The Dilemma of Praxis

Anarchism and Education: A Comparative Approach to Theory and Practice

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Abstract

Anarchists argue that public (or state) education is antithetical to the idea of freedom because state education is a central controlling agency in society. This thesis addresses two questions. First, in order to liberate students, what kind of pedagogy did the anarchist propose? Second, in a practical sense, did anarchist educational experiments achieve the libertarian results for which they were hoping? I argue throughout this thesis that while anarchism presents a systematic education strategy to effect radical social change, the practical application of this theory was both contradictory and a failure.

In order to expose this failure, this thesis uses the positive and negative conception of liberty as a navigational tool. I argue that both forms of liberty are equally important to anarchists and this importance feeds into their educational methodology. To anarchists, education possessed a responsibility to remove constraints in the classroom, while education also had a responsibility to fully develop all human faculties. A stress on both forms of liberty led to an irreconcilable tension emerging in their educational experiments because both concepts of freedom could not develop side by side consistently.

This thesis identifies and compares two separate educational traditions emerging in anarchism. The first is integral education and the second is aesthetic education. The First Chapter of this thesis draws together the goals of anarchism and illuminates how these goals feed into their educational theory. Chapter Two develops an exposition on integral education. Chapter Three evaluates an historical attempt by the Spanish anarchist/educator Francisco Ferrer to put some of these ideas (broadly) into practice. Chapter Four develops an exposition on aesthetic education while Chapter Five examines Leo Tolstoy's educational experiment that, (broadly), represents an example of the aesthetic educative tradition. I argue that a close examination of these practical experiments, using the positive/negative liberty model, reveals the inherent paradox evident in anarchist education, at least at a practical level.

Statement of Originality

This work contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University of Adelaide Library, being made available to all forms of media, now or hereafter.

Signed

22/08/07

Luke Trenwith Date

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Introduction

Anarchists are preoccupied with the relationship between education and the state. When thinking about education, anarchists do not take the existing political and social structure for granted.[1] Rather, they argue that education is a tool used by the state to ensure the state's continued future. For anarchists, state education is authoritarian in practice, and, for the student, this diminishes a sense of independence and appreciation for critical thought. As a consequence, students 'willingly' accept the status quo without question. Somewhat paradoxically, anarchists also assert that if education encourages a sense of independence by developing all faculties of the human condition, education is potentially revolutionary. In such an instance, state authority will be undermined by a shift in public opinion, as education possesses the capability of transforming culture from 'the old relationship of master-slave (capitalist-proletarian)' to a 'relationship of egalitarian co-operation.'[2] At the heart of anarchist education is therefore a keen stress on freedom and the removal of authority, in order to create conditions where critical thought and new forms of socialisation develop unhindered. This raises the question of whether anarchist education can achieve these ends and, in doing so, whether the consequences are revolutionary. I argue in this thesis that anarchist education fails in its endeavour to reach these goals through critically assessing two of its best–known experiments.

Education has always occupied the minds of anarchists as one means to create a new libertarian social consciousness.[3] If education 'designates [the]...basic social process whereby individuals acquire the culture of their society,'[4] anarchists hope to radically change culture using a radical libertarian educational approach to education. They believe this radicalism will drive the development of new forms of socialisation. Leonard Krimerman and Lewis Perry argue in

[1] Judith Suissa, 'Anarchism, Utopias and Philosophy of Education' *The Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 35, no. 4 (Nov. 2001), p. 629.
[2] Herbert Read, 'The Necessity of Anarchism' in *Anarchy and Order: Essays in Politics* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1971), p. 92.
[3] George Woodcock, 'Liberating Education' in *The Anarchist Reader*, ed. George Woodcock (William Collins Sons and Co, Glasgow, 1977), p. 266.
[4] James Bowen and Peter Hobson, 'Introduction' to *Theories of Education: Studies of Significant: Innovation in Western Educational Thought*, ed. James Bowen and Peter Hobson (John Wiley and Sons, Brisbane, 1987), p. 2.

Patterns of Anarchy that anarchist education 'does not simply lay the groundwork for subsequent achievements; at its best it constitutes the most complete and most feasible paradigm of those achievements.'[5] Krimerman and Perry go on to say that anarchist education is 'the living center and clearest model of what is ultimately desirable in human relations.'[6] Education, put simply, has the potential to secure a commitment to the anarchistic principles,[7] or, at it's very least, it possesses the capability of preparing individuals for radical social change.

An Anarchist Response to Education

From this brief introduction, this thesis addresses two key questions. First, in the anarchist tradition is there an educational philosophy? Second, did their pedagogical thought, in a practical sense, have the intended affect? That is, were historical anarchist educational experiments successful in going some way to producing students who were imbued with a 'new' revolutionary consciousness?

In response to the first question, I argue in this thesis that what emerges from the anarchist tradition is a systematic educational programme. At the heart of any educational programme is an inseparable connection to questions about what society ought to be like. As Bowen and Hobson note, 'no philosopher of education can be fully neutral, but make certain normative assumptions and in the case of the liberal-analysts [for instance] these will reflect the values of

[5] Leonard I. Krimerman, Lewis Perry, 'The Anarchists and Education' in *Patterns of Anarchy: A Collection of Writings on the Anarchist Tradition,* ed. Leonard Krimerman and Lewis Perry (Anchor Books, New York, 1966), p. 404.

[6] *ibid.*

[7] This is not to suggest that all anarchists placed equal emphasis on education to primarily transform society. Michael Bakunin, for instance, accepted that some form of direct action and/or violence was required in the transition to anarchism. Bakunin supported a militant approach to revolution where direct action against the state was recommended. Bakunin argued that reform using the state to achieve this is 'a drop in the sea…and far from sufficient to prepare, arouse and liberate our people.' See Michael Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, ed. Marshall Shatz (Cambridge, University Press, 1999), pp. 212–218. Peter Kropotkin was more ambiguous on the issue of violence. He rejected Bakunin's constant support for violent revolution. Kropotkin did sanction force in certain circumstances (for instance his support for war against Germany in WW1) and understood that despair often leads to violent acts. But ultimately he preferred the method of propagandising the people over and above the use of force, although he envisaged that the final death knell of the state would be a bloody confrontation. See Peter Kropotkin 'The Spirit of Revolt' in *Revolutionary Pamphlets*: *A Collection of Writings by Peter Kropotkin*, ed. Roger N. Baldwin, intro. Roger N. Baldwin (Dover Publications, New York, 1970), pp. 37–43. Also see Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*: *A History of Anarchism*, (Fontana Press, London, 1993), p. 633.

democracy.'[8] Anarchist theories of education also develop from, and are inseparable from, answering the question—what should society be like?

Broadly speaking, anarchists have developed a broad range of political and social models that represent a normative vision. This normative vision, it must be noted, lacks definitional precision and is (sometimes) amorphous, but, nonetheless, a coherent framework exists and, contra to the general perception, is not without organisation.[9] It follows that anarchist educational commentary aims to both initiate and replicate this normative vision. While the above perspective may seem self–evident in any educational programme, it is worth emphasising this point as, somewhat paradoxically, at times the anarchist stress on freedom in education obfuscates this connection. In focusing on freedom, anarchists are sceptical about presenting a definite prescribed methodology and curriculum. This concern is driven by the anarchist's assertion that public schools, supported by wider dominant social and political institutions, reflect the practices of these very institutions by implementing a 'top down' authoritarian and (usually) prescribed curriculum.[10] In order to liberate the student from this imposition, anarchists have consistently asserted that education must be less theoretical, rigid and goal–driven.[11] In the anarchist mindset, education is only appropriate when it concentrates much less on 'moulding' the student to meet a predetermined set of standards.

If this position is consistent with anarchist focus on freedom, this approach also leads to conceptual challenges. To the commentator of anarchist education, the fluid methodology of the anarchists occasionally obscures their curriculum. Many anarchist writings on education developed in fragmentary form, normally in the framework of their wider political thought. Additionally, one of the major problems anarchists themselves have faced, historically, is a lack of libertarian school experiments from which to draw lessons. With the exception of the two models this thesis will evaluate, only the Modern School Movement in America

[8] James Bowen and Peter Hobson, 'Prospects for the Future' in *Theories of Education,* p. 445.
[9] This position will be elaborated upon in the next chapter.
[10] Joel Spring, *A Primer of Libertarian Education,* (Free life Editions, New York, 1975), p. 10.
[11] Suissa, 'Anarchism, Utopias and Philosophy of Education' p. 632.

lasted for any duration.[12] Fragments of information exist in some of the nineteenth century French experiments—for instance, in the French anarchist Paul Robin's (1831–1912) school—but this information tends to be disjointed and less analytical than other educational anarchists educational experiments.[13] It is perhaps not surprising then that scholars make the charge that anarchist education is anti–theoretical. Reginald Archambault, for instance, argued that the educational position of the Russian anarchist Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) constituted 'an anti–theory' that was 'often non–logical.'[14]

This thesis rejects the assertion that anarchist education constitutes an 'anti–theory' or lacks direction. To develop this argument, and navigate the anarchist educative spectrum in general, I state that the objective of anarchist education is the attainment of two fundamental concepts central to anarchism—autonomy and community. These two concepts—autonomy and community—succinctly, I suggest, define both the goals of anarchist education and anarchism in general.[15] When evaluating anarchist educational theory, not only do these two concepts constitute their goals, but anarchists also claimed that these concepts, and indeed learning in general, could be achieved 'neutrally.' That is, an appreciation for the idea of autonomy and community, and personal development, would emerge from the praxis of free education and free association in the classroom. The role of the teacher was to facilitate student learning and not act as the fount of knowledge.

More specifically, to draw out and explicate strategies that define autonomy, I use the positive/negative dichotomy. In the tradition of negative liberty, I assert in this thesis that anarchist educational practice developed strategies that aimed

[12] The Modern School Movement in America operated between the years 1910–1960. The school first opened in New York in 1911 and then moved to Stelton, a small country town outside of New York, in 1914. For a thorough evaluation of this pedagogical movement see Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980). A detailed examination of the twists and turn of its programme is outside the scope of this thesis.

[13] Laurence Rogers, *Anarchism and Libertarian Education* (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1975), p. 73.

[14] Reginald D. Archambault, 'Introduction' to *Tolstoy on Education*, trans. Leo Weiner, ed. Reginald D. Archambault (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967), pp. xv, xvi.

[15] For an introduction to the anarchist goal of autonomy and community see Alan Ritter, *Anarchism: A Theoretical Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980), ch. 2.

to protect the student from 'top down' authoritarian practices. In the positive liberty tradition, I argue that anarchists embrace education as one means to develop the 'whole person' where reasoning powers, critical thought and moral understanding ought to be profoundly encouraged.

Surprisingly, the anarchist commitment to positive liberty, in an educative context, has largely gone either unnoticed, or is only given peripheral attention, by scholars of anarchist education. Joel Spring, in *A Primer of Libertarian Education*, focuses on the anarchist's commitment to developing 'techniques for making people free from all domination.'[16] From this vantage point, Spring develops a good summary of the anarchists' commitment to protecting students from the negative effects of state education, yet provides little or no information about what kind of curriculum anarchists proposed.[17] Michael Smith, in *The Libertarians and Education*,[18] is more thorough on this point. Smith notes strategies that the anarchists applied in education, notably the anarchist attempts at developing literacy skills in an environment of permissiveness. However, because his book is an attempt to cover an historical 'educational movement' and not educational theory per se, his exposition of anarchist curriculum is fragmentary and lacks specific analysis. By illuminating the key features of the anarchist curriculum, this thesis is an attempt to redress this scholarly dearth. Moreover, the positive/negative model offers a unique means to both shed light on the anarchist commitment to development in education and, as a important corollary, also problematise anarchist education.

In order to identify the problems of anarchist education, (and hence address the second question—were the anarchists successful in their educational endeavour?), I argue that their educational experiments, strictly speaking, failed. They failed because, although their educational experiments were 'internally coherent' and less authoritarian than orthodox educational programmes, in a practical sense their educational strategies reverted to using an authoritarian, 'top

[16] Spring, *Primer*, p. 9.
[17] Joel Spring discusses the concept of 'ownership of self' and strategies anarchists have developed in order to protect students from the perceived negative effects of state education. See Spring, *Primer,* ch. 2.
[18] Michael Smith, *The Libertarians and Education*, (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1983). For an example of Smith's identification of curriculum see ch. 2.

down,' approach. What surfaced in their educational experiments was a constant and irreconcilable tension—a tension between the two forms of liberty (positive and negative). The anarchists' commitment to developing all aspects of the human condition in the tradition of positive liberty clashed with their commitment to removing constraint in the classroom—or negative liberty—as both concepts of freedom could not be accommodated consistently or harmoniously.

Chapter Outline

In order to develop this argument, Chapter One connects anarchist educational principles to their wider political philosophy to make transparent this connection. I first analyse (separately) both the concepts of community and autonomy suggesting that this framework helps to answer the anarchist question: what should our society be like? I draw upon the positive and negative concepts of freedom in order to present an accurate and focused definition of autonomy while I present (briefly) the anarchist projection of their good society to help define community. I then amalgamate these two broad perspectives—autonomy and community—and place them in an educative context. From this vantage point, I aim to show how the tension between positive and negative profoundly surfaces in anarchist education. In addition, this general introductory chapter connects anarchist educational theory to wider anarchist theory. Without this signpost, the 'destination' of anarchist education will remain unclear in the context of what the anarchists are aiming to achieve.

The remaining four chapters explicate specific anarchist educational theory and practice. Throughout this thesis I suggest that in anarchist educational theory two distinct streams of educational thought emerge. Both streams, it must be noted, believe that freedom is fundamental to their educational methodology. And both streams of educational theory aim to secure a commitment to the principles of autonomy in community. Where they are distinct arises from differences in methodology and theoretical influence. At one end of the spectrum is the nineteenth century socialist tradition of integral education. In this educative tradition autonomy is conceptualised (and achieved) through rational and scientific deliberation, with curricula emphasising the importance of scientific

and industrial application by hands–on activity in a workshop setting. It is commonly associated with the social anarchists namely Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), Michael Bakunin, (1814–1876) Errico Malatesta (1853–1932), Alexander Berkman (1870–1936), Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) and Francisco Ferrer (1859–1909).[19]

At the other end of the educational spectrum is a pedagogical model that understands the development of autonomy in terms of self–exploration through imagination. This tradition emphasised classroom activities dedicated to exploring psychological faculties through the process of aesthetic regeneration. Freedom was defined in terms of inner and outer personal liberation where a sense of autonomy develops from creative artistic learning experiences. A radical change in social consciousness is achieved via this 'exploration' and, in doing so, the emergence of a new revolutionary egalitarianism was the anticipated outcome. The Russian anarchist Leo Tolstoy and the English anarchist Herbert Read (1893–1968) are most commonly associated with this tradition.

Chapters Two and Three therefore evaluate, in more detail, the integrated model of education. In Chapter Two, I develop an exposition of the integrated method to unravel its main features. I suggest that integral education predominantly draws from its wider socialist roots, namely a focus on, and support for rationalism, scientism and equality. In this chapter, I argue that the social anarchists' support for these concepts, in association with their critique of capitalism, is best understood primarily from within the domain of wider socialism. In Chapter Three, when I examine the Spanish anarchist educator Francisco Ferrer and his school programme in Barcelona, I argue that this connection to socialism, in fact, leads to intellectual confusion that feeds into confusion in educational context and practice. So while Ferrer believed himself an anarchist, his early twentieth century experiment, on inspection, has definite authoritarian elements within its practice. I consequently argue that Ferrer's educational method was more interested in achieving a left–wing political consciousness that drew from both socialist and anarchist perspectives.

[19] David Millar, *Anarchism* (J.M. Dent and Sons, London, 1984), p. 45.

In Chapters Four and Five, I evaluate the aesthetic tradition in anarchist education. In Chapter Four I develop an exposition of aesthetic education. I suggest that the aesthetic tradition, in essence, fundamentally aimed to appeal to the irrational and instinctual characteristics of students, in opposition to a strict appeal to 'reason.' In Chapter Five, I evaluate the Russian novelist and anarchist, Leo Tolstoy's educational experiment during mid–nineteenth century Russia. I argue that, while Tolstoy's experiment was more 'libertarian' than Ferrer's and met with some success, his aesthetic approach was hindered by the employment of authoritarian methods, inadvertently, or out of necessity, in order to intensify the process of personal aesthetic development. Last, the conclusion draws together the main themes of this thesis. I reiterate that the anarchist's theoretical stress on freedom could not be matched equally when practicable attempts were made to apply this theory, thereby leading to failure. Given this recognition, I draw (briefly) wider implications this (may) entail for anarchism.

Chapter One
Community, Autonomy and Education

Freedom is fundamental in anarchist philosophy. Preoccupation with freedom and a concomitant concern with the totalizing actions of state authority permeate anarchist thought. Before one evaluates anarchist educational theory, it is important to examine the wider anarchist vision of the good society so that connections can be drawn between anarchist education and its broader goals. It is useful to start this analysis by focusing on the concept of anarchist freedom, according to which freedom is, in essence, defined as autonomy *in* community. While opposition to authority is a key aspect of anarchist ideology, anarchism is misunderstood if it is seen only in terms of that opposition. Against state authority, anarchists look to the future with an alternative model in mind, founded on principles of community, equality and liberty that develop most profoundly, anarchists insist, in a non–authoritarian social setting.

In order to explicate the nature and scope of the anarchist programme the first part of this chapter will elaborate the concept of community within the context of anarchism. The next part of the chapter will then outline what liberty means in that context. In turn, I use the concepts of positive and negative liberty to define autonomy and, second, to connect the idea of autonomy to community. Importantly, autonomy and community underpin the anarchist educational position, particularly its reformist curriculum and pedagogical goals. Last, it is at this junction where concepts of positive and negative help to expose the inherent tension that prevails in anarchist education. I discuss this tension in more detail when evaluating Ferrer's and Tolstoy's respective educative experiments in Chapters Three and Five.

