we have good reason here to extend anarchist consideration beyond states. The creation, maintenance and actions of states are not the only social activities with forms and consequences anarchists should resist: "The spontaneous dynamic of civil society is also pregnant with disaster and mayhem" (Blackburn 1997: 6).

10.5 Resistance

The "Bitter central fact" about Atlantic slavery is that "The planter class kept this vicious system going" for so long (Dunn 1984: 175). But despite the masters' general success in maintaining the slave system, they faced continuous resistance of various kinds from their slaves.

A number of different taxonomies of resistance have been developed. Eugene Genovese, influenced by Marxism and especially by the pioneering work of C L R James (1980), distinguishes two major forms of slave resistance:

> Until the Age of Revolution the slave revolts did not challenge the world capitalist system within which slavery itself was embedded. Rather, they sought escape and autonomy – a local, precapitalist social restoration. When they did become revolutionary and raise the banner of abolition, they did so within the context of the bourgeois-democratic revolutionary wave, with bourgeois-democratic slogans and demands and with a commitment to bourgeois property relations. (Genovese 1979: xxi-ii).

This distinction between restorative and revolutionary resistance is useful for some purposes; other, more fine-boned distinctions are useful for others. In *Testing the Chains*, Michael Craton distinguishes between "Revolts of the Maroon type, those led by unassimilated Africans, and the late slave rebellions led by Creole (colony-born) members of the slave elite" (Craton 1982: 13), in the Caribbean. In later work, Craton has further distinguished seven "Forms of slave resistance and planter response" (Craton 1997: 224) as follows. 1) General uprising, or plots for it, responded to by the formation of planter militias, by draconian laws, and by conscious attempts to instil fear in the slave population. Examples of this first form include rebellions in Jamaica in 1760, 1776, 1795 and 1831-2; Barbados in 1816; Antigua in 1736; and, most successfully, Haiti in 1791-1804. 2) Mass running away to form colonies of Maroons (the term is from American Spanish *cimarrón*, wild, applied especially to runaway cattle). Responses included attempts at extermination, but also negotiation and non-aggression pacts. Examples include Barbados in the 1650s, Antigua, Martinique and Guadeloupe up to the 1730s, and even "New Providence in the Bahamas as late as 1823" (ibid: 230). 3) 'Petit marronage', that is short-term, short-distance running away by individuals and very small groups. This especially seems to have been a continuous feature of Atlantic slavery, and a continuous problem for slave-owners, throughout the lifespan of the system. 4) Poisoning,

industrial sabotage, feigning stupidity, and malingering. 5) Subtle social sabotage including exaggerated deference, disguised satire, and the deliberate fostering of divisions between masters. 6) Internalised rejection including abortion, suicide, intra-slave violence and madness. 7) Resistance through the maintenance or recreation of African culture: African language and writing, craft skills, religion, music, traditional family life and ways of making a living.

I do not intend, and am not qualified, to arbitrate between these different taxonomies (and am not convinced that arbitration is necessary: they are intended for different purposes, and may be able to coexist). I note them for two purposes of my own. First, to emphasise the permanence and variety of resistance, by the slaves themselves, to the Atlantic system (for more evidence of that permanence, see for instance the chronology of slave-resistance in the Caribbean in Craton 1982: 335-9). Second, to note the social creativity of resistance. In Maroon colonies throughout the Caribbean, runaway slaves created and maintained viable social forms and networks even under extreme pressure and attempts at extermination by white colonists and planters. Maroon groups did not merely reproduce African social forms:

> Maroons were socially opportunistic and eclectic. Practices derived from any available culture area – African, European, plantation slave culture, occasionally even Amerindian – were incorporated. (de Groot 1997: 188)

The 'Black Caribs', for instance:

> Traced their origins to a cargo of African slaves wrecked on the… island of Bequia around 1690 who were harboured by the 'Yellow Caribs' there who were in control of St Vincent. Within a few decades – and not, it seems, without some internal disruption – the black refugees, reinforced by runaway slaves from nearby islands, had become the dominant element in an increasingly miscegenated warrior community that fearsomely combined African and Amerindian weapons and tactics of resistance. (Craton 1997: 237)

In general, then, resistance was permanent, varied, and socially creative. Even the extreme institutionalised inequality of power, and techniques for its maintenance, of the Atlantic system, were not

sufficient to prevent the expression of the general human tendencies to resist and to form new social networks (see chapter 8).

10.6 Slavery: a summary

The potential for slavery is always with us. Slavery is in general an extreme, institutionalised form of inequality of power, created and maintained by violence and by authority and property discourses, and it attempts to make slaves socially dead in a variety of ways (10.1). Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries it took a distinctive global form, the Atlantic system. It used enormous numbers of mostly black African slaves, understood by a new racial discourse and as one object of the triangular trade, to operate the plantation system of production. It was one condition of the transformation of the world towards our current arrangements. That is, it created considerable extra power and new powers, and distributed them in favour of a white, western elite and against black Africans, including those who remained in Africa (10.2 & 10.3). It developed at the same time as the development and spread of modern states, but was largely not created by those states, and this has consequences for anarchist thought (10.4). Despite its effectiveness and longevity, the Atlantic system could not prevent the expression of the general human tendencies to resist and to form new social networks, in a variety of ways (10.5).

10.7 States and slavery: a comparison

States and slavery are both similar and different. While slavery is common, states are a recent and unusual innovation in human sociability. The institutions of the two, the ways in which they use violence and discourses of authority and property, and the lives those involved in them typically lead, are all different. States' institutions are more functionally promiscuous than slavery's, and have been available to be used for better purposes. But the two are in general alike and comparable in being organisations of humans in confederal social networks, creating and distributing power. Specifically, modern states and Atlantic slavery are alike in creating large amounts of power and distributing it extremely unequally. They are also historically connected: the world in which modern states operate, the wealth of some and poverty of others, are conditioned by the Atlantic system. Indeed, Atlantic slavery's effects may be even deeper than that:

> Its development was associated with several of those processes which have been held to define modernity: the growth of instrumental rationality, the rise of national sentiment and the nation-state, racialized perceptions of identity, the spread of market relations and wage labour, the development of administrative bureaucracies and modern tax systems, the growing sophistication of commerce and communication, the birth of consumer societies, the publication of newspapers and the beginnings of press advertising, 'action at a distance' and an individualist sensibility. (Blackburn 1997: 4)

Whether or not this strong claim is true, modern states and Atlantic slavery are distinctive forms of human sociability which condition our current lives in many ways, and which are similar at least in their creation and unequal distribution of power.

Comparisons with slavery have long been available for moral and polemical purposes, and have often deployed the notion of 'wage slavery'. The notion appears to have two sources: first, in pro-slavery polemic from the American South, where the term was used to make a *tu quoque* attack on Northern anti-slavery campaigners, on the grounds that the condition of the 'free' workers they employed was at

least as bad as that of Southern slaves; second, in socialist polemic by people like Bronterre O'Brien, from the 1830s onwards, about the condition of the British proletariat (Cunliffe 1979: chapter 1). In the second case, the comparison works in the same way as Kropotkin's comparison between modern division of labour and the Indian caste system: it attempts to extend disapproval by comparison between an accepted and a supposedly unacceptable social form (see 4.3). The notion of wage slavery has since been used in variety of ways, including its use: 1) by Marx, to emphasise the continuity, despite historical transformation, of exploitative class-relations; and 2) to analyse the transformation of slavery in particular histories of, for instance, apartheid South Africa (Tsotsi 1981) and slavery in Jamaica (Sheridan 1993). I now want briefly to pursue an alternative, but structurally similar, comparison, between slaves and the subjects of states.

To what extent are slaves and subjects similar? The institutions and tactics by which states and slavery create and distribute power are somewhat different, although both use cooperation, technique, violence, authority discourses and property discourses. Some subjects' lives are less controlled, at least in some spheres, than are some slaves'. But states certainly can have and exercise as much distributed power as, and modern states in particular have the tactics and technology to exercise considerably more power than, any past system of slavery. Both slaves and subjects are at the sharp end of an extreme inequality of power (and are thus similarly not free, on my definition of freedom – see 7.5). It may be thought that the difference is that we would rather be subjects than slaves. But this is too quick: subjects of which state? Being a subject of a liberal democratic state is fairly obviously preferable to being a slave, but recall my point in 9.3 that liberal democracy is one form, but not typical, of modern states. Some states are at least as bad as slavery (and some slave-masters, just possibly, are not irredeemably brutal). It would be false, and offensive to the memory of slaves, to acclaim myself, a subject of a wealthy liberal democracy, as sharing their suffering. But it would

be equally false, and offensive to the memory of the victims of Pol Pot in Cambodia, Idi Amin in Uganda, or Stalin's purges, to claim that they were better off for being subjects instead of slaves. The shared experience of inequality of power and extreme violence makes some subjects comparable with slaves.

The notion of 'state slavery', like the notion of wage slavery, is available for moral comparative purposes. However, in line with my specified intention to concentrate on the factual over the normative elements of anarchism (see 1.3), I do not so use it here. My less ambitious purposes in this section have been: first, to note some similarities in the experience and condition of some people involved in two distinct but related social forms; and second, to make the comparison implied by the notion of state slavery available for more normative projects.

10.8 A record of crimes

I have already quoted William Godwin's repetition of the "Old observation that the history of mankind is little else than a record of crimes" (Godwin 1985: 83; see 3.2.1). In this and my previous chapter, I have added to that gloomy genre. The general capacities and social creativity of humans have recently been used to build and maintain two extremely effective systems for the creation of power and its unequal distribution, and for the creation and use of violence, with pleasant consequences for some of us but terrible ones for many others. Anarchists, and others, might be inclined to despair. But there are also reasons for hope: although it is clear that these and other disastrous possibilities are within the human social range, so too are some better ones. In my next two chapters, I display some of them.

11 ◇ The Nuer

States are one, recent and historically uncommon way in which humans have organised themselves. For most of the time there have been humans, there have not been states:

> For 30,000 years… life went on without kings, queens, prime ministers, presidents, parliaments, congresses, cabinets, governors, mayors, police officers, sheriffs, marshals, generals, lawyers, bailiffs, judges, district attoneys, court clerks, patrol cars, paddy wagons, jails, and penitentiaries. How did our ancestors manage to leave home without them? (Harris 1989: 344)

Harris suggests that "Small populations provide part of the answer" (ibid) to this question. But in his attempts to explain war and sexism, he also appeals to the fact that these small populations in bands and villages interacted across their borders, especially in trade, exogamous marriage and competition for food resources. Again, there are no discrete social totalities (see chapter 8), and so the small populations of bands and villages cannot fully explain how they organised themselves without states. Their problems were of the same type as ours: how are we to live together and manage conflict resolution, despite the differences and clashes between our interests?

The general answer to Harris' question is that our ancestors managed in many different ways. They did to a considerable extent succeed in living together in relatively ordered ways, and to limit and resolve violent conflict. Stateless life has not in general been chaotic or a 'war of each against all', any more than life in and under states has been (and perhaps less so). But the tactics used by people in non-state arrangements, and the ways in which they live together, are various. This is unsurprising: 'non-state' means nothing more than 'not using one particular, historically unusual set of institutions and tactics for living together'. In particular, non-state people vary in their types of social network, means of creating and distributing power, mode of subsistence, equality (especially gender equality),

and level and type of violence. On the latter two: the !Kung of the Kalahari desert, for instance, have highly (although not perfectly) egalitarian gender relations, and are generally (although not perfectly) peaceful (ibid: 279-81; 288). The Yanomami, who live on the border of Brazil and Venezuela, are by contrast both sexist and violent, both amongst themselves and in their relations with their neighbours (ibid: 290-1)[1].

In this chapter I focus on one non-state social form, that of the Nuer in the southern Sudan, in order to exemplify some of the capacities and tactics humans have for living together and resolving conflict, without states or other institutionalised inequalities of power. I consider an acephalous social form because, first, it both provides a comparison with other ways of living and managing conflict, and exemplifies the wide range of human sociability and the possibility of alternatives to our current arrangements. Second, because stateless people have been an enduring subject of interest for anarchists: I have already noted Kropotkin's interest in 'savages' (chapters 3 & 4); further examples of this anarchist concern, in various styles and as part of various projects, include Barclay (1982), Clastres (1977), Taylor (1982) and Ward (1973: chapter 4). In general, anarchists have "Stressed the non-hierarchic and egalitarian nature of many traditional societies, for instance the Nuer in Africa" (Heywood 1992: 187). My use of this example is thus an extension of that tradition, although distinct from it in the two ways I noted in 1.6: I use the theoretical apparatus developed in the Toolkit section to describe the Nuer social form, and do not romanticise it.

I focus on the Nuer in particular for two further reasons. First, the classic studies of E E Evans-Pritchard (1940, 1940a, 1951 & 1956) both stand as a paradigm of anthropological investigation and instigated a prolonged engagement with the Nuer:

---

[1] There may, as Harris argues, be general causal relations between these different features, such that, for instance, groups of people making their living by plough-based agriculture tend to be both more sexist and more violent than those who rely on rice-paddies (ibid: 328-31). I do not need to consider this debate for my purposes.

> The enduring disciplinary fame of "the Nuer" of southern Sudan derives directly from the intellectual virtuosity of their original ethnographer, Sir Edward E Evans-Pritchard (1902-73)... Nearly all the great disciplinary debates that have emerged in recent decades have drawn at one time or another on the Nuer ethnographic corpus of Evans-Pritchard. Indeed, with the possible exception of the "Trobriand Islanders" made famous by Malinowski, "the Nuer" have been more widely cited, discussed, analyzed, and theorised about than any other "imagined community" within the anthropological discourse. (Hutchinson 1996: 21)

That there is therefore a great deal of material on the Nuer does not unambiguously mean that we know a great deal about them: Hutchinson goes on to argue that "The cumulative effect of decades of secondary reanalyses of Evans-Pritchard's materials" (ibid) has been both to foster an illusion that the Nuer are "Somehow above history and beyond change" (ibid), and to perpetuate several false images of their social form[2]. However that there is such a mass of material at least means that we are likely to have correctives to one-sided and ideologically motivated accounts, which we might lack in the case of less studied people and social forms.

Second: as I describe them in 11.1, the Nuer are not especially far towards the peaceful end of the variation I have noted in non-state social forms. Individual Nuer are fairly quick to use and to retaliate with violence. My argument is not just that some people are wonderfully peaceful, and that we would do well to emulate them. It is that even where people are not much given to being peaceable, the non-state tactics for conflict resolution I discover are still effective. The relatively violent Nuer life is therefore a good exemplary social form to use to make the argument. I do not want to give the impression that non-state conflict resolution depends on the unusual mildness of the people involved in it: even among fairly violent people like the Nuer, non-state conflict resolution works. This is a further distinction of my use from other anarchist uses of this example:

---

[2] For brief consideration of and references for the multiple reinterpretations of Evans-Pritchard's material, see Hutchinson (1996:

where they have typically used an account of the Nuer social form to display the possibility of peace in the absense of the state, I use one to display the possibility of conflict resolution in the face of ongoing violence.

11.1 The Nuer: a sketch

When E E Evans-Pritchard lived with and studied them in the 1930s, the Nuer were a group of perhaps two or three hundred thousand people[3] living around the Nile, in what was then the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, in East Africa. At that time, they were having to deal rapidly with invasion by British military forces and the consequent imposition of new administrative and political institutions, including for instance a colonial governor who argued that the Nuer:

> Are slow to appreciate the blessings of European civilization and the benefits arising from an ordered administration of their country. Although this outspoken self-consciousness was bound to lead to conflicts, it must be admitted that the personal qualities of the people that caused these conflicts are of a kind that ought to be cultivated and guided rather than blamed and suppressed. (Westermann 1970: v; first published 1931)

Although Evans-Pritchard "Was profoundly aware of 'the colonial encounter' and was, in fact, part of it" (Hutchinson 1996: 30), he pays little attention to this aspect of contemporary Nuer life. Since then, the Nuer's way of life has been transformed and partly destroyed by government interference, trade, disease, and two Sudanese civil wars (ibid: Prologue). I do not attempt to give anything like a full account of the complexities of Nuer life here, but consider only enough of the material about them to provide an empirical example of effective conflict-resolution without the use of unequal power distributions.

31-2); for some examples of that reinterpretation, the studies in Beidelman (1971).

[3] Although see Huffman 1970 for a higher estimate, and Hutchinson 1996: 26 for argument that Evans-Pritchard's estimate may be too low.

The Nuer live(d) on savannah, which is parched and dry from December to June, and flooded from June to December. They husband cattle, fish, hunt, collect wild fruit and roots, and cultivate millet and maize. During the wet season, they live in villages of between fifty and several hundred people, on high ground, separated from other villages by between five and twenty miles of flooded grassland; during the dry season, in camps concentrated around permanent water-sources. Camps and villages involve partly but not entirely the same individuals living together: "People who form separate village communities in the rains may unite in a common camp in the drought. Likewise, people from the same village may join different camps" (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 275). The Nuer live in a general situation of scarcity. Famine is not uncommon, and there are few natural resources – no iron or good stone and very few trees – for toolmaking.

Cattle and their husbandry have been particularly important to the Nuer. "According to Evans-Pritchard… the Nuer of the early 1930s were almost totally absorbed in the care, exchange, and sacrifice of their beloved cattle" (Hutchinson 1996: 59). Humans and cattle were involved in an "Intimate symbiosis of survival" (ibid). Cattle were not only the central metaphor for value, but were both "The principle means by which people created and affirmed enduring bonds amongst themselves as well as between themselves and divinity" (ibid) through a symbolic equation of cattle with people, and "An incessant topic of conversation among Nuer men and women" (ibid: 33). On her first field trip to the Sudan in 1979, Hutchinson found that this topic had largely been replaced in conversation by "National political issues, cabinet shake-ups, regional troop movements, and the Jonglei Canal scheme" (ibid).

The significance of cattle has been transformed since the 1930s by Nuer involvement in state politics and especially monetary exchange, but not wholly lost. Hutchinson argues that, throughout the 1980s and early 90s, Nuer were "Actively grappling" with the relationship between cattle and money, and developing a "Unique

system of hybrid wealth categories... in order to facilitate movements of cattle and money between 'market' and 'non-market' spheres of exchange while simultaneously affirming the existence of an axiological boundary between these spheres" (ibid: 50). Money has not passed the Nuer by, but neither has it effaced their earlier modes of exchange and understandings of value (see further ibid: chapter 2).

The Nuer in the 1930s had no government, no long-standing inequalities of power, no police or tax collectors, and no leaders.

> The ordered anarchy in which they live accords well with their character, for it is impossible to live among Nuer and conceive of rulers ruling over them. The Nuer is a product of a hard and egalitarian upbringing, is deeply democratic, and is easily roused to violence. His turbulent spirit finds any restraint irksome and no man recognizes a superior. Wealth makes no difference. A man with many cattle is envied, but not treated differently from a man with few cattle. Birth makes no difference. A man may not be a member of the dominant clan of his tribe, he may even be of Dinka descent, but were another to allude to the fact he would run a grave risk of being clubbed. That every Nuer considers himself as good as his neighbour is evident in their every movement. They strut about like lords of the earth, which, indeed, they consider themselves to be. There is no master and no servant in their society, but only equals who regard themselves as God's noblest creation... Among themselves even the suspicion of an order riles a man and he either does not carry it out or he carries it out in a casual and dilatory manner that is more insulting than a refusal. When a Nuer wants his fellows to do something he asks it as a favour to a kinsman, saying, 'Son of my mother, do so-and-so', or he includes himself in the command and says: 'Let us depart', 'Let the people return home', and so forth. In his daily relations to his fellows a man shows respect to his elders, to his 'fathers', and to certain persons of ritual status, within the circuit of his reference, so long as they do not infringe on his independence, but he will not submit to any authority which clashes with his own interests and he does not consider himself bound to obey any one. I was once discussing the [neighbouring] Shilluk with a Nuer who had visited their country, and he remarked, 'They have one big chief, but we have not. This chief can send for a man and demand a cow or he can cut a man's throat. Whoever saw a Nuer do such a thing? What Nuer ever came when some one sent for him or paid any one a cow?' (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 181-2)

Evans-Pritchard's repeated use of 'man', 'he' and 'his' in this passage is not accidental: he mostly spent his time with male, and in his terms 'aristocratic', Nuer, and his account may therefore be distortedly

viricentric. Sharon Hutchinson makes it clear that being female allowed her access to interactions and social spaces which were closed to Evans-Pritchard; she is also very funny about the difficulties raised by her being "An awkward cross between a woman and a girl" (Hutchinson 1996: 46) since she was married, but had no children. I briefly consider Nuer gender relations in a moment, but before that, I want to note two points.

