Spring 5-11-2018

Rescuing the Individual from Neoliberalism: Education, Anarchism, and Subjectivity

Gabriel Keehn
Georgia State University

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, RESCUING THE INDIVIDUAL FROM NEOLIBERALISM: EDUCATION, ANARCHISM, AND SUBJECTIVITY, by GABRIEL T. KEEHN, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

_____
Deron Boyles, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

_____   _____
Kristen Buras, Ph.D.   Chara Bohan, Ph.D.
Committee Member   Committee Member

_____   _____
Judith Suissa, Ph.D.   Michael Bruner, Ph.D.
Committee Member   Committee Member

_____
Date

_____
William Curlette, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Educational Policy Studies

_____
Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.
Dean
College of Education and Human Development

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

By presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the advanced degree from Georgia State University, I agree that the library of Georgia State University shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I agree that permission to quote, to copy from, or to publish this dissertation may be granted by the professor under whose direction it was written, by the College of Education and Human Development's Director of Graduate Studies, or by me. Such quoting, copying, or publishing must be solely for scholarly purposes and will not involve potential financial gain. It is understood that any copying from or publication of this dissertation which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without my written permission.

_____
Gabriel T. Keehn

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations deposited in the Georgia State University library must be used in accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement. The author of this dissertation is:

Gabriel Thomas Keehn
Georgia State University
Department of Educational Policy Studies
30 Pryor Street
Atlanta, GA 30302

The director of this dissertation is:

Deron Boyles, Ph.D.
Department of Educational Policy Studies
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30302

<div align="center">

CURRICULUM VITAE
Gabriel Keehn

</div>

Education

Fall 2013-Present	Doctoral Student
	Social Foundations of Education
	Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
	Dissertation – "Rescuing the Individual from Neoliberalism: Anarchism, Education, and Subjectivity"
May 2012	MA Philosophy
	Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX
	Summa Cum Laude
May 2010	BA Philosophy
	SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
	Religious Studies Minor
	Magna Cum Laude

Publications (Sole Author Unless Noted)

Refereed

- Gabriel Keehn and Deron Boyles, "Emmanuel Levinas: Philosophical Exposures, and Responses to Systemic and Symbolic Violence in Education," in *The Wiley Handbook of Violence in Education,* ed. Harvey Shapiro (Wiley, forthcoming).
- "Review of *Baudrillard, Youth, and American Film: Fatal Theory and Education*, by Kip Kline", *Critical Questions in Education*, in press.
- Gabriel Keehn, Morgan Anderson, and Deron Boyles, "Neoliberalism, Technology, and the University: Max Weber's Concept of Rationalization as a Critique of Online Classes in Higher Education," in *Philosophical Proposals for the University: Toward a Philosophy of Higher Education*, eds. Aaron Stoller and Eli Kramer (Palgrave, forthcoming).
- "Monstrous Discourse: A Lacanian Reading of *Monsters University* as Neoliberal Dystopia," in *Hollywood Goes to College*, eds. Kip Kline and Randy Laist (Fourth Horseman Press, forthcoming).
- "The Need for Roots Redux: On the Supposed Disciplinary Right to a Nonideal Theory," *Philosophical Studies in Education 47* (2016): 98-107.
- Gabriel Keehn and Deron Boyles, "Sense, Nonsense, and Violence: Levinas and the Internal Logic of School Shootings." *Educational Theory 65*, no. 4 (2015): 441-458.
- "Does the Theory of Recollection Preclude Learning?: A New Dimension to Platonic Nativism" *Philosophy of Education 2014,* ed. Michelle Moses (158-165).

Presentations

Refereed

- "Sabotage, Withdrawal, Insubordination: On Some Possibilities for Quotidian Teacher Resistance," Southeast Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Chattanooga, TN, 2018.

- "A Phenomenological Case for Individualist Education or, Not-So-Rugged Individualism," American Educational Studies Association Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA, 2017.
- "Rescuing Individualism from Capitalism: Anarchism, Education, and Not-So-Rugged Individualism," Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Mundelein, IL, 2017.
- "A Phenomenological Case for Individualist Education or, Not-So-Rugged Individualism," Southeastern Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Knoxville, TN, 2017
- Kip Kline, Trevor Norris, Kristopher Holland, and Gabriel Keehn, "Author Meets Critics: *Baudrillard, Youth, and American Film: Fatal Theory and Education,*" Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, 2017.
- "Who's Afraid of a Science of Education: A Note on Universalism and Hope," Southeast Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Asheville, NC, 2016.
- Kip Kline, Gabriel Keehn, Jesica A. Heybach, and Richard Quantz, "Author Meets Critics: *Baudrillard, Youth, and American Film: Fatal Theory and Education,*" Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Dayton, OH, 2016.
- "Anarchism versus Rejectionism: An Anarchist Case for Principled Disengagement," Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Dayton, OH, 2016.
- Gabriel Keehn, Nicholas Eastman, and Morgan Anderson, "The Revolution Might Not be Taught: Reflections on the Limitations and Possibilities of Teacher Education Programs as Sites of Educational Activism," Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Dayton, OH, 2016.
- "The Need for Roots Redux: On the Supposed Disciplinary Right to A Nonideal Theory," Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting, Dayton, OH, 2015.
- "Platonic Moral Psychology and Soft Moral Paternalism," Mid-Term Meeting of the International Plato Society, Atlanta, GA, 2015.
- "The Blair Witch Project and the New Going Native: A Case Study in Transpositional Nativeness," Texas Tech Annual Comparative Literature Conference, Lubbock, TX, April 2011
- "The Infinite Climb: Augustine's Proof of God and Questions of Hierarchy," Moravian College Undergraduate Conference in Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Bethlehem, PA, 2009

Awards and Distinctions
- SUNY New Paltz Distinguished Graduate in Philosophy-May 2010
- Texas Tech University Provost's Masters Degree Fellowship-September 2010
- Social Foundations Outstanding Teaching Assistant – 2016.
- Social Foundations Award for Scholarly Achievement – 2017

Membership
Philosophy of Education Society 2014-Present
Southeast Philosophy of Education Society 2014 - Present
Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society 2015 - Present
American Educational Studies Association 2014 – Present
American Educational Research Association 2015 – Present

**RESCUING THE INDIVIDUAL FROM NEOLIBERALISM: EDUCATION,
ANARCHISM, AND SUBJECTIVITY**

By

GABRIEL T. KEEHN

Under the direction of Deron Boyles, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

"Individualism" is a term that evokes a wide range of responses, particularly when deployed in

the context of American history and society, with its supposed (and purportedly objectionable)

tradition of so-called "rugged individualism." The images of the cowboy, frontiersman, and lone

entrepreneur spring readily to mind, along with a long list of virtues embodied in these figures:

self-sufficiency, drive, courage, gumption, and the like. It is the project of this dissertation to

rehabilitate the concept of individualism as tool of the Left for resisting the ongoing assault of

neoliberalism, particularly with respect to our educational institutions. I argue that the various

problematic associations commonly made between individualism and various forms of right-

wing political and moral commitments, such as free-market capitalism, materialism, self-interest,

and the like are historical mutations of an individualist tradition that is both fundamentally

incompatible with those ideals, but which can also serve as a powerful tool for critiquing them.

More specifically, I argue for an individualism that fuses the ontological commitments of the

historical individualists with the left-individualist tradition in anarchist political theory.

Individualism along the lines argued here is neither an enemy of democracy, communal identity,

or group resistance, but serves as a complement to and ally of those forms of leftist commitment. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly given the urgency of our current moment, individualism provides a powerful basis for critiquing the forces that genuinely oppose left movements. Ultimately I will argue not only that individualism is a much richer, more varied, and more philosophically tenable position than has been commonly assumed, but also that some form of individualist commitment is, rather than being incompatible with truly democratic commitment, actually a fundamental prerequisite thereof. In this, I hope to lend some support to Emerson's famous and cryptic contention that "individualism has never been tried."

RESCUING THE INDIVIDUAL FROM NEOLIBERALISM: EDUCATION, ANARCHISM, AND SUBJECTIVITY

by

GABRIEL T. KEEHN

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Social Foundations

in

Educational Policy Studies

in

the College of Education and Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA

2018

To Morgan, who has changed my life in more ways that I can say, and without whom none of this would have been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my advisor and dissertation committee chair, Deron Boyles. Without his patience, generosity, humor, and wisdom, I would not have made it through this degree or dissertation.

I would like to acknowledge my family for their unending support and empathy, and for not getting too angry when I was occasionally out of contact for weeks at a time throughout the writing of this dissertation.

I would also like to acknowledge my two dogs, Louise and Luther, who have endured a highly unusual and sporadic walking schedule these last few months with grace and understanding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

ANARCHISMS, SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL; INDIVIDUALISMS, RUGGED AND NOT-SO-RUGGED

The Problem: Rehabilitating Individualism

"Individualism" is a term that evokes a wide range of responses, particularly when deployed in the context of American history and society, with its supposed (and purportedly objectionable) tradition of so-called "rugged individualism." The images of the cowboy, frontiersman, and lone entrepreneur spring readily to mind, along with a long list of virtues embodied in these figures: self-sufficiency, drive, courage, gumption, and the like. Aside from the oftentimes vague appeal of these affective personality traits, there is also a countervailing sense that individualism as a more concrete philosophical doctrine is both morally and politically corrosive; that it undermines the very possibility of democratic community which has earned wide general endorsement in the era of modern liberalism, particularly within education, grounded as the field is in the various liberalisms of John Dewey, John Rawls, Hannah Arendt, and others.

It is the project of this dissertation to rehabilitate the concept of individualism as tool of the Left for resisting the ongoing assault of neoliberalism, particularly with respect to our educational institutions. I argue that the various problematic associations commonly made between individualism and various forms of right-wing political and moral commitments, such as free-market capitalism, materialism, self-interest, and the like are historical mutations of an individualist tradition that is both fundamentally incompatible with those ideals, but which can also serve as a powerful tool for critiquing them. More specifically, I argue for

an individualism that fuses the ontological commitments of the historical individualists with the left-individualist tradition in anarchist political theory. Individualism along the lines argued here is neither an enemy of democracy, communal identity, or group resistance, but serves as a complement to and ally of those forms of leftist commitment. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly given the urgency of our current moment, individualism provides a powerful basis for critiquing the forces that genuinely oppose left movements.

While it is the overall goal of this dissertation to clarify the concept of individualism and argue for its reconstruction as a tool for the left, it is critical to address at the outset the concept of anarchism as well, since it is also fundamental to the vision of individualism advocated here, and notoriously controversial. Before proceeding I will attempt to give something of an overview of anarchism as an ideology, as well as briefly laying out some of the major schools within anarchism. It should go without saying that the term "anarchy" and its etymological cousins ("anarchist," "anarchism," etc.) have earned themselves something of a bad rap both within the academy and without. These terms have come to be synonymous variously with "chaos," "violence," "disorder," "mob rule," and so on. As Peter Marshall puts the point in the introduction to his monumental history of anarchist theory and practice, "it is usual to dismiss [anarchism's] ideal of pure liberty at best as utopian, at worst, as a dangerous chimera."[1] Individuals who describe themselves or their beliefs as anarchist are often labeled as terrorists, nihilists, or simply insane. George Woodcock notes that the figure of the anarchist is often dismissed as "a mere promoter of disorder who offers nothing in place of the order he destroys."[2] The particulars of these misunderstandings are not necessarily important for us here, but it is

---

[1] Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), ix.
[2] George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 11.

worth noting that they do differ significantly in their tone and origin. For a member of the general public, the term anarchism cannot but conjure up images of rioting in the streets and smashed storefront windows. The gradual and historical corruption of the associative content of "anarchism" in the public consciousness is a large topic that will be outlined more fully in the dissertation, but one imagines this sort of vulgar misunderstanding to be the progeny, in some sense, of Hobbes' famous characterization of the pre-Statist state of nature as the *bellum omnium contra omnes,*[3] perhaps bolstered by the ubiquitous contemporary capitalist consensus regarding the supposed selfishness inherent in human nature, a position famously taken to its absurd logical conclusion by Ayn Rand.[4]

In the academy, the misunderstandings found in the wider public discourse regarding anarchism are significantly less prevalent, but this fact does not eliminate all obstacles to academic conversation regarding anarchism. Specifically, there is the widespread endorsement of Marxism of one type or another by broad swathes of academe, especially in the humanities and related disciplines, and the attendant attitudes toward anarchism with which the family of Marxisms is often associated. As David Graeber puts the point, "Anarchism, in the standard accounts, usually comes out as Marxism's poorer cousin, theoretically a bit flat-footed but making up for brains, perhaps, with passion and sincerity."[5] Marxism is generally seen, that is, as the more theoretically serious account both of social relations as they currently exist, and of the means to change them, as cast against the naive utopianism of the anarchist. There are, it should be noted, important and deep-rooted, historical dimensions to this antagonism as well, as it was

---

[3] See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Parts 1 and II*, A.P. Martinich and Brian Battiste, eds. (Peterborough, ON, CAN: Broadview, 2011), 123.
[4] See Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness* (New York: Signet, 1964). For an excellent general consideration of Rand's relationship to contemporary capitalism, see Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[5] David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004), 3.

precisely the tension between Marx and the Russian communitarian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin that caused the split and ultimate dissolution of the First International at The Hague Congress in 1872. The core of the disagreement between Bakunin and Marx had to do with competing interpretations of the events leading up to and following the Paris Commune's two-month existence in 1871. Bakunin saw the Commune as an opportunity for sustained decentralized organization between peasants and workers in opposition to all forms of State power, whereas Marx believed that the lesson of the Commune was that the workers needed a true political party to help them to seize power from the State, and he saw the role of the International as becoming that party. Bakunin, somewhat prophetically, argued that Marx's views would at best result in a changing of the authoritarian guard, and that a dictatorship of the proletariat was no less objectionable than one of the bourgeoisie.[6]

The second reason that it is useful to spend some time delineating, or at least positing for the sake of argument, some of the basic tenets of anarchist thinking is to avoid becoming mired in a sea of conflicting intuitions and commitments. The organization and development of sub-categories of anarchism, unlike in Marxism and its descendants (Leninism, Maoism, Althusserianism, Gramscianism, etc.), does not follow the family-tree model just suggested, where one can tie relatively closely the content of one's positions to one or another major named-tradition, founded by a discrete individual. In anarchism, generally speaking, individuals are grouped on the basis of either tactical commitments (insurrectionists, illegalists, anarcho-communists, etc.) or a basic theoretical commitment (individualists, Christian-anarchists,

---

[6] There is much excellent historical work done on this topic. See for example, Alvin W. Gouldner, "Marx's Last Battle: Bakunin and the First International," *Theory and Society* 11, no. 6 (1982): 853-884; Donald Clark Hodges, "Bakunin's Controversy with Marx: An Analysis of the Tensions Within Modern Socialism," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1960): 259-274; and August H. Nimtz, "Marxism Versus Anarchism: The First Encounter," *Science and Society* 79, no. 2 (2015): 153-175.

feminist anarchists, etc.).[7] Importantly, this manner of carving up the theoretical space does

significantly less toward generating intra-group agreement than it does in the Marxist tradition.

That is, it is far more likely that a random sampling of Gramscians will have a significant level

of pre-established theoretical common-ground than a similar sampling of individualist anarchists,

say. Where the Gramscians might have some slight disagreements about Gramsci's relationship

to Croce or the details of universal intersubjectivity, it is likely that the individualist anarchists

will have a hard time even getting their discussion past the level of the most basic tenets of

individualism or their understanding of the nature of the individual itself. Whether or not this fact

of near total theoretical openness in anarchism is a sign of theoretical underdevelopment or an

encouraging sign of theoretical fertility is up for discussion. The point here is that, in order to

avoid spinning our wheels on the slippery terrain of anarchist theory, it is useful to posit a

provisional fixed point from which to begin. A traditional and, I find, useful such point is Peter

Kropotkin's entry in the 1910 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for "Anarchism:"

> 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.[8]

While there is some ambiguity even in this skeletal description of the anarchist framework to

which one could object, amend, or add, I will operate with this basic understanding of anarchism

in the rest of the dissertation.

---

[7] Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 5.
[8] Peter Kropotkin, "Anarchism, from The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910." Anarchist Archives.
http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/kropotkin/britanniaanarchy.html.

Schools of Anarchism: A Primer

As suggested above, the various schools of anarchist thought are resistant to easy categorization, and many have significant areas of overlap. This has become particularly true with the proliferation of hyphenated and double-hyphenated schools that attempt to hybridize what they see as the most important theoretical and tactical aspects of a number of other anarchist forms (e.g. "vegan-queer-anarchism," "anarcha-trans-feminism," "green-nihilist-anarchism," and so on). By way of overview, the major schools of anarchism are divided into two categories. The much larger and more influential of the two is often referred to as "social anarchism" and the smaller, more marginalized school is that of individualism.[9] Given that the bulk of the dissertation will be dealing with individualism and individualist anarchism, I devote some time here to three of the major forms of social anarchism, namely mutualism, collectivism, and anarcho-communism, so as to communicate something of the theoretical landscape into which individualist anarchism fits.

Mutualism

Mutualism is the oldest of the various schools of thought which explicitly refer to themselves as anarchist. Developed first by the French economic theorist Pierre Joseph Proudhon, mutualism was born out of Proudhon's radical theories of property and ownership as a way of making sense out of economic activity and social production in the face of the conviction that private property was at bottom philosophically corrupt and indefensible. Proudhon, famous for his various paradoxical slogans ("Anarchy is Order," "God is Evil," etc.)[10] summed up his

---

[9] See Carl Levy, "Social Histories of Anarchism," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 4, no. 2 (2010): 1-44.

[10] For more on Proudhon's obsession with paradox, see Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 91-121 and Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 234-235.

view of property with the well-known claim that "Property is Theft."[11] Proudhon's critique of

property is not quite as radical as it may seem at first pass, and indeed he is equally critical of

communist theories of social organization as unacceptably disrespectful of individual rights to

the products of their own labor, "As if the individual came into existence after society, and not

society after the individual."[12] Rather than any global critique of property, Proudhon sought so

chart a course between the gross accumulation of property in the hands of a few wealthy

landowners (his principal target in critiquing property), on the one hand, and the erasure of

individual dignity and labor which he saw as accompanying communism in all its forms. His

answer to this puzzle was mutualism, which he argued would be able to function without any

form of state power or capitalist economic control. He claimed that mutualism would be a

"synthesis of the notions of private property and collective ownership" so as to avoid the

potential dangers he saw in both of those concepts when established on their own and

exclusively.[13] Proudhon was perfectly content to have certain types of exclusive usufruct rights

over land and other types of property, but argued that all of these types of possession must be

temporary and conditional on continued use. In this connection, a distinction is sometimes made

between personal property, which Proudhon favored, and private property, which he did not. The

general principles of mutualism are familiar from market capitalism, though they also contain

some built-in safeguards to prevent excessive property accumulation. Firstly, as with all forms of

communitarian anarchism, the workers in a given industry are in control of their own means of

production and are entitled to the fruits of their own labor (again, in the sense of personal

---

[11] It is worth noting that Proudhon's slogan is in a sense self-defeating, since the very concept of theft is only possible on the condition that one already has a concept of property itself in hand. See, Max Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* ed. David Leopold, trans. Steven Byington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 251.
[12] Quoted in Edward Hyams, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Revolutionary Life, Mind, and Works* (London: John Murray, 1979), 85-86.
[13] Quoted in Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 242.

property, rather than private), which can be used in market exchanges.[14] In this sense, mutualism subscribes to the labor theory of value. Proudhon believed that over time, as workers organized themselves and formed associations both large and small, and as credit was equalized across all productive citizens (Proudhon was in favor of a large centralized bank which could track credit), the functions performed by the State would either become obsolete or would be performed by other forces, and the need for political organization would disappear entirely in the face of improved economic organization.

Collectivism

Collectivism as a doctrine developed out of Proudhon's mutualism. The term was first explicitly used by the noted Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin during the early days of the first International Working Men's Association in Geneva in 1866.[15] The IWMA was founded to bring together the various factions concerned with class struggle, labor, and anti-capitalist politics, and many of the members who attended the first congress could fairly be described as Proudhonists. Generally, they accepted the principle that society ought to be restructured as a coalition of individuals who are free to make contracts with one another under conditions of labor value exchange and free credit through a centralized people's bank. Bakunin generally accepted the tenets of mutualism, but disagreed significantly with Proudhon on a number of significant points. While it is difficult to characterize Bakunin as a thinker in any sort of broad terms, since he published so little and so much of it is fragmentary and incomplete, we can get a general sense of the areas of tension between his views and those of Proudhon. One of the key planks in the Proudhonist platform was the abolition of private ownership of land, a point on which collectivists generally agree. However, where Proudhon would maintain a robust sense of

---

[14] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 243.
[15] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 7.

usufruct both for the land itself as well as for the products of one's labor on the land (which we have called here "possession" or "personal property"), the collectivists, including Bakunin, moved toward full collective ownership, both of the means of production as well as the land.[16] Bakunin only maintained any strong sense of private or personal property for the direct products of individual labor. In the mutualist framework, the workers associations and industrial groups were essentially just a means of harnessing the power of large-scale industry, something which Proudhon himself accepted as necessary only begrudgingly, valuing as he did the individual worker as the basic unit of social organization. Collectivism, however, fully embraces the need for collective association not as a distasteful necessity but as fundamentally beneficial for human flourishing and the economic viability of a stateless society. After the ultimate failure of the Paris Commune in 1871, Bakunin would point to that episode as a validation of his views, claiming that in the functioning of the commune "the action of individuals was almost nothing" and that "the spontaneous action of the masses should be everything."[17] In this sense, Bakunin rejected the lingering individualist tendencies in the mutualist program in favor of a higher degree of communal sensibility.

At the same time, Bakunin was also not, at least on the classical definition, a communist. Where the communist embraced the classic principle "from each according to his means, to each according to his needs," Bakuninist collectivism held onto a sense of individual dessert and a right to the products of one's own labor, holding to the principle of "from each according to his means, to each according to his deeds."[18] Bakunin described his view, drawing on what he saw

---

[16] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 8.
[17] Quoted in Daniel Guerin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970) 35.
[18] Woodcock, *Anarchism,* 138.

as the guiding principles of the French Revolution, in his *Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism*, writing that the key problem to be solved by collectivism is

> to organize society in such a fashion that every individual, man or woman, coming into life, shall find as nearly as possible equal means for the development of his or her different faculties and for their utilization by his or her labour; to organize a society which, rendering for every individual, whoever he may be, the exploitation of anybody else impossible, permits each to participate in social wealth – which, in reality, is never produced otherwise than by labour – *only in so far as he has contributed to produce it by his own labour*.[19]

Collectivism was thus defined, and could be still, as an exchange economy where the legal ownership of the of the instruments of production is held by a network of "collectivities" which are sorts of workers' joint stock companies and which themselves serve, rather than individuals, as the fundamental unit of social organization. In the 1870's and the 1880's the anarchist-communists, who wanted to abolish exchange value in all its forms, would break with the collectivists, and in so doing revived the tradition of radical communism that had existed in France in the 1840's.

Anarcho-Communism

Anarcho-communism, perhaps predictably, takes a step even further in the full communalization of property and the products of labor. As noted above, Bakunin maintained certain tendencies in his vision of collectivism which were seen by some in the anarchist movement of the time as problematically individualistic. Against this, the anarcho-communists held to the principle of distribution according to need, rather than dessert or actual productive labor. After the initial meetings of the IWMA, splits began to emerge between Bakuninist collectivists and the anarcho-communists, with the communist wing led by representatives of the

---

[19] Quoted in Woodcock, *Anarchism,* 137. Italics mine. Going forward, all italics included in quotations are in the original unless otherwise noted, as here.

Spanish workers parties and the Italian anarchist and early advocate of collectivism Carlo

Cafiero. An important set of victories were won by the anarcho-communists over the course of

the 1870s at the various meetings of the important anarchist international group the Jura

Federation, which finally adopted anarcho-communism as its official economic platform in

1880.[20] At this Congress, Cafiero presented a report that was later published in *Le Révolté*, an

important anarchist periodical of the time, under the title "Anarchy and Communism". In this

report, Cafiero succinctly exposed the points of rupture with collectivism: rejection of exchange

value; opposition to transferring ownership of the means of production to workers' corporations

(in favor of communal ownership without reference to the specific nature of the work being

done, that is); and elimination of payment for productive activities. Furthermore, Cafiero

suggested that anarcho-communism was the inevitable development of anarchism in Europe, and

rejected the popular narrative that collectivism was a necessary step on the path to true

communal ownership. Cafiero argued, rather, that collectivism of the type advocated by Bakunin

was actually inimical to ultimate goals of anarchist society. On the one hand, he claimed that the

demand for collective ownership of the means of production and the individual appropriation of

the products of labor would cause the accumulation of capital and the division of society into

classes to reappear. On the other hand, he maintained that retaining some form of payment for

individual labor power would conflict with the socialized character (indivisibility of productive

activities) already imprinted on production by the capitalist mode of production. As to the need

for rationing products, which might occur after the revolutionary victory, nothing would prevent

such rationing from being conducted not according to merits, but according to needs.[21]

---

[20] Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 169.
[21] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 437.

Another important exponent of anarcho-communism was Peter Kropotkin, another former collectivist who switched allegiances in the late 1800s. Kropotkin's arguments in favor of the communist position at the 1880 Congress were the culmination of a slow evolution of his position from strict collectivism to communism, by way of an intermediate position where he saw collectivism as a simple transitional stage. The collectivists favored the 'right to work', which is 'industrial penal servitude'. In Kropotkin's view, their pro-worker policy sought to harness to the same horse the wage system and collective ownership, in particular through their theory of labor vouchers. Kropotkin opposed labor vouchers on the grounds that they seek to measure the exact value of labor in an economy that, being socialized, tends to eliminate all distinctions as far as contribution of each worker considered in isolation is concerned. Furthermore, the existence of labor vouchers would continue to make society a commercial company based on debit and credit. Hence he denounced labor vouchers in the following terms: "The idea... is old. It dates from Robert Owen. Proudhon advocated it in 1848. Today, it has become 'scientific socialism'"[22] In general, Kropotkin believed that collectivism committed two major errors, both of them tied together by the same blindness. Specifically, "While speaking of abolishing capitalist rule, they intend nevertheless to retain two institutions which are the very basis of this rule – representative government and the wages system."[23] Kropotkin believed that in order for genuine anarchist goals to be achieved, only full communist ownership could be acceptable as an economic system.

---

[22] Quoted in Alain Pengam, "Anarcho-Communism," in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, eds. Maximilien Rubel and John Crump (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 60-82, 72-73.
[23] Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings,* ed. Marshall S. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 144.

Method of the Dissertation

Education has a fraught relationship with theory. There are longstanding debates surrounding the relative merits of various approaches to educational research, and indeed surrounding the definition of the term "research" itself. Historically this has manifested in the debate over qualitative versus quantitative methods in educational research that raged during the 1980's and into the 1990's. This debate revolved generally around two axes, as outlined by Kenneth Howe, who's work became a major factor in the dissolution of that debate. Howe describes both "literal" and "derivative" aspects to the debate between qualitative and quantitative methods.[24] Literally, quantitative and qualitative approaches to educational research have distinct techniques and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. Derivatively, these methods differ in their "broader epistemological assumptions."[25] These epistemological differences rest on larger debates both in educational research and in the history of philosophy more generally. The two distinct approaches are, on the one hand, positivistic approaches to research which emphasize the objective, scientific quality of that research, and, on the other, more interpretivist understandings of the goals of research. Howe points out that many researchers (e.g. Yvonne Lincoln and Egon Guba,[26] and John K. Smith[27]) have advocated what he calls "the incompatibility thesis."[28] Howe's work ultimately terminates in his advocacy of what he calls "critical educational research,"[29] a concept which is related to what others have

---

[24] Kenneth Howe, "Getting Over the Quantitative-Qualitative Debate," *American Journal of Education* 100, no. 2 (1992): 236-256, 237.

[25] Howe, "Getting Over the Quantitative-Qualitative Debate," 237.

[26] Yvonne S. Lincoln & Egon Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishers, 1985).

[27] John K. Smith, "Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research: An Attempt to Clarify the Issue," *Educational Researcher* 12, no. 3 (1983): 6-13.

[28] Kenneth Howe, "Against the Quantitative-Qualitative Incompatibility Thesis, or Dogmas Die Hard," *Educational Researcher* 17, no. 8 (1988): 10-16.

[29] Howe, "Getting Over the Quantitative-Qualitative Debate," 250.

called, in a similar attempt to bridge the qualitative-quantitative divide, "mixed methods research."[30]

Even more recently, however, discussions of the role of philosophical and theoretical methods of research have begun to develop in education as well. Despite helping to close the gap between qualitative and quantitative research, the work of Howe and others did not fully revolve the question of the role of theory in educational research. Indeed, Rene Arcilla diagnosed as recently as 2002 what he calls the "uncanny…established silence between philosophy and education."[31] Arcilla makes an impassioned plea for a bridge between philosophy and education similar to that constructed by the pioneering work of Howe. Since the publication of Arcilla's article, and although it was by no means the first to directly address philosophy and education, philosophical analysis has made significant gains in terms of legitimacy as research.

In contrast to the generally empirical (whether qualitative or quantitative) approach of much educational research, this dissertation participates directly in the tradition of theoretical, philosophical analysis. The analysis is not entirely conceptual, in that I argue that the conclusions of my investigation have decidedly real-world implications for how we ought to think about education, schools, and their place in society, and in the sense that there are significant historical considerations that are brought to bear on the discussion. At the same time, the method of argumentation is entirely theoretical in nature. Another way of putting this is that I will be addressing not the current actual state of education and schooling, or at least will only be doing so in the context of critique, but will focus more directly on a potential future state that I will argue is preferable to the status quo. In this sense, my argument will be prescriptive, though I

---

[30] See R. Burke Johnson and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzi, "Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come," *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 7 (2004): 14-26.

[31] Rene Arcilla, "Why Aren't Philosophers and Educators Speaking to Each Other," *Educational Theory* 52, no. 1 (2002): 1-11, 2.

will also argue that the prescriptivism involved in specifically anarchist theory, such as it is, is exploratory and open rather than constricting.

Significance: The Need for an Expanded Toolkit of Resistance

In response to the establishment of the neoliberal economic hegemony and its incursions into education in various contexts, educational theorists have attempted to expose the corruptions, failures, and contradictions in the neoliberal, corporatist narrative. Innumerable studies trace back to the neoliberal global order, among other things: the troubling historical trends in school funding, the rise of school choice rhetoric, the continuing and worsening effects of racist educational and economic policies at all levels of government, the growing corporate influence on both k-12 and higher education, the profound and growing emphasis on concepts such as "accountability" and "standards." The major assumption made in these exposé-style studies is that in order to solve, or even to properly address, these issues, we must chronicle in detail the injustices they perpetuate or cause and hold up their internal workings to others, be they the broader public or academic colleagues, ideally so as to shock them into anger and action. Typical of this mode of exposé thinking is Jean Anyon's conclusion to her book *Radical Possibilities* in which she writes that "my argumentation has aimed at a more radical consciousness in readers" which will counteract "the ideological battering most people receive as schoolchildren, the mangled news they imbibe from newspapers and television, and racial and class distortions pouring from the media."[32] Michael Apple's concluding reflections in *Ideology and Curriculum* echo Anyon's logic. He writes, "I have tried to illuminate how this close connection between power and control that exists between government and the dominant

---

[32] Jean Anyon, *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement* (London: Routledge, 2014), 172

classes...also exists between schools and these groups."[33] Maarten Simons, Mark Olssen, and Michael Peters introduce their collection on "studying the policy agenda of the 21st century" in this way, "Indeed re-reading education policies in view of gathering people around matters of concern-the focus of this handbook-could be regarded as a democratic act or an act of public advocacy" and they suggest that their ultimate goal is "turning education into a matter of public concern."[34] It is precisely in this sense that educational theorizing must engage in critique via illuminating the hidden connections, functionings, and contradictions in neoliberal political and economic agendas that I mean to refer to by using the phrase "the exposé method."

At this point, I want to lodge two objections against the exposé method and the attendant solutions the method generally suggests ("democratize," "localize," "purge of racism," etc.). The first objection, which at first may seem naive bordering on asinine but which I actually believe reveals a deep misunderstanding about the nature of neoliberal global capital on the part of advocates of exposé critique, is that the exposé method simply has a poor track record of generating changes of any kind in the public discourse surrounding education. This seems almost too obvious to merit much discussion, but think, for just one example, of the case of charter schools. In the face of mounting evidence that charter schools do not produce meaningfully better outcomes than their public counterparts[35] as well as the even more troubling emerging evidence regarding potentially adverse racial and economic implications of large-scale charter takeovers on vulnerable communities,[36] one is still hard pressed to find any high-ranking sitting

---

[33] Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (London: Routledge, 1990), 160

[34] Maarten Simons, Mark Olssen, and Michael A. Peters, "Re-Reading Education Policies Part 1: The Critical Education Policy Orientation" in *Re-Reading Education Policies: A Handbook Studying the Policy Agenda of the 21st Century*, Simons, Olssen, and Peters eds. (Rotterdam, NED: Sense Publishers, 2009), 30-31.

[35] Andrew Maul, "Review of Urban Charter School Study 2015" (Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, 2015). http://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/review-urban-charter-school

[36] For a painfully detailed case-study see Kristen L. Buras, *Charter Schools, Race, and Urban Space: Where the Market Meets Grassroots Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

politician at any level of government (other than those with principled opposition to government activity of any kind) who is anything but emphatically supportive of charter schools. This is reflected in public opinion as well, with PDK International polling data holding steady at 70% support for the last five years.[37]

On the exposé model, the exposing of the problematic racial implications and the oftentimes suspicious flows of money into, through, and out of the large Educational Management Organizations (EMOs), coupled with the advancing of proposals to re-democratize public education ought to be enough to shock public opinion in some way back toward salvaging public education, but this has not happened. I want to suggest that this is because the exposé model fundamentally misunderstands the ideology of neoliberal global capitalism. At the root of this problem, I argue, is Karl Marx's original formulation of the nature of ideology, namely that ideology is that which people do "without being aware of it,"[38] or, as Althusser later puts it, that ideology represents "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence."[39] That is, this orthodox understanding of ideology conceptualizes ideology as creating and relying for its persistence on a false consciousness on the part of those under it regarding the way things really are. We can see immediately why this understanding of ideology is amenable to the exposé method, which often goes about its aforementioned business of "illuminating," "exposing," and "mapping" the objects of its critique explicitly under the banner of "consciousness raising." Again, the assumption of both vulgar Marxism and the exposé

---

[37] William J Bushaw and Valerie J. Calderon, "The 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" Phi Delta Kappan International, 2015.
http://www.pdkintl.org/noindex/PDK_Poll46_2014.pdf

[38] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1,* Ben Fowkes, trans. (New York: Penguin, 1982), 166-67.
[39] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-188, 162.

method is that through a detailed process of ideological demystification of some social phenomenon to reveal its underlying adverse material effects, false consciousness can be overcome and, by implication, social change can occur through the activity of the now enlightened citizenry. If one can clearly expose the ill-effects of neoliberal school reform and reveal the ideological nature of "school choice" and "competition" discourses, the hearts and minds of policymakers and the public can be changed and education can move in a different direction.

I contend that this understanding of ideology is no longer applicable; critical methods that utilize it as their guiding theoretical commitment are doomed to fail in the face of a capitalism which is no longer ideological in this sense. While this claim may appear sweeping, it is by no means new or reactionary, as arguments for the need to rethink ideological critique in light of recent developments in global capitalism have been advanced and refined since at least the early 80s. Peter Sloterdijk, for instance, opens his extended analysis of contemporary hegemonic ideologies *Critique of Cynical Reason* with the following, "The discontent in our culture has assumed a new quality: It appears as a universal, diffuse cynicism. The traditional critique of ideology stands at a loss before this cynicism...this critique has remained more naive than the consciousness it wanted to expose."[40] For Sloterdijk, the modes of orthodox ideology critique have become stagnant, predictable, and themselves absorbed into the very functioning of hegemonic ideology more generally, and he goes as far as to isolate eight paradigmatic models of critique which function as models for all subsequent moves of unmasking and demystifying. The key point of his analysis is that when we examine the current status of ideological critiques of unmasking, i.e. the exposé method, we find "a clearly structured playing field with well-known

---

[40] Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 3.

players, established tactics, and typical fouls" where "each side has developed certain, almost rigged, moves of critique."[41] The predictable result of this stagnant culture of critique and its objects is a generalized attitude of cynical distance in the society at large. All of the exposures of the functioning of dominant ideology have been made, and the arguments and critical moves have been rehearsed over and over. It is no longer shocking (if it ever was) to hear the latest salacious exposé of capitalist exploitation or callous profit-maximization, and neoliberal global capital no longer relies on the mystification of its inner workings to persist, but rather is always already exposed, relying instead on the shoulder-shrugging cynicism of contemporary culture diagnosed by Sloterdijk. Even if we are ignorant of the precise details of *how* capital is callously or exploitatively operating in a given arena (e.g. we do not know that Volkswagen is knowingly cheating emissions tests), we know *that* it is doing so, and are no longer surprised to find out the details because the overarching structure of global capital is always the same. As Zizek characterizes the nature of the cynical subject, he "is quite aware of the distance between the ideological mask and the social reality, but he none the less still insists upon the mask."[42] In the context of this new type of cynical culture, where the mask of ideology is a transparent one, Zizek suggests a reformulation of Marx's understanding of ideology to reflect the fact that ideology is no longer that which we do without knowing we are doing but that which we know very well we are doing, but still continue to do.[43] If this picture is right, and our society has shifted to what Sloterdijk refers to as the mode of "enlightened false consciousness" which has "learned its lessons in enlightenment, but...has not...put them into practice" and "no longer feels affected by any critique of ideology,"[44] then the fact that the exposé method of critique has failed

---

[41] Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 90.
[42] Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 25.
[43] Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 25.
[44] Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, 5.

to generate change in education or elsewhere should not come as a surprise. On this view, the

exposé method is doomed to fail because its entire critical project consists, finally, in telling

people things they already know. The problem today is not that people care but do not know, as

in traditional ideological critique. Rather, it is that they know but do not care, which is a scenario

that the exposé method is ill equipped to deal adequately with.

The second objection I want to level against the exposé method of critique is that even

the best-case scenarios, when the exposé method actually resonates with some sector of the

public to the degree that they demand change and actually achieve their goals, the overall

outcome is still negative. In such cases, the ultimate effect is does not fundamentally change the

structures of neoliberal global capital, but actually reinforces them. This objection is best

illustrated by an example. Think of the recent push for a fifteen-dollar minimum wage in the

United States. The issue I want to highlight here is connected with what is presupposed in any

demand made of the neoliberal capitalist order, and what the implications of making such

demands are. One presupposition that seems to me to be made in the very act of asking, for lack

of a better term, "the system" for something like an increase in pay (a decrease in police

violence, etc.) is that the system has what you are demanding of it and can give it to you, if only

you ask for it in the right way. Insofar as the public (or whomever) must ask the neoliberal

structure to meet its demands (however supposedly progressive or revolutionary those demands

may be) via the mechanisms of governmental or economic administration, the public cannot help

but affirm its structural subservience to the power of the system more generally. Keeping with

our example, while it is unambiguously true that a fifteen-dollar minimum wage would

somewhat improve the lives of individuals who would receive higher pay, it is also undeniable

that this change would have little to no impact on slowing the pace of the development of

neoliberal capital. Put another way, this demand, and others like it, are demands made *of* rather than *against* neoliberal capital, and they fundamentally support, rather than challenge, the continued existence of that system. The spirit of this line of critique is not new either; we have only to recall Jacques Lacan's admonishment of the student protests of May 1968 to see the radical heritage of the view I am advancing. Lacan, speaking in front of a large protest, accused the students of failing to truly challenge the fundamental existence of the structure they claimed to be against: "As hysterics, you demand a new master. You will get it!"[45] A similar sentiment is echoed by the Bavarian anarchist Max Stirner, who critiqued the earlier French revolution in a precisely parallel fashion, writing "The revolution was not directed against *the established*, but against the *establishment in question*, against a *particular* establishment. It did away with *this* ruler, not with *the* ruler, on the contrary, the French were ruled most inexorably." Later, he adds, in an even more Lacanian register, "Much as may be *improved*, strongly as 'discreet progress' may be adhered to, always there is only a *new master* set in the old one's place, and the overturning is a building up."[46] This last point is crucial, namely the idea that in overturning some particular piece of the established system of rule (changing the minimum wage, reducing police violence, etc.) the perverse outcome is that the system is actually strengthened. When a particular goal of a piecemeal reform agenda is fulfilled, those who were participants in that struggle tend to become mollified and return to their cynical participation in the system feeling satisfied with their victory, which is in fact a victory for the ruling ideology, which has escaped a struggle without its fundamental structures being questioned.