The Anarchist Programme

From its inception, anarchism has been plagued by definitional imprecision. Owing, in part, to popular culture, in the realm of public imagination anarchism has historically been seen as a destructive doctrine whose aim is the violent

disruption of the social order.[1] Joseph Conrad's popular *The Secret Agent* (1907), portrayed anarchists as socially disengaged, sinister and lusting for mindless destruction. In Conrad's story, the anarchist 'Professor,' for example, walked the streets 'averting his eyes from the odious magnitude of mankind. He had no future. He disdained it. He was a force. His thoughts caressed the images of ruin and destruction…He passed on, unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men.'[2] This grim assessment of anarchists misrepresents what anarchism stands for. In evaluating anarchist theorists, it is evident that their social, political and economic objectives are constructive and built on the principle of sociability.[3] In this context, anarchism is both a philosophy and a social movement, and in its most general sense can be seen as a revolt against political authoritarianism.

Anarchist political theory draws together common strands evident from both the liberal and socialist tradition. At one end of the spectrum anarchist communism is almost identical to socialism with the anarchist's commitment to equality, social cooperation and community sharing much in common with basic socialist principles.[4] At the other end of the spectrum, the anarchist wariness of state power is shared by liberalism. The anarchists are, like liberals, individualists in that they place high value on autonomy;—the right to make independent decisions free from coercion is central in the anarchist mind.[5]

While anarchists draw from a range of theoretical sources, they distinguish themselves from liberalism and socialism in that their 'good society' is defined as small, non–authoritarian communities that uphold the right to individual autonomy, or, 'the replacement of the authoritarian state by some form of non–governmental cooperation between free individuals.'[6] The word 'anarchism' is

[1] David, Millar, *Anarchism*, p. 2. See also, Marshall Shatz, 'Introduction' to *The Essential works of Anarchism* ed. Marshall Shatz (Bantam Books, New York, 1971), p. xxi.
[2] Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*: *A Simple Tale* (J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd, London, 1960), p. 311.
[3] Millar, *Anarchism*, p. 2.
[4] Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies*: *An Introduction* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1998), p. 196.
[5] Robert Wolff, *In Defence of Anarchism* (Harper and Row, New York, 1970), pp. 12–13.
[6] George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 11.

derived from the Greek word *anarchos* meaning '*without government.*'[7] In essence, anarchism refers to support for the absence of political leaders and a rejection of a centralised political apparatus. With the exception of individualist anarchists, such as the nineteenth century German Max Stirner (1806–1856)[8] and the English radical William Godwin (1756–1836),[9] who largely regarded society as a threat to the individual,[10] most anarchists understood the 'good society' as the right to autonomy that is expressed and celebrated in a non–authoritarian community setting that is freed from state influence.

Unlike both liberalism and socialism, anarchists therefore reject the state apparatus altogether. Anarchists rebuff liberalism's claim that the state is a necessary precondition to protect the rights of the individual, while, at the same time, they doubt the Marxist claim that the transition to socialism is necessitated by the need for central planning—at least in the initial period.[11] Anarchists seek to identify all structures of power, domination and hierarchy, and, if they entrench social inequity, they must be challenged. In this respect, anarchists primarily target the state, both domestically and internationally.[12]

Community: A definition

The right to autonomy is widely regarded as the leading ideal for most anarchists. At the same time, anarchists share a commitment to community.[13] In that sense, autonomy and community are inextricably linked and equally significant. Yet,

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[7] Errico Malatesta, *Anarchy*, trans. Vernon Richards (Freedom Press, London, 1995), p. 15. Emphasis original.

[8] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 220.

[9] Despite their important contribution to anarchism, Stirner and Godwin will not be discussed in this thesis as I am concentrating primarily on 'communitarian' anarchists and their interest in education. Stirner and Godwin, it must be noted, were less interested in education to foster appreciation for 'community' even through they both were highly critical, like all anarchists, of the potential of state education to encroach on the right to individual autonomy. For examples of their respective critiques of state education see Max Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education*, trans. Robert H. Beebe (Ralph Myles, Colorado Springs, 1967), p. 23 and William Godwin, 'Evils of National Education' in *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin*, ed. Peter Marshall (Freedom Press, London, 1986), pp. 146–148.

[10] Paul Nursey-Bray, 'Autonomy and Community: William Godwin and the Anarchist Project' *Anarchist Studies,* 4, no. 2 (October 1996), p. 110.

[11] Shatz, 'Introduction' to *Essential Works*, pp. xv–xvi.

[12] Noam Chomsky, 'Anarchism, Marxism, and Hope for the Future,' in *Chomsky on Anarchism*, ed. Barry Pateman (A.K Press, Edinburgh, 2005), p. 178.

[13] Paul Nursey-Bray, 'Malatesta and the Anarchist Revolution' *Anarchist Studies*, 3, no. 1 (Spring 1995), p. 104.

while removing the state is important in the anarchist mindset, more important, is the creation of a viable form of social organisation that sets in place the conditions and structures that encourage true liberty.

To probe this mindset, it is worth first defining the anarchist position on human nature, as most political and educational theory implies what human beings are and what they can become.[14] Most anarchists adopt an organic view of human nature in which, just as different plants grow in different kinds of soil and climates, so too different individuals require a variety of conditions for their development.[15] Most anarchists, with the exception of Tolstoy,[16] accept that individuals are generally comprised of innate qualities—both potentially positive and negative.[17] Indeed, as Bakunin, Malatesta and others pointed out, individuals are prone to expressing innate egoistic behaviour.[18] Importantly however, this very capacity for egoism does not negate the over–riding human capacity for, and deep–seated need to engage in, sociability with peers.

For the most part, anarchists argued that individuals are predominantly social beings.[19] Anarchists reject the Hobbesian notion of the isolated individual, fighting a war of all against all, and claim that human beings are, and always have been, interdependent. Typically, anarchists maintain that individuals tend to develop understanding and construct meaning largely from interaction with their

[14] For further analysis on this rather broad statement, see R.S. Peters where he draws connections between education and a variety of different concepts, from marxism, through to liberalism and existentialism, noting the parallels between each respective ideology, their educational goals, and how these goals accord with their interpretation of human nature. R. S. Peter, *Ethics and Education* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1980), pp. 227–234.

[15] David Morland, 'Anarchism, Human Nature and History: Lessons for the Future' in *Twenty-First Century Anarchism: Unorthodox Ideas for a New Millennium,* ed. James Bowen, and Jon Purkis (Cassell, London, 1997), p. 14.

[16] A brief introduction to Tolstoy's position on human nature will be noted in Chapter Five.

[17] David Hartley, 'Communitarian Anarchism and Human Nature' *Anarchist Studies*, 3, no. 2 (Autumn 1995), p. 147.

[18] This perspective arose from an anthropological position, first coming to prominence in the late nineteenth century, where many social anarchists argued that egoism was an historical necessity in order to secure and exploit limited resources. This thus served the purpose of preservation of the species. For further examples of this position in anarchist thought, see Errico Malatesta, *Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas*, ed. Vernon Richards (Freedom Press, London, 1977), p. 74; see also Michael Bakunin, 'Ethics: Truly Human or Anarchist Morality,' in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism,* ed. G.P. Maximoff (Free Press, New York, 1964), p. 146.

[19] R. B. Fowler, 'The Anarchist Tradition of Political Thought' *The Western Political Quarterly*, 25, no. 4 (Dec. 1972), p. 742.

peers. The natural and correct form of social arrangement, therefore, is one that fosters mutual support and cooperation.[20] In the words of Malatesta:

> If man's interests were really antagonistic, if the struggle between men was indeed a basic essential law of human societies and if the liberty of the individual were to be limited by the liberty of others, then everyone would always seek to ensure that his interests prevailed, everyone would try to increase his own freedom at the expense of other people's freedom, and one would have a government, not just because it would be more or less useful to all members of society to have one, but because the victors would want to make sure of the fruits of victory by thoroughly subjecting the vanquished, and so free themselves from the trouble of being permanently on the defensive, entrusting their defence to men specially trained as professional *gendarmes.* In that case mankind would be condemned to perish or be forever struggling between the tyranny of the victors and the rebellion of the vanquished.[21]

For Malatesta, then, despite the overbearing exertion of state authority and law, what is fundamental to humanity is not a desire to exploit each other, but rather the opposite—that is, the recognition by individuals that have duties to the community.

The more negative qualities such as egoism in human nature are not immutable.[22] On the contrary, as David Morland notes, anarchism is very much a 'philosophy of praxis; and one of the best ways to stimulate the ascent of sociability over egoism is through appropriate social praxis.'[23] While egoism will not be completely eradicated, the socialisation process that upholds the values of non–competition and non–authoritarianism will go some way to 'socialising away' egoism where it has less opportunity to surface and will contradict wider social norms (and advocacy for) sociability. In an 'anarchist society,' it is assumed that the fully developed individual will recognise the importance of social obligations and individual responsibility and, in doing so, also recognise, more fully, the danger egoism represents to the established anarchist social order. As such, egoism will be controlled both by exterior social norms and the individual

[20] Millar, *Anarchism*, p. 45.
[21] Malatesta, *Anarchy*, p. 26. Emphasis original.
[22] Peter Marshall, 'Human Nature and Anarchism' in *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice*, ed. David Goodway (Routledge, London, 1989), p. 140.
[23] Morland, 'Anarchism, Human Nature and History' p. 15.

themselves.[24] Providing the predominant social paradigm is one of non–authoritarian sociability, the more negative features of the human condition that surface from time to time will be kept in check.[25]

Anarchists are committed to freedom because they believe that once the state disappears, a natural spontaneous social harmony will surface. Here, anarchists believe that an ultimate social harmony does exist in the universe.[26] If society is left to its own devices, human attributes of, and appreciation for, cooperation and mutual respect will develop organically. While noteworthy, the anarchist commitment to natural order was not wholly original: the idea of a natural order has a long history, as Marshall notes, first appearing in early Greek philosophy.[27] What makes the anarchist position unique, however, is their specific focus on the state as culpable for blocking, but not completely eradicating, the organic growth of this natural order. For anarchists, the state does this by protecting the inequitable distribution of wealth, entrenching a social hierarchy and using authoritarian power.[28] In turn, these artificial social structures retard the natural flow of social equality.

Anarchists recognise that governments, as institutions, do fulfil some important social functions such as providing health care and other social services that benefit the community, but maintain that social dysfunction offsets these benefits.[29] That dysfunction is due, say the anarchists, to the imposed, dominating and coercive nature of any centralised political system. In short, if humankind's instinct is largely one of sociability, it follows that the best form of social organisation develops where these characteristics are given the fullest

[24] George Crowder notes that this aspect of anarchist thought, i.e. the full development of the individual, finds its origins in the 'perfectionist' tradition in western philosophy that has its roots in Plato. George Crowder, *Classical Anarchism, The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991), pp. 12–13.
[25] Morland argues that despite the anarchist sanguine argument that egoism can be 'socialised away,' ultimately the tacit acceptance (by some anarchists) that humans have egoistical tendencies remains a problem. It still leaves unresolved the problem of anti–social behaviour and how best to deal with it should it get out of hand for whatever reason. See David Morland, *Demanding the Impossible: Human Nature and the Politics of Nineteenth–Century Social Anarchism* (Cassell, London, 1997), pp. 184–187.
[26] Crowder, *Classical Anarchism*, p. 13.
[27] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 15.
[28] John Morrow, *A History of Political Thought: A Thematic Introduction* (Macmillan Press, London, 1998), p. 98.
[29] Sean Sheehan, *Anarchism* (Reaktion Books, London, 2003), p. 48.

opportunity to flourish. In a non–authoritarian community setting, these inclinations thrive more thoroughly.[30]

Kropotkin's anarchistic communism is one possible model of how anarchists imagined an alternative world. Kropotkin was extremely concerned about a private property and wage–based economy, because he believed that both concepts arise from 'individual ownership of the land and the instruments of labour.'[31] This particularly worried Kropotkin as he believed that this economic arrangement, with its specific focus on capital acquisition and social inequity, constituted a perverse denial of human freedom and was equal to slavery.[32] Thus condemning the capitalist system, Kropotkin argued that it must be replaced with a system where the distribution of community goods ought to be managed via a system of equal rewards to everybody.

In Kropotkin's new system, all in the community share production and consumption. 'The means of production,' he tells us, 'having been created by the common efforts of all, must be at the disposal of all. The private appropriation of requisites for production is neither just nor beneficial.'[33] In contrast, a means of production that is based on equal distribution obtains 'maximum satisfaction' for everyone.[34] The communes were to be organised on a voluntary basis, with each individual participating according to his/her abilities and needs; in addition, the communes were to be connected by a series of federal communes. Hence, the commune system strengthens community bonds and encourages purposeful human interaction.

Kropotkin believed that individuals were administering aspects of their lives, independent of government, despite the 'egotistical turn given to men's minds by the commercial system.'[35] To provide evidence for his proposition, Kropotkin

[30] George Woodcock, 'Anarchism' in *The New Palgrave: The Invisible Hand*, ed. John Eatwell Murray Milgate, and Peter Newman (Macmillan Reference, London, 1989), p. 43.
[31] Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (Chapman and Hall, London, 1913), p. 34.
[32] Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988), p. 61.
[33] Peter Kropotkin, 'Anarchist Communism' in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets: A Collection of Writings by Peter Kropotkin*, ed. Roger Baldwin (Dover, New York, 1970), p. 56.
[34] Errico Malatesta, *At the Café: Conversations on Anarchism*, ed. Paul Nursey-Bray (Freedom Press, London, 2005), p. 61.
[35] Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p. 36.

studied contemporary sociological developments, arguing, for example, that the collective, egalitarian nature of the Jura watchmakers collective in Switzerland was one such instance.[36] In other examples, he was drawn to lifeboat organisations in Britain, arguing that 'those who man the lifeboats do not ask [the] credentials of the crew of a sinking ship.'[37] To stress the point, Kropotkin additionally turned to what he thought was the egalitarian character of libraries, in which books are shared equally among the populace irrespective of class. Other more general examples Kropotkin gave for this egalitarian trend, though—perhaps less than compelling—include museums, parks and water supply whose function and benefits serves all the community.[38] Although most of these examples derive from government–authorised utility, Kropotkin was confident that they represented a return to 'our' communistic tendencies.

Not surprisingly, Kropotkin maintained that government was an historical aberration, rather than a forgone conclusion.[39] The practice of state centralisation had 'systematically weeded out all institutions in which the mutual–aid tendency had formerly found its expression.'[40] It ultimately represented a powerful but transient aberration. With an eye on the past, Kropotkin appraised the guild system of the Middle Ages as a successful model of sociability, where human organisation flourished freely and complemented basic human needs. He believed that, in practice, the guild system operated upon a social law where individuals helped each other either in times of illness or dispute and fulfilled their obligations without hesitation. In addition, disputes were settled within the guild without any outside help. Lastly, the work of the guild was completed according to internal standards where the purchase of materials occurred

[36] Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, p. 62.
[37] Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p. 38.
[38] *ibid.*, p. 36.
[39] Kropotkin argued that, in an historical context, individuals fell under what he termed the 'Roman or Imperial' system where persons put their faith in authority without realising the consequences. Once established the machinations of government were difficult to combat. See Peter Kropotkin, *The State: Its Historical Role* (Freedom Press, London, 1946), p. 44.
[40] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: Factor in Evolution* (Extending Horizon Books, Boston, 1915), p. 226.

communally. As such, the guild functioned freely and without outside interference.[41]

Tensions can be noted in Kropotkin's model. His radical reconfiguration of society is open to debate, not least because differences of opinions and expectations, as Millar notes, will surely surface due to the subjective nature of individual abilities and needs.[42] His model is problematic for the very reason that he did not articulate a particularly detailed methodology for achieving a communal system.

Beyond Kropotkin's position is the more practical model represented by Proudhon's mutualism, first developed in the 1840's. Proudhon argued that the state must be replaced by a system of 'agro–industrial federation' that would organise public services. Working associations made up of the members involved in its operation would regulate and control the economic conditions of its members.[43] Importantly, these economic federations were to be comprised of a series of communes or associations of property–owning workers who interact for their mutual benefit. It is worth noting that, for Proudhon, a degree of inequality was acceptable. Arguing that absolute communism would encourage idleness because it would not distinguish between the numbers of hours worked, or the quality of labour completed, Proudhon maintained that a society based upon egalitarianism posed a threat to individual independence.[44]

Conceived differently to Proudhon's mutualism, Bakunin's collectivism comprised of agricultural associations made up of communes. While he accepted Proudhon's federalism in principle, Bakunin did not accept that individual property rights, modified depending on whether the individual was a peasant or artisan, were practical. He proposed that the collective, and not the individual,

[41] For an elaboration of Kropotkin's discussion on the guild system see *Mutual Aid*, pp. 169–181. See also David Millar, *Social Justice*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976), pp. 233–235.
[42] Millar, *Social Justice,* p. 224.
[43] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *The Principle of Federation,* trans. Richard Vernon (Toronto University Press, Toronto, 1979), pp. 70–72.
[44] Millar, *Social Justice*, p. 221.

own the means of production,[45] but also proposed, like Proudhon, that workers should receive some kind of financial remuneration for their work.[46] Kropotkin believed these kinds of compromises flirted with features common to property–based capitalist society and therefore ran the risk of replicating the kind of society the anarchists were hoping to eliminate.[47]

Contrasting points of view about the virtues of communal ownership notwithstanding, there are common underlying assumptions that capture the essence of wider anarchist philosophy. First, this précis of anarchist models show that anarchistic societies are not without some organisation. Second, and more crucially, most anarchists maintained that preserving liberty can only be achieved when the individual is liberated from both economic and political exploitation, irrespective of how this liberation is achieved, and grounded firmly in a community setting. Indeed, as Bakunin suggested:

> No individual can recognise his own humanity...if not by recognising it in others and cooperating in its realisation for others. No man can achieve his own emancipation without at the same time working for the emancipation of all men around him. My freedom is the freedom of all since I am not truly free in thought and in fact, except when my freedom and my rights are confirmed and approved in the freedom and rights of all men who are my equals.[48]

Hence, Bakunin recognised that it was not possible for the individual to be autonomous outside the parameters of his/her social network. Similarly, Proudhon claimed that small–scale social organisation is both preferable (to the state) and necessary: 'In place of laws, we will put contracts. –No[49] more laws voted by the majority, nor even unanimously; each citizen, each town, each industrial union, makes its own laws…In place of public force we will put collective force.'[50] Freed from the state, local, small organisations enhance

[45] Michael Bakunin, 'Federalism: Real and Sham' in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, p. 274. See also Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 18.
[46] Woodcock, 'Anarchism,' p. 46.
[47] Peter Kropotkin, 'The Wage System' in *The Essential Kropotkin*, ed. Emile Capouya, and Keitha Tompkins (Liveright, New York, 1975), p. 95.
[48] Bakunin, cited in Malatesta, *Anarchy*, p. 30. NB: Malatesta does not cite a reference for his quotation from Bakunin.
[49] Sic.
[50] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 'General Idea of the Revolution' in *The Anarchist Reader*, ed. George Woodcock (William Collins Sons and Co, Glasgow, 1977), p. 295.

personal contact and encourage community initiatives via direct participation in the decisions and debate that affect everyone, either in the workplace or in the public sphere.[51] Unlike the 'rigid mental construction[s]' that anarchists charged typified the socialist state, these kinds of communities would operate in an environment of fluidity, experimentation and social evolution.[52]

Autonomy: A Definition

At the heart of anarchist theory lies the defence of, and right to, self–direction and independent moral and intellectual judgement. Much as is the case with liberalism, the idea of autonomy is a construction that is central to anarchist ideals, particularly given its focus on liberty. It is useful, then, to outline a conceptual framework first to pinpoint what this idea means and, second, to situate it within its relationship to the community.