First: at least for some Nuer, sociability was egalitarian, anti-authoritarian, and potentially violent. Second: the Nuer's way of distributing power is not the result of the absence of other, inegalitarian tactics. In general, there is no simple state of nature on which more complex systems can be built (see 8.1.3). In particular, the Nuer's 'turbulent spirit' is a distinctive way of maintaining a (relatively) equal power distribution, further to the ways of distributing power I distinguished in 6.6. The Nuer are well aware of the possibility and danger of chiefs, and have tactics to resist such redistributions of power, including their attitudes to authority and especially to orders. Such tactics are widespread. Marvin Harris records a parallel example in the experience of Richard Lee:

> To please the !Kung, [Lee] decided to buy a large ox and have it slaughtered as a present. After several days searching Bantu agricultural villages looking for the largest and fattest ox in the region, he acquired what appeared to be a perfect specimen. But his friends took him aside and assured him that he had been duped into buying an absolutely worthless animal. "Of course, we will eat it," they said, "but it won't fill us up – we will eat and go home to bed with stomachs rumbling." But when Lee's ox was slaughtered, it turned out to be covered with a thick layer of fat. Later, his friends explained why they had said his gift was valueless, even though they knew better than he what lay under the animal's skin: "Yes, when a young man kills much meat he comes to think of himself as a chief or a big man, and he thinks of the rest of us as his servants or inferiors. We can't accept this, we refuse one who boasts, for someday his pride will make him kill somebody. So we always speak of his meat as worthless. This way we cool his heart and make him gentle." (Harris 1989: 345-6)

I am not making the obviously false claim that such egalitarian tactics are always successful. My point is twofold: 1) egalitarian people are

typically aware of the possibility of other arrangements of power; and 2) have tactics of distribution explicitly intended to maintain their situation of equal power. Now, back to gender equality.

Nuer distinguish between men and women, especially as fathers and mothers; descent is reckoned on the male line; and males hold positions of responsibility and ritual status which are not usually open to women - although it is open to a woman who is unable to conceive children "To become a social man, gather cattle, and marry a wife to produce children for her" (Hutchinson 1996: 61). Men and women have different roles in relation to husbandry and cultivation, to food preparation, to children, and to violence. However it is not clear to me to what extent these differences in roles translate into gender differences in power. Hutchinson traces the changing roles, metaphorical understandings, and reciprocal autonomies of Nuer men and women since the 1930s with considerable subtlety (ibid: chapter 4). Her account cannot be taken as unambiguously supporting either the claim that women were or are systematically oppressed in Nuer social forms, or that they were or are not. Rather, she argues that the metaphors of blood, cattle and food, and the culturally legitimated demands and spheres of autonomy of men and women, of husbands and wives, and of fathers and mothers, have changed in complex and inter-related ways. I therefore leave the issue of gender equality as an admitted gap in my sketch of the Nuer. We certainly have no reason to claim that the Nuer's otherwise egalitarian social form requires or gives rise to gender inequality.

Across these differences and complexities, Nuer social and political life significantly involves two interlinked but distinct forms of interaction: tribes and their subsections on the one hand, and kinship networks on the other. "There is no common political organisation or central administration" (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 279), but Nuer nontheless relate to one another as members of various sorts of group, as well as individuals.

Tribes are the largest groups in which "There is machinery for settling disputes and a moral obligation to conclude them sooner or

later" (ibid: 278), but their boundaries are not the limits of social and political interaction:

> People move freely all over Nuer-land and are unmolested if they have not incurred blood-guilt. They marry and, to a small extent, trade across tribal boundaries, and pay visits to kinsmen living outside their own tribe. Many social relations, which are not specifically political, link members of different tribes. (ibid: 279)

Further, members of different tribes encounter one another in dry-season camps concentrated around scarce sources of water.

Tribes are subdivided into what Evans-Pritchard calls primary, secondary and tertiary segments. These segments are concentric, so an individual might be a member, for instance, of the Cuak tertiary segment of the Nyapir secondary segement of the Jenyang primary segment of the Lak tribe (see the diagram in Evans-Pritchard 1940: 141). An important characteristic of segmentary organisation is that how an individual characterises her membership is relative to the level of segment from which she is excluded in a particular context:

> A member of Z^2 tertiary division of tribe B sees himself as a member of Z^2 community is relation to Z^1, but he regards himself as a member of Y^2 and not of Z^2 in relation to Y^1. Likewise, he regards himself as a member of Y, and not of Y^2, in relation to X. He regards himself as a member of tribe B, and not of its primary section Y, in relation to tribe A. (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 281)

So, again, my Cuak is a Cuak in relation to the Kar and Thiang tertiary sections, a Nyapir in relation to the Kudwop secondary section, a Jenyang in relation to the Kwacbur primary section, and a Lak in relation to the Gawaar, Gaajak and other tribes. In situations of violent conflict, and of blood-feud after a murder in particular, this Cuak will join with other Cuaks against the Kar, when a Kar has killed a Cuak, but will join with other Nyapir, including the Kar, against the Kudwop when a Kudwop has killed a Nyapir.

> Thus, on a structural plane, there is always a contradiction in the definition of a political group, for a man is a member of it in virtue of his non-membership of other groups of the same type which he stands outside of, and he is likewise not a member of the same community in virtue of his membership of a segment of it which stands in opposition to its other segments... The outstanding structural characteristic of Nuer political groups is

> their relativity. A tribal segment is a political group in relation to other segments of the same kind, and they jointly form a tribe only in relation to other Nuer tribes and to adjacent foreign tribes which form part of their political system, and without these relations very little meaning can be attached to the concepts of 'tribe' and 'tribal segment'. (ibid: 281-2)

Tribal and segmentary groups "Are always changing in one direction or another" (ibid: 284). That is, the Nuer social form has tendencies both towards fission and towards fusion: "Although any group tends to split into opposed parts, these parts tend to fuse in relation to other groups... fission and fusion are two aspects of the same segmentary principle and the Nuer tribe and its divisions are to be understood as a relation between these two contradictory, yet complementary, tendencies" (ibid).

The Nuer's other, interlinked but distinct form of interaction is the kinship system, which cuts across tribes and tribal segments. A clan is a segmented set of lineages comprising everyone descended, through the male line, from the founder of that line. It is worth noting that 'the male line' is not constituted by physical fatherhood, but by heirs legitimated by the payment of bride-cattle: "Without access to cattle, a man could not legally acquire heirs – no matter how many children he sired" (Hutchinson 1996: 61); further, "If a man died without heirs, his relatives were able – indeed obliged – to collect cattle and marry a 'ghost wife'... in the name of the deceased to bear children for him" (ibid). As with tribal structure, lineage membership is relative: "Two lineages which are equal and opposite are composite in relation to a third, so that a man is a member of a lineage in relation to a certain group and not a member of it in relation to a different group" (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 285-6).

Kinship is extremely important to the Nuer. They have a variety of obligations to their kin, especially the duty to avenge a death, and a complex system of prohibitions of incest, even between kin we would not regard as close. Kinship crosscuts tribal membership – "The same clans are found in different tribes" (ibid: 279) – but lineage and clan relations also provide a general idiom for social obligations and interaction, as well as a rich source of gossip. Kin and tribal affiliations

can clash, in particular by giving rise to conflicting duties. For instance, after a murder, "It is not clear what would happen if close agnates of the slayer were living in the village of the slain, in which case they would have loyalties to both sides" (Gough 1971: 86).

Kinship can be fictional: Evans-Pritchard records that, ill and leaving the Nuer, he asked the people he had been living with to help carry his belongings to the river. They refused. When asked why, a young Nuer boy replied:

> You told them to carry your belongings to the river. That is why they refused. If you had asked them, saying, 'My mother's sons, assist me', they would not have refused. (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 182).

Nobody of course supposed that Evans-Pritchard was actually close kin, but kinship was still the right idiom for a request for help as for other interactions.

> Rights, privileges, and obligations are determined by kinship. Either a man is a kinsman, actually or by fiction, or he is a person to whom you have no reciprocal obligations. (ibid: 183)

Like other features of Nuer sociability, kinship and the social idiom it provides have been changed, but like others, not wholly effaced, by involvement with states, money and war.

The Nuer that Evans-Pritchard encountered were quick to use violence, both individually and collectively: "A Nuer will at once fight if he considers that he has been insulted, and they are very sensitive and easily take offence… From their earliest years children are encouraged by their elders to settle all disputes by fighting" (ibid: 151); "Feuds frequently break out between sections of the same tribe and they are often of long duration" (Evans-Pritchard 1940a: 283); and "From the earliest times", but not continuously, "The Nuer have been fighting [their neighbours] the Dinka and have been generally on the offensive" (ibid: 280) in raids for cattle or captives. Hutchinson to some extent confirms this impression, recording for instance that many Nuer mothers "Consciously sought to inculcate the virtues of courage, self-assertion, and independence in their children"

(Hutchinson 1996: 168) and praised them for asserting themselves violently and for knowing how to fight.

However despite this general, culturally approved tendency to initiate violence and to use it in revenge, the Nuer have (or had) systems of conflict-resolution which do not involve unequal power or hierarchy, and which relatively successfully prevent or limit violence. In the first place, although once a fight has begun between people of the same village, neither party can with honour give way, what generally happens is that "People pull them away from each other, loudly protesting, and then stand between them" (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 151). In the second place, kinship obligations and tribe or segment membership provide a system both of deterrence, because it is generally known that the kin or tribal associates of a murder victim will seek vengeance, and of limitation of involvement, because "The scope of direct vengeance is limited to small kinship groups and their efforts to exact it are not incessant" (ibid: 159). The duty of vengence is felt and acted on only by a limited number of people.

In the third place, and most importantly here, there is a system of arbitration and arrangement of compensation. I now sketch it.

11.2 Leopard-skin chiefs

The term 'chief' is misleading about this system of arbitration, because leopard-skin chiefs do not have any general authority. The Nuer regard them as:

> Agents through which disputes of a certain kind can be settled and defilement of a certain kind can be effaced, and I have often heard remarks such as this: "We took hold of them and gave them leopard skins and made them our chiefs to do the talking at sacrifices for homicide". (ibid: 170)

Chiefs are ritual and social functionaries with specific roles, and those roles do not translate into any more general authority or to being the beneficiary of unequally distributed power: "The chiefs I have seen were treated in everyday life like other men and there is no means of telling that a man is a chief by observing people's behaviour to him"

(ibid: 176). Nor is a chief representative of any political grouping: "He in no way represents or symbolizes the unity and exclusiveness of political groups" (ibid). Nor does he gain material benefits from his position. Indeed being a chief is often costly, since their ritual activities involve giving or sacrificing cattle. Chiefs perform a mediative role in disputes: they pursuade parties in conflict to talk rather than fight; they offer but are unable to enforce a resolution; they build coalitions to support a return to peace; and they arrange and preside over compensation, usually in the form of a traditionally-specified number of cattle. A chief:

> Is simply a mediator in a specific social situation and his mediation is only successful because community ties are acknowledged by both parties and because they wish to avoid, for the time being at any rate, further hostilities... He is the machinery which enables groups to bring about a normal state of affairs when they desire to achieve this end. (ibid: 174-5)

Mediation is not always successful, and is in general less so the more distant the parties to the dispute are in kinship or tribal relations. At the limit, no possibility of compensation, or therefore of mediation, is recognised in disputes between tribes (although this statement may be less informative than it appears, since Evans-Pritchard partly *defines* tribal boundaries as the limit of the possibility of mediation). (Evans-Pritchard 1940: chapter 4; Evans-Pritchard 1940a: section V; Greuel 1971.)

11.3 Primitivism, again

In 11.1 & 11.2 I have sketched some of the features of Nuer sociability over the period from the 1930s, when E E Evans-Pritchard lived with them, to the 1980s and '90s, when Sharon Hutchinson did. I have not covered anything like the full complexity of Nuer life: I have not, for instance, said much about gender relations, except to leave their equality or lack of it as an admitted absence in my account. I have gestured towards, but said little about, the changes that the Nuer's encounter with state power, money and warfare have

brought about. And I have said nothing about Nuer religious practices, or about the repeated phenomenon of religious revivals led by prophets (on which see Beidelman 1971a; Evans-Pritchard 1956; Hutchinson 1996: chapter 7).

However even what little I have said should be enough to show that the Nuer are not 'primitive' in one of the senses of that term: they live complex lives in a complex and fluid social form. In the case of the Nuer, and I suggest in general, Ernest Gellner's claim that "What defines a segmentary society is not that [segmentary organisation] occurs, but that this is very nearly all that occurs" (Gellner 1969: 42) is manifestly false.

Whether or not the Nuer are 'primitives' (ignoring for the moment my argument in 8.1 that there are no 'primitive' societies), my argument here is not primitivism.

I have not used the Nuer to display some uncorrupted human nature (in the primitivist mode defined in chapter 3). They are, as sketched in 11.1 & 11.2, as richly and distinctively aculturated as anyone else. And even if they did display fundamental human nature, we could not regard it as wholly good: as I have emphasised, the Nuer are fairly violent.

I have not presented the Nuer social form as a relic of some past golden age: according to my sketch, the Nuer, like the rest of us, are a group of people making a living and pursuing their other interests in a historically and environmentally conditioned but not determined way. And, for as long as western anthropologists have known anything about them, the Nuer have been greatly affected by their encounter with capitalist nation-states.

I am not recommending return to a Nuer-like social form, for at least two reasons. First, it has some fairly unappealing features: I am not recommending abandoning the complex and industrially based technology we enjoy, and which the Nuer used to lack (at least in part because they also lacked the the raw materials to make or support it); nor am I praising the Nuer's propensities for violence. Second, the

idea of a 'return' to this way of living is obscure: for whom would it be a return? Certainly not me.

As with Kropotkin and Godwin (chapter 3), the question is, What am I doing argumentatively with this material?, and the answer is that I am not performing a primitivist argument. I am using the example of the Nuer to display some human capacities for living together and especially for conflict-resolution. The range of human social possibility includes systems of equal or fairly equal power networks, without institutionalised inequalities of power, in which violence is limited and conflict is often resolved.

11.4 Morals

I have given one example of humans living together and resolving conflict, without (institutionalised) inequalities of power, and despite culturally sanctioned tendencies towards individual and collective violence. The Nuer create sufficient power to satisfy their interests, which they share with most other humans, in food, shelter, company, continued life, the respect of peers, and the absence, or at least the limitation and resolution, of violent conflict. They further create capacities for complex social interaction, ritual performance, storytelling, and investigation of the world around them. But they do not distribute power in the radically unequal, institutionalised way that some other humans, including us, have done. They mutually organise conflict-resolution by assigning the task of mediation to ritual and coalition-forming specialists known as leopard-skin chiefs, and thereby succeed for the most part in living in 'ordered anarchy'. They have also been socially creative and plastic in their responses to, and appropriation of some elements of, other social forms.

The Nuer are not the only example of successful life in the absence of inequalities of power and of institutions benefitting from that inequality, and using their power to limit and resolve, or to create and direct, violent conflict. Other examples of the effectiveness of similar strategies of mediation can be found in Barclay (1982) and

Middleton & Tate (1958). In general, mediation without unequal power is a common way of resolving conflict. Mediation:

> Is a kind of non-governmental system of dispute settlement which one finds widely dispersed throughout the world... That it is so common and widespread may indicate that it has proven a most successful mechanism for maintaining peace. (Barclay 1982: 47-8)

Other tactics are also available: see, for instance, Ernest Gellner's description of trial by collective oath among Berber tribes (Gellner 1974).

Humans can live together and create and distribute power in a wide variety of ways. The range of human social possibility includes (pristine or modern) states and slavery, but it also includes situations of (much more) equally distributed power, in which peace is relatively successfully maintained by tactics including mediation. It is often thought that if we do not distribute power in favour of institutions to maintain peace or stability, we will be unable to live in any way except a chaotic war of each against all. But this claim is empirically false: humans are capable of creating, maintaining and living in ordered, egalitarian and relatively peaceful social forms.

12 ◇ Spanish Civil War Anarchism

Anarchism in the Spanish civil war is a classic anarchist example and locus of debate: no anarchist or historian of anarchism since has been able to ignore it, or the problems and arguments it raises. Examples of this engagement include Bookchin (1998), Guérin (1970: chapter 3), Harper (1987: chapters 6 & 8), Joll (1979: chapter 9), Marshall (1993: chapter 29), Richards (1983), Skirda (2002: chapter 17) and Woodcock (1963: chapter 12). As with my discussion of the Nuer in chapter 11, my engagement with this example is thus an extension of the anarchist tradition; however, as with that discussion, it is distinctive in making use of my theoretical apparatus, and in avoiding the tendency to romanticise the case (see 1.6).

I do not intend to intervene in, still less resolve, all of the disagreements among anarchists or others about the civil war. I do not, for instance, consider the ongoing debate about the propriety of the involvement of anarchist trade-unionists in the Spanish republican government (on which see, for instance, Guérin 1970: 128-30). Nor do I involve myself in the bitter argument about atrocities committed by both sides (see, for instance, Preston 1996: 88-91). In line with my general minimalist strategy, I invoke only enough information and make only as much argument as is necessary for my particular purposes. But before sketching the civil war and the anarchist social experiments it provoked or allowed, I need to refute one influential false image of Spanish anarchism.

12.1 Primitive rebels?

There is an image of specifically Spanish anarchism, sometimes illegitimately extended to other anarchisms, which pictures it as a 'primitive' social movement. This is potentially another kind of accusation of primitivism (see chapter 3): if Spanish anarchists were 'primitive', and other anarchists admire and seek to emulate them, then anarchists are primitivists. I now consider this accusation in detail, and argue that it falls at the first hurdle: Spanish anarchism was not a 'primitive' social movement.

Spanish anarchists have often been compared to medieval millennialists. Hugh Thomas, for instance, describes the "Regime" in Castro del Río, in the early part of the Spanish civil war, as "Comparable to that of the anabaptists of Münster of 1530, all private exchange of goods being banned, the village bar closed, the inhabitants realising the long-desired abolition of coffee" (Thomas 1990: 306)[1]. Similar analogies are made by James Joll (1979), by Gerald Brenan (2000; first published 1943), and, most importantly here, by Eric Hobsbawm (1971). For a careful history of the millennial analogy, as applied to nineteenth-century Andalusian anarchists in particular, see Kaplan (1977: chapter 8).

Where the analogy between anarchists and millennialists is made as a descriptive conceit or as an attempt at illumination by comparison, it is unproblematic. It is of obvious historical and human interest to note the similarities in activity and aspiration between such widely-separated phenomena. Ascetic ideals of purification exercised both fifteenth-century peasant chiliasts and twentieth-century peasant anarchists, and both expected radical change, even reversal, of the order of the world. They are not alone: many radicals have hoped or expected that the world would be turned upside down (see for

---

[1] It is perhaps worth noting that Thomas' book has long been "The standard work on the Spanish Civil War" (Carr 1971: 257), but that he, and it, have been attacked by anarchists on both historical and political grounds (see for instance Richards 1975). I do not involve myself in this debate.

instance Hill 1975). That said, we need also to recognise the striking differences between anarchists and millennialists. The latter characteristically expect that the transformation of the world is to be "Miraculous, in the sense that it is to be accomplished by, or with the help of, supernatural agencies" (Cohn 1970: 13), and regard the role of the righteous group as being:

> To gather together, to prepare itself, to watch the signs of the coming doom, to listen to the prophets who predict the coming of the great day, and perhaps to undertake certain ritual measures against the moment of decision and change, or to purify themselves, shedding the dross of the bad world of the present so as to be able to enter the new world in shining purity. (Hobsbawm 1971: 58)

The Spanish anarchists, in contrast and like other revolutionary groups, regarded their role as being to bring about the great transformation themselves, particularly through egalitarian organisation, struggle, and often the tactic of the general strike.

Further, while we can compare the social and economic circumstances of the southern Spanish peasantry and the medieval peasants who were often the core of millennial movements, we need to recognise that Spanish anarchism was also an urban phenomenon, especially in (comparatively) wealthy, industrialised Barcelona. Daniel Guérin is particularly concerned, indeed, to show Spanish anarchism as a tense "Symbiosis" (Guérin 1970: 119) between two tendencies: one rural, southern, Kropotkinite and nostalgic for a mythologised traditional "Free commune" (ibid); the other industrial, northern, syndicalist, Bakuninite and "More realistic, more concerned with the present than with the golden age" (ibid: 120).

The analogy between millennialism and Spanish anarchism is often intended not just to be descriptive, but to form the basis of a genealogy. If the ideologies and activities of the two are similar, it might be that millennialism is an ancestor of anarchism. This historical hypothesis, and the research intended to test it, are also unproblematic. But clearly, more than an analogy will be needed to support any such genealogical claim. Specific evidence of the transformation of millennial into anarchist groups, activity and

ideology is required. We will need to recognise that, although anarchism may have roots in millennial movements, it has other roots too. Spanish anarchism began most obviously in, first, the Proudhonian political theory of Fransisco Pi y Margall, and second, the arrival of Giuseppe Fanelli, a disciple of Bakunin, in Madrid in 1868 (Bookchin 1998: chapter 1). Before the civil war, it has a sixty-year history of debate, polemic, and often-clandestine organisation (on which see Nettlau 1996: chapter 13). The history of Spanish anarchism is a part of the history of nineteenth-century European socialism and Spanish politics as much as it is part of the suggested transformation of millennialism.

The detail of these specifically historical debates is outside the scope of this section; for a recent review, see Esenwein (1989). My points are: 1) that while there are analogies to be made between millennial and Spanish anarchist movements, and while it is possible that anarchism is partly descended from millennialism, this is far from being the whole story; and 2) that neither of these historical claims, even if true, in themselves support the characterisation of Spanish anarchism as 'primitive', nor therefore of anarchists enthused by it as primitivists.