---

[45] Quoted in Slavoj Zizek, "The Structure of Domination Today: A Lacanian View," *Studies in East European Thought* 56 (2004): 383-403, 388.
[46] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 100.

This points to the second, and perhaps even more problematic assumption involved in demanding piecemeal reforms of the existing system, and brings us directly to the distinction between the anarchist and the reformer. In advocating for piecemeal changes to the system to alleviate localized contradictions and injustices we expose via our critique, the assumption is made that there is something fundamentally right about the existing structure, and all that is left is to smooth out the problems as we find them. For example, when I expose the ill-effects of a low minimum wage and demand a higher one, I have already accepted that people should have to work for wages at all, that money should be the primary mode of social exchange, that income level should be the measuring stick for quality of life, and so on. In other words, I have accepted all of the important premises of global capitalism. This view is perhaps most clearly expressed in Jean Anyon's call for a "kinder, gentler capitalism"[47] through piecemeal reforms made to the current system. One cannot help but see in this Fukuyama-esque relationship to global capitalism an echo of the archetype of an abusive relationship, where one party consistently abuses the trust of the other, and the abused party justifies the continued relationship on the grounds that "somewhere deep down there is a good person" etc.

Though the anarchist will deeply disagree with the method of critique just espoused, which makes concessions to the system in the hope of changing it from within, it is also important to realize that the enemy identified in this critique is real and is one that anarchism as a philosophy and movement shares, namely neoliberal individualism. In the rest of this chapter I want to survey the origins of American rugged individualism as a personal and economic ideal, a discussion that will be continued in more detail in Chapter Two.

---

[47] Anyon, *Radical Possibilities,* 3.

22

The American Tradition of Rugged Individualism

There are deep cultural and historical associations with the figure of the rugged individual that run through American consciousness and naturally color our understandings of the concept of individualism writ large. That is, there are genuine and real reasons that people have come to associate individualism with the kind of selfish, capitalistic attitude embodied in contemporary neoliberal rationalisms. The phrase "rugged individualism" itself was first popularized by Herbert Hoover, who deployed it in an untitled campaign speech during the 1928 presidential campaign on October 22 at Madison Square Garden in New York City. The speech emphasized what Hoover saw as traditional American ideals, including "self-government," hostility to bureaucratic centralization, a refusal to look to the government for assistance or ways out of hardship, and the cultivation of initiative and innovation. The phrase "rugged individualism" itself appears only once in the text of the speech, but it represents a critical moment in American understandings of individualism as a philosophico-political doctrine. In the post-WWI era, Hoover argued, that Americans were "challenged with a peace-time choice between the American system of rugged individualism and a European philosophy of diametrically opposed doctrines – doctrines of paternalism and state socialism."[48] It is this dichotomous characterization of the relationship between rugged American individualism, on the one hand, and the socialistic and communal practices of Europe (or any variety of generalized "others") that I argue has more than anything characterized the American understanding of individualism. As I will document in this section, this general formula of individualism as distinctly American and as a sign of mental, emotional, and economic fortitude, and collectivism as weak, paternalistic, and distinctly un-American has many valences, expressions, and

---

[48] Herbert Hoover, Campaign Speech, New York City, October 22, 1928.

permutations, though the basic through line is the same. The purpose of this discussion is both to detail how individualism came to have the problematic ideological baggage that it currently has, as well as to set up a contrast class to the vision of individualism I will develop in the remainder of this dissertation, particularly Chapter Three.

Rugged Individualism as Cultural Ideal

Though Hoover was perhaps the first to popularize the phrase "rugged individualism," the spirit and vision embodied in that phrase were embedded in the American psyche much earlier in the country's history. Interpreters of American society as early as the great political critic Alexis de Tocqueville identified this sense of rugged individualism as both central to American civil and cultural life as well as potentially damaging to the democratic prospects of the nascent nation. In his 1835 *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville, referring to the predominant attitudes of competition and individualism among the American populace, writes "Selfishness blights the germ of all virtue; individualism, at first, only saps the virtues of public life; but in the long run it attacks and destroys all others and is at length absorbed in downright selfishness."[49] Here we see the roots of the idea, which would eventually see its terminus in the right-individualist philosophy of Ayn Rand and neoliberal economics, that selfishness and individualism are inherently bound together, and that they are uniquely threatening to democratic society and social cohesion in general. Political philosopher Leo Strauss concurs with de Tocqueville's diagnosis, but traces the cultural roots of rugged individualism back even further, namely to the work of John Locke, who has often been seen as the founding father of both laissez-faire capitalism and the concept of rugged individualism.[50] The influence of Locke on the

---

[49] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* Thomas Bender ed., Henry Reeve trans., revised by Frances Bowen and Phillips Bradley (New York: Modern Library, 1981), 395.
[50] Henry Moulds, "John Locke and Rugged Individualism," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1965): 97-109, 97.

American founding fathers (particularly Jefferson), the American revolution, and the

Constitution of the United States itself, has been well documented,[51] and Strauss suggests that it

is particularly Locke's vision of economic competition and the value of rugged individualism

that shaped the early civic values of the United States. Strauss argues that Locke's theory of

property rights, in which the right of property is established through mixing one's labor with a

previously unowned resource, represents "the classic doctrine of 'the spirit of capitalism'" and

goes on to argue that Locke believed that "By building civil society on 'the low but solid ground'

of selfishness or of certain 'private vices,' one will achieve much greater 'public benefits' than

by futilely appealing to virtue, which is by nature 'unendowed.'"[52] This is perhaps the foundation

of the ideal of rugged individualism, in which individuals are empowered to compete with one

another for scarce resources and accumulate as many of those resources as possible. The

important addendum to this ideal is that success in this social game is itself representative of a

valuable internal quality, e.g. being a self-starter, having the entrepreneurial spirit, being a "go-

getter" and so on. The value place on these supposed personality and character traits is critical to

understanding the American vision of rugged individualism as a cultural and personal ideal.

More recently, anthropologist Francis L.K. Hsu has brought to the fore the American

sense of rugged individualism through comparative ethnographic studies, particularly examining

America in relation to Japanese and Chinese cultures.[53] Hsu argues that rugged individualism as

a personal, cultural ideal has driven American society since the moment of its inception. Hsu

---

[51] See George M. Stephens, *Locke, Jefferson, and the Justices: Foundations and Failures of the US Government* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2002); Allen Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy, and Theology* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015); Jerome Huyler, *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

[52] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 240-1.

[53] See Francis L.K. Hsu, *Rugged Individualism Reconsidered: Essays in Psychological Anthropology* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), and Francis L.K. Hsu, *Americans and Chinese: Passages to Difference* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1980).

contrasts traditional Chinese culture, which is based on a highly structured set of prescribed

social relations, with the rugged individualist imperative to strike out on one's own and indeed to

question the dictates of the current social order. Hsu suggests that this type of attitude is valuable

to a degree, particularly in terms of generating certain forms of social progress, necessitating as it

does the breaking of norms, questioning of traditions, and so on. At the same time, it can also be

profoundly socially damaging. Hsu simultaneously echoes the warning of de Tocqueville and

evokes some of the most pernicious historical examples of the rugged individualist spirit when

he suggests that "To succeed, the rugged individualist is driven to treat all other human beings as

things to be manipulated, coerced or eliminated, if they happen to get in the way of his forward

march…the rugged individual is bound to be self-centered. He is taught to shape the world in his

image."[54] For Hsu, examples of both large and small-scale social ills, such as the ideology of

Manifest Destiny, embody and express the logical conclusions of the ideal of rugged

individualism.

Perhaps nowhere is the personal ideal of the rugged individual expressed more fully than

in the cultural artifacts of American society, particularly in literature, film, and advertising.

Many studies have examined the ways rugged individualism has been culturally transmitted in,

especially masculine, cultural artifacts such as sporting magazines,[55] literature,[56] and workplace

norms,[57] among others. However, I want here to focus on one particularly potent example of

ideological rugged individualism in the American consciousness, namely the figure of John

Wayne. While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to examine in detail the large and varied

---

[54] Hsu, *Rugged Individualism Reconsidered,* x-xi.

[55] Elizabeth C. Hirschman, "Men, Dogs, Guns, and Cars: The Semiotics of Rugged Individualism," *Journal of Advertising* 32*,* no. 1 (2003): 9-22.

[56] Andrew Madigan, "The New Rugged Individualism: Modernity and Countersystem in Post-World War II Fiction," *Comparative American Studies* 8, no. 3 (2010): 200-214.

[57] Nathan Ensmenger, "'Beards, Sandals, and Other Signs of Rugged Individualism': Masculine Culture within the Computing Professions," *Osiris* 30, no. 1 (2015): 38-65.

academic literature that has been produced around this actor, his work and his persona are of particular importance to understanding the personal and cultural ideal of rugged individualism in American culture. As Larry Van Meter has argued, "Even today, almost 40 years after his death, John Wayne stands for an 'ideal' masculinity."[58] Wayne's professional career was characterized most notably by a number of successful Western films, including *Stagecoach* (1939), *The Searchers* (1956), *Rio Bravo* (1959), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), and *True Grit* (1969), for which he won an Academy Award. Wayne, a former college football player, was known for depicting Western heroes who were "unsentimental, hard, brutal if necessary, proudly anachronistic.,"[59] and for his gruff and imposing on-screen persona. Jonathan Wyatt evocatively describes the sense he had of Wayne as a young child watching his films, "The heroes were strong, rugged men protecting children; pretty, skirted women; and good but ineffectual men from ruthless, mean men…all set amongst a pitiless, mean landscape and its downbeat, downtrodden, rundown towns."[60] Even contemporaneously, Wayne was seen as a masculine ideal, representing fundamental American values of competition and self-reliance. A 1950 article in the magazine *The Saturday Evening Post* about Wayne, entitled "The Ladies Like 'Em Rugged," ties Wayne's ideal on-screen persona to his real life, and suggests in no uncertain terms that Wayne ought to serve as the ideal not only for American masculinity, but perhaps for the country's own self-understanding. The article opens this way, "When John Wayne strides lankily down a Cowtown street, hands swinging free, ready to draw, millions of female hearts thump. Old Long Legs just acts natural – while husbands wonder why their wives have that

---

[58] Larry A. Van Meter, *John Wayne and Ideology* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 4.
[59] Stephen Metcalf, "Inventing John Wayne: How John Ford Turned a Bland Kid into a Hollow Masculine Icon," *The Atlantic,* December 1, 2017: 38-40, 39.
[60] Jonathan Wyatt, "'Out Here a Man Settles His Own Problems': Learning from John Wayne," *International Review of Qualitative Research* 8, no. 3 (2015): 280-282, 281.

faraway look."[61] Here we see a number of the various ways in which Wayne represents the ideal of rugged individualism, aloof, sexually desirable, ready for a fight and capable of winning. This ideal is exemplified for Wyatt in an iconic line from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, when Wayne's character Tom Doniphon explains to a feminized lawyer (played by James Stewart), who Doniphon will eventually have to save, "Out here a man settles his own problems."[62] This is a direct endorsement of the competitive ethos of rugged individualism, and an implicit rejection of the sorts of communal identities and economic relationships that were increasingly visible on the world stage during Wayne's heyday.

Indeed, it is critical to note that in many ways John Wayne's persona was explicitly politicized, both by observers as well as by Wayne himself. Wayne was very public, for example, about his staunch anticommunist ideology and support for American capitalism. Indeed, when he began producing his own films in the 1950's, some have argued that Wayne "ended up making propaganda, not art."[63] Wayne publicly positioned himself against "a liberal establishment that was feminized, and therefore worthy of populist disgust."[64] Wayne's rugged individualist was the strongest available counterpoint to the popular images that drove communist hysteria during that era, and particularly the various feminized and homoeroticized caricatures that underwrote much of the ideological animus that was directed at communism as an ideology. In Wayne's *Big Jim McLain* (1952), which revolves around Wayne's character tracking down communists in post-war Hawaii, the prime villain is a feminized Russian named "Sturak," played by Alan Napier, who speaks in a high pitched, lispy accent.[65] This feminization

---

[61] Pete Martin, "The Ladies Like 'Em Rugged," *The Saturday Evening Post*, December 23, 1950: (19-74): 19.
[62] Quoted in Wyatt, "'Out Here a Man Settles His Own Problems'," 280.
[63] Nancy Schoenberger, *Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero* (New York: Doubleday, 2017), 17.
[64] Metcalf, "Inventing John Wayne," 39.
[65] Van Meter, *John Wayne and Ideology,* 38.

of communism and anything to do with non-American masculinity was a common tactic of the right at the time, and as William J. Mann notes, "For many, sexual perversion and political subversion became interchangeable. The Right linked homosexuality with sedition, equating it with moral weakness and conflating it with Communism."[66] Wayne represented the polar opposite of these figures, and embraced the ideological implications of that representation in his own political expression. In his commitment to capitalism as an economic doctrine, distrust of anything even remotely communistic, and embodiment of character traits such as grit, determination, and the like, John Wayne still serves as perhaps the best and most extreme example of what is mean by the phrase "rugged individualism" as a cultural and personal ideal, particularly of masculinity.

There is, however, another important aspect to rugged individualism, namely the economic, to which I turn in the next section. Though the economic ideals of individualism will be detailed more directly in Chapter Two, I will here point out some examples of how the concept has influenced American economic and domestic policy, often to disastrous effect. The rejection of individualism in the sense described here is, I think, entirely justified, and it will be the project of Chapters Two and Three to distinguish the form of anarcho-individualism I advocate from these understandings of the term.

Rugged Individualism as Economic and Policy Doctrine

As suggested by the example of John Wayne, a key component of the rugged individualist mentality is a certain commitment to self-sufficiency, refusal to accept outside assistance, and resistance to communalism in all its forms. These commitments have variously found expression in public policy throughout the history of the United States, and continue to be

---

[66] William J. Mann, *Beyond the Screen: How Gays and Lesbians Shaped Hollywood, 1910-1969* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 287.

reflected in the country's attitudes toward the poor, disabled, and the like. Perhaps fittingly, Hoover is again here one of the first to enact policies explicitly from the perspective of rugged individualism, and would continue his commitment to his vision of rugged individualism as president during the early years of the Great Depression. In the early 1930s, Hoover vetoed an important bill, the Muscle Shoals Bill, that would have appropriated funds for the government to build a dam on the Tennessee River and sell electricity, essentially nationalizing that utility in that part of the country.[67] The idea behind the bill was both that the building of the dam would provide valuable and then-scarce jobs for a depressed region of the country as well as enable the sale of cheaper electricity than was being provided by private electric companies. The reasons Hoover cited for the veto explicitly appealed to the ruggedly individualistic values he had campaigned on and his economic faith in free market solutions. He wrote that the plan would "break down the initiative and enterprise of the American people" and would be a fundamental betrayal of the ideals of innovation and economic competition that he believed America was based on.[68] This economic interpretation of rugged individualism as a philosophical basis for free market competition, entrepreneurship, and the like is one of the most powerful associations that has arisen in the discourse about individualism.

Another powerful example of this discourse making its way into the political arena explicitly was the rhetoric and writing of Republican Senator from Arizona and presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Four years before running for President in 1964, Goldwater published *The Conscience of a Conservative*, a book that many credit with reigniting the conservative movement in the United States and laying the ideological groundwork for the

---

[67] This plan would later serve as the basis for the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority under President Roosevelt's New Deal.

[68] Arthur W. Macmahon, "Third Session of the Seventy-First Congress, December 1, 1930 to March 4, 1931." *The American Political Science Review* 25, no. 4 (1931): 932-955, 947.

impending Reagan Revolution that would take place some twenty years later. The book, ghostwritten by noted conservative and longtime Goldwater speechwriter L. Brent Bozell Jr., [69] was in many ways a distillation of American conservative principles, and in particular the doctrine of economic rugged individualism. Indeed, one contemporary commentator argued that the broad support Goldwater's message was able to amass, particularly on college campuses, made him "the most attractive 'conservative' since Herbert Hoover."[70] Like John Wayne, Goldwater centered anticommunism in his political messaging, and called for a return to the suite of classical American values embodied in rugged individualism. In his analysis of Goldwater's rhetoric and appeal John Hammerback argues that all of Goldwater's various themes could be distilled down to the pervasive ideal of rugged individualism.[71] Goldwater, like Wayne, went out of his way to project an image of rugged individualism in his personal life as well, desiring to appear as "manly, adventurous, simple, and unpretentious," and often relating to his audiences stories of his forefathers, "as when he described his grandfather's 'courage and fortitude' in crossing the Colorado River under attack by Indians."[72] This was also politically important, as it reformed the image of conservatism from one of aloof intellectuals that dominated the era, such as the figure of William F. Buckley. Goldwater's policy positions flowed directly from his rugged individualist persona, for example by "de-emphasizing international cooperation, discontinuing conciliatory foreign policies, and challenging communism directly" as well as advancing simplified programs of taxation and regulation, positions that have become *de rigueur* for conservative politicians to this day.

---

[69] Bruce Frohnen, *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia* (Wilmington, NC: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006), 179-180.

[70] Quoted in John C. Hammerback, "Barry Goldwater's Rhetoric of Rugged Individualism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58, no. 2 (1972): 175-183, 177.

[71] Hammerback, "Barry Goldwater's Rhetoric of Rugged Individualism," 180.

[72] Hammerback, "Barry Goldwater's Rhetoric of Rugged Individualism," 181.

Though Goldwater ultimately failed to reach the presidency, his policy influence would be dramatically felt in the election and presidency of Ronald Reagan. Reagan, who himself gained fame first as a film actor, was perhaps the most rhetorically and politically effective of any politician in U.S. history in advocating for the ideal of rugged individualism. As early as Reagan's famous speech in support of Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign, Reagan mobilized discourses of individualism versus communism and the value of individual work ethic and motivation.[73] This theme continued throughout Reagan's political life and played such a central role that Robert Rowland and John Jones have claimed that Reagan fundamentally redefined the "American Dream" in terms of "heroic individualism."[74] Reagan's policy targets, which included "unreasonable bureaucrats, criminal-friendly judges, welfare cheats, spoiled college students, appeasement-minded liberals, soft-headed liberals, narrow-minded liberals" and any and all other forces that threatened to squelch American individualism,[75] have come to serve as the policy agenda for the Republican party through the present day, and the policy positions he advocated are nearly all undergirded by a commitment to an economic and cultural form of rugged individualism. Valuing private property rights, freedom of expression, and so on at the individual level to the point of excluding nearly all other social values is the hallmark of political and economic rugged individualism. Reagan often mobilized ruggedly individualist, and importantly racialized, discourses of laziness and personal motivation, "law and order," and personal freedom, even going so far as arguing that "if an individual wants to discriminate against Negros or others in selling or renting his house, he has a right to do so."[76] These sorts of

---

[73] See Kurt W. Ritter, "Ronald Reagan and 'The Speech': The Rhetoric of Public Relations Politics," *Western Speech* 32 (1968): 50-58.

[74] Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, "Reagan's Farewell Address: Redefining the American Dream," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 20, no. 4 (2017): 635-665, 654.

[75] Gil Troy, *The Reagan Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 37.

[76] Quoted in Richard Primuth, "Ronald Reagan's Use of Race in the 1976 and 1980 Presidential Elections," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 100, no. 1 (2016): 36-66, 43.

policy proposals, which also included cutting welfare benefits and other forms of the social

safety net, are all fundamentally predicated on the idea that social problems are best addressed

through individual and corporate initiative and creativity rather than government intervention, a

hallmark of rugged individualism in the policy arena. As Rowland and Jones sum up the

Reaganite vision of rugged individualism, Reagan

> presented a perfected and condensed form of ultimate definition as a means of reinforcing a small government perspective and in so doing recasting the meaning of the most important American political myth, the American Dream, in a way that placed responsibility for action on the individual rather than the government.[77]

It is this view that supports the neoliberal narratives that so characterize our contemporary policy

landscape, both within education and elsewhere. I will lay out in more detail in Chapter Two the

historical development of these ideas particularly from the perspective of anarcho-individualism,

but first want to point out briefly some of the ways these ideals of rugged individualism have

manifested in education.

Perhaps predictably, educational policy did not escape the long-term effects of Reagan's

individualist revolution, and Reagan's administration itself in many ways set the stage for the

current neoliberal capture of public education. The 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk: The*

Imperative for Educational Reform was a key moment in the intrusion of rugged individualism

into the realm of public education. As Jal Mehta notes, "Perhaps the most fundamental shift in

thinking that *A Nation at Risk* encapsulates is the elevation of the economic purposes of

schooling over its many other purposes."[78] The economization of education, though it took many

forms in the Reagan era, specifically with respect to international competition, was in many ways

most concentrated on the role of education as a means of economic mobility, one's success in

---

[77] Rowland and Jones, "Reagan's Farewell Address," 638.
[78] Jal Mehta, "Escaping the Shadow: *A Nation at Risk* and Its Far-Reaching Influence," *American Education,* Summer 2015: 20-44, 23.

which was inherently reflective of the presence or absence of the character traits of the rugged individual, e.g. perseverance, adaptability, etc.

This fusion of the economic and personal ideals of rugged individualism was further entrenched by the various testing and accountability regimes that emerged in the wake of the Reagan Revolution, such as the Bush era "No Child Left Behind" and Barack Obama's "Race to the Top". On the one hand, as many recent commentators have argued, the neoliberal imperatives of economic production necessitate strict governmental oversight and "accountability" regarding what is taught and how it is taught.[79] At the same time, many of the traditional values of rugged individualism have become directly infused into the educational rhetoric of would-be reformers. Indeed, one can see the contemporary echoes of this vision of the ideal individualist in much recent work on what makes for a successful student, with John Wayne-esque buzzwords like "resilience," "adaptability," "initiative," "vision," and so on coming to describe the ideal student. Perhaps the most illustrative example of this is the recent controversy surrounding the concept of "grit" as an educational value.[80] After the publication of Angela Duckworth's study on grit as a factor in student academic success and the widespread adoption of the concept in education circles, a backlash emerged which critiqued Duckworth's usage of the idea as problematically individualist and reductionist. Ariana Gonzalez Stokas is representative of this critique when she argues that "to tell the impoverished child in particular that he or she needs more grit in order to succeed seems at best misguided and at worst classism

---

[79] See Michael Apple, "Education, Markets, and Audit Culture," *International Journal of Educational Policies 1,* no. 1 (2007): 4-19; David Hursh, "Marketing Education: The Rise of Standardized Testing, Accountability, Competition, and Markets in Public Education," in *Neoliberalism and Education Reform*, eds. E. Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson (New York: Hampton Press, 2006): 15-34; Dennis Attick, "Homo Economicus at School: Neoliberal Education and Teacher as Economic Being," *Educational Studies* 53, no. 1 (2017): 37-48.

[80] The article that has motivated much of this recent discussion is Angela L. Duckworth, Christopher Peterson, Michael D. Matthews, and Dennis R. Kelly, "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1087-1101.

and a return to a culture of poverty ideology that equates pauperism with an unfavorable human trait that could be bred out of society."[81] The Reaganite narrative that the inherent qualities of individuals should determine their economic and social success is predicated precisely on the type of bootstrapping narratives of perseverance that also underwrite educational approaches that center character traits such as "grit."

The next chapter will extend the historical account of the development of individualism, with a particular focus on the ways that it came to be so deeply associated with various rightist ideals, both economic and social, and distinguish individualism's radically leftist origins from its ultimately radically rightist, and perverted, terminus.

---

[81] Ariana Gonzalez Stokas, "A Genealogy of Grit: Education in the New Gilded Age," *Educational Theory* 65, no. 5 (2015): 513-528, 516.

CHAPTER TWO

INDIVIDUALISM AND ANARCHISM: CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT

Within anarchism as an umbrella ideology, individualist anarchism has a particularly

interesting history, and there is significant controversy surrounding many of the key individualist

anarchist thinkers and their place in the tradition. Indeed, there are some within anarchism who

consider individualist views to be fundamentally incompatible with anarchism in the same way

that liberal democrats view individualism as incompatible with genuine democracy. For

example, one of the most well-known public anarchists in modern history, Colin Ward, while

clearly delineating the distinctions between genuinely autonomist individualist anarchism and the

appropriation of the language of individualism by free-market advocates, nonetheless dismisses

as "incomprehensible" and "distasteful" the individualist tradition that grew out of the work of

Max Stirner, one of the major thinkers of individualist anarchism.[82] Murray Bookchin, a

progenitor of libertarian municipalism and advocate of communalist anarchism, famously

divided anarchism into two camps, namely social anarchism and lifestyle anarchism (or

lifestylism), with lifestyle anarchism representing essentially the modern iteration of

individualism.[83] Bookchin argued that the recent developments in individualistic lifestylism "are

steadily eroding the socialistic character of the libertarian [anarchist] tradition."[84] In this chapter,

I want to review some of the historical developments within anarchism that have affected the

perception of individualism within anarchism specifically, and contextualize individualist

anarchism in the anarchist context by comparing it with a selection of other anarchist schools of

---

[82] Colin Ward, *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 62.
[83] Murray Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (San Fransisco, CA: AK Press, 1995).
[84] Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, 9.

thought. This discussion will provide the basis for the vision of individualism discussed and endorsed in chapter three.

The Origins of a Rift: Marx, the Young Hegelians, and Stirner

In his discussion of individualist anarchism, Bookchin seems to endorse a classically Marxist critique of individualism, voiced most forcefully during the 1930s by anarcho-syndicalists and anarcho-communists, namely the idea that individualist anarchism amounts to little more than "petty-bourgeois exotica" and "middle-class indulgence."[85] By raising this Marxist critique of individualism (which I will address more directly in Chapter Four), Bookchin is pointing to what is perhaps the critical moment of rupture between social anarchism and individualist anarchism (and, perhaps, the broader Left and individualism in general), namely Marx's encounter with Stirner. Here I want to survey the genesis and development of Marx's

Marx's various clashes with his anarchist contemporaries are well known and have been documented in great detail. Studies of Marx's relationship to anarchism often rightly focus on the importance of his nearly decade-long engagement with Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, a battle that took place in the arena of the then-newly-formed International Workingman's Association (IWA) or the First International.[86] One of the core disagreements between Bakunin and Marx had to do with competing interpretations of the events leading up to and following the Paris Commune's two-month existence in 1871. Bakunin saw the Commune as an opportunity for sustained decentralized organization between peasants and workers in opposition to all forms of State power, whereas Marx believed that the lesson of the Commune was that the workers

---

[85] Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, 7.

[86] See, for example, Donald Clark Hodges, "Bakunin's Controversy with Marx: An Analysis of the Tensions Within Modern Socialism," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1960): 259-274; and August H. Nimtz, "Marxism Versus Anarchism: The First Encounter," *Science and Society* 79, no. 2 (2015): 153-175.

needed a true political party to help them to seize power from the State, and he saw the role of

the International as becoming that party. This was reflective of a more basic doctrinal difference

between the two, namely their visions of post-revolutionary social organization. While both

Marx and Bakunin attacked capitalism, the scope and focus of their approaches differed

critically. Marx relegated his revolutionary ardor to the bourgeoisie property-owning classes,

where Bakunin wanted to expand the revolution to overthrow not only these mechanics of

capitalism but also the state form itself. Bakunin, rather than envisioning a form of centralized

state ownership of the means of production, advocated for a "voluntarily federated set of groups"

as the basis of post-revolutionary social organization.[87] Bakunin, somewhat prophetically, argued

that Marx's views would only ever result in a changing of the authoritarian guard, and that a

dictatorship of the proletariat was no less objectionable than one of the bourgeoisie. Alvin

Gouldner refers to this feud, which ultimately resulted in the dissolution of the First International

in 1872 and the exiling of Bakunin's contingent of IWA members to the United States, as "the

culminating conflict of [Marx's] political life.[88]

       While this emphasis on the climactic clash between Marx and Bakunin is in many ways

justifiable, there has been comparatively little examination of the arguably equally important

inaugural conflict between Marx and anarchism, which occurred in the form of Marx's extended

attack on Max Stirner's *The Ego and its Own.* Among Marx scholars, the importance of *The*

German Ideology for Marx's later work is well established, and many of the themes that find

their ultimate expressions in *Capital* are first elucidated in *The German Ideology.* However, what

is often overlooked about that work and its impact on Marx's later thinking (and the

---

[87] Alvin W. Gouldner, "Marx's Last Battle: Bakunin and the First International," *Theory and Society* 11, no. 6
(1982): 853-884, 859.
[88] Gouldner, "Marx's Last Battle," 853.

development of the relationship between Anarchism and other Leftisms more generally) is the inclusion of a very lengthy section, indeed the largest in the work, addressing the thought of Max Stirner. There are a number of interesting historical factors that contributed to the general lack of sustained analysis of this section of *The German Ideology*, and the attendant de-emphasizing of the impact of Stirner's thought on Marx. For example, the earliest and most widely-read English translation of that work (the Roy Pascal translation) omitted the section of Stirner, entitled "Saint Max," entirely.[89] Indeed, this translation was the only English version available until nearly 1970,[90] and by the time full translations began to emerge it was generally thought that the omitted sections from the Pascal translation were either small or of minor theoretical interest. From a purely editorial standpoint, the omission of "Saint Max" from the text of *The German Ideology* is a strange choice. The section, which lays out Marx's interpretation of Stirner's philosophy and methodically attacks nearly every aspect of his work, comprises nearly three-fifths of the entire text, is nearly ten thousand words longer than the entirely of Stirner's own book, and is over five times longer than Marx's discussion of his own position.[91] The facts seem to clearly illustrate the importance that Marx himself placed on Stirner's work, and specifically the need he felt personally to respond to it in such a lengthy and detailed manner.

The Post-Hegelian Milieu

There is something of a larger context to this discussion that is worth reviewing as well, and which sheds some light on Marx's preoccupation with Stirner during this period of his life. Throughout the early-to-mid-1840's, Marx was intent on settling his longstanding philosophical

---

[89] Paul Thomas, *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* (London: Routledge, 1985), 125.
[90] Nicholas Lobkowicz, "Karl Marx and Max Stirner," in *The Boston College Studies in Philosophy Volume II: Demythologizing Marxism: A Series of Studies on Marxism*, ed. Frederick J. Adelmann (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 64-95, 69.
[91] Lobkowicz, "Karl Marx and Max Stirner," 69.

score with Hegelianism, and specifically the intellectual movement known as "Young

Hegelianism." The Young Hegelians, sometimes referred to as "Left Hegelians" (as opposed to

their "Old" and "Right" counterparts, who embraced the idea that the dialectic of history had

essentially come to an endpoint with Hegel's death) was a loose association of German

intellectuals who began to examine and engage with Hegel's legacy after his death in 1831.

Among their ranks were the brothers Bruno and Edgar Bauer, the theologian David Strauss,

Ludwig Feuerbach, Arnold Ruge, and Max Stirner. The intellectual and political culture of

Germany in the aftermath of Hegel's death was profoundly divided on the direction in which

Hegel's work was to be taken, and how the political landscape was to be interpreted through the

lens of Hegel's work, and the Young Hegelians represented the left-liberal point of view on those

questions. More specifically, the nature and role of the Prussian state and the question of religion

became key objects of contestation and, in the case of the Young Hegelians, critique, for those

who would vie for Hegel's mantle during these years. These topics dominated the post-Hegelian

intellectual space to such a degree that Karl Rosenkranz, one of the few Hegelian thinkers of the

time who attempted to maintain a relatively orthodox or centrist position, reflected that where

Hegelianism has previously served as a pillar of both the Prussian state and the Church, it was

now "considered to be heretical in religion and revolutionary in politics."[92] The dramatic degree

to which Rosenkranz saw this shift in the perception of Hegelianism was in large part due to the

success of the Young Hegelian project. As it turns out, the most radical developments in Young

Hegelianist leftism were yet to come, and emerged largely in the mid-1840s as Bauer,

Feuerbach, and Stirner began publishing more of their work.

---

[92] Quoted in James D. White, *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 102

What Rosenkranz was referring to in 1940 were the early writings of the Young

Hegelians, most notably David Strauss' 1935 *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, which

represented the opening salvo of Left Hegelianism against established religious commitments

and theological accepted wisdom. Strauss' *Life*, a nearly eight-hundred-page tract, set out to

historically examine the life of Jesus Christ, ultimately arguing, contra church teachings, that the

belief in the incarnation of God in Christ was "the product of collective myth, the truth of which

lies not in the unity of one man with God but in the divinity of humanity itself."[93] Strauss

couched his project in rationalistic terms, claiming to reject the presupposition of any

supernatural facets of the Christ narrative in order "to cling more tenaciously"[94] to the historical

truth of the Biblical accounts. The publication of Strauss' investigation caused an uproar, and

signaled the arrival of the Young Hegelians as a distinct political and philosophical movement.

Importantly, though Strauss' book was most explicitly religious, in the context of Prussia at the

time, which severely restricted political speech but was comparatively lax when it came to

religious discourse, it served as an important proxy for a political critique of the Prussian

monarchical system. As Walter Jaeschke puts the point, "Much of the extensive literature

devoted to the Hegelian left and right has failed to notice and has consistently disregarded the

fact that it was this [Strauss' *Life*] which transformed a debate on the philosophy of religion into

a political debate."[95]

---

[93] Warren Breckman, *Marx, The Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 122

[94] David Strauss, *The Life of Jesus: Critically Examined* (London: Swann Sonnenschein & Co., 1902), xvix.

[95] Walter Jaeschke, *Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, trans. J. Michael Stewart and Peter C. Hodgson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 377. For an in-depth discussion of the political ramifications of Strauss' book and the influence the debate had on the development of Marxism, see Marilyn Chapin Massey, *Christ Unmasked: The Meaning of* The Life of Jesus *in German Politics* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

Indeed, the majority of work produced by the Young Hegelians during this period took the form of religious criticism, but resonated most deeply and in the longer term in the political arena. A notable example is Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), in which Feuerbach advocates for a naturalistic and anthropological view of the origins and fundamental nature of religious conviction. Specifically, Feuerbach suggests that religious belief is the product of a confluence of two forms of what he calls "projection," both of which grow out of immutable and basic human psychological needs. The first mode of projection arises out of man's recognition of his own finitude, and the extension of that finitude to man as a species more generally.[96] The second, and derivative form of projection, is the creation of a personal God in the image of the human person, a projection that, according to Feuerbach, "is in fact a product of the human person's egoistic refusal to recognize his own limits in nature."[97] For Feuerbach, then, the emergence of Christianity was a historical, naturalistic process that could be objectively studied anthropologically. Feuerbach's curative to this was a humanistic return to the individual as the measure of human value, rather than some immutable and ultimately illusory concept like the Christian God. Indeed, Feuerbach considered titling *The Essence of Christianity, Know Thyself* instead, thus driving home his humanistic desire to dispel "the illusions that alienated man from his own nature."[98] For Feuerbach, the task of post-Hegelian philosophy was to return man to himself because, as he puts the point, "It is the species which infuses love into me. A loving heart is the heart of the species throbbing in the individual."[99]

---

[96] Jonathan Malesic, "Illusion and Offense in *Philosophical Fragments*: Kierkegaard's Inversion of Feuerbach's Critique of Christianity," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 62 (2007): 43-55, 48.

[97] Breckman, *Marx, The Young Hegelians*, 102.

[98] John Edward Toews, *Hegelianism: The Path Toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805-1841* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 347.

[99] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity,* trans. George Eliot (Amherst, MA: Prometheus Books, 1989), 269

It was this anthropological critique of Christianity coupled with Feuerbach's humanistic return to the value of the individual in society that made his work politically important. In an echo of Hegel's early work and indeed as a notable precursor to Marx, Feuerbach saw Christian belief as a product of its own particular material and historical conditions. He tied the genesis of the Christian need to "project his quest for personal worth into an afterlife beyond the social and political world that had ceased to be the sustaining medium of the self"[100] to the decline of the Greek *polis* and Roman Republic. With the collapse of these archetypical forms of socio-political relationships, the human need of self-actualization drove humanity to posit a Universal redeemer who could satisfy that need. However, in doing so, Feuerbach argued that humanity profoundly and ultimately alienated itself from itself, and "sacrificed man to God, his own creation."[101] The reduction of human identity and value to a single, isolated individual (Christ, or the personhood of God), Feuerbach argued for a return to the communal orientation of the *polis*, and insisted on a social ontology that prioritized the social nature of humanity.[102] While Feuerbach generally resisted explicit political engagement (he gradually ceased to contribute to Arnold Ruge's journal *Hallische Jahrbucher* as the publication became increasingly politically radical),[103] it is critical to recognize the degree to which philosophical and religious writings were deployed by the Prussian state to ideological support its foundations among the public and intellectual classes against what they saw as the potentially subversive advance of certain philosophical positions (atheism, republicanism, etc.). As Todd Gooch has argued, Feuerbach's critiques of religion were often "directed against…representatives of what Feuerbach refers to as the positive philosophy, who were enlisted by Friedrich Wilhelm IV after he assumed the throne in 1840 to

---

[100] Breckman, *Marx, The Young Hegelians*, 103.
[101] William J. Brazill, *The Young Hegelians* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 146-147.
[102] Breckman, *Marx, The Young Hegelians*, 103.
[103] White, *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism,* 114.

combat the influence of Hegelian 'rationalism' in the Prussian universities.[104] This participation

in the *sub rosa* political conflict between the Prussian monarchy and the Young Hegelians,

coupled with his lasting influence on Marx (as in his initial articulation of a concept of

alienation), Feuerbach's political impact was substantial.

A similar case to that of Feuerbach was the work of Bruno Bauer. Bauer, though he

originally rejected Strauss' interpretation and held to the orthodox view of the historicity of the

Christ narrative, published in quick succession *Critique of the Evangelical History of John*

(1840) and *Critique of the Evangelical History of the Synoptics* (1841-1842), in which he argued

that Strauss had not gone far enough in his criticism of religious doctrine. Specifically, where

Strauss accounted for the mythological nature of Christian texts by appealing to a certain

unsophisticated sincerity on the part of their authors, Bauer argued that the gospels he analyzed

were created by "writers who had deliberately set out to achieve a desired effect."[105] This

historically materialistic interpretation of the Gospels led Bauer to critique what he saw as the

Church's monopolistic, sectarian claim to universality by fusing the particular (in Christ) with

the universal, rather than allowing for a pluralistic understanding of abstract universality in its

myriad instantiations. This deeply Hegelian critique of the Church was tied directly to Bauer's

then-radical republicanism, in the sense that he saw the Church and the Monarchy as enacting

precisely the same type of "hubristic particularism"[106] that tamped down the radical possibilities

embodied in a pluralistic celebration of what Bauer called "Self-Consciousness," and it is

Bauer's understanding of this concept that provides the direct bridge between his religious

---

[104] Todd Gooch, "Some Political Implications of Feuerbach's Theory of Religion," in *Politics, Religion, and Art: Hegelian Debates*, ed. Douglas Moggach (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 257-280, 262.
[105] White, *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism,* 109.
[106] Quoted in Roland Boer, "Friends, Radical and Estranged: Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx," *Religion and Theology* 17 (2010): 358-401, 363.

critiques and his critiques of the Prussian state (and State power more generally). Though Bauer did not identify as an anarchist, in the early 1940s he articulated a number of important critiques of the state and its structural oppression of self-consciousness, both individual and collective. In classical Hegelian fashion, Bauer saw his revolutionary program, as "rooted in the historical process of self-consciousness. What the present demands is opposition to alienation and heteronomy in all their forms," and one key form in which those things are instantiated is the State.[107] Though the intricacies of Bauer's political theory are not directly relevant to the discussion here, what is important to note is that, as in the work of Feuerbach, the seemingly apological character of the Young Hegelian critiques of religion are also importantly political, once the Prussian context is understood.