Two fundamental meanings, Richard Lindley suggests, are attached to the idea of autonomy. On one hand, autonomy can be defined as the removal of 'external constraints' (negative liberty). On the other hand, the development of autonomy requires that 'one is a developed self, to which one's actions can be ascribed' (positive liberty).[53]

The positive/negative liberty dichotomy is not an anarchist invention: it was famously developed in the work of Isaiah Berlin in his 1958 work, *Two Concepts of Liberty*.[54] Prior to this, the dichotomy, as George Crowder notes, can be recognised in the works of G.W.F Hegel and T.H. Green, although different terminology was sometimes utilized.[55] The anarchists themselves were not aware of this 'positive/negative' interpretive model as such, but it is possible to see that the model shares much in common with the anarchists' understanding of

[51] Woodcock, 'Introduction' to *Anarchist Reader*, p. 21.
[52] Woodcock, *Anarchism*, pp. 20–21. This is not to suggest that some socialist Utopian novels have not had an impact on anarchism. The socialist William Morris' novel *News From Nowhere* (1890), for example, appealed to anarchists, particularly Kropotkin, for its libertarian emphasise. Morris' society was typecast as a decentralised democracy in which individual communities run their own affairs in opposition to the authoritarian nature of state socialism. See Clive Wilmer, 'Introduction,' to *William Morris: News From Nowhere and Other Writings*, trans and ed. Clive Wilmer (Penguin Classics, London, 1998), p. xxxix.
[53] Richard Lindley, *Autonomy* (Macmillan, London, 1986), p. 6.
[54] Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1958).
[55] George Crowder, *Classical Anarchism,* p. 14.

freedom. Although anarchists did not use the negative/positive terminology, it acts as a useful framework to navigate the tension evident in the anarchist educational project.

In turning attention to negative liberty, the anarchists were clearly committed to the right to untrammelled freedom, or freedom from constraint.[56] Anarchists, on one level, questioned whether it is legitimate for an individual to exercise power over their fellow human beings.[57] They assert that the state is a tool of oppression by one class over another normally to protect inequitable property rights. Second, the state encroaches upon the right to personal freedom (or autonomy) because it is authoritarian.[58] Not only then does the state suppress the human instinct of sociability, the state, as anarchists further asserted, is an essentially coercive body. 'A man is trained, first of all,' Tolstoy said, 'in habits of obedience to State laws.'[59] In this political environment, the state administers laws, often to protect the privileged, and enforces them with violence if necessary.[60] As Proudhon explained:

> To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorised, admonished, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under the pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolised, extorted, squeezed, mystified, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, despised, harassed, tracked, abused, clubbed, disarmed, chocked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and, to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.[61]

Simply put, then, the state enacts rules and regulations not to benefit its citizens but rather to ensure its own continued existence. The state, as the anarchists

[56] Fowler, 'Anarchist Tradition' p. 746.
[57] William O. Reichert, 'Anarchism, Freedom and Power' *Ethics,* 79, no. 2 (Jan 1969), p. 141.
[58] Richard, T. De George, 'Anarchism and Authority' *Anarchism: Nomos XIX,* ed. Roland Pennock, John W. Chapman (New York University Press, New York, 1978), pp. 93, 95.
[59] Leo Tolstoy, 'Tolstoi's Criticism of his Age' in *The Living Thoughts of Tolstoi*, ed. Stefan Zweig (Cassell, London, 1939), p. 49.
[60] Millar, *Anarchism*, p. 6.
[61] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. John Beverly Robinson (Freedom Press, London, 1923), p. 294. Emphasis original.

insisted, is a self–interested body that is loathe to destroy itself.[62] Authority, if it is going to be acceptable to anarchists, has to be 'bottom–up' decentralised and democratic authority that operates in the shape of, for instance, epistemic authority.[63]

It would be an error, however, to over–emphasise the anarchist focus on negative liberty. Equating anarchism with negative liberty, while a common perception, is, according to Crowder, a general misreading of the anarchist position.[64] It is absurd to suggest that the anarchists conceive of autonomy as simply an absence of impedients. If this position is adopted, the immediate question of what kind of social order will emerge, and what kind of ethics will bind the community, is left unanswered. After all, the anarchists maintain that society can regulate its own affairs free from the machinations of government. Accordingly, the individual must at least be capable of self–regulating her/his own affairs consistent with also meeting the needs of, and participating in, the community.

A more accurate picture of the anarchist position on freedom develops when the concept of positive liberty is explored in some detail.[65] In Berlin's terms, positive liberty occurs when a person is regarded as 'a subject and not an object.' Moreover, says Berlin, a person is autonomous when s/he wishes to 'to be somebody, not nobody; a doer—deciding, not be decided for, self–directed and not acted on by external nature.'[66] Developing this definition, Crowder argues that the anarchists are fundamentally concerned with the development of the 'authentic' self: namely, the part of the personality that largely identifies individuals as 'who' they are. This development occurs, says Crowder, in two

[62] Nursey-Bray, 'Malatesta and the Anarchist Revolution' p. 25.
[63] Nursey-Bray, 'Autonomy and Community' p. 107. More specifically, epistemic authority (or authority of 'knowledge,' that is, having specialised knowledge), is acceptable to anarchists because this kind of authority is not 'forced' upon the individual. Rather, the individual acts autonomously by choosing either to accept or reject advice, for instance, from a medical specialist. This is what Bakunin means when he states, 'if I bow before the authority of the specialist...it is because their authority is not being imposed upon me.' See Michael Bakunin, *God and the State* (Libraries Press, New York, 1971), pp. 32–33. Likewise, this is what De George meant when he said that anarchists draw a distinction between 'authority' and 'authoritarianism.' See De George, 'Anarchism and Authority' p. 98.
[64] Crowder, *Classical Anarchism,* p. 10.
[65] *ibid.*
[66] Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1997), p. 203.

key areas: rationality and virtue. For anarchists, rationality constitutes the ability for the individual to reason critically, independent of outside influence, and hence to act upon, and judge, circumstances using independent rational consideration. Virtue constitutes that aspect of the 'self' for which actions are governed by moral rules. As Crowder suggests, the anarchist 'good society is a realm neither of chaos, nor of competition...but a moral order in which freedom implies virtue as part of its meaning.'[67] The 'virtuous' society thus is a 'moral' society. In the anarchist mind, moral principles equate to attainment of, and appreciation for, values such as 'brotherhood,' a commitment to social equity, mutual respect for individuals, recognition that each individual has obligations to the community and a distrust of egoism.[68]

In developing the theme of rational and virtuous importance, anarchists would accept Kant's dictum that autonomy means the acceptance of self–imposed rules that have been freely chosen.[69] An individual is autonomous in that their action is determined by not only the actions that s/he takes, but also by the additional acknowledgment that actions require some recognition of what is a 'right' action. This is not to suggest that when the individual has reached this point s/he will always do what is considered the right action, but it does presuppose that s/he will make some effort to consider what is best. This assumes that the individual understands the action has moral constraints attached to it based on pre–existing community values. Yet these constraints, while important, do not dictate to the individual how to behave, for the individual is, above all, the sole judge of his/her actions. Rather than accepting accounts of things without first questioning their validity, individuals will interact in the community and listen to the advice of others and, in turn, contribute to the community. So long as this advice is not imposed, an individual can accept the advice. This acceptance involves giving

[67] Crowder, *Classical Anarchism,* p. 11.
[68] From henceforth, when I use the terms rational and moral development this is what I mean.
[69] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 38. Kant argued that human reason constitutes the most appropriate means to define autonomy, as human reason explains human conduct. In Kant's mind moral obligations derive from an assumption that, as rational agents, we all have the capacity to identify and abide by moral laws that are universal and categorical. Kant said that, 'A rational being belongs as a *member*...when he gives universal laws in it but is also himself subject to these laws. He belongs to it *as sovereign* when, as lawgiving, his is not subject to the will of any other.' Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* ed. Mary Gregor, intro. Christine M. Korgaard (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000), p. 41. Emphasis original.

'basic priority to the demands of his own nature...he may and should submerge his own private interests to those of his social group on occasion. But when he does, he should not abandon his social principles...'[70] An individual, ought, then, to choose to develop his/her own interests in a group, so long as s/he does not abandon his/her sense of identity to that group.[71] It is at this point that individuals are seen to be largely free, self–regulating and autonomous.[72] As Read suggests, freedom is 'to become what one is...It is a state of action, of projection, of self–realisation.'[73]

For communitarian anarchists, individual liberty cannot be secured in the state as previously mentioned, nor can liberty be forfeited completely to community values. In linking these two concepts of liberty together, the communitarian anarchist claims that freedom *is* autonomy in community. Freedom constitutes a developed sense of autonomy that evolves in conjunction with direct, equitable and mutual relationships with others in the community. In voluntary associations, interpersonal relationships are maximised and freed from authoritarianism.[74] Autonomy does not conflict with allegiance to the community because it is only in the community that one can be truly autonomous. Individual autonomy operates with a sense of responsibility to the collective and this responsibility is freely chosen.[75] Bakunin remarks that in a 'collective unit...every individual completes all the others.'[76]

Clearly, then, 'far from advocating the breakdown of society,' anarchists uphold the importance of interdependent communities that function at a grassroots level where social bonds are reinforced.[77] Moreover, when anarchism is defined as autonomy in community, it is clearly distinguished from the modern terminology of 'libertarianism,' whose ideology typically supports the principles of 'rugged individualism,' the benefits of the free market, limited government, and

[70] Reichert, 'Anarchism, Freedom and Power' p. 143.
[71] *ibid.*
[72] Wolff, *Defence of Anarchism*, pp. 12–14.
[73] Herbert Read, 'Chains of Freedom' in *Anarchy and Order*, pp. 161–162.
[74] Shatz, 'Introduction' to *Essential Works*, p. xxiii, See also Woodcock, 'Introduction' to *Anarchist Reader*, p. 15.
[75] Bowen, and Purkis, 'Introduction' to *Twenty-First Century Anarchism,* p. 2.
[76] Michael Bakunin, 'Upbringing and Education' in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, p. 330.
[77] Woodcock, 'Introduction' to *Anarchist Reader*, p. 22.

especially distrust for community.[78] Freedom, as understood by anarchists, is attained in a non–authoritarian community setting.

Autonomy, Education and the Limits of Freedom

Having examined these conceptual and definitional issues about autonomy, it is now possible to focus more closely on anarchist education, particularly on the ways that the negative/positive liberty dichotomy informs and expresses a specifically anarchist curriculum and pedagogy. With regard to negative liberty, the anarchists maintained that, to free the individual from imposition, education has a responsibility to ensure a permissive environment. In an educational context, anarchists have a clear sense of what their students ought to be freed from. They believe that young individuals are particularly vulnerable to messages and values that the state disseminates in the classroom such as uncritical instruction in state constitutions for instance.[79] Anarchists note the potent effects of the school as an institution that wields immense power in shaping social and political perception. In order to counter these potent effects, and in contrast to mainstream educational theories, anarchist educational theory strongly argues that all traditional authoritarian teaching practices must be abandoned altogether. Tests, exams, rote learning and punishment must not be practiced because the curriculum is at its best when it operates in a flexible way, in accordance with students' wishes and with much less emphasis on a rigid approach. The role of the instructor is critical here for s/he must exemplify flexibility in terms of permitting experimentation and individual initiative, while knowing when to intrude to help solve problems and/or queries that arise. It was the responsibility of the instructor to intrude only minimally, using his or her

[78] The meaning of the word 'libertarianism' has changed significantly in the last century. By the late nineteenth century 'libertarianism' referred largely to anarchists and other left-wing radicals. See Smith, *Libertarians*, pp. 2–3. During the mid–twentieth century it was largely synonymous with advocacy for big government, welfare and high taxes. The modern meaning of 'libertarianism' took hold in the 1970's and beyond, when advocates of free market economics, sceptical of state power and concerned for individual freedom, became increasingly influential, particularly in America. Milton Friedman and F.A. Hayek are two notable thinkers in this tradition. See David Boaz, 'Introduction' to *The Libertarian Reader: Classic and Contemporary Writings From Lao-Tzu to Milton Friedman* (The Free Press, New York, 1998), p. xiii. For an introduction to Hayek and Milton's economic views see Milton Friedman, 'The Relation Between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom,' in *Libertarian Reader*, pp. 292–302, and F.A. Hayek, 'The Market Order or Catallaxy,' in *Libertarian Reader*, pp. 303–311.

[79] Smith, *Libertarians,* p. 87.

own discretion. Developing this position Emma Goldman (1869–1940), the Russian anarchist émigré to America, explained that anarchism,

> ...repudiates utterly this pernicious and truly criminal system of education. It maintains that there is no more harmony between compulsion and education than there is between tyranny and liberty...education is a process of drawing out, not of driving in: it aims at the possibility that the child should be left free to develop spontaneously, directing his own efforts and choosing the branches of knowledge which he desires to study. That, therefore, the teacher, instead of opposing, or presenting as authoritative his own opinions, predilections, or beliefs should be a sensitive instrument responding to the needs of the child...[80]

In essence, then, the role of the teacher is to act as a 'facilitator' of learning in a flexible and non–coercive manner.

On one level, the enlargement of individual freedom creates opportunities for discovery. Education is at its best when it advances a learner's natural motivation to learn because individuals are, by nature, curious and eager to learn. On another level, the jettisoning of authoritarian practices allows greater spontaneous social harmony to develop. In an environment of permissiveness, the anarchists hoped that the principles of sociability and mutual support would naturally surface more readily. This would, presumably, lead to the development of equitable social relations. In this regard anarchist education is grounded firmly in respecting the rights of the learner.[81] In its most desirable form, the instructor's role is to develop the autonomy of the student without asserting his or her own initiatives. If authority is to be acceptable, it must be exerted only temporarily, when, for instance, it aims to 'eliminate immediate deficiencies (for example the child's natural ignorance in matters of physical health).'[82]

Anarchists condemn a centralised system of education because it actively discourages, they say, natural organic growth and free expression. Any system of centralised education will dominate individuals because its goal is the conformity

[80] Emma Goldman, 'The Social Importance of the Modern School' in *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches by Emma Goldman*, ed. Alix Shulman (Vintage Books, New York, 1972), p. 120.
[81] Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1973), p. 85.
[82] Krimerman and Perry, 'The Anarchists on Education' p. 405.

of the young to mirror its own values.[83] Emma Goldman put this simply when she opined that state education produced an 'inert mass of humanity' that is 'drilled and pounded into absolute uniformity.'[84] Similarly, Francisco Ferrer (1859–1909), a Spanish anarchist, stated:

> It cannot be expected that this kind of education [state] will have any influence on the progress of humanity. I repeat that it is merely an instrument of domination in the hands of the ruling classes, who have never sought to uplift the individual, and it is quite useless to expect any good from the schools of the present day.[85]

Kropotkin developed the relationship between state and ideology further when he noted:

> ...all our education, from the Roman history we learned at school, the Byzantine code which we studied later under the name of Roman law, and the various sciences taught at the universities, accustom us to believe in Government and in the virtues of the State providential.[86]

These accusations delineate the emphasis on liberty in anarchism. State education is a target of criticism for all anarchists because it represents a clear violation of the right to non–interference. To many anarchists, to place education in the hands of the state is, simply, to provide a training ground for producing compliant workers for the modern industrial state. In this kind of pedagogical atmosphere, anarchists charge that acquiescence to authority and subservience are actively encouraged.[87]

The focus on negative liberty also demarcates anarchist education from 'progressive' education theories such as Montessori. In principle, most anarchists would be sympathetic to the goals of Montessori education, particularly, the emphasis on self–directed learning. However, where anarchists would note a distinct difference between their positions with that of Montessori lies in the realm of freedom and its definition. Without a revolutionary political agenda, any educational programme, no matter how much it professes to support freedom,

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[83] Ward, *Anarchy in Action*, p. 79.
[84] Emma Goldman, 'Social Importance of the Modern School' p. 119.
[85] Francisco Ferrer, *The Origins and Ideals of the Modern School*, trans. Joseph McCabe (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1913), p. 50.
[86] Kropotkin, *Conquest of Bread*, p. 42.
[87] Spring, *Primer*, p. 13.

will, the anarchist insist, use authoritarian methods, often by de–facto means. This is because, without a revolutionary agenda, the anarchists believed that a precise and focused approach to autonomy becomes less relevant as it (autonomy) constitutes only part of a wider 'end' goal.[88] So, for instance, anarchists would draw to the reader's attention the way progressive schools commonly use a well–planned and often–rigid curriculum, or use specified implements to the exclusion of others. This is not to suggest that progressive schools do not support a less authoritarian approach to education. However, the anarchists assert that progressive models, like Montessori, are misguided if they think these more rigid practices still equate to freedom. Rather, these kinds of practice, according to anarchists, constitute an imposition on the student.[89]

In a similar light, the anarchist's focus on negative liberty separates it from other 'left wing' educational theories—notably, socialism. While there is, as will be seen in the next chapter, much in common between anarchist and socialist educational theory, the anarchists point out that the importance of negative liberty, in its own right, is less significant in wider socialist theory. Indeed, the anarchists consistently maintain that any educational programme in the hands of the state, whether in a liberal democratic or a socialistic incarnation, will always be used as a tool to secure the dominant hegemony irrespective of whatever ideology the state upholds. Therefore, any focus on the right to non–interference is at best ignored, or worst viewed suspiciously, because allegiance to state values and ideology take precedence.