More than analogy or genealogy will be needed characterise Spanish anarchism as 'primitive'. The argument requires some structure in which millennial and revolutionary movements can be placed on a progressive scale from simple, undeveloped, 'primitive' or embryonic, to complex, developed, modern or fully grown. Gerald Brenan (2000) implies such a stucture in his influential suggestion that Spanish anarchism was a millennial heresy of the kind which took place in the rest of Europe in the late middle ages, but which was delayed in Spain by the power of the Church and especially the Inquisition. For this claim to be meaningful, we need to assume that millennial heresy is somehow a necessary stage in the 'growth' of a discrete society. This biological metaphor – speaking of societies as if they were distinct creatures, and needed to endure millennialism as humans need to endure puberty – allows Brenan to present Spanish

society between the late middle ages and the nineteenth century as neotenous, and Spanish anarchism as a phase that Spain had to endure to gain adulthood or modernity.

Brenan's progressive scale is largely implicit, and his picture of Spanish anarchism as delayed heresy is more metaphor than metaphysics. But he directly inspired Eric Hobsbawm's 'primitive rebels' thesis (Hobsbawm 1971), in which the historical metaphysic is explicit and polemical (for Hobsbawm's debt to Brenan, see ibid: 74). I now consider this account of Spanish anarchism as 'primitive' in detail.

Primitive Rebels is a series of studies rather than a continuous narrative. But these studies of mafia in Sicily, Lazzarettists in Spain, and others, are contextualised and linked by a metaphysic of progression. The three major types of 'primitive rebellion' which Hobsbawm recognises – social banditry, mafias, and millenarian movements – are part of what he calls "A chain of historical evolution" (ibid: 4). All three are "Archaic" or "Primitive" (ibid: 1 and passim), but unlike "What are normally thought of as 'primitive' societies", they "All have considerable historical evolution behind them, for they belong to a world which has long known the State… class differentiation and exploitation… and even cities" (ibid: 3). Hobsbawm's historical metaphysic has three stages: true primitiveness, where society is governed by "Kinship or tribal solidarity… whether or not combined with territorial links" (ibid); modern society; and, between them, the transitional stage which is his subject. The people involved in this last pre-modern stage are "*Pre-political* people who have not yet found, or only begun to find, a specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world", and "Their movements are thus in many respects blind and groping, by the standards of modern ones" (ibid). In asserting this metaphysic, Hobsbawm makes frequent use of the same biological metaphors as Brenan: mafia, for instance, are "A sort of embryo" of "More highly developed movements" (ibid: 30).

So, Hobsbawm's account of Spanish anarchists and other 'primitive' movements is a cultural evolutionary story of the kind I described and criticised in 8.1.2. There, I characterised such stories as involving the association of five ideas or research plans: an ambition to describe and explain human social change at a high level of generality; a typology of human social forms; a linear scale of height, civilisation, evolution or complexity; unilinealism; and metaphors of organic growth. Although Hobsbawm's story is confined to revolutionary movements in western and southern Europe, rather than encompassing the whole of human social life, it displays: an ambition to describe and explain their development at a fairly high level of generality; a typology of revolutionary forms; a linear scale of of evolution from simple to complex; and metaphors of organic growth. It is unclear to what extent Hobsbawm is a unilinealist. It appears, then, that my reasons for not adopting such stories or plans could apply to Hobsbawm's account. I consider this possibility further in a moment, but first, I say something about how Hobsbawm places Spanish anarchism on his scale.

The Spanish anarchists find their place on Hobsbawm's scale as millennialists. For Hobsbawm, millennialism, "Of all the primitive social movements… is the one least handicapped by its primitiveness" (ibid: 57), because it is on the cusp of 'modernity'. Millennialists share with modern revolutionary movements the desire, not merely to correct particular injustices, but to overthrow and replace the whole present world. The differences are only that: 1) unlike millennialists, modern movements "Have – implicitly or explicitly – certain fairly definite ideas on how the old society is to be replaced by the new, the most crucial of which concerns what we may call the 'transfer of power'" (ibid: 58); and 2) millennialists lack a precise language in which to express their claims and grievances. The Spanish anarchists "Show millenarianism wholly divorced from traditional religious forms" (ibid: 65), but still lack such definite ideas and precise expression, which are to be provided by modern and especially socialist revolutionary movements, and are therefore, only just, 'primitive'.

In order for anarchists to be given their place on this scale, at least one of 1 and 2 must be true: the Spanish anarchists lacked definite ideas about the transfer of power, or appropriate language in which to express their aspirations. But, first, it is not true that the Spanish anarchists lacked definite ideas about the transfer of power. They were involved in a lively debate, through publication and conference, throughout the sixty years before the civil war, precisely about revolutionary tactics. These debates have been exhaustively recorded by Max Nettlau (1996), and many of the pamphlets and periodicals in which they were carried out are still extant. The eventual consensus about tactics was such that, as I discuss in 12.3, the transfer of power was accomplished in similar ways all over the Republican sector of Spain in the early part of the civil war. The first argument for characterising Spanish anarchists as 'primitive' fails.

Hobsbawm's second argument is that the anarchists lacked the proper vocabulary to express their aspirations. The claim is that millennial Spanish anarchists shared the aspirations of modern socialist revolutionary movements, but, lacking the proper mode of expression, cloaked themselves in mystical and pseudo-religious language instead. Millennialists can "Readily exchange the primitive costume in which they dress their aspirations for the modern costume of socialist and communist politics" (Hobsbawm 1971: 64), but the Spanish anarchists failed to find the right wardrobe. Hobsbawm is not the only commentator to make such claims about costume. Josef Macek, for instance, writes of the Hussite heresy that "The dim vision of a classless society, disguised in biblical vestments, which arose before the eyes of the Taborite brothers and sisters in 1420, reflected the yearnings of the serfs and the poor" (Macek 1965: 34). Some Spanish anarchists did use religious language, although with more self-consciousness than Hobsbawm implies:

> Anarchist writers and orators... were not averse to using religious imagery and developing a prophetic rhetorical style, often employing the apostolic message as a guide or a point of contrast. At times in conversation the name of God might be invoked, but only to symbolise a common though

> incomprehensible creation and a shared heritage that calls for unity and equality among men. (Mintz 1982: 4)

This does not show that they wanted to say something else, still less that they would have said what a 'modern socialist' would say, had they possessed the vocabulary. Indeed it is difficult to imagine what kind of evidence could be provided to support a claim that any historical actor was trying, and failing, to say something other than what she actually said. The second argument for characterising Spanish anarchism as 'primitive' is at best unsupported.

Hobsbawm's account of Spanish anarchism misrepresents it, and should therefore be rejected. But, to return to the issue of cultural evolutionary stories, do we also have reason to reject the progressive scale as a whole? Recall that in 8.1.2, I asserted only the fairly weak claim that we should not use such stories for my anarchist and comparative purposes. So, since Hobsbawm's purposes are different, I cannot reject his scale for the reasons given there. This point implies the question, What are Hobsbawm's purposes?, and I now consider it.

Hobsbawm's purposes in asserting his historical metaphysic may simply be to do with the fact that *Primitive Rebels* introduced a new topic into historical conversation. As Hobsbawm characterises it, historical work on revolutionary movements before *Primitive Rebels* had concentrated, first, on "Ancient and medieval" revolutionaries, and, second, on modern "Labour and socialist" ones (Hobsbawm 1971: 1; 2). His subjects had been regarded by "Older historians" as "Marginal or unimportant phenomena" (ibid: 2). So, the metaphysic may be intended to contextualise those subjects in relation to more well-known and 'respectable' issues. It may further be a way of justifying taking an interest in such apparently marginal figures, analogously to James Joll's justification of his interest in anarchism on the grounds that "The study of failure can often be as instructive and rewarding as the study of success" (Joll 1979: viii).

However, I suggest that there is a further implicit purpose in Hobsbawm's characterisation of anarchism as 'primitive'. Hobsbawm

ends his consideration of Spanish anarchism with the claim that "The history of anarchism, almost alone among modern social movements, is one of unrelieved failure; and unless some unforseen historical changes occur, it is likely to go down in the books with the Anabaptists and the rest of the prophets who, though not unarmed, did not know what to do with their arms, and were defeated for ever" (Hobsbawm 1971: 92). He uses the same analysis to support his later judgement that "The revival of interest in anarchism today seems... unexpected, surprising, and – if I am to speak frankly – unjustified" (Hobsbawm 1999b: 100). In both cases, Hobsbawm feels free to extend (dubious) conclusions about Spanish peasant anarchism to anarchism in general. Marx and Engels used their idea of utopian socialism to legitimate their, and their theories', hegemony in socialist politics (see further 13.1.2); Josef Macek's claims about the Hussites were an appropriation of a Czech cultural myth as support for communist power in mid-twentieth-century Czechoslovakia. Hobsbawm similarly makes a political move: by characterising anarchism as blind, groping, misclothed and 'primitive', and by presenting modern parliamentary and Marxist socialism as the culmination of earlier, obsolete movements, he polemically supports his own politics. We therefore have good reason to reject, or at least to be suspicious of, the whole metaphysical structure.

Hobsbawm perhaps misrepresents the complexity and historical fragmentation of revolutions and revolutionary movements (on which see, for instance, Parker 1999) for political reasons; he certainly misrepresents Spanish anarchism and therefore anarchism in general. The labels 'primitive' and 'millennialist' "Stamp anarchist goals as unrealistic and unattainable" (Mintz 1982: 5), but they are inaccurate. The primitive rebels thesis should be rejected.

Now that I have removed this influential image of Spanish anarchism, I can go on to sketch the Spanish civil war in general.

12.2 The Spanish civil war: a sketch

The background of Spain's civil war is the long struggle and vacillation between "The forces of reform and reaction which had dominated Spanish history since 1808" (Preston 1996: 10) in the persons of republicans, liberals, communists, monarchists, the army, and pro- and anti-clericals. It is grounded in this instability and in the culture of political violence which went with it. The specifically anarchist background partakes of this culture and history, and further fuses several other influences, from both within and outside Spain. First, the Spanish tradition and myth of village democracy and collective self-management in the *patria chica*. Second, in many regions and especially in Catalonia, a tradition of localist resistance to the centralising tendencies of Castille. Third, a tradition of peasant anti-clericalism. Fourth, from outside Spain, the influences of Proudhon, Kropotkin, and especially Bakunin, whose doctrines were spread by apostolic anarchists travelling rural Spain from the late 1860s onwards, leaving behind them groups of vegetarians, teetotallers, and anarchist revolutionaries. Fifth, a sixty-year history of trade-union and conspiratorial organisation and polemical publication. Sixth, after 1917, the glorious inspiration of the Russian revolution, even if the image of it was unrealistic.

In February 1936, the latest of many vacillations of power produced a left-wing 'Popular Front' government supported by anarchists, socialists and communists. In July, an attempted right-wing military coup under General Franco and others sparked popular resistance. That resistance was organised not by the republican government, but by anarchist and communist organisations (the CNT, FAI, UGT, PSUC, POUM[2] and others). Spain was divided into

---

[2] CNT: Confederación Nacional del Trabajo; anarcho-syndicalist. FAI: Federación Anarquista Ibérica; militant anarchist. UGT: Unión General de Trabajadores; socialist. PSUC: Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya; Comintern-affiliated communist; POUM: Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista; dissident or Trotskyite communist. See Fraser (1981: 11-12).

republican or loyalist or socialist or revolutionary against nationalist or Christian or fascist sectors (in each case, the description depends on who is asked). The first was concentrated in the east, around Catalonia, and in the south, around Andalusia. The second, in the west and north. The civil war was initially fought at their boundaries, for instance at the front moving back and forth near Saragossa in Aragon, before the nationalists won in the east and then the south. (Bookchin 1998; Preston 1996; Thomas 1990. Maps can be found in Fraser 1981: 16-23.)

The war can usefully be divided, following George Woodcock, into two general periods. First, from 1936 to early 1937, a "Dynamic period" (Woodcock 1963: 365). During this period the CNT and FAI were among the most active and influential organisations in Spain. They thought and organised in terms of general strikes, insurrection and street-fighting, workers' self-management, and collectivisation of land and industry. In alliance with other socialist unions and parties, they resisted the Generals' uprising in many areas, and their successes gave rise to a brief flourishing of free communal organisation. Factories and services were collectivised. The eye-witnesses George Orwell and Franz Borkenau both testify, for instance, to the success of worker-managed industry in Barcelona (Orwell 2001; Borkenau 1986). Farming land was taken over by village communes. I consider these organisational successes further in 12.3.

The second phase of the war was inaugurated or at least signalled by the street-fighting between Republican government troops and CNT and POUM militias in Barcelona, in May 1937. The CNT and other libertarian movements thereafter "Declined both in influence and drive as centralization in military and administrative affairs successfully brought the loyalist regions of Spain under the control of the republican government" (Woodcock 1963: 365). The situation changed from popular resistance to a military attempt to seize power, to a modern total war, and the anarchists were ill-fitted for it. The republican government, under the influence of the

Comintern-affiliated PSUC and with the material support of Stalin's USSR, centralised and militarised the anti-nationalist effort. Militia and radical leaders were arrested and in some cases, for instance that of Andrés Nin, murdered. The 'People's Army', regularised with a hierarchy of officers and differential rates of pay, and armed by the USSR, took over the conduct of the war from the rag-tag egalitarian militias (Alexander 1999: chapter 9). And lost. "1936: the 'People in Arms' won the revolution. 1939: the 'People's Army' lost the war" (Richards 1983: back cover).

The nationalists, in the mean time, were getting military support from Italy and from Nazi Germany, particularly in the form of the 'Condor Legion': some 16,000 men over the course of the war, with tanks, anti-aircraft guns and fighter-bomber aircraft (Thomas 1990: appendix 7).

The anarchists in the Spanish civil war achieved more than any other anarchist movement, certainly in the twentieth century, perhaps ever. Nonetheless, they failed. The civil war killed perhaps 500,000 people, and Spain ended it with a reactionary or fascist dictatorship which lasted until Franco's death in 1975. Perhaps that outcome can be blamed on the republican government and its Soviet allies, but the anarchists did not prevent it, and their social innovations and successes were short-lived (for further consideration of how far the communists were to blame for the nationalist victory, see for instance Alexander 1999; Bolloten 1968; Goldman 1983: section 5). The Spanish anarchists, in the judgement of both Woodcock (1963) and Guérin (1970), were failures at war; their success, even if a fleeting one, was in their creative egalitarian organisation. I now consider that success.

12.3 Anarchic organisation

"The military insurrection of July 1936 not only destroyed the political edifice of the Second Republic but also, in most of the areas where it proved possible to maintain opposition to the rebellion, led to the re-ordering of an entire society" (Kelsey 1986: 60). Anarchic and other egalitarian organisation in Spain was improvised, socially eclectic and various: each one of these experiments "Would deserve a book to itself" (Skirda 2002: 161). I artificially divide this range into three types: military (12.3.1), urban (12.3.2) and rural (12.3.3) organisation. I make this division for convenience, and do not intend to suggest that any of the three categories was monolithic.

The anarchic and social-revolutionary currents of Spain's civil war have been downplayed, and in some cases completely ignored, by non-anarchist historians and commentators. The reasons for this absence are various, but include at least that several of the major players in the conflict had their own reasons for not presenting the social experiments in the republican zone as anarchic or revolutionary. The republican government hoped for help from western powers, and did not want to frighten them off with the ideas of anarchy or revolution. Stalin, and therefore the Comintern-affiliated communists in the government, wanted to draw those western powers into Spain and into conflict with Nazi Germany, and thereby shift Hitler's attention away from the east. They therefore shared the republicans' desire to present the civil war as a liberal regime threatened by a military coup, not a revolution. Much of the local and international support for Franco's rebels was Catholic, and they therefore had reason to present themselves as crusaders against Godless Soviet communism, in line with the contemporary church's attacks on "Russia and Moscow and Communism with all their blasphemous and anti-democratic tyranny" (Edward Lodge Curran, quoted in Alexander 1999: xxiv). Robert Alexander further suggests that "Had the Rebels drawn an accurate picture of the taking over of factories and other enterprises by their workers, and of the land by

the peasants, this would certainly have had the effect of sowing discontent behind their own lines" (Alexander 1999: xxiv). After their victory, the rebels continued to present themselves as crusaders against communism, and went to great lengths to manipulate and control the historical record, to maintain that presentation (Preston 1994).

It may further be the case, as Noam Chomsky (1988) argues, that liberal and Bolshevik-communist intellectuals share an elitist ideology which leads to a characteristic "Antagonism to mass movements and to social change that escapes the control of privileged elites" (Chomsky 1988: 84-5), and therefore to a tendency to marginalise such movements.

12.3.1 Military organisation

The egalitarian militias were not successful in war. But this does not mean that we know why, nor that we can attribute that lack of success to their organisational form, nor therefore that we can dismiss them. It was, after all, a regular, hierarchical army that eventually lost to Franco's nationalists.

Anarchist involvement in the actual fighting of the civil war is perhaps the element of Spanish anarchism most downplayed by historians. Nonetheless, and thanks in particular to the work of Robert Alexander (1999), we can say something about it.

After the initial, improvised and partly successful response to the Generals' uprising, militias were rapidly organised, not by the government but by the General Council of Anti-fascist Militia, "In which the anarchists were the overwhelmingly dominant element" (Alexander 1999: 158), and by various left-wing parties and trade-unions including the CNT, UGT, PSUC and POUM. The first of them was the famous Durrutti column, raised in Barcelona on July 24th 1936.

Organised by different groups as they were, the militias varied considerably in their constitution, organisation, size, and amount and

quality of equipment. However we can make some generalisations. First, the vast majority of the recruits were militarily inexperienced. Second, militia columns often took one of two forms: anarchist and communist.

According to Burnett Bolloten (who was no fan of anarchism), the anarchist militias were egalitarian, non-hierarchical, and democratic. They had:

> No military titles, badges, or distinctions in the way of food, clothing, and quarters... The basic unit was the group, composed generally of ten men; each group elected a delegate, whose functions were somewhat akin to those of a non-commissioned officer of the lowest rank, but without the equivalent authority. Ten groups formed a century which also elected its own delegate, and any number of centuries made up a *columna*, or "column," at whose head stood a committee of war. This committee was likewise elective and was divided into various sections in accordance with the needs of the column. The gradation into group and century delegates and a committee of war did not imply the existence of any permanent staff with special privileges since all delegates could be removed as soon as they failed to reflect the wishes of the men who had elected them. "The first impression one gets," ran a CNT-FAI account, "is the total absence of hierarchy... There is no one giving orders by authority." Nevertheless, duties had to be assigned, and in such a way as to avoid friction. In the Anarchist Iron Column, for example, lots were drawn by the militiamen to decide on who should stand guard at night and who in the early morning. (Bolloten 1968: 216-7; Orwell 2001 largely confirms this description)

That is, the anarchist militias were equal-power social networks. The communist militias, in contrast, adopted a semi-military, hierarchical organisation based on party discipline and Bolshevik tactics. As a result, they "Attracted many of the regular [army] officers who remained loyal to the Republic, many of whom were appalled at what they conceived (by no means entirely correctly) as indiscipline bordering on chaos in many of the militia units" (Alexander 1999: 152).

Accounts of anarchist militias have tended to emphasise their 'indiscipline'. It is true that the apparent need for military discipline, if they were effectively to fight the nationalist army, raised a problem for and tensions within the anarchist movement:

> If this problem beset all the militia units, whatever their ideology, it was only in those formed by the Libertarian movement that its solution encountered a philosophical impediment, for the liberty of the individual is the very core of Anarchism and nothing is so antipodal to its nature as submission to authority. "Discipline is obedience to authority; Anarchism recognizes no authority," said *La Revista Blanca*, the leading anarchist journal, in an issue published before the civil war [22nd June 1934]. (Bolloten 1968: 216)

But it is not true, as has sometimes been claimed, that this problem was insoluble in anarchist terms. In the first place, many anarchists decided that the compromise acceptance of some military discipline and hierarchy was a necessary sacrifice, and rapidly put it into practice, although they often retained general assemblies of soldiers existing in parallel to the orthodox military hierarchy, at least for a time (Alexander 1999: 150-1; 169).

In the second place, and more importantly here, anarchist militias solved the problem by re-understanding 'discipline': "The anarchists had a different concept of discipline than that of the Communists or professional military officers" (ibid: 167-8). If by discipline is meant military courtesy and rigid hierarchy – saluting, uniforms, deep divisions between officers and ordinary soldiers, differential rates of pay, orders obeyed without question – then the anarchists certainly lacked it. But "If by discipline is meant a willingness to go into battle when told to do so, or when volunteers were asked for, the anarchist troops had discipline as good as or better than that of any other elements in the Republican army" (ibid: 169, paraphrasing Ricardo Sanz, commander of the Durrutti column after Durutti's death). If by discipline is meant the ability to coordinate military actions, the anarchist and other egalitarian militias were disciplined. According to George Orwell:

> A newly raised draft of militia was an undisciplined mob not because the officers called the privates 'Comrade' but because raw troops are *always* an undisciplined mob. In practice the democratic 'revolutionary' type of discipline is more reliable than might be expected. In a workers' army discipline is theoretically voluntary. It is based on class-loyalty, whereas the discipline of a bourgeois conscript army is based ultimately on fear... In the militias the bullying and abuse that go on in an ordinary army

would never have been tolerated for a moment. The normal military punishments existed, but they were only invoked for very serious offences. When a man refused to obey an order you did not immediately get him punished; you first appealed to him in the name of comradeship. Cynical people with no experience of handling men will say instantly that this would never 'work', but as a matter of fact it does 'work' in the long run. The discipline of even the worst drafts of militia visibly improved as time went on... 'Revolutionary' discipline depends on political consciousness – on an understanding of *why* orders must be obeyed; it takes time to diffuse this, but it also takes time to drill a man into an automaton on the barrack-square. (Orwell 2001: 50-1)

'Discipline' might name either of two modes of organising military cooperation: the orthodox military or the anarchist mode. The second proved itself sufficiently effective in the practice of war that the charge of 'indiscipline' is either false, or an irrelevant comment on the anarchist militias' lack of military courtesy.