It was at this critical and fecund moment in German intellectual history, that Karl Marx arrived in Berlin and quickly fell in with the Young Hegelians. It was, importantly, Bruno Bauer, who was largely responsible for Marx's being brought into the fold of the Young Hegelian social circle, and the two would even work on an edition of Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* together.[108] Bauer's influence on Marx was profound, and the two became very close, with many contemporaries viewing Marx as Bauer's protégé.[109] It is telling, in this regard, that Marx concluded his dissertation on Epicurus by arguing that the Hellenistic-era Greek thinkers represented an early instantiation not of the dialectical progress of Spirit, as orthodox Hegelianism would have it, but rather as participants in the dialectic of self-consciousness, as Bauer himself had argued.[110] Soon after the completion of Marx's dissertation, Marx accepted an

---

[107] Douglas Moggach, *The Philosophy and Politics of Bruno Bauer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 99.
[108] David McLellan, *Karl Marx: A Biography* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 32-33.
[109] See Zvi Rosen, *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx: The Influence of Bauer on Marx's Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 127; Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx: A Life* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), 56-57.
[110] Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth Century Life* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 65.

invitation from Bauer to visit him in Bonn, where Bauer had been transferred from Berlin to teach theology. The pair proceeded to spend the summer "shocking the local bourgeoisie – getting drunk, laughing in church…and penning an anonymous spoof *The Last Trumpet of Judgment Against Hegel the Atheist and the Anti-Christ*."[111] The publication of this shorter work, once the identity of the authors was discerned by a local Hegelian newspaper, ultimately led to the dismissal of Bauer from his university post and the departure of Marx to Cologne, where his break with Young Hegelianism would begin. After this time period, Marx's thinking would quickly shift to a full rejection of Young Hegelian ideals, both philosophical and political. As he began his journalistic career at the German radical newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung* and began to become more interested in economic theory, he simultaneously began publishing a series of works attacking the Young Hegelians with whom he had previously been so close. These works included *The Holy Family* (1844), *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), and *The German Ideology* (written around 1845). I have rehearsed briefly the philosophical context of Young Hegelianism as well as Marx's interaction with the movement not merely for historical purposes, but because I argue that Marx's break with Young Hegelianism, and Max Stirner most importantly, represents the origin of the more general rift between individualism and more communally oriented leftist ideologies in general, be they anarchist, communist, socialist, or whatever. That is, the intra-leftist disagreements between communalist democratic thinking and individualism always echo the rift between Marx and Stirner. It is to Stirner's views themselves to which I turn in the next section, setting as they do the stage for nearly all subsequent developments and mutations in individualist anarchism, as well as the relationship between individualism and the Left more generally.

---

[111] Wheen, *Karl Marx,* 34.

Stirner's Egoism and the Culmination of Young Hegelianism

Max Stirner, though closely associated with the Young Hegelian circle, more often served as a foil to the work produced by the likes of Bauer, Feuerbach, and the like. Indeed, the little historical evidence we have about Stirner's personal life and reladtionships suggest that he purposely remained on the margins of his social circle. William Brazill evokes Stirner's presence at the meetings of the Young Hegelians of Berlin as "aloof and calm…willing to talk about philosophical matters, but never [speaking] about himself."[112] Friedrich Engels, who sketched the only extant depictions of Stirner, also mentions Stirner in a mock-epic poem, characterizing him as combining "restraint in his manners and extremity in his views, quietly reflective in appearance but provoking others with his ideas."[113] In terms of those provocative ideas, Stirner broadly held the Young Hegelian line on questions of religion and the Prussian monarchy, but broke with his contemporaries by pushing their lines of critique even further, arguing that the Young Hegelians had failed to see their project through fully. After having published a series of shorter articles and pieces of journalism in the early 1840s, Stirner published *The Ego and Its Own (Der Einzige und Sein Eigentum).* The book, which was a broad-based critique not only of the traditional targets of Young Hegelianism, but also the Young Hegelians themselves, specifically Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach, received wildly divergent receptions. Among the general public, it was largely ignored entirely. Indeed, the manuscript was approved surprisingly easily by the Prussian censors, given its radical content and explicit critiques of the state, and was dubbed "too absurd to be dangerous."[114] At the same time, the book has also been

---

[112] William J. Brazill, *The Young Hegelians* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 209-210.
[113] David Leopold, "A Solitary Life," in *Max Stirner,* ed. Saul Newman (London: Palgrave, 2011), 21-41, 25.
[114] John Henry Mackay, *Max Stirner: His Life and Work,* trans. Hubert Kennedy (Concord, CA: Peremptory Publications, 2005), 127.

referred to as "the most revolutionary book ever written,"[115] and this characterization is indeed more apt when the book is placed in the context of Left politics and the relationship between anarchism, Marxism, and the Young Hegelian milieu of the time. The book provoked direct responses from Moses Hess (who defended socialism against Stirner's anarchism), Ludwig Feuerbach, and an anonymous follower of Bruno Bauer, who went by the name "Szeliga."[116]

Stirner, the only Young Hegelian to explicitly declare himself an anarchist, sets up as his goal in *The Ego and its Own*, first to critique what he sees as the unfinished Young Hegelian project of ideological demystification, and second, to provide an individualist account of human development, both on the level of individual persons as well as as the grounds for a new social order. The book is divided into two major sections entitled "Man" and "I." The first section can be characterized as genealogical, "not only in the mundane sense of tracing a linear progression through modes of experience, but also in the Foucauldian sense of trying to unsettle by demonstrating that modernity fails to escape from the very thing that it claims to have outgrown."[117] Specifically, Stirner argues that in their zeal to transcend the old types of religious belief and monarchical state power, his contemporaries had only succeeded in replacing those forms with equally homogenizing and oppressive constructs that changed the type of oppression, but not its nature. Whether one's identity is determined by religious strictures, monarchical nationalism, or abstract ideals of humanism and secular citizenship, the key point is that one's identity is being determined at all, and therefore stifled. For Stirner, the individual corporality of human experience is irreducible, and attempts to subsume individuals under any umbrella whatever are all fundamentally flawed and represent attacks on subjectivity. He accurately

---

[115] James Huneker, *Egoists. A Book of Supermen* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 350
[116] Leopold, "A Solitary Life," 28
[117] David Leopold, "Introduction," to Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, xix.

glosses the general Young Hegelian humanist consensus in this way, "Be not a Jew, not a Christian, but be a human being…Assert your *humanity* against every restrictive specification; make yourself, by means of it, a human being, and free from those limits; make yourself a 'free man,' that is recognize humanity as your all determining *essence*."[118] Stirner unambiguously endorses freeing humanity from the shackles of outmoded religious visions of souls and essences (Stirner's pet term for these incorporeal ideals is "spooks"), but argues that this critique is incomplete. What else is "human being" but yet another restrictive identity specification, much like "Jew," "Christian," "Prussian," or whatever else? He writes, "I say: You are indeed more than a Jew, more than a Christian, etc., but you are also more than a human being. Those are all ideals, but you are corporeal."[119] Stirner is not here advocating some primitive form of posthumanism, by which we transcend our humanity through technological or other forms of augmentation,[120] (though as I will argue in Chapter Three, individualism is fundamentally compatible with these sorts of identity play), but rather is calling for a reevaluation of the identity categories of Enlightenment humanism, and illustrating their discursive limitations. Stirner's genealogy of homogenizing, spectral power over identity and subjectivity suggests that where "political liberalism" attacked the power of individual feudal masters, it merely replaced that master with the master of state power; where "social liberalism" aims to abolish inequality in property, it does so only by appealing to the abstract category of "ghostly society," which again only serve to subsume the individual; and where "humanistic liberalism" attempts to free people from the controlling power of religion, it does so only by replacing religious conviction

---

[118] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 114.
[119] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 114.
[120] See for the canonical statement of this sort of view, Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), and specifically the eighth chapter of that text, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century:" 149-182.

with abstract ideals of "Man."[121] Stirner summarizes his view of liberal humanism this way, "In

short, I have no calling, and follow none, not even that to be a man."[122] Importantly, Stirner

directly attacked socialist communism as participating in this religious return to abstract ideals of

humanity and community membership. Stirner accurately points out that the socialist

preoccupation with alienation is important not because of the process of alienation (on which

Stirner largely agrees with Marx), but because of the question of what one becomes alienated

from. The socialist view of alienation, on Stirner's view is that "if a factory worker must tire

himself to death twelve hours and more, he is cut off from becoming man,"[123] where "man" is

used as a proxy for a prescriptive vision of humane excellence or value. The communist still

neglects the individuality of discrete human persons in favor of their preferred religious ideals of

"laborer," "fellow worker," and the like. This discourse is still unacceptably essentialist on

Stirner's view, and is itself merely a form of religious orthodoxy. He writes, "As the communists

first declare free activity to be man's essence, they, like all work-day dispositions, need a

Sunday; like all material endeavours, they need a God."[124] It was this form of critique that so

predictably incensed Marx, and pushed him to directly and lengthily attack Stirner. Though it is

generally agreed upon that Marx's dealings with the anarchists, Stirner in particular, were

interpretively ungenerous, reliant on personal attacks, and revealing of "the authoritarian

tendency of his own social and political thought, but also the authoritarian nature of his own

personality,"[125] Marx did recognize that Stirner's extremism did indeed represent the culmination

of the Young Hegelian project of critique, and took seriously his diagnosis of concepts such as

---

[121] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 128.
[122] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 128.
[123] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 108.
[124] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 110.
[125] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 27.

"man," and historical actors such as "the worker" as merely vestigial and covert religious abstractions.[126]

The truly radical project of individualism, for Stirner, is to subvert all categories of homogenizing identification and expose the relations of power and control that exist in even the purportedly liberal rejections of things like religion and monarchical authority. In this sense, Saul Newman argues that Stirner represents an important precursor to more recent critiques of power and calls for a "politics of difference" pursued by poststructuralist thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida.[127] Stirner's exposure of a political imaginary, in mid-19th century Germany, that was still indelibly polluted with "essentialist categories that are derived from Enlightenment humanism,"[128] Stirner was inarguably ahead of his time. His positive views for a society compatible with individualist values will be discussed along with those of other individualists in Chapter Three, but the key point here is to illustrate Stirner's inauguration of anarchist individualism and his break with Marx, which I argue represents the larger break between leftist thinking and individualism in general, particularly once individualist ideas are exported to the United States and undergo certain proto-libertarian mutations.

American Anarcho-Individualism

As discussed in Chapter One, a certain breed of rugged individualism is deeply embedded in the American cultural and political consciousness. I want in this section to discuss how the arrival of Max Stirner's egoist anarchism on American shores influenced the libertarian left of the age, as well as examine how these developments set the stage for the ultimate appropriation of individualism by the current neoliberal forces of right libertarianism and conservatism.

---

[126] Breckman, *Marx, The Young Hegelians*, 303.
[127] Saul Newman, "Max Stirner and the Politics of Posthumanism," *Contemporary Political Theory 1*, no. 2 (2002): 221-238.
[128] Newman, "Max Stirner and the Politics of Posthumanism," 221.

While there were certainly important precursors to individualist anarchism in American philosophical history, the majority of the nineteenth century in American radicalism was marked much more dramatically by a tendency toward communal utopianism, which was both not generally anarchist in its orientation and much more willing to treat individuals as explicitly subordinate to communal identities. During this period, figures like Robert Owen, George Rapp, and various religious sects, drawing their inspiration often from the work of utopian social planner Charles Fourier, set out to establish perfectly harmonious communal societies apart from the control of state authority.[129] It was this utopian socialist milieu that produced arguably the first American anarchist,[130] Josiah Warren, as well as primed the American left to receive the impending English translation of *The Ego and its Own* on terms very different than those of the European context.

Warren, of whose life relatively little is known, first appears in the history of American radicalism as a follower of the utopian Robert Owen, and one of the founding settlers of an Owenite utopian socialist community, New Harmony, in Indiana in 1925. The colony at New Harmony fell apart two years later in 1927, but unlike many of the disillusioned would-be utopians, Warren's conviction of the possibility of autonomous government apart from State authority only strengthened. For Warren, the failure of New Harmony was that it had entirely failed to respect individuality and, crucially, concepts of private property and personal responsibility.[131] Warren argued that attempts to subjugate individual will and personality to a

---

[129] For American utopianism in general, see John W. Friesen & Virginia Lyons Friesen, *The Palgrave Companion to North American Utopias* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), Christopher Jennings, *Paradise Now: The Story of American Utopianism* (New York: Random House, 2016), and *America's Communal Utopias*, ed. Donald E. Pitzer (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

[130] Philosopher Crispin Sartwell, who has produced the only major collection of Warren's writings and remains one of the few scholars actively researching Warren, suggests as a more accurate characterization "the first American to publish his views whose anarchism was not primarily religious." *The Practical Anarchist: Writings of Josiah Warren*, ed. Crispin Sartwell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 2.

[131] Eunice Minette Schuster, *Native American Anarchism*, 96-97.

sense of collectivity was ultimately what doomed New Harmony, and was the fatal flaw in all forms of communalist organization, be they utopian, communist, or merely state-socialist. He wrote in his "Narrative of Practical Experiments," "It [the utopian movement] had been defeated by our attempt to govern each other, to regulate each other's movements for the common benefit, no two having the same view from one week to another. Infinite diversity instead of unity is inevitable…"[132] Though Warren was by no means opposed to the concept of common benefit, and held that rigorous respect for individuality would on the whole lead to the benefit of all, one can already see here the seeds of the right-libertarian wholesale rejection of community and valorization of private property.

Another key aspect of Warren's philosophy that serves as a precursor to explicit right-libertarianism, and contributed to the misinterpretation of Stirner among American anarchists, was his emphasis on economic exchange. The year that New Harmony failed also represented a banner year for the American labor movement, with laborers from a number of disciplines forming the Mechanics Union of Trade Associations and successfully striking for a ten-hour work day, as well the founding of the radical trade newspaper *The Mechanic's Free Press*.[133] Warren, who saw Robert Owen's proposed solutions to the problems of labor as paternalistic and wrongly capitulating to the demands of capital at the level of ownership, saw this as an opportunity for him to put forth his theory of voluntary association and economic production as a solution that genuinely respected the individual and his rights. One of the cornerstones of Warren's economic theory, which he referred in a work by the same name as "equitable commerce," was the concept of the "Time Store."[134] Effectively, the Time Stores, of which a

---

[132] Josiah Warren, "Narrative of Practical Experiments," in Sartwell, *The Practical Anarchist*, 184-218, 189.
[133] Schuster, *Native American Anarchism*, 91.
[134] Josiah Warren, *Equitable Commerce,* in Sartwell, *The Practical Anarchist*, 54-98.

number were actually established in Cincinnati and elsewhere, were meant to be places where goods could be exchanged directly for labor, represented by labor notes. Rather than a currency in the sense that the term is usually understood, Warren argued that "a stable, rational circulating medium must be nothing but a representation of a certain amount of goods or labor, a sheer placeholder for things of intrinsic value."[135] In Warren's system, if I want to purchase x number of bushels of wheat, I need to pay the wheat farmer with labor directly equivalent to the labor utilized in the production of the wheat. This system, Warren argued, both solved some of the intrinsic problems with money (inflation, speculation, artificial limitation on supply, etc.) and provided opportunities to those traditionally left behind by usual monetary systems (the homeless, poor, etc.) since they would immediately gain wealth in the form of their direct labor under this system. While there are examples of Warren's system finding success, as in his later utopian experiment on Long Island, Modern Times, it should be obvious given more recent mutations in the discourse of responsibility and personal initiative (as in Reagan and Thatcher), that Warren's vision of fair economic exchange was ripe for exploitation and appropriation by conservative and right libertarian forces.[136]

Warren's emphasis on private property and exchange, along with his interpretation of self-ownership in an economic sense centered around one's right to economically dispose of one's own labor, rather than in a metaphysical sense centered around the imperative of self-creation (as in Stirner, Emerson, and Thoreau), runs through the American individualists. Take, for example, William Batchelder Greene, another American anarchist individualist whose views were, like Warren's, significantly shaped by a negative experience with an experimental socialist

---

[135] Sartwell, *The Practical Anarchist,* 18.
[136] In fairness to Warren, it is also worth noting that he never intended his understanding of labor to be applied to a capitalist context, but held only that it was feasible after the complete elimination of money and wage slavery.

utopia, this time at George Ripley's[137] Brook Farm in eastern Massachusetts. Greene is by far

most well-known not as an anarchist per se, but rather as an economic critic, specifically of the

concept of interest. James J. Martin, one of the most important historians of American

individualist anarchism refers to Greene as "a product of the currency radicalism that

accompanied and followed the business and financial panic of 1837."[138] Greene's most well-

known works, *Mutual Banking* (1850) and *Equality* (1849), echoed Warren's critiques of

centralized state and private power in the form of banks and other organization, arguing that the

various forms of speculation, interest, and the like that had plagued the banking system in the

United States be eliminated from financial transaction. Greene, though developing a less

thoroughgoing individualist metaphysic than Warren, still couched many of his economic

critiques in the language of individualism. He writes, for example, in *Equality*, that centralized

banking, with interest and the like, puts banks in a prime position "to enable the few to bring the

many under tribute…On the side of the bank there is a small army, well equipped, well officered,

and well disciplined."[139] Greene saw the banks as essentially paramilitary organizations that

tamped down individual freedom, productivity, and generally damaged social relations. At the

same time, his solutions to the issues he saw with banking and the excesses of centralized capital

were articulated in precisely the same language as what we would today think of as right-

libertarianism, namely "increasing personal freedom" and "increasing competition and choice."

---

[137] It is interesting to note that in the American context there was something of a parallel of the Marx-Anarchist antagonism in the tensions between communist-utopianism and individualist anarchism. Where Marx broke away from Young Hegelianism toward communism, Warren, Greene, and others broke from communist-utopianism toward individualist anarchism. George Ripley, for example, anonymously published a scathing review of a reprint of Warren's *Equitable Commerce* in 1852. See James J. Martin, *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908* (Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles, 1970), 72.

[138] Martin, *Men Against the State,* xii.

[139] Quoted in Martin, *Men Against the State*, 128.

Greene's economic individualism was importantly formative in the thought of the most influential of the American individualists, Benjamin Tucker. It would be through Tucker, and his series of anarchist periodicals *The Radical Review* and *Liberty*, that European individualism of the type advocated by Stirner first made its way to the United States. Tucker, who referred to his politics not as anarchism, but as "unterrified Jeffersonianism,"[140] was in some senses the philosophical heir of a wide swathe of American leftisms, less an original thinker than a synthesizer and, in some ways, a popularizer.[141] The wide and popular distribution of *Liberty* (active from 1881-1908), which counted among its contributors and subscribers the likes of George Bernard Shaw and Walt Whitman,[142] provided the perfect avenue for the distribution of anarchist thought and writing, and was taken full advantage of by Tucker and his contemporaries. The purpose of the periodical was entirely and explicitly to advocate anarchist ideals, particularly in the tradition of Josiah Warren. The influence of Warren's economistic individualism on Tucker's early thought is apparent in the initial advertisement for *Liberty*, which read in part that the chief enemy of the publication was

> the State – The State that corrupts children, the State that trammels law; the State that stifles thought; the State that monopolizes land, the State that limits credit; the State that restricts exchange; the State that gives idle capital the power of increase, and through interest, rent, profit, and taxes, robs industrious labor of its products.[143]

Given Tucker's philosophical proclivities and the global reach of his influential publication, it was inevitable that Tucker would eventually become acquainted with Stirner's work and its European advocates, most notably John Henry Mackay, a prominent advocate of Stirnerite individualism and eventual biographer of Stirner. While the historical timeline is somewhat

---

[140] Schuster, *Native American Anarchism,* 138.
[141] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 390.
[142] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible, 389.*
[143] Quoted in Schuster, *Native American Anarchism,* 140.

muddled regarding who introduced who to Stirner's work, and though Stirner had been known in certain American anarchist circles prior to Tucker's first meeting with Mackay in the Summer of 1889, what is clear is that Tucker and Mackay immediately felt a philosophical kinship and began working together very quickly.[144] Mackay was himself a fascinating figure, and a poet and anarchist thinker of some merit in his own right. He was a prominent homosexual in European radical circles and penned a number of highly polemical and controversial defenses of free love, up to and including pederasty.[145] After the meeting between Tucker and Mackay, Mackay began publishing regularly in *Liberty* from an explicitly Stirnerite perspective, and Tucker began working, along with fellow Anarchist Steven T. Byington, on preparing the first English translation of *The Ego and its Own*, which would eventually appear in 1907. Tucker's interpretation of Stirner's individualism was directly in line with and colored by his already established commitments to the Americanized individualism of Warren, Greene, and the like, and so he saw in the work of the German a philosophical tool to advance his own vision of individualism, which again was much more economistic and reductive than Stirner ever intended. Indeed, controversies surrounding Tucker's interpretation of Stirner arose almost immediately, with Dora Marsden, a suffragette and individualist who published a Stirnerite journal *The Egoist* in the early 1900s, pointing out that Tucker was reading into Stirner and other European individualists economic themes and commitments that were simply not there, or at least were being wildly exaggerated and misinterpreted.[146] At this point, however the die of American individualist anarchism had largely been cast, and the term was fastened strongly to

---

[144] Martin, *Men Against the State*, 250.
[145] See Thomas A. Riley, *Germany's Poet-Anarchist: John Henry Mackay* (New York: The Revisionist Press, 1972).
[146] Ruth Kinna, *Anarchism* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 91.

ideas of economic freedom, choice, competition, and reductive dichotomies of selfishness and altruism, and government and private industry.

In 1908, Tucker's anarchist book shop, and the publishing office of *Liberty*, burned to the ground, forcing Tucker to flee to France. Many saw the fall of *Liberty,* the dissolution of the individualist group that had formed around the figure of Tucker, and the simultaneous rise of Anarcho-communism as the preferred radical leftist position (exemplified in Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth*), as the end of individualist sentiment in America, and it is indeed where James J. Martin ends his authoritative study of that subject.[147] However, when Tucker died in France in 1939, though his work would not be as influential on the development of the Left as Stirner's was in his time, his economistic rhetoric of individualist self-interest was already shaping the views of a very different group of political thinkers that would come to define right-libertarianism in the years to come. In the next section I will survey some of these thinkers and their thought, as well as complete my genealogical account of the development and eventual subversion of individualism in the American context, culminating in its appropriation for explicitly conservative capitalist ends.[148]

The Conservative Appropriation of Individualism

Much has recently been written about the prominent (re)emergence of individualist economic and social discourses on the American right. Perhaps the figure who has prompted the most interest in the ideological foundations of these views is that of Paul Ryan, Republican

---

[147] Martin, *Men Against the State*, 276.

[148] It is worth reiterating that I in no way mean to directly equate the views of the early American individualist anarchists discussed in this section with contemporary conservatism and right-libertarianism. Indeed, many of the views of these thinkers were genuinely radical, both in their time and today (many were early adopters of abolitionism, free love, equality for men and women in marriage, and gay rights). The point here is to show how Stirner's individualism, beginning with his feud with Marx, was appropriated and mutated through its various historical contexts to the point that individualism as a term has become automatically associated with neoliberal capitalism and unfettered self-interest.

congressman from Wisconsin and current Speaker of the House. Ryan has been very public about his philosophical affection for the work of Russian novelist Ayn Rand, who is credited by many with popularizing rightist libertarian individualism among the American populace during the middle of the 20th century. Ryan credits reading Rand in high school with sparking his interest in politics and economic policy, and claims to direct all of his congressional interns to read her most well-known work *Atlas Shrugged* (1957).[149] Donald Trump has spoken highly of Rand's *The Fountainhead* (1943), stating that "it relates to business (and) beauty (and) life and inner emotions. The book relates to…everything," and claims to personally identify with the novel's egoist protagonist Howard Roark.[150] Trump's nominee for labor secretary Andrew Pudzer (who was forced to withdraw from consideration after documents detailing alleged spousal abuse surfaced), has stated that he instructed all six of his children to read *The Fountainhead*.[151] Clearly, Rand has had a large influence on the ideology of the contemporary right, particularly on economic issues. Jennifer Burns, who has painstakingly documented Rand's work and rise in conservative circles in her *Goddess of the Market* (2009), assesses Rand's legacy in this way, "She does, however, remain a veritable institution within the American right…For over half a century Rand has been the ultimate gateway drug to life on the right."[152] It is worth mentioning here that, despite her undeniable political staying power, Rand has exerted precisely zero influence in academic philosophical circles, even among those who identify as conservative or libertarian. Robert Nozick,

---

[149] See Ryan Lizza, "Fussbudget: How Paul Ryan Captures the G.O.P.," *The New Yorker,* August 6, 2012. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/08/06/fussbudget.
Katherine Mangu-Ward*,* "Young, Wonky, and Proud of it: Wisconsin Republican Paul Ryan Makes Waves*,*" *The Weekly Standard*, March 17, 2003.
http://www.weeklystandard.com/article/3599
[150] Kirsten Powers, "Donald Trump's 'kinder, gentler' version," *USA Today,* April 11, 2016. https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/04/11/donald-trump-interview-elections-2016-ayn-rand-vp-pick-politics-column/82899566/
[151] Jennifer Anju Grossman, "Can You Love God and Ayn Rand?" *The Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 2016. https://www.wsj.com/articles/can-you-love-god-and-ayn-rand-1478823015
[152] Burns, *Goddess of the Market,* 4.

who authored the standard account of academic right-libertarian philosophy *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) is one of the few academic philosophers to even address Rand by name, and he more-or-less dismisses her philosophy as a potential moral foundation for capitalism out of hand.[153] This fact is perhaps indicative of yet another splintering of individualism once it entered the consciousness of the right, but since Rand and those in her orbit much more readily took up the mantle and language of individualism explicitly, it is their work that will be the focus of this section.

Rand seems to have viewed her philosophy and work as historically *sui generis*, conditioned neither by the material conditions of her life or his theoretical forebears. Speaking through the character of Howard Roark, she writes in a not-so-thinly-veiled reference to her own work, "I inherit nothing. I stand at the end of no tradition. I may, perhaps, stand at the beginning of one."[154] In reality, of course, Rand was undeniably in theoretical conversation with the American individualists and their European counterparts (particularly Nietzsche, in Rand's case), and she developed much of her thinking in the same way that many of the American individualists did, namely as a response to a deeply negative formative experience with communal existence, as she witnessed her father's self-made wealth forcefully reappropriated by the Red Guard during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1918, and was forced to relocate multiple times as a child due to communist-induced instability in Europe.[155] Rand's philosophy extolled the polar opposite of communal values, as well, in her eyes the repressive and irrational Christian morality, namely what she famously referred to as "the virtue of selfishness," and correspondingly preached the inherent

---

[153] See Robert Nozick, "On the Randian Argument," in his *Socratic Puzzles* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 249-264.

[154] Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), 16.

[155] Burns, *Goddess of the Market*, 9-12.

destructiveness of altruism.[156] For Rand, any proper ethic that would claim to be able to guide human conduct must above all else be rational. Her proposed system, which she called "objectivism," purported to be the first ever rational answer to "the question of *why* man needs a code of values."[157] Rand's answer to this question is, essentially, the pursuit of survival and self-interest by individuals. Rand interpreted the Nietzschean conception of the *ubermensch* to refer to the individualized forms of genius and creativity that are constantly tamped down by the strictures of society and political power.[158] While this interpretation of Nietzsche, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, is crude and reductive, as well as likely a product of Rand's own bitterness at her early professional and social failures, it lent her work a particular appeal amongst disaffected youth and individuals who felt that their own greatness had been overlooked or even suppressed by some or other aspect of society. For Rand, the solution was, essentially, capitalism. The freedom of the market was the most "rational" way of releasing the shackles that had previously fettered the great geniuses of society and provide a rational basis for organizing society, namely along the lines of intellectual, physical, and economic prowess.

Rand's work emerged alongside both a series of Red Scares in the United States, which contributed to a generalized skepticism regarding communism and communally-based political systems in general, as well as the emergence of a chorus of new economists who defended Rand's vision of the free market on economic, rather the moral grounds favored by Rand. Specifically, the rise of so-called Austrian economics and its outpost at the University of Chicago in the United States purported to empirically prop up Randian assumptions regarding individuals, capitalism, and the good. This era in economic theory represents the rise of what we know today as

---

[156] See Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (New York: Signet, 1964).
[157] Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, 9.
[158] Burns, *Goddess of the Market*, 25.

"neoliberalism," a term that has undergone a number of mutations and alterations, sometimes going by the aliases of "late capitalism," "liquid capitalism,"[159] and others. Neoliberalism is itself, as the name implies, a type of mutation, namely of economic liberalism, or what is sometimes called "classical liberalism" to emphasize the distinction. The basic principles of neoliberalism were elaborated following the 1938 Walter Lippman Colloquium in Paris, which was called explicitly to form a new liberalism as interest in classical liberal economic thinking waned. The foundational commitments ultimately produced by the participants at the colloquium are "the priority of the price mechanism, the free enterprise, the system of competition, and a strong and impartial state."[160] Two of the most important neoliberal economic theorists who were to emerge in the postwar period were attendees at the original Colloquium, namely Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises. Hayek and von Mises, along with Chicago economist Milton Friedman would go on to found the Mont Pelerin Society, an organization dedicated to developing and, critically, disseminating the ideas of neoliberal economics. The neoliberals took on board nearly all of the most foundational commitments of classical liberalism, namely a vision of economics as an objective science akin to the hard sciences of physics and chemistry, a fundamentalist Lockean view of property rights,[161] and a strong preference for negative over positive freedom. That is, the neoliberal theorists, in advocating for a government detached from people's economic lives in every way other than military protection, argued that the primary mode of freedom to be accorded individuals is that of freedom from outside interference. Individuals ought to be free from interference or restriction by government power up until the point that they threaten to infringe on

---

[159] This particular locution is Zygmunt Bauman's. See *Liquid Modernity* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2000).

[160] *The Road from Mont Pelerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective,* eds. Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 14.

[161] The most authoritative treatment of the Lockean theory of rights, and one that fundamentally undercuts Locke's labor-based theory of property is A. John Simmons, *The Lockean Theory of Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

the rights of another, third party. Naturally, this implies the freedom to dispose of one's labor and capital in whatever way one likes.[162] While this view of freedom goes back as far as John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*,[163] it was particularly centered in the economic theories advocated by the classical liberals and their neoliberal progeny.

It was the publication of Hayek's 1944 *The Road to Serfdom* that signaled the fusion in the American political imaginary of the moralistic Nietzschean individualism of Rand with the dispassionate economic individualism of the Austrian school of economics. Both Rand and Hayek pointed to the deteriorating situation in Europe as evidence of the failures of collectivism and directly mobilized individualist language, tied in their work directly to capitalism, as a counterpoint to the evils of socialism. Though neither thinker would directly identify American anarcho-individualism as an influence on their thought, the connections were made by their followers both in the public and in the academy. Followers of Rand on the student Right, for example, fashioned a new logo for the nascent Objectivist movement that imposed a shining, gold dollar sign (one of the avatars of John Galt, the hero of *Atlas Shrugged*) over the traditional anarchist black flag.[164] Murray Rothbard, a radical devotee of von Mises and the first to use the term "anarcho-capitalism" to describe his economic views, deeply admired the work of Benjamin Tucker and his lesser known contemporary Lysander Spooner. Rothbard opened his analysis of what he called "The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine," that "nothing is more needed today than a revival and development of the largely forgotten legacy that they left to political philosophy."[165] Rothbard advocated, like Tucker and Warren, the complete elimination of the state so as to maximize

---

[162] See Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in his *Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 166-217.
[163] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2003).
[164] Burns, *The Goddess of the Market,* 253.
[165] Murray N. Rothbard, "The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine: An Economist's View," *The Journal of Libertarian Studies 20*, no. 1 (2006): 5-15, 5.

personal liberty in the economic realm, and agreed with Rand that this would open up the space for human creativity to unfold unhindered.

Rothbard's anarcho-capitalist individualism is the philosophical terminus at the extreme right of the individualist anarchism of Max Stirner, a view with which, as Chapter Three will demonstrate, it is fundamentally incompatible. When "individualism" is attacked by those on the left who advocate the range of views from state socialism to communistic anarchism, it is generally the views described in the last section of this chapter that they have in mind, and these views are indeed anathema to many traditionally leftist commitments, such as democratic community, a sense of the common good, and basic human empathy. Having traced the mutation of Stirner's original articulation of individualist anarchism, and particularly his negative critique of the state and the project of enlightenment humanism, up to the current era of neoliberal capitalism, the next chapter will, drawing on not only Stirner but a suite of other early individualist thinkers, construct a view of individualism that not only runs counter to the neoliberal individualisms just discussed, but also serves as a powerful ally to other leftisms.

CHAPTER THREE

LEFT-ANARCHO-INDIVIDUALISM: A POSITIVE VISION

Having reviewed the historical development of individualist thinking within anarchism, and diagnosing what I see as the perversion of the core of individualism by neoliberal capitalist rationality, this chapter will, drawing on the work of some of the individualist thinkers surveyed in Chapter 2, lay out a positive, synthetic understanding of individualism as both an ontological and socio-political worldview that I believe ought to be attractive to leftists of many types, particularly in the struggle to resist neoliberal late capitalism. I have previously spoken in terms of "individualism" or "anarcho-individualism" in general terms, focusing more on the historical development of the tradition. In this chapter I will articulate a view of what I will call "left-anarcho-individualism" and distinguish that view from the "right-anarcho-individualism" described in the conclusion of the previous chapter.[166] While both views are "individualist" in a basic sense, it is the political and ethical dimensions of each view that render them importantly distinct. Chapter 4 will lay out what I see as some of the most powerful objections to the left-anarcho-individualist view presented here and answer them.

Individualism as an Ontological Commitment: The Primacy of Subjectivity and Identity

At the foundation of individualism lies a suite of ontological claims about the nature of the individual, the nature of freedom, and, by extension, the nature of society. Eunice Minette Schuster, in her study of the American anarchist tradition, succinctly sums the individualist view (which she controversially attributes to all anarchists) this way, "The Individual for the anarchist is the only social reality. Society has no existence, *per se*, as distinct from the individuals who

---

[166] In the remainder of the dissertation, whenever I use terms such as "individualism" or "individualist," it is to the left-anarcho-individualist view that I refer unless otherwise specified.

compose it."[167] Put more expansively in the words of American anarchist Benjamin Tucker,

"Man sums up in his being all the universe contains."[168] This particular social ontology, which

centers the individual as of primary importance in philosophical and political theorizing, runs

throughout all of the individualist thinkers, including those who would mobilize their thought for

conservative capitalist ends, an overlap which has led many to dismiss individualism out of hand

as a useful tool for leftist resistance, a mistake that I will address in Chapter 4.

The particular approaches taken by the various individualist thinkers differ in some minor

ways, but the general thrust of their ontological approaches to individualism are, in the main,

very similar. In general, individualists are interested in the unavoidably subjective, first-person

nature of human experience of being a specific, discrete person in the world. In this sense, the

foundational ontological concern of individualism can be said to be existentialist in some

regards, and many commentators have made explicit the connections between the left-anarcho-

individualism of Stirner, Emerson, and others with the existentialist tradition represented by

Nietzsche, Sartre, and others. Herbert Read, for example, makes this connection perhaps most

explicitly, noting that

> Existentialism is eliminating all systems of idealism, all theories of life or being that
> subordinate man to an idea, to an abstraction of some sort. It is also eliminating all
> systems of materialism that subordinate man to the operation of physical and economic
> laws. It is saying that man is the reality - not even man in the abstract, but the human
> person, you and I; and that everything else – freedom, love, reason, God – is a
> contingency depending on the will of the individual.[169]

The point Read is making here is simply that, for the existentialists and individualists alike, the

individual both is ontologically primary (rather than abstract concepts of society and so on) and

---

[167] Schuster, *Native American Anarchism,* 7.
[168] Benjamin R. Tucker, "Chips from My Studio," in *Radical Review vol. 1*, ed. Benjamin R. Tucker (New Bedford, MA: Office of Publication, 1877): 367-396
[169] Herbert Read, *Existentialism, Marxism, and Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1952), 86.

ought never to be treated as subsumable under any other abstract heading. The individualist

begins with the subjective lived-experience of the individual, and lets those experiences serve as

the basis of all further theorizing and action. Max Stirner ably elucidates the starting point of

individualist philosophy in the opening to *The Ego and its Own*, writing "From the moment

when he catches sight of the light of the world a man seeks to find out *himself* and get hold of

himself out of its confusion, in which he, with everything else, is tossed about in motley

mixture."[170] Emerson poetically echoes Stirner's vision of the "motley mixture" of our subjective

experience in the opening of his aptly titled "Experience,"

> Where do we find ourselves? In a series of which we do not know the extremes, and
> believe that it has none. We wake and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us,
> which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward
> and out of sight…All things swim and glitter.[171]

Both Stirner and Emerson here are describing what they take to be the fundamental nature of

human existence and experience, namely the fact that we are always engaged in a never-ending

process of attempting to make sense of the world and of ourselves as beings in that world. It is

the first task of the individual, on the individualist view, to reckon with the simple but strange

fact that we exist at all. Agnese Maria Fortuna argues that both Emerson and his

Transcendentalist contemporary Henry David Thoreau saw the search for authenticity and the

expression thereof as an unavoidable ontological fact of human existence. She writes that for the

Transcendentalists, "Individuals are basically conceived as expressing selves…Therefore, to

express self is not evidently a matter of self-satisfaction or complacency…nor is it a simple

question of finding a good use for personal talents. The worth of expression rests on its

---

[170] Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own,* 13.
[171] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Experience," in *The Major Prose*, eds. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 226-249, 227.

unavoidability."[172] It is this unavoidability of confrontation with the self and the need for self-creation that forms the most fundamental ontological commitment of the individualist.

In this sense, the early individualists seem to be prefiguring some aspects of the work of Martin Heidegger, who, in his *Being and Time,* would famously call for a philosophical return to the question of Being as such that he felt had been lost in Western philosophy. Specifically, the individualist attitude toward experience seems to be of a piece with Heidegger's concept of "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*).[173] The essential aspects of thrownness have to do with the unchosen and yet unavoidable fact of simply being somebody in the world, with concerns, responsibilities, relationships, and the full suite of human limitations and capacities. As Taylor Carman puts it, "I am constantly thrown into taking on responsibility for my being…my responsibility for my own being is thrust upon me; it accrues to me just in virtue of my being-in-the-world."[174] Katherine Withy glosses the concept of thrownness in terms more directly in line with Stirner and Emerson, claiming that "Pure thrownness is the fact that there is and has to be sense-making, rather than not…Explicitly formulated, the reflective question…is, 'What is it to be a sense-maker (rather than not)?'"[175] While it would be wrong to label Heidegger as an individualist in the same way that one might use that term apropos Emerson or Stirner, there is no doubt that Heidegger's understanding of the fundamental nature of the human subject is deeply in line with the understanding of the individual shared by the individualist thinkers.

---

[172] Agnese Maria Fortuna, "Expressing Being: The Perfectionism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau," *Vivens Homo* 27, no. 2 (2016): 225-256.

[173] Heidegger first introduces this term in section 29 of *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 174.

[174] Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 289

[175] Katherine Withy, "Situation and Limitation: Making Sense of Heidegger on Thrownness," *European Journal of Philosophy* 22, no. 1 (2011): 61-81, 75.