Significantly, the anarchists also recognised the importance of positive liberty in pedagogy. They argued it was vital to develop an educational programme with a specific focus on attaining an independent and critical mind, along with a sense of empowerment. Education thus could not be a passive process—it was not sufficient to let the student meander through the school environment undirected. Complete permissiveness renders impossible the task of achieving a self–directed

[88] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 16.
[89] For examples of these kinds of authoritarian top–down methodologies, see Maria Montessori, *The Montessori Method*, trans. Anne E. George (Robert Bentley, Cambridge, Mass, 1967), ch. 7 and ch. 15. In Chapter Seven, the curriculum is discussed, while in ch. 15, the use of, and discussion on, certain tools and implements are evaluated.

individual who subscribes to moral and rational development. Accordingly, education was (likened to) a gardener's tool in order to develop the student: the teacher's main aim was to provide guidance and signposts so as to help the students develop their own potential for wisdom and autonomy. This general approach to learning would further help the student to take his/her own initial independent steps towards self–realisation.

In the context of anarchist education, achieving self–realisation requires a pedagogy that appeals to all facets of human nature. One can only fully develop—both morally and intellectually—when teachers employ pedagogical techniques committed to 'complete' individual development. If all facets of human nature develop side by side, and in conjunction with a full array of learning experiences, then individual development will occur more naturally and completely.[90] The intellectual, artistic and vocational features of education develop the rational faculties, while learned behaviour from direct experience in a non–authoritarian community setting, fosters emotional and moral development. In other words, education is not a mere 'training ground' to cement specific anarchist principles. Rather, educational practice and curriculum need to incorporate and unleash all human attributes and needs. When this occurs, education has the capacity to revolutionise normative social conceptions, not by didacticism but by shared praxis. The experience of spontaneity, in tune with a non–authoritarian school environment, or a focus on the intrinsic value of education, will help to transform consciousness.

The following chapters will explicate these pedagogical and curriculum issues in anarchist educational theory. In the meanwhile it is important to recognise the evident tensions that surface once the negative and positive aspects of liberty are juxtaposed. Most anarchists were adamant that it was fundamental not to impose their theories upon children. Yet, they also recognised the importance of positive liberty—and that its actualisation was not a passive process. If the anarchists failed to impose their agenda the danger existed that they ran the risk of failure. Further, if the anarchists did not set in place a programme that guided their

[90] Krimerman and Perry, 'Anarchists on Education' pp. 404–405.

students towards an anarchist consciousness, in its broadest sense, this would also make little sense. Creating an 'autonomous' individual steers, then, a fine line between discretion to permit the student to explore and the danger of slipping into submission and authority by a regimented educational program.[91] When, in the following chapters I evaluate practical anarchist educational experiments, I show that the extreme anarchist position on negative liberty cannot sufficiently be reconciled with their position on positive liberty, at least without a 'top–down' authoritarian technique surfacing. This does not condemn the anarchist position on education, but, rather, pinpoints its essential weakness—namely, the tension between positive and negative liberty

Concluding Comments

Anarchists regarded state authority as antithetical to the idea of freedom, but did not view the school as a morally suspect venture that was beyond redemption.[92] Anarchist education does, however, reside outside the reforming tradition of educational theories because its goal is ultimately to challenge all social and political structures that support the status quo.[93] Most anarchists believe then that not the school itself, but instead state education, is problematic, because it dominates the individual in order to ensure conformity to state authority and its social norms.[94] Thus, claim the anarchists, students lose their right to autonomy, and therefore freedom—the wider political consequences of which include, notably, apathy towards engagement with politics and the community, and social compliance to the political and economic orders of the day.

In contrast, an educational programme that removed constraints as much as possible would set in place the conditions for a spontaneous social order to develop, while a focus on positive liberty would enhance a sense of independence in conjunction with community values. This kind of pedagogical

[91] R. S. Peters, *Ethics and Education*, p. 196.
[92] Suissa, 'Anarchism, Utopias and the Philosophy of Education' p. 638.
[93] Spring, *Primer*, pp. 9–10.
[94] It may be worth noting that in the mid to late twentieth century, the anarchist Paul Goodman, in contradiction to other anarchists, called for the abolition of schools altogether. He argued that the school in the modern industrialised society was so closely affiliated with, and grafted to, the state apparatus, that any attempt to address problems in the school would fail. For an introduction to Paul Goodman's ideas see, Paul Goodman, *Compulsory Miseducation* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1971), ch. 1.

practice would go some way to developing a specific social consciousness in which autonomy in community was the primary, overarching concept, and thus serves as a preparatory institution to initiate anarchist values. Irrespective, though, of how the anarchists envisaged the 'good society' or what constituted the most feasible way to achieve it, a developed sense of autonomy with an appreciation for community, according to anarchists, has the clear advantage of helping to challenge the state–controlled social mores of contemporary culture. To explicate what this means for the curriculum, in the next chapter I examine the specific educational theory of integral education.

Chapter Two
Integral Education and Autonomy

In the first chapter I identified the relationship between anarchist education and its broader goals and aspirations, how anarchists defined liberty and to what extent the concept of liberty broadly feeds into an educational programme. In the next two chapters I aim to develop a more systematic understanding of anarchist educational theory and practice that was drawn from the integral education tradition. This will permit an exegesis of this specific anarchist response to education (integral education) and additionally reveal the reasons why it developed its specific characteristics. When Francisco Ferrer's school is assessed in Chapter Three I will then evaluate a practical attempt to put some of these concepts into practice. At this point it is then possible to gauge whether Ferrer's programme was effective, practically speaking, and thus draw wider conclusions in relation to the broader anarchist's goals of pedagogy.

It is worth starting this discussion on integral education by noting that, as an educational programme, the social anarchists adopted this kind of pedagogy as the most appropriate education to instil a sense of empowerment and independence.[1] Like socialists in general, the social anarchists were specifically concerned about the rise of capitalism. In it, they saw the further erosion of the principles of solidarity and mutual aid, along with the apparent ill effects capitalism bestowed upon the worker.[2] In this context, the origin of integral education is found in revolutionary Europe of the nineteenth–century where it developed as one possible response to addressing the pathology of capitalism.

[1] To avoid confusion, when I use the term 'social anarchists' I am referring to the school of Anarcho-communist anarchists whose origins are found in the far left of the communist school during the middle to late nineteenth century and into the early part of the twentieth century. This group comprise of anarchist thinkers such as Malatesta, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Proudhon, Berkman, Goldman, and French social anarchist Élisée Reclus (1830–1905). While these anarchists were highly suspicious of the authoritarianism they believed characterised Marxist thought, they all predominantly drew their inspiration and ideas from the wider socialist tradition of this period and so share much in common with socialism in general. For a summary of this influence see Millar, *Anarchism*, ch. 4.

[2] This is not to suggest that other anarchists are not equally concerned about capitalism. The social anarchists are, however, best posited in this historical context.

This chapter evaluates the connection between socialism and social anarchism to reveal integral education's theoretical roots. Moreover, these theoretical roots also reveal a concrete set of principles that define autonomy, in tune with its debt to socialism, and what learning components and/or methodologies are seen to achieve autonomy. To develop this argument, I focus on three key concepts that commonly characterise central aspects of socialist thought—egalitarianism, rationalism and libertarianism—to enable a clear definition of autonomy to emerge.

Integral Education and its Socialist Roots

As a concept, integral education was concerned with the all–round development of the individual, by integrating all human faculties. In this pedagogical tradition, the school was conceived as a 'workshop.' At its most basic, the school was to be a kind of production arena where students developed both intellectually and practically through the educative process of manual construction, social interaction and intellectual development.[3] In Bakunin's words: 'In an all round education there must invariably be *industrial or practical instruction*. This is the only way to train the full human being.'[4] Recognising that human nature is multi–faceted, it was envisaged by the proponents of integral education that both manual and intellectual development more fully accommodated every possible talent and interest.[5] In a very general sense, the anarchists charged that the traditional 'bookish' education, most prevalent in public state schools, was fundamentally inadequate as it compartmentalised learning through the fragmentation and diversification of subjects thereby leading to a disconnected learning experience.

The origin of integral education has an interesting pedigree in socialist thought with Charles Fourier, the French Utopian socialist thinker, being the first to use the term 'integral education.'[6] A son of a linen draper, his society of the future

[3] Angus McLaren, 'Revolution and Education in Late Nineteenth Century France: The Early Career of Paul Robin' *History of Education Quarterly,* 21, no. 3 (Autumn 1981), p. 320.
[4] Michael Bakunin, 'All Round Education' *The Basic Bakunin: Writings 1869–1871*, trans. Robert Cutler (Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York, 1992), p. 120. Emphasis original.
[5] Michael Smith, 'Kropotkin and Technical Education: An Anarchist Voice' *For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice*, ed. David Goodway (Routledge, London, 1989), p. 218.
[6] Aurich, *Modern School*, p. 16.

was based on a communal arrangement where associations of producers would operate freely and interdependently. The secret to success, according to Fourier, stemmed from human cooperation. He hoped that the human instinct for mutual support would flourish in what he termed the 'phalanstery.'[7] These phalansteries would operate through a system of voluntary tasks in which each pupil would participate depending on which task they enjoyed the most. Students were to be encouraged to experience mind and body activities so that it would be 'impossible that the child in passing from one to the other should not find opportunities to satisfying several of his dominant instincts.'[8] In Fourier's mind, education fulfilled an important role in 'integrating' the body with the mental attributes of the child in order for these faculties to be given the maximum opportunity for expression. Through careful planning, where initially the child was to be subjected to 'material' education using manual learning, the child, after the age of around 12 years, would be introduced to intellectual education. This was to be achieved through a range of activities from group participation to completing everyday tasks using intellectual learning.[9] Hence, the curriculum of the phalanstery was to embody a broad range of learning techniques.

Yet, curiously, Fourier's educational writings are littered with authoritarian tendencies that occasionally border on the absurd. Fourier claimed, for instance, that everyone should be forced to invent their own economic teachings while being subjected to instruction in cuisine and opera—the two great mechanisms of education.[10] Nevertheless, the social anarchists appreciated the potential of Fourier's ideas regarding integral education irrespective of how this was practiced.[11]

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[7] Fourier conceived of the Phalanx as a commune where no more than 1,620 people ought to live. According to Fourier, it was to be organised in such a manner that the members voluntarily organise daily chores and complete tasks on a rotary basis to avoid monotony. See Smith, *Libertarians,* p. 19. For a more detailed account see M.C. Spencer, *Charles Fourier* (Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1981), ch. 4.

[8] Charles Fourier, 'Of Education' in *Socialist Thought: A Documentary History*, ed. Albert Fried, Ronald Sanders (Columbia University Press, New York, 1992), p. 139.

[9] Spencer, *Charles Fourier*, pp. 77–79.

[10] Rogers, *Anarchism and Libertarian Education*, p. 75.

[11] Proudhon was the first anarchist to adopt some of Fourier's key principles. Proudhon removed Fourier's somewhat Utopian characteristics and repositioned the idea of integral education in the context of the labour market as one means to enhance skills for the worker. Smith, 'Kropotkin and Technical Education' p. 218.

It is possible to get an historical sense of how influential integral education was through looking at two possible examples: the Paris Commune of 1871 and the teachings of Paul Robin. During the Commune of 1871 in Paris, where its citizens revolted against the Third Republic, those with a new responsibility for organisation took over the Ministry of Education and initiated a new public body called the Commission of Labour and Exchange, in an effort to propagate new social doctrines. It is worth noting that, throughout this period, both republicans and socialists alike united against the dominance of the Church's control over education (re–established by Napoleon the third) and called for a secular education.[12] In its brief life, and in tune with a wider motivation to dismantle religious education, the Commune, among many experiments, launched an educational programme that implemented some of the ideas that integral education represented.[13] Industrial arts, workshops and schools for orphans and women were set up. The communards established a new curriculum that disregarded the traditional separation of boys' and girls' education. Education for women, like men, comprised of 'an industrial school.' It was deemed important to 'revise and complete the scientific education of girls while affording at the same time sound vocational training.'[14] The popularity of these experiments led many socialists and anarchists to uphold the workability of integral education.

While the communards' motivation was not specifically anarchist, the Commune appealed to the anarchists for the very reason that a cooperative, rather then an individualist, mind–set drove the educational and industrial experiments.[15] This kind of cooperative spirit was also the objective of the anarchist educator Paul Robin's orphanage in Cempius, France. Like Proudhon, Robin believed that an integrated approach would equip the child with a range of necessary vocational skills. Imbued with these ideas, Robin, between 1880–1894, threw himself into the administration of his school with such enthusiasm that, by the time he was dismissed from his post by the French authorities, owing largely to continued attacks from the right and a series of anti–anarchist laws, his school had an

[12] Stewart Edwards, 'The Commune–Social Measures (Education)' *The Communards of Paris, 1871: Documents of Revolution*, ed. Steward Edwards (Thames and Hudson, London, 1973), p. 112.
[13] The anarchist's anti-clerical position will be evaluated later in this chapter.
[14] 'An Industrial School for Girls' *The Communards*, p. 115.
[15] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 30.

enrolment of 180. In an effort to secure a new spontaneous, creative, communal social order, Robin enthusiastically encouraged, as a part of the curriculum, dance, sciences, arts, manual and other intellectual pastimes for all his students, irrespective of gender. Like Fourier, Robin's methods were controversial. In an effort to discover the relationship between intellectual development and physiology, for example, he went to remarkable lengths such as carefully analysing meals.[16] In any case, an indication of the extent to which integral education was entrenched in socialist thinking became apparent when in the 1860s Robin presented a paper on integral education for the International's Second Congress at Lausanne. It was fully adopted as official policy the next year.[17]

Anarchism, Socialism and Autonomy

Given that integral education has its roots in socialist thinking, it is not surprising that the programme it rests on aims to realise a changed social consciousness and an achievement of 'fraternity.' When a specific focus on the idea of autonomy in community, conceptually speaking, is brought into focus, integral education fulfils an important role in achieving a changed consciousness. For the social anarchists, the praxis of education reinvigorates and facilitates the renewal of a community ethic, albeit from the perspective of a new libertarian consciousness. Yet, this libertarian consciousness, in a theoretical sense, is best understood primarily in the context of the wider socialist principles to which it is indebted. While it is worth noting that, as a concept, socialism is 'as varied in its manifestations as are the lives and characters of the people who have expressed socialist ideas,'[18] what can be gleaned from this broad mix are general values that constitute basic socialist principles. Common to both ideologies were shared principles that both social anarchists and socialists agreed were fundamental in a future society. Examples include the socialist principles of egalitarianism, rationalism, and libertarianism[19] all of which can be seen to underpin integral education. As such, an elaboration of these principles, and what they specifically

[16] McLaren, 'Revolution and Education' pp. 328–330.
[17] Smith, 'Kropotkin and Technical Education' p. 219.
[18] Fried and Sanders, 'Introduction' to *Socialist Thought*, p. 2.
[19] For a broad introduction to these principles (in the context of socialism) see Berki, *Socialism* (J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, London, 1975), pp. 24–29.

mean, reveals and explains how the social anarchists understood the goal of autonomy, in a positive liberty sense.

Left Libertarianism

In order to understand what liberty means in the socialist tradition, this meaning must be put in the context of the reaction against the industrial revolution. Specifically, the idea of liberty arose out of what the socialists believed was the crisis of Liberalism with its great stress on individual liberty—or what socialists perceived to be, more accurately, the liberty of the businessperson, and his/her freedom in the market place. In a capitalist economic arrangement, socialist and anarchists alike asserted that capitalism shackled the enormous productive capabilities of the individual. Malatesta suggests that:

> ...it [Liberalism] respects private property and is entirely based on the principle of each for himself and therefore of competition between men, the liberty it espouses is for the strong and for the property owners to oppress and exploit the weak, those who have nothing; and far from producing harmony, tends to increase even more the gap between rich and poor and it too leads to exploitation and domination...[20]

The inequitable relationship between the capitalist and the worker equated to, on one hand, the idleness and greed of the capitalist, while on the other, the worker being subject to the experience of drudgery and underemployment, or at its worst, unemployment. Like Marx, anarchists believed that the capitalist industrial system, where the production of goods is driven by profit margins, in actual fact deprives the 'majority' of expressing their productive powers and therefore constitutes bondage.[21]

In response to the challenge of capitalism, socialists and social anarchists alike conceived of liberty as meaning freedom from class society and the renewal of social and economic equity, along with a new appreciation for community hitherto fragmented by capitalism and economic stratification. Kropotkin put this succinctly when he said that: 'Anarchists recognise the justice of...tendencies towards economic and political freedom, and see in them...the very same need of

[20] Malatesta, *Anarchy,* p. 47.
[21] Millar, *Anarchism*, pp. 46–48.

equality which constitutes the very essence of all struggles mentioned by history.'[22] Moreover, Marxists and anarchists both shared a Promethean faith. That is, both Marx and the social anarchists believed that human society could exist where an individual's talents and potential could be more fully realised—largely through the individual's desire for, and capacity to, enjoy laborious activity.[23] This was impossible in capitalism because, owing to the restrictive nature of specialised division of labour in conjunction with state laws that protect the wealthy, the majority were deprived of any opportunity to fully realise their talents.