The second major problem for the anarchists, which they failed to solve, was their rivalry with the communists, who increasingly and with the backing of the USSR took over the republican military effort and government.

Despite this failure, the anarchist militias were effective fighting forces, especially in the early part of the war:

> It is clear that on all of the fronts of the Spanish Civil War, anarchist troops made up a substantial proportion of those fighting in the Republican forces. On the Catalan-Aragónese, Levante-Teruel, and Asturias areas they constituted the majority of the soldiers fighting against the Rebels; elsewhere they were not numerically as significant but nonetheless constituted an important part of the Republican forces. As a general rule, they fought tenaciously and well and, on some fronts, held out when most other elements were ready to give up. In some areas, CNT leaders such as Ricardo Sanz, Cipriano Mera, and José González Malo played key roles in organizing and leading important elements of the Republican army. (Alexander 1999: 248)

There is no evidence that anarchist militias were in general less effective than others in prosecuting the war; there is evidence that they were highly effective in some cases. Nonetheless, we must judge that the anarchists were failures at war, for exactly the same reason that we must judge the communists and the other republican forces

as failures: their side lost. But this does not mean that we can ignore the success and effectiveness, even though in this case temporary, of egalitarian fighting forces.

12.3.2 Urban organisation

In the very early part of the civil war, many owners of industrial and commercial enterprises in Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia abandoned them, either out of sympathy for Franco's side, or out of fear of the revolutionary workers. The administrative gap this left was rapidly filled by improvised egalitarian arrangements of the workers themselves, drawing on trade-union organisation. Because they were mostly organised spontaneously and locally by the workers in particular factories and shops, which varied greatly in size and form (Dolgoff 1974: 85), these arrangements were various. But we can make some generalisations.

Typically, a general assembly of the workers in a particular enterprise elected a Comité de Control or Comité de Empressa, consisting of five to ten people, and theoretically including representatives of both the UGT and CNT (but in practice, especially in the early stages of the war, often CNT-dominated). This Comité contained delegates for different departments of the firm, and elected a managing director (who in some cases was the returned or sympathetic former owner). The director and Comité ran the enterprise day to day, but major decisions were brought before the general assembly. (Alexander 1999: 467-9.)

Collectives of this general kind successfully ran enterprises including municipal transport, telephone services, railways, gas, water, electricity, textile factories, the munitions industry, even hairdressing (Borkenau 1986: chapter 2; Souchy 1974). In Barcelona, workers' collectives distributed food supplies, set up communal dining halls, and organised themselves into a Food Workers' Industrial Union including bakers, butchers and dairy workers (Souchy 1974a). "Every shop and café had an inscription saying that it had been collectivised;

even the bootblacks had been collectivised and their boxes painted red and black" (Orwell 2001: 32). In Catalonia, health services were collectivised and made available free to all (Leval 1974a). In general, urban workers' collectives successfully provided food, clothing, shelter, public services and war materials.

The collectives faced problems caused by the economic situation in Spain, by the civil war, by their own organisational failings, and by their supposed allies. 1) Like much of the west, Spain was still feeling the effects of the great depression, and had high unemployment and inflation, which made the organisation of a war economy difficult. 2) As the war went on, the nationalist blockade made raw materials increasingly hard to source; physical plant was damaged or destroyed by bombing; and workers went to the front, leaving many enterprises under-staffed. 3) Because of their spontaneous and improvised nature, and the unpreparedness of the CNT's organisation, it was often difficult for individual enterprises to federalise and coordinate their activities. Many contemporary writers complain of the problem of 'Factory patriotism'. Victor Alba, for instance, noted that "We have occasion to see how in some workers' sectors, to collectivize a factory or an industry consists only of appropriating it without consideration of the needs of the war and of the general organization of production, nor of whether the raw materials they possess are needed by other branches of production" (quoted in Alexander 1999: 474). 4) Both the Republican government and the increasingly influential Comintern-affiliated communists were strongly opposed to local, ground-up anarchic reorganisation of enterprises by their workers, and attempted "To undermine and destroy the collectives" (Alexander 1999: 484).

Despite these problems, individual collectivised enterprises were often highly successful, and anarchic organisation was in general effective:

> There is little question about the fact that, as a result of the seizure of most of the manufacturing, public utilities, and many commercial enterprises by the workers, the economy of Republican Spain began functioning as normally as wartime

> conditions permitted a few days after the suppression of the Rebellion there. It is also clear that the workers' collectives quickly created a war industry where none had existed before, an industry which was able to provide a substantial part of the weapons, vehicles and other military equipment which was used throughout the War by the Loyalist armed forces. At the same time, essential consumer goods such as textiles continued to be available from the factories run by the collectives. In these senses, the collectives were an economic success. (ibid: 487)

We can at minimum say that, despite difficulties and failures, and in the face of civil war, the economy of republican Spain did not collapse under collective organisation. We do not know whether or not these organisations were sustainable in the long term, but cannot ignore their temporary success.

12.3.3 Rural organisation

Village and agricultural organisation was rapidly transformed in the space opened by initial victories against the military coup. The forms this transformation and its results took varied considerably, according to local opportunities, decisions, and individual peculiarities, and especially across three major ranges of difference. Anarchist and other egalitarian rural organisations varied: 1) in the precise details of their administrative and social organisation. 2) In the relative wealth of different villages. Hugh Thomas argues that the economic situation of a village "Depended over-greatly on the situation before" (Thomas 1971: 254): that is, that redistribution between poor and wealthy villages was ineffective. And, 3) in the balance of and relations between *colectivistas* (who collectivised their land and managed it by direct local democracy) and *individualistas* (mostly small peasant proprietors who remained outside the collectives, either for ideological reasons, or to wait and see how successful they were before joining). This division was exploited and widened by the republican government, and especially its communist members, for political purposes, but was often handled peaceably and reasonably on a local level (see for instance Goldman 1983: 64-6; Leval 1975: 209). For

examples of particular and various village organisations, see Dolgoff (1974: chapters 8-10), Goldman (1983: 64-72), and Leval (1975: part 2).

Despite this variation, we can make a number of generalisations about agricultural and village organisation in the republican sector of Spain during the civil war. First, they were to some extent actuated by the same spirit:

> We wanted a terrestrial paradise, but not in the biblical sense: to live here – organized here. One man wouldn't be able to live off the work of another. It was the wish that each man work and not desire to live in luxury. One wouldn't be able to suck another's produce, and we would all eat. The world is work – intellectual and manual. (anonymous anarchist of Casas Viejas, quoted in Mintz 1982: 5)

That is, a spirit of levelling and activism (and not of millennial religious mania).

Second, the rapid transformation of class-bound and inegalitarian social forms was a bottom-up reorganisation: "Collectivization was not (as in the Soviet Union or Cuba) imposed from above by decree, but achieved from below by the initiative of the peasants themselves" (Dolgoff 1974: 111).

Third, some administrative tactics were generally adopted by colectivistas and accepted by individualistas. A *consejo de administración* (council of administration), consisting typically of "A president, secretary, vice-secretary and treasurer, together with a number of other *vocales* or *delegados* responsible for specific questions such as statistics, cattle, food, the olive crop and so on" (Thomas 1971: 243), reported to and was recallable by a general assembly of the whole village (that is, not usually excluding women, local individualistas, or non-agricultural workers). This assembly heard, debated and voted on all major issues for the collective and its locality. Gaston Leval (1975: 207-13) gives a detailed eye-witness account of one such assembly in Tamarite de Litera.

Fourth, the assemblies and councils often abolished the use of state-issued currency, replacing it with common stores of goods, ration-books, work-vouchers, and entitlements based particularly on

how many non-working dependents (the young, old, and ill) someone had to support (Dolgoff 1974a). Typically, villages organised complex systems of payments to individuals and families, based on formulas of need and work-contribution (Thomas 1971: 250-1).

Fifth, the village collectives were probably economic successes. Although the figures for production by collectivised villages, and therefore the possibility of comparison with the system they replaced, are limited, we can say at minimum that the collectives were not economic failures. They did succeed in continuing to produce enough food not only for themselves but for the militias at the front. According to Thomas, "The most complete general account of a collective's finances is that of the 300-family collective of Almagro" (ibid: 247). Thomas has some doubts about the accuracy of these figures, but it appears that despite war and rapid social reorganisation, the Almagro collective had "75 per cent more barley... 500 per cent more wine, 200 per cent more olive oil, 80 per cent more rye, 400 per cent more peas, 300 per cent more chick-peas, [and] about 90 per cent more beans of varying sorts" (ibid: 248) in store in 1937 than the village had been able to produce before collectivisation. "The total value of the products possessed by the collective was about 50 per cent higher than in 1936" (ibid). Almagro may have been unusual: but we can at least say that the production of this village, and of many others, did not collapse under collective organisation.

Sixth, the social success of the collective villages is clear. In a short time, they removed or effaced considerable social and economic inequality; instituted social support of widows, orphans and invalids; organised schools; and considerably extended medical care.

Seventh, and finally, collectives to some extent federalised, coordinating their production, sharing tactics and expertise, and exchanging or sometimes giving food and other goods (Leval 1974; Thomas 1971: 244). As already noted, the redistribution towards equality implied by this was not entirely effective: perhaps it did not have time to be.

In general, the rural revolution was startlingly successful:

> Although these collectives varied much in their organisational structure, and their degree of 'utopianism', most of them provided their members with levels of living and a feeling of self-respect which they had never before enjoyed. Many of them considerably increased the output of the land under their control. (Alexander 1999: 1087)

Although they were short-lived, had problems, and were having rapidly to improvise solutions in difficult circumstances, the collectives were succesful in creating a situation of (much more) equal power and making a living in it.

•

In summary: in the republican sector of Spain, the opportunities and demands created by the coup, partially successful resistance, and then civil war, gave rise to rapidly improvised local organisation. Equal-power networks took over the organisation of military action, urban industry, commerce and public services, and rural and agricultural life. The tactics for creating and distributing power they used were various, but typically included the direct democratic creation of administrative committees, responsible to and recallable by general assemblies. They also included improvisations in the face of present problems. Ronald Fraser, for instance, records how Luis Santacana, an administrator in one of Catalonia's largest textile plants, dealt with the problem of pilfering:

> [Santacana:] "Inevitably, collectivization could not resolve all problems; there were people who lacked self-discipline, a consciousness of what was demanded of them. There was a mechanic who stole a spanner. I told him he was no longer stealing from the capitalists, he was robbing himself and his fellow-workers. Under the old regime, he would have been sacked on the spot. 'Please, please, don't steal again'...". Within a fortnight the man was back and Santacana had to take disciplinary action. The collective, he said, would not sack him because he had children and needed his weekly wage. Instead, they were going to move him to a new section, the cleaning department. But that would require public notification. – "'You will write your full name on the blackboard, underneath it that you have stolen two spanners and that is the reason for your move to a section where you will have no chance of further theft.' 'No, no,' he cried, 'not the blackboard.' 'Yes,' I said, 'It can't hurt you to write the truth up there.' There were no more

> cases of indiscipline; the threat of the blackboard was sufficient…" (Fraser 1981: 218-9)

The final and most important point about these various egalitarian organisations is that they were in general successful. In the middle of a crisis, and despite having to fight a war without a pre-existing military infrastructure, anarchist and other federated, minimally institutionalised, equal-power networks managed to organise food production and distribution, munitions manufacture, fighting forces, public services, and much else. "All these creative activities, these ventures, these changes to human relationships amounted to a 'miraculous blossoming'" (Skirda 2002: 161).

12.4 Spanish anarchists and the Nuer: a comparison

Spanish anarchists and the Nuer differ in many ways, the most obvious being their different technologies and ways of making a living. However they are also importantly similar, in three major ways. First, neither exist in a social vacuum. They are examples of the political condition of "Siba", that is "Anarchy opposed to something" (Gellner 1969: 1; 2). Both are bundles of minimally institutionalised equal-power networks existing in a complex relationship with, challenged by, and aware of the dangers of, much more institutionalised, hierarchical, unequal-power networks. So, the common belief that such anarchic social forms can only exist in unusual situations of isolation is empirically false. Second, neither social form can be characterised as the mere absence of tactics and organisations for the unequal distribution of power. Rather, both the Nuer and the Spanish anarchists used a complex and various set of tactics for creating power and for distributing it equally (or, at least, much more equally than many alternatives available to them). Third, and most generally: both Nuer and Spanish anarchists succeeded in creating enough power to satisfy their interests, which they share with most other humans, in food, shelter, company, continued life, and the respect of peers. The Nuer succeeded in limiting and often

resolving conflict; the Spanish anarchists were capable of organising themselves against hierarchical military aggression, with temporary success.

12.5 Morals

In chapter 11, I showed that humans are capable of organising themselves to limit and resolve conflict in situations of equal power. But it might be argued that the Nuer's lack of (western, industrial) technology explains their success, and that our arrangements are sufficiently different that unequal power distributions are necessary. Here, however, I have shown that anarchic tactics for the creation and equal distribution of power have also been effective in modern industrial circumstances. Anarchic organisations can successfully organise factories and urban public services, as well as tribal conflict-resolution. In general, we have empirical examples of humans' ability to organise ourselves so as to satisfy our many interests while distributing power equally.

The Spanish anarchist experiment failed, but that does not mean that it had to, nor that its successes can be disregarded. We have the capacities and tactics available to organise ourselves in this way. I am not making the obviously false claim that anarchic social forms are always stable, or will always win in a contest against alternative social forms. There seems no reason to suppose that this is true of any social form, anarchic or not. Rather, I am displaying this human social possibility as one amongst many others.

12.6 Summary and conclusion

After clearing the ground by removing the false image of Spanish anarchism as a 'primitive' social movement (12.1), I sketched the civil war (12.2). I then described the forms and successes of anarchic organisation during it (12.3), dividing them for convenience into three general types: military (12.3.1), urban (12.3.2) and rural (12.3.3)

organisation. I compared the Spanish civil war anarchist and Nuer social forms (12.4), emphasising the similarities that both are 'siba', that both exemplify complex tactics for distributing power equally (and not merely the absence of hierarchical tactics), and that both succeed in satisfying typical human interests, while distributing power equally. I drew the morals (12.5) that anarchic tactics have been successful in modern industrial circumstances, and that the empirical range of human social possibility includes successful anarchic social forms.

In this and my previous chapter, I have displayed examples of successful anarchic organisation: fragments of hope to put up against the undeniable possibility of enslavement and violence which I displayed in chapters 9 & 10. In chapter 13, I put these fragments together to show the possibility of my anarchist utopia.

13 ◇ Utopia

In this chapter, I draw together the fragments of hope I discovered in chapters 11 & 12 to describe and prove possible my anarchist utopia. But because the terms 'utopia' and 'utopianism' have such polemical heft, I first defend (my) utopianism against some expected attacks and misrepresentations.

13.1 A defence of utopianism

A defence of utopianism implies a direct clash between arguments for and against utopianism. I wish it were so: but attacks on utopianism commonly talk past it, failing to take notice of what actual utopian texts are like and what actual utopists use them to do[1]. The contest between utopists and anti-utopists is less like a duel than like ships passing in the night. So, here, I describe utopianism and utopias in general (13.1.1) and show how common attacks fail to engage with them (13.1.2), before displaying and analysing two major purposes of utopists in writing and publishing utopias (13.1.3 & 13.1.4) and a major rhetorical feature of utopias (13.1.5) in relation to my purposes. I argue that utopianism understood in this way, and in particular my version of it, is one of a range of reasonable tactics for performing what I call a political intervention.

The title of this section alludes to a series of articles by G K Chesterton, published under the by-line 'The Defendant' and including for instance "A Defence of Rash Vows" (Chesterton 1935). Chesterton's defensive strategy is often to show that a widespread belief that his subject has long ago been refuted, shown to be

---

[1] In order to avoid confusion, I use 'utopia' to mean an example of the genre, or the imaginary place described in it; 'utopist' to mean the author of a utopia; 'utopian' to mean something to do with the genre or place; 'Utopia' (note initial capital) to mean the imaginary place

ridiculous, or rendered obsolete – that nobody who is anybody could now believe, worry about or do *that* – is false. I intend something similar here: despite a widespread belief to the contrary, no one has shown that utopianism is a bad idea. Its opponents are still drifting in fog, and have never fired on a real target. Once we understand what utopists do with utopias, we can see utopianism as one reasonable form of political action.

13.1.1 Utopianism and utopias

What is utopianism? Creating and making use of utopias. So, What is a utopia? For my purposes, it is a text which makes use of a historically developed and developing vocabulary of tropes, story-fragments and rhetorical tactics. That is, I exclude real experimental communities from consideration here (on such communities see, for instance, the studies in Pitzer 1997). The utopian vocabulary includes, but is not limited to: an unknown land; a framing story of a traveller who has visited it; an imaginary community; a story within the story of that community's foundation; a built environment in which the community's members are fully at home; a travelogue which reveals the lineaments of the utopia; peace, harmony and human flourishing; and an often satirical comparison with our own land and living arrangements. Example utopias include More's *Utopia*, Bacon's *A New Atlantis*, Morris' *News from Nowhere*, Wells' *A Modern Utopia*, and Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and *Always Coming Home* (More 1992; Bacon 1889; Morris 1993; Wells no date; Le Guin 1975 & 1986). For many more examples, see for instance Berneri (1982); Claeys (1994 & 1997); Manuel & Manuel (1979).

One major utopian trope is a description of an ideal way of life, and it is worth considering the meaning of 'ideal'. It might mean a perfect way of life: one with nothing at all wrong with it. But more often, utopias describe something less than perfection in this sense.

---

described by Thomas More; 'Utopian' to mean one of its inhabitants; and '*Utopia*' to mean More's book.

Utopias typically describe either a life which is better than ours, without the implication that nothing even better than that is imaginable, or an ideal in the weaker sense of something which is as good as is possible for us. That is, as good as is possible for flawed humans in a not entirely friendly world.

That one can write a utopia just by making use of, modifying, or even alluding to or satirising the utopian vocabulary, has three consequences. First, the boundaries of the genre are extremely fuzzy. Do we want to include, for example, Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, or Iain M Banks' 'culture' novels (Butler 1968; e.g. Banks 1988)? This problem is made worse by anachronistic, but sometimes useful, extension of the genre back into the period before its explicit foundation: do we want to include *Republic*? Second, the utopian vocabulary can productively be combined with other vocabularies and tactics. Science-fiction, in particular, provides a rich resource for combination with utopian tactics (see, for instance, the work by Wells, Le Guin and Banks I have already mentioned; on the general relationship between utopian and science-fictional writing, see Hardesty 1987).

Third, because one can write a utopia just by making use of the vocabulary, we cannot completely specify in advance for what particular purposes, by whom, nor to express what particular ideal, the vocabulary might be used. It can be and has been used for purposes of satire, criticism, experimental community design, moral polemic, and sheer creative game-playing, by Christians, behaviourists, anarchists, socialists, libertarians and others. The ideals it has been used to express include monastic communism, enlightened technocracy, arts-and-crafts federalism, and shamanic anarchy, amongst many others.

However, one limitation we can make to the range of purposes for which utopias have been used is that typically, they have been political interventions. By calling utopias interventions, I mean that they are attempts to act in public – to do something to and with others, whether it is to debate, to motivate, to shock, to delight – by

writing and publishing. I mean political in a wide sense, as covering not only, for instance, parliamentary activity, but all human sociability and interaction. Whatever particular purpose and ideal it is intended to serve and present, we can expect that a utopia will be a political intervention in this sense. I will argue in 13.1.3 and 13.1.4 that we can make two further specifications of the purposes of many utopias.

Given the variation of utopias, if by a defence of utopianism we mean a defence of all of the particular purposes and ideals elaborated in examples of the genre, then the project is probably impossible and certainly unwise. It would end in trying to defend both Thomas More and L Neil Smith: both communism and libertarianism; both deism and secularism; both regimentation and laissez faire (More 1992; e.g. Smith 1980). It would also require, for me specifically, defending things I have no wish to defend. I find B F Skinner's ideal unappealing, but cannot deny, without implausible stipulation, that *Walden Two* is a utopia: Skinner explicitly says so, uses many elements of the utopian vocabulary, and has discussed the strand of the utopian genre with which he identifies himself (Skinner 1968 & 1976). So, rather than make the mistake of trying to defend all utopias, I specify and defend two major purposes of many utopias, before considering a major rhetorical feature. The purposes are criticism and imagination, and the rhetorical feature is the story form. I intend to defend utopian tactics, not every particular utopia. But before displaying those tactics, I will deal with three common attacks on utopianism.

13.1.2 Common attacks

Perhaps the most common attack on utopias and utopianism is the simple use of the adjective 'utopian'. Used to describe a utopia, or any radical proposal, it means unrealistic, impractical, weird, lunatic, or unlikely to come true. The critic often then acts as though a telling point has been made, but it has not, for two reasons. First, not all utopias are intended to describe realistic possibilities or practical

manoeuvres. Some are intended to describe an unreachable goal, on the basis that even half way there would be better than here. Others, a regulative ideal against which current arrangements can be judged. The claim or fact that these utopias are unrealistic is irrelevant. Second, even when a utopia is intended to describe a real (even if distant or difficult) possibility, the criticism that it fails to do so requires evidence to be telling. Calling something 'utopian' in this sense, without showing that and why it is unrealistic, is not an argument but an example of what Martin Buber calls "Annihilation by labels" (Buber 1958: 6).