In this sense, there is an important distinction to be made in the individualist understanding of the nature of the individual herself. By centering the individual ontologically, the individualist does not simply mean that all humans are atomically isolated, Leibnizian monads that do not interact or comingle in meaningful ways. Rather, the claim of the individualist is that the question of what is it like to be a person, of the inside-out view of the world that we invariably have as humans, and of how we create ourselves and our identities out of the experiences that we have from that subjective first-person point of view must be central in our thinking about the world. What this means in practice is that individualists reject both the claim that social forms and identities are intelligible apart from individuals as well as the claim that individuals are always invariably subject to the influences of these social forms. Social identities and forms are viewed by the individualist as generally stifling, oppressive, and to be subverted by individual expressions of uniqueness and the quest for self-creation. The individualist rejects hierarchically imposed forms of homogenization as unacceptable forms of oppression, and calls for a rethinking of social forms so as to allow more space for the free development and self-creation of all people.

There is an important parallel here to draw between this positive understanding of the individualist claim regarding social forms and a critical insight provided by critical feminist and race scholarship, namely the rejection of essentializing narratives regarding groups of people as a way of undermining and subverting the power relations that those narratives reinforce and instantiate. Anti-essentialism, as theorized by critical race, feminist, queer, and other theorists of identity construction and formation, holds that overly general claims and narratives about oppressed populations are often deployed by social power structures in order to uphold and justify the systems of oppression that are in place in a given historical context. In feminist

69

thinking, for example, there is a long tradition, going back even to Simone de Beauvoir's proto-

constructionist claim that "One is not born, but rather becomes woman,"[176] of critiquing

essentialist narratives that "deploy accounts of women's hormones, anatomy, and physiology

(especially in terms of menstruation and reproduction) to justify the political and social

domination of women by men."[177] In recent years, the critique of essentialism has been

importantly expanded by women of color and women who otherwise do not fit the standard

historical feminist mold of white and middle-class. For these critics, the traditional feminist

subject has been problematically generalized along racial, economic, ability, and other lines that

obscures and flattens the unique and deeply diverse experiences of women cross-contextually.[178]

These developments have in large part been spurred on by the encounter between feminist theory

and the various postmodern decenterings of the subject in relation to social power relations

exposed by the likes of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and others.[179] Some have argued that

the critiques of essentialism have been overapplied or otherwise taken too far beyond their

usefulness,[180] but the general spirit of the anti-essentialist critique, i.e. that it problematically

---

[176] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 283.

[177] Bonnie Mann, "World Alienation in Feminist Thought: The Sublime Epistemology of Emphatic Anti-Essentialism," *Ethics & the Environment* 10, no. 2 (2005): 45-74, 48.

[178] For helpful general surveys of these debates and the development of feminist thinking on essentialism, see Cressida Heyes, *Line Drawings: Defining Women Through Feminist Practice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), and Alison Stone, "Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (2004): 135-153.

[179] See Mann, "World Alienation," 53-56.

[180] See *The Essential Difference,* eds. Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994). It is worth taking a moment to note Gayatri Spivak's call, which is not exactly a critique of anti-essentialism, for a form of what she calls "Strategic" essentialism. For Spivak, while it is critical to rhetorically and philosophically reject the absolutist universal narratives that reduce women and other oppressed subjects to a collection of pre-established characteristics and tendencies, it is also important to realize the strategic value of deploying those pre-made identities in struggles against oppression. That is, Spivak argues that oppressed groups must sometimes unite based precisely on these essentialized narratives in order to represent themselves effectively on the stage of socio-cultural power to demand rights and to challenge their own oppression. While the question of collective versus individual resistance will be addressed specifically in the next chapter, it is important to note that the individualist would generally be entirely amenable to Spivak's suggestion here, as it conforms with the central individualist tenet that identities and the mobilization of them are at the discretion of individuals. That is, if an individual determines that aligning along essentialist lines with a particular group or another is beneficial in terms of rights recognition (or for another goal), the individual is free to do that, or not. Of course, the individualist position

erases critical differences between individuals' experiences in a way that reinscribes oppressive power relations, is one that is still of profound importance in the struggle for liberation among oppressed groups.

A relatively extreme representative example of this anti-essentialist insight in racial theory is the work of Paul Gilroy, who has called for a fundamental break with "the dangerous and destructive patterns that were established when the rational absurdity of 'race' was elevated into an essential concept and endowed with a unique power to both determine history and explain its selective unfolding."[181] Gilroy argues for a radically humanist, and admittedly utopian, vision of social relationships that does not employ racial concepts, either for solidarity and communal organization or, more importantly perhaps, oppression and persecution. Despite the "hard-won, oppositional identities" that racial categories can and do support among marginalized peoples, Gilroy argues that these categories are always ultimately the concepts of "rulers, owners, and persecutors," and for that reason must be rejected by those on which they are foisted.[182] In this sense, Gilroy's critique of the use of racialized thinking both by those who use it as a basis of oppression as well as those who would take it up for their own uses is fundamentally individualist in orientation, and the classic individualists would emphatically support Gilroy's call for eliminating race as a social category that is imposed from the top down and, importantly, all-too-often utilized for purposes of oppression.

---

would be that society should never be organized such that these types of group mobilizations are necessary, but in world where they are, the individualist would not in any way deny their usefulness or the right of oppressed peoples to undertake them. See her "Feminism, Criticism and the Institution," *Thesis Eleven* 10/11 (1984-85): 175-87.

[181] Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 14.

[182] Gilroy, *Against Race,* 12. Another key aspect of Gilroy's critique in the book has to do with certain isometries he isolates between historical fascism and the performance of identity in authoritarian cultures, on the one hand, and recent developments in corporate multiculturalism and black popular culture, on the other. This aspect of the book is less relevant to my project, but has been critiqued by other critical race scholars on a number of grounds. See Patricia Hill Collins, "Review Symposium: Between Camps/Against Race," *Ethnicities* 2, no. 4 (2002): 539-60.

Perhaps the clearest example of the individualist approach to social categories and relations is the advent and development of transgender studies and the various other approaches to "queering" gendered identities as a theoretical and political force in intellectual life. The subversion and disruption of historical and contemporary gender norms of appearance, dress, behavior, and the like represented by the transgender community, what Stephen Whittle has referred to as the effects of "gender outlaws,"[183] is precisely the type of identity-work called for by Emerson, Stirner, Vaneigem, and others in the individualist tradition. The emphasis on the fluidity, irreducibility, and play[184] in the approach to gender identity advocated by many transgender and queer theorists is something that the individualist tradition calls for to be applied across the board to all possible types of identity. As Judith Butler suggests, the idea that gender identities are fundamentally spectral, and socially imposed in order to maintain certain types of power relations can "open up possibilities for reassignment that excite [their] sense of agency, play, and possibility."[185]

This language of possibility, freedom, and play with respect to the creation and, often, changing of one's own identity runs throughout the classical individualists, and is applied to all types of problematically homogenizing imposed identities. The individualist equally rejects imposed gender identities, imposed racial identities, and imposed cultural identities. The critical point for the individualist understanding of identity is that the individual is the one who is in

---

[183] Stephen Whittle, "Foreword," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, eds. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (London: Routledge, 2006), xi-xvi, xiii.
[184] By "play" here I do not mean to suggest that transgender identities are somehow less serious or legitimate than others, or that transgenderism is a form of temporary play-acting, beyond which is the individual's "real" or "true" identity. Rather I only mean to signify the insight offered by this body of literature that gender identities are malleable, performative, and can indeed be approached playfully. This is of course nor representative of the feelings of many transgender people, who, as Susan Stryker rightly points out "consider their sense of gendered self *not* to be subject to their instrumental will, not divestible, not a form of play." Susan Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, eds. (London: Routledge, 2006), 1-17, 10.
[185] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004), 98.

control of who they are, and who they want to be. This is not a one-time choice made with any sort of deterministic outcome, but is rather an ongoing and slippery process. In much the same way that critical race theorists have argued that culture is fluid, malleable, and fundamentally not static in any meaningful way, individualists argue that the self and identity should be thought of as open to change, play, and fluidity. In a similar way to how thinkers like Butler speak about and understand gender and the queering thereof, the individualist can be understood as suggesting that we explore how we might be able to queer all identity formations and socially imposed roles.[186]

Many of the individualists couch their understanding of identity explicitly in this type of language of experimentation. Emerson, for example, speaks approvingly in "Self-Reliance" of the feeling of whimsy that his experiments in identity can provide, and in an anticipation of modern-day concepts like gender non-conformity, argues that self-reliance, rather than the rugged individualist caricature often suggested by his less charitable interpreters, is the aversion to conformity, which in his eyes is "the virtue in most request" by society in general.[187] Stanley Cavell interprets Emerson's admonishment to self-creation and experimentation as an injunction not to follow some set standard of excellence or a predetermined identity, but rather to follow one's own whim and internal compass. He writes, "To say, 'follow me and you will be saved,' you must be sure you are of God. But to say, 'follow in yourself what I have followed in mine and you will be saved,' you merely have to be sure you are following yourself."[188] What is

---

[186] The recent theoretical and political dustup surrounding the publication of an article endorsing the concept of transracialism (in reference to the controversy surrounding Rachel Dolezal, the white woman who claimed to culturally and racially identify as black) is perhaps an indicator of how difficult the type of identity work called for by the individualists is in our current socio-cultural climate. See Rebecca Tuvel, "In Defense of Transracialism," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 32, no. 2 (2017): 263-278.

[187] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Major Prose*, eds. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015),127-151, 130.

[188] Stanley Cavell, "An Emerson Mood," in *The Senses of Walden* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 139-160, 160.

critical about this injunction of Emerson's is that what is to be followed in each individual may be, and indeed is likely to be, radically different, but each individual identity, though they may change over time and even moment to moment, grants to each individual the same feeling of subjective belonging to oneself and authenticity that cannot be attained simply by participating in large-scale social identities or labels. This common subjective sense of self-belonging is what Emerson will eventually argue serves as the basis of friendship and social relations.

A related approach to self-creation and freedom from social identity formations is taken by Friedrich Nietzsche, a thinker who, along with Stirner, is often cited as a philosophical precursor to existentialism. One of the important aspects of the perpetual and rigorous critique of all homogenizing and reductive social forms, for the individualist, is the conviction that the individual has a right (and indeed a duty, as Emerson suggests) to take control of shaping herself according to her own vision of herself and of the good life. This aspect of individualism is clearly articulated in the work of Nietzsche, which attempts to bridge the divide between a conviction that individuals are inherently called to mold themselves in the ways they see fit and the knowledge that the conditions of human existence are often largely not of our own choosing. Ariela Tubert refers to this strain of Nietzsche's work as "freedom as self-creation," and argues that, for Nietzsche, "freedom is acting in accordance with one's own values, which he often refers to as self-mastery and self-creation."[189] Indeed, this is reflected in a number of passages from Nietzsche's work, as when he remarks in *Beyond Good and Evil,* that "In man *creature* and *creator* are united: in man there is material, fragment, excess, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in man there is also creator, formgiver, hammer, hardness, spectator, divinity, and seventh day..."[190]

---

[189] Ariela Tubert, "Nietzsche's Existentialist Freedom," *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 46, no. 3 (2015): 409-424, 418.
[190] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989), 225

Similarly, in characterizing his vision of the truly free individual, he argues that "the 'free' human being, the possessor of a long, unbreakable will, has in this possession his *standard of value* as well...the proud knowledge of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and fate, has sunk into his lowest depths and has become instinct."[191] Importantly, this freedom to self-create in Nietzsche's work is not simply an option which is available to humans but is rather, in a way which aligns Nietzsche closely with the thinking of Emerson, a moral imperative that we as humans cannot avoid.

Taking on board the ontological commitments of individualism outlined above, namely the immediacy of our subjective experience of our own individuality as thrown into a morass from which we must differentiate ourselves, Nietzsche moves toward the normative position that humans *ought* to engage with this freedom to self-creation which is offered them by their ontological lot in life. One who fully and creatively participates in the process of constant self-overcoming and re-making is what Nietzsche famously refers to as the *Ubermensch.* This term is one which needs a significant amount of explication to avoid some of the historically problematic associations which have grown up around Nietzsche's use of it and its subsequent interpretations and the uses to which it has politically been put, particularly in connection to the rise of Nazism in WWII Germany. Generally speaking, the term *Ubermensch* has been construed as what Bernd Magnus refers to as an "ideal type,"[192] which represents a prescriptive set of traits, qualities, and values which must be aspired to by each individual person in society; a sort of heroic individual which is set apart from the mediocrity of the crowd and who serves as model for their own behavior and self-shaping activity. An important aspect of this interpretation of the

---

[191] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality,* trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1998), 37.
[192] Bernd Magnus, "Perfectibility and Attitude in Nietzsche's *Ubermensch*," *The Review of Metaphysics* 36, no. 3 (1983): 633-659.

Ubermensch has to do with the idea that he embodies a new moral code which is somehow

higher or more transcendent than the current moral standards, something which is often seen to

play directly into the fascistic tendencies which are often drawn out of Nietzsche's work.[193]

Going back as far as the introduction written for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by Nietzsche's sister

(herself the fount of many of the most pernicious and egregious misinterpretations of her

brother's work, including the imagined ties to Nazism), we see this interpretation at work. She

writes,

> The phrase 'the rearing of the *Ubermensch*' has very often been misunderstood. By
> the word 'rearing,' in this case, is meant the act of modifying by means of new and
> higher values – values which, as laws and guides of conduct and opinion, are now
> to rule over mankind...a new table of valuations must be placed over mankind –
> namely, that of the strong, mighty, and magnificent man, overflowing with life and
> elevated to his zenith – the *Ubermensch*, who is now put before us with overpowering
> passion as the aim of our life, hope, and will...This type must not be regarded as a
> fanciful figure...it is meant to be a possibility which mean of the present could realize
> with all their spiritual and physical energies, provided they adopted the new values.[194]

This interpretation of the *Ubermensch* figure is not one which was simply advocated by

Nietzsche's sister, well known for bastardizing for her own political ends her brother's work.

Much more recently, a similar view is advocated by J.P. Stern, who makes the ties to fascism

quite explicit, writing of the *Ubermensch*,

> We for our part are bound to look askance at this questionable doctrine. We can hardly
> forget that the solemn avowal of this reduplicated self – the pathos of personal
> authenticity – was the chief tenet of fascism and National Socialism. No man came closer
> to the full realization of self-created 'values' than A. Hitler.[195]

---

[193] It is interesting here to compare the supposedly Fascistic individualist tendencies in Nietzsche's work with Paul
Gilroy's claim that Fascism arises not out of the raising up of the individual but in a tribalistic and fanatical assertion
of group identity. See n. 181 above.
[194] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche,* Introduction to *Thus Spake [sic] Zarathustra* (New York:
Random House, 1927), xxi.
[195] J. P. Stern, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978), 85-86.

While it would be disingenuous to deny that there are moments in Nietzsche's writing that are tempting to cite in support of these types of interpretations, particularly when taken out of context, it is equally important to recognize the countervailing tendencies in Nietzsche as well as the fact that he himself explicitly rejected this interpretation of the concept of the *Ubermensch* in *Ecce Homo*, writing that

> The word '*Ubermensch,'* as a designation of a type of supreme achievement, as opposed to 'modern' men, to 'good' men, to Christians and other nihilists...has been understood almost everywhere with perfect innocence in the sense of those very values whose opposite Zarathustra was meant to represent – that is, as an 'idealistic' type of a higher kind of man, half 'saint,' half 'genius.'[196]

Given that there are good reasons to be suspicious of the "ideal type" interpretation of Nietzsche's *Ubermensch* here, we ought to ask after a better, more consistent interpretation. Bernd Magnus has proposed what he refers to as the "attitudinal" or "diagnostic" interpretation of the *Ubermensch*, which emphasizes not any specific set of qualities or values which the *Ubermensch* is supposed to embody or model, but rather certain attitudes or approaches which are characteristic of the *Ubermensch*.[197] For Magnus, we ought to reject the interpretation of Nietzsche's *Ubermensch* which holds him up as any kind of human ideal of perfection or "an algorithm telling us how, what, and when to choose"[198] in favor of an understanding of the *Ubermensch* as a diagnostic concept which serves as "an underdetermined embodiment...of a certain attitude toward life and the world."[199] This less prescriptive understanding of the

---

[196] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*, trans. Duncan Large (London: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37.
[197] Magnus, "Perfectibility and Attitude in Nietzsche's *Ubermensch*." See also Bernd Magnus, *Nietzsche's Existentialist Imperative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978).
[198] Magnus, "Perfectibility and Attitude in Nietzsche's *Ubermensch*," 643.
[199] Magnus, "Perfectibility and Attitude in Nietzsche's *Ubermensch*," 643.

Ubermensch as a general guideline for how one is to approach life, namely taking on the burden of self-creation and, indeed, self-perfection, seriously.

Ultimately, the key difference, then, between the social ontologies of left-individualism a la Stirner, Nietzsche, and Emerson, and the right-individualism discussed in Chapter Two has to do with their orientation toward the self. The major focus of the anarcho-capitalist individualism of Rothbard, Rand, and the like is fundamentally objective in its orientation. The individual is conceptualized and treated as above all else rational, and as playing a role in the objective science of free-market economics. Insofar as subjectivity in right-individualism is considered at all, it is in the attempt to capture and quantify the economic preferences and desires of individuals. By contrast, left-individualism centers subjectivity from the beginning, orienting its entire view of the social space around the experiences of the individuals who exist in and create both that space and themselves in it. Emerson's understanding of self-reliance as self-creation would be entirely foreign to Hayek, for example, who understands individuals only as nodes of economic exchange.

Having detailed the ontological commitments of the individualism I advocate here, as well as describing the ways in which that individualism sees the relation of individuals to their identity formations, I want to address directly the understanding of society and political commitments of individualism. I argue that an anarchist political theory is the most consistent with the individualism I have been discussing, and that it is the distinct set of political beliefs, strategies, and ideals that set apart left-anarcho-individualism from other forms individualist thought, such as anarcho-capitalism. In the next section, I discuss how left-anarcho-individualism sees society, social forms, and why these socio-political commitments necessitate a rejection of both state and corporate authority. I will then conclude the chapter with a

somewhat briefer discussion of various potentialities for left-anarcho-individualist society, and illustrate why, despite how it may appear, such a term is in no way a contradiction or oxymoronic.

Individualism as a Political Commitment: State, Economy, and Culture as Homogenizing Forces

In her 1993 book *The Return of the Political*, Chantal Mouffe provides a set of considerations and questions that can be seen as inaugurating the turn from ontological individualism to political, and ultimately, anarchist individualism. She writes,

> How can we grasp the multiplicity of relations of subordination that affect an individual if we envisage social agents as homogeneous and united entities? What characterizes the struggle of the new social movements is precisely the multiplicity of subject positions which constitute a single agent and the possibility that this multiplicity can become the site of an antagonism and thereby politicized.[200]

While Mouffe's broader goal in that book is, roughly, to attempt to rescue liberal democracy from itself, a project that the individualist, for reasons that will become clear, sees as fundamentally flawed, the animating concerns she lays out here are in many ways the same as those animating the left-anarcho-individualist political project. It is, I argue, the socio-political project of left-anarcho-individualism that sets it apart more than its ontological commitments. After all, one might readily accept that individuals are ontologically primary while still holding that social roles, mores, and cooperative goals still supersede the individual once they are established. This is arguably the view held by the classical social contract theorists.

For left-anarcho-individualism, the political and social corollary to the ontological emphasis on individual subjectivity is a global critique of all imposed political and social identifications, which individualists see as serving only to homogenize, reduce, and flatten

---

[200] Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 12.

subjective experience unjustifiably and to both individual and collective detriment. I argue that this takes two major forms in individualist thinking: first, a critique of capitalism, and second a critique of state power and socio-cultural categories. Importantly, these imposed identifications also always reinforce pre-existing power relations and mechanisms of both state and social control. Recall from Chapter Two Max Stirner's extension of the Young Hegelian critique of religious identification to the concept of "Man" itself. For the left-anarcho-individualists, where the identifications of "Christian," "Jew," "Muslim," and so on (even more pernicious, is adding the modifier "good" to any of those) represented a type of reductive control of individual identities and a way of maintaining the power of the various churches, so do concepts like "Man," "Consumer," "Citizen," and the like serve the same structural purpose. Some such identifications directly undergird state power, others the power of capital, and still others social relations of control. Political ideologies of all stripes, be they fascist, liberal, nationalist, or whatever all mobilize homogenizing identities to ensure conformity and control. Thus, where the left-anarcho-individualist would concur with the anarcho-capitalist in their commitment to dismantling governmental power, the rationales could not be more different, as the left-anarcho-individualist calls also for the dismantling of the power of capital.

The thinker who has theorized the socio-political import of left-anarcho-individualism perhaps most thoroughly is Raoul Vaneigem, associate of the Situationist International. Vaneigem is often represented as the more poetic, chaotic foil to the more well-known Guy Debord, whose *The Society of the Spectacle,* represents the most influential and lasting contribution of the SI.[201] It was, however, arguably the publication of Vaneigem's *The*

---

[201] See Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1999).

Revolution of Everyday Life[202] in 1967 that more directly inspired and fed the revolutionary ardor

that exploded in the student protests of May 1968 in France.[203] Vaneigem's book would be

quoted at rallies, used in graffiti, and carried in the back pockets of protestors throughout that

event and others afterwards. Though Vaneigem's work is often reductively juxtaposed with

Debord's on a spectrum of anarchism to Marxism, subjectivity to objectivity,[204] Vaneigem had

an important and well-developed theory of socio-political control and homogenization via

identifications and social roles. Vaneigem diagnosed the various forms of oppression, violence,

malaise, and depression experienced in their various modalities in modern life as stemming from

forced, rote participation in ideological social identities. Vaneigem stands firmly on the primacy

of the subjective in the project of political and economic liberation. He writes,

> The concept of class struggle constituted the first marshalling of responses to the shocks
> and injuries which people experience as individuals; it was born in the whirlpool of
> suffering which the reduction of human relationships to the mechanisms of exploitation
> created everywhere in industrial societies. It issued from a will to transform the world
> and change life...Anyone who talks about revolution and class struggle without referring
> explicitly to everyday life – without grasping what is subversive about love and positive
> in the refusal of constraints – has a corpse in his mouth.[205]

For Vaneigem, and I would argue the individualists more generally, both the fundamental evils

of capitalist oppression and the primary means of ultimately subverting that oppression[206] are

inescapably subjective, and begin with our inner experiences of our social world and roles in it.

In this connection. Vaneigem makes a distinction between "identity," which is the authentic and

self-fulfilled expression of our genuine interiority, and "identification," which represents the

---

[202] Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012).

[203] See Julian Eagles, "Marxism, Anarchism and the Situationists' Theory of Revolution," *Critical Sociology* 43, no. 1 (2017): 13-36.

[204] Debord generally theorized in a more dispassionate manner than Vaneigem, and participated in Marxist discourses of the science of dialectical materialism and the like.

[205] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 10-11.

[206] I will address individualism as a base of resistance in Chapter Four

uncritical ways we play our various social roles at the behest of power.[207] In the context of our

roles as consumers under capitalism, for example, he writes "At first glance the main thing

would seem to be the choice of the 'consumable image.' The housewife-who-uses-Fairy-Snow is

different…to the housewife-who-uses-Tide."[208] Here Vaneigem is rehearsing the common but

important critique of capitalism that it provides merely surface-level, meaningless choices as a

way of providing an illusion of identity and individuality when in reality all individuals are

precisely the same in the eyes of capital, i.e. they are consumers; what is consumed is of nearly

no importance whatsoever to the fundamental structure of the system.[209] These types of

meaningless loyalties to a label (e.g. Tide or Fairy Snow) are what Vaneigem calls

"identifications." In keeping with the individualist centering of subjectivity, Vaneigem argues

that capitalist oppression functions most insidiously in its effects on subjective experience,

homogenizing totally both individual identities as well as every moment of our daily existences.

He writes "The bourgeoisie for its part does not dominate. It exploits. It does not *subject* people

so much as *wear them out*."[210] Though the term "neoliberalism" had not entered the popular

lexicon at the time, Vaneigem importantly anticipated David Harvey's characterization of that

particular mutation of capitalism as "the financialization of everything,"[211] in that he was able to

diagnose the ways in which neoliberal capitalism had begun to seep into every aspect of human

existence, robbing them of those aspects that made them distinctly human to begin with. He

traces the gradual phasing out of joy, love, friendship, and so on under the imperatives of

neoliberal production and rationality, concluding that these forms of human relation and

---

[207] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 118-121.
[208] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 119.
[209] This is another distinguishing mark between the left-individualists and anarcho-capitalist tendencies. For the right-individualists, expression via purchasing power and disposing of one's capital in the way one prefers is a genuine and legitimate exercise of freedom.
[210] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 38.
[211] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 33

expression only temporarily "found refuge in…oases doomed to disappear as the dictatorship of quantified exchange (market value) colonized everyday life and turned that too into a market."[212] The individualists hold that the evil of the marketization is not solely, nor even primarily, the material conditions it imposes on people, but that it is fundamentally anti-human, reducing human beings to mere objects of exchange and homogenizing them under umbrella identities (worker, producer, owner, slave, etc.). The relationships, activities, and interactions that make human life something worth celebrating are undercut when they are subjected to the dictates of the market. Vaneigem writes,

> Systematically quantified (first by money and then by what might be called 'sociometric units of power'), exchange corrupts all human relationships, feelings, and thoughts. Wherever exchange rules, only *things* remain in a world of human objects frozen in place in the organigrams of the cybernetic powers-that-be: a world of reification.[213]

This critique of capitalist rationality, though it extends to the suffering that that economic form inflicts materially on a daily basis, argues that the fundamental evil committed by capitalism, that which enables all the other harm it causes, is its view of the human person, namely as an object reducible to brand identifications and relations of exchange. The individualist holds, rather, that "The individual is irreducible: subject to change but not to exchange."[214] However, this irreducibility applies beyond the realm of neoliberal economic reductionism into the political and social realms as well.

Much like Stirner extended the Young Hegelian critique of religion to the very categories employed by the Young Hegelians themselves, Vaneigem mobilizes the common leftist critique of capitalism to critique the left itself as participating in the same type of ultimately meaningless,

---

[212] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 62.
[213] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 63.
[214] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 95.

homogenizing identification. He writes, referring back to the false distinction between the Tide

user and the Fairy Snow user,

> The Labour voter differs from the Conservative voter, and the Communist from the
> Christian Democrat, in much the same way. But such differences are increasingly hard to
> discern…Eventually identification with anything at all, like the need to consume anything
> at all, becomes more important than brand loyalty to a particular type of car, idol, or
> politician. The essential thing, surely, is to alienate people from their desires and pen
> them in the spectacle, the policed zone. Good or bad, honest or criminal, left-wing or
> right-wing – what does the *mould* matter, so long as we are engulfed by it?[215]

This extension of the critique of capital to the political and social realm is of critical importance

to the left-anarcho-individualist project, as it suggests that not only are the choices that we are

presented by capital meaningless, but similarly the choices we are presented by political parties,

economic doctrines, cultural group identifications, and so on are also fundamentally

meaningless, predicated as they are on the existence of larger-scale relations of power and

control. Identification as a Communist, Christian, Latino, and so on are all the socio-political

equivalents of brand identities, and falsely homogenize the irreducible nature of subjectivity in

precisely the same way that the pseudo-choices of capitalism do. For the individualist, so long as

our identities are simply chosen, or assumed unconsciously, out of a pre-established array of

acceptable options presented to us by power, power wins. It is only the radical rejection of these

homogenizing identifications and subversion of their expectations that genuine revolutionary

progress can be made. The ontological irreducibility of subjective experience then serves as a

grounding for the rejection of those socio-political forces that would attempt that reduction.

Emerson is again illustrative of this rejection of socially dictated identifications when he

calls for the continual rejection of conformity and his famous "hobgoblin of little minds, adored

---

[215] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 119.

by little statesmen and philosophers and divines," namely consistency.[216] For Emerson, authenticity (Vaneigem's "identity") requires aversion to conformity, which "loves not realities and creators, but names and customs."[217] He goes on to name various social identifications that impinge on uniqueness and authenticity, including familial roles and conceptions of right and wrong, writing "Good and bad are but names very readily transferrable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it."[218] Stirner makes similar claims regarding the stifling nature of imposed social values, explicitly arguing that control over the levers of social morality grants incredible power to the State and the upper classes. In reference to this social power, he writes,

> What was so longed for and striven for through thousands of years – namely, to find that absolute lord beside whom no other lords and lordlings any longer exist to clip his power – the *bourgeoisie* has brought to pass. It has revealed the Lord who alone confers 'rightful titles,' and without whose warrant *nothing is justified*.[219]

Stirner, after making the political ground of his objections to talk of right and wrong, argues that we must reject these concepts in their traditional, externally imposed, forms. In an almost verbatim echo of Emerson's essay, published only three years prior to *The Ego and its Own*, Stirner writes "*I* decide whether it is the *right thing* in *me;* there is no right *outside* me. If it is right for me, it is right."[220] Stirner goes on to extend this critique to the concept of political rights, which he sees as also fundamentally dependent on an external authority, and therefore to be rejected, executing again the maneuver of taking an accepted position on the left and extending its own logic, to a less intuitive but relevantly similar example. He begins with the rejection of certain objectionable sorts of birthrights, particularly for the communists and

---

[216] Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 133.
[217] Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 130.
[218] Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 130.
[219] Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own,* 92-93.
[220] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 170.

socialists who are his primary interlocutors, namely "the right to receive an entailed estate, to inherit a throne, to enjoy a princely or noble education."[221] Similarly, the disadvantage foisted on the poor and oppressed underclasses by the genetic lottery must also be rejected. The rejection, or at least social and economic counterbalancing, of these sorts of unearned benefits and harms under the guise of the language of rights is in many ways the foundation of liberal democratic thinking,[222] and Stirner agrees here with the advocates of liberal humanist democracy that these sorts of inequalities are fundamentally unacceptable. However, the proposed liberal democratic solution, i.e. to "affirm that every one is by birth *equal* to another – namely, a *man*" must also be rejected.[223] The issue with rights is not that they are unjustly distributed, but that their existence necessitates an outside authority to grant, enforce, and even create them. Attempting to solve the issues of human interaction by subsuming all individuals under the abstract heading "man" and submitting them to the authority of an external power that grants them certain rights and withholds others is to entirely retain the pre-enlightenment religious structure of authority, only substituting in for God things like State power and social expectation. For the left-anarcho-individualists, the political and social dimensions of the assertion of the self and the rejection of homogenizing categories of identification extends past religious and nationalistic fervor to all imposed forms, racial, gendered, and even the concepts of right and wrong themselves.

---

[221] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 171.
[222] In many ways it was the consideration of these various unchosen and unearned situations of inequality that motivated the work of the most important philosopher of liberalism, John Rawls, and particularly his thought experiment regarding what he calls "The original position." The idea here, very briefly, is that we ought to organize our society around principles that rational individuals would want for themselves in a situation in which nobody is aware of the contingent facts of their social situation (race, gender, parental wealth, birth country, etc.). See John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), esp. 304-310. See also Amartya Sen, "Equality of What?" in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values Volume I*, ed. Sterling M. McMurrin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 197-220.
[223] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 172.

Individualism and Relativism

It is critical here to preemptively address an obvious objection that might be levelled against left-anarcho-individualism, namely that of moral relativism. This interpretation of the individualists is tempting due to their explicit rejection of imposed moral categories and the locating of moral authority at the level of the individual, as opposed to social norms or religious doctrine. Peter Marshall, for example, seems to suggest this view when he claims that Stirner's ethic can be summed up as the "completely subjective" view that "right is merely might." [224] Admittedly, Stirner's polemical writing style does little to assuage these worries about nihilistic moral relativism. However, I argue that neither Stirner nor Emerson, nor the other left-anarcho-individualist thinkers are advocating any sort of simplistic ethical relativism of this type, but are rather calling for individuals to reject *imposed* categories, moral categories included. That is, the individualists do not reject the concept of morality or the concept of empathic engagement with fellow human beings tout court, but rather argue that our morality must grow out of our own experiences and interactions, rather than be dictated from an outside source. While Marshall is indeed correct that individualism holds that "there are not eternal moral truths and no values to be discovered in nature,"[225] he is wrong that this view implies a wholesale rejection of ethical thinking.[226] There are of course many moral theories that reject eternal and immutable moral truths apart from human existence but that do not collapse into relativism, and individualism is, I argue, to be counted among these.

---

[224] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 226.
[225] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 226.
[226] It is worth noting in this connection that one of the major motivating factors in Marx's attack on Stirner and Young Hegelianism was what he saw as a *preoccupation* with ethics, and that Marx called for a return to the objectivist evaluations of social relations a la Jeremy Bentham and David Ricardo as a response. See John Carroll, *Break-Out From the Crystal Palace: The Anarcho-Psychological Critique: Stirner, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 73.

Emerson, for example, advocates a pragmatist view of morality, that is neither imposed from outside nor fixed immutably, but rather shifts with experience and self-understanding. He writes, "Yesterday I was asked what I mean by Morals. I reply that I cannot define & care not to define. It is man's business to observe & the definition of Moral Nature must be the slow result of years, of lives, of states perhaps of being."[227] Indeed, it was Emerson's rejection of imposed external categories, both moral and other, that ultimately led him to reject traditional Christian derivations of morality from God.[228] Emerson was quite circumspect regarding the danger of what David M. Robinson has called the possibility of a "subjectivism run amok."[229] He warned, for example, in "Experience" that as humans we have a certain tendency to "permit all things to ourselves, and that which we call sin in others, is experiment for us."[230] Emerson's point here is neither an endorsement of ethical relativism nor a call to hold ourselves to an objective moral standard, but rather to acknowledge that ethical engagement requires deep self-reflection. This also entails a disciplined refusal to simply dismiss other's actions as simply wrong or ours as simply right, but rather to attempt to subvert these categories altogether through experimentation and reflection. For Emerson, though morality is in some sense unknowable, the best we can do is to attempt to reach a place of self-trust and comfort in our moral action, such that morality becomes a type of epiphenomenon of self-knowledge and expression, coupled with rejection of imposed standards and categories. As David Robinson puts the point, "Emerson overcame moral paralysis with a…recognition that subjectivity generates 'self-trust,' which is valuable finally in insulating us from the imperatives of others," and argues further that "the acts of the self-trusting

---

[227] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. 4: 1832-1834*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 86
[228] Gustaaf Van Cromphout, *Emerson's Ethics* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 32.
[229] David M. Robinson, *Emerson and the Conduct of Life: Pragmatism and Ethical Purpose in the Later Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 68.
[230] Emerson, "Experience," 242.

individual will cohere with the larger good more closely than those of the imitative or unoriginal individual."[231] Put slightly differently, so-called "'immoralism' often appears to amount to no more than mere transgression…; but the essential principles of the immoralist are ever found in strength and inwardness, which strong assertion from within contrasts most strikingly with weak submission to that which is without."[232] Individual experience and self-reflection are, Emerson would argue, better guides to behavior than imposed external standards. This is not a rejection of morality, but a call to take our own moral lives seriously.

Stirner argues along similar lines, holding that what is objectionable about moral strictures is not their content, but their form, imposed as they are by an outside source and uncritically accepted by individuals without regard to the ways in which those moral rules resonate or fail to with the experiences of that individual. This is not a rejection of the concept of ethical behavior or morality as such, but only of a certain attitude toward moral concepts, namely that they are outside the subjective experiences of individuals and must be obeyed regardless of context. For Stirner, this is to treat morality in the same way that we treat any other religious concept, namely as beyond questioning, and it is the positive project of individualism to empower the individual to question that which is foisted on her as given. When morality is treated as a sacred end beyond questioning, it becomes anathema to the individualist. It is in the constant reassessment and evaluation (what Nietzsche would call "transvaluation") of our moral categories in light of our experience that constitutes individualist morality. For Stirner, like Emerson, the content of our moral lives is fundamentally comparative and experiential. As John Carroll suggests,

> "The *quality* of an experience – its noumenal intensity, its sensual abundance, or however it is described – can be assessed only in the same manner in which the individual

---

[231] Robinson, *Emerson and the Conduct of Life*, 69.
[232] Charles Gray Shaw, *The Ground and Goal of Human Life* (New York: New York University Press, 1919), 146

subjectively makes value judgments about phenomena external to him. The actor/observer can compare it with other experiences only by making judgments as imprecise ('unscientific'), and as open to subsequent revaluation, as moral rankings of good and evil."[233]

Moral evaluation and behavior are, on individualism, unscientific in the sense that they can never be objectively specified by appeal to outside, objective authority, but are always undergoing continued examination and questioning by those that engage in them. On individualism, one can never say when considering some potential course of action or evaluating the actions of others "it is objectively and for-all-time wrong in light of a third-person standard handed down from an infallible authority," but one can say "in light of what I have myself experienced and what I have observed in the experiences of others up until this point, this action is wrong." To this, one must always add the proviso that subsequent experiences and interactions with others can always induce a re-evaluation of the judgment rendered previously, and that all such judgments are to be constantly subject to scrutiny and one must "remain toward [them] frostily cold, unbelieving."[234] That is, one must remain constantly skeptical even of one's own ethical evaluations, understanding that they are always open and never final. The individualist holds that autonomous, self-actualized individuals are better equipped to perform this constant movement of evaluation and re-evaluation than are those who are still subject to the dictates of this or that imposed moral system.

This raises a related worry about individualist ethics, namely the idea that the individualist is in some sense cheating in their use of evaluative language at all. After all, is not individualism itself a value set, both ontological and political, like any other? If so, how can the individualist justify their assertion of the superiority of individualism over, say, religious

---

[233] Carroll, *Break-Out From the Crystal Palace,* 73.
[234] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 58.

subservience? I think there are two things to be said here. First, while individualism is undeniably a value set, complete with evaluative claims about the types of life that we as humans ought to aspire to, namely a free life of self-actualization, individualism is better thought of as a meta-evaluative claim, compatible with many forms of life. In his book-length reply to the various critiques that emerged after the publication of *The Ego and its Own*, Stirner addresses those who accused him of nihilism and the rejection of any and all human relationships whatever. Writing in the third person, assuming the identity of an anonymous interpreter of Stirner, he writes,

> Egoism, as Stirner uses it, is not opposed to love nor to thought; it is no enemy of the sweet life of love, nor of devotion and sacrifice; it is no enemy of intimate warmth, but it is also no enemy of critique, nor of socialism, nor, in short, of any *actual interest*. It doesn't exclude any interest. It is directed against only disinterestedness and the uninteresting; not against love, but against sacred love, not against thought, but against sacred thought, not against socialists, but against sacred socialists, etc.[235]

Here Stirner makes clear that the egoist does not oppose any and all forms of identity, relationship, and belief, but only opposes the essentializing reification of those things as anything other than contingent human creations, and hence impervious to human change, mutation, and intervention. For Stirner, there is no contradiction between individualism and socialism, self-sacrifice, and even deeply altruistic devotion to others, so long as the latter are not imposed from without by either state or social authorities, are taken on willingly by free individuals, and are always open to re-evaluation. As David Leopold argues, "Stirner's rejection of morality is grounded not, as is often suggested, in a rejection of values as such, but in the affirmation of what might be called *non-moral goods*, that is, he allows a realm of actions and desires which,

---

[235] Max Stirner, *Stirner's Critics,* trans. Wolfi Landstreicher (Oakland, CA: LBC Books & Columbia Alternative Library, 2012), 81-82

although not moral…are still to be evaluated positively."[236] That is, while Stirner reject moral claims in the sense of traditional objectivist moral realism, he further holds that moral claims do not exhaust the evaluative space, and that certain forms of life can be superior or inferior to others on grounds unrelated to their moral content or lack thereof. Leopold suggests Stirner's discussion of the famed, and famously immoral, Roman Emperor Nero as an example of what Stirner sees as a non-moral evaluative claim justified on the basis of his individualism. While Stirner and traditional moralists would agree in negatively assessing Nero's behavior, they would do so for critically different reasons. Where the moralist would hold that Nero had violated some or other moral rule, Stirner argues that Nero's behavior is to be negatively assessed because his "obsessive predilections violated his self-mastery."[237] This is not a moral claim in any traditional sense, since moral claims fundamentally deal with relations *between* individuals, but is rather an evaluative assessment of Nero's relationship with himself. Nero is to be viewed negatively because his behavior and beliefs were alien to himself, dictated by various obsessions and the belief that he possessed some divine, sacred quality. There are, in the Foucauldian sense, "styles of life" that are preferable for non-moral reasons, i.e. they are preferable for reasons other than whether or not they conform to an objective list of duties to others. The individualists hold that those who partake in the constant evaluation and questioning of their own relationships with themselves, actualizing their subjectivity and living truthfully with it are not prone to this type of self-alienated behavior, and this ideal of self-relation serves as the basis for the individualist ethic.