Thus, Marx's concept of alienation, arising from his analysis of capitalism and the way it constrains the individual, feeds broadly into the social anarchists' critique of capitalism. In Marx's study of political economy he argued that a 'disconnect' developed between the individual worker, and their labour and the products of that labour. Marx termed this disconnection 'alienation.' Alienation, according to Marx, is what happens to individuals when the work s/he completes has little relationship with either the person who produced the work, or the wider community in which the individual lives. 'Meaningful' work, conversely, is conceived of as communal and human activity whereby the products of one's labour bears the value of those who made them but, in addition, is also produced in the knowledge that this value is fulfilling the needs of other individuals. This concept was important to Marx as he argued that labour activity had deep roots in human psychology as a means of achieving self–awareness.[24] Individual fulfilment was therefore closely connected to, and expressed in, labour.[25]

The social anarchists agreed with Marx. Bakunin for instance, asserted that labour activity was 'the foundation of human dignity and morality. For it was only by free and intelligent labour that man, overcoming his own bestiality,

[22] Kropotkin, 'Anarchist Morality' in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, p. 52.
[23] Paul Nursey-Bray, 'What Directions are Left?' in *Left Directions: is There a Third Way?* Ed. Carol Bacchi, and Paul Nursey-Bray (University of Western Australian Press, Crawley, W.A 2001), p. 64.
[24] Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1971), p. 103.
[25] For further analysis of Marx's thought on labour and alienation see Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844' in *Marx–Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (W.W. Norton and Company, 1978), pp. 70–72 and Berki, *Socialism*, p. 59.

attained his humanity.'[26] Proudhon, in a similar fashion, argued that manual labour is 'an inward pleasure, to be found as much in solitary meditative reflection as in the bustle of the workshop. It results from the worker's sense that he is making full use of his faculties.'[27] Marx and the social anarchists would not disagree with the nineteenth century English romantic socialist, artist and poet William Morris (1834–1896), who in *Useful Work Versus Useless Toil* noted that:

> The hope of pleasure in the work itself: how strange that hope must seem to some of my readers – to most of them! Yet I think that to all living things there is pleasure in the exercise of their energies, and that even beasts rejoice in being lithe and swift and strong. But a man at work, making something which he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as of his body…If we work thus we shall be men, and our days will be happy and eventful.[28]

What Morris, Marx and the social anarchists saw in the capitalist system was, in essence, a complete disregard for human contentment, at least for the majority who were wage earners.[29] As production is geared towards profit and not need, the individual recognises his/her work not in terms of its relationship to him/her and the community, but its relationship to the market. Therefore, work is subordinated to the drudgery and boredom of the production line.[30] The object as a commodity robs the individual of her/his direct connection to what they have produced. [31]

From this perspective, Marx's theory of alienation has relevance to integral education—the manual aspect of its programme would contribute to fundamentally liberating the student through a direct appeal to labour. A workshop scenario possessed the means to reconfigure the individual's intellectual and manual capacity in tune with what *is* the 'real' nature of the

[26] Michael Bakunin, '1866 Revolutionary Catechism' in *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchy,* ed. Sam Dolgoff (Alfred A. Knopt, New York, 1972), p. 89.
[27] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, 'Education' in *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon,* ed. Stewart Edwards (Macmillan, London, 1970), p. 81.
[28] William Morris, 'Useful Work Versus Useless Toil' in *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*, ed. Clive Wilmer (Penguin Books, London, 1998), pp. 288–289.
[29] Sheehan, *Anarchism,* p. 153.
[30] Spring, *Primer,* p. 14.
[31] Marx, 'The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844' pp. 73–75.

individual. The reinvigoration and centrality of meaningful work, at least in a classroom setting and taken out of a market 'consciousness,' was seen to cement a renewed appreciation for labour.

Here, Marxist and anarchist educational theory diverge somewhat. In principle the social anarchists would not dispute Marx's theory of alienation. Yet in the context of each respective position, the importance of alienation differed. Marx's attack on the state developed primarily because of his concerns about alienation. The social anarchists, while clearly sympathetic, as mentioned already, primarily attacked the state because of its coercive and authoritarian nature.[32] It is not surprising then that Marx largely viewed integral education from a utilitarian perspective in which the manual training of integral education would bolster the future socialist economy. Marx praised the polytechnic schools developing in Europe at the time because the combination of 'productive labour with instruction and gymnastics' was a secure means of 'adding to the efficiency of production.'[33]

Certainly, the idea of integral education as a kind of 'immuniser' from capitalism was also prevalent in social anarchist thought. For the social anarchists, integral education was also considered to be advantageous in enhancing a skill–base for the future society. In a practical sense, integral education was seen to partially liberate the individual from the job market. Proudhon, for instance, was particularly interested in integral education for this reason. He focused specifically on the plight of working class children and made the point that the school should connect the nature of work to life experience. Proudhon thus envisaged an education that equipped the student with a range of skills. This would help combat capitalist exploitation by arming the worker with a wider range of marketable skills. Proudhon makes the point that:

[32] Cutler, 'Introduction' to *The Basic Bakunin*, p. 20.
[33] Marx, '*Capital*, Volume One' in *Marx–Engels Reader*, p. 412.

> Labor and study which for so long and so foolishly have been kept apart, will finally emerge side by side in their natural state of union. Instead of being confined to narrow, specialised fields, vocational education will include a variety of different types of work which, taken as a whole, will ensure that each student becomes an all-round worker.[34]

Put simply, what Proudhon was alluding to here was the need to take education out of the hands of the state and into the control of the worker so that their needs, and not the state's, are served.[35] Moreover, in a future anarchist economy, some social anarchists, for example Kropotkin and Bakunin, envisaged production organised on a rotational basis, whereby all individuals experience a variety of technical and manual vacancies for the betterment of society.[36] Kropotkin echoes this theme below, arguing that:

> In olden times men of science, and especially those who have done most to forward the growth of natural philosophy, did not despise manual work and handicraft. Galileo made his telescopes with his own hands. Newton learned in his boyhood the art of managing tools; he exercised his young mind in contriving most ingenious machines…Liebnitz was fond of inventing machines: windmills and carriages to be moved without horses preoccupied his mind as much as mathematical and philosophical speculations.[37]

In contrast to specialised division of labour concepts so apparent under capitalist production, Kropotkin makes the point that combining manual and intellectual work significantly contributes to societal development, not least in a broad sense, because both activities lead to more creativity.

In the social anarchist tradition, this practical advantage of integral education as one means of arming the worker, should not, however, detract from its wider potential to encourage a sense of individual independence, nor underestimate the contribution of empowering the student. The social anarchists believed that the liberating activity of laborious activity, in its own right, encouraged autonomy in a positive liberty sense. Bakunin said that, 'we [social anarchists] are convinced that well-rounded living persons must develop muscular and mental activities

[34] Proudhon, 'Education' p. 87.
[35] McLaren, 'Revolution and Education' p. 320.
[36] Ritter, *Anarchism,* pp. 51–52.
[37] Kropotkin, 'Fields Factories and Workshops' in *Essential Kropotkin*, pp. 272–273.

equally and that these activities, far from harming each other, not only will not impede each other but support, broaden, and support each other.'[38] Indeed, Proudhon appreciated the manner in which the development of all sides of the human character emancipated the individual. He was adamant that the educative experience must 'allow the student to go through a range of industrial practices, working from the most simple to the most difficult without specialising in any one activity.'[39] Proudhon recognised that, in order to ensure that the school does not become simply a workshop that focuses solely on enhancing manual skills, it was crucial to encourage intellectual learning by combining theoretical learning with 'hands–on' practice. 'The triumph of liberty' is an education that brings 'out the principles underlying these practices, just as in the past the rudiments of science were deduced from the first industrial machines.'[40]

Bakunin stressed this point again when he disagreed with the First International's call for negotiation with state institutions in order to secure the regulation of the working day. He attacked the emergence of worker parties as just another set of new rulers who were replacing the old. Similarly, Bakunin denounced any affiliation between education and the state because he could foresee the imminent dangers this represented to the freedom of the individual.[41] It is at this junction where the specific focus on negative liberty crystallises for social anarchists. In order to cast off notions of reverence to authority and appreciation for hierarchy, the liberating potential of integral education had to be practiced in a fluid environment and completely free from state interference.

Egalitarianism

The commitment to egalitarianism is one of the defining features of both socialism and anarchism. While differences arise in the socialist tradition on the precise meaning of the concept, all socialists and social anarchists denounce the way that capitalism leads to the inequitable distribution of income and social fragmentation. Any system that is constructed on a system of private property socialists and social anarchists argue, are divisive and create a social structure

[38] Bakunin, 'All-Round Education' p. 115.
[39] Proudhon, 'Education' p. 80.
[40] *ibid.*
[41] Robin Small, *Marx and Education* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, 2005), p. 148.

where some have more opportunity than others. The social anarchists and Marx were highly critical of the capitalist system because it produced inequality through the intensification of a growing property class who ultimately controlled economic and political power.[42] By contrast, socialists and anarchists alike supported a system where 'equal opportunity is the heritage of all.'[43] Socialist and social anarchists reject the liberal position of equality where this concept is practiced largely before the law. This, they claim, fails to take into account wider social and economic disadvantage that is, according to anarchists, responsible for individuals ending up in the court system in the first instance. Instead socialism will, as Malatesta stated, put 'everybody…in a situation of equality to dispose of social wealth.'[44] Both social anarchists and socialists thus share a commitment to the equal distribution of resources in the community.

Pedagogically, integral education fulfilled an important function as a way of challenging the capitalist 'consciousness'. In a practical sense, the abandonment of 'rank and file' conceptions, such as the traditional distinction between the 'authority' of the teacher in relation to their students, would encourage students to appreciate egalitarianism instinctively. The eradication of any distinction between the pros and cons of either manual or intellectual instruction would, it was argued, break down preconceived notions of what it means to be working or middle class, particularly in terms of career choice and the messages these careers carry in reference to class. A non–authoritarian education would thus help contribute to the creation of an egalitarian community ethic learnt on the job.[45] In addition, the concern for equality would maximise and protect autonomy from the egregious effects of authority commonly associated with state education.

Likewise, this egalitarian environment would go some way to devaluing an appreciation for competitiveness. One of the problems of capitalism in general,

[42] James Bowen, 'The Curse of the Drinking Classes' in *Twenty-First Century Anarchism,* pp. 154–155.
[43] Alexander Berkman, *ABC of Anarchism*, intro. Peter E. Newell. (Freedom Press, London, 1995), p. 37.
[44] Malatesta, *Anarchy*, p. 48.
[45] Geoffrey Fidler, 'Anarchism and Education: Éducaton Intégrale and the Imperative Towards Fraternité' *History of Education*, 18, no. 1 (March 1989), p. 24.

according to socialists and anarchists, was the manner that it extolled ruthless competition and encouraged competition. For both socialists and social anarchists this kind of 'dog–eat–dog' scenario has to be called into question.[46] Conversely, a sense of egalitarianism would be achieved via direct participation and general discussion in opposition to simple authoritarian instruction and competition. In this scenario, it was believed that the praxis of education is a natural educator and, in doing so, the principles of social fraternity and mutual cooperation, as well as the custom of mutual exchange, would surface organically.[47]

Rationalism and Scientism

The ascendancy of Enlightenment thinking, in particular its stress on 'reason,' in the eighteenth–century impacted significantly upon anarchist thought. Like their eighteenth–century forebears, such as Voltaire, many social anarchists believed that reason could help aid purposeful human organisation, while at the same time cast off the yoke of superstition and mysticism once and for all.[48] It possessed, the social anarchists maintained, an apparent ability to untangle the perplexities of the modern world through the prism of rational application and consideration.[49] A number of social anarchists thus adopted the Newtonian principle that the universe is a mechanism that is driven by certain physical laws, and humanity is part of this universe.[50] In opposition to the romantic tag that is sometimes attributed to social anarchism, social anarchists were strong adherents of rationalism and scientism.[51]

Empirical approaches to social and political problems would go some way to shedding these old traditions, while aiding the creation of a new individual who was at once imbued with a sense of rational appreciation and curiosity. Put

[46] Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, p. 98.
[47] Carolyn Boyd, 'The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868–1909' *The Journal of Modern History*, 48, no.4 (Dec. 1976), p. 126.
[48] Berki, *Socialism,* p. 27.
[49] Morland, *Demanding the Impossible,* p. 24.
[50] Crowder, *Classical Anarchism*, pp. 29–31. Crowder argues that the three main sources to anarchism derive from the scientific revolution of the Enlightenment period, Rousseau's critique of modern civilization (in terms of the corrupting nature of institutions) and the idea of moral self-mastery. For a brief summary see Crowder, *Classical Anarchism*, p. 38.
[51] Crowder, *Classical Anarchism*, p. 30.

simply, a 'rational' education, in tune with Enlightenment thinking, meant the development of critical reasoning powers, and the derivation of knowledge, from practical and concrete scientific scenarios so as to avoid the danger of religious and state indoctrination.[52]

To start, the effects of this kind of thinking can be seen in, for instance, Kropotkin's writings. Kropotkin was keen to stress that his position was scientific and not philosophical.[53] As a geographer, he attempted to employ an anthropological interpretation in order to explain social currents. Here Kropotkin was highly influenced by Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species.* Kropotkin supported Darwin's scientific theory of evolution in principle, but was concerned that some individuals had misconstrued Darwin's theory—notably the growing influence of social Darwinism—in order to justify social competition and, tacitly at least, the apparent superiority of one ethnic group over another through these laws of 'competition.' Kropotkin rejected the idea of social Darwinism as fallacy. In adopting Darwin's method of analysing nature scientifically (via empirical evidence) Kropotkin wrote *Mutual Aid* as a 'scientific' rebuke to those, most notably Thomas Huxley (1825–1895), who took up the mantra of 'survival of the fittest.'[54]

Kropotkin stated that his theory was 'natural' for two key reasons. First, he asserted that the human instinct to practice mutual aid was an evolutionary fact as a means of explaining human survival and development and second, that this aspect of human nature corresponds with the human tendency to be social.[55] Kropotkin summarises his position stating that:

[52] Boyd, 'Anarchists and Education' p. 146.
[53] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 662.
[54] It is important to note Darwin himself recognised (at times) the importance of mutual aid as a means to ensure survival of any species. For instance, Darwin recognised that the different castes in Mexican *Myrmecocystus* ant colonies worked in a mutual capacity through a kind of division of labour. See Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Species in the Struggle for Life*, ed. J.W. Burrow (Penguin books, London, 1998), pp. 256–257.
[55] Millar, *Social Justice*, p. 231. David Millar notes that this aspect of Kropokin's argument is open to contention. It is possible to argue that this instinct may not be natural but rather cultivated through the influence of wider, more general, social circumstance. See *Social Justice*, p. 232.

> The anarchist thinker does not resort to metaphysical conceptions (like 'natural right,' the 'duties of the State', and so on) to establish what are, in his opinion, the best conditions to realise the greatest happiness of humanity. He follows, on the contrary, the course traced by the modern philosophy of evolution. He studies human society as it is now and was in the past; and without either endowing humanity as a whole, or separate individuals, with superior qualities which they do not possess, he merely considers society as an aggregation of organisms trying to find out the best ways of combining the wants of the individual with those of cooperation for the welfare of the species.[56]

Kropotkin goes on to suggest that:

> And since man is part of nature, and since the life of his 'spirit', personal as well as social, is just as much a phenomenon of nature as is the growth of a flower or the evolution of social life amongst ants and the bees, there is no cause for suddenly changing our method of investigation when we pass from the flower to man, or from a settlement of beavers to a human town.[57]

Unlike Marx then, who argued human development amounted to a series of class struggles, Kropotkin turned his attention to evolution and the way that it could potentially explain historical development.

Educationally, anarchists believed that science held to key to liberation. Integral education possessed the most feasible educative model to advance a 'rational' or 'scientific' pedagogy. It was believed that the manual/intellectual methodology would foster appreciation for, and practice in, rational and scientific praxis. In practical terms, the workshop as classroom, where practical trial and error scenarios are the norm, would enhance an appreciation for rational thinking and scientific application because arising problems and issues would be solved empirically. Knowledge develops in tune with the process of manual participation and experimentation. In this sense, 'education' is thus a process of transformation where the student grasps wider cognitive meaning based on this experience. For instance, questions such as what are the relationship between scientific evaluation and its potential affects on wider society—either good or bad would arise. In close association with this process, the student would learn to

[56] Kropotkin, 'Anarchist Communism' p. 47.
[57] Kropotkin, 'Modern Science and Anarchism' in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, p. 152.

also acquire skills and competence in a specific subject or trade.[58] This learning is conducted in an atmosphere conducive to supporting constant evaluation, discussion and experimentation in order to inaugurate a sense of independence and critical rational judgement. So, for instance, students were expected to deduce certain conclusions from practice, to set up experiments, and to observe tests and results. Speculation would arise from a concrete situation with a specific focus on solving the problem with individual initiative.

The passivity and obedience associated with state education would be done away with, while the student would not be distanced from the material itself. Paul Robin put this kind of thinking into practice by providing a printing press in his school and encouraging his students to print their own *Bulletin*. It was hoped that this programme would synthesise the sciences with creative artistry and alleviate complete dependence on the teacher to provide basic instruction in reading, while encouraging communal problem solving.[59]

Bakunin recognised that children lack a complete capacity to fully reason, while the instructor does possess the ability to reason comprehensively. To overcome this disparity, Bakunin believed that so long as education is rational, what authority did surface in the school would be acceptable:

> In view of the fact that minors, especially children, are largely incapable of reasoning and consciously governing their acts, *the principle of tutelage and authority,* which is to be eliminated for the life of society, will still find a natural sphere of application in the upbringing and education of children. However, such authority should be *truly humane and rational,* and altogether alien to all the refrains of theology, metaphysics, and jurisprudence.[60]

Aside from Bakunin's slight inconsistency here, in his suggestion that liberty for the student is actually characterised by 'diminishing' adult authority, Bakunin's point is that the student has the right to question the teacher. The teacher's role is

[58] R S. Peters, *Ethics and Education*, pp. 30–34.
[59] David Gribble, 'Good News for Francisco Ferrer—How Anarchist Ideals in Education have Survived Around the World' in *Changing Anarchism – Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, ed. Jonathan Purkis, and James Bowen (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2004), p. 182.
[60] Michael Bakunin, 'Social and Economic Basis of Anarchism' in *Anarchists*, ed. Irving L. Horowitz (Dell Publishing, New York, 1964), p. 141. Emphasis original.

to make suggestions and/or correct the student so long as both the student and instructor are subject to the rule of reason. The teacher must justify his/her response by providing rational reasons while the student accepts these answers only if they were rationally compelling. Ferrer, whose experiment will be evaluated in more depth in the next chapter, taught instruction in natural science, philosophy and history, in order to rationally show, for instance, that it was 'to the contrary' that 'man and women are two complementary aspects of human nature.'[61] Ferrer believed that the dissemination of this kind of information would instigate discussion thereby helping his students draw their own 'enlightened' conclusions with the help of the teacher should the teacher's knowledge be requested.