'Utopian' is also an attack made by Marxists, and there are two distinct senses of the term in this usage. In the first, respectful sense, a utopian socialist is one of a group of pre-Marxian socialists including Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier. While Marx and Engels to an extent shared their ideals, and gave credit for expressing them, they argued that the utopians were hamstrung by their historical position. Lacking both Marxian science and a developed proletariat, the utopians could not avoid becoming "Lost in pure fantasy" (Engels 1993: 64), and could not be politically effective. In the second, contemptuous sense, a utopian is a socialist who does not share the Marxian theory of history, or whom Marx and Engels wanted to discredit in the eyes of socialist and communist movements. The first are "Utopians as forerunners"; the second, "Utopians as obscurantists" (Buber 1958: 6).

In both cases, as Buber argues, the claim is a political tactic internal to socialism. Marx and Engels used the epithet in the first sense in *The Communist Manifesto*, to claim Owen and the rest as *their* forerunners, and thereby to present themselves as early socialism's true heirs (Marx & Engels 1977: 243-5). They used or alluded to it in the second sense against many rivals for influence, including, for instance, Proudhon and Weitling. Their disciples have often done the same. In general, the Marxist use of the charge of utopianism is significant for two groups. First, for non-Marxian socialists in movements with strong Marxist wings, who must find

ways to avoid or to transform it. Second, for the rest of us, who are subject to the polemical force partly given to it by Marx's genius for contemptuous rhetoric. But the charge itself is only a matter of deep argumentative concern for those who accept Marx's theory of history.

The third common attack is the use of 'utopian' to characterise a political intervention which presents an ideal without suggesting any means for reaching it. 'That sounds wonderful', says the critic, 'but what are we to do now, or at any time, to get there?'. As with the first attack, the critic often then acts as though a telling point has been made, but as with the first attack, it has not. It may be that this attack is simply an appropriation of 'utopian' as a technical term unrelated to the utopian genre, and I will deal with that possibility in a moment. But first we should note that if the critic supposes that utopias typically sketch ideals without any means to reach them, then she is wrong. More's *Utopia*, Morris' *News from Nowhere*, L Neil Smith's libertarian utopia in the sequence of novels beginning with *The Probability Broach*, and many others, all provide detailed accounts of how we might realise their ideals. Whether or not these means would actually work is another question: the point is that 'utopian', if it is to have anything to do with actual utopian writing, cannot be used to mean an ideal without means.

Suppose, however, that the criticism signalled by this third use of 'utopian' is just that some ideal, whether expressed in the utopian vocabulary or not, can be disregarded because it lacks an account of the means for achieving it. This is an odd criticism: why does the fact that some political intervention is incomplete mean that we can disregard it? An ideal without means is not a complete system, but why are only complete systems worth reading? 'All ideal, no means' might be a telling criticism of an individual political actor, but it is no criticism at all of a political text. John Rawls provides no account of how to get to the ideal just society he describes in *A Theory of Justice*, because that is not the task he has set himself, and to attack Rawls as a 'utopian' would be to miss the point. I do not provide an account of how to get to my ideal either, because, again, that is not

the task I have set myself. My argument is that the anarchist utopia is a possible social form for humans. To attack that argument as 'utopian' would, again, be to miss the point (although I do give some consideration, below, to the idea that expanding the assumed bounds of possibility might in itself be one means for starting the journey from here to there). There is nothing as such wrong with essays, as opposed to systems; and this is lucky, because if there were, most of us who write would be subject to the same criticism.

These three kinds of attack, and especially the first and third, are likely to come up whenever utopias or utopianism are mentioned. I have argued that none of them is telling, but in order to defend utopianism, more is needed. Having shown what utopias are not, I need to show what they (historically and typically) are, and I therefore now sketch and discuss three typical features of utopian political interventions.

13.1.3 Criticism

In 4.4.2, I characterised the critical purpose of the anarchist rhetorical trope I discovered there, by comparison with utopias. As I noted there, this utopian form of criticism – broad external criticism by comparison – is not the only way of criticising something. But what, exactly, is wrong with it? We can argue of particular utopias that we do not in fact prefer that specific ideal to our own life: More's and other utopias can seem stagnant, regimented tyrannies, as is dramatised by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World* (Huxley 1955; before characterising Huxley as an anti-utopian, we should note that he also wrote a utopia, *Island* – Huxley 1994). But even if we do not adopt the ideal, the criticism can stand. That there is something badly wrong with here and now can be pointed out even by comparison with something which, we decide, is also wrong, and that some particular utopia fails to convince does not prove the tactic a bad one. I do not mean to suggest that this form of criticism is the only reasonable or

workable one, which would be ridiculous, but only that there is no obvious reason why it should not be one such form.

Utopias are typically and amongst other things broad external-critical political interventions. The comparison this involves is extreme in covering all or almost all of our here and now, and in suggesting that very deep changes are necessary. Utopianism, the creation and use of utopias, is one but not the only way of making criticisms, and is particularly suited to radical criticism. I can find no argument to show that this is a bad or unreasonable form of political intervention, and therefore conclude that I have succeeded in defending utopianism as criticism to the extent required by my purposes. The onus is on critics of utopianism to show that criticism either cannot or should not be performed in this way.

As I stated in 1.3, my focus in this thesis is on the factual rather than the normative element of anarchism. So, although I do intend to compare our current arrangements with my ideal, I am more interested in the second typical purpose of utopias.

13.1.4 Imagination and social possibility

The second major feature of utopias and utopianism which I want to emphasise is imagination. Clearly, utopists exercise imagination in inventing and picturing their ideals, but what I want to point out is that one typical purpose of utopias is to expand the political imaginations of their readers. That is, first, to attack our acceptance of here and now as inevitable, inescapable, and as good as we can expect. 'Things in the past could not have worked out any differently; having got here, we cannot get away; and this is as good as things have been or will get'. In this explicit form, it is clear how strong and strange this assumption is, but it is nonetheless widespread. Not all utopias are intended to describe real possibilities: but some are, and one of their purposes is, second, to assert and defend the possibility of better alternatives to what we now have. "Political philosophy is

realistically utopian when it extends what are ordinarily thought of as the limits of practical political possibility" (Rawls 1999a: 6).

We can now see a further analogy between utopianism and the anarchist trope I discovered in chapter 4: both are intended to assert, first, the wide variety of human social possibility, and second, the possibility within that range of better (or even ideal) alternatives. The imaginative purpose typical of utopias is very much like the exemplification of human social variety and possibility made by the anarchist trope.

We are contained in and to some extent constructed by our local circumstances and ways of thinking, and it is therefore easy to believe that nothing could be much different. This belief is further supported by our tendency to interpret other ways of life in terms derived from our own, and so falsely to minimise their differences. There are several ways in which we might attack it. One, for instance, is to show that what we have here and now has a history: that things were not always like this, and that our arrangements were preceded by other social forms. I used this tactic in discussing states in chapter 9. Utopias use another tactic: utopists attempt to expand the political imaginations of their readers by giving an account of a better life somewhere else (in place or time), and by defending its possibility.

False assumptions about the limited possibilities of human sociability can stand in the way of movement towards a better way of life: Kropotkin believed that the claim that human limitations prevent the realisation of communism did so, for instance (see chapter 3). So, the expansion of political imagination which is one frequent function of utopias may have a revolutionary potential of its own. It has been argued by Miguel Abensour, amongst others, that part of the point of William Morris' utopianism, and by extension part of the point of (non-classical, non-juridico-political) utopianism in general, is the "Education of desire" (Thompson 1976: 793, translating Abensour). A utopia can transform or crack open the imaginations of its readers, and thereby not only show that what was thought impossible is possible, but also be a first step towards its realisation. However, as

already noted (1.4 & 13.1.2), I have not intended to write about revolutionary tactics or about the means by which we might achieve utopia: my concern is a particular utopia's possibility.

Whatever the revolutionary potential of the expansion of imagination, the possibility of utopia can be defended in a wide variety of ways. For example: More initially asserts the possibility of the Utopians' social form by having Hythloday say that they are no more intelligent than we are. "As a matter of fact, I believe we surpass them in natural intelligence, but they leave us far behind in their dilligence and zeal to learn" (More 1992: 29-30). The suggestion is that, since the Utopians have no special advantage over us, and started, as it were, in the same place as we did, we could have done and still could do what they did with the endowments we share. The difference between us and the Utopians is not that they are of a different natural kind from us, but that they have invented better ways of living together, and "What ingenuity has discovered or chance hit upon could have turned up just as well in one place as the other" (ibid: 29). Utopians are humans, not angels; Utopia is a place on Earth, not in heaven; we can do as well as the Utopians.

This way of defending the possibility of utopia for us, by grounding it on a shared human nature[2], is common to many utopias. They need not be set literally on Earth. Wells' utopia is set on a planet "Out beyond Sirius, far in the deeps of space, beyond the flight of a cannon-ball flying for a billion years", but that planet is completely Earth-like: "The same continents, the same islands, the same oceans and seas, another Fuji-Yama is beautiful there dominating another Yokohama" (Wells no date: 318), and its inhabitants are just humans who have done better than us at creating a social life for themselves. Again, the implication is that if these familiar people, in this familiar place, can do so well, then so can we. Utopias are typically far away in terms of distance, but close in terms of who lives there. This does

---

[2] That is, a human character to which, at minimum, claim 1 (that it is real or permanent or transhistorically present in humans) and claim 2

not preclude, and indeed often implies, that their inhabitants have built better selves for themselves than we have: but they built out of the same materials.

The defence of these possibilities is rarely explicit in utopias. But utopists often describe people like us, in a place like our place, succeeding in creating an ideal social form, at least in the sense of one better than ours. The intended implication of this display is the real possibility of that ideal society, grounded on a human nature which we share with its inhabitants. Showing other people acting in ways which are not completely alien to our endowments, but which are involved in and give rise to a better life than ours, implicitly defends the possibility of that life.

Although this way of defending the possibility of some utopian ideal is common, I do not think it particularly convincing. As I argued in 4.4, the Kropotkinite version of the anarchist trope, which uses real exemplary social forms, is a better tactic for defending the possibility of ideal alternatives to our current arrangements than is the Godwinite version, which uses imaginary social forms. Accounts of human nature are in general highly controversial and difficult to prove, and are especially so when they are designed to allow human social forms which, for whatever reason, appear unrealistic. I have stipulated and appealed to a minimalist and non-normative account of human nature (see 5.5). But I do not use it directly to defend the possibility of my utopia. Instead, and in line with the Kropotkinite version of the trope, I defend my utopia by discovering real fragments of the utopian social form in human history and social life. One common and unconvincing utopian argument for defending the possibility of an ideal is: 1) humans are like *this*; 2) this nature allows my ideal social form; and therefore 3) my utopia is possible. My argument, on the other hand, is: 1) humans have as a matter of fact lived in various ways, including *these*; 2) so these ways of life are

---

(that it is shared by all humans), from my definition of an idea of human nature in 3.1, both apply.

possible for humans; and therefore 3) my utopia, which is made up of these fragments, is possible.

We can now say of utopias that they are typically political interventions intended not only to criticise here and now, but to assert and defend the possibility of better alternatives to here and now. The expected response to a utopia is not just to say 'that sounds wonderful', but to change one's beliefs about what is really possible for us: that is, to expand one's political imagination.

Particular utopias may fail to convince us of their possibility, or defend what is really impossible, or both. I have suggested that the common (although not universal) defensive tactic of asserting or implying, and relying on, a rich account of shared human nature, is unconvincing. But as with the critical side of utopianism, I can find no argument to attack the assertion and defence of the possibility of a better life, just as such. What is unreasonable about this kind of political intervention? Lacking an argument to show that one should never write utopias (or, perhaps, never read them), I conclude that I have defended this second typical purpose of utopias, to the extent required by my purposes. Again, the onus is on critics of utopianism to show that there is something wrong with this utopian tactic.

13.1.5 Stories

I have so far defended and described two major purposes of utopias and utopianism: criticism and imagination, both of particular kinds. My argument has been that these are reasonable modes of political intervention, not that they are the only such modes. The third feature I want to consider is the usual rhetorical form of utopias. Unlike many other kinds of political intervention – manifestos, works in political theory, speeches – utopias are typically stories. That is, they are both narrative and (openly) fictional. By calling utopias narrative, I mean that they are structured by a plot (even if it is rudimentary: a character finds herself in a strange place, meets friendly natives, is shown around, and comes home to tell us) and around characters

(even if they are also rudimentary), as opposed to being structured, for instance, by an analytic division of the subject matter. By calling them fictional, I mean that their narratives are literally false, known to be false by their authors, and paradigmatically intended to be known to be false by their audiences[3].

Often, utopian stories are structured by the visit of a traveller (or travellers) from the author's world to the utopia. In More, Campanella and Bacon, this traveller is an explorer and sailor; in Morris and Wells, someone who finds himself transported, without explanation, to the utopia. This form is in the first place a useful plot device for describing the utopia, since the traveller, a stranger, can be shown things and have things explained which a local would find obvious or uninteresting. The stranger is the reader's representative in utopia, and as 'one of us', is used to focus on what we find interesting. In the second place, this device is a further dramatisation of criticism. By juxtaposing the utopia with someone strange to it but familiar to us, the author emphasises the comparison between us and them and between here and there, and thereby emphasises the criticism which that comparison is intended to make. The comparison and criticism is further emphasised by the return of the traveller to tell us what she has seen. Her travel and return typically frame utopian stories: she is our representative there, and then the representative of the ideal alternative which *there* represents, when she comes home.

---

[3] I say only *paradigmatically* intended to be known to be false, because there is room for play in, and utopists often have played with, presenting fiction as fact. More scattered *Utopia* with coded indications that his story is not true – the river running through the main Utopian city, for instance, is called 'Anyder', which means 'no water' – but convinced many of his contemporaries, and probably enjoyed the joke. Utopists are not alone in playing with fiction-as-fact: the Coen brothers, for instance, prefaced their film *Fargo* (Coen & Coen 1996) with the statement "This is a true story". It is not, the Coens later said that the truth-claim was part of the fiction, and it appears in the screenplay (http://bigloosecannon.com/downloadsfiles/scripts/fargo.pdf, accessed 1/11/02).

Not all utopias use this device. In Le Guin's *Always Coming Home*, for instance, the main characters live in the utopia, and the narrative which structures our discovery of it is not a travelogue but a web of biographies, fables, and stories for children. In these cases, we take on the role of the traveller: the reader is the stranger. But in both cases, the utopist invites us to compare here with there, and to find *here* wanting.

The device of the stranger's visit also relates to the imaginative purpose of utopias. Psychologically at least, the suggestion that one can get from here to there and back again emphasises the point I made in discussing the imaginative purpose of utopias: they may be physically far away, but they are also close to us. Utopia is in this universe, not heaven. Where the traveller device is not used, and we are the strangers, we are typically encouraged to the same psychological conclusion by identification with the viewpoint character or characters. Le Guin's Stone Telling, Pandora, and others, are strange people, but ones who can become friends.

Whatever its particular plot, the fact that a utopia is introduced to us in a story, not an analysis, is rhetorically useful. A story requires concrete and small elements as well as the general ones on which a political theory, for instance, would focus. The traveller or viewpoint character is shown living day to day in utopia, and so encounters not only justice but the judge; not only economics, but the sights and smells of a market; not only the necessity of producing clothes, but, for instance, a Thames waterman who wears a costume "Of dark blue cloth, simple enough, but without a stain on it" and "A brown leather belt around his waist, and I noticed that its clasp was of damascened steel beautifully wrought" (Morris 1993: 47). The concreteness which is required and encouraged by the story form can be persuasive in furthering both the critical and the imaginative purposes of utopias.

Despite its rhetorical advantages, I do not emulate this feature of many utopias, for four reasons. First, this is a work of political philosophy, and explicitly intended, as stated in 1.2, to promote conversation between anarchists and academics. I suspect that telling

a story about a stranger's round trip to utopia would not further this purpose. Second, I am a philosopher, not a novelist, and any attempt I made at writing a narrative utopia would be likely to be poor. I do in fact think that it is worth writing anarchist narrative utopias, and that Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and *Always Coming Home* (Le Giun 1975 & 1986) are good examples. But I do not think that this is the place, nor that I am the person, to produce another one. Third, I use the Kropotkinite mode of defending the possibility of my utopia: I rely on accounts of real human social forms. Telling a narrative fiction would therefore work against my defensive strategy. Fourth, I have argued in 8.1.1 that there are no social totalities, and telling a story about a trip to some geographically or temporally distinct *place* might wrongly suggest that I intended to describe utopia as (metaphorically) an island, rather than as a mode of social organisation.

•

In this section I have characterised utopianism as one kind of political intervention, carried out by writing and publishing utopias, which are pieces of writing making use of a historically developed vocabulary of tropes and tactics, and which are therefore not characterisable by some one particular purpose or ideal. I then distinguished and defended two typical, although not universal, purposes of utopias: criticism by extreme external comparison, and expansion of political imagination by asserting and defending alternative social possibilities. I showed that these purposes were analogous to the purposes of the anarchist trope I identified in chapter 4. Finally, I considered and chose not to use the narrative and fictional form common to many utopias.

Of course, there are other ways than utopianism of criticising here and now, other ways of expanding political imagination, and other forms for political interventions. I have emphasised that I am not arguing for the use of this particular way of doing these things to the exclusion of other ways. I am not arguing that we should replace political theory, or speeches, or manifestos, or arguments in pubs,

with utopias. I am arguing for accepting and using utopias as part of a wide repertoire of ways of intervening politically.

My utopia, like many others, has two purposes: criticism of our current arrangements by external comparison, and the exemplification of the possibility of better alternatives. In line with my intention, stated in 1.3, to concentrate on the factual over the normative elements of anarchism, the second of these purposes is the more important here. I have suggested that one common way of defending the possibility of alternatives, by appeal to a rich idea of shared human nature, is unconvincing, and indicated my alternative defensive tactic. In the next section, I describe my utopia and show, by recalling the fragments of anarchic social possibility which I discovered in chapters 11 & 12, that it is possible.

13.2 Some features of my anarchist utopia

In 1.9 I sketched my utopia as follows: my anarchist utopia consists of multiple interwoven networks of social humans pursuing their huge variety of interests, from the most basic in making a living, to the most subtle in art, science and communication. Power is equally distributed in these networks. Coordination between individuals and their networks is achieved, not by an attempt to unify them into a single territorial hierarchy, but by federalisation and agreement. Conflict is not absent, but is limited and resolved by mediation and negotiation. Individuals' activity is various and varying, not limited to particular tasks by the division of labour. I now show by empirical example that the central elements of this ideal are possible for social humans.

13.2.1 Equal-power networks

Networks of social humans can distribute power equally amongst themselves. Humans can create and maintain a wide variety of power distributions, using a huge range of tactics (including but not limited to the tactics I have described in 6.5, 6.6, 9.2, 10.3 & 11.1). Some of these distributions, including those exemplified by states and slavery, are extremely unequal. Others, including those exemplified by the Nuer and the Spanish civil war anarchists, are much more equal, and tend towards actual equality. These distributions are not merely consequences of the (lucky) absence of anti-egalitarian tactics, but of the conscious use of tactics for the creation and preservation of equality. So, equal-power networks are one among a wide range of human social possibilities.

13.2.2 Production and distribution

Production and distribution to satisfy human interests can be carried out by federated, minimally institutionalised, equal-power networks of humans, rather than, for instance, by slaves working for the benefit of masters who hold extreme power over them, or by hierarchies of owners, managers and workers who are differentially rewarded according to the dictates of property and authority discourses. In the social experiments made by anarchists and others during the Spanish civil war, we have an empirical example of the possibility of this arrangement, and its success in satisfying a wide variety of interests: food production and distribution; public services including transport, fire-brigades, education and health services; even munitions manufacture and military organisation for self-defence. Humans in equal-power networks are capable of creating the power to satisfy their interests.

13.2.3 Federal coordination

Relations between networks can be managed by federalisation and negotiation rather than by, for instance, attempting to organise all of the inhabitants of some territory into a discrete hierarchical organisation controlled from an administrative centre. As I have admitted, federal coordination between collectives in the Spanish civil war was not fully effective. But even in the short time available, and in difficult circumstances, it was partly so. Humans have been and therefore are, to some extent, capable of managing their relations with other groups by organised negotiation, by assigning the tasks of communication and coordination to representatives, and by oversight of those representatives by local general assemblies. Hierarchy is one way, but not the only way, to coordinate networks of humans. We do not know how successful Spanish anarchic federalisation would have been in the long term. In general, we do not know how far federal coordination could spread among equal-power networks, and to what extent network organisation would remain local. We do know that federalisation is a possible tactic.

13.2.4 Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution can be managed by mediation, rather than by distributing (coercive) power to some institution or elite. The Nuer provide us with an empirical demonstration that, even where people have culturally-sanctioned tendencies towards violence, conflict resolution can be managed in and by equal-power networks. We can mutually organise conflict-resolution by assigning the task of mediation to ritual and coalition-forming specialists, and thereby satisfy the typical human interest in the absence or limitation of violence.