---

[236] Leopold, "Introduction," in *The Ego and its Own*, xxiv.
[237] Leopold, "Introduction," in *The Ego and its Own*, xxiv.

Individualism and Social Construction

Another potential problem that is important to address here is the idea that individualists must deny the influence of social forms and power structures on individuals. That is, it is possible to read the individualists as rejecting the concept of the social construction of identity and relations of power.[238] The idea here is that individualists, in emphasizing the primacy both ontologically and politically of subjectivity and individual identity formation, must correspondingly de-emphasize the role of unchosen social forces beyond our control in the shaping of our identities and beliefs. I think that this type of objection, formulated in this way, fundamentally misunderstands the position of individualism. The individualist does not minimize the influence of external forces on our day to day lives, since it is precisely the strength and depth of that influence to which the individualist objects. The claim of the individualist is precisely that these forces exert much too strong a force on the shaping of our identities and our lives in the world, and that we should rather assert ourselves against their oppressive control.

One might restate the objection to say not that the individualists downplay the power of social construction, but rather even in their acknowledgement still underestimate it in their assumption that we ever could transcend or subvert socially imposed identities and categories. The forces that bear down on our self-understandings, identities as members of groups, and understandings of our place in the world are simply too strong and pervasive to be overcome by any amount of introspection or willful rejection. This critique could be offered as a parallel version of a related critique levelled by Michel Foucault against the dominant understanding of Kantian freedom. For Foucault, the transcendental rationality and objectivity at the core of

---

[238] A full accounting of the concept of social constructionism is beyond the scope of this discussion, but see Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966) for the canonical statement of the idea; and Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) for a more recent treatment.

Kant's conception of freedom, which does seem to imply the ability of individuals to transcend contingent sociopolitical factors, ignores the fact that all humans are always already implicated in relations of power, whether aware of those relations or not. Essentially, Kant had confused the ontological conditions of freedom with the actual historical conditions that restrict and hem-in autonomous action.[239] Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon is Foucault's analysis of discipline and internalized moral strictures found in modern society. The advent of a type of Panopticism that subjects all individuals to constant surveillance finds its ultimate expression in the unconscious internalizing of that surveillance. The individualist ideal of a free or autonomous individual is belied by the fact of our own internalizing of various moral categories, self-surveillance practices, social categories and power relations, and so on. Foucault writes "The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself."[240] The advocate of this line of objection might, in performing a Foucauldian genealogical move, argue that the individualist is inadvertently mobilizing enlightenment visions of the transcendentally free individual that have been since undermined by increased understandings of social forces and power relations. I find this line of objection to be both more plausible and addressing more directly the claim of individualism, however, I do think that this critique also operates on a significant misinterpretation of the individualist view of the self, as well as of freedom.

The individualist need not deny the overriding power of social constructs on our self-understanding, and can readily admit that no individual can ever achieve full freedom in the Kantian sense of ridding oneself of all outside conditioning. Stirner, for his part, explicitly rejects

---

[239] Foucault's strongest critique of the Kantian program comes in *The Order of Things: An Archeology of Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1993).
[240] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995), 30.

the concept of "freedom" as yet another pseudo-religious deflection of genuine selfhood. He writes,

> 'Freedom' awakens your *rage* against everything that is not you; 'egoism' [Stirner's term for individualism] calls you to *joy* over yourselves, to self-enjoyment; 'freedom' is and remains a *longing*, a romantic plaint, a Christian hope for unearthliness and futurity; 'ownness' is a reality, which *of itself* removes just so much unfreedom as by barring your own way hinders you…Freedom teaches only: Get yourselves rid, relieve yourselves of everything burdensome; it does not teach you who you yourselves are.[241]

Stirner's conception of individualism here rejects the merely negative understanding of freedom, endorsed by the anarcho-capitalist right-individualists, as the removal of barriers. The left-anarcho-individualist views this type of freedom as problematic because it must be conferred, guaranteed, and administered by a higher authority. In this negative sense, I am free to the degree that I am guaranteed (by some third force) a lack of intervention in my life. Again, the question of individualism is considered in an objective, external way. Individualism as I am understanding it here again returns to subjectivity as the site of freedom, and calls for an ongoing positive project of self-creation, understanding, and experimentation.

Interestingly, Foucault himself was deeply engaged in questions of freedom, and I would argue that he ultimately arrived at strikingly similar conclusions to those of the left-anarcho-individualists.[242] For Foucault, re-situating the problematic of freedom *within* rather than abstracted from relations of power and social control (a la Kant) opens up new paths for discussions of freedom.[243] Foucault saw freedom under the strictures of modernity as essentially a process of self-formation. He writes in his late essay "What is Enlightenment?," itself an

---

[241] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 148.

[242] See Saul Newman, "Stirner and Foucault: Toward a Post-Kantian Freedom," *Postmodern Culture* 13, no. 2 (2003). https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed January 11, 2018).

[243] For extensive treatments of Foucault's thinking on freedom, see Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," *Political Theory* 12, no. 2 (1984), 152-183.

attempt to rethink the Kantian legacy of critique, "This modernity does not 'liberate man in his own being'; it compels him to face the task of producing himself."[244] Referring to the "indispensable example" of Baudelaire's vision of the figure of the dandy, Foucault takes up a certain attitude of self-aestheticism, suggesting that the modern individual is "not the man who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth," as these would participate in the abstracted Kantian metaphysic of freedom and essences, but rather the individual who "makes of his body, his behavior, his feelings and passions, his very existence, a work of art."[245] Foucault increasingly, particularly in his later years, turned to ideas of self-work, aestheticization, and style as fundamental to freedom and also as important instances of political resistance. It is worth quoting Paul Veyne at some length in this connection:

> The idea of style of existence played a major role in Foucault's conversations and doubtless in his inner life during the final months of his life that only he knew to be in danger. Style does not mean distinction here; the word is to be taken in the sense of the Greeks, for whom an artist was first of all an artisan and a work of art was first of all a work. Greek ethics is quite dead and Foucault judged it as undesirable as it would be impossible to resuscitate this ethics; but he considered one of its elements, namely the idea of work of self on self, to be capable of acquiring a contemporary meaning, in the manner of one of those pagan temple columns that are occasionally reutilised in more recent structures. We can guess at what might emerge from this diagnosis: the self, taking itself as a work to be accomplished, could sustain an ethics that is no longer supported by either tradition or reason; as an artist of itself, the self would enjoy that autonomy that Enlightenment can no longer do without.[246]

This conception of self-work and the artistic, expressive nature of subjectivity in the face of oppressive and homogenizing categories and power relations articulated by Foucault is directly in line with the calls of Emerson, Stirner, Nietzsche, and Vaneigem to assert as ontologically and

---

[244] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheoon Books, 1984), 32-50, 42.
[245] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 42.
[246] Paul Veyne, "The Final Foucault and His Ethics*,"* in *Foucault and His Interlocutors,* ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 225-233, 231.

politically meaningful our own subjectivity[247], and to define that subjectivity for ourselves. Freedom and selfhood are not simply acts of bursting free of the myriad chains placed upon us by (post)modernity, but are rather the constant negotiations, refusals, and interrogations we articulate within those structures. In this sense, the left-anarcho-individualist both sides with the Foucauldian critique of abstracted Kantian concepts of "Man" and "Freedom" as themselves homogenizing categories as well as endorses the view of freedom as an ongoing individualized movement of self-creation. The more direct question of how these interactions might eventually change or undermine the structures to which we are subject, and the degree to which individualism can serve as a basis for political resistance, is addressed in Chapter Four.

Individualist Society?

I want to conclude this chapter with a somewhat brief discussion of how individualists have conceived of how societies might be organized along individualist principles. Given the individualist rejection of formalized State power and imposed socio-cultural forms, it is reasonable to ask what is proposed in their place. This discussion will serve in some ways to set the stage for the concluding discussion in Chapter Five regarding how individualism might manifest itself in the organization of schools and in pedagogical principles. This discussion is brief largely out of necessity. That is, for reasons that ought to be clear from the account given in this chapter of the commitments of left-anarcho-individualism, individualists have generally refrained from engaging in robust and detailed prescriptions for how society ought to be organized. This would be, of course, to simply impose another system of external strictures on

---

[247] While the question of whether Foucault can be accurately described as an anarchist is beyond the scope of this discussion, but it is worth noting that he does assert that "The political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to liberate the individual from the State and its institutions, but to liberate ourselves from the State and the type of individualization linked to it." See his "The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 208-229, 216.

the free expression and self-work of unique individuals, something that runs fundamentally against individualism. That said, there are some common themes that arise in the writing of the individualists regarding what a possible individualist society might look like.

Max Stirner makes and important distinction that helps indicate a first pass at what forms individualist society might take, namely the distinction between "society," on the one hand, and "coalition" or "union" (he uses the terms more-or-less interchangeably) on the other, and refers to his vision of individualist society as a "union of egoists."[248] The key distinction between the two has to do with their orientation toward those individuals that make them up. Society, in Stirner's usage of the term, is fundamentally indifferent to the individual, swallowing her into its generalizing, homogenizing sense of membership. Accordingly, Stirner views society as fixed and static, rehearsing the same formal relationships of work, labor, love, and so on via the pre-established roles that operate within its structures. He lays out the various distinctions in this way,

> You bring into a union your whole power, your competence, and *make yourself count*; in a society you are *employed*, with your working power; in the former you live egoistically, in the latter humanly, that is, religiously, as a 'member in the body of this Lord'; to a society you owe what you have, and are in duty bound to it, are – possessed by 'social duties'; a union you utilize, and give it up undutifully and unfaithfully when you see no way to utilize it further. If a society is more than you, then it is more to you than yourself; a union is only your instrument…the union exists for you and through you, the society conversely lays claim to you for itself and exists even without you; in short, the society is *sacred*, the union your *own;* the society consumes *you*, *you* consume the union.[249]

This paragraph makes an important connection between Stirner's vision of social relationships and the cultivation of the self, namely the fact that in both cases impermanence, change, and mutability are fundamental. The sort of constant self-work and experimentation called for by the

---

[248] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 271.
[249] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 277.

left-anarcho-individualists expresses itself socially as well, with all social relations being sorts of *ad hoc* experiments or associations directed at a particular goal or problem, to be dissolved or altered once that goal is reached. The freedom to enter into and remove oneself from social relationships is key to the left-anarcho-individualist conception of society. Stirner writes that a coalition or a union "is an incessant self-uniting"[250] and insofar as relationships calcify and become fixed, as they do in societies that impose pre-established roles on their members, those relationships cease to be unions. In the same way that my individual identity cannot be subsumed under social roles and disciplinary mores, neither can my relationships with others be reduced to interactions between those roles. The key point here is that relationships and identities are ideally to be entered into and assumed by choice and self-expression. If one's internal self-understanding demands assertion as a Latino or a Father or a Woman, or if the material facts of one's existence make such an assertion of identity useful, as in the case of mobilizing larger groups of individuals for some political or social purpose,[251] the individualist is in complete support, so long as the proviso is included that those identity and relational forms are not imposed from without and are malleable, open to exit and reentry, and not viewed as some sort of metaphysical essence expressing the totality of one's unique self. A society predicated on left-anarcho-individualist principles would retain many of the relationships and identities familiar from our current order, but would radically change the signification of those relationships and identities, from essentialist divine edicts of society or the state to subjective expressions of interiority. Importantly, as in the case of individualist ethics, there is no contradiction between the individualist focus on individual autonomy and self-actualization and the existence of social structures and relationships, which again the individualist recognizes as an

---

[250] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 271.
[251] See n. 179 above on the idea of "strategic essentialism."

inevitable and even desirable aspect of human existence. As Daniel Guerin argues with respect to Stirner's view of social institutions, "The individual needs help and friends…He joins with his fellow man in order to increase his strength and fulfill himself more completely through their combined strength than either could in isolation."[252] In his critique of the homogenizing ideological tendencies of political parties, Stirner even goes so far as to directly allow for the possibility of an individual joining such a party or identifying with their cause, but with certain conditions. He writes, "So then an egoist could never embrace a party or take up with a party? Oh, yes, only he cannot let himself be embraced and taken up by the party. For him the party remains all the time nothing but a gathering: he is one of the party, he takes part."[253] Again, individualism does not foreclose the possibility of social structures, organizations, and relationships, but only suggests that these structures and relationships must be predicated on voluntary association between free individuals, where "free" is understood in the Foucauldian sense discussed earlier. Much like the self, social institutions and relationships must always be subject to re-evaluation, repudiation, and restructuring. This does not mean that they cannot exist or are inherently oppressive, only that they become so when they hinder the freedom of self-creation through imposed identifications or behavioral strictures.

Vaneigem, for his part, is predictably more poetic in his envisioning of a world that respects subjectivity, and suggests that part of what makes that possibility so exciting is precisely how radically open it is to our own influence. That is, it is impossible to say what the unshackling of human subjectivity and creativity would ultimately produce, but that unshackling is itself desirable. He writes, "Everyone wants their own subjectivity to triumph; the unification of human beings ought therefore to be built on this common desire. Nobody can strengthen their

---

[252] Guerin, *Anarchism*, 28.
[253] Stirner, *The Ego and its Own*, 211.

subjectivity without the help of others, without the help of a group that concentrates subjectivity, that faithfully expresses the subjectivity of its members."[254] Again, Vaneigem rejects the subsuming of individual identity and subjectivity into social roles, but rather calls for social organizations that respect and create space for the unique expression of that subjectivity. The left-anarcho-individualist desires a world where people are not forced to identify as a given racial, gender, or other socio-cultural category out of either the demands of their social group or out of economic or political necessity, and remains optimistic about the possibilities for the freedom granted in such a world.

Perhaps the best microcosm of this understanding of social relationships advocated by Stirner and Vaneigem, and the one perhaps best suited as a model for individualist education, is Emerson's understanding of friendship. Friendship was one of Emerson's preoccupations throughout his career, and he dedicated significant thought to the matter of reconciling both his own understanding of individualism and his own tendency toward introspective isolation with the importance of sociality and relationships in all human endeavors. In many ways Emerson echoes Stirner's distinction between society and union, only substituting the even smaller-scale notion of friendship into the latter position. He certainly rejects society in terms similar to Stirner, writing in "Self-Reliance" that "Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company in which the members agree for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater."[255] In contrast to the homogenizing surrender of individuality to the dictates of society, genuine friendship recognizes the unique beauty and identity of the other, a recognition that inspires within us a greater understanding of our own subjectivity. This relationship is

---

[254] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 193.
[255] Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 130.

mutual, continual, and constantly changing and evolving. He writes in "Friendship," "In good company, the individuals merge their egotism into a social soul exactly coextensive with the several consciousnesses there present."[256] True friendship represented, for Emerson, the desire for "a just and even fellowship, or none."[257] As David Robinson has argued at length, Emerson's understanding of friendship importantly centers the choice of the individuals united in friendship to enter and continually affirm that friendship for its duration, whatever that may be.[258] Friendship is both a recognition of value and individuality in another, but also a means of my own self-expression and discovery. It is this sort of interaction that would be encouraged in a society founded on principles of individualism, and precisely that which is denied under the oppressive homogenization of the State, capital, and social roles.

It is worth briefly noting, to conclude, that the individualist vision of society as a mutually beneficial series of temporary, organic, and spontaneously arising relationships was, perhaps ironically, has been given an important layer of empirical legitimacy through the work of mutualist anarchist Peter Kropotkin, particularly in his collection of scientific essays *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, published in 1902.[259] Kropotkin, an amateur scientist and naturalist, spent a number of years during the 1860s as an officer of the Russian military exploring Siberia and cataloging his observations of the wildlife and their behaviors. His observations led him to conclude that rather than the classical Darwinian picture of competition for scarce resources and natural selection as the fundamental driving forces of evolution and social harmony within a

---

[256] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Friendship," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. 2,* eds. Robert Spiller, Alfred Ferguson, et al., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 121-122.
[257] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Transcendentalist," in *The Major Prose*, eds. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 164-180, 171.
[258] David M. Robinson, "'In the Golden Hour of Friendship:' Transcendentalism and Utopian Desire," in *Emerson and Thoreau: Figures of Friendship,* John T. Lysaker & William Rossi, eds. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 53-69.
[259] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (New York: Black Rose Books, 1989).

species, cooperative behavior for mutual benefit played a much larger role than had been previously believed. He wrote "I failed to find…that bitter struggle for the means of existence…which was considered by most Darwinists…as the dominant characteristic of the struggle for life," but rather "saw Mutual Aid and Mutual Support carried on to an extend which made me suspect in it a feature of the greatest importance for the maintenance of life, the preservation of each species, and its further evolution."[260] Kropotkin argued, and his views have been generally upheld in the scientific community up to the present day,[261] that rather than surviving through competitive or adaptive advantage, species tended to persist and flourish more to the degree that they exhibited cooperative behavior based on mutual benefit. The concept of mutual benefit is critical here, as Kropotkin aimed not only to dismantle the myth of pure Darwinian competition in the vein of Hobbes' "war of all against all," but also the romantic visions of thinkers like Rousseau, "who saw in nature but love, peace, and harmony."[262] Rather, individuals were motivated to cooperative behavior not out of any large-scale sense of species survival or altruism, but out of a form of self-interest, and that this form of motivation created as an epiphenomenon evolutionary success. Though Kropotkin is not considered an individualist, his view of human society based around these same mutualist principles is remarkably similar to the view of left-anarcho-individualism, which sees social organizations as arising out of a mutual sense of need or desire between individuals and dissolving once that need has been met, rather than remaining and calcifying into the oppressive organs of state power.

Having laid out the positive vision of individualism that I wish to defend (i.e. as fundamentally anticapitalist, anti-statist, and against homogenizing and reductive domination of

---

[260] Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, xxxv, xxxvii.
[261] See for example, Stephen Jay Gould, "Kropotkin Was No Crackpot," *Natural History,* no. 106 (1997): 12-21.
[262] Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, 12.

all types) and distinguishing it from the traditions of "rugged individualism" and rightist anarcho-capitalism, the next chapter addresses in more detail two of what I see as the most powerful objections against the view of individualism presented here. Specifically, I will argue that individualism can serve as a base of political resistance as well for the compatibility of individualism and a genuine democratic impulse.

CHAPTER FOUR

TWO OBJECTIONS TO INDIVIDUALISM

The Objection of Inefficacy: Individualism and Resistance

Having discussed in Chapter Three the compatibility of individualism and group identity, I will now respond to a related objection, namely that individualism is incapable of providing a solid basis of resistance to organized oppression and violence. Discussions of resistance in education are commonplace, particularly in our era of neoliberal incursions, takeovers, and augmentations within the public school system. It is natural that under the pressure of the constantly changing and ever more onerous suite of burdensome and deprofessionalizing policies and demands placed on teachers and students alike that these groups would seek out ways of resisting and pushing back against the forces of neoliberalism. In this section I will address two major points. First, I will discuss the predominant ways in which resistance is conceptualized in contemporary educational thought and practice, as well as examine some of the theoretical and ideological underpinnings of those conceptualizations. Second, drawing from the work of some of the most politically active individualists, argue that anarchist individualism offers a valuable tool for those on the Left who seek to resist neoliberalism in education. Counter to the prevailing discourse that paints individualized resistance as at worst counterproductive and disorganized, and at best merely emotionally cathartic for those who undertake it, I will suggest that individualist resistance both has a rich theoretical tradition as well as a history of legitimate success. From desertion to poaching to work sabotage, individualism has much to offer us as educators and students in our struggle against neoliberal capture.

Teacher and Student Resistance: The Contemporary Consensus

It is interesting to begin this discussion of educational resistance by noting that teacher and student resistance in the way that I mean to discuss it here is rarely named in the literature as such. Rather, resistance is most commonly discussed as an obstacle to be overcome by administrators dealing with recalcitrant, stubborn teachers who simply refuse to adapt to the changing needs of their workplace environment, or students who are in need of the ubiquitous "behavior modification." Resistance, in this understanding of the term, is a flaw in an educator or a student, something to be overcome, worked through, and managed by administrators and outside reformers. Typical of this type of approach to teacher resistance are quotes such as this one from Joo-Ho Park & Dong Wook Jeong, who argue that "Eliminating or reducing teachers' negative attitude toward change is a common and persistent challenge to interveners, in particular, outside the school." [263]Jim Knight concludes his article, simply entitled "What Can We Do About Teacher Resistance?" by arguing for having a small group of educators and administrators "do the thinking for teachers" because "Schools need programs implemented consistently across a district, and it's not especially efficient for many teachers to be deeply involved in curriculum revision."[264] Often administrators are cautioned about how to approach teachers with policies or ideas for change because of the emotional responses such "innovations" might trigger in the change-resistant teaching force, and teachers' dissatisfaction with reforms are often dismissed in psychological terms that reduce their agency and expertise to simple attachment to older ways of doing things, force of habit, or even simple laziness.[265] One group of

---

[263] Joo-Ho Park & Dong Wook Jeong, "School Reforms, Principal Leadership, and Teacher Resistance: Evidence from Korea," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 33, no. 1 (2013): 34-52, 45.

[264] Jim Knight, "What Can We Do About Teacher Resistance?" *Phi Delta Kappan* (March 2009): 508-513, 511.

[265] See for example, Qin Zhang & David A. Sapp, "Psychological Reactance and Resistance Intention in the Classroom: Effects of Perceived Request Politeness and Legitimacy, Relationship Distance, and Teacher Credibility," *Communication Education* 62, no. 1 (2013): 1-25; Ewald Terhart, "Teacher Resistance Against School Reform: Reflecting an Inconvenient Truth," *School Leadership and Management* 33, no. 5 (2013): 486-500; George

researchers has even claimed to have found a "solution for the treatment of teacher resistance" based on a "combination of five theoretical approaches to preventing, diagnosing, and remediating misbehavior."[266] The infantilizing language of "misbehavior" here is, I argue, not accidental, as it appeals to dominant deprofessionalizing narratives of teachers as in need of direction from the outside and childishly resistant to change. It also fuses the literature on teacher resistance with the literature on student resistance, which often participates in precisely the same psychologizing discourses of misbehavior and behavior modification.[267]

While a number of criticisms can and have been made of these ways of talking about teachers and students (e.g. that this discourse removes autonomy, reduces legitimate critique to psychology, etc.), my purpose in referencing it here is slightly different. The point I want to emphasize about how resistance is talked about in education today is that the word itself has been robbed of whatever radical or political implications it might have had by discourses of management and psychologism. If "resistance" is reduced to a minor managerial inconvenience, then those who would use the term more expansively must find alternative ways of expressing themselves, and this itself is already a significant victory for the neoliberal project, and is something worth acknowledging.

G. Bear, "Teacher Resistance to Frequent Rewards and Praise: Lack of Skill or a Wise Decision?" *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation* 23 (2013): 318-340; and Hayo Reinders, "A Positive Approach to Dealing with Techer Resistance," *Modern English Teacher* 26, no. 2 (2017): 74-76.

[266] Irwin A. Hyman, Kris Winchell, & Timothy C. Tillman, "Treatment Integrity and Satisfaction Using the Teacher Variance Approach: A Multidimensional Method for Dealing with Teacher Resistance," paper presented at the Annual Convention of the National Association of School Psychologists (Washington, DC, April 17-21, 2001).

[267] The literature on student behavior modification is considerably larger than that on teacher resistance and has a number of dedicated journals, but see for some examples, Qin Zhang, Jibiao Zhang, Ana-Alyse Castelluccio, "A Cross-Cultural Investigation of Student Resistance in College Classrooms: The Effects of Teacher Misbehaviors and Credibility," *Communication Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2011): 450-464; Susan Flynn & Ya-yu Lo, "Teacher Implementation of Trial-Based Functional Analysis and Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior for Students with Challenging Behavior," *Journal of Behavioral Education* 25, no. 1 (2016): 1-31; and Melissa B. McHugh et al., "Effects of Tootling on Classwide and Individual Disruptive and Academically Engaged Behavior of Lower-Elementary Students," *Behavioral Interventions* 31, no. 4 (2016): 332-354.

By and large, the language that has been picked up by teachers and students who would politicize their resistance is the language of "activism." Discussions of both student activism on college campuses and at the K-12 level, and work on teacher activism have long been important aspects of education as an academic discipline, and interest in these topics has only escalated in the era of Donald Trump. The discourse of activism, both student and teacher, takes a number of different forms. Mark R. Warren and Karen L. Mapp, for example, conceptualize resistance to neoliberal school as a form of community organizing, which they see as a catalytic force not just for resistance but also for creative and grassroots generation of new, democratic forms of community education.[268] Warren and Mapp specifically situate their understanding of community organizing within the larger historical context of civil rights struggles of minoritized and oppressed communities, who have long mobilized along community lines to achieve political and social ends. They argue, for example, that "the struggle for quality education and the struggle for liberation have been fundamentally interconnected in the African American community," and go on to emphasize the importance of shared histories and identities in the process of building communities and bases of resistance in sociopolitical struggle.[269] Russell H. Carlock Jr. argues that community organizing around education has been instrumental in the Latinx struggle for social justice as well, pointing out that "As early as the nineteenth century, social reformers in the United States combined organizing with adult education to impact social change, especially in immigrant communities."[270] There is perhaps no better illustration of the power of community organizing to alter educational conditions than the East Lost Angeles

---

[268] *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform*, eds. Mark R. Warren & Karen L. Mapp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[269] Warren & Mapp, *A Match on Dry Grass*, 17-21.
[270] Russell H. Carlock Jr., "'La Union Hace la Fuerza:' Community Organizing in Adult Education for Immigrants," *Harvard Educational Review* 86, no. 1 (2016): 98-122, 102.

"blowouts" of March 1968, which saw thousands of Latinx students walk out of their high and middle schools in protest of the way they had been treated by their school districts.[271] The students led by teacher Sal Castro, parental groups, college students, and many other community members, whose schools had been systematically ignored and defunded, demanded equality in facilities, funding, supplies, as well as a more inclusive curriculum and diverse schools staff that more completely reflected Chicano culture.[272]

These community-based forms of resistance and protest often draw on the work of Paulo Freire, who centered the need for communal identity formation and consciousness in his educational philosophy and pedagogical practice. For Freire, critical education occurred only through dialogue with others in one's own context to address the specific material conditions of that context, a commitment which grew out of the well-documented influence of Marx on Freire's educational thought and practice.[273] In classic Marxian fashion, Freire often refers to the fact of humanity being "something constructed socially and historically and not there simply a priori."[274] Freire's own interest in education and community-oriented pedagogy began during his time spent educating illiterate and economically disadvantaged rural adults in his native Brazil, where he would eventually, after being exiled for his views, serve as Secretary of Education and

---

[271] For a first-hand account of this episode related by one of the major mobilizing figures, see Mario T. Garcia & Sal Castro, *Blowout!: Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[272] Edward J. Escobar, "The Unintended Consequences of the Carceral State: Chicana/o Political Mobilization in Post-World War II America," *The Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015):174-184, 182. Interestingly, the walkouts and the LAPD's response to them also illustrate the often abusive and discriminatory nature of racial policing in America, both at the time and today. For a detailed analysis of the gender dynamics at play in the Blowouts, see Dolores Delgado Bernal, "Rethinking Grassroots Activism: Chicana Resistance in the 1968 East Lost Angeles School Blowouts," in *The Subaltern Speak: Curriculum, Power, and Educational Struggles,* eds. Michael W. Apple and Kristen L. Buras (New York: Routledge, 2006), 141-162

[273] See Peter McLaren and Ramin Farahmandpur, "Freire, Marx, and the New Imperialism: Toward a Revolutionary Praxis," in *The Freirean Legacy: Educating for Social Justice*, eds. Judith J. Slater, Stephen M. Fain, & Cesar A. Rossatto (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 36-56.

[274] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 25.

come to profoundly influence the development of national education.[275] Freire's radically

communal and situated pedagogy has had wide appeal among Marxist and Leftist educators

throughout the world, particularly with his emphasis on the building of shared identities to

address shared struggles and oppressions (a sine qua non of community organizing, as elucidated

by Warren and Mapp), and Freirean experiments have taken place in locations as disparate as

South Africa,[276] Scotland,[277] Grenada, Jamaica, and Australia.[278]

A second major current in the contemporary discussions of educational resistance takes

as its main source of inspiration not the community-building critical pedagogy of Freire,[279] but

rather the radical group organizing and action of the historical labor movement and working

class. This strain of thinking, which tends to focus more on teacher activism than student, or at

least views them as inseparably linked, sees teachers primarily as workers in a capitalist system

that exploits their labor and advocates for teacher organizing along the lines of the traditional

labor unions. The decline of labor unions and the continued attacks on their sources of influence

and indeed their very existence, as in the various moves to implement so-called "right to work"

(RTW) policies across the United States,[280] has been a growing source of concern on the left

---

[275] See Ana Maria Saul & Antonio Fernando Gouvea da Silva, "The Legacy of Paulo Freire for Curriculum Policies and Teaching in Brazil," *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (2011):38-68.

[276] Leslie Anne Hadfield, "Conscientization in South Africa: Paulo Freire and Black Consciousness Community Development in the 1970s," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 50, no. 1 (2017): 79-98.

[277] Catherine Matheson & David Matheson, "Community Development: Freire and Grameen in the Barrowfield Project, Glasgow, Scotland," *Development in Practice* 18, no. 1 (2008): 30-39.

[278] Anne Hickling-Hudson, "Striving for a Better World: Lessons from Freire in Grenada, Jamaica and Australia," *International Review of Education* 60 (2014): 523-543.

[279] Freire did address the idea of teachers as workers, though he devotes himself more to pedagogical questions and questions of cultural reproduction than the political aspects of teacher organizing, strikes, and the like. See Paulo Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2005).

[280] For a helpful general overview of these developments, see Victor G. Devinatz, "Right-to-Work Laws, the Southernization of U.S. Labor Relations and the U.S. Trade Movement's Decline, *Labor Studies Journal* 40, no. 4 (2015): 297-318; and Jamie Peck, "The Right to Work, and the Right at Work," *Economic Geography* 92, no. 1 (2016): 4-30. For a specific case study of the implementation of RTW laws in Michigan, see Michelle Kaminski, "How Michigan Became a Right to Work State: The Role of Money and Politics," *Labor Studies Journal* 40, no. 4 (2015): 362-378.

broadly, and has produced passionate calls for the revitalization of labor unions and radical

working-class politics in general. One of the most well-known and respected diagnostician of the

neoliberal paradigm, David Harvey, has argued the construction of "strong collective institutions

(such as trade unions)" is one of the most threatening possibilities to neoliberal rationality,

committed as it is to free market ideologies and the fracturing of collective identities of all kinds

in the name of the type of rugged individualism discussed in Chapter 1.[281]

The labor view of resistance is also fundamentally Marxist in orientation, though with

important caveats and modifications. Though Marx clearly advocated for organized worker

resistance to capital and somewhat infamously held that worker uprisings would inevitably end

capitalism and usher in the dictatorship of the proletariat, there are tensions between the

orthodox Marxist view and the traditional modes of trade unionism. For example, where trade

unions tend to advocate for things like higher wages, Marxism ostensibly calls for the

elimination of the wage system altogether.[282] That being said, it is undeniable that there is a deep

affinity between the Marxist vision of worker resistance and the activity of the historical trade

unions. Advocates of this view often look to figures such as Bill Haywood, one of the founders

of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and prominent figure in early radical labor

organizing in the United States, organizing a number of textile strikes in the early 1900s for

inspiration.[283] Haywood had deeply revolutionary views about class relations and capitalism,

claiming in the very first line of the preamble to the IWW constitution that "The working class

and the employing class have nothing in common" and going on to directly evoke Marx, writing

---

[281] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 69

[282] For a subtle discussion of Marxism's relationship with trade unionism, see Dan La Botz, "The Marxist View of the Labor Unions: Complex and Critical, *Working USA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 16 (2013): 5-41.

[283] See Joseph R. Conlin, *Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1969). For an explicit analysis of Haywood's Marxism, see Matthew S. may, "Orator-Machine: Autonomist Marxism and William D. 'Big Bill' Haywood's Cooper Union Address," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 45, no. 4 (2012): 429-451.

that "between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth."[284]

Within education, many have argued that teachers today under neoliberalism find themselves in much the same position that industrial workers found themselves in when Haywood founded the IWW, and so should respond with similarly radical forms of organization. Mary Compton and Lois Weiner open their collection detailing the global neoliberal assault on education and teacher unions in this way, "Teachers are in a war being fought over the future of education, and though at times it might seem as though we are losing the war without firing a shot, we have a potentially powerful weapon in our hands – our solidarity and organization into powerful teachers unions."[285] Bob Peterson argues for a "social justice unionism" that fuses together the classical trade union perspectives and advocacy for better wages and conditions with the insights of community organizing and the realization that, in a direct echo of Haywood, "teachers' long-term interests are closer to those of poor people and working people whose children are in our public schools, than to the corporate leaders and politicians who run our society."[286] The overriding idea of the labor vision of educational resistance is that educators must bind together as a unified force in order to articulate and ultimately achieve their political and social ends.

---

[284] William Haywood, "Preamble to the IWW Constitution," *Industrial Workers of the World,* https://www.iww.org/culture/official/preamble.shtml

[285] Mary Compton and Lois Weiner, "The Global Assault on Teachers, Teaching, and Teacher Unions," in *The Global Assault on Teaching, Teachers, and their Unions: Stories for Resistance,* eds. Mary Compton and Lois Weiner (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 3-10, 6.

[286] Bob Peterson, "Survival and Justice: Rethinking Teacher Union Strategy," in *Transforming Teacher Unions: Fighting for Better Schools and Social Justice* eds. Bob Peterson & Michael Charney (Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 1999), 11-19, 16.

What I want to point out at this point regarding these two dominant strains of thinking about educational resistance is that they are both fundamentally rooted in the centrality of community and group identity of some kind. In the case of community organizing, that identity is likely to be some form of shared marginalization or oppression, often along racial or cultural lines, and in the case of labor organizing, the identity in question is that of a worker under neoliberal capitalism, and particularly an educational worker. This focus on community and shared identity should not be surprising, given the Marxist roots of both types of thinking documented above. In the next section, I want to argue that communally-oriented thinking about resistance, whatever historical successes it may have had and whatever theoretical considerations weigh in its favor, ought not to exhaust the resources we have as educators for resisting neoliberal global capitalism, nor for pursuing our own vision of the good in education and without.

The Critique of Individualized Resistance

The discourse of political resistance, particularly on the left, has been so dominated by the community-oriented modes discussed in the previous section that it has becomes nearly commonsensical to believe that resistance at the individual level is at best ineffectual and at worst corrosive to larger-scale leftist goals. The debate between organized, communal resistance and decentralized individualist resistance has been particularly fierce among anarchists and other revolutionary ideologies, specifically socialism and communism. A representative instance of this debate has been ongoing roughly since the advent of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in 2011, and centers around the tactics employed by a subset of protesters at that and related events referred to as the "Black Bloc." Strictly speaking, the Black Bloc is not a discrete group or identity, but is rather a tactic used within protests and movements, or, as Francis

Dupuis-Deri refers to it, a collective action that forms a contingent within an already existing protest or rally.[287] These Blocs are not homogenous or uniform in either size or composition, but emerge organically in specific circumstances, and multiple Blocs can be active within a single event. The Bloc is easily identifiable by the uniformly black colors its members don, often covering their faces with bandanas and glasses, as well as their controversial tactics which can include vandalism, burning or otherwise destroying property (a particularly well-known example here is the breaking of windows at large corporate businesses, e.g. Starbucks, McDonalds, or certain banks), and anti-capitalist and anarchist signage and imagery.[288] The Black Blocs first made their appearance on the American political scene during the massive demonstrations against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle in late 1999.[289] They returned in full force during OWS and immediately generated very public and heated debates surrounding their tactics and ideology.

While the description of the Black Blocs I have given here may suggest that the tactic is a fundamentally communal one, predicated as it is on the anonymous dissolution of individuality within a group for a shared tactical purpose, the critiques leveled against the Black Bloc protesters of OWS argue precisely the opposite, namely that Black Bloc tactics were childish expressions of individual frustrations or predilections that fundamentally cut against the more collectively organized factions within the movement. The most forceful proponent of this line of thinking at the time was Chris Hedges, a journalist who identifies closely with radical worker

---

[287] Francis Dupuis-Deri, "The Black Blocs Ten Years after Seattle: Anarchism, Direct Action, and Deliberative Practices," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 4, no. 2 (2010): 45-82, 46.

[288] Dupuis-Deri, "The Black Blocs," 46.

[289] For a first-hand account of the protests, including some discussion of the role of Black Blocs, see Alexander Cockburn, Jeffrey St. Clair, & Allan Sekula, *5 Days that Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond* (London: Verso, 2000). A more academic treatment with the benefit of over a decade of hindsight is Lesley J. Wood, *Direct Action, Deliberation, and Diffusion: Collective Action After the WTO Protests in Seattle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). David Graeber's *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009) also includes useful discussions about Seattle and Black Blocs in general.

movements (he often cites Haywood, along with the founder of the Catholic Workers movement and anarchist Dorothy Day) and advocates powerfully for unionization and anti-war organizing. In early 2012, Hedges, who participated in OWS and often spoke to the initial group that formed at Zuccotti Park in New York City, published a piece entitled "The Cancer in Occupy" that fiercely critiqued the Black Bloc contingents in OWS.[290] The thrust of Hedges' case against Black Bloc protestors was that they mistakenly eschewed traditional leftist organization in favor of wanton violence, criminal activity, and even "a deeply disturbing hypermasculinity."[291] Hedges argued that the fundamental motivations of Black Bloc-ers[292] were individualistic, and that their tactics were, rather than any form of serious critique or protest against capitalism or corporate power, but expression of "the lust that lurks within us to destroy, not only things but human beings," even going so far as to equate the motivations of Black Bloc-ers to "the same sickness that fuels the swarms of police who pepper-spray and beat peaceful protestors."[293] The selfish, individualistic, "progressive adolescentization" of the anarchist movement, in Hedges' eyes, fundamentally undercut the organized leftists movements, primarily by "open[ing] the way for hundreds or thousands of peaceful marchers to be discredited by a handful of hooligans."[294]

The debate surrounding Black Bloc tactics has, with the advent of Donald Trump, begun again with full force, this time surrounding the group known as "Antifa," which has become a household term after the violent protest clashes in Charlottesville, Virginia and Berkeley,

---

[290] Chis Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy," *TruthDig* (February 6, 2012): https://www.truthdig.com/articles/the-cancer-in-occupy/
[291] Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy."
[292] I use this admittedly somewhat strained way of formulating the plural of those who participate in Blac Blocs to avoid the false implication that Black Blocs are always of necessarily engaged in any explicit "blocking" of anything.
[293] Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy."
[294] Hedges, "The Cancer in Occupy." There were a number of responses to Hedges' broadside from Black Bloc anarchists and others. The most lucid and useful, in my estimation, is David Graeber's "Concerning the Violent Peace-Protest: An Open Letter to Chris Hedges," *n+1* (February 9, 2012): https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/concerning-the-violent-peace-police/

California during the Summer of 2017. Antifa, which is a shortening of Anti-Fascist, is a complex of loose group associations that has a long history dating back to the rise of fascism under Benito Mussolini in Italy during the 1920s.[295] Like the Black Bloc, Antifa is as much of a tactic as it is a discrete grouping or organization. While the specific details of Antifa as a movement are not directly relevant to my discussion, the response to their emergence in American politics in recent months is a further example of the type of thinking represented by Hedges with respect to supposedly individualized resistance on the American far left. Many of the same types of dismissals and insults that had been levelled against the Black Bloc are now being deployed against Antifa, with similar effect. Even mainstream figures have participated in this type of critique, as when Trevor Noah, the host of the massively popular *The Daily Show*, referred to Antifa as "vegan ISIS."[296] Noah went on to more directly echo the sentiments of Hedges and the like, claiming with respect to the common Antifa tactic of breaking windows of major corporations, most famously Starbucks,

> Seriously, though, breaking a window was a 'symbolic act'? You might think it's some deep statement, but most people see that and think, 'Great, now I've got to walk a whole block up to the next Starbucks.' Like, who is that supposed to convince? What are you trying to do? It definitely doesn't convince the Starbucks guy, the person who's gonna be in the store cleaning up the glass, like, 'Yeah, they made a good point about fascism. I understand what they mean. I understand it.'[297]

Whether they are aware of it or not, these critics of what they see as individualized, expressive forms of resistance are echoing a well-known intra-anarchist critique articulated most forcefully

---

[295] For a recent and thorough history of Antifa and explanation of its tactics, see Mark Bray, *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing, 2017).