More broadly, this kind of teaching practice, it was believed, would spur self–initiative and self–directed learning. For instance, Robin supplied telescopes for astronomy, provided record books so that his students could detail their own meteorological observations and encouraged interest in music by supplying instruments, in order to catalyse learning. Robin also placed great emphasis on what is called today physical education, most notably cycling and country walks. Robin believed physical education enhanced an appreciation for both intellectual and physiological development.[62]

This is not to suggest that the curriculum ignored what is commonly termed the rudiments of education—notably reading, writing and maths. The curriculum at Sébastian Faure's school,[63] for example, involved grammar and dictation on Monday mornings, while on Tuesday morning, vocabulary and corrections, and on Wednesday morning, history, geography and drawing constituted the bulk of the curriculum. In the afternoon subjects like music, shorthand, English and

[61] Ferrer, *Ideals*, p. 25.
[62] McLaren, 'Revolution and Education' p. 326.
[63] Sébastien Faure (1858–1942) was a French anarchist and educator who personally knew Robin. He founded the journal *Libertaire* thereby single–handedly making the word 'libertarian' synonymous with anarchism during this period. Faure founded his own school at La Ruche, France, in 1904 where he too based his educational experiment on the principles of integral education. In his school, students were introduced to arts and craft after the age of ten. Smith, *Libertarians*, pp. 40–42.

maths were taught along with sewing and handwriting.[64] Along with manual learning, these aspects of education were also considered important providing they were taught in an environment of flexibility, and in conjunction with, manual activity.

Limitations of Curriculum

With this in mind, it is important to recognise that, somewhat paradoxically, the social anarchists demanded certain restrictions be placed on the curriculum. This restriction surfaced most profoundly in regards to the discipline of religious studies where the social anarchists rejected any inclusion of religious instruction in the curriculum. It is important to recognise that historically both socialists and anarchists were highly suspicious of the ways in which they believed schools encouraged 'non–rational' education, specifically, through fostering allegiance to king, country and God. During the nineteenth century, religious education was still very prevalent, particularly in Catholic dominated countries such as France and Spain. In general, the social anarchists believed that religion was still a potent social force and exerted a powerful presence and means of social control. They therefore associated the church with the state and saw little difference between the priest and the politician.[65] The church, like the state, was seen to be strongly in favour of maintaining the current social order. The social anarchists argued that the priest preached in a position of authority to propagate acceptance to authority and support for the state. For the social anarchist it is impossible not to separate religion from notions of obedience, blind acceptance and deference to power.[66]

The social anarchists were thus perturbed about religious pedagogical instruction because it constituted what they perceived to be indoctrination. More potently, in their minds the subjection to religious instruction early on in life meant that allegiance to religiosity was often very difficult to jettison in adulthood. This was particularly dangerous to the social anarchists because they believed that this kind of indoctrination actively discouraged the development of critical

[64] Gribble, 'Good News for Ferrer' p. 184. Gribble notes however that in a practical sense a curriculum like this is really teacher–centred.
[65] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 74.
[66] Millar, *Anarchism*, p. 8.

judgement. Kropotkin, for example, claimed that under the affects of religion, '[p]eople do not criticise, they let themselves be drawn by habit, or indifference.'[67] Furthermore, Read argued that religion and politics are, in the end, 'captured by an individual or class and turned against the group which they were designed to benefit.'[68] Bakunin infamously raised this objection when he lambasted the myth of Adam and Eve and their 'transgression' in the garden of Eden, when Eve takes the forbidden fruit despite God's request not to.[69] Bakunin insisted that this kind of mentality is indicative of the way religious institutions discourage human liberation and curiosity by inciting fear and loathing. In Bakunin's mind, what Eve was actually doing was not an act of disobedience, but the first act of human liberation and rebellion to authority.

It is from this vantage point that the importance of, and support for, science is further clarified. What appealed to social anarchists about the nature of science, particularly as a 'type' of authority, was the way in which science, by character, was 'neutral' and 'disinterested.' Methodologically, science used empirical evidence, fact and observation, irrespective of what the outcome was. Consequently, the anarchists believed that in scientific analysis there is no agenda, rather value–free conclusions. Cora Bennet Stephenson, an educator at the Modern School in New York,[70] wrote that:

> Science asserts that true play is nature's efficient means of preventing arrest and staying reversion. Science, knowing no authority, can be trusted for real radicalism when it points steadily to the facts that seem to indicate that the most serious, definite problems for all true believers in the future free society is the one of providing the youth the means of coming to full and complete maturity. If the means are at hand we must develop the power to take and use them.[71]

In a similar manner, Bakunin argued that:

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[67] Kropotkin, 'Anarchist Morality' in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, p. 81.
[68] Read, 'The Philosophy of Anarchism' in *Anarchy and Order*, p. 40.
[69] Michael Bakunin, *God and the State*, pp. 10–11.
[70] In the initial period following the death of Ferrer, the Modern School in New York followed many of Ferrer's principles. It was forced to close by the authorities in 1914 after three associates, who were acquainted with the school, inadvertently blew themselves up when trying to make a bomb. They were attempting to destroy Rockefeller's residence in New York in protest against the Ludlow Massacre of 1914.
[71] Cora Bennet Stephenson, 'Play,' in *The Modern School Monthly Bulletin*, ed. Kelly Harry, I No. 3, March 1st, 1914, p. 2.

> ...the faculty of the exact and natural science. These are the true sciences! Foreign to theology and metaphysics, they are hostile to all fabrications and are founded exclusively on the exact knowledge, on conscientious analysis of facts, and on pure reason, that is, on common sense as expanded by well-planned experiments. Just as the ideal sciences are authoritarian and aristocratic, so the natural sciences are democratic and entirely liberal.[72]

Therefore, not only would an integral education liberate the student in terms of human cognitive development, but it would also overcome the process of 'indoctrination' the social anarchist insisted characterised religious and state instruction.[73] Science and reason, in conclusion, held the key to liberation.[74] Put simply, the public school and all its traditional practices represented the curriculum of the past.[75]

Concluding Remarks

It is important to recognise that the idea of an integrated education is best understood when its relationship to socialism is recognised. 'Anarchy, as understood by the [social] anarchists,' Malatesta notes, 'is based on socialism.'[76] In drawing from wider socialist criticisms of capitalism, the social anarchists were vocal in their condemnation of the market economy.

Although, aside from merely opposing capitalism, integral education and its theoretical components encompassed practical solutions to the pathology of capitalism. In terms of its educational capacity, its programme incorporated direct strategies for challenging capitalism, not least the regeneration of, and appreciation for, labour activity and scientism.

Last, the recognition that integral education possessed a means to providing coherent solutions to capitalism must not detract from the social anarchists belief that it possessed the potential to reinvigorate a sense of community and

[72] Bakunin, 'The Hypnotizers' in *The Basic Bakunin*, p. 74.
[73] Bakunin, for instance, argued that 'we ask better than to see men endowed with great knowledge, great experience...exercise over us a natural and legitimate influence, freely accepted...' Here Bakunin believed that the dissemination of knowledge and interchange of discussion and ideas would enhance a community spirit. See Bakunin, *God and the State*, p. 35.
[74] Boyd, 'The Anarchists and Education' p. 129.
[75] Smith, 'Kropotkin and Technical Education' p. 220.
[76] Malatesta, *Anarchy*, p. 48.

autonomy that encompassed a specific anarchist focus on liberation. The goal of autonomy is achieved by the practical experience of a workshop as commune. A sense of critical, independent thought develops from direct experience in manual and intellectual learning techniques. Through constant discussion and interaction with the student's peers, this experience is seen to cement a greater sense of understanding and independence—in short—a changed consciousness. With a specific focus on using science and reason to explain social phenomena and other issues, the dangers of internalising 'metaphysical' authority, in the shape of church and state, is cast off. An integrated education was hence seen to enhance an appreciation of an egalitarian community ethic where notions of class and class differences would be minimal, if not redundant. In the next chapter some of these principles will be evaluated, practically speaking, to gauge their success.

Chapter Three
Francisco Ferrer and the *Escuela Moderna*

In 1901 a rather obscure Spanish educator, Francisco Ferrer arrived in Barcelona to set up an educational programme called the *Escuela Moderna, Científica y Rational*, or simply the *Modern School*.[1] Fundamental to Ferrer's educational philosophy was a learning theory that defined freedom in economic and class terms. He shared a commitment to radical politics and, like other social anarchists, supported the concept of rational integral education as a means to expand children's consciousness, and challenge the negative impacts of state education. Specifically, out of Ferrer's programme grew a strong emphasis on attacking, head–on, the class oppression and social hierarchy prevalent in contemporary Spain. Having come from a working class background himself, Ferrer's pedagogy was inextricably connected with his desire to directly challenge what he perceived to be the inequities of class society and the unjust nature of capitalism.

This chapter looks specifically at the Modern School as an opportunity to practically analyse an anarchist school that drew its philosophy from the influence of integral education.[2] This opportunity also permits an illustration of the actual difficulties in trying to implement a specific anarchist school. When Ferrer's school is evaluated from the perspective of working class politics, I suggest that practical difficulties in his programme surface that contradict the principles of rational education. Ferrrer's pedagogy was built on liberating primarily the working class, who, to his mind, constituted the most ignorant in society. In this regard, Ferrer remained wedded to implementing a curriculum that dealt directly with political and economic issues. Hence, students were taught to rationally understand wider social, economic and political forces that influence them—usually in a negative capacity. Ferrer was also committed to creating libertarian conditions in the class so as to foster an educative culture that supported the principles of autonomy and community. Yet, in Ferrer's case, this

[1] Henceforth I will be using the English translation.
[2] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 47.

fusion proved difficult to achieve, not least in terms of negating the kind of 'top–down' authoritarianism he claimed characterised church and state education. On analysis, it is evident that Ferrer's curriculum disseminated political propaganda in direct contrast to his own principles of 'rational' education that abhorred indoctrination in any shape. This raises fundamental questions about the success of his anarchist school, as I argue that this dissemination violated the right to be autonomous in the classroom.

Ferrer: By Way of Background

Given the influence of Ferrer's background on his educational theory, it is useful to start our evaluation of Ferrer by looking briefly at his past. Francisco Ferrer was born in 1859 on a farm near Barcelona. He grew up in a strong culture of Catalan separatism and anarchism prevalent in Alella, the town of his birth. His uncle, a freethinker and militant atheist, also influenced Ferrer's thinking. As a young man he worked as a conductor on the railways, and it was during this period that Ferrer became a courier to help political refugees escape across the border to France. In 1885 he was involved in a failed republican uprising and, owing to a severe police crackdown, was forced to flee Spain to France. He settled in Paris, where he taught Spanish while acting as a secretary to the radical republican Manuel Ruiz Zorilla, another Spanish exile. Throughout this period Ferrer considered himself to be a 'republican' and was active in radical causes from 'Defending Dreyfus' through to acting as a delegate in the Congress of the Second International, held in London, in 1896.[3]

While engaged in his political activities, he also became exposed to a range of other radical ideas, from socialism through to anarchism. After digesting these points of view he eventually abandoned his former republicanism and adopted, instead, a fervent commitment to anarchism. Ferrer read anarchist literature and frequented anarchist clubs during his time in Paris. He encountered and befriended prominent French anarchists, such as Élisée Reclus and Sébastien Faure, and formed good friendships with other exiled Spanish anarchists of the day, notably Fernando Tarrida del Marmol and Anselmo Lorenzo. It was a

[3] Rogers, *Anarchism and Libertarian Education*, pp. 95–97.

period, according to Emma Goldman, during which Ferrer 'learned, absorbed and grew' politically.[4]

After reflecting on how to best achieve 'anarchism,' Ferrer settled on education as the most practical means.[5] In order to train students to become 'careful observer[s]'[6] of social injustice, Ferrer concluded that education could secure two important goals—to initiate and prepare students for radical social transformation and, second, to secure these ends through the direct promotion of an alternative social consciousness. Ferrer remained wedded to the common belief of the time, among left–leaning educators at least, that if 'you gave individuals an education that stressed independent thinking, [and] freedom from religious indoctrination…they would naturally reject the hierarchy and blind faith that tied them to the Ancien Regime.'[7]

Ferrer's educational philosophy drew from two interconnected nineteenth century pedagogical legacies. First, his educational programme developed from a socialist preoccupation where education was viewed as an instrument to radically challenge contemporary socio–political institutions. In this regard, Ferrer was influenced by the wider tradition of syndicalism. Second, Ferrer was influenced by the possibilities of a scientific education that would accommodate the needs of students. Ferrer consistently corresponded with Robin and, while he did not visit Robin's school, was well informed of Robin's pedagogy and interest in integral education. Ferrer in short, received Robin's recommendations positively.[8] In this manner Ferrer was motivated to eliminate traditional educative prejudices (such as religion) by means of a 'disinterested' scientific education. Or, in his words: 'Our ideal is that of science; we appeal to it in demanding the power to educate.'[9] Perhaps, not surprisingly, Ferrer attacked

[4] Emma Goldman, 'Francisco Ferrer: The Modern School' in *Anarchism and Other Essays*, intro. Richard Drinnon (Dover Publications, New York, 1969), p. 148.
[5] Joan Ullman, *The Tragic Week: A Study in Anti-Clericalism in Spain, 1875–1912* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1968), p. 95.
[6] Ferrer, *Ideals*, p. 13.
[7] Pamela Radcliff, 'The Emerging Challenge of Mass Politics' in *Spanish History Since 1808*, ed. José Alvarez Junco, and Adrian Schubert (Oxford University Press, New York, 2000), p. 144.
[8] Geoffrey Fidler, 'The Escuela Moderna Movement of Francisco Ferrer: 'Por la Verdad y la Justicia,' *History of Education Quarterly* 25 nos. 1–2 (Spring-Summer, 1985), p. 108.
[9] Ferrer, *Ideals*, p. 51.

contemporary school texts on the basis that they perpetuated falsehoods, myths and 'irrational' sentiment to king and country. On examining French secular educational texts, Ferrer argued that 'God was replaced by the state, Christian virtue by civic virtue, religion by patriotism, submission to the king...'[10] In consulting the Ministry of Public Education in Spain, an unidentified 'imminent freethinker,' who was employed as an officer there, offered a series of books as possible examples to be used in Ferrer's school. After inspecting these texts, Ferrer similarly concluded that they were 'more or less cleverly and insidiously, tainted with untruth, which is the indispensable cement of social inequality.'[11] Ferrer hoped that a scientific education would thus go some way to protecting students from these kinds of 'falsehoods,' and also meet the needs of his students, as they arose, neutrally.[12]

An opportunity to set up a rational educational programme arrived in 1900 when Ferrer inherited an estimated 1,300,000 francs[13] from Ernestine Meunier.[14] Ernestine Meunier was a middle–aged woman to whom Ferrer had given Spanish lessons and, while of a strong Catholic disposition, had come round to Ferrer's political point of view after much discussion and analysis. Upon her sudden death, Ferrer found himself the benefactor of half her estate, which, without Ferrer's knowledge, she had bequeathed to him in her will. This estate consisted of bonds and commercial property in Paris.[15] Ferrer returned to Barcelona after 16 years in exile and, using the money he received from the will, opened the *Escuela Moderna* in the Calle de Las Cortes in September 1901. The school started with a mere 30 students, however by the time that the school was closed in 1906 the enrolment had reached 125 pupils. The classes were divided into levels depending on age starting from primary through to intermediate and finally advanced. The school had a laboratory and a tuition fee was charged on a sliding scale according to means. Ferrer wished to remain completely

[10] *ibid.*, p. 61.
[11] *ibid.*
[12] *ibid.*, p. 51.
[13] Boyd, 'Anarchists and Education' p. 148.
[14] The nature of Ferrer's relationship with Miss Meunier was steeped in controversy. Ferrer's detractors aimed to undermine his position as an educator by claiming his relationship with her was far from platonic.
[15] Ullman, *Tragic Week*, p. 96.

independent from state intrusion, so the fee was a vital contribution to achieving this goal, especially since the bequest was unable to completely cover the cost of the school.[16] Between the periods of 1901–1906, Ferrer expanded the school into other areas when, on October 15th 1905, Ferrer opened further branches in Villanueva y Geltrú, a neighbouring industrial suburb. The Directorship of these new schools fell to Samel Torner, the son-in-law of Anselmo Lorenzo. At its peak, fourteen schools were operating in Barcelona, Valencia and Andalusia.[17]

In the context of the then Spanish educational system, Ferrer's school set out to achieve a daunting task. The education system in Spain had changed little for decades. Millions of Spaniards were unable to access the schooling system with two–thirds of the population unable to read and only around 15,000 of the nation's 45,000 towns having public schools.[18] The Catholic Church controlled the bulk, but not all, of the educational system and, in the catholic schools, the teachers were sworn to uphold Catholic dogma. It was hence not uncommon in the majority of schools for students to be subjected to heavy doses of religious instruction alongside their instruction in traditional subjects.[19] In other words, the school system in Spain during this time was still firmly in the grip of the church. As Joll noted, in this educative climate any reform to the educational system 'seemed startling.'[20]

Added to the mix was the woeful administration of the public non–religious schools by the Republican government who took charge of national education in 1902. The local town councils, formally responsible for non–religious schools, became the pawns in the politics of education when the conservatives in parliament rejected new educational proposals introduced by the liberal left. In short, the central government in Madrid bickered constantly about what to do with its educational policy and hence made few inroads into addressing these underlying issues. This constant environment of uncertainly resulted in a dearth

[16] Avrich, *Modern School,* p. 20.
[17] Ullman, *Tragic Week*, p. 99.
[18] Avrich, *Modern School*, p. 6.
[19] Smith, Libertarians, p. 45.
[20] James Joll, *The Anarchists* (Methuen, London, 1964), p. 234.

of teaching staff, along with inadequate government funding.[21] By 1902, the town council in Barcelona presided over only 94 elementary schools while it subsidized a further 43 more. Practically speaking, this scenario only accommodated around 20,000 children out of an estimated school age population of some 60,000.[22]

The Modern School: Negative and Positive Liberty

The antiquated state of education in Spain, along with the ineptitude of the central government to fundamentally improve access, drove Ferrer's commitment to setting up a radical educational programme. After reflecting on his own experience in school, particularly the harsh discipline and endless religious instruction, Ferrer was not unacquainted with experiencing, first hand, what he considered to be class bias and the oppressive nature of schooling in Spain.[23] It is not surprising that he despised the Catholic Church and all it stood for. Partly in reaction against his own educational experience, and in accordance with his wider desire to radically transform social attitudes, Ferrer's educational strategy encompassed both concepts of liberty. We now turn our attention to evaluating these two concepts.