One possible response to this argument is to suggest that conflict resolution by mediation may be possible in times of (relative) peace, but would collapse in war. This may be so. But as I showed in

chapter 9, war is characteristically a practice of states. Few humans are perfectly peaceful, but humans living in and with states have historically been far less peaceful than humans living without them.

13.2.5 The division of labour

Cooperative labour does not have to involve the permanent division of a project into sub-tasks assigned to individuals who perform only that task. Dividing up some large project into smaller sub-tasks is an available and useful tactic for cooperation: but as I argued in 9.2, humans have not always made such divisions permanent. Humans have been able to, and therefore can, organise cooperation without limiting and simplifying individuals' lives to some one, ever-smaller task. Although we have reason to believe that condemning someone to spend the rest of her life working only with a cash-register is profitable for some, we have no reason to believe that it is a necessary feature of human social life. Other modes of cooperation are available and can, as in the case of the Nuer, produce enough power to satisfy our interests.

13.2.6 Networking

In my utopia, humans do an enormous amount of networking: they organise and maintain multiple, interacting social networks for the satisfaction of a huge variety of interests. We may worry that few would bother. Why not retreat into solitary life and let someone else do all the talking and organising? It is undeniable that this might happen in some utopian anarchic social form, and leave it either culturally and materially impoverished, or easy prey for the empire next door. However all of my descriptions of landmarks in chapters 9-12 exemplify the fact that humans are highly social creatures. Most humans spend an enormous amount of time and effort on creating, maintaining, transforming and destroying social networks, using a vast variety of tactics for the creation of power, its distribution, and

for thereby satisfying their many interests. Some of our tactics are violent; some of the networks and institutions we form are disastrous; but social interaction is what we typically do. This fragment of my utopia is exemplified by all human history and social activity.

13.2.7 Siba

It might be supposed that, even if the anarchic social form I have described is possible, its realisation would require a lucky isolation from the challenge of non-anarchic forms and especially states and slavery. But as I pointed out in 12.4, we have empirical examples of 'siba', of anarchic social forms existing in complex and difficult relationships with non-anarchic forms. As the egalitarian militias in Spain show (see 12.3.1), anarchic equal-power networks are capable of organising military self-defence. Further, and as I emphasised in chapter 10, resistance is a permanent feature even of the most extreme power-inequalities. So, it is not the case either that the realisation of my anarchist utopia would require colonising a new planet, or that such a utopia would be easy prey for the first conqueror to come along.

•

In this section I have set out the main features of my utopia, in structural rather than narrative form. I have shown that these features are humanly possible ways of living and organising, by displaying the empirical examples of these fragments of utopia which I discovered in my Landmark chapters.

13.3 What shall we do with utopia?

Given that utopia is possible, how are we to regard it? As a motivation for longing, for personal emulation, for immediate action, or what? I do not have a pat answer to this question, but several responses to it are available in the anarchist tradition.

One of the many possible taxonomies of anarchism divides it into separatist and immanentist forms. Representatives of both regard utopia as possible and desirable, but their attitudes to it differ. For separatists, utopia is on the other side of a radical break with current arrangements, whether spacial, brought about by setting up new communities and colonies, or temporal, brought about by destroying those current arrangements and starting again from scratch. For both colonising and destroying-and-building separatists, utopia is a new design, freed from the irrationalities of tradition, historical entitlements to authority and property, and the whole paraphernalia of the old life. For immanentists, utopia is present in seed form in, and can or will grow out from, our current arrangements. For them, utopia is buried in the here and now.

As with many taxonomies, the division between separatist and immanentist is not sharp: there is a continuum of views between the extremes. Some anarchists believe, like Marxists, that utopia is on the other side of a revolution which is immanent in our current social form. Kropotkin, for instance, regards the revolution as growing out of current arrangements, and is in that sense an immanentist. But he distinguishes between "The dramatic side of revolution" (Kropotkin 1995: 26) as a necessary destructive episode, and the real revolution, which he envisions on separatist lines as the conscious organisation of utopia, by the people, in the absence of states and capitalism:

> A revolution in Europe means... the unavoidable stoppage of at least half the factories and workshops. It means millions of workers and their families thrown on the streets... Society itself will be forced to take production in hand, in its entirety, and to reorganise it to meet the needs of the whole people. But this cannot be accomplished in a day, or even in a month; it must take a certain time to reorganise the system of production, and during

> this time millions of men will be deprived of the means of subsistence... There is only one really *practical* solution of the problem – boldly to face the great task which awaits us, and instead of trying to patch up a situation which we ourselves have made untenable, to proceed to reorganize production on a new basis. (ibid: 56-7)

Kropotkin is an immanentist about the revolution which will usher utopia in, but a separatist in how he conceives its creation.

Colonising separatists have included the founders, like Josiah Warren, of American utopian communities, like New Harmony. These utopian experiments, influenced by Robert Owen and by Charles Fourier, were an important strand of nineteenth-century American radicalism; they have been a source of inspiration for anarchists, communitarians, romantics, religious nonconformists, and others, ever since (see for instance Pitzer 1997). However, their separatist ideal of self-sufficient communities, organised on rational and moral grounds, operates in parallel with an immanentist ideal most clearly expressed in the experiments in community banking carried out by Warren, Benjamin Tucker and others.

Bakunin's very different separatism regards utopia as unachievable in a colony separated from mass society. Freedom cannot be achieved piecemeal:

> Man is really free to the extent that his freedom, fully acknowledged and mirrored by the free consent of his fellowmen, finds confirmation and expansion in their liberty. Man is truly free only among equally free men; the slavery of even one human being violates humanity and negates the freedom of all. (Bakunin 1980: 76)

The freedom of individuals, and their proper authority over themselves, are of vital importance to Bakunin, but they can be achieved only by everyone, not individually. The separation he believes necessary is therefore the complete destruction of current arrangements: the abolition of organised religions, monarchy, "Classes, ranks, and privileges",

> *Abolition*, dissolution, and moral, political, and economic dismantling of the *all-pervasive, regimented, centralized State,* the alter ego of the Church... *Abolition of all state universities... Abolition of the state judiciary... Abolition of all criminal, civil, and*

> *legal codes now administered in Europe... Abolition of banks and all other institutions of state credit. Abolition of all centralized administration, of the bureaucracy, of all permanent armies and state police*. (ibid: 78)

Bakunin is the most radical, or at least the most vocal, of separatists. Nothing will do for him but a complete break with the current social order:

> We must overthrow from top to bottom this effete social world which has become impotent and sterile... We must first purify our atmosphere and transform completely the milieu in which we live... The social question takes the form primarily of the overthrow of society. (quoted in Carr 1975: 173)

Bakunin's thought is often unoriginal: according to Peter Marshall, it "Consists largely of Proudhonian politics and Marxian economics" (Marshall 1993: 270). His legacy to anarchists, apart from his example as a revolutionary activist, has been his universal separatism. He probably inspired Buenaventura Durutti:

> We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall. We will know how to accommodate ourselves for a time. For, you must not forget, we can also build. It is we the workers who built these palaces and cities here in Spain and in America and everywhere. We, the workers, can build others to take their place. And better ones! We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here, in our hearts. (interview with Pierre van Paasen, *Toronto Star*, September 1936[4])

Other anarchists have also been optimistic about ruins, and about the utopia which will or could be built on them.

In contrast, William Godwin believes that the exercise and education of free individual judgement will lead to the gradual improvement of society from within. He rejects violent revolution and secession as means for reaching utopia, and argues instead for the steady progress of the whole through cautious deliberation:

> The true instruments for changing the opinions of men are argument and persuasion. The best security for an advantageous

---

[4] http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/spain/durruti_interview.html, accessed 8/9/03.

> issue is free and unrestricted discussion. In that field truth must always prove the successful champion. If then we would improve the social institutions of mankind, we must write, we must argue, we must converse... There are two principles therefore which the man who desires the regeneration of his species ought ever to bear in mind, to regard the improvement of every hour as essential in the discovery and dissemination of truth, and willingly to suffer the lapse of years before he urges the reducing his theory [sic] into actual execution. (Godwin 1985: 115-6)

Rational discussion and choice will lead, gradually, to utopia.

Not all immanentists have had Godwin's faith in the progressive perfection of humanity. Many have instead relied on the readoption of power by already-existing equal-power groups, or on the voluntary creation of alternative anarchic organisations in the interstices of our current arrangements, to replace them from within. Proudhon came to reject revolutionary separatist action in favour of gradual transformation, led by (his) economic theory, towards utopia. Hakim Bey recommends face-to-face interaction – dinner parties, quilting bees, art projects, tongs – to overcome the mediation and loneliness which he sees as the main expressions of the current distortion of human life (Bey 1994). Colin Ward argues that:

> An anarchist society, a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism. (Ward 1973: 18)

Anarcho-syndicalists are immanentists in the sense that they regard one and the same thing, the industrial workforce organised into voluntary and federalised syndicates, as being both the instrument of revolution and the form of utopia, already present within current arrangements. Despite their differences, Proudhon, Bey, Ward and the syndicalists all regard utopia as immanent in and growing out of what we have now, rather than as separated from it by destruction or colonisation, by radical fractures in time or distance.

These are merely some examples of the many possible attitudes to utopia. I do not intend to arbitrate between them. So far as I can see, all of these attitudes could be appropriate in particular

circumstances, individuals and moods. I am sympathetic to, and vacillate between, several of them, and have no basis for legislating to others. But this is not a problem: that there are so many possible attitudes to utopia is part of its strength. Believing in the possibility of the anarchist utopia does not require one to sign anything, to join any political party, or to carry an identity card. It might motivate any of a wide range of attitudes and actions.

13.4 Conclusion

In 13.1, I gave a general account of utopias and utopianism, and defended them against some common but misguided attacks. Utopianism is one among many reasonable ways of performing a political intervention. At the same time, I specified my political intervention here as utopian, by showing the analogies between the purposes of the anarchist comparative trope and of many utopias. Those purposes are, first, criticism by external comparison, and second, assertion of the wide variety of human sociability and of the specific possibility within it of an ideal social form. Given my project as I have specified it, the second is the more important for me here. I argued that the tactic used in many utopias to support the possibility of the ideal alternative, appeal to a rich idea of shared human nature, is unconvincing, and described my own, different tactic. In 13.2, I deployed that tactic: I constructed a utopia by pulling together the real fragments of anarchic sociability I discovered in previous chapters. The argument is that, since humans really have lived in these ways, we could. My anarchic utopia is possible for creatures like us. In 13.3, I considered, but did not decide between, some of the possible motivational consequences of expanding our political imaginations to include this utopia.

14 ◇ Conclusion

In this final chapter, I summarise my project, argument and conclusions, and consider their significance.

14.1 Reasons not to marginalise anarchism

In 1.1, I suggested that there were five reasons for the marginalisation of anarchism. I dealt quickly with the first two: anarchists are not typically, first, terrorist bomb-makers, nor second, pathetic nihilists. The third accusation was that anarchism is a kind of skepticism. I dealt with it in chapter 2, by showing that the analogy between anarchism and skepticism is only that both have been systematically misrepresented in some academic discourses. The fourth was that anarchists are primitivists, and I dealt with it in chapter 3, by showing that two important anarchists do not hold the required beliefs about human nature or history, and therefore that the generalisation 'anarchists are primitivists' cannot stand. In chapter 4, I explained the mistaken accusation of primitivism and discovered a common anarchist trope. In the rest of the thesis, I developed and used a form of argument based on that trope to refute the fifth and most interesting reason for marginalisation, the beliefs that utopianism is unreasonable and that the anarchist utopia is impossible.

My argument was as follows: in chapters 5-8 I solved a major problem with my proposed argument-form by developing a conceptual toolkit for analysing and comparing human sociability. In chapters 9-12, I used it to describe, and place within the range of human social possibility, both some familiar and disastrous social forms, and some (perhaps) less familiar fragments of hope. In chapter 13, I argued that utopianism was one reasonable form of political intervention, and then constructed a utopia from those fragments. I argued that 1)

humans have as a matter of fact lived in the ways discovered in these fragments; so 2) these ways of life are possible for humans; and therefore 3) my utopia, which is made up of these fragments, is a possible way of life for humans. The anarchist utopia is available to us.

One possible objection to this conclusion is that, despite the fact that my fragments are individually possible, there might be relationships between each of them and their wider social environments which sustain them, and which make them incompatible with each other. So, these fragments could not co-exist in a single way of life. However, this response has no teeth, for two reasons.

First, it is less a criticism than a gesture in the direction of a possible form of criticism. It might be the case that, for instance, the form of conflict-resolution by mediation I discovered in the Nuer social form (chapter 11) and the form of industrial production without hierarchy I discovered in the practice of Spanish civil war anarchists (chapter 12) are incompatible, because of some features of the wider social systems in which they were embedded and on which they depended. It might be the case: but without evidence to show that it is, as a matter of fact, the case, this is not a real objection. It is akin to the use of the term 'utopian', without further argument, to label something as impossible (see 13.1.2).

Second, and more importantly, the (gesture in the direction of) criticism misunderstands my project and its results. I have not advocated a utopian colonisation project in which we would emigrate to some isolated island and attempt to play out all of the fragments of utopia I have discovered (worse problems than the possible incompatibility of mediation and non-hierarchical factories would be facing us if we tried that, not least the impossibility of suddenly becoming quite differently socialised people). Rather, I have attempted an expansion of political imagination, by rediscovering the possibility of some features of a utopia (that is, an ideal way of life) in the joint social experience of humanity. My purpose has been to show

that the anarchist utopia is available to us, not to solve all of the problems we might face in making it our own way of life.

14.2 Anarchists and academics, again

In 1.2, I stated my subsidiary ambition to promote conversation between anarchists and academics. I have satisfied that ambition in two ways. First: by using academic literature to develop my conceptual toolkit, which allows me to prove an anarchist utopia possible, I have shown that anarchists can benefit by taking notice of academic work. Second: by displaying and arguing for an anarchist way of looking at human sociability and the possibility of an anarchist utopia, in academic and specifically philosophical style, I have brought anarchism into academic discourse. Whether or not an academic is pursuaded by my argument, she can at least recognise it as within the academic pale.

14.3 Utopianism and political philosophy

Political philosophy is a tradition (or perhaps a cluster of interlinked and nested traditions), and, as such, is probably subject to the same kinds of ambiguity about its unity as are other traditions. So, we are unlikely to be able to say what the single, unchanging task of political philosophy is. Different political philosophers have had different projects and interests, and future ones might have different ones again. However, we can identify and distinguish two common kinds of project in which political philosophers have often been interested. First, there are projects which approach the question, What is to be done? That is: What tactics should we use to transform our world, or to preserve it, in line with justice or morality? This is a reasonable question, and answering it is a reasonable project, but it has not been my project. Second, there are utopian projects, which attempt to expand political imagination by displaying the availability to us of alternative ways of life. My project is an example of this second type:

I have argued that the joint experience of humanity, mapped by my conceptual toolkit, proves the availability to us of an anarchic utopian social form, amongst many other possibilities. I have not given any account of what means we might use, now or at any time, to realise my utopia. That was not the task I set myself, and as I argued in 13.1.2, there is nothing wrong with essays as opposed to systems.

14.4 Some roads not taken

I have argued for anarchism, most importantly on the grounds that the anarchist utopia is possible. I now want to note some arguments and claims I have not made. 1) I have not proved the typical anarchist moral claims that domination, violence, inequality and slavery are bad things, and that equality, freedom, self-determination and peace are good things (see 1.3). My interest has been in the factual rather than the normative side of anarchism, and I have therefore concentrated on showing that the utopian life anarchists demand is possible, not that it is morally ideal. 2) I have not said anything about how probable it is that the anarchist utopia will be realised, now, soon, or at any time. As I stated in 1.4, I do not know how to answer the probability question for this (or any other) possible social form, and I doubt that anyone else does, either. I have argued that my utopia is possible, not that we should expect the revolution tomorrow. Most importantly, 3) I have not argued either that my utopia is inevitable, or that once achieved it would last forever. I doubt that these claims are true of any social form, whether utopian, adequate or disastrous. I have argued only that the anarchic utopia is one among the vast range of human social possibilities, which also includes slavery and states. To paraphrase Gustav Landauer: anarchy need not come, but anarchy can come and should come, when we wish it (cf Berman & Luke 1978: 3).

14.5 The negotiated settlement

In 1.8, I emphasised that I did not intend to present my theory as the one true heir of the anarchist tradition, but rather wanted to come to a negotiated settlement with, and thereby sympathetically to extend, that tradition. I have done so by drawing on some of its threads: in particular, on the common rhetorical habit of critical and exemplary comparison which I discovered in chapter 4, on anarchist concerns and ideas about power, and on anarchist accounts of a utopian social form. My theory is an extension of the tradition, and therefore anarchist, because I have made this use of some of its elements. Further, it is specifically Kropotkinite in making use of and extending his version of the anarchist trope and his vision of anarchy.

I have not picked out several other threads, not because they are not 'real' anarchism, but because they were not useful for my purposes. For instance: I have not made much use of Kropotkin's post-Darwinian evolutionary vocabulary (which he shares with many other nineteenth and early twentieth-century socialists – see Stack 2003). This is not because I think that evolution-talk is a mistake, but because I did not need to make more use of it than my claim that humans are evolved creatures and therefore share a range of general capacities and interests (see 5.5). For another instance: I have not taken on Godwin's perfectionism. I do in fact think it false, but have not argued for that claim here.

My theory is anarchist and to some extent specifically Kropotkinite in extending the tradition in these ways. It is not, and does not need to be, 'true' anarchism. "Interpretations... are neither good nor bad for being notionally 'authentic'; they are convincing developments of the tradition, or they are not" (Clark 1972: 269). Anarchism is various, and mine is just one anarchism amongst many. I do, however, believe that many anarchists will find my conclusions sympathetic.

I have not, then, solved the problem of the unity of the anarchist tradition (see 1.5). Nor have I specified conditions for what

counts as an extension of, as opposed to a break with, this or any other tradition. I doubt that these problems have general solutions, and do not need to solve them in order to carry out my project. If Bakunin can be an anarchist on the grounds of calling himself one, being influenced by (as well as sometimes disagreeing with) Proudhon, and writing texts which have family resemblances to those which other anarchists write, then I can be an anarchist by calling myself one, by being influenced by (as well as sometimes disagreeing with) Kropotkin, and by writing things which have such family resemblances. This is what I have done here, and all I require.

14.6 Our general situation

Humans are evolved creatures who share some general capacities, which can be expressed in a variety of ways, and typical interests, which are strong but can be trumped by others. The ways in which humans have expressed their capacities, pursued their interests, and lived together, have varied widely. But in general: human social activity can be mapped as consisting of multiple networks of humans interacting in various ways, creating power and distributing it equally or unequally, using a variety of tactics. These networks overlap and interpenetrate one another, and change in response to a variety of projects and stimuli. Humans have not historically organised themselves into unified and discrete social totalities, but have lived in confederal social situations. Human history is not best understood by cultural evolutionary stories, and there is no single, simple groundstate of human social life. All social networks display opposing tendencies to institutionalisation on the one hand and to resistance and interstitial emergence on the other; all are functionally promiscuous. Human sociability is typically changing and changeable, and humans are typically socially creative and plastic.

14.7 Our current arrangements

Almost all humans currently live in a social situation importantly shaped by states (and by Atlantic slavery, amongst other influences). We are involved in institutions, which create and distribute power using several techniques, and in which hierarchical elites have and exercise considerable unequally distributed power of various kinds. We all help to create this power and its distribution, but many of us are at the sharp end of its inequalities: we are not free. This situation is historically unusual. Pristine states appear only rarely; modern states are a recent innovation; for most of the time there have been humans, there have not been states.

14.8 Our possibilities

States are only one amongst the vast range of human social possibilities. That range also includes my anarchic utopia, in which: power is equally distributed in our social networks; those equal-power networks produce and distribute goods to satisfy our interests; they are coordinated federally and by negotiation; conflict is resolved by mediation; labour is not permanently divided; humans expend a great deal of their time and effort on networking; and we succeed in living, if we must, alongside and amongst hierarchical and unequal-power social forms. Utopia is one of the ways in which we really can live together.

14.9 Our predicament

There are many problems which humans must face in living together, whatever social form we create for ourselves. Our interests can clash, either because they differ, or because of the scarcity of goods in which we share an interest. We have propensities for violence, self-aggrandisement, dividing the world into 'we' and 'they', enslavement, weakness of will, and sheer stupidity. I have not argued that my

anarchist utopia will magically solve these problems: they are general human predicaments. I have argued that one of the ways in which we can approach living together, without being destroyed by these predicaments, is an anarchic utopia. No social form has ever fully solved these problems. States, in particular, have not been particularly good at doing so, and have especially failed to prevent violence: they have, in fact, promoted it more than any other human social form. But humans can live together, in a variety of ways, and my utopia is one of those ways.

14.10 Human anarchy

An anarchic utopia is possible. We can organise ourselves and live together in this way, amongst many other ways, and our recognition that this is the case is a widening of political imagination, with many possible motivational consequences. "There is no final struggle" (Ward 1973: 29) for utopia, because it is as subject to impermanence as any other human social form, but it is one of our real options. The human potential for violence and enslavement is undeniable: but we also have reasons for hope.

References

1 Articles and books

Abrahamson, M. 1969. Correlates of Political Complexity. In *American Sociological Review* vol.34: 690-701.

Alexander, R. 1999. *The Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War*. London, Janus Publishing Company. 2 vols.

Anderson, B. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London, Verso.