[296] Marlow Stern, "'The Daily Show's' Trevor Noah Blasts Antifa, Brands them 'Vegan ISIS,'" *The Daily Beast* (September 1, 2017):
https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-daily-shows-trevor-noah-rails-against-antifa-they-are-vegan-isis
Interestingly, there has been legitimate academic discussion within the counterterrorism discipline regarding the possibility of so-called "lone wolf" terror attacks by Black Bloc anarchists. See Jose Pedro Zuquete, "Men in Black: Dynamics, Violence, and Lone Wolf Potential," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 1 (2014): 95-109.

[297] Stern, "'The Daily Show's.'"

by Murray Bookchin in his *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm.*[298] What Bookchin refers to as "lifestyle anarchism" or simply "lifestylism," is what he sees as the depoliticized, individualistic, and even metaphysical forms of anarchism represented by Max Stirner and, moreso for Bookchin, Hakim Bey and John Zerzan. It is worth quoting Bookchin at some length here, as he singles out many of the figures discussed in this dissertation and references many of the concepts I have been concerned to rehabilitate. He writes,

> With its aversion for institutions, mass-based organizations, its largely subcultural orientation, its moral decadence, its celebration of transience, and its rejection of programs, this kind of narcissistic anarchism is socially innocuous, often merely a safety valve for discontent toward the prevailing social order. With the Bey [Bookchin's disparaging nickname for Hakim Bey, much as Marx had referred to Stirner as "Saint Max"], lifestyle anarchism takes flight from all meaningful social activism and a steadfast commitment to lasting and creative projects by dissolving itself into kicks, postmodernist nihilism, and a dizzying Nietzschean sense of elitist superiority. The price that anarchism will pay if it permits this swill to displace the libertarian ideals of an earlier period could be enormous. The Bey's egocentric anarchism, with its postmodernist withdrawal into individualistic "autonomy,"…threatens to render the very word *anarchism* politically and socially harmless – a mere fad for the titillation of the petty bourgeois of all ages.[299]

Here I believe that Bookchin distills not only the intra-anarchist critique of individualized resistance, but also touches on many of the worries expressed by other leftists in general, as well as advocates of the reductionist objection against individualism, i.e. that it problematically rejects group identities as bases of resistance and sites of communal bonding. In the next section I argue that this is a mistaken view of individualized resistance. I show that individualized resistance is both effective, as well as compatible with the sorts of empowering, curative effects that can come from a strong sense of communal identity, particularly in the face of trauma.

---

[298] Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism.*
[299] Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, 25.

The Case for Individualized Resistance: The Politics of Refusal and Withdrawal

The case I want to make here for individualized resistance is both negative and positive. The negative case has to do with a general social tendency to overstate the effectiveness of resistance in the form of mass movements, and the positive case has to do with a correlative tendency to downplay the successes of individualized resistance, often for reasons, I argue, that are inscribed directly into the way individualized resistance functions. I will also offer a qualified defense of the expressive, emotive value of individualized resistance. I conclude the section by discussing the potential for individualized resistance within the current context of neoliberal education.

James C. Scott, a political anthropologist with an anarchist bent, has long written about grassroots peasant and popular resistance to government power and oppressive social orders. His *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, for example, examines a large region of Asia[300] that he argues is a world "in which the state has not come to close, as it now has, to sweeping all before it."[301] Scott details the various strategies and tactics used by the peoples of this area, often existing in small tribal or familial groups, for avoiding state power and outside intervention. For example, Scott describes a number of examples of the ways in which people on the margins of society evaded conscription into the armies of the Burmese-Manipur Wars, which took place from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. These tactics included everything from simply fleeing into more remote areas outside of the marching paths of the armies to, in an interesting form of identity play, altering official kinship records,

---

[300] Scott designates this area as "Zomia" and suggests that it covers "virtually all the lands at altitudes above roughly three hundred meters all the way from the Central Highlands of Vietnam to northeastern India and traversing five Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma) and four provinces of China (Yunan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and parts of Sichuan)." James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), ix.
[301] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed,* 324.

since conscription was almost always done by family or household. For Scott, the evidence of the effectiveness of these small-scale, individualized forms of resistance is provided by the increasing desperation of the conscription efforts, which expanded over time from one out of every hundred households, to one out of every fifty, to one of ten, and so on.[302] Much of the success of these resistance efforts, Scott holds, came from the malleability of the identities of the populations involved, from their willingness to alter and blur kinship lines to their ability to alter cultural norms based on their location, he argues that

> they [the peoples of Zomia] have multiple histories they can deploy singly or in combination depending on the circumstances. They can…create long, elaborate genealogies or…have minimally short genealogies and migration histories. If they appear to be without a definite history, it is because they have learned to travel light, not knowing what their next destination might be…They have just as much history as they require.[303]

What is important about Scott's insight here are not the details of the Southeast Asian context, but the fact that this example provides what Scott sees as a general template for successful small-scale, individualized resistance to oppression. For Scott, the example set by the unincorporated, stateless regions of Southeast Asia is illustrative of the more general point that "More regimes have been brought, piecemeal, to their knees by what was once called 'Irish democracy,' the silent, dogged resistance, withdrawal, and truculence of millions of ordinary people, than by revolutionary vanguards or rioting mobs."[304] Scott suggests two other important examples of this principle in action, arguing that both the outcomes of the Civil War and the ultimate defeat of Napoleon "can almost certainly be attributed to a vast aggregation of acts of desertion and insubordination."[305]

---

[302] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed,* 148-149.
[303] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed,* 330.
[304] James C. Scott, *Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 14.
[305] Scott, *Two Cheers for Anarchism*, 9.

Indeed, much work has been done on the role of small-scale, individualized resistance in both the abolitionist movement and the Civil Rights movement. Robin D.G. Kelly frames his critical study of the history of black working-class resistance in precisely the same terms that Scott uses to describe anti-statist strategies in Southeast Asia.[306] Kelly writes that his goal is to "dig a little deeper, beneath 'below,' to those workers whose record of resistance and survival is far more elusive. I'm referring here to evasive, day-to-day strategies: from footdragging to sabotage, theft at the workplace to absenteeism, cursing to graffiti."[307] Kelly's various examples of individualized forms of resistance and, importantly expression, such as the subversive uses of urban Black musical spaces that operated as venues for oppressed Black workers subject to brutal hours and treatment to "take back their bodies"[308] all suggest a fusion between the political value of small-scale, individualized resistance strategies and the subjective, expressive, eruptive nature of these types of acts. It is illustrative to look, for example, at the ways in which autonomous, undirected groups of resisters were treated both contemporaneously and historically during the Civil Rights movement. Kelley points out that the vast majority of marchers that took part in the critically important May 1963 Civil Rights demonstrations in Birmingham, organized by Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), were actually not native to the city, nor were they those who bore the brunt of oppression in Birmingham's worst slums. However, as Kelly puts it "The slum dwellers…did show up to Ingram Park to participate *on their own terms* in the May demonstrations."[309] This group of protestors, who were outside the organizational authority of the SCLC, famous for its advocacy of nonviolent resistance,

---

[306] Indeed, Kelly cites Scott's work as a direct inspiration for his investigation into black working class low-level infrapolitics.
[307] Robin D.G. Kelly, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 7.
[308] Kelly, *Race Rebels*, 169.
[309] Kelly, *Race Rebels*, 88.

responded to the infamous water guns and dogs of the Birmingham police with violence and force, engaging directly with police via throwing bottles, rocks, and hand to hand combat. These protestors returned the next day, lining the route of the planned march armed with pistols and knives, ultimately causing the SCLS to call the demonstration off altogether.[310] One can clearly see the echoes and spirit of Black Bloc and Antifa tactics in the behaviors of the Birmingham slum dwellers, refusing to be subsumed under an organizational head and engaging in direct insurrectionary action against oppressive authoritarian power. It is telling, both as a metric of the attitudes toward this type of resistance and the invisibility of individualized resistance in the historical record that, as Kelly points out, historians and contemporary activists have generally dismissed this aspect of the May Birmingham protests as the fringe activity of "onlookers" or "bystanders."[311]

Kelly is not the only scholar of Black history to point out the power of individualized, guerilla resistance. Both Akinyele Omowale Umoja and Charles E. Cobb, Jr. have written powerful counterhistorical narratives regarding the role of insurrectionary violence in the Civil Rights movement.[312] Umoja, who focuses his work on Mississippi during the Civil Rights era and before, notes that "The armed resistance of the post-Reconstruction period does not generally manifest as intentionally organized collective action, but rather as emergency self-defense, often in the form of individual acts, in response to the threat of White violence."[313] Though Cobb's analysis tends to emphasize the efforts to organize resistance among armed militia groups in the South, he concurs with Kelly that one of the most critical and

---

[310] Kelly, *Race Rebels*, 88.
[311] Kelly, *Race Rebels,* 88.
[312] Akinyele Omowale Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2013); and Charles E. Cobb, Jr., *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).
[313] Umoja, *We Will Shoot Back,* 19.

underappreciated aspects of the Civil Rights movement was the individual, dogged resistance of "small farmers, sharecroppers, day laborers, craftsmen,…and church leaders."[314]

The overarching idea, shared by Scott, Kelly, Stirner, and others is that while large-scale mobilizations like protests, marches, strikes, and so on are, for obvious reasons, more historically visible than individual forms of resistance such as desertion, tax evasion, poaching, squatting, and the like, the accumulated effect of these seemingly innocuous individual acts is ultimately more damaging to established orders of power and oppression than the mass movements that are much more often credited with generating social and historical change. Indeed, a common theme running through all of the individualist thinkers and advocates of guerilla resistance is the idea that part of the strength of individualized forms of resistance lies precisely in their refusal to participate in established and accepted channels of contestation. As Scott puts the point apropos the rampant wildcat strikes, looting, rent boycotts, slow work, and so on that marked depression era economic life, "they represented no coherent policy agenda. Instead it was genuinely unstructured, chaotic, and full of menace to the established order. For this very reason, there was no one to bargain with, no one to credibly offer peace in return for policy changes. The menace was directly proportional to their lack of institutionalization…there were no coherent demands, no one to talk to." Neoliberal capitalism thrives at bargaining with and ultimately defusing established, organized, institutions of resistance, even purportedly radical ones. Individualized resistance, on the other hand, is much more threatening, precisely because it is sub rosa, with no manifestoes, platforms, or lists of demands. The practitioner of individualized resistance says to neoliberal capital "I will not negotiate with you because you have nothing to offer me."[315] There

---

[314] Cobb, "*This Nonviolent Stuff'll,"* 15.
[315] This way of putting things raises the interesting and complex question of intentionality regarding individualized resistance. That is to say, to what degree do those who participate individualized resistance need to have some sense of the larger scale political context of their actions or of the philosophical underpinnings of their resistance? Both

is, then, a political value to being disorganized, to refusing to be subsumed under established organization norms of engagement, and that political value is the difficulty such disorganized resistance presents for systems of power predicated on negotiating with those who would resist them, and on offering piecemeal versions of reform.

Slavoj Zizek makes precisely this point with respect to a more recent instance of eruptive, individualized resistance, namely OWS. One of the most common critiques of OWS, which emerged organically and captured national attention when they effectively turned parks and public places around the country into temporary autonomous zones, was that they articulated no clear policy agenda, had no demands, and were generally uninterested in communicating with outside media or reporters.[316] For Zizek, this recalcitrance and unwillingness to couch their resistance in familiar terms and fields of play was precisely one of the strengths of the movement. Referring to Bill Clinton's suggestion that the protestors of OWS focus on getting then President Obama's jobs plan passed, Zizek writes that "they [Clinton and others like him] will try to make the protests into a harmless moralistic gesture…What one should resist at this

---

Scott and Kelly seem to suggest that there need not be any sense of linkage to a larger movement on the part of individual resisters, but that such a sense of connection is not precluded by strategies of individualized resistance either. Antifa and the Black Bloc groups, for example, clearly see themselves as directly politically engaged in a large-scale struggle against fascism, capitalism, and state power, whereas the protestors in Birmingham discussed by Kelly seemed to be responding more to the squalor and indignity of their immediate conditions, without any necessary connection to the Civil Rights Movement proper. In some ways, the question of intentionality here is unknowable, and perhaps unimportant given that both intentional and unintentional forms of individualized resistance can each aggregate to great effect. As Scott aptly puts the point, much individualized resistance "makes no open claims of this kind [claims of resistance] and because it is almost always self-serving at the same time. Who is to say whether the poaching hunter is more interested in a warm fire and rabbit stew than in contesting the claim of the aristocracy to the wood and the game he has just taken?" (Scott, *Two Cheers*, 13). Ultimately, I would argue that individual acts of resistance are overdetermined in that they can be intentionally political, self-serving, and even cathartic singularly or all at once without robbing them of their power.

[316] See for just two examples Ezra Klein, "Wonkbook: What Does 'Occupy Wall Street' Want?" *The Washington Post* (October 3, 2011):
https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/post/wonkbook-what-does-occupy-wall-street-want/2011/10/03/gIQAgCLgHL_blog.html?utm_term=.c3e5b8881815
Nicholas Kristof, "The Bankers and the Revolutionaries," *The New York Times* (October 1, 2011):
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/02/opinion/sunday/kristof-the-bankers-and-the-revolutionaries.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss.

stage is precisely such a quick translation of the energy of the protest into a set of 'concrete'

pragmatic demands" and goes on to praise the eruptive, expressive force of the OWS episode,

arguing that "The reason the protestors went out is that they had enough of the world where to

recycle your Coke cans, to give a couple of dollars for charity, or to buy Starbucks cappuccino

where 1% goes for the third world troubles is enough to make them feel good."[317] For Zizek, it is

precisely the undirected rage, frustration, and disgust that made OWS such a potentially fertile

moment in history. The moment one capitulates, even conceptually and linguistically, to the

terms of hegemonic power structures, one has already given up significant ground.

　　　Zizek's conceptualization of the impetuses for OWS in specifically quotidian, expressive

terms (the infantilizing false morality of Western capital, the malaise of daily life under

neoliberalism, and so on) leads me to address another objection commonly levelled against

individualist resistance, namely that it is more about emotional expression than legitimate

political change. Having demonstrated the political potential of individualized resistance, I want

to conclude this section by briefly arguing for the value of subjective expression in resistance.

The bifurcation between political organization and individualized resistance is, I suggest, a false

dichotomy, and wrongly assumes that political change can never occur out of eruptive,

expressive actions that themselves grow out of various forms of dissatisfaction with the current

order of things. This, in essence, is the objection favored by critics of individualist resistance like

Bookchin and Hedges, who see this type of action as merely "lifestylist" and emotive, and hence

inherently unpolitical.

---

[317] Slavoj Zizek, "Occupy Wall Street: What Is To Be Done Next?: How A Protest Movement Without a Programme Can Confront a Capitalist System that Defies Reform," *The Guardian* (April 24, 2012): https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/apr/24/occupy-wall-street-what-is-to-be-done-next

Few would deny, at this stage in political history, the power of subjective, personal experiences of daily life to spur political action and change. When Betty Freidan diagnosed the quiet oppression of the female sexual underclass of the 1950s as "the problem that has no name,"[318] the Second-wave feminist movement organically coined the phrase "the personal is political." Or when James Baldwin wrote of his friends "in twos and threes and fours, in a hallway, sharing a jug of wine or a bottle of whiskey, talking, cursing, fighting, sometimes weeping: lost, and unable to say what it was that oppressed them, except that they knew it was 'the man,'"[319] they are all asserting the value of individual experiences of oppression, depression, frustration, and anger as of fundamental importance for political resistance and movements. What is often assumed, however, and what the individualist rejects, is the idea that the only acceptable outlets for these types of frustrations are organized political parties, protests, organizations, and language. That is, the subjective experiences of oppression and violence under neoliberal capitalism and state authority are taken as legitimate and are understood to influence political engagement, but the outlets for those feelings must be regulated, approved, and generally accepted in the wider socio-political landscape (e.g. unions, parties, community groups, etc.). For the left-anarcho-individualist, the eruptive power of these subjective experiences is inherently political, regardless of their modes of expression.

One of the most articulate and passionate defenders of the political power of subjective, individual experience and eruptive expression is Raoul Vaneigem, an anarchist affiliate of the loose politico-artistic group the Situationist International (SI).[320] According to Peter Marshall,

---

[318] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell, 1979), 11

[319] James Baldwin, "Letter From A Region in my Mind," *The New Yorker* (November 17, 1962): https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/11/17/letter-from-a-region-in-my-mind.

[320] For general treatments of the Situationists, who varied from more-or-less orthodox Marxists to pre-Baudrillard media critics to artists, and their milieu see Michael Lowy, *Morning Star: Surrealism, Marxism, Anarchism, Situationism, Utopia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009); Frances Stracey, *Constructed Situations: A New*

the Situationist critique of capitalism and oppressive state authority suggested that "the way out…was not to wait for a distant revolution but to reinvent everyday life here and now. To transform the perception of the world and to change the structure of society is the same thing."[321] The Situationists, and Vaneigem in particular, saw the subjective experience of oppression, and the invisible forms of microresistance that organically erupt in our daily experience as fundamental to any revolutionary politics, not simply as a basis for larger scale organized resistance, but in themselves. Vaneigem summarized his position, and, I argue, the position of the left-anarcho-individualists in general, this way,

> The unstated agenda of every insurrectionary movement is the transformation of the world, and the reinvention of life…Revolution is made every day despite, and indeed in opposition to the specialists of revolution. This revolution is nameless, like everything that springs from lived experience. Its explosive integrity is forged continuously in the everyday clandestinity of acts and dreams.[322]

This is of course not to say that individualized expressions of refusal are the sole means of revolutionary political change, but only that their political value is their own and that they must not be seen as entirely subordinate to or precursors of larger-scale forms of resistance. The SI explicitly supported many of the forms of individualized resistance discussed above (e.g. vandalism, wildcat strikes, work sabotage, etc.) and saw these types of refusal as signs of creativity and always already political acts of expression.[323] Vaneigem, in an echo of Baldwin's description of his despondent and frustrated friends, vividly describes a scene where the eruptive, inarticulable force of refusal expresses itself in a deeply quotidian manner, but with critical political implications.

History of the Situationist International (London: Pluto Press, 2014); and Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[321] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 551.
[322] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 94.
[323] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 552.

He writes,

> The malaise assails me as the crowd around me grows. The concessions I have made to stupidity, under the pressure of circumstances, rush to meet me, surging around me in hallucinatory waves of faceless heads…Carried along by a crowd which only he can see, a man suddenly screams out in an attempt to break the spell, to call himself back to himself, to get back inside his own skin. All the tacit compliance, all the fixed smiles, lifeless words, cowardice and humiliation strewn along his path suddenly coalesce and possess him, driving him out of his desires and his dreams and exploding the illusion of 'being together.'[324]

Here the individualist commitment to the primacy of subjective experience is on full display. The individual lived experience of oppression, boredom, and generalized feelings of dissatisfaction is the impetus for the desire to construct new forms of living and interacting. For Vaneigem, structured political revolution and the development of new social forms are inseparable from subjective oppression. Vaneigem argues that subjectivity and rigorous systematic critique must work in tandem, writing that the various structures and ideologies of violence and control "withstand neither analysis nor the anxiety that assails me."[325] That is, subjective, individualized experiences and their outward expression are as valid in terms of political resistance and diagnosis as any form of more structured, organized engagement.

The expression of these subjective states of humiliation and despair serve as important shared spaces of connection and construction as well. Importantly for left-anarcho-individualists, the alienation from the self and subjective oppression are not only key forms of resistance, but also form the basis from which new forms of social relations can be constructed. Individualism ultimately holds that inverting alienation and actualizing individuals is also the truest form of democratic society. It is to this question, and the anti-democratic objection that I turn in the next section.

---

[324] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 24.
[325] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 19.

The Anti-Democratic Objection: Individualism versus Democracy?

It is difficult to overstate the influence of liberal democratic thinking on contemporary educational philosophy, and specifically the thinking of John Dewey. Dewey scholar Mordechai Gordon has gone so far as to compare the scope and depth of Dewey's impact on education to those of Marx and Freud on sociology and psychology respectively.[326] Perhaps the most important of Dewey's many theoretical legacies has been the sense among philosophers of education that the fundamental project of schooling is a social, democratic, and communicative one; that, as Dewey said, "…learning is the accompaniment of continuous activities or occupations which have a social aim and utilize the materials of typical social situations. For under such conditions, the school itself becomes a form of social life, a miniature community."[327] Schooling, for Dewey, is to develop in children "the means to be fully and adequately what one is capable of becoming through association with others in all the offices in life."[328] While Dewey recognized the significant challenge of how to balance the concerns and needs of individuals, on the one hand, and the large democratic community, on the other (indeed, he once referred to this problem as "the ultimate problem of all education,")[329] it is undeniable that Dewey viewed the community building, democratic aspects of the educational project to be of primary importance. This legacy has had two major implications for the purposes of this dissertation. First, there is the enduring sense that Dewey was fundamentally correct about the nature and goals of education in modern society, i.e. that it ought to promote liberal democracy, broadly understood. There is a certain affinity between the current state of political thinking in

---

[326] Mordechai Gordon, "Why Should Scholars Keep Coming Back to John Dewey?" *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 48, no. 10 (2016): 1077-1091, 1077.

[327] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 360.

[328] Dewy, *Democracy and Education*, 358.

[329] John Dewey, "Plan of Organization of the University Primary School," in *The Early Works of John Dewey vol. 5, 1882-1898*, ed. Jo Anne Boyston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 224.

educational philosophy and the thesis of Francis Fukuyama's controversial 1992 book *The End*

of History and the Last Man, in which he famously suggests that "What we may be witnessing is

not just the end of the Cold war, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the

end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the

universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."[330] With

certain provisos, e.g. that we incorporate into our democratic political theorizing the insights of

identitarian movements and thinking, many educational theorists seem to think that we have

more or less hit on the best possible vision of schooling, and that we must simply tweak our

approaches to bring that vision into practice in reality or add this or that theoretical addendum as

necessary.[331]

A corollary to the "end of history" mentality regarding liberal democratic education, and

the second major implication of Dewey's legacy, has been that contemporary educational

thinking has developed a list of foes and anathematic concepts against which the ideal of

democratic schooling must be defended. Generally speaking, the discourse of resistance and

incursion revolves around capitalism, markets, privatization, and the ubiquitous "neoliberalism."

The particular features of this historical epoch and its guiding philosophy, both of which are

potential referents of these terms, are certainly in dispute, but there is widespread agreement on

some of the fundamentals. For example, there is a general consensus that the basic tenets of

neoliberalism tend to guide global and national economic policies, perhaps particularly so in the

United States. The basic principles of neoliberalism were elaborated following the 1938 Walter

Lippman Colloquium in Paris, which was called explicitly to form a new liberalism as interest in

---

[330] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 2006), xi.
[331] Perhaps the most complete statement of this type of thinking is Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education*
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

classical liberal economic thinking waned. The foundational commitments ultimately produced

by the participants at the colloquium are "the priority of the price mechanism, the free enterprise,

the system of competition, and a strong and impartial state."[332] Although neoliberalism as a term

has become a generalized shorthand form of criticism toward both classical and properly

neoliberal economic policies, we ought, as implied by the conditions of neoliberalism's initial

articulation, to note the important differences that exist between these principles and the pure

free-market philosophies of, say, F.A. Hayek or Ludwig von Mises, who initially did object to

the commitment to strong state intervention in economic matters on the part of neoliberals.

Another important aspect of neoliberalism is the shift from manufacture and labor as the main

founts of profit and productivity to an emphasis on financial markets and speculation for those

purposes. David Harvey puts the point pithily, claiming that "Neoliberalization has meant, in

short, the financialization of everything."[333] I take this pervasive influence of globalized financial

capital to be one of the defining features of the current political problematic, and it is the one

against which the majority of current politico-educational critique is leveled.[334] Crucially for this

dissertation, it is generally assumed that a handmaiden to the destructive logics of efficiency,

market ideology, and neoliberalism more generally is individualism, and the two are casually

paired together with such notably frequency that one could be forgiven for thinking that

---

[332] *The Road from Mont Pelerin,* eds. Mirowski and Plehwe, 14.

[333] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* 29.

[334] This topic is ubiquitous in educational thinking, but see for a sampling: Wayne Au and Joseph J. Ferrare, *Mapping Corporate Education Reform: Power and Policy Networks in the Neoliberal State* (London: Routledge, 2015); Pauline Lipman, *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City* (London: Routledge, 2011); Stephen J. Ball *Global Education Inc.: New Policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 2012); and David E. Meens, "Democratic Education versus Smithian Efficiency: Prospects for a Deweyan Ideal in the "Neoliberal Age," *Educational Theory* 66 no. 1-2 (2016): 211-226. There are holdouts in education who still single out rightist conservatism in its various manifestations (economic, religious, etc.) as the main enemy of education today. Chief among these is Michael Apple. See his *Educating the "Right" Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality* (New York: Routledge, 2006), and *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

neoliberalism and individualism just are one and the same, or at the very least parasitic on one another. Critical pedagogue Henry Giroux groups individualism with "the ethic of consumption, "empire-building," "the dictates of the market" and "patriotic jingoism," and goes on to contrasts it directly with "civic responsibility."[335] In another piece, he ties individualism to "excessive commercialism" and "selfishness" which "undermine and displace the values necessary to define ourselves as active and critical citizens rather than as consumers."[336] Peter McLaren, another critical pedagogue, groups individualism together with what he calls "myths of the nuclear family" and "imperialism."[337] One of the most widely-cited theorists of neoliberalism, David Harvey, sees individualism as fundamentally tied to "the anarchy of the market, of competition" and "a breakdown of all bonds of solidarity and a condition verging on social anarchy and nihilism."[338] Many other writers prefer to appropriate C.B. Macpherson's famous term "possessive individualism"[339] to more directly tie individualism to consumerism and capitalism. This despite the fact, it must be noted, that Macpherson himself explicitly denied the association between individualism and capitalism, writing that his entire philosophical project has in part revolved around "rescuing that valuable part of the liberal tradition which is submerged when liberalism is identified with capitalist market relations."[340] Wendy Brown, another important recent critic of neoliberalism, historically links the ideology of possessive individualism to "the

---

[335] Henry Giroux, "The Conservative Assault on America: Cultural Politics, Education, and the New Authoritarianism," in *America on the Edge: Henry Giroux on Politics, Culture, and Education* (London: Palgrave, 2006), 23-42, 24.

[336] Henry Giroux, "Turning America Into a Toy Store," in *Critical Pedagogies of Consumption: Living and Learning in the Shadow of the "Shopocalypse,"* eds. Jennifer A. Sandlin and Peter McLaren (New York: Routledge, 2010), 249-258, 253.

[337] Peter McLaren, *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Postmodern Era* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 103

[338] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* 82

[339] C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[340] C.B. Macpherson, "Humanist Democracy and Elusive Marxism: A Response to Minogue and Svacek," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 9, no. 3 (1976): 423-430, 423.

growth of capitalism and its overtaking of public life."[341] Pauline Lipman similarly deploys the term when she suggests that "Antidemocratic policies take root in a culture of possessive individualism and White supremacy that makes them seem natural and inevitable…"[342] Clearly, there is a sense in much of the educational literature that individualism is fundamentally complicit with neoliberal capitalism and its attendant corruptions of democracy, community, and even human meaning, as in Harvey's charge of nihilism. In short, the anti-democratic objection to individualism holds that individualism is fundamentally incompatible with democratic social organization, treating individuals as atomistic, disconnected, and in some cases fundamentally driven only by their own selfish desires. The next section argues that individualism is actually entirely consistent with democratic organization, and may even be a more truly radical form of democracy than traditional understandings of the term. I argue that the target of the critiques of individualism surveyed above is the type of rightist-individualism discussed in the conclusion of Chapter Two, and that the left-anarcho-individualism I advocate would wholeheartedly endorse the critiques of that rightist form of individualism as racist, atomistic, and oppressive. That is, to argue that individualism is incompatible with democracy is to fail to make the critical distinction between rightist-anarcho-capitalist individualism and left-anarcho-individualism. I will also argue that this distinction is one of which Dewey himself was keenly aware, and that his vision of democratic life is of a piece with that of the left-anarcho-individualist view.

Individualist Democracy

It is worth acknowledging at the outset of responding to the antidemocratic objection that it is manifestly true that forms of rugged, capitalist individualism that are the intended target of the antidemocratic objection are not in any way democratic, predicated as they are on ideologies

---

[341] Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 92
[342] Lipman, *The New Political Economy of Urban Education,* 73

of domination, pseudo-Darwinian competition, and isolation. The argument of this section is that the anarchist individualism advocated in this dissertation is united with traditional advocates of democracy in both opposing these tendencies as well as in calling for a freer, more just social world, though apart from state control. In nearly all of the major individualist thinkers, particularly those of the anarchist tradition, one finds political considerations to be of critical importance. While the political principles on which individualism is based, and some of the potential implications of those principles for social organization have already been articulated in Chapter Three, what I want to focus on here are the ways in which those principles align with the explicit commitments of democratic social organization. Given the broadly educational context of this discussion, I find it helpful to appeal to Dewey in terms of thinking about the nature of democracy and the values that underpin it. Dewey is rightly considered one of the most important theorists of democracy in the history of thinking about the concept, and any discussion of democracy must inevitably move through his work in some way. Here I will outline Dewey's understanding of democracy, and go on to illustrate its fundamental compatibility with anarchist individualism.

The first critical point to note about how Dewey understands democracy is that, for him, democracy is not only, nor even primarily, a form of governmental organization. Rather, democracy is a way of life, an ethic, and, critically, a subjective experience. In his early articulation of democracy "The Ethics of Democracy," Dewey argues that democracy as government or social organization is at best derivative of the subjective, inner sense of democracy as a moral commitment. He writes that democracy "is not to be put into a man from without. It must begin in the man himself, however much the good and the wise of society

contribute. Personal responsibility, individual initiation, these are the notes of democracy."[343]

Indeed, in 1927's *The Public and Its Problems,* Dewey derides those who would restrict

democracy to political organization at the expense of the subjective component, arguing that

mere political democracy is weak, mechanistic, and narrow, stealthily relying on implied

premises of rugged individualist liberalism.[344] This centering of the individual in Dewey's

conception of democratic life is by no means marginal or limited to his early work, but rather is

shot through the entire philosophical framework he establishes for democracy. In "A Resume of

Four Lectures on Common Sense, Science and Philosophy," from 1932, Dewey again describes

the fundamental aspect of the democratic sensibility in individual terms, describing the

democratic society as one in which "every individual has a degree of power to govern himself

and be free in the ordinary concerns of life."[345] Critically for Dewey, democracy is constantly

evolving, always creative, and always in the process of becoming. That is, there is no fixed

endpoint at which we reach perfect democracy. Rather, as he puts the point in "The Challenge of

Democracy to Education," democracy "as a form of life cannot stand still."[346] Indeed, James

Albrecht glosses Dewey's experimentalist democracy as primarily a means of attempting to

usher in a new vision of individualism, one that should immediately be familiar from discussion

of individualism in Chapter Three. Albrecht writes that Dewey envisioned an individualism "that

rejects classic liberalism's negative conception of liberty and its rigid laissez-faire opposition to

public regulation, in favor of a broad commitment to creating the positive conditions of

---

[343] John Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy," in *The Early Works vol. 1, 1882-1888*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 227-252, 243.
[344] John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, in *The Later Works vol. 2, 1925-1927,* ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 235-372, 325-27.
[345] John Dewey, "A Resume of Four Lectures on Common Sense, Science and Philosophy," in *The Later Works vol. 6, 1931-1932,* ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 424-433, 431.
[346] John Dewey, "The Challenge of Democracy to Education," in *The Later Works vol. 11*, *1935-1937*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 181-190, 182.

individual liberty and equality by whatever means…are best suited to each particular

situation."[347] The ultimate goal of democratic organization, and the inner experience of the

democratic spirit, is to unlock individual subjectivity, rather than achieve some objective form of

freedom (as in the right-individualist tradition). Dewey, critically, extended this goal of

individual cultivation into the realm of education as well, a connection that will be drawn more

explicitly in Chapter Five.

Perhaps the most important statement of Dewey's understanding of individualism, and a

text that in many ways can serve as a bridge between Dewey and the left-anarcho-individualists

on the question of democratic individualism, is *Individualism Old and New* (1930). Dewey

argues that the gradual advance of capitalist social capture and its infiltration into all aspects of

modern life has fundamentally undercut the ability of individuals to achieve subjective

fulfillment or band together for social progress. In an argument that parallels the rhetoric of

Vaneigem, Dewey isolates as particularly oppressive "the unrest, impatience, irritation and hurry

that are so marked in American life" and suggests that the ubiquity of these pathological

subjective phenomena can only signal "an acute maladjustment between individuals and the

social conditions under which they live,"[348] namely a global capitalism that centers private

pecuniary accumulation as the ultimate goal of human existence. Dewey argues that the "old"

view of individualism is, as I argued in Chapter Two, fundamentally complicit with this view,

situating the individual as merely an agent of capital. On the "old" view of individualism, "The

individual is told that by indulging in the enjoyment of free purchasing he performs his economic

duty, transferring his surplus income into the corporate store where it can be most effectively

---

[347] James M. Albrecht, *Reconstructing Individualism: A Pragmatic Tradition from Emerson to Ellison* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 246.
[348] John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1999), 28.

used."[349] This is the view of right-individualism and anarcho-capitalism, holding as they do to the model of *homo economicus* as the ideal of individual activity. Dewey also echoes the discussion of Herbert Hoover from Chapter One, arguing that Hoover positioned himself, and by extension the Republican party at large, not as political entities, but rather as engineers of order and prosperity, taking a supposedly more objective view of economic relations.[350] This is of course a *sine qua non* of neoliberal capitalist rationality of the Randian and Hayekian variety. As should be clear, the left-anarcho-individualist agrees with Dewey's critique of this form of individualism.

These developments in capitalism and the entrenchment of the "old" vision of individualism that supports those developments has resulted, Dewey argues, in the subversion of the individual, who is divided within himself between the alienating and homogenizing forces of capitalist production and his genuine desire for self-realization and expression. Dewey argues that the individual needs to be reconstructed in an organic way that responds to the currently existing problematic and set of social relationships. In a similar argument to that made by Stirner, Dewey argues that traditionally imposed mores and social roles must be re-evaluated in light of new social conditions and forms of living, writing "Traditional ideas are more than irrelevant. They are an encumbrance; they are the chief obstacle to the formation of a new individuality integrated within itself and with a liberated function in the society wherein it exists."[351] The new individual must be free to develop in conversation with both her genuine self and those around her. For Dewey, this spark of individuality and the desire to escape oppressive social forms (and indeed create new ones) is, as Vaneigem also argues, "inexpugnable" and

---

[349] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 22.
[350] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 52.
[351] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 46.

asserts itself everywhere that it is tamped down, even in small ways.[352] The mode of individualist

democracy begins within the individual and the recapturing of the individual spirit of

experimentation and engagement with one's surroundings.

This individualist orientation in terms of the spirit of democracy is shared by all the great

individualists, as is the sense that democratic forms can never become static or rigid, falling back

into the homogenizing subsuming of the individual under the heading of "Society" as understood

by Emerson and Stirner in Chapter Three. The left-anarcho-individualists, if anything, see

themselves as calling for a more rigorously thorough democratic reimagining of society, so as to

maximize the value and variation of human experiences and freedoms. This view is in keeping

with the individualist tendency to extend the logic of a traditional leftist position to its logical

conclusions. If democracy is decoupled from its associations with this or that particular way of

organizing political representation, and is viewed as an attitude toward the world and other

individuals in it, it becomes clear that Dewey and the left-anarcho-individualists share much the

same understanding of the concept. Stirner's call for a reconfiguration of human relationships

from society to union and Emerson's extension of the ideal of friendship into the realm of the

social are both of a piece with Dewey's definition of democracy as "a name for a life of free and

enriching communion."[353] The emphasis here on freedom and enrichment is key, as it represents

a critical point of agreement between Dewey and the left-anarcho-individualists, namely on the

issue that true democracy, while acknowledging the unavoidable entanglements into which we

are thrown as human being, must not unilaterally impose on us unchosen relations of force, or

put us in positions that sap our individuality and unique identities. For Dewey, these free and

enriching communities (or "publics" in his preferred terminology) emerge and develop in

---

[352] Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, 80.
[353] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems,* 342.

response to specific, localized conditions and problems that confront the members of that public in their daily lives. There is no predetermined model or theoretical ideal to which the emergence of a public must adhere, and indeed, "to form itself, the public has to break existing political forms."[354] This understanding of the emergence of publics as contingent and dependent on shifting, localized contexts, is certainly consistent with how Stirner understands the formation of unions, namely for mutual benefit and in response to a desire or need. These types of *ad hoc* social forms that do not exist long enough to become hardened by social roles or other strictures are hallmarks of the left-anarcho-individualist understanding of democracy and democratic decision making.

Dewey is similarly clear, and in agreement with the left-anarcho-individualists, that one of the main forces that has come to oppress and stifle subjectivity, and hence democracy, is the advent of neoliberal capitalism and the attendant flattening of human relations under the demands of production, work, and capital accumulation. Dewey clearly recognized that "the problem of democracy is no longer chiefly governmental and political. It is industrial and financial – economic."[355] For Dewey, industrial capitalism and the various indignities and humiliations it produced, along with its demand for competition among all of those under its control, had snuffed out the spirit of democracy. Mere political democracy in the form of elections and the like is neither able to spark or nourish the democratic impulse, and Dewey calls for a radical reshaping of our social order so that democracy can be reborn anew. He goes so far as to explicitly call for the people's ownership and control of "the land, banks, the producing and distributing agencies of the nation."[356] Certainly Vaneigem would agree with Dewey regarding

---

[354] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems,* 254.
[355] John Dewey, "American Education Past and Future," in *The Later Works vol. 6*, 90-98, 96.
[356] John Dewey, "Imperative Need: A New Radical Party," in *The Later Works vol. 9: 1933-1934*, Jo Ann Boydston ed., (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 76-80, 76.

the false promises and antidemocratic foundation of capitalist production, a when he describes

the reality of day to day life under capitalism as "working to survive, surviving by consuming

and for the sake of consuming: the hellish cycle is complete. According to the logic of the-

economy-rules, survival is both necessary and sufficient."[357] Modes of modern capitalist

production, for both Dewey and the left-anarcho-individualist, are fundamentally antidemocratic

and corrosive to the ultimate goals of self-actualization and development of agency.