Negative Liberty

Ferrer's school, like the majority of anarchist schools, rejected a system of rewards and punishments. He stated unambiguously that he would 'rather have the free spontaneity of the child who knows nothing than the verbal knowledge and intellectual deformation of one that has experienced the existing system of education.'[24] Ferrer, in tune with other social anarchists during this period, asserted that education in state hands was really a mechanism to produce compliant workers for the market–place.[25] In an effort to confront this trend, Ferrer avoided any recourse to traditional grading systems. Examinations and punishments were avoided because, according to Ferrer, they gave 'others the

[21] Rogers, *Anarchism and Libertarian Education,* p. 106.
[22] Boyd, 'Anarchists and Education' p. 148.
[23] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 45.
[24] Ferrer, *Ideals,* p. 53.
[25] Spring, *Primer,* pp. 22–23.

vulgar title of "good," and make others unhappy with a consciousness of incapacity and failure.'[26] In Ferrer's words:

> The teachers who offer services to the Modern School, or ask our recommendation to teach in similar schools, must refrain from any moral or material punishment...Scolding, impatience and anger ought to disappear with the ancient title of 'master.'[27]

This kind of pedagogical practice was crucial to ensure that the 'natural disposition' of the child developed free from external constraints. Aside from his wider political outlook, Ferrer expressed concerns that traditional forms of tests were really just artificial indicators for the benefit and 'vanity of parents' or the 'selfish interests of many teachers.' In this context, Ferrer concluded that children are subjected to 'torture before the examination' and this makes 'them ill afterwards.'[28] Putting to the side Ferrer's perhaps dramatic observations, what he was suggesting was that these impositions fail miserably to accommodate the development of the students' own interests, whether they be artistic, trade–based or otherwise, because they incite fear and trepidation. In Ferrer's mind, this methodology actively discouraged the spontaneous creative learning that children generally respond to positively. It was thus important to remove these practices in order to minimise fear. So, for instance, students were not compelled to attend classes and, if desired, they could leave, mid–class, without consequence.[29]

Positive Liberty

When attention is turned to the principle of positive liberty, an analysis of Ferrer's writings, paradoxically, both illuminate and obscure a thorough evaluation. On one hand, extracting a comprehensive analysis is made difficult by the often disparate and vague nature of the writings given that his polemical style avoided focusing on detail.[30] Still, this very polemical style reveals the essential weakness in his programme. When Ferrer's rational approach is

[26] Ferrer, *Ideals,* p. 55.
[27] *ibid.*, p. 59.
[28] *ibid.*, p. 57.
[29] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 48.
[30] Ferrer's book *Origins and Ideals of the Modern School*, originated from a series of articles and essays that first appeared in the French publication, *L'École Renovée*. The English version appeared in 1913 when the Ferrer apologist Joseph McCabe translated it for the English–speaking market.

scrutinised, it is clear that his educational programme exemplified an inability to implement a scientific educational programme that was, in fact, value–free. Somewhat ironically, Ferrer failed to draw parallels between the ideological positions he believed state schools imposed upon their students, and how his own ideological position percolated throughout his programme, despite his claims that his programme was not 'educating for a specific purpose.'[31]

To start, Ferrer was committed to the positive liberty. If Ferrer shared a commitment to creating a spontaneous environment, he also recognised that education has a responsibility:

> ...to secure that the boys and girls who are entrusted to it shall become well-instructed, truthful, just, and free from all prejudice.
> To that end the rational method of the natural sciences will...stimulate, develop, and direct the natural ability of each pupil, so that he or she will not only become a useful member of society, with his individual value fully developed, but will contribute...to the uplifting of the whole community.[32]

To this end, Ferrer was pragmatic enough to accept that, in order to attain this autonomy, the teacher had a responsibility to 'implant the germs of ideas' that will 'bring forth corresponding flowers and fruit, in accordance with the degree of initiative and the characteristic features of the pupil's mind.'[33]

In Ferrer's mind, the idea of integral education was, in essence, a psychological process where the harmonious development of all facets of human nature could not be achieved without guidance. Providing that this guidance was achieved under the auspices of a rational approach, then Ferrer believed that students would learn to 'rationally' reject antiquated and mystical beliefs, once scientific analysis has proven, for instance, that the 'story of creation is a myth.'[34] He goes on to state that:

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[31] Ferrer, *Ideals*, p. 55.
[32] *ibid.*, p. 15.
[33] *ibid.*, p. 20.
[34] *ibid.*, p. 64.

> The mission of education is to show the child, by purely scientific methods, that the more knowledge we have of natural products, their qualities, and the way to use them, the more industrial, scientific and artistic commodities we shall have for the support and comfort of life, and men and women will issue in larger numbers from our schools with a determination to cultivate every branch of knowledge and action, under the guidance of reason and the inspiration of science and art, which will adorn life and reform society.[35]

Here Ferrer's debt to the influence of Enlightenment thinking is evident. He was convinced that 'rational' analysis would sufficiently counter the 'irrational' doctrines that he insisted state and religious education regularly inflict upon their students. However, in practice, Ferrer flouted this rational tradition of Enlightenment thinking by teaching his own brand of socialist dogma.

Spain and Anarchist Politics

At this point, it is worth emphasising that the school, and Ferrer himself, need to be understood within the context of its historical dimension. Importantly, Ferrer was affected by, and absorbed, the cultural and political climate in Spain and this was to affect his own educational strategy.[36] During this period many anarchists, and other socialist sympathizers, began to increasingly support anarcho–syndicalism as the most practical solution to challenging capitalism. Like many Spanish anarchists, Ferrer's allegiances were also firmly grafted to the syndicalist movement.

French in origin, anarcho–syndicalism[37] aimed to reconfigure economic organisation by revolutionary unions in order to eliminate capitalism altogether.[38] Labour councils, organised geographically within each federation, were encouraged to disseminate information, education and propaganda through face-to-face contact or broadsheets.[39] In the 1890s, a number of anarchists who

[35] *ibid.*, pp. 64–65.
[36] Fidler, 'Escuela Moderna' p. 108.
[37] The history of syndicalism seemed to have developed from the emergence of radical trade unions after the Commune in Paris. It reached its peak in France in 1914 but, with all the disruptions following the tumult of the First World War in France, was a 'pale shadow of itself.' In Spain, however, the continuing political instability meant that it continued to flourish. During the Spanish civil war syndicalism played an important part in terms of organisation and rebellion. See Millar, *Anarchism*, p. 124. Also see Woodcock, 'Anarchism' p. 47.
[38] Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868–1936* (Free Life Editions, New York, 1977), p. 132.
[39] *ibid.*, pp. 132–133.

supported the idea of 'propaganda by the deed,' committed terrorist acts against the state.[40] This resulted in severe police reprisals, coupled with repressive legislation. In response, by the turn of the century, a culture that supported a propagandist approach to instigating social revolution was rapidly becoming influential. Ferrer incorporated these very ideas and perspectives.[41] Ferrer's recognition of the miserable quality of schooling in Spain, plus his disenchantment with republican and conservative politics during this period, meant that he turned his attention to the use of propaganda to challenge both capitalism and the state. [42]

In a practical sense, this is evident in the way that Ferrer used his school to spread propaganda throughout the local community. Ferrer played down his political credentials to avoid government interference. In order to disarm his opponents and attract a wider audience, he advertised the school's 'anticlerical nature,' stating also that 'our teaching has nothing to do with politics.'[43] He denied any association with anarchist organisations, describing himself as only a philosophical anarchist.[44] In reality, however, Ferrer's activities told a different story, with his energies spent organising activities and propaganda for the Catalan labour movement.[45] Ferrer cooperated heavily with Anselmo Lorenzo, an itinerant printer, in editing and contributing the *La Huelga General*—a paper produced at the school—that presented anarcho–syndicalist ideas.[46] The paper was distributed widely throughout Spain to peasants and workers by wandering anarchist propagandists who were in contact with Ferrer on a regular basis.[47] The administrator, José Prat, was a leading anarchist along with Lorenzo, who,

[40] This tactic was constructed on the belief that terrorism could insight revolution on the hope that, albeit naïvely, a pre-existing desire for radical change already prevailed. So long as an organisation of conspirators would ,at the proper moment, light the 'flame,' the rest, it was believed, would follow. Bookchin, *Spanish Anarchists*, p. 116.
[41] Raymond Carr, *Modern Spain 1875–1980* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1980), p. 157.
[42] Fidler, 'Escuela Moderna' p. 114.
[43] Ferrer, *Ideals*, p. 65.
[44] Ullman, *Tragic Week*, p. 95.
[45] Fidler, 'Escuela Moderna' p. 107.
[46] It is worth noting that Ferrer used his own funds from the inheritance to establish and maintain a printing press at the school. The press produced almost 50 different titles that were published in the school magazine, the *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*. See Boyd, 'Anarchists and Education' pp. 152–153.
[47] Bookchin, *Spanish Anarchists*, p. 131.

inspired by the Italian Guiseppe Fanelli,[48] carried the message of anarchism to numerous villages.[49] Federico Uralas, another anarchist sympathizer, taught at Ferrer's school and wrote various texts for distribution in the school.[50] On one occasion Ferrer deliberately incensed the clergy by organising a picnic for his students on Good Friday[51] during which 1,700 children marched on behalf of rationalist education.[52]

This propaganda was received with enthusiasm by large sectors of the working class in Barcelona. The moderate trade union movement after 1890 had failed to captivate the imagination of the working class, which was increasingly dominated by new unskilled migrants arriving from the country to find work. Many of these immigrants were already converts to a staunch anarchism, due to the efforts of such stalwarts as Anselmo Lorenzo. The increased number of immigrants arriving in Barcelona, particularly from Andalusia,[53] meant that in Barcelona anarchist trade unions were both popular and well organised. This was evident particularly in the textile industry.[54] Not only was Barcelona a product of the communitarian class–consciousness tradition, rooted in a predominantly urban setting, but it also incorporated the tradition of rural anarchism with all its hatred of the Church and regional authority. This culminated in a political climate that was a hotbed of growing radicalism of working class consciousness and an urban stronghold for anarchist and socialist ideals.

Political Culture and Education

This general contextual analysis is important because it helps to explain Ferrer's programme. Like socialists in general, Ferrer agreed that freedom for all is only possible once the inequities of the class structure is dismantled. Ferrer was thus committed to defining freedom in terms of economic and class exploitation and concerned with the question of how to practically address challenging the

[48] For a brief introduction into the exploits of Fanelli in Spain see Bookchin *The Spanish Anarchists*, pp. 12–16.
[49] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 454.
[50] Boyd, 'Anarchists and Education' p. 148.
[51] Joll, *Anarchists*, p. 235.
[52] Ullman, *Tragic Week*, p. 98.
[53] According to Hugh Thomas anarchist membership was around 30,000 in Andalusia in 1880. See Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (Penguin Books, London, 1986), p. 63.
[54] *ibid.*

system. Ferrer saw in pedagogy an opportunity to 'educate' students along these lines, as, without any conceptual understanding of the injustice of the economic system in Spain, he believed that the working class would be perpetually at the mercy of the establishment.[55] In his words:

> While religion has with its divine power, created a positively abusive power and retarded the development of humanity, political systems have also retarded it by encouraging men to depend for everything on the will of others, on what are supposed to be men of a superior character – on those, in a word, who, from tradition or choice, exercise the profession of politics. It must be the aim of the rational schools to show the children that there will be tyranny and slavery as long as one man depends on another, to study the causes of the prevailing ignorance, to learn the origin of all the traditional practices which give life to the existing social system, and to direct the attention of the pupils to these matters.[56]

Here Ferrer accepts, in a somewhat contradictory fashion, that left–leaning political instruction was necessary to counter the 'abusive' nature of religious and state instruction because, without a clear political anchor to grasp, the sophisticated psychological techniques used by the state would be difficult to combat.[57] In essence, Ferrer's educational programme rested on the assumption that a lack of political reference in the classroom made little sense if the working class were to be freed from ignorance.[58]

This broader conception of freedom is synonymous with socialists and social anarchists alike. Ferrer's understanding of what freedom means is, hence, not inconsistent, nor unusual given his anarchist background. Where it becomes contentious is the way in which his point of view pervades, and thereby perverts, the concept of integral education and its scientific characteristics. Pedagogically

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[55] It is interesting to note that other social anarchists at the turn of the century and beyond recognised that a political consciousness before revolution was vital if the revolution was to succeed in the long term. Malatesta suggested that revolution 'cannot exist if people do not understand the benefits of solidarity…That is why we engage in propaganda.' See Malatesta, *At the Café*, p. 79. Berkman echoed this point when he recognised that 'the idea is the thing.' Not only must a 'new social structure….have a new foundation,' but this structure ought to be driven by 'new ideas.' 'Blind revolution' Berkman notes, 'without definite object and purpose is not revolution.' See Berkman, *ABC of Anarchism*, pp. 55, 57.

[56] Ferrer, *Ideals*, p. 65.

[57] Spring, *Primer*, p. 26.

[58] Florence Tager, *A Radical Approach to Education: Anarchist Schooling–The Modern School of New York and Stelton* (Unpublished dissertation, Ohio State University, 1979), p. 102.

speaking, these particular points of view are commonly disseminated throughout his educational programme. This is evident when aspects of the subject matter taught in the classroom are scrutinised. It is therefore worth considering and evaluating examples to reveal this tension. For instance, an evaluation of the children's book, *The Adventures of Nono,* a popular resource in the school and written by the French anarchist Jean Grave, is a good starting point and worth close attention in order to get a flavour of how Ferrer's political message was transmitted.

In the story, Nono, the son of a working class parents, finds himself in a dream in which he saves a young bee. In gratitude, the bee takes him to see the bee's mother who, as it turns out, presides over a palace. Naturally impressed, he addresses the mother as 'your majesty,' only to be reprimanded because such labels have no place in a classless society. The Queen goes to some length to correct Nono, stating that:

> Your teacher is an ignoramus, who talks of what he knows nothing about. Studying the life of our hives, men have judged our customs by their own. They think of me as a privileged being, as useless as a king, to whom the others owe obedience, and whose will regulates the work of hives. The partisans of authority have found in this error an argument in their own favour, and go on teaching in schools that bees are governed by a queen.[59]

After leaving the bees, Nono meets a fairy from the amiable town called Solidaria, and he is subsequently guided to the land of Autonomy—a local area that is organised by happy children and wise adults. Names such as Labour, Electricia and Liberta are the norm and people exemplify their goodness by refraining from imposing their own will on the children. In befriending Nono, the people of Solidaria made no attempt to impose any one perspective on him, nor did he have to do anything that he did 'not want to do.'[60] Unfortunately Autonomy's neighbour, the kingdom of Argrirocracy, whose ruler is King Monodia, a cynical tyrant, challenges Autonomy. One day, while a party from Autonomy is butterfly hunting, under the guidance of professor Botanico, Nono

[59] Quoted in William Archer, *The Life, Trial and Death of Francisco Ferrer* (Moffat, Yard and Company, New York, 1911), p. 41.
[60] *ibid.*, p. 42.

finds himself separated from the others in the party. In his solitude, he happens to meet King Monadio, who tries to convince Nono of the wonders of his own kingdom, but, when he notices Nono's reluctance to be convinced, carries him off under duress.

As it turns out, Argrirocracy is a miserable place in which capitalism rules and society is class structured. In Argrirocracy, there are 'those who enjoy all pleasures and do nothing; those who work and enjoy no pleasure; and those who, in the interests of the former class, force the latter class to work.'[61] Nono is forced to work for a tailor, whom he tells about the wonders of the kingdom of Autonomy. The authorities, however, discover this apparent act of subversion and Nono is arrested. In a mock trial, in which the judicial members are presented as repulsive characters in the shape of a crow, hyena and jackal, Nono is sentenced to life in prison on a diet of bread and water. As he is dragged from the courtroom to meet his fate, he is lucky to find that his friends from Autonomy have come to rescue him. Just as this is happening, he awakes from his dream. Hence, through the text, it is evident that Ferrer's students were being subjected to a clear left–oriented political message.

In other examples, such as *Man and the Earth*, a text on European history written by Reclus, the reader is reminded that the 'present vaunted civilization…is merely a semi civilization, because only a minority enjoy all its benefits….The modern labourer is devoid personally.'[62] Moreover, in the school's magazine, *The Boletín*, another prominent text source in the classroom, Clemence Jacquinet, the director of the school, wrote a history article entitled *Compendium of Universal History*. In it, she suggested that:

> Very far from being a civilizing force, Christianity has always, throughout the course of history, placed obstacles in the path of progress. We shall find in it the negation of science, which disproves its dogma; the firmest support of absolutism, and of the inequality of the social classes; the oppressor of the human conscience in the clamps of its false morality; the odious standard in whose shadow all crimes have

[61] *ibid.*, p. 43.
[62] *ibid.*, p. 36.

> been committed; the vampire ever thirsting for blood, to whom have been sacrificed millions of victims.[63]

In a similar fashion, these same kind of political messages appeared when the idea of nationalism was raised:

> The idea of the fatherland is the well-spring of all hatred and all injuries. Born of war, it prevents the people from knowing and appreciating each other, and mingling in fraternal solidarity....Hatred of the foreigner is fostered throughout life by all possible means, because it is a great resource to the governing classes, permitting them to maintain armies which are always ready for anything....Rapacity and hatred are allied, in the patriotic ideas, with a vanity which would form the comic side of the matter if it were not painful as an exhibition of human blindness.[64]

Certainly these kinds of polemical statements reveal Ferrer's commitment to eliminating working class ignorance. Where it is controversial, however, is the actual nature of subject matter itself, for questions are immediately raised about the right of the student not to be subjected to this material, or, alternatively, the right of the student to be subjected to a variety of political and social ideas. Crucially, this particularly didactic method does not encourage students to learn to freely and rationally reject support for religious sentiment; rather, Ferrer has already made this decision for students.