Anderson, E S. 1999. What is the Point of Equality? In *Ethics* vol.109: 287-337.

Anderson, J. 1986. The Modernity of Modern States. In Anderson ed., *The Rise of the Modern State*. Brighton, Harvester. 1-20.

Anderson, J, ed. 1986a. *The Rise of the Modern State*. Brighton, Harvester.

Anisimov, E V. 1993. *The Reforms of Peter the Great: Progress through coercion in Russia*. Trans. J T Alexander. New York etc., M E Sharp.

Armstrong, C. 2003. Some Reflections on Equality of Power. In *Imprints* vol.7: 44-53.

Avrich, P. 1988. Kropotkin's Ethical Anarchism. In *Anarchist Portraits*. Princeton etc., Princeton University Press. 53-78.

Axtmann, R. 1993. The Formation of the Modern State: The debate in the social sciences. In M Fulbrook ed., *National Histories and European Histories*. Boulder etc., Westview Press. 21-45.

Bachrach, P & Baratz, M S. 1962. Two Faces of Power. In *American Political Science Review* vol.56: 947-52.

Bacon, F. 1889. *A New Atlantis*. In H Morley ed., *Ideal Commonwealths*. London etc., George Routledge & Sons. 171-213.

Bakunin, M. 1980. Revolutionary Catechism. In S Dolgoff ed., *Bakunin on Anarchism*. Trans. Dolgoff. Montréal, Black Rose Books. 76-97.

Bakunin, M. 1990. *Statism and Anarchy.* Ed. & trans. M S Shatz. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Banks, I M. 1988. *Consider Phlebas*. London etc., Futura Publications.

Barber, B R. 1972. *Superman and Common Men*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Barclay, H. 1982. *People Without Government: An anthropology of anarchism*. London, Kahn & Averill with Cienfuegos Press.

Barry, N. 1991. Anarchism. In N Ashford & S Davies, eds., *A Dictionary of Conservative and Libertarian Thought*. London etc., Routledge. 4-7.

Becker, L C. 1977. *Property Rights: Philosophical foundations*. London etc., Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Beetham, D. 1987. *Bureaucracy*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Beidelman, T O, ed. 1971. *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E E Evans-Pritchard*. London, Tavistock Publications.

Beidelman, T O. 1971a. Nuer Priests and Prophets: Charisma, authority and power among the Nuer. In Beidelman ed., *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E E Evans-Pritchard*. London, Tavistock Publications. 375-415.

Berlin, I. 1969. Two Concepts of Liberty. In *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. 118-72.

Berman, R & Luke, T. 1978. Editors' Introduction to G Landauer, *For Socialism*. St Louis, Telos Press. 1-18.

Berneri, M L. 1982. *Journey Through Utopia*. London, Freedom Press.

Bey, H. 1994. *Immediatism: Essays by Hakim Bey*. Edinburgh etc., AK Press.

Bhaskar, R. 1991. Contradiction. In T Bottomore et al. eds., *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. 2nd ed. 109-10.

Blackburn, R. 1988. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848*. London etc., Verso.

Blackburn, R. 1997. *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800*. London etc., Verso.

Blassingame, J W, ed. 1977. *Slave Testimony: Two centuries of letters, speeches, interviews, and autobiographies*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press.

Blau, P M. 1977. *Inequality and Heterogeneity: A primitive theory of social structure*. New York, Free Press/London, Collier Macmillan.

Bloch, M. 1961. *Feudal Society*. Trans. L A Manyon. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Blocker, H G & Smith, E S. 1980. Preface to Blocker & Smith eds., *John Rawls' Theory of Social Justice: An introduction*. Athens, Ohio University Press. vii-xii.

Bolloten, B. 1968. *The Grand Camouflage: The Spanish civil war and revolution, 1936-39*. London, Pall Mall Press.

Bookchin, M. 1998. *The Spanish Anarchists: The heroic years 1868-1936*. Edinburgh etc., AK Press.

Borkenau, F. 1986. *The Spanish Cockpit*. London, Pluto Press.

Braddick, M J. 1996. *The Nerves of State: Taxation and the financing of the English state, 1558-1714*. Manchester etc., Manchester University Press.

Brenan, G. 2000. *The Spanish Labyrinth: An account of the social and political background of the civil war*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press. 2nd ed.

Breuilly, J. 1994. *Nationalism and the State*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press/Manchester, Manchester University Press. 2nd ed.

Breuilly, J. 2001. The State. In A J Motyl ed., *Encylopedia of Nationalism*. San Diego etc., Academic Press. 2 vols. Vol. 1: 769-92.

Brighouse, H. 2001. Dworkin on Equality of Power. In *Imprints* vol.5: 237-50.

Brown, E A R. 1974. The Tyranny of a Construct. In *American Historical Review* vol.79: 1063-88.

Buber, M. 1958. *Paths in Utopia*. Trans. R F C Hull. Boston, Beacon Press.

Budrys, A. 1964. *Some Will Not Die*. London, Mayflower-Dell.

Buisseret, D, ed. 1992. *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps: The emergence of cartography as a tool of government in early modern Europe*. Chicago etc., University of Chicago Press.

Burleigh, M. 2001. *The Third Reich: A new history*. London etc., Pan.

Burnyeat, M. 1983. Introduction to Burnyeat ed., *The Skeptical Tradition.* Berkeley etc., University of California Press. 1-8.

Butler, S. 1968. *Erewhon: Or, over the range*. New York, AMS Press.

Callinicos, A, ed. 1989. *Marxist Theory*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press.

Callinicos, A. 2000. *Equality*. Cambridge etc., Polity.

Callinicos, A. 2001. *Against the Third Way: An anti-capitalist critique*. Cambridge etc., Polity.

Campanella, T. 1889. *The City of the Sun*. In H Morley ed., *Ideal Commonwealths*. London etc., George Routledge & Sons. 217-63.

Cannadine, D & Price, S, eds. 1987. *Rituals of Royalty: Power and ceremonial in traditional societies*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Canovan, M. 1996. *Nationhood and Political Theory*. Cheltenham etc., Edward Elgar.

Carlson, A R. 1972. *Anarchism in Germany*, vol.1: *The Early Movement*. Metuchen New Jersey, Scarecrow Press.

Carr, E H. 1975. *Michael Bakunin*. London etc., Macmillan.

Carr, R, ed. *The Republic and the Civil War in Spain*. London etc., Macmillan.

Carter, Alan. 1992. A 'Counterfactualist' Four-Dimensional Theory of Power. In *Heythrop Journal* vol. 33: 192-203.

Carter, Alan. 1999. *A Radical Green Political Theory*. London etc., Routledge.

Carter, Alan. 2000. Analytical Anarchism: Some conceptual foundations. In *Political Theory* vol.28: 230-53.

Carter, April. 1971. *The Political Theory of Anarchism*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Castells, M. 2000. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford etc., Blackwell. 2nd ed.

Chaney, N. 1990. *Six Images of Human Nature*. Eaglewood Cliffs NJ, Prentice Hall.

Chesterton, G K. 1935. A Defence of Rash Vows. In *Stories, Essays, & Poems*. London, J M Dent & Sons. 113-8.

Childe, V G. 1963. *Social Evolution*. London etc., Collins.

Chomsky, N. 1970. Introduction to D Guérin, *Anarchism: From theory to practice*. New York, Monthly Review Press. vii-xx.

Chomsky, N. 1988. Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship. In J Peck ed., *The Chomsky Reader*. London, Serpent's Tail. 93-120.

Christman, J. 1994. *The Myth of Property: Toward an egalitarian theory of ownership*. New York etc., Oxford University Press.

Claeys, G, ed. 1994. *Utopias of the British Enlightenment*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Claeys, G, ed. 1997. *Modern British Utopias: 1700-1850*. London, Pickering & Chatto. 8 vols.

Clark, J. 1984. What is Anarchism? In *The Anarchist Moment: Reflections on culture, nature and power*. Montréal, Black Rose Books. 117-40.

Clark, S R L. 1972. The Use of "Man's Function" in Aristotle. In *Ethics* vol.82: 269-83.

Clark, S R L. 1990. *Limits and Renewals* vol.2: *A Parliament of Souls*. Oxford etc., Clarendon Press.

Clastres, P. *Society Against the State*. Trans. R Hurley & A Stein. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Clendinnen, I. 1987. *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, G A. 1978. *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*. Oxford etc., Clarendon Press.

Cohen, G A. 1989. On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice. In *Ethics* vol.99: 906-44.

Cohen, G A. 2000. *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Harvard University Press.

Cohn, N. 1970. *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the middle ages*. London, Paladin. Revised ed.

Cohn, R L. 1998. Mortality in Transport. In S Drescher & S L Engerman eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*. New York etc., Oxford University Press. 290-2.

Connolly, W E. 1993. *The Terms of Political Discourse*. Oxford etc., Blackwell. 3rd ed.

Conrad, J. 1993. *The Secret Agent: A simple tale*. Ware, Wordsworth Classics.

Craton, M. 1982. *Testing the Chains: Resistance to slavery in the British West Indies*. Ithaca etc., Cornell University Press.

Craton, M. 1997. Forms of Resistance to Slavery. In F W Knight ed., *General History of the Caribbean* vol.3: *The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*. London etc., Unesco. 222-70.

Crump, J. 1993. *Hatta Shuzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan*. New York, St Martin's Press.

Cunliffe, M. 1979. *Chattel Slavery and Wage Slavery: The Anglo-American context 1830-1860*. Athens, University of Georgia Press.

Curtin, P D. 1969. *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A census*. Madison etc., University of Wisconsin Press.

Dahl, R A. 1961. *Who Governs? Democracy and power in an American city*. New Haven etc., Yale University Press.

Dahl, R A. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven etc., Yale University Press.

Dandeker, C. 1990. *Surveillance, Power and Modernity: Bureaucracy and discipline from 1700 to the present day*. Cambridge, Polity.

David, N & Kramer, C. 2001. *Ethnoarchaeology in Action.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Davis, D B. 1984. *Slavery and Human Progress*. New York etc., Oxford University Press.

Davis, D B. 1998. Introduction: The problem of slavery. In S Drescher & S L Engerman eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*. New York etc., Oxford University Press. ix-xviii.

Dawidowicz, L S. 1976. *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*. Toronto etc., Bantam Books. With a new introduction.

Dawkins, R. 1989. *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. New ed.

Day, J P. 1969. Hope. In *American Philosophical Quarterly* vol.6: 89-102.

De George, R T. 1978. Anarchism and Authority. In J R Pennock & J W Chapman eds., *Nomos XIX: Anarchism*. New York, New York University Press. 91-114.

de Groot, S et al. 1997. Maroon Communities in the Circum-Caribbean. In F W Knight ed., *General History of the Caribbean* vol.III: *The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*. London etc., Unesco. 169-93.

de Jesay, A. 1985. *The State*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Derbyshire, J D & Derbyshire, I. 1996. *Political Systems of the World*. New York, St Martin's Press.

Descartes, R. 1968. *Discourse on the Method of Properly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking the Truth in the Sciences*. In *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*. Trans. F E Sutcliffe. London etc., Penguin. 25-91.

Deutsch, K W. 1953. *Nationalism and Social Communication: An inquiry into the foundations of nationality*. Cambridge Massachusetts, MIT Press.

Diamond, J. 1998. *Guns, Germs and Steel: A short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years*. London etc., Vintage.

Dolgoff, S, ed. 1974. *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' self-management in the Spanish revolution 1936-1939*. New York, Free Life Editions.

Dolgoff, S. 1974a. Money and Exchange. In Dolgoff ed., *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' self-management in the Spanish revolution 1936-1939*. New York, Free Life Editions. 70-6.

Douglass, F. 1982. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. Ed. H A Baker. New York etc., Penguin.

Duncan, G. 1983. Political Theory and Human Nature. In I Forbes & S Smith, eds., *Politics and Human Nature*. London, Frances Pinter. 5-19.

Dunn, R S. 1984. Review of M Craton, *Testing the Chains*. In *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* vol.15: 173-5.

Dworkin, R. 1981a. What is Equality? part 1: Equality of Welfare. In *Philosophy and Public Affairs* vol.10: 185-246.

Dworkin, R. 1981b. What is Equality? part 2: Equality of Resources. In *Philosophy and Public Affairs* vol.10: 283-345.

Dworkin, R. 2000. *Sovereign Virtue*. Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Harvard University Press.

Earle, T. 1994. Political Domination and Social Evolution. In T Ingold ed., *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology.* London etc., Routledge. 940-61.

Eisenstadt, S N. 1959. Primitive Political Systems: A preliminary comparative approach. In *American Anthropologist* vol.61: 200-20.

Ellul, J. 1991. *Anarchy and Christianity*. Trans. G W Bromiley. Grand Rapids Michigan, William B Eerdmans.

Elster, J. 1985. *Making Sense of Marx*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Eltis, D et al., eds. 1981. *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade*. Madison etc., University of Wisconsin Press.

Eltis, D. 1998. Slave Trade: Trans-Atlantic trade. In S Drescher & S L Engerman eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*. New York etc., Oxford University Press. 370-5.

Elton, G R. 1953. *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative changes in the reign of Henry VIII*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Eltzbacher, P. 1960. *Anarchism: Exponents of the anarchist philosophy*. Trans. S T Byington. Ed. J J Martin. London, Freedom Press.

Engels, F. 1969. *Anti-Dühring: Herr Eugen Dühring's revolution in science*. London, Lawrence and Wishart.

Engels, F. 1972. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State: In the light of the researches of Lewis H Morgan*. London, Lawrence & Wishart.

Engels, F. 1993. *Socialism: Utopian and scientific*. London etc., Bookmarks.

Engerman, S L. 1998. Historiography: An overview. In S Drescher & S L Engerman eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*. New York etc., Oxford University Press. 222-7.

Esenwein, G. 1989. *Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868-1898*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press.

Evans-Pritchard, E E. 1940. *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Evans-Pritchard, E E. 1940a. The Nuer of the Southern Sudan. In M Fortes & Evans-Pritchard eds., *African Political Systems*. London etc., Oxford University Press. 272-96.

Evans-Pritchard, E E. 1951. *Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Evans-Pritchard, E E. 1956. *Nuer Religion*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Fagan, B M. 1995. *People of the Earth: An introduction to world prehistory*. New York, Harper Collins. 8th ed.

Fagan, B M. 1999. *World Prehistory: A brief introduction*. New York etc., Longman.

Faure, S. 1977. Extract from *Encyclopédie Anarchiste*. In G Woodcock ed., *The Anarchist Reader*. Glasgow, Fontana/Collins. 62.

Flannery, K V. 1972. The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations. In *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics,* vol.3. Palo Alto, Annual Reviews Inc. 399-426.

Flathman, R. 1980. *The Practice of Political Authority: Authority and the authoritative*. Chicago etc., University of Chicago Press.

Fleming, M. 1979. *The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisée Reclus and nineteenth-century European anarchism*. London, Croom Helm.

Fowler, R B. 1972. The Anarchist Tradition of Political Thought. In *Western Political Quarterly* vol.25: 738-52.

Frankfurt, H G. 1973. The Anarchism of Robert Paul Wolff. In *Political Theory* vol.1: 405-14.

Fraser, R. 1981. *Blood of Spain: The experience of civil war, 1936-1939*. London etc., Penguin.

Freeden, M. 1996. *Ideologies and Political Theory: A conceptual approach*. Oxford etc., Clarendon Press.

Gallie, W B. 1956. Essentially Contested Concepts. In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* vol.56: 167-98.

Gallie, W B. 1964. *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*. London, Chatto & Windus.

Gamble, C. 1986. Hunter-Gatherers and the Origin of States. In J A Hall ed., *States in History*. Oxford etc., Basil Blackwell. 22-47.

Garland, D. 2001. *The Culture of Control: Crime and social order in contemporary society*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press.

Gates, H L, ed. 1987. *The Classic Slave Narratives*. New York etc., New American Library.

Geertz, C. 2000. The Uses of Diversity. In *Available Light: Anthropological reflections on philosophical topics*. Princeton etc., Princeton University Press. 68-88.

Geertz, C. 2000a. Passage and Accident: A life of learning. In *Available Light: Anthropological reflections on philosophical topics*. Princeton etc., Princeton University Press. 3-20.

Gellner, E. 1969. *Saints of the Atlas*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Gellner, E. 1974. How to Live in Anarchy. In I C Jarvie & J Agassi eds., *Contemporary Thought and Politics.* London etc., Routledge & Kegan Paul. 87-94.

Gellner, E. 1986. Soviets against Wittfogel: Or, the anthropological preconditions of mature Marxism. In J A Hall ed., *States in History*. Oxford etc., Basil Blackwell. 78-108.

Genovese, E D. 1974. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The world the slaves made*. New York etc., Pantheon Books.

Genovese, E D. 1979. *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American slave revolts in the making of the modern world.* Baton Rouge etc., Louisiana State University Press.

Godwin, W. 1985. *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Modern Morals and Happiness*. Ed. I Kramnick. London etc., Penguin. 3rd ed.

Godwin, W. 1992. *Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin*, vol.1: *Memoirs*. Ed. M Philp. London, William Pickering.

Goldman, E. 1983. *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish revolution*. Ed. D Porter. New Paltz, Commonground Press.

Gough, K. 1971. Nuer Kinship: A re-examination. In T O Beidelman ed., *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E E Evans-Pritchard*. London, Tavistock Publications. 79-121.

Gray, J. 1995. Notes Towards a Definition of the Political Thought of Tlön. In *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and culture at the close of the modern age*. London etc., Routledge. 11-17.

Greuel, P J. 1971. The Leopard-Skin Chief: An examination of political power among the Nuer. In *American Anthropologist* vol.73: 1115-20.

Guérin, D. 1970. *Anarchism: From theory to practice*. Trans. M Klopper. New York, Monthly Review Press.

Guibernau, M. 1996. *Nationalisms: The nation-state and nationalism in the twentieth century*. Cambridge, Polity.

Hallowell, A I. 1967. The Nature and Function of Property as a Social Institution. In *Culture and Experience*. New York, Schocken Books. 236-49.

Hardesty, W H. 1987. Mapping the Future: Extrapolation in utopian/dystopian and science fiction. In G Beauchamp et al. eds., *Utopian Studies 1*. Lanham etc., University Press of America. 160-72.

Harper, C. 1987. *Anarchy: A graphic guide*. London, Camden Press.

Harré, R. 1993. *Social Being*. Oxford etc., Blackwell. 2nd ed.

Harris, M. 1959. The Economy Has No Surplus? In *American Anthropologist* vol.61: 185-99.

Harris, M. 1989. *Our Kind: Who we are, where we came from, where we are going*. New York, Harper Collins.

Heywood, A. 1998. *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. Houndmills etc., Macmillan. 2nd ed.

Hill, C. 1975. *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical ideas during the English revolution*. London etc., Penguin.

Hobbes, T. 1994. *Leviathan*. Ed. E Curley. Indianapolis, Hackett.

Hobsbawm, E. 1971. *Primitive Rebels: Studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries.* Manchester, Manchester University Press. 3rd ed.

Hobsbawm, E. 1995. *Age of Extremes: The short twentieth century 1914-1991*. London, Abacus.

Hobsbawm, E. 1999a. Bolshevism and the Anarchists. In *Revolutionaries*. London, Abacus. 67-83.

Hobsbawm, E. 1999b. Reflections on Anarchism. In *Revolutionaries*. London, Abacus. 97-108.

Hoebel, E A. 1942. Fundamental Legal Concepts as Applied in the Study of Primitive Law. In *Yale Law Journal* vol.51: 951-66.

Hollis, M & Lukes, S. 1982. Editors' Introduction to *Rationality and Relativism*. Oxford etc., Blackwell. 1-20.

Honoré, A M. 1961. Ownership. In A G Guest ed., *Oxford Essays in Jurisprudence*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. 107-47.

Höpfl, H & Thompson, M P. 1979. The History of Contract as a Motif in Political Thought. In *American Historical Review* vol.84: 919-44.

Horowitz, I, ed. 1964. *The Anarchists*. New York, Dell.

Hospers, J. 1971. *Libertarianism: A political philosophy for tomorrow*. Los Angeles, Nash Publishing.

Howard, M. 1976. *War in European History*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press.

Huffman, R. 1970. *Nuer Customs and Folk-Lore*. London, Frank Cass & Co.

Hughes, R. 1987. *The Fatal Shore: A history of the transportation of convicts to Austrailia, 1787-1868*. London, Collins Harvill.

Hunt, A. 1996. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A history of sumptuary law*. Houndmills etc., Macmillan/New York, St Martin's Press.

Hutchinson, S E. 1996. *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with money, war, and the state*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press.

Huxley, A. 1955. *Brave New World*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Huxley, A. 1994. *Island*. London, Flamingo.

Inikori, J. 1998. Capitalism and Slavery. In S Drescher & S L Engerman eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*. New York etc., Oxford University Press. 107-10.

James, C L R. 1980. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo revolution*. London, Allison & Busby. With a new foreword.

James, L. 1997. *Raj: The making and unmaking of British India*. London, Abacus.

Joll, J. 1976. Singing, Dancing and Dynamite: Review of J Maitron, *Le Mouvement Anarchiste en France*. In *The Times Literary Supplement*, 10th September: 1092-3.

Joll, J. 1979. *The Anarchists*. London, Methuen. 2nd ed.

Kant, I. 1991. Perpetual Peace: A philosophical sketch. In H Reiss ed., *Political Writings.* Trans. H B Nisbet. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press. 2nd ed. 93-130.