Both in their understanding of the fundamental goals of democracy (i.e. the cultivation of

individuality), their conception of how democratic social organization is to be approached, as

well as their critiques of capitalism as antithetical to democratic life, the left-anarcho-

individualists and Dewey agree. Broadening the conception of democracy from mere formal

political organization to include certain types of attitudes and subjective dispositions shows

clearly that left-anarcho-individualism is not only compatible with, but an ally of, democracy.[358]

In the final chapter, I will approach educational issues specifically, applying the positive left-

anarcho-individualist view espoused in Chapter Three to specifically educational concerns,

namely concerns of school organization, pedagogy, curriculum, and the relationship of schools to

society.

---

[357] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life,* 53.
[358] Of course, if one simply insists on a procedural definition of democracy with institutionalized forms of representation, the individualist view will not be amenable, as procedural democracy requires individuals to represent other individuals, a reductive move that would be utterly rejected by the individualist thinkers. At the same time, anarchist thinkers in general have done significant work in theorizing various forms of horizontal democratic decision making. See Kinna, *Anarchism*, esp. 144-145 for a helpful survey of some of the theories and difficulties within anarchism on this issue.

CHAPTER FIVE

LEFT-ANARCHO-INDIVIDUALIST EDUCATION

In this chapter I synthesize the critiques of state power and social homogenization offered by individualism with the positive picture of that view offered in Chapter Three specifically with respect to educational questions. I will argue first that left-anarcho-individualism provides a strong and important critique of the current neoliberal problematic in education, defined as it is by increasing calls for standardization, measurement, accountability, and the like. Second, I discuss some possible futures suggested by the left-anarcho-individualist program for reshaping and rebuilding education for individual liberation and expression. I also address the potential objection that left-anarcho-individualist education in practice simply collapses into a type of existentialism, an educational approach that has a long theoretical and practical history of its own.

Education as a Fundamental Anarchist Interest

Education has long been a central preoccupation of anarchist thinking in general, apart from the individualist tradition. Despite anarchism's notorious inability to generate meaningful theoretical consensus among those who actually identity as anarchists,[359] one of the few nearly universal points of agreement among anarchists of various stripes is the conviction that education and schools are of foundational importance in any long-term project of social change or revolution. Leonard Krimerman and Lewis Parry go so far as to claim of anarchism that "Indeed, no other movement whatever has assigned to educational principles, concepts, experiments, and

---

[359] See Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 4-6 for a comparison between the theoretical family trees of Marxism and anarchism, and a discussion of intra-anarchist debate and consensus.

practices a more significant place in its writings and activities."[360] The reasons for this are both

negative and positive. That is, anarchists recognize both the importance of wresting the powerful

tool of ideological reproduction and indoctrination represented by the educational system from

State control, as well as seeing education as a critical positive project for building a new society.

       With respect to the negative aspect of the anarchist interest in education, anarchists are

largely in agreement with the analysis of schools as social institutions provided by Marxist

philosopher Louis Althusser in his influential essay "Ideology and Ideological State

Apparatuses," which diagnosed the ways in which State and Capital power reproduce the

conditions of their persistence, specifically with respect to production.[361] For Althusser, the key

function of social formations of all types is to "reproduce the conditions of its production at the

same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce."[362] That is, social forms must

participate in maintaining the material bases of their existence, such that they can continue with

their productive imperatives. Crucially, this "endless chain" of social reproduction necessitates

not just the reproduction of the *means* of production (e.g. raw materials, factories, etc.), but also

of what Althusser calls "productive forces," by which he simply means labor power itself.[363]

Althusser argues that the most influential and important institution in the process of reproducing

labor power is the ideological State apparatus (ISA) of the educational system.[364] Althusser

performs a genealogical exposure not unlike those undertaken by Stirner and Foucault to

demonstrate how the educational ISA has come to perform the same reproductive functions and

---

[360] Leonard Krimerman and Lewis Parry, *Patterns of Anarchy* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 404.
[361] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."
[362] Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 128.
[363] Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 130.
[364] Althusser importantly distinguishes between ideological and repressive state apparatuses, with the former representing the "softer" forms of state power that function primarily through the dissemination and reproduction of certain ideological presumptions, and the latter referring to the explicitly organized repressive uses of force perpetrated by the State (e.g. the police, military, etc.).

occupy the same structural position as the previously dominant ISA, namely the Church. He

argues that "the ideological State apparatus which has been installed in the *dominant* position in

mature-capitalist social formations as a result of a violent political and ideological class struggle

against the old dominant ideological State apparatus [the Church], is the *educational ideological*

apparatus."[365] The school is where children are initiated into the structural relations of State

power and capital and prepared for their various downstream positions in productions. Critically,

Althusser does not necessarily see school as a site of explicit propagandizing or indoctrination in

any direct sense, but rather isolates how the most supposedly innocuous and basic aspects of the

curriculum serve the larger purposes of ideological control. Inquiring into what precisely it is

that students learn in school, he writes in a paragraph that is unmistakably applicable to our

current neoliberal context,

> at any rate they learn to read, to write and to add – i.e. a number of techniques and a
> number of other things as well, including elements of 'scientific' or 'literary culture,'
> which are directly useful in the different jobs in production (one instruction for manual
> workers, another for technicians, a third for engineers, a final one for higher
> management, etc.). Thus, they learn 'know-how.'

 He goes on to argue that beyond these technical forms of preparation for economic production,

children also learn

> the 'rules' of good behavior, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the
> division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and
> professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical
> division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination.[366]

The school, then, is one of the primary means of assigning social roles, instilling the rules of the

game of production, and the site of subjection to the established order. While this

characterization of the ideological apparatus of the school is particularly attractive to

---

[365] Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 152.
[366] Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 132.

individualists for reasons I will discuss, it is also generally consistent with the anarchist position

on schools as they currently exist in the neoliberal social order, and helps to explain the high

degree of interest in schools and education on the part of anarchists.

While anarchists generally agree on the centrality of a robust critique of the educational

system and acknowledge its importance in any revolutionary project, the positive visions of what

education ought to look like, and what its purposes would be, in post-revolutionary society are,

perhaps predictably, strikingly different. Judith Suissa makes clear the fundamental tension

between total freedom and a positive political program that invariably arises in any discussion of

anarchist education in her authoritative treatment of the topic, writing

> On the one hand, given the anarchist aversion to blueprints and the demand for constant
> experimentation in the endeavour to improve society, it may seem quite reasonable to
> argue that doing away with schools and formal education altogether would be a crucial
> step toward the creation of an anarchist society…Yet on the other hand, the earlier
> discussion of the substantive core of anarchism suggests that any educational practice
> consistent with these values cannot coherently adopt a libertarian position, in the sense of
> a *laissez-faire* attitude to children's upbringing.[367]

Suissa goes on to argue that the former horn of this dilemma, while in some senses consistent

with anarchist commitment, is more properly referred to as "libertarian," given its

uncompromising emphasis on the freedom of the child and unwillingness to impose strictures on

their behavior and development. On the other hand, it is the centrality of anarchist political

principles in the educational process that marks certain forms of education as distinctly anarchist,

rather than simply libertarian, and the imparting of these principles can indeed necessitate certain

forms of imposition and authority that would be rejected by strict educational libertarians. This

distinction is of profound importance for thinking about anarchist education in general, but

specifically for individualism, which I ultimately argue bridges the gap between libertarian and

---

[367] Judith Suissa, *Anarchism and Education* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), 75.

anarchist education by explicitly politicizing the project of subjective liberation. Before making

that case, however, I want to advance and discuss some representative examples of each horn of

Suissa's dilemma, both theoretical and as instantiated in actually existing schools.

Libertarian Education

Two of the most well-known recent anarchist educational theorists, Paul Goodman and

Colin Ward, represent a more libertarian position on educational questions. Both Goodman and

Ward saw the formalized education system as having become so corrupt and stifling that they

questioned the need for formal schooling entirely, a hallmark of libertarian educational thinking,

advocating instead various forms of informal community-based, organically evolving educative

organizations and structures, often centered around the utilization of urban spaces as sites of

educational growth. For Goodman and Ward, both fundamentally urbanists and early proponents

of what Henri Lefebvre called "the right to the city,"[368] contemporary urban spaces would ideally

serve as large-scale, open classrooms that would ultimately eliminate the need for any formalized

education or a specific educational site called a "school." The open-endedness and near infinity

of experiences available to urban children (and the adults around them), ought to be utilized for

educational purposes and free development of children, specifically what Ward called "education

for mastery of the environment."[369] Both Ward and Goodman believed that direct contact with

the physical spaces of daily life was the most effective means of coming to understand not only

those spaces themselves, but the people who occupy them, the political implications of their

design and conditions (e.g. poverty, segregation, etc.), and one's role in the broader community.

---

[368] See Henri Lefebvre, "The Right to the City," in *Writings on Cities,* Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, trans. & eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 63-184. See also David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2013).

[369] Colin Ward, "Education for Mastery of the Environment," in Colin Ward, *Talking Schools* (London: Freedom Press, 1995), 21-38.

Goodman, a prominent forerunner of the de-schooling theories of Ivan Illich,[370] described his

vision of this radically open urban education in his 1942 novel *The Grand Piano*, writing

> It seems to me *prima facie* that we have to use the City itself as our school. Instead of
> bringing imitation bits of the City into a school building, let us go at our own pace and
> get out among the real things. What I envisage is gangs of about six kids, starting at nine
> or ten years old, roving the City with a shepherd empowered to protect them, and
> accumulating experiences tempered to their powers.[371]

Goodman believed, with Emerson, that the highest value in contemporary capitalist society was

conformity, and that the schools had come to reflect that truth. He argued for a revitalization of

traditional progressive education, but with an even stronger emphasis on the individuality of each

child and a higher degree of "permissiveness in all animal behavior and interpersonal

experience."[372] Ward is somewhat more moderate in searching for "a compromise between the

radical ideas of the deschoolers and our own expectations of schooling for our own children,"[373]

but still fundamentally calls for a breakdown of the traditional organized educational system and

an entirely open school, without walls or other barriers, and a curriculum fundamentally dictated

by the immediate needs of the local community and the interests of the children, rather than a

grand anarchist political program.

Perhaps the most famous actually existing example of libertarian education in this sense

is A.S. Neill's Summerhill School, founded in 1921 in Suffolk, England. For Suissa, Summerhill

is distinctive of the libertarian view of education and is also an excellent example of what

separates anarchist education proper from its libertarian alternatives. Neill, whose educational

methods are sometimes placed under the umbrella of "existentialist" education, put strong

---

[370] See Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).
[371] Quoted in Ward, *Talking Schools,* 26.
[372] Paul Goodman, *Growing up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized System* (New York: Random House, 1960), 81.
[373] Ward, "Places for Learning," in *Talking Schools*, 92-107, 106.

emphasis on non-intervention with the development and behavior of children, advocating what he referred to as "self-regulation" on the part of children.[374] As Suissa points out, "Neill conceived of freedom in a primarily individual, psychological sense,"[375] and indeed much of Neill's approach to childhood and education was driven by psychological concerns. Specifically, for example, Neill was deeply interested in the effects of repression and discipline on the development of children's sexuality and ways in which allowing existentialist self-expression might counteract what he sees as the pernicious influence of sexual repression. He even goes so far as to claim that "To find a new orientation to sex is the most difficult task of the parent and teacher."[376]

Neill was also stoutly apolitical in his pedagogical vision, even to the point of potential relativism, which is a radically different attitude from the anarchist's explicit centering of social and political reform in their worldview. Suissa cites a telling quote from an interview Neill once gave, in which he seemed to endorse a relativistic view of pedagogical neutrality, saying "Life is so difficult to understand that I personally cannot claim to settle the relative educational values of anyone."[377] Neill was, in this sense, fundamentally committed to the total freedom of individuals and saw that freedom as abstractable from social forces in precisely the way objected to by many critics of individualism. In a strange inversion, Neill's deeply isolationist individualism and relativist approach can even be said to participate in the objectionable individualism of Rand and Rothbard, fetishizing free choice and the development of exceptional individuals even to the detriment of larger-scale socio-political concerns. Neill seems to directly endorse this type of view when he states, "When the individual and social interests clash, the

---

[374] A.S. Neill, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* (Oxford: Hart Publishing Company, 1960), 68.
[375] Suissa, *Anarchism and Education*, 94.
376 Neill, *Summerhill*, 133.
[377] Quoted in Suissa, *Anarchism and Education*, 95.

individual interests should be allowed to take precedence."[378] Neill's thinking is of course

distinct from the that of Goodman and Ward, who both implicated capitalism and oppressive

political structures directly in their calls for libertarian education, but the methodological

practices advocated by all three thinkers are importantly similar, and can be characterized as

libertarian in the sense Suissa uses the term. The concluding sections of this chapter will

illustrate how an individualist education based on the left-anarcho-individualist view advocated

in Chapter Three importantly differs from the educational thinking of both Ward and Goodman,

as well as Neill.

Anarchist Education Proper: The Case of The Stelton Ferrer School

Representative of proper anarchist education, as opposed to the pseudo-anarchist

libertarianism of Neill, is the thinking of anarcho-communist Mikhail Bakunin, one of the most

well-known anarchists in history. Bakunin held that even in a fully realized anarcho-

communalist society, both education and work would be compulsory for every person. Bakunin

believed that this was the only equitable, fair way to ensure that no individual's labor was

exploited by another.[379] Of course, Bakunin shared the critique of schooling under State

authority, and even more so under the influence of capitalism, and, as Suissa notes, was very

open in terms of how precisely education would be structured in an anarchist society and to what

ends it would be put,[380] but still held to the necessity of formal structures of education in a

general sense. Slightly more prescriptive in his anarchist educational theory is Peter Kropotkin,

who explicitly advocated for a certain type of vocational education as fundamental to anarchist

society. Education, for Kropotkin, is primarily

---

[378] Quoted in Suissa, *Anarchism and Education,* 95-96.
[379] See Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible,* 299.
[380] Suissa, *Anarchism and Education*, 98.

to teach him [the child] the elements of knowledge and the good methods of work, and, above all, to give him that general inspiration which will induce him, later on, to put in whatever he does a sincere longing for truth, to like what is beautiful, both as to forms and to contents, to feel the necessity of being a useful unit amidst other human units, and thus to feel his heart at unison with the rest of humanity.[381]

For Kropotkin, and the anarchist tradition of education in general, one of the critical goals is to attempt to instill in children a sense of their place in the world and a sense of obligation toward their fellow men. I do not mean here that children are to be told their place in the sense of Althusserian indoctrination into a pre-established role in capitalist production, but rather a communication of the ideals of cooperation, mutuality, and interdependence that generally characterize the anarchist society advocated by the anarcho-communists and the like. Again, like Bakunin, Kropotkin here sees work as a necessary part of that society, and so calls for vocational training to be a component of the educational system. He sums up his view on education by claiming that learning should come "through the eyes *and* the hand to the brain."[382] Unlike the relativist libertarianism of Neill, proper anarchist education foregrounds issues of class consciousness, anticapitalism, antiracism, and a positive vision of the common good and political organization. For these thinkers, the conception of freedom most relevant to the educational and social project is collective, including much more than simply relieving individuals of this or that restriction on their thought or behavior. Suissa cites anarchist educator Fransisco Ferrer's denunciation of attempts to depoliticize education as fundamentally hypocritical. Rather, he explicitly advocates for direct political content in schools, writing, "We should not, in the school, hide the fact that we would awaken in the children a desire for a society of men truly free and truly equal."[383]

---

[381] Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories, and Workshops Tomorrow*, ed. Colin Ward (London: Freedom Press, 1974), 178.
[382] Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories, and Workshops Tomorrow,* 194.
[383] Quoted in Suissa, *Anarchism and Education,* 95.

The reference to Ferrer is particularly relevant here, as he is perhaps the most well-known and successful anarchist educator in modern history, having founded the Escuela Moderna (Modern School) in Barcelona in 1901. The school was the culmination and confluence of many of Ferrer's most closely cherished ideals. The Escuela was profoundly radical for the time and context, advocating the political education of working-class children for their own class consciousness and outside of the purview of the Catholic Church, an institution which at that time closely controlled nearly all education in Spain. In *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School,* one of a tiny number of Ferrer's few writings to ever appear in print, he wrote that "Governments have ever been careful to hold a high hand over the education of the people. They know, better than anyone else, that their power is based almost entirely on the school."[384] Ferrer also rejected the strict discipline that tended to accompany formal education at the time, instead arguing that in order to ever truly learn or engage deeply with their own education, children must be given the freedom explore, consider, and reject ideas and approaches as they see fit. They must be educated, that is, to become freethinking and self-actualized adults. Ferrer's ultimate goal was that the children who attended the Modern Schools would eventually become the men who would lead a working-class revolution. Though Ferrer's school ultimately closed due to his being swept up in various political events in Spain, including a prison term and eventual execution, his school inspired what would become the longest-lasting and most influential radical educational experiment in American history, namely the Stelton Ferrer School, which began in 1911 in New York City. It will be worthwhile to spend some time detailing the historical rise and fall of the Ferrer school, as it is importantly illustrative of the tension between libertarian and anarchist education identified by Suissa.

---

[384] Fransisco Ferrer, *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, trans. Joseph McCabe (London: Watts & Co, 1913), 15.

Originally called simply the Ferrer School, the school was founded by notable American anarchist Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and others. In her essay "Fransisco Ferrer and the Modern School" which appeared in her 1910 collection *Anarchism and Other Essays*, Goldman treats Ferrer as a type of political martyr, writing that upon his execution "the obscure teacher, became a universal figure, blazing forth the indignation and wrath of the whole civilized world against the wanton murder," and proclaimed that "his spirit would rise in just indignation against the iron regime of his country."[385] Goldman, along with other American anarchists and leftists, would form the Fransisco Ferrer Association and Center in New York City in 1910. While the Ferrer Association was not a strictly anarchist project, from the beginning anarchists took leading roles in the organization. Goldman and Alexander Berkman were prominent Ferrer Association figures, as were Leonard Abbot and Joseph Cohen, both well-known anarchists in New York. Harry Kelly, an anarchist who served as the first professional organizer of the Ferrer Association wrote of the group in 1913 that a "libertarian impulse" was at the base of the Association's work:

> The predominating spirit is anarchistic; yet it cannot be too strongly insisted on that the association as such is not committed to any special economic theory or political ideal… The interpretation of freedom and justice and how to attain them differ, but free expression of opinion and interchange of ideas is the working method.[386]

The Ferrer Center of New York became an important anchor for educational experiments and adult programs, with men and women of all economic classes coming to the Ferrer Center to learn and socialize.

---

[385] Emma Goldman "Fransisco Ferrer and the Modern Schools," in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969), 108-127, 110.
[386] Quoted in Laurence R. Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 82.

The school was eventually forced to move from the city due to the involvement of individuals associated with the Center in a botched attempted assassination of Standard Oil chairman John D. Rockefeller.[387] Harry Kelly, another anarchist figure involved in the school, wrote of that time that "It was felt to be unfair to the children and harmful to their development as free spirits to grow up in an atmosphere of violent partisanship and fierce revolutionary ardor inevitable with men and women engaged in a daily struggle with the powers of darkness."[388]The school was able to procure around 140 acres of land under the incorporated name of the Ferrer Colony Association, and then resold small plots of the land to families and individual prospective colonists for around one hundred and fifty dollars per acre, leaving room for some profit that was intended to begin construction of a new schoolhouse and other infrastructural considerations.[389] On May 16th. 1915, the school formally opened and thirty-two young students came by train from the Ferrer School in New York to the new Ferrer Colony School, which came to be known as the Stelton Modern School. Perhaps no school was more consistent in the implementation of and commitment to these progressive values in curriculum and pedagogy than the Stelton Ferrer school. While the school struggled to maintain a consistent staff, going through four principals in its first year, the teachers and children saw incredible success and happiness. There was no formal curriculum or schedule of activities, and students set and pursued their own intellectual or personal goals. There was no standard for when children "should" read or do certain levels of mathematics. The only demands made on a course of study was that it was fulfilling to the child undertaking it. Education at Stelton was designed to cultivate responsibility

---

[387] "Exploded in Apartment Occupied by Tarrytown Disturbers. Only One Escaped Alive." *The New York Times*, July 5, 1914. Interestingly, it was another attempted assassination, this time of King Alfonso XIII, that ultimately derailed Ferrer's educational experiment. See Carolyn P. Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education in Spain: 1868-1909." *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 4 (1976): 125-170.
[388] Quoted in Veysey, *The Communal Experience,* 107.
[389] Veysey, *The Communal Experience,* 112.

in the children. The school had a weekly meeting where children could make suggestions on

school policy and make decisions on matters of discipline. A former student, Ray Miller,

summed up the nature of a Stelton education in a discussion with anarchist historian Paul Avrich,

stating:

> We did everything ourselves – we were gardeners, we were typesetters, we were cooks –
> we did everything with our own two hands. Instead of merely reading *A Midsummer
> Night's Dream*, we put on the play, and put it on outdoors. The grownups got involved
> too. I never avoided taking part in anything, whereas in high school everything seemed
> like a chore, even though I always got good marks…Stelton was not only a school but a
> community; it wasn't just education – it was living. [390]

The 1920s represented the most fruitful and consistent time in the Modern School's existence.

Husband and wife team Elizabeth and Alexis Ferm, took over the school in 1920 and under their

leadership "the Modern School became one of the most radical experiments ever to take place in

the history of American education."[391] The Ferms had significant experience in alternative

education. Before coming to Stelton, the pair had founded and run their own school, the

Children's Playhouse, in Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, and later founded one of the first so-called

storefront schools on the Lower East Side, which is where they met and befriended Emma

Goldman. Elizabeth Ferm was particularly influenced by the ideas of the German educator and

founder of the kindergarten movement Friedrich Froebel who was a leader in the progressive

education movement and argued for ideals of self-creation and self-direction in education. At

Stelton, the Ferms promoted both manual and creative work, such as printing, weaving,

carpentry, basket-making, pottery, metal work, gardening, singing, dancing and other sports;

they built a series of workshops in the schoolhouse, although the children still had the choice of

---

[390] Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 253.
[391] Avrich, *The Modern School Movement,* 256.

152

studying more traditional academic subjects within the library, which was named after Peter

Kropotkin, appropriately, given the schools fusing of vocational and intellectual training.[392] This

program led to a remarkable creative flowering among the children, who produced, among other

things, the *Voice of the Children*, which they wrote, illustrated and printed entirely themselves,

using a printing press provided by anarchist publisher Joseph Ishill, who would go on to found

the influential anarchist publishing company Oriole Press. Eventually, however, the Ferms began

to be questioned by some of the parents who wanted a more radical, politicized education for

their children, and objected to the lack of attention paid to academics. Refusing to modify their

methods, the Ferms left in 1925.

Though the Ferms would return to the school in 1933, their initial departure can be seen

as the beginning of the end of the Stelton Ferrer School, and the Ferrer colony itself. The

politicization of education in the colony that initially led the Ferms to leave the school would

only intensify through the 1930s and 1940s, with internal disputes between committed anarchists

and those who, with the rise of the Soviet Union, shifted their political allegiances in a more

communistic direction.[393] At the same time, during the rise of Nazism in Germany, many of the

Jewish residents of the colony rediscovered their religious and ethnic identities and either left the

colony to support the war effort or began to shift away from anarchism to a more nationalistic

form of political engagement, causing further ideological tensions within the community. In

general, there was significant disagreement in terms of how to handle the threat of fascism and

whether or not the wars against it should be supported (in Spain, for example).[394] As so often

---

[392] Avrich, *The Modern School Movement,* 275.
[393] This was by no means unique to the Stelton colony, and conflicts between anarchists and communists caused tensions in many communal living experiments around the world during this period of time. See, for example, the dissolution of the Worpswede artist colony in Germany in the early 1920s. Stephen Eric Bronner, *Modernism at the Barricades: Aesthetics, Politics, Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 37-40.
[394] Veysey, *The Communal Experience,* 127.

happens with the political quarrels of adults, these internal disputes bled into the school as well, with bitter fights about what types of materials should be in the library, and how political the school should be, with some advocating for keeping the school out of the political arena and others demanding explicit political and ideological foci in the education of their children.

Even more damaging than the internal struggles, though, was the purchase by the United States government of a large parcel of land directly next to the colony. Not only did this militate against the fundamental goals of the colony, i.e. escaping city life and the influence and gaze of the government, but it also caused tangible problems for the colony. For example, when the construction of Camp Kilmer on the land was complete, over 70,000 soldiers moved into the barracks. This caused a significant uptick in break-ins and vandalism in the colony, and there was even one documented case where a young woman was raped by a solider.[395] By the middle of the 1940s there were only fifteen children left in the school, mostly very young, and the school finally closed in 1953. The Stelton Ferrer School represents both one of the greatest achievements of anarchist education in history, and also illustrates the fundamental tension at the heart of anarchist educational projects, namely that "between child-centered pedagogical practice and…anarchist goals and values."[396] In many ways, the Stelton School was brought down by the manifestation of this tension between those who wanted the school to remain apolitical, focusing on libertarian educational methods, and those who wanted to explicitly politicize the curriculum and mission of the school, representing the explicitly anarchist strain. At this point, I want to turn to the educational thinking of the individualists, and argue that individualism as described in Chapter Three can effectively serve as a bridge between the educational tensions that exist between libertarian and anarchist thinking, as defined by Suissa.

---

[395] Veysey, *The Communal Experience,* 170-172.
[396] Suissa, *Anarchism and Education*, 85.

Left-Anarcho-Individualist Education and Civic Epiphenomenalism

The left-anarcho-individualist tradition in education, such as it is, and in following the general pattern of its engagement with both anarchism and libertarianism in general, has significant points of agreement as well as critiques of those two traditions. Though, with some exceptions, the individualists wrote comparatively little on educational matters, and rarely in any sustained way, there is much to be gleaned from the place education has in their thought, as well as extrapolated from their other commitments. Ultimately, I argue that individualists bridge the gap between libertarian and anarchist education by fundamentally politicizing subjectivity and the everyday subjective experiences that form our understandings of the world. While endorsing many of the traditional anarchist political principles, the left-anarcho-individualists hold that still these do not need to be formally instilled in children, but rather that education for politicized subjectivity naturally produces feelings of mutual cooperation and genuine democracy. In this sense, the educational theory of the left-anarcho-individualists might be referred to as a type of democratic epiphenomenalism.

While endorsing the attitude of anti-conformity expressed by both the libertarians and anarchists regarding educational matters, the individualists extend this critique further even to the position of the anarchists themselves. Specifically, the individualists target the idea that education should be aimed at producing a positive vision of the Good Citizen or Good Anarchist, as in Kropotkin or Ferrer's understandings of the goals of education. What is important to highlight here is not the specific content of Kropotkin or Ferrer's understanding of what makes a good Citizen, but the fact that they both insist that the good Citizen has some positive content at all, determined in advance, and to be cultivated by the educative process. It is at this point that the left-anarcho-individualist critique is most radical. Thus far the individualist has concurred

with the critique that schools as they currently exist, as sites of blind conformity to pernicious

social trends and as mere extensions of state power to which the anarchist of any stripe is *ex

hypothesi* opposed. However, the individualist objects even to what might be called the ideal

form of formalized education, that is, a world where we have a vibrant public sphere already in

existence and there is a one-to-one correspondence between the ideal of the Good Citizen needed

for the maintenance of that public and the functioning of the educational system in producing

precisely that type of citizen. The anarchist, on Suissa's understanding, holds that the problem

with education in its current form is the mistaken understandings we have as a society about the

content of the concept of the citizen and the way society ought to be structured. If only we

understood these things in a more enlightened way, presumably along the lines that they propose,

and were able to bring the students that our educational system is creating into line with that

vision, there would be nothing left to object to in the concept of even compulsory schooling.

For the individualist, debates about the content of the type of person that schools should

work toward teleologically are mere distractions from the real problem of education, which lies

in its very structure. The ubiquitous critiques of the oppressive, homogenizing nature of

schooling in capitalist America, by which we produce only unthinking capital-C Consumers,

who take it as their highest calling in life the production and consumption of material goods, is

itself only an inverted mirror image of the same oppressive homogenizing nature of schooling

which would inevitably continue in the hypothetical anarcho-communist utopia, by which we

produce only capital-C Citizens, Communists, Anarchists, Comrades, or whatever who take it as

their highest calling in life to preserve the public sphere and engage in good deliberative

communalist relations with one another. To put the point differently, for the anarchist, the

problem with current educational system lies in our understanding of the type of person we are

training up, whereas the individualist locates the problem in the fact *that we are training people up at all*. That is, the individualist case against formal education is fundamentally structural; the content of any given manifestation of that type of education is immaterial. For the anarchist, both the capital-C Consumer and the capital-C Communist or capital-A Anarchist are equally homogenizing as teleological goals of education, and equally oppressive. This line of anarchist critique is echoed in Max Stirner's admonishing of the French revolutionaries for failing to engage in true structural change, but only substituting a new content into the same oppressive structures which had previously existed. He writes, "The revolution was not directed against *the established*, but against the *establishment in question*, against a *particular* establishment. It did away with *this* ruler, not with *the* ruler..."[397] and later, in perhaps the clearest statement of the anarchist opposition to the possibility of piecemeal radical change, "Much as may be *improved*, strongly as 'discreet progress' may be adhered to, always there is only a *new master* set in the old one's place."[398] The individualist objection to formal schooling is precisely parallel. Even revolutionary reform agendas hoping to install a new democratic or communalistic ethos into the structure of the formal school system are always only replacing the old master (Nationalist indoctrination, consumerist ideology, etc.) with a new one (the ideal of deliberative citizenship, working class solidarity, etc.), which ultimately serves exactly the same structural purpose, namely to homogenize the identities of irreducibly unique individuals under the umbrella of a teleological vision of what a person should be.[399]

---

397 Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 100.
398 Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 100.
399 It is, worth noting that, as is implied in Stirner's critique, that the anarchist does not reject the concept of social improvement *tout court*. Rather, the idea is that there is a rather low ceiling on the liberatory possibilities for piecemeal improvements which ultimately leave the oppressive structures in place, only changing out the content of those structures for something slightly preferable.

Nietzsche, who wrote in perhaps the most sustained way on education out of all the individualist thinkers, directly attacks the concept of education for citizenship and productive contribution even in ideal social scenarios such as Bakunin's social anarchist communalism. He makes a distinction between survival and education, and goes on to argue that the two are fundamentally distinct, and indeed incompatible, and must be approached separately. He writes,

> A person needs to learn much to live, to fight his battle for survival – but everything he learns and does with that aim, as an individual, has *nothing* to do with education and culture…No course of instruction that ends in a career, in breadwinning, leads to culture or true education in our sense; it merely shows how one can save and secure the self in the struggle for survival.[400]

Nietzsche at times appears to endorse the libertarian view of Goodman that schools as institutions ought to be done away with entirely both because of their inability to fully capture the individuality of each student as well as the greater forms of educational experience that take place in the world at large, outside of the schoolhouse. He asks, with respect to actualized individuals, "how could their incalculable nature be the basis of an institution?"[401] and goes on to suggest that the path to the creation of these genuine forms of subjectivity beyond social conformity lies outside institutions of any kind, writing "The most remarkable, instructive, decisive experiences in life are the everyday ones; the enormous riddle before everyone's eyes is precisely what almost no one sees as such."[402] For Nietzsche, education must be separate from questions of mere survival and imposed ideals or social forms, so as to allow the flourishing of individuality. He writes "Here, with me, you will be in complete control of your own individual personality; your gifts will shine forth in their own right, bringing you – you! – into the first

---

[400] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Anti-Education,* trans. Damion Searls, eds. Paul Reitter & Chad Wellmon (New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2016), 55
[401] Nietzsche, *Anti-Education*, 61.
[402] Nietzsche, *Anti-Education*, 73.

rank."[403] It may appear that Nietzsche is endorsing a generally libertarian understanding of education, a la Niell. However, what is critical about Nietzsche's view, and that of individualism generally, is that it is precisely the individual pursuing what Emerson calls "his own secret,"[404] that creates the conditions for social progress. As David Roof characterizes Nietzsche's views "individuals serve society best when they learn self-trust, evaluate their contemporary morals, and envision a new world…Society is benefited when individuals seek their own personal happiness and well-being."[405]

Though he did not approach educational questions directly, Raoul Vaneigem develops this Nietzschean view of how individual self-actualization produces social progress as an epiphenomenon. Vaneigem speaks of "radical-subjectivity" as the production of a certain type of united front of subjectivities produced from the mutual recognition of subjective desires for self-fulfillment and actualization. He writes, "You cannot save yourself on your own or achieve fulfillment in isolation. How can any individual who has gained some measure of insight into himself and the world fail to recognize a will identical to his own in those around him – the same quest, the same starting points?"[406] Vaneigem holds that while each individual subjectivity is irreducibly unique, each participates in what he refers to as the "identity reflex" (as distinct, to refer to Chapter Three, from identification), which is the recognition of the same "will to fulfill oneself by changing the world, to live every sensation, every experience, every possibility to the full."[407] Here Vaneigem appeals to the Nietzschean distinction between survival and culture, arguing that if we ignore our desires for life, living freely and honoring our subjective

---

[403] Nietzsche, *Anti-Education,* 67.
[404] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Education," in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. 10: Lectures and Biographical Sketches* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), 125.
[405] David Roof, "The Ethical Domains of Individualism: Nietzsche and Emerson's Pedagogic Vision," *Philosophical Studies in Education* 45 (2014): 168-178, 173
[406] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 219.
[407] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 220.

actualization in favor of mere survival, we will ultimately undercut the possibilities of communal

life, which is itself based in radical subjectivity. As he writes in an echo of Emerson's

characterization of society in "Experience," "Who wants a world where the guarantee of freedom

from starvation means the risk of death from boredom?"[408] Jean Leca refers to this type of

emergent citizenship as a type of alchemy, citing, appropriately, one of the leaders of the French

Revolution, Louis Antoine de Saint-Just, who wrote that "Each person fights for what he loves:

that is what is called speaking in good faith. To fight for everyone is only the effect."[409]

Educationally, the focus must be on the generation of subjective understanding first, because it is

self-knowledge that enables the recognition of the self in others, and that recognition will

naturally produce a social world predicated on the recognition of common subjectivity. As

Emerson pithily suggests, "Isolation must precede true society."[410]

Max Stirner develops this vision of democratic epiphenomenalism in his short essay on

education "The False Principle of Our Education: Or, Humanism and Realism" as well. Grasping

Stirner's vision of the goals of the educational project is crucial for an understanding of how he

sees the relationship between the school and the rest of society. "The False Principle of Our

Education" was published in four parts during April of 1842 in the short-lived *Rheinische*

Zeitung, of which Marx would later serve as editor. In the essay, Stirner outlines two historically

popular positions on the nature of education, which he dubs "humanism" and "realism"

respectively. This distinction is not critical, but it is important to note that Stirner took humanism

to be a type of perennialist focus on "understanding the old classics," a programme which was

pursued under the auspices of a type of aristocratic or "exclusive" education, and saw realism to

---

[408] Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 4.
[409] Quoted in Jean Leca, "Individualism and Citizenship," in *Citizenship: Critical Concepts, Volume 1*, eds. Bryan S. Turner & Peter Hamilton (London: Routledge, 1994), 148-188, 173.
[410] Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 141.

be motivated by the "drive toward a universal education accessible to everyone"[411] and which emphasized practical skills for the navigation of day-to-day existence.[412] Against these two conceptions, he opposes what he ultimately calls "personalis[m]."[413] While some interpreters argue that this essay was little more than Stirner sharpening some of his conceptual tools "in the ambience of an educational theme"[414] in preparation for writing *The Ego and its Own*, I maintain that the work contains a substantial view of the aims of education and the figure of the student which is carried over into that work, rather than "replace[d]" or "abandon[ed]"[415] in Stirner's later development.

The implications that Stirner's views on authority and individuality have for education are, in a sense, obvious. Following the spirit of the rest of Stirner's philosophy, education of the personalist sort ought to be a process of encouraging and facilitating self-actualization, self-understanding, and self-expression. Jeffery Shantz glosses Stirner's view in the following way, "For Stirner, education should assist individuals to be creative persons rather than learners. Learners lose their freedom of will in becoming increasingly dependent upon experts and institutions for instruction on how to act."[416] This characterization seems fair to me, so long as one keeps in mind exactly how far Stirner's analysis wants to take the idea of "creative persons," that is, radically beyond the spaces of logic, reason, and language, as well as applying one's creative powers to one's own selfhood, in a constantly regenerative, playful process. As Stirner puts the point, education must concern itself with cultivating "*eternal* characters in whom

---

411 Max Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education: Or, Humanism and Realism* (Colorado Springs: R. Myles, 1967), 13.
412 Welsh, John F. *Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism: A New Interpretation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010), 12.
413 Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* 24.
414 Ronald William Keith Paterson, *The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 51.
415 Paterson, *The Nihilistic Egoist,* 52.
416 Jeffrey Shantz, "Spaces of Learning." *Anarchist Pedagogies: Collective Actions, Theories, and Critical Reflections on Education* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012), 124-45, 137.

constance [sic] only consists in the unremitting floods of their hourly self-creation and who are therefore eternal because they form themselves each moment, because they set the temporal concerns of their actual appearance out of the never-withering or aging freshness and creative activity of their eternal spirit."[417] This is diametrically opposed to the stagnant, stultifying, rote education that Stirner sees in the traditional doctrines (and which he might argue we still are embroiled in today), which simply accumulates information and skills "like the frozen-limbed supreme court, heaps documents upon documents, and plays for the millennia in delicate porcelain figures" with what he calls "immortal childishness."[418] The traditional forms of education can only ever give us control over the things of nature and the physical world (science, engineering, etc.) and our own internal natures, desires, and beliefs (psychology, religion, philosophy), but cannot self-actualize us in the way required by individualism. Stirner goes out of his way to make clear that he does not reject these types of education and understanding entirely, but rather holds that they can only ever be in the service of the free individual, and not the other way around. He writes,

> I receive with thanks what the centuries of culture have acquired for me; I am not willing to throw away and give up anything of it: I have not lived in vain. The experience that I have *power* over my nature, and need not be the slave of my appetites, shall not be lost to me; the experience that I can subdue the world by culture's means is bought at too great a cost for me to be able to forget it. But I want still more.[419]

Stirner joins Vaneigem and Nietzsche in denouncing the imposition of static identities in the educational process, including, again, ideals of Citizenship, Anarchism, and so on. Speaking of the French Revolution, he criticizes the ideals of the movement on precisely this basis, writing "It was not the *individual man*-and he alone is *man*-that became free, but the *citizen*...the

---

417 Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* 12-13.
418 Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* 9.
419 Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 295.

political man, who for that very reason is not *man* but a specimen of the human species, and more particularly a specimen of the species Citizen."[420] He uses the capital 'C' in citizen here to signify his skepticism of the idea that being a good citizen ought to be thought of as a person's highest calling, or as the criteria for living a good life. Elsewhere, he links the idea of putting citizenship first with the idea of finding one's worth in "being a good Christian"[421] which he reminds us is a notion which the advocates of citizenship often think of themselves as having rejected as antiquated. For Stirner, though, trading "good Christian" for "good Citizen" is simply to swap objects of sacred reverence, neither of which has any more warrant than the other.