Other pedagogical methods of the curriculum raised further questions. For instance, Ferrer taught arithmetic from a specific focus of political economy. Instruction in maths developed from the perspective of contemporary capitalist acquisition and its unjust outcome. In posing mathematical questions to his students, Ferrer made constant reference to what he termed the 'false ideals of the capitalist regime' in which 'reference[s] to wages, economy, and profit' were denounced. Conversely, Ferrer used mathematical formula to uphold a socialist understanding of political economy, where the 'just distribution of the raw material...the means of communication...the comparison of human labour with mechanical, the benefits of machinery, public works, etc' were all held as exemplary examples of just distribution.[65]

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[63] *ibid.*, p. 49.
[64] *ibid.*, pp. 50–51.
[65] Ferrer, *Ideals*, pp. 66–67.

This is not to suggest that Ferrer's programme diverged completely from anarchist principles of integral education. Though, as I suggest, the pedagogy of Ferrer was underpinned by his socialist ideals, he did attempt to practice, at times, a neutral educational experience. For instance, to engender a wider community spirit, the school organised evening classes in geography, hygiene, science and history. These classes were open to the general public, parents and workers who were keen to learn.[66] Additionally, while Ferrer was committed to emancipating the working class in Barcelona, he recognised that it was vital to break down notions of class division. He thus deliberately welcomed both working and middle class students. Given his view that class division was an artificial construct, Ferrer considered it important to overcoming this division by incorporating students from a variety of social backgrounds. 'The only sound...form of school' Ferrer states, 'is that which co–educates the poor and rich...by means of the systematic equality of the rational school.'[67] Moreover, it was for this reason that Ferrer insisted that his school be co–educational. As 'man is neither inferior nor...superior to women,' equality between the sexes, he hoped, would contribute to the social development and community spirit on the assumption this coeducation would break down former common, but false, assertions that suggested both sexes were fundamentally different.[68]

Given Ferrer's severe anti–clericalism he, not surprisingly, also held no place for religious instruction. In place of religious curriculum, Ferrer encouraged 'neutral' observation and experimentation to enhance rational development. For example, Ferrer took his students into the local community, notably the local hills or seaside, in order to explain and study geological or topographical questions. From here, he encouraged his students to use their observational skills, to gather data and analyse the material as best they could. Students were invited to then draw scientific explanations from these observations. After these visits, Ferrer encouraged his students to discuss 'various subjects,' stating that:

[66] Avrich, *Modern School*, p. 21.
[67] Ferrer, *Ideals,* p. 33.
[68] *ibid.*, p. 27.

> ...sometimes we spoke of Spanish customs, sometimes of politics, religion, art, or philosophy. I sought always to correct the exaggeration of their judgements, and to show clearly how mischievous it is to subordinate one's own judgement to the dogma of a sect, school or party, as is so frequently done.[69]

In this instance Ferrer attempted to foster neutral self–directed learning. By replacing traditional 'bookish' learning with learning in a wider community environment, he aimed to help students make direct connections between their own observations and the wider discussions on these observations that developed between both the teacher and the students themselves. In other examples, Ferrer took his students to the local factory, or community workshops and laboratories, where things were explained and illustrated to his students by workers themselves.[70]

While it is important to recognise that Ferrer's programme was not beyond redemption, these above examples were generally exceptions to the rule. Ferrer abandoned some of the key principles of integral education altogether. Unlike Robin and Faure before him, Ferrer ignored integrating theoretical and practical learning. There were no workshops, as such, at his school.[71] Financial constraints aside, it suggests that Ferrer's central focus lay in the implantation of left–oriented political ideas. Perhaps this is most evident when Ferrer staunchly defends what he believed was the 'ingenious reasoning power' of his students. At one point during the school year, Ferrer requested that his students write down their thoughts on paper. A perusal of these texts—and Ferrer's content reaction to these thoughts—is revealing. One of his pupils, declared, for instance, that, 'Fanaticism is the outcome of the state of ignorance and backwardness of woman; on that account Catholics do not want to see women educated, as they are the chief support of their system.'[72] Another student of 16 years of age asserted:

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[69] *ibid.*, p. 5.
[70] Boyd, 'Anarchists and Education' p. 151.
[71] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 47.
[72] Ferrer, *Ideals,* p. 91.

> What inequality there is in the present social order! Some working from morning to night without more profit than enough to buy their insufficient food; others receiving the products of the workers in order to enjoy themselves with their superfluous. Why is this so? Are we not equal? Undoubtedly we are; but society does not recognise it, while some are destined to work and suffering, and others to idleness and enjoyment. If a worker shows that he realises the exploitation to which he is subject, he is blamed and cruelly punished, while others suffer the inequality with patience. The worker must educate himself…[73]

While another student, aged nine, lamented:

> A criminal is condemned to death; if the murderer deserves this punishment, the man who condemns him and the man who kills him are also murderers; logically, they ought to die as well, and so humanity would come to an end. It would be better, instead, of punishing a criminal by committing another crime, to give him good advice, so that he will not do it again. Besides, if we are all equal, there would be no thieves, or assassins, or rich people, or poor, but all would be equal and love work and liberty.[74]

Ferrer accepted that these kinds of opinions were 'not perfect.' He recognised that his young charges lacked 'the formation of a perfectly sound opinion' as their reasoning powers were still undeveloped.[75] Yet, notwithstanding this recognition, Ferrer welcomed these perspectives, believing that his students arrived at these sorts of conclusions 'freely, without prejudice or submission to any kind of sect, with perfect autonomy…'[76] This seems unlikely given that his students were subjected to numerous texts that expounded these kinds of political messages, along with a wider school environment that was organising propaganda and other left wing political initiatives.

As such, Ferrer's educational experiment reveals the interconnection between socialist and anarchist aspirations of integral education in general and the difficulty in separating the two positions, not least in a practical sense. The right to autonomy that ought to have developed from the praxis of education became less significant to the need to implant, and indeed fast track, a left–oriented political consciousness. On this level, Ferrer's educational experiment might usefully be compared to some socialist experiments. This is perhaps illustrated

[73] *ibid.*, pp. 93–94.
[74] *ibid.*, p. 90.
[75] *ibid.*, p. 88.
[76] *ibid.*, p. 94.

by comparing Ferrer's experiment with that of Soviet educator Anton Makarenko (1888–1939), the son of a painter from a small Ukrainian town. Makarenko, a keen follower of Marxist principles, became a teacher immediately after he completed his schooling and went on to manage two successful Communes, which both taught and trained other teachers. During the 1930s at the high point of the purges, he found himself propelled into the spotlight after Stalin considered his pedagogy 'genuine,' in contrast to other more libertarian experiments that flourished in the 1920s.

The main features of Makarenko's thought lie in his concept of the primacy of the collective and not the individual. Makarenko wanted to create a 'new Soviet person' who was at once thoroughly imbued with a proper sense of communist ideology and enthusiasm.[77] Allegiance to the common good should override individualism, he believed, so that the legitimacy of the new classless society further establishes itself. To achieve this, Makarenko asserted that education:

> ...must be organised by forming united, strong and influential collectives. The school must be a single collective where all the educative processes are properly organised. Every separate member of the collective should feel his dependence on the collective, he should be devoted to the interests of the collective, he should uphold these interests and value them above all else.[78]

Makarenko rejected the theory of free education, evident in some of the early Russian post–revolutionary period experiments, precisely because he believed they failed to instil into the individual a Soviet political and social consciousness.[79] The modus operandi underpinning Makarenko's theory of education constituted a preoccupation with meeting a set of rigid goals—namely, a communist consciousness. In this arrangement the subordination of the individual to a collective consciousness took primacy.

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[77] Bowen, Hobson, 'A.S. Makarenko: Commentary' in *Theories of Education*, pp. 215–216, 217, 222.
[78] A.S. Makarenko, *Problems of Soviet School Education*, trans. O Shartse (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965), p. 43.
[79] *ibid.*, p. 56.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that all socialist educators are, by association, authoritarian. The prominent Marxist Brazilian educator Paulo Freire is a case in point.[80] Moreover, it would be a mistake to place Ferrer in the same camp as Makarenko altogether. On the one hand, Ferrer was committed to at least setting in place an educational programme that fostered a permissive environment. Yet, on the other, Ferrer's model is haunted by its similar characteristics to, for instance, Makarenko's authoritarian methodology. It is difficult to identify with precision why Ferrer failed to see his own contradictions. Strangely, at one point, when contemplating the road to anarchism, Ferrer exemplified a pragmatism and a somewhat refreshing honesty when he stated, rather pessimistically, that:

> For polemical purposes I can give you an argument against those who ask us for schools with great advantages—integrated education, manual labour, skills, multiple course offerings, etc. We cannot do more now than make the children think about social injustice, about religion, governmental, patriotic, judicial, political, or militaristic lies etc, in order to prepare minds ready to carry out a social revolution. We are not interested today in forming good workers, good employees, good shopkeepers…All that is secondary for us; we have neither the time nor the means to change everything.[81]

Here Ferrer admits that, in fact, his school is primarily concerned with creating revolutionaries armed with an allegiance to left–oriented political propaganda. For Makarenko, this kind of statement posed no theoretical contradiction, as the right to autonomy was secondary, if not redundant, to legitimising the Socialist state. In Ferrer's case, we cannot draw the same conclusion if we consider his anarchist credentials. His commitment to practicing a prescriptive approach to methodology moves away from the neutral principles of integral education, at least within the anarchist tradition. In fairness to Ferrer, this is perhaps not that surprising given the increasingly polarised nature of Spanish society during the period of the Modern School's existence.

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[80] Freire emphasised the importance of a dialogical relationship between the student and teacher to encourage non-authoritarian atmosphere. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Penguin Books, London, 1972), pp. 61–64. Freire concludes that the 'revolutionary's role is to liberate, and be liberated, with the people—not win them over.' p. 67.

[81] Cited in Boyd, 'Anarchists and Education' p. 150. NB: Boyd does not cite where quote came from.

What is clear is that Ferrer could not separate his own political viewpoint from his pedagogy. Ferrer believed that, in order to help students develop their own critical perspective and evaluate the intricacies of modern political economy, it was crucial to have certain 'facts' at the student's disposal.[82] Without this kind of knowledge it made impossible the task of applying critical judgement to society as no conceptual tools would be available to the student. Here, it is possible to accept that Ferrer is struck by the challenge all teachers must confront—the tension between process and content. In a real practical sense, however, if Ferrer was committed to creating a permissive environment, this process was undermined by his commitment to disseminating a didactic narrow curriculum (or content) that focused completely on left–oriented class politics and social injustice.

Concluding Remarks

Given the short duration of Ferrer's school (it closed in 1909), it is difficult to know, with precision, what became of Ferrer's students.[83] Yet, from the information that exists it is possible, on examination, to acknowledge two points. First, in defence of Ferrer, he demonstrated a marked streak of realism when contemplating the most practical method to create an anarchist consciousness. His anticipation of Antonio Gramsci's (1891–1937) idea of hegemony, albeit crudely, is not insignificant. If one is going to have any preparation for radical social and political transformation, it is crucial that students are sensitive to, and cognitively aware of, anarchist ideas.

[82] Gribble, 'Good News for Francisco Ferrer' p. 185.

[83] On the 31st of May, 1906, an anarchist by the name of Mateo Moral threw a bomb at the King and Queen in Madrid. Ferrer was arrested and charged with complicity in the crime. After spending a year in gaol, he was released after no clear evidence against him was forthcoming. His time in gaol resulted in the demise of the school. For further information of Ferrer during this period see Ullman, *The Tragic Week*, p. 101. In 1909 he was again arrested for his apparent responsibility as the author and chief instigator of the Tragic Week, where police and workers fought bloody confrontations. It began when workers refused to sign up for active duty to serve in Morocco. Ferrer was executed on the command of the government. As there was little evidence to support this charge, his crime seemed to be more to do with what he represented to the established order. See, Tóbín Colm, *Homage to Barcelona* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1994), p. 60. Gerald Brenan, for example, notes that there was 'little evidence to show that he [Ferrer] had been implicated in the rising, which was a spontaneous affair, not part of an anarchist plot, he was not even living in Barcelona at the time.' See Gerald Brenan, *The Spainish Labyrinth: Any Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1943), pp. 34–35.

Second, perceptive or not, the authoritarian aspects of Ferrer's programme strictly contradict the anarchist emphasis on autonomy. The imposition of a political ideology was incompatible with the right to develop freely. An evaluation of the texts used in the classroom, for example, alongside his persistent reference to political economy when teaching maths, provides evidence of this. Given this tension, Ferrer's educational experiment can be described as a composite model that draws from both anarchist and socialist educative traditions, despite Ferrer's commitment to anarchism in general. It is not inaccurate to conclude that Ferrer's students were encouraged to absorb a particular social justice political framework without question. In this arrangement, the teacher/student relationship remained orthodox. Put simply, the liberating potential of the praxis of education was given little opportunity to develop unhindered. Seen from this perspective, Ferrer's experiment represented a severe compromise of his wider theories of integral education. We now turn our attention to the aesthetic educative tradition in anarchism to evaluate its key principles, and to gauge if it fared any better.

Chapter Four
Anarchism, Autonomy and Aesthetic Education

In the last two chapters I focused on an educative model that defined autonomy largely in class terms. While I suggested that this position represented a violation of the right to autonomy, advocates of this model, particularly Ferrer, argued that in order to effect practical social change, teaching class and political consciousness was a necessity. As a rule, left libertarianism and integral education developed in reaction to the inequities of capitalism, including the fact that, as social anarchists saw it, capitalism shackled the productive capacity of the worker. In opposition to this perspective, an aesthetic educative model of radical social change also developed in the anarchist stream. The twentieth century English educational theorist and anarchist, Herbert Read, and the Russian novelist and radical political thinker, Leo Tolstoy, represent this tradition. Claiming that creativity is essentially '...the extension of consciousness itself, the conquest of new areas of awareness...'[1] the aesthetic educative model emphasised classroom activities that explored autonomy via primarily imaginative and creative learning experiences. Unlike the social anarchists, who situated autonomy within a framework of rational and scientific development, Read and Tolstoy constructed their educative theory upon an impetus to unleash (and liberate) pre–existing aesthetic sensibilities, with no reference to class society and the need to resist it.

Interestingly, there has been very little comparison of Read and Tolstoy regarding their mutual interest in aestheticism. Scholars have compared both anarchists differently and, at times, from diverging traditions. Peter Marshall, in his voluminous analysis of anarchism, *Demanding the Impossible*, compares Read with Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) based on their mutual interest in aesthetic matters,[2] while Michael Smith in *The Libertarians and Education*, suggests that Read's 'roots are in British Romanticism.'[3] Reginald Archambault notes that

[1] Read, 'Introduction: Revolution and Reason' in *Anarchy and Order*, p. 24.
[2] Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, p. 588.
[3] Smith, *Libertarians,* p. 118.

Tolstoy's views on education were largely a derivative of Jean–Jacques Rousseau[4] (1712–1778), while Daniel Murphy maintains that Tolstoy's writings on education were 'deeply imbued with the traditions of Slavic culture.'[5]

These contrasting views develop somewhat from the eclectic nature of Read and Tolstoy's interests: both thinkers encompassed numerous academic and literary fields from education, politics through to literature and art studies. Indeed, Read was a man of letters, a poet and an art critic with an interest in anarchism and education.[6] His method of inquiry into education derived from Freudian theories of modern psychology, aesthetics and art history that were popular in the middle of the twentieth century.[7] Tolstoy's ideas on politics and society, however, shared much in common with French Enlightenment thinking of the eighteenth century.[8] Tolstoy's vision was pastoral, pacifist and anti–industrial[9] whereas Read supported anarcho–syndicalism.[10] What links the two is the centrality of art in their educational theory: both thinkers interpreted education primarily from an impetus of aesthetic renewal. To develop this perspective this chapter constructs an understanding of aesthetic education by, first, defining what aestheticism means and, second, by putting it in the context of key principles and strategies using the positive/negative liberty dichotomy.

Aestheticism, Education and Left Libertarianism

When thinking about how to liberate the individual, Tolstoy and Read started their respective discussions of aestheticism from a perspective of unleashing organic, artistic characteristics.[11] '[The] appreciation of good form, the

[4] Archambault, 'Introduction' to *Tolstoy on Education*, p. viii.
[5] Daniel Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education* (Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 1992), p. 5.
[6] John S. Keel, 'Herbert Read on Education Through Art,' *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 3, no.4 (Oct. 1969), p. 47.
[7] Charles G. Wieder, 'Herbert Read on Education, Art and Individual Liberty' *Journal of Aesthetic Education,* 17, no. 3 (Fall 1983), p. 86.
[8] Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers,* ed. Henry Hardy and Aileen Kelly (Viking Press, New York, 1978), p. 238.
[9] Woodcock, *Anarchism*, pp. 213–215.
[10] Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' p. 51.
[11] It is important to recognise that anarchists in general believe that creativity is an important avenue for both human expression and unity. On this point see William O. Reichert, 'Art, Nature and Revolution' *Arts in Society*, 9, no. 3 (May 1972), p. 401; André Reszler, 'Bakunin, Marx and the Aesthetic Heritage of Socialism' *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, no. 22 (1973), pp. 47–48. However, most social anarchists considered art less in the context of educational theory but, rather, within the parameters of a 'broader cultural and political

perception of rhythm and harmony, the instinct to make things shapely and efficient,' were, according to Read, 'present in the child from its earliest years.'[12] Similarly, Tolstoy believed that the 'beauty of the sun, the beauty of the human face, the beauty of the sounds of a popular song, [and] the beauty of an act of love' were perennial.[13] The trajectory towards individual development and liberation was interpreted from the broad perspective of 'creativity' that encapsulated artistic improvisation. 'The most important function of education,' Read asserted, 'is concerned with...an integral approach to reality which should be called *aesthetic* education—the education of those senses upon which consciousness, and ultimately the intelligence and judgement of the human individual, are based.'[14] Read hence believed that a harmonious relationship between the individual and his/her external world is formulated in the early years, primarily