Kaplan, T. 1977. *Anarchists of Andalusia 1868-1903*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Kedourie, E. 1960. *Nationalism*. London, Hutchinson & Co.

Kellaway, G P. 1949. *Map Projections*. London, Methuen & Co. 2nd ed.
Kelsey, G. 1986. Anarchism in Aragon During the Second Republic: The emergence of a mass movement. In M Blinkhorn ed., *Spain in Conflict 1931-1939: Democracy and its enemies*. London etc., Sage Publications. 60-82.

Kinna, R. 1995. Kropotkin's Theory of Mutual Aid in Historical Context. In *International Review of Social History* vol.40: 259-83.

Knafla, L A & Binnie, S W S. 1995. Editors' Introduction to *Law, Society and the State: Essays in modern legal history*. Toronto etc., University of Toronto Press. 3-33.

Kolchin, P. 1993. *American Slavery: 1619-1877.* London etc., Penguin.

Koren, J, ed. 1918. *The History of Statistics: Their development and progress in many countries*. New York, Burt Franklin.

Kramnick, I. 1972. On Anarchism and the Real World: William Godwin and radical England. In *American Political Science Review* vol.66: 114-28.

Kropotkin, P. 1899. *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*. London, Smith, Elder & Co. 2 vols.

Kropotkin, P. 1943. *The State: Its historic role.* Ed. & trans. G.W. [probably George Woodcock]. London, Freedom Press.

Kropotkin, P. 1985. *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*. Ed. C Ward. London, Freedom Press. 2nd ed.

Kropotkin, P. 1989. *Mutual Aid: a factor of evolution*. Montréal etc., Black Rose Books.

Kropotkin, P. 1993. Anarchist Communism: Its basis and principles. In G Woodcock ed., *Fugitive Writings*. Montréal, Black Rose Books. 72-94.

Kropotkin, P. 1995. *The Conquest of Bread and other writings*. Ed. M S Shatz. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Kropotkin, P. 1995a. Anarchism. From *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. In M S Shatz ed., *The Conquest of Bread and other writings*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press. 233-47.

Kuhn, T S. 1996. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago etc., University of Chicago Press. 3rd ed.

Kuper, A. 1988. *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an illusion*. London etc., Routledge.

Kurtz, P. 1992. *The New Skepticism: Inquiry and reliable knowledge*. Buffalo, Prometheus Books.

Kymlicka, W. 2002. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An introduction*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. 2nd ed.

Ladenson, R. 1972. Legitimate Authority. In *American Philosophical Quarterly* vol.9: 335-41.

Lambert, M D. 1977. *Medieval Heresy: Popular movements from Bogomil to Hus*. London, Edward Arnold.

Laqueur, W. 1989. *A History of Zionism*. New York, Schocken Books. New ed.

Leakey, R. 1995. *The Origin of Humankind: Unearthing our family tree*. London, Phoenix.

Lenin, V I. 1992. *The State and Revolution*. Ed & trans. R Service. London etc., Penguin.

Le Guin, U K. 1975. *The Dispossessed*. London etc., Grafton.

Le Guin, U K. 1986. *Always Coming Home*. London, Victor Gollancz.

Leval, G. 1974. The Peasant Federation of Levant: Extract from *Né Franco Né Stalin*. In S Dolgoff ed., *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' self-management in the Spanish revolution 1936-1939*. New York, Free Life Editions. 122-6.

Leval, G. 1974a. The Socialization of Health Services: Extract from *Né Franco Né Stalin*. In S Dolgoff ed., *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' self-management in the Spanish revolution 1936-1939*. New York, Free Life Editions. 99-101.

Leval, G. 1975. *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*. Trans. V Richards. London, Freedom Press.

Lewellen, T C. 1992. *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*. Westport Connecticut etc., Bergin & Garvey. 2nd ed.

Lomax, A & Arensberg, C M. 1977. A Worldwide Classification of Cultures by Subsistence Systems. In *Current Anthropology* vol.18: 659-708.

Loptson, P. 1995. *Theories of Human Nature*. Peterborough Ontario etc., Broadview Press.

Lovejoy, A O & Boas, G. 1973. *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*. New York, Octagon Books.

Lukes, S. 1974. *Power: A radical view*. London etc., Macmillan.

Macek, J. 1965. *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*. London, Lawrence & Wishart.

MacIntyre, A. 1985. *After Virtue: A study in moral theory*. London, Duckworth. 2nd ed.

Mann, M. 1986. *The Sources of Social Power*, vol.1: *A history of power from the beginning to AD 1760*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Mann, M. 1986a. The Autonomous Power of the State: Its origins, mechanisms and results. In J A Hall ed., *States in History*. Oxford etc., Basil Blackwell. 109-36.

Mann, M. 1993. *The Sources of Social Power*, vol.2: *The rise of classes and nation-states, 1760-1914*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Manuel, F E & Manuel, F P. 1979. *Utopian Thought in the Western World*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Marshall, P. 1984. *William Godwin*. New Haven etc., Yale University Press.

Marshall, P. 1986. Editor's Introduction to W Godwin, *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin*. London, Freedom Press. 9-48.

Marshall, P. 1993. *Demanding the Impossible: A history of anarchism*. London, Fontana Press. Revised ed.

Martin, R. 1974. Wolff's Defence of Philosophical Anarchism. In *Philosophical Quarterly* vol.24: 140-9.

Martin, R. 1978. Anarchism and Skepticism. In J R Pennock & J W Chapman eds., *Nomos XIX: Anarchism*. New York, New York University Press. 140-9.

Marx, K. 1977. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. In D McLellan ed., *Selected Writings*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. 300-25.

Marx, K & Engels, F. 1977. *The Communist Manifesto*. In D McLellan ed., *Selected Writings*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. 221-47.

Matravers, M. 2002. Responsibility, Luck, and the 'Equality of What?' Debate. In *Political Studies* vol.50: 558-72.

Mazower, M. 1998. *Dark Continent: Europe's twentieth century*. London etc., Penguin.

McGuire, R H. 1983. Breaking Down Cultural Complexity: Inequality and heterogeneity. In M B Schiffer ed., *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* vol.6. London etc., Academic Press. 91-142.

McKerlie, D. 1989. Equality and Time. In *Ethics* vol.99: 475-91.

Middleton, J & Tate, D, eds. 1958. *Tribes Without Rulers: Studies in African segmentary systems*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Midgley, M. 1995. *Beast and Man: The roots of human nature*. London etc., Routledge. Revised ed.

Miller, D. 1984. *Anarchism*. London etc., J M Dent & Sons.

Miller, M A. 1976. *Kropotkin*. Chicago etc., University of Chicago Press.

Mills, C W. 1956. *The Power Elite*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Mintz, J R. 1982. *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas*. Chicago etc., University of Chicago Press.

Moore, B. 1978. *Injustice: The social bases of obedience and revolt*. London etc., Macmillan.

Moore, B. 1991. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world*. London etc., Penguin.

Moore, M. 1998. Introduction: The self-determination principle and the ethics of secession. In Moore ed., *National Self-Determination and Secession*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press. 1-13.

More, T. 1992. *Utopia.* Ed & trans. R M Adams. New York etc., W W Norton & Co. 2nd ed.

Morgan, L H. 1877. *Ancient Society: Or, researches in the lines of human progress from savagery through barbarism to civilization.* Chicago, Charles H Kerr & Co.

Morland, D. 1997. *Demanding the Impossible? Human nature and politics in nineteenth-century social anarchism*. London etc., Cassell.

Morris, W. 1993. *News from Nowhere*. In C Wilmer ed., *News from Nowhere and other writings*. London etc., Penguin. 41-228.

Morrison, A. 1984. Uses of Utopia. In P Alexander & R Gill eds., *Utopias*. London, Duckworth. 139-51.

Munzer, S R. 1990. *A Theory of Property*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Murphy, P. 1990. *The City, Not Long After*. New York etc., Bantam.

Nagel, J. 1975. *The Descriptive Analysis of Power*. New Haven etc., Yale University Press.

Nettlau, M. 1996. *A Short History of Anarchism*. Trans. I P Isca. Ed. H M Becker. London, Freedom Press.

Nozick, R. 1974. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Oxford etc., Blackwell.

Orwell, G. 2001. *Homage to Catalonia*. In P Davidson ed., *Orwell in Spain: The full text of Homage to Catalonia with associated articles, reviews and letters from The Complete Works of George Orwell*. London etc., Penguin. 28-215.

Otter, L. 1966. Determinism and Utopianism in the Anarchist Tradition. In *Anarchy* no.68: 305-18.

Pagden, A. 1986. *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press. Revised ed.

Paradis, J. 1989. *Evolution and Ethics* in Its Victorian Context. In T H Huxley et al., *Evolution and Ethics: T H Huxley's Evolution and Ethics with new essays on its Victorian and sociobiological context*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. 3-55.

Parfit, D. 1985. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press.

Parker, N. 1999. *Revolutions and History: An essay in interpretation*. Cambridge, Polity.

Parsons, T. 1957. The Distribution of Power in American Society: Review of C W Mills, *The Power Elite*. In *World Politics* vol.10: 123-43.

Parsons, T. 1967a. On the Concept of Political Power. In *Sociological Theory and Modern Society.* New York, Free Press/London, Collier-Macmillan. 297-354.

Parsons, T. 1967b. On the Concept of Influence. In *Sociological Theory and Modern Society.* New York, Free Press/London, Collier-Macmillan. 355-82.

Passmore, J. 2000. *The Perfectibility of Man*. Indianapolis, Liberty Fund. 3rd ed.

Patterson, O. 1982. *Slavery and Social Death: A comparative study*. Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Harvard University Press.

Pennock, J R & Chapman, J W, eds. 1978. *Nomos XIX: Anarchism*. New York, New York University Press.

Philp, M. 1986. *Godwin's Political Justice*. New York, Cornell University Press.

Philp, M. 1996. Power. In A Kuper & J Kuper eds., *The Social Science Encyclopedia*. London etc., Routledge. 2nd ed. 657-61.

Pitzer, D E, ed. 1997. *America's Communal Utopias*. Chapel Hill etc., University of North Carolina Press.

Poggi, G. 2001. *Forms of Power*. Cambridge etc., Polity.

Popkin, R H. 1979. *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press.

Preston, P. 1984. War of Words: The Spanish civil war and the historians. In Preston ed., *Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939*. London etc., Methuen. 1-13.

Preston, P. 1996. *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War*. London, Fontana Press.

Radcliffe Richards, J. 1998. Equality of Opportunity. In A Mason ed., *Ideals of Equality*. Oxford etc., Blackwell. 52-78.

Radzinowicz, L & Hood, R. 1990. *A History of English Criminal Law and its Administration from 1750*, vol.5: *The Emergence of Penal Policy in Victorian and Edwardian England.* Oxford etc., Clarendon Press.

Rae, D et al. 1981. *Equalities*. Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Harvard University Press.

Rawley, J A. 1981. *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A history.* New York etc., W W Norton & Co.

Rawls, J. 1972. *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press.

Rawls, J. 1996. *Political Liberalism*. New York, Columbia University Press. New ed.

Rawls, J. 1999. *Collected Papers*. Ed. S Freeman. Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Harvard University Press.

Rawls, J. 1999a. *The Law of Peoples* with *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*. Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Harvard University Press.

Reiman, J. 1972. *In Defence of Political Philosophy*. New York, Harper.

Reynolds, S. 1994. *Fiefs and Vassals: The medieval evidence reinterpreted*. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press.

Richards, V. 1975. Foreword to G Laval, *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution*. London, Freedom Press. 7-15.

Richards, V. 1983. *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*. London, Freedom Press. 3rd ed.

Ritter, A. 1980. *Anarchism: A theoretical analysis.* Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Russell, B. 1918. *Roads to freedom: Socialism, anarchism, and syndicalism*. London, Allen & Unwin.

Sahlins, M D. 1961. The Segmentary Lineage: An organisation of predatory expansion. In *American Anthropologist* vol.63: 322-45.

Sanderson, S K. 1990. *Social Evolutionism: A critical history*. Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Blackwell.

Sanderson, S K. 1995. *Social Transformations: A general theory of historical development*. Oxford etc., Blackwell.

Sassoon, D. 1997. *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The west European left in the twentieth century*. London, Fontana.

Schaack, M J. 1889. *Anarchy and Anarchists: A history of the red terror and the social revolution in America and Europe*. Chicago, F J Schulte & Co.

Schmitt, C B. 1983. The Rediscovery of Ancient Skepticism in Modern Times. In M Burnyeat ed., *The Skeptical Tradition*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press. 225-51.

Scott, J C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven etc., Yale University Press.

Scruton, R. 1983. *A Dictionary of Political Thought*. London, Pan Books.

Sedley, D. 1983. The Motivation of Greek Skepticism. In M Burnyeat ed., *The Skeptical Tradition*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press. 9-29.

Seed, D, ed. 2000. *Imagining Apocalypse: Studies in cultural crisis*. Houndmills, Macmillan.

Sen, A. 1982. Equality of What? In *Choice, Welfare and Measurement*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. 353-69.

Service, E R. 1962. *Primitive Social Organisation: An evolutionary perspective*. New York, Random House.

Service, E R. 1975. *Origins of the State and Civilization: The process of cultural evolution*. New York, Norton.

Sextus Empiricus. 1994. *Outlines of Scepticism.* Trans. J Annas & J Barnes. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Sheridan, R B. 1993. From Chattel to Wage Slavery in Jamaica, 1740-1860. In *Slavery and Abolition* vol.14: 13-40.

Simmons, A J. 1996. Philosophical Anarchism. In J T Sanders & J Narveson eds., *For and Against the State: New philosophical readings*. Lanham etc., Rowman & Littlefield. 19-39.

Simon, H A. 1969. Notes on the Observation and Measurement of Power. In R Bell et al. eds., *Political Power: A reader in theory and research*. New York, Free Press/London, Collier-Macmillan. 69-78.

Skinner, B F. 1968. Utopianism: The design of experimental communities. In D L Sills ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. New York, Macmillan & Free Press. Vol 16: 271-5.

Skinner, B F. 1976. *Walden Two*. New Jersey, Prentice Hall. New ed.

Skinner, Q. 1988. Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas. In J Tully ed., *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his critics*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. 29-67.

Skinner, Q. 1998. *Liberty Before Liberalism*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Skirda, A. 2002. *Facing the Enemy: A history of anarchist organization from Proudhon to May 1968*. Trans. P Sharkey. Edinburgh etc., AK Press.

Skocpol, T. 1994. A Critical Review of Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. In *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press. 25-54.

Smith, A D. 1971. *Theories of Nationalism*. London, Duckworth.

Smith, L N. 1980. *The Probability Broach*. New York, Ballantine Books.

Smith, W. 2001. National Symbols. In A J Motyl ed., *Encylopedia of Nationalism*. San Diego etc., Academic Press. 2 vols. Vol. 1: 521-30.

Souchy, A. 1974. Collectivizations in Catalonia: Extracts from *Nacht Über Spanien*. In S Dolgoff ed., *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' self-management in the Spanish revolution 1936-1939*. New York, Free Life Editions. 86-98.

Souchy, A. 1974a. Workers' Self-Management in Industry: Extracts from *Collectivisations: L'Oeuvre Constructive de la révolution Espagnole*. In S Dolgoff ed., *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' self-management in the Spanish revolution 1936-1939*. New York, Free Life Editions. 78-84.

Spruyt, H. 1994. *The Sovereign State and its Competitors: An analysis of systems change*. Princeton etc., Princeton University Press.

Stack, D. 2003. *The First Darwinian Left: Socialism and Darwinism 1859-1914*. Cheltenham, New Clarion Press.

Steckel, R H. 1998. Economics. In S Drescher & S L Engerman eds., *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*. New York etc., Oxford University Press. 179-84.

Stevenson, L & Haberman, D L. 1998. *Ten Theories of Human Nature*. New York etc., Oxford University Press. 3rd ed.

Taylor, A. 2002. *American Colonies: The settlement of North America to 1800*. London etc., Allen Lane.

Taylor, A J P. 1967. The Failure of the Habsburg Monarchy. In *Europe: Grandeur and decline*. Harmondsworth etc., Penguin. 127-32.

Taylor, M. 1976. *Anarchy and Cooperation*. London, Wiley.

Taylor, M. 1982. *Community, Anarchy and Liberty*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, M. 1987. *The Possibility of Cooperation*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Temkin, L S. 1993. *Inequality*. New York etc., Oxford University Press.

Theuws, F & Nelson, J L, eds. 2000. *Rituals of Power: From late antiquity to the early middle ages*. Leiden etc., Brill.

Thomas, H. 1971. Anarchist Agrarian Collectives in the Spanish Civil War. In R Carr ed., *The Republic and the Civil War in Spain*. London etc., Macmillan. 237-56.

Thomas, H. 1990. *The Spanish Civil War*. London etc., Penguin. 3rd ed.

Thomas, H. 1994. *The Conquest of Mexico*. London etc., Pimlico.

Thompson, E P. 1976. *William Morris: Romantic to revolutionary*. London, Merlin Press. Revised ed.

Thompson, E P. 1991. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London etc., Penguin. Revised ed., with a new preface.

Tilly, C, ed. 1975. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Tilly, C. 1992. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD990-1992*. Cambridge Massachusetts etc., Blackwell.

Todes, D P. 1987. Darwin's Malthusian Metaphor and Russian Evolutionary Thought, 1859-1917. In *Isis* vol.78: 537-51.

Tolstoy, L. 1990. On Anarchy. In D Stephens ed., *Government is Violence: Essays on anarchism and pacifism*. London, Phoenix Press. 68-70.

Tsotsi, W M. 1981. *From Chattel to Wage Slavery: A new approach to South African history*. Maseru, Lesotho Printing and Publishing Company.

Tucker, B. 1972. State Socialism and Anarchism: How far they agree and wherein they differ. In *State Socialism and Anarchism and other essays*. Colorado Springs, Ralph Myles. 11-25.

Tudor, H. 1972. *Political Myth*. London etc., Macmillan.

Unger, P. 1975. *Ignorance: A case for scepticism*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Unsworth, B. 1992. *Sacred Hunger*. London etc., Penguin.

Vance, J. 1977. *Big Planet*. Sevenoaks etc., Coronet Books.

Van Creveld, M. 1999. *The Rise and Decline of the State*. Cambridge etc., Cambridge University Press.

Vincent, A. 1992. *Modern Political Ideologies*. Oxford etc., Blackwell.

Vizetelli, E A. 1911. *The Anarchists: Their faith and their record including sidelights on the royal and other personages who have been assassinated*. London etc., John Lane.

Waldron, J. 1988. *The Right to Private Property*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Ward, C. 1973. *Anarchy in Action*. London, Freedom Press. 2nd ed.

Wells, H G. No date. *A Modern Utopia*. In *Tono-Bungay and A Modern Utopia*. London, Odhams Press. 307-504.

Westermann, D. 1970. Introduction to R Huffman, *Nuer Customs and Folk-Lore*. London, Frank Cass & Co. v-xi.

White, D M. 1972. The Problem of Power. In *British Journal of Political Science* vol.2: 479-90.

Williams, B. 1982. The Minimal State. In J Paul ed., *Reading Nozick: Essays on Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. 27-36.

Williams, B. 1983. Descartes's Use of Skepticism. In M Burnyeat ed., *The Skeptical Tradition*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press. 337-52.

Winch, P. 1970. Understanding a Primitive Society. In B R Wilson ed., *Rationality*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. 78-111.

Winch, P. 1988. *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*. London etc., Routledge.

Wolf, E R. 1997. *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press. With a new preface.

Wolf, E R. 1999. *Envisioning Power: Ideologies of dominance and crisis*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press.

Wolfe, J. 1991. Anarchist Ideology, Worker Practice: The 1917 general strike and the formation of São Paulo's working class. In *Hispanic American Historical Review* vol.71: 809-46.

Wolff, J. 1996. Anarchism and Skepticism. In In J T Sanders & J Narveson eds., *For and Against the State*. Lenham, Rowman & Littlefield. 99-118.

Wolff, R P. 1973. Reply to Professors Smith and Pritchard. In *Journal of Value Inquiry* vol.7: 303-6.

Wolff, R P. 1977. *Understanding Rawls*. Princeton etc., Princeton University Press.

Wolff, R P. 1998. *In Defence of Anarchism*. Berkeley etc., University of California Press. 2nd ed.

Woodcock, G. 1946. *William Godwin: A biographical study*. London, The Porcupine Press.

Woodcock, G. 1948. Preface to Woodcock ed., *A Hundred Years of Revolution: 1848 and after*. London, Porcupine Press. 5-6.

Woodcock, G. 1963. *Anarchism: A history of libertarian ideas and movements*. Harmondsworth etc., Penguin.

Woodcock, G & Avakumović, I. 1990. *Peter Kropotkin: From Prince to Rebel*. Montréal etc., Black Rose Books. [Originally published as *The Anarchist Prince*].

Yates, F A. 1975. *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. St Albans, Paladin.

Zenker, E V. 1897. *Anarchism: A criticism and history of the anarchist theory*. New York etc., Knickerbocker Press.

2 Music

The Sex Pistols. 1977. Anarchy in the UK. On *Never Mind the Bollocks: Here's the Sex Pistols*. Sex Pistols Residuals/Virgin Records. Track 8.

3 Film

Coen, E & Coen, J. 1996. *Fargo*. Working Title Films.