Stirner sees the order in which development of the qualities of personal freedom and self-assertion, on the one hand, and citizenship, on the other, take place as critical to the ends of personalist education. He echoes the other individualists on the natural emergence of the Deweyan democratic sensibility when he rights, it is "o*nly* the free and personal man who is a good citizen"[422] and he cautions that "We are not yet everything when we move as useful members of society; we are much more able to perfect this only if we are free people, self-creating people."[423] If we ignore the individual aspects of education for radical subjectivity and attempt to teach citizenship directly and explicitly as the dominant traditions in education have done, we end up with individuals full of "pride and every wind of covetousness, eagerness for office, mechanical and servile officiousness, hypocrisy, etc."[424] Though he has no quarrel with the ultimate goals of anarchist society, he argues that putting the cart of civics before the horse of individualism has been the fundamental flaw of anarchist educational thought. In this division

---

420 Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 100.
421 Stirner, *The Ego and its Own,* 90.
422 Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* 16.
423 Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* 14.
424 Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* 10.

between man and citizen, Stirner echoes Rousseau's famous binary, introduced in the first pages of *Emile*, where Rousseau suggests that when we are "Compelled to oppose nature or our social institutions, we must choose between making a man and a citizen, for we cannot make both at once."[425] While Rousseau appears to cast this relationship as an exclusive disjunction, I contend that Stirner holds a somewhat more nuanced picture. Specifically, I think we are justified in concluding that Stirner sees the qualities of a good citizen, not as opposed to those of a good or natural man, as does Rousseau, but as supervenient on them. That is to say, good citizens emerge from good men without any additional training or specific instruction. The cultivation of the free, radical subjectivity of each individual is the entirely the educational project, properly understood; there are no civics classes or governmental projects that must be undertaken by students in Stirner's view, and indeed such training is self-defeating, as Stirner suggests in his list of the qualities produced by traditional modes of education. The good citizen is simply an epiphenomenon of the self-work that must be undertaken perpetually by individuals, and the qualities that we want in citizens will naturally emerge if we focus our attention on cultivating the qualities we want in individuals qua individuals. Clarity here is crucial, in personalist education, we are not violating Rousseau's dictum, creating both man and citizen at the same time; we are creating only individuals, but citizens and social relations emerge thereof naturally.

In an age where government has been bureaucratized and systematized beyond imagination, and in the advent of technocratic rationalism's commandeering of the most fundamental aspects of our human lives, it is worth re-asking what kinds of people we want looking after these things, and how we go about finding them. Is it people who have been trained in the "best practices" of governmental bureaucracy and administrative managerialism, and who

---

425 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, Or, Treatise on Education* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2003), 5.

can reliably and quickly execute their action items, though they have never set foot in a class on ethics? Is it people who can sway the votes of millions of people and hit all of the right notes when interviewed on national television but who have no relationship or investment in their own conscience? Do we want people, in Stirner's words, of "dialectical sophistication" but who also represent "commonness of thought and will?"[426] I believe that the individualist project in education suggests that we ought to cultivate and encourage individuals, in the true sense, for whom the answers to the questions of government and civil society fall out of larger questions of ethics, worth, and happiness, rather than the other way around. While embracing the broadly libertarian view of pedagogy for self-understanding, the individualists also reject the depoliticization of education. Rather, the individualists hold that self-understanding is itself political, and the everyday experience both of oppression, anger, humiliation, as well as joy, friendship, and hope, are the foundations of revolution and resistance, and must be tapped for those purposes. Learning takes the form of learning about oneself, and ultimately learning to see that same fount of creativity and subjective assertion in others. To return to Cavell's Emerson, who says "'follow in yourself what I have followed in mine and you will be saved,'"[427] the individualist project in education, through radical subjectivity and democratic epiphenomenalism, adds, "Follow in yourself what I have followed in mine and we will all be saved."

Practical Considerations

There are a number of significant practical questions that the left-anarcho-individualist view of education leave unanswered but which are important to address. For example, questions of pedagogical and parental authority, about whether or not there should be discrete institutions

---

[426] Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education,* 10.
[427] Cavell, "An Emerson Mood," 160.

called "schools," and questions of whether or not schooling in itself is a problematic form of imposition, and at what age it becomes problematic. It is first important to note that these questions are not unique problems to anarcho-individualism and arise with respect to most other forms of anarchism as well, opposed as all anarchisms are to unjustified hierarchical relationships of control. As we saw in the tension between libertarian and anarchist education discussed earlier in this chapter, there is little agreement among anarchists on many of these questions. For the individualist, the answers to many of these questions, as with social formations and relationships of any kind, must always be experimental, provisional, and open to re-evaluation. In this sense, it is impossible to give definitive or overly prescriptive answer to them, but I will address briefly some pragmatic possibilities for a left-anarcho-individualist educational future.

Pedagogy and Teacher Authority

Recalling the discussion of left-anarcho-individualist ethics in Chapter Three, it is worth restating that the individualist does not give up evaluative language altogether, and retains the conviction that certain styles of living are preferable to others. At the same time, the individualist would reject the imposition of those styles of life onto another, despite their evaluative preferability. Given this latter claim, it is fair to ask what individualist education would teach at all, if anything, and how pedagogy would have to be reformed in light of the individualists ontological and political commitments. One potentially attractive approach to these questions is offered by anarchist philosopher Alejandro de Acosta, who argues for a type of "antipedagogy" that views teaching in the way it has been historically understood as fundamentally impossible.[428] de Acosta's claim is particularly relevant to individualism and its goal of

---

[428] Alejandro de Acosta, "That Teaching is Impossible," in *Anarchist Pedagogies: Collective Actions, Theories, and Critical Reflections on Education*, Robert H. Haworth ed. (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012), 303-311.

cultivating self-actualized individuals, as he suggests that to assume the role of the teacher or pedagogue is actually to subvert that goal, to assume yet another identity, or in his terms "ego-mask," that signals "the inevitable calcification of the urge to teach into the kinds of systems we call pedagogies."[429] Insofar as the individualist rejects rigid systems of prescriptive rules for interaction (be they moral, pedagogical, or whatever) and obscuring identifications and social roles, the role of teacher and pedagogue is to be subverted. For de Acosta, teaching is impossible because it implies a final purpose, endpoint, or terminus. He writes that we ought rather to embrace a view of learning, study, and self-work that "is interminable…endlessly frustrated and frustrating."[430] Education must be revaluated so as to reflect the experimentalist spirit of individualism and the sense that there are not definite or final outcomes to be aimed at other than a fulfilled sense of self, something which manifestly cannot be taught in the way that term is commonly understood.

In place of traditional understandings of teaching, de Acosta suggests a more minimalist understanding of modeling styles of life. de Acosta does not argue that modeling behaviors or ways of being for students is desirable in that it is more likely to produce some result or other (e.g. getting the students to mimic or adopt that behavior), but only that is an entirely inevitable side-effect of human relationships, and the educative relationship is a human relationship like others. Modeling, however, is subject to experimentation, resistance, and reinterpretation that calcified systems of pedagogy and traditional information transfer are not. He writes "A model may be imitated, counterimitated, or met with sovereign indifference. We might cooperate, we might fight, or we might ignore each other. In that social chaos, in its interstices of order and

---

[429] de Acosta, "That Teaching is Impossible," 303.
[430] de Acosta, "That Teaching is Impossible," 304.

stillness, someone might learn something."[431] In this sense, I argue that individualist pedagogy,

or antipedagogy, is fundamentally open, viewing the educational relationship as indeterminate

and messy in the same way that other human relationships are. At best, I can show or model how

I have come to interact with and express myself, but I can never prescribe or teach that to you.

The path of self-discovery and actualization is, as it were, made in the walking.

Schools as Social Institutions

Given the views of pedagogical authority expressed above and the general view of social

institutions held by individualists discussed in Chapter Three, the individualist view of schools

seems to follow relatively directly. That is, like all social institutions, schools, if they exist at all,

must be open, malleable, and never calcified into rigid structures. The libertarian vision of Paul

Goodman, which breaks down the walls of the school entirely and opens the entirety of

environmental space as educative seems to me to be amenable to the left-anarcho-individualist

picture of pedagogy and social institutions. If the definition of "school" is expanded to mean

anywhere that educative experiences take place, or organic emergent moments of learning, the

individualist has no objection. However, when schools become something like permanent

institutions set aside from society for the express purpose of education, the individualist, I

believe, would object. "Schools" on the individualist picture, should be thought of not as static

state or even community institutions, but spaces of learning wherever they arise. Should a lecture

or a debate or any other form of learning break out, that place is a school. The individualist

rejects compulsory education and rather opts to let the world and the people that populate it

educate one another, as they inevitably always do. Compulsory education set aside from the rest

of the world is to be rejected, that is, not because it is undesirable (though individualism is, of

---

[431] de Acosta, "That Teaching is Impossible," 309.

course, deeply suspicious of anything compulsory), but because it is unnecessary. In this sense, anarchist educational spaces such as the Ferrer School would indeed conflict with the individualist educational program in some respects. It was, for example, explicitly part of that school's goal to separate itself from the rest of the world and society, something the individualist sees as hampering the range of experiences available to children. The individualist might also disagree with the explicit motivation of the school to instill a sense of class solidarity in its students, opting rather for children to come to learn organically from their daily experiences and informal interactions with others and the world around them.

Conclusion

In attempting to rehabilitate the tradition of left-anarcho-individualism as a tool for the Left and specifically for educators searching for inspiration and practical forms of resistance to neoliberal global capital, it is important to reiterate what I have not attempted. I have not argued that individualism is the only answer available to the Left or that it perfectly responds to all aspects of the problematic of capital. I have not suggested that the individualist vision is even attainable in any sort of large-scale sense, and have even argued in favor of the power of the small-scale. My goal has not been to convert individualists, but rather to present a vision of individualism that other forms of Left thinking can view as an ally rather than the locus of that which they oppose.

Thinking back to the conservative appropriation of individualism that came with the advent of American economic atomism in the work of Josiah Warren and Benjamin Tucker, and the eventual fusion of the various strains of Wayne-ian rugged individualism with Rand's morality of selfishness, Hayek's Austrian economic theory with Reagan's perverse understanding of bootstrapping narratives, what becomes apparent is that the Right is incredibly

capable of and willing to build within itself alliances between a variety of ideological subspecies. Though Rand and Hayek could barely stand to be in the same room with one another,[432] they recognized in each other's philosophy the seeds of a shared vision of the world. Though Murray Rothbard and other anarcho-capitalists scoff of the vigorous nationalist patriotism of John Wayne or Ronald Reagan, they happily deploy Reaganite narratives of rugged-self-reliance and the morality of "making it on one's own" to advance a shared agenda. The Right has proven to be must more willing to take on allies despite areas of disagreement than has the Left, generally speaking. Michael Apple has documented this fact extensively in the context of educations specifically, arguing that it is precisely in the areas of tension on the Right and, critically, in "how these tensions are creatively solved"[433] by the Right that the Right finds its power and ability to effect social change. If the Left is to counter the totalizing effects of neoliberal global capitalism in education and elsewhere, it must study and learn from how the Right has been able to so deftly resolve tensions between and unite groups a diverse as libertarian economists, traditional rural workers, and evangelical Christians. The Left must expand its toolkit in the face of a global hegemony that is both deeply entrenched and constantly anticipating, as Sloterdijk noted, the next move of critique or resistance. To that end, I have suggested that individualism is fundamentally compatible with various fundamental Left commitments, such as democracy, respect for identity, anticapitalism, and the like. That is, I have argued here that left-anarcho-individualism should be one tool in the toolkit of the Left, to be strategically deployed as a form of resistance, of identity play and subversion, or as a positive vision of the world-to-come as the context dictates. Like the individualist understanding of the self and social forms, individualism itself is subject to revaluation, experimentation, and mutation. If the Left has any hope of

---

[432] Burns, *Goddess of the Market,* 252.
[433] Apple, *Educating the "Right" Way,* 7.

genuinely turning the tide of social change, it will need to creatively deploy a diverse suite of

tactics, ideologies, and positive visions and inspirations. I argue, finally, that individualism can

serve an important role in an expanded Left toolkit.

REFERENCES

"Exploded in Apartment Occupied by Tarrytown Disturbers. Only One Escaped Alive." *The New York Times*, July 5, 1914.

Albrecht, James A. *Reconstructing Individualism: A Pragmatic Tradition from Emerson to Ellison.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays.* trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971. 127-188.

Anyon, Jean. *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement.* London: Routledge, 2014.

Apple, Michael W. *Ideology and Curriculum.* London: Routledge, 1990.

Apple, Michael. "Education, Markets, and Audit Culture." *International Journal of Educational Policies 1,* no. 1 (2007): 4-19.

Apple, Michael. *Educating the "Right" Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

Apple, Michael. *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age.* New York: Routledge, 2000.

Arcilla, Rene. "Why Aren't Philosophers and Educators Speaking to Each Other." *Educational Theory* 52, no. 1 (2002): 1-11.

Attick, Dennis. "Homo Economicus at School: Neoliberal Education and Teacher as Economic Being." *Educational Studies* 53, no. 1 (2017): 37-48.

Au, Wayne and Joseph J. Ferrare. *Mapping Corporate Education Reform: Power and Policy Networks in the Neoliberal State.* London: Routledge, 2015.

Avrich, Paul. *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.

Baldwin, James. "Letter From A Region in my Mind." *The New Yorker.* November 17, 1962.

Ball, Stephen J. *Global Education Inc.: New Policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary.* London: Routledge, 2012.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity.* Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2000.

Bear, George G. "Teacher Resistance to Frequent Rewards and Praise: Lack of Skill or a Wise Decision?" *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation* 23 (2013): 318-340.

Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex.* New York: Vintage Books, 2011.

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* New York: Anchor Books, 1966.

Berlin, Isaiah. "Two Concepts of Liberty," in his *Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 166-217.

Boer, Roland. "Friends, Radical and Estranged: Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx." *Religion and Theology* 17 (2010): 358-401.

Bookchin, Murray. *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm.* San Fransisco, CA: AK Press, 1995.

Boyd, Carolyn P. "The Anarchists and Education in Spain: 1868-1909." *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 4 (1976): 125-170.

Bray, Mark. *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook.* Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing, 2017.

Brazill, William J. *The Young Hegelians.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970.

Breckman, Warren. *Marx, The Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Bronner, Stephen Eric. *Modernism at the Barricades: Aesthetics, Politics, Utopia.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Brown, Wendy. *Undoing the Demos.* New York: Zone Books, 2015.

Buras, Kristen L. *Charter Schools, Race, and Urban Space: Where the Market Meets Grassroots Resistance.* New York: Routledge, 2015.

Burns, Jennifer. *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Bushaw, William J. and Valerie J. Calderon. "The 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools." Phi Delta Kappan International, 2015

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender.* London: Routledge, 2004.

Carlock Jr., Russell H. "'La Union Hace la Fuerza:' Community Organizing in Adult Education for Immigrants." *Harvard Educational Review* 86, no. 1 (2016): 98-122.

Carman, Taylor. *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in Being and Time.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Cavell, Stanley. "An Emerson Mood," in *The Senses of Walden.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 139-160.

Chis Hedges. "The Cancer in Occupy." *TruthDig* (February 6, 2012).

Cobb, Jr., Charles E. *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.

Cockburn, Alexander, Jeffrey St. Clair, & Allan Sekula. *5 Days that Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond.* London: Verso, 2000.

Collins, Patricia Hill. "Review Symposium: Between Camps/Against Race." *Ethnicities* 2, no. 4 (2002): 539-60.

Compton, Mary and Lois Weiner. "The Global Assault on Teachers, Teaching, and Teacher Unions," in *The Global Assault on Teaching, Teachers, and their Unions: Stories for Resistance,* eds. Mary Compton and Lois Weiner. New York: Palgrave, 2008.

Conlin, Joseph R. *Big Bill Haywood and the Radical Union Movement.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1969.

Cromphout, Gustaaf Van. *Emerson's Ethics.* Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999.

de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America.* Thomas Bender ed., Henry Reeve trans., revised by Frances Bowen and Phillips Bradley. New York: Modern Library, 1981.

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books, 1999.

Delgado Bernal, Dolores. "Rethinking Grassroots Activism: Chicana Resistance in the 1968 East Lost Angeles School Blowouts." in *The Subaltern Speak: Curriculum, Power, and Educational Struggles,* eds. Michael W. Apple and Kristen L. Buras. New York: Routledge, 2006, 141-162.

Devinatz, Victor G. "Right-to-Work Laws, the Southernization of U.S. Labor Relations and the U.S. Trade Movement's Decline." *Labor Studies Journal* 40, no. 4 (2015): 297-318.

Dewey, John. "A Resume of Four Lectures on Common Sense, Science and Philosophy," in *The Later Works vol. 6, 1931-1932,* ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008, 424-433.

Dewey, John. "American Education Past and Future." *The Later Works vol. 6*, 90-98.

Dewey, John. "Imperative Need: A New Radical Party." *The Later Works vol. 9: 1933-1934*, Jo Ann Boydston ed. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008, 76-80.

Dewey, John. "Plan of Organization of the University Primary School." *The Early Works of John Dewey vol. 5, 1882-1898*, ed. Jo Anne Boyston. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972.

Dewey, John. "The Challenge of Democracy to Education." *The Later Works vol. 11*, *1935-1937*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008, 181-190.

Dewey, John. "The Ethics of Democracy." *The Early Works vol. 1, 1882-1888*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008 227-252.

Dewey, John. *Democracy and Education.* New York: The Free Press, 1997.

Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*, in *The Later Works vol. 2, 1925-1927,* ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008, 235-372.

Duckworth, Angela L., Christopher Peterson, Michael D. Matthews, and Dennis R. Kelly. "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1087-1101.

Dupuis-Deri, Francis. "The Black Blocs Ten Years after Seattle: Anarchism, Direct Action, and Deliberative Practices." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 4, no. 2 (2010): 45-82.

Eagles, Julian. "Marxism, Anarchism and the Situationists' Theory of Revolution." *Critical Sociology* 43, no. 1 (2017): 13-36.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Education," in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. 10: Lectures and Biographical Sketches.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Experience," in *The Major Prose*, eds. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015, 226-249.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Friendship," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. 2,* eds. Robert Spiller, Alfred Ferguson, et al. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971, 121-122.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Self-Reliance," in Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Major Prose*, eds. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015, 127-151.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The Transcendentalist," in *The Major Prose*, eds. Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015, 164-180.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson vol. 4: 1832-1834*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Ensmenger, Nathan. "'Beards, Sandals, and Other Signs of Rugged Individualism': Masculine Culture within the Computing Professions." *Osiris* 30, no. 1 (2015): 38-65.

Escobar, Edward J. "The Unintended Consequences of the Carceral State: Chicana/o Political Mobilization in Post-World War II America." *The Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015):174-184

Eunice Minette Schuster. *Native American Anarchism.* Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited, 1983.

Ferrer, Fransisco. *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, trans. Joseph McCabe. London: Watts & Co, 1913.

Feuerbach, Ludwig. *The Essence of Christianity,* trans. George Eliot. Amherst, MA: Prometheus Books, 1989.

Flynn, Susan, & Ya-yu Lo. "Teacher Implementation of Trial-Based Functional Analysis and Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior for Students with Challenging Behavior." *Journal of Behavioral Education* 25, no. 1 (2016): 1-31.

Fortuna, Agnes Maria. "Expressing Being: The Perfectionism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau," *Vivens Homo* 27, no. 2 (2016): 225-256.

Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, 208-229.

Foucault, Michel. "What is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheoon Books, 1984, 32-50.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archeology of Human Sciences.* New York: Vintage, 1993.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage.* Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001.

Freire, Paulo. *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2005.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique.* New York: Dell, 1979.

Friesen, John W. & Virginia Lyons Friesen. *The Palgrave Companion to North American Utopias.* New York: Palgrave, 2004.

Frohnen, Bruce. *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia.* Wilmington, NC: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006.

Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man.* New York: The Free Press, 2006.

Garcia, Mario T. & Sal Castro. *Blowout!: Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice.* Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

Gilroy, Paul. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Giroux, Henry. "The Conservative Assault on America: Cultural Politics, Education, and the New Authoritarianism." in *America on the Edge: Henry Giroux on Politics, Culture, and Education.* London: Palgrave, 2006

Giroux, Henry. "Turning America Into a Toy Store," in *Critical Pedagogies of Consumption: Living and Learning in the Shadow of the "Shopocalypse."* eds. Jennifer A. Sandlin and Peter McLaren. New York: Routledge, 2010, 249-258.

Goldman, Emma. "Fransisco Ferrer and the Modern Schools." in *Anarchism and Other Essays.* New York: Dover, 1969, 108-127.

Gonzalez Stokas, Ariana. "A Genealogy of Grit: Education in the New Gilded Age." *Educational Theory* 65, no. 5 (2015): 513-528.

Gooch, Todd. "Some Political Implications of Feuerbach's Theory of Religion," in *Politics, Religion, and Art: Hegelian Debates*, ed. Douglas Moggach. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011, 257-280.

Goodman, Paul. *Growing up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized System.* New York: Random House, 1960.

Gordon, Mordechai. "Why Should Scholars Keep Coming Back to John Dewey?" *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 48, no. 10 (2016): 1077-1091.

Gouldner, Alvin W. "Marx's Last Battle: Bakunin and the First International." *Theory and Society* 11, no. 6 (1982): 853-884.

Graeber, David. "Concerning the Violent Peace-Protest: An Open Letter to Chris Hedges." *n+1* (February 9, 2012).

Graeber, David. *Direct Action: An Ethnography*. Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009.

Graeber, David. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004.

Grossman, Jennifer Anju. "Can You Love God and Ayn Rand?" *The Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 2016.

Guerin, Daniel. *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970.

Gutmann, Amy. *Democratic Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Hacking, Ian. *The Social Construction of What?*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Hadfield, Leslie Anne. "Conscientization in South Africa: Paulo Freire and Black Consciousness Community Development in the 1970s." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 50, no. 1 (2017): 79-98.

Hammerback, John C. "Barry Goldwater's Rhetoric of Rugged Individualism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58, no. 2 (1972): 175-183.

Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: Verso, 2013.

Haywood, William. "Preamble to the IWW Constitution." *Industrial Workers of the World.*

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.

Heyes, Cressida. *Line Drawings: Defining Women Through Feminist Practice*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Hickling-Hudson, Anne. "Striving for a Better World: Lessons from Freire in Grenada, Jamaica and Australia." *International Review of Education* 60 (2014): 523-543.

Hirschman, Elizabeth C. "Men, Dogs, Guns, and Cars: The Semiotics of Rugged Individualism." *Journal of Advertising* 32, no. 1 (2003): 9-22.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan: Parts 1 and II*, A.P. Martinich and Brian Battiste, eds. Peterborough, ON, CAN: Broadview, 2011.

Hodges, Donald Clark. "Bakunin's Controversy with Marx: An Analysis of the Tensions Within Modern Socialism." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1960): 259-274.

Hoover, Herbert. Campaign Speech, New York City, October 22, 1928.

Howe, Kenneth. "Against the Quantitative-Qualitative Incompatibility Thesis, or Dogmas Die Hard." *Educational Researcher* 17, no. 8 (1988): 10-16.

Howe, Kenneth. "Getting Over the Quantitative-Qualitative Debate." *American Journal of Education* 100, no. 2 (1992): 236-256.

Hsu, Francis L.K. *Americans and Chinese: Passages to Difference*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1980.

Hsu, Francis L.K. *Rugged Individualism Reconsidered: Essays in Psychological Anthropology*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1983.

https://www.iww.org/culture/official/preamble.shtml

Huneker, James. *Egoists. A Book of Supermen*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921.

Hursh, David. "Marketing Education: The Rise of Standardized Testing, Accountability, Competition, and Markets in Public Education." in *Neoliberalism and Education Reform*, eds. E. Wayne Ross and Rich Gibson. New York: Hampton Press, 2006, 15-34.

Huyler, Jerome. *Locke in America: The Moral Philosophy of the Founding Era.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

Hyams, Edward. *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Revolutionary Life, Mind, and Works.* London: John Murray, 1979.

Hyman, Irwin A., Kris Winchell, & Timothy C. Tillman, "Treatment Integrity and Satisfaction Using the Teacher Variance Approach: A Multidimensional Method for Dealing with Teacher Resistance." paper presented at the Annual Convention of the National Association of School Psychologists. Washington, DC, April 17-21, 2001.

Illich, Ivan. *Deschooling Society.* New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Jaeschke, Walter. *Reason in Religion: The Foundations of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, trans. J. Michael Stewart and Peter C. Hodgson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Jayne, Allen. *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy, and Theology.* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015.

Jennings, Christopher. *Paradise Now: The Story of American Utopianism.* New York: Random House, 2016.

Johnson, R. Burke and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzi. "Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come." *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 7 (2004): 14-26.

Kaminski, Michelle. "How Michigan Became a Right to Work State: The Role of Money and Politics." *Labor Studies Journal* 40, no. 4 (2015): 362-378.

Kelly, Robin D.G. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class.* New York: The Free Press, 1996.

Kinna, Ruth. *Anarchism,* Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009.

Klein, Ezra. "Wonkbook: What Does 'Occupy Wall Street' Want?" *The Washington Post* (October 3, 2011).

Knight, Jim. "What Can We Do About Teacher Resistance?" *Phi Delta Kappan* (March 2009): 508-513.

Krimerman, Leonard, and Lewis Parry. *Patterns of Anarchy.* New York: Doubleday, 1966.

Kristof, Nicholas. "The Bankers and the Revolutionaries." *The New York Times* (October 1, 2011)

Kropotkin, Peter. "Anarchism, from The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1910." Anarchist Archives. http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/kropotkin/britanniaanarchy.html.

Kropotkin, Peter. *Fields, Factories, and Workshops Tomorrow*, ed. Colin Ward. London: Freedom Press, 1974).

Kropotkin, Peter. *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings,* ed. Marshall S. Shatz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

La Botz, Dan. "The Marxist View of the Labor Unions: Complex and Critical." *Working USA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 16 (2013): 5-41.

Leca, Jean. "Individualism and Citizenship," in *Citizenship: Critical Concepts, Volume 1*, eds. Bryan S. Turner & Peter Hamilton. London: Routledge, 1994, 148-188.

Lefebvre, Henri. "The Right to the City," in *Writings on Cities,* Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, trans. & eds. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, 63-184.

Leopold, David. "A Solitary Life." in *Max Stirner,* ed. Saul Newman. London: Palgrave, 2011, 21-41

Leopold, David. "Introduction." to Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, xix.

Levy, Carl. "Social Histories of Anarchism." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 4, no. 2 (2010): 1-44.

Lincoln, Yvonne S. & Egon Guba. *Naturalistic Inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishers, 1985.

Lizza, Ryan. "Fussbudget: How Paul Ryan Captures the G.O.P." *The New Yorker,* August 6, 2012.

Lobkowicz, Nicholas. "Karl Marx and Max Stirner." in *The Boston College Studies in Philosophy Volume II: Demythologizing Marxism: A Series of Studies on Marxism*, ed. Frederick J. Adelmann. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, 64-95.

Lowy, Michael. *Morning Star: Surrealism, Marxism, Anarchism, Situationism, Utopia.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009.

Mackay, John Henry. *Max Stirner: His Life and Work,* trans. Hubert Kennedy. Concord, CA: Peremptory Publications, 2005.

Macmahon, Arthur W. "Third Session of the Seventy-First Congress, December 1, 1930 to March 4, 1931." *The American Political Science Review* 25, no. 4 (1931): 932-955.

Macpherson, C.B. "Humanist Democracy and Elusive Marxism: A Response to Minogue and Svacek." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 9, no. 3 (1976): 423-430.

Macpherson, C.B. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Madigan, Andrew. "The New Rugged Individualism: Modernity and Countersystem in Post-World War II Fiction." *Comparative American Studies* 8, no. 3 (2010): 200-214.

Magnus, Bernd. "Perfectibility and Attitude in Nietzsche's *Ubermensch*." *The Review of Metaphysics* 36, no. 3 (1983): 633-659.

Magnus, Bernd. *Nietzsche's Existentialist Imperative.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978.

Malesic, Jonathan. "Illusion and Offense in *Philosophical Fragments*: Kierkegaard's Inversion of Feuerbach's Critique of Christianity." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 62 (2007): 43-55.

Mangu-Ward, Katherine. "Young, Wonky, and Proud of it: Wisconsin Republican Paul Ryan Makes Waves." *The Weekly Standard*, March 17, 2003.

Mann, Bonnie. "World Alienation in Feminist Thought: The Sublime Epistemology of Emphatic Anti-Essentialism." *Ethics & the Environment* 10, no. 2 (2005): 45-74.
Mann, William J. *Beyond the Screen: How Gays and Lesbians Shaped Hollywood, 1910-1969.* New York: Penguin, 2001.

Marshall, Peter. *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism.* Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010.

Martin, James J. *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908.* Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles, 1970.

Martin, Pete. "The Ladies Like 'Em Rugged." *The Saturday Evening Post*, December 23, 1950: (19-74).

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1,* Ben Fowkes, trans. New York: Penguin, 1982.

Massey, Marilyn Chapin. *Christ Unmasked: The Meaning of* The Life of Jesus *in German Politics*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

Matheson, Catherine & David Matheson. "Community Development: Freire and Grameen in the Barrowfield Project, Glasgow, Scotland." *Development in Practice* 18, no. 1 (2008): 30-39.

Maul, Andrew. "Review of Urban Charter School Study 2015." Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, 2015. http://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/review-urban-charter-school.

May, Matthew S. "Orator-Machine: Autonomist Marxism and William D. 'Big Bill' Haywood's Cooper Union Address." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 45, no. 4 (2012): 429-451.

McHugh, Melissa B. et al. "Effects of Tootling on Classwide and Individual Disruptive and Academically Engaged Behavior of Lower-Elementary Students." *Behavioral Interventions* 31, no. 4 (2016): 332-354.

McLaren, Peter and Ramin Farahmandpur, "Freire, Marx, and the New Imperialism: Toward a Revolutionary Praxis." in *The Freirean Legacy: Educating for Social Justice*, eds. Judith J. Slater, Stephen M. Fain, & Cesar A. Rossatto. New York: Peter Lang, 2002, 36-56.

McLaren, Peter. *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Postmodern Era.* New York: Routledge, 2002.

McLellan, David. *Karl Marx: A Biography.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Meens, David E. "Democratic Education versus Smithian Efficiency: Prospects for a Deweyan Ideal in the "Neoliberal Age." *Educational Theory* 66 no. 1-2 (2016): 211-226.

Mehta, Jal. "Escaping the Shadow: *A Nation at Risk* and Its Far-Reaching Influence." *American Education,* Summer 2015: 20-44.

Metcalf, Stephen. "Inventing John Wayne: How John Ford Turned a Bland Kid into a Hollow Masculine Icon." *The Atlantic,* December 1, 2017: 38-40.

Mill, John Stuard. *On Liberty.* Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2003.

Mirowski, Philip and Dieter Plehwe eds. *The Road from Mont Pelerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Moggach, Douglas. *The Philosophy and Politics of Bruno Bauer.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Mouffe, Chantal. *The Return of the Political.* London: Verso, 1993.

Moulds, Henry. "John Locke and Rugged Individualism." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1965): 97-109.

Neill, A.S.. *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing.* Oxford: Hart Publishing Company, 1960.

Newman, Saul. "Max Stirner and the Politics of Posthumanism." *Contemporary Political Theory 1*, no. 2 (2002): 221-238.

Newman, Saul. "Stirner and Foucault: Toward a Post-Kantian Freedom." *Postmodern Culture* 13, no. 2 (2003). https://muse.jhu.edu/

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Anti-Education* trans. Damion Searls, eds. Paul Reitter & Chad Wellmon. New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2016.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil,* trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1989.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*, trans. Duncan Large. London: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morality,* trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1998.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Philosophy of Nietzsche,* Introduction to *Thus Spake [sic] Zarathustra.* New York: Random House, 1927.

Nimtz, August H. "Marxism Versus Anarchism: The First Encounter." *Science and Society* 79, no. 2 (2015): 153-175.

Nozick, Robert. "On the Randian Argument," in his *Socratic Puzzles.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997, 249-264.

Oksala, Johanna. *Foucault on Freedom.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Park, Joo-Ho & Dong Wook Jeong. "School Reforms, Principal Leadership, and Teacher Resistance: Evidence from Korea." *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 33, no. 1 (2013): 34-52.

Paterson, Ronald William Keith. *The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner.* London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Pauline Lipman. *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City.* London: Routledge, 2011.

Peck, Jamie. "The Right to Work, and the Right at Work." *Economic Geography* 92, no. 1 (2016): 4-30.

Pengam, Alain. "Anarcho-Communism," in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, eds. Maximilien Rubel and John Crump. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Peterson, Bob. "Survival and Justice: Rethinking Teacher Union Strategy," in *Transforming Teacher Unions: Fighting for Better Schools and Social Justice* eds. Bob Peterson & Michael Charney. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, 1999, 11-19.

Pitzer, Donald E. ed. *America's Communal Utopias*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994

Plant, Sadie. *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Powers, Kristen. "Donald Trump's 'kinder, gentler' version." *USA Today,* April 11, 2016.

Primuth, Richard. "Ronald Reagan's Use of Race in the 1976 and 1980 Presidential Elections." *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 100, no. 1 (2016): 36-66.

Rand, Ayn. *The Fountainhead.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971.

Rand, Ayn. *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism.* New York: Signet, 1964.

Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Read, Herbert. *Existentialism, Marxism, and Anarchism*. London: Freedom Press, 1952.

Reinders, Hayo. "A Positive Approach to Dealing with Techer Resistance." *Modern English Teacher* 26, no. 2 (2017): 74-76.

Riley, Thomas A. *Germany's Poet-Anarchist: John Henry Mackay.* New York: The Revisionist Press, 1972.

Ritter, Kurt W. "Ronald Reagan and 'The Speech': The Rhetoric of Public Relations Politics." *Western Speech* 32 (1968): 50-58.

Robinson, David M. *Emerson and the Conduct of Life: Pragmatism and Ethical Purpose in the Later Work.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Robinson, David. M. "'In the Golden Hour of Friendship:' Transcendentalism and Utopian Desire." in *Emerson and Thoreau: Figures of Friendship,* John T. Lysaker & William Rossi, eds. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010. 53-69.

Roof, David. "The Ethical Domains of Individualism: Nietzsche and Emerson's Pedagogic Vision." *Philosophical Studies in Education* 45 (2014): 168-178.

Rosen, Zvi. *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx: The Influence of Bauer on Marx's Thought.* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977.

Rothbard, Murray N. "The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine: An Economist's View." *The Journal of Libertarian Studies 20*, no. 1 (2006): 5-15.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Emile, Or, Treatise on Education.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2003.

Rowland, Robert. C. and John M. Jones. "Reagan's Farewell Address: Redefining the American Dream." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 20, no. 4 (2017): 635-665.

Sartwell, Crispin, ed. *The Practical Anarchist: Writings of Josiah Warren*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.

Saul, Ana Maria & Antonio Fernando Gouvea da Silva. "The Legacy of Paulo Freire for Curriculum Policies and Teaching in Brazil." *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (2011):38-68.

Schoenberger, Nancy. *Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero.* New York: Doubleday, 2017.

Schor, Naomi and Elizabeth Weed eds. *The Essential Difference.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.

Scott, James C. *Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Sen, Amartya. "Equality of What?" in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values Volume I*, ed. Sterling M. McMurrin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, 197-220.

Shantz, Jeffrey. "Spaces of Learning." *Anarchist Pedagogies: Collective Actions, Theories, and Critical Reflections on Education*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012), 124-45.

Shaw, Charles Gray. *The Ground and Goal of Human Life.* New York: New York University Press, 1919.

Simmons, A. John. *The Lockean Theory of Rights.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Simons, Maarten, Mark Olssen, and Michael A. Peters. "Re-Reading Education Policies Part 1: The Critical Education Policy Orientation" in *Re-Reading Education Policies: A Handbook Studying the Policy Agenda of the 21st Century*, Simons, Olssen, and Peters eds. Rotterdam, NED: Sense Publishers, 2009.

Sloterdijk, Peter. *Critique of Cynical Reason.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Smith, John K. "Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research: An Attempt to Clarify the Issue." *Educational Researcher* 12, no. 3 (1983): 6-13.

Sperber, Jonathan. *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth Century Life.* New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014.

Spivak, Gayatri. "Feminism, Criticism and the Institution." *Thesis Eleven* 10/11 (1984-85): 175-87.

Stephens, George M. *Locke, Jefferson, and the Justices: Foundations and Failures of the US Government.* New York: Algora Publishing, 2002.

Stern, J.P. *Friedrich Nietzsche.* Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978.

Stern, Marlow. "'The Daily Show's' Trevor Noah Blasts Antifa, Brands them 'Vegan ISIS.'" *The Daily Beast* (September 1, 2017).

Stirner, Max. *Stirner's Critics,* trans. Wolfi Landstreicher. Oakland, CA: LBC Books & Columbia Alternative Library, 2012.

Stirner, Max. *The Ego and its Own,* ed. David Leopold, trans. Steven Byington. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Stirner, Max. *The False Principle of Our Education: Or, Humanism and Realism.* Colorado Springs: R. Myles, 1967).

Stone, Alison. "Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (2004): 135-153.

Stracey, Frances. *Constructed Situations: A New History of the Situationist International.* London: Pluto Press, 2014.

Strauss, David. *The Life of Jesus: Critically Examined.* London: Swann Sonnenschein & Co., 1902

Strauss, Leo. *Natural Right and History.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

Stryker, Susan. "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, eds. London: Routledge, 2006. 1-17.

Suissa, Judith. *Anarchism and Education.* Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010.

Taylor, Charles. "Foucault on Freedom and Truth." *Political Theory* 12, no. 2 (1984), 152-183.

Terhart, Ewald. "Teacher Resistance Against School Reform: Reflecting an Inconvenient Truth." *School Leadership and Management* 33, no. 5 (2013): 486-500.

Thomas, Paul. *Karl Marx and the Anarchists.* London: Routledge, 1985.

Toews, John Edward. *Hegelianism: The Path Toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805-1841.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Troy, Gil. *The Reagan Revolution.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Tubert, Ariela. "Nietzsche's Existentialist Freedom." *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 46, no. 3 (2015): 409-424.

Tucker, Benjamin R. "Chips from My Studio." *Radical Review vol. 1*, ed. Benjamin R. Tucker. (New Bedford, MA: Office of Publication, 1877): 367-396.

Tuvel, Rebecca, "In Defense of Transracialism." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 32, no. 2 (2017): 263-278.

Umoja, Akinyele Omowale. *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement.* New York: New York University Press, 2013.

Van Meter, Larry A. *John Wayne and Ideology.* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.

Vaneigem, Raoul. *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012.

Veyne, Paul. "The Final Foucault and His Ethics*,"* in *Foucault and His Interlocutors,* ed. Arnold I. Davidson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 225-233.

Veysey, Laurence R. *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth-Century America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Ward, Colin. "Education for Mastery of the Environment." in Colin Ward, *Talking Schools.* London: Freedom Press, 1995, 21-38.

Ward, Colin. *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Warren, Josiah. "Narrative of Practical Experiments," in Sartwell, *The Practical Anarchist*. 184-218.

Warren, Josiah. *Equitable Commerce,* in Sartwell, *The Practical Anarchist*, 54-98.

Warren, Mark R. & Karen L. Mapp eds.. *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform*, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Welsh, John F. *Max Stirner's Dialectical Egoism: A New Interpretation.* Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010.

Wheen, Francis. *Karl Marx: A Life.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000.

White, James D. *Karl Marx and the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Whittle, Stephen. "Foreword," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, eds. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle. London: Routledge, 2006, xi-xvi.

Wood, Lesley J. *Direct Action, Deliberation, and Diffusion: Collective Action After the WTO Protests in Seattle.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Woodcock, George. *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Wyatt, Jonathan. "'Out Here a Man Settles His Own Problems': Learning from John Wayne." *International Review of Qualitative Research* 8, no. 3 (2015): 280-282.

Zhang, Qin & David A. Sapp. "Psychological Reactance and Resistance Intention in the Classroom: Effects of Perceived Request Politeness and Legitimacy, Relationship Distance, and Teacher Credibility." *Communication Education* 62, no. 1 (2013): 1-25.

Zhang, Qin, Jibiao Zhang, Ana-Alyse Castelluccio. "A Cross-Cultural Investigation of Student Resistance in College Classrooms: The Effects of Teacher Misbehaviors and Credibility." *Communication Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2011): 450-464.

Zizek, Slavoj. "Occupy Wall Street: What Is To Be Done Next?: How A Protest Movement Without a Programme Can Confront a Capitalist System that Defies Reform." *The Guardian* (April 24, 2012).

Zizek, Slavoj. "The Structure of Domination Today: A Lacanian View." *Studies in East European Thought* 56 (2004): 383-403.

Zizek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology.* London: Verso, 2008.

Zuquete, Jose Pedro. "Men in Black: Dynamics, Violence, and Lone Wolf Potential." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 1 (2014): 95-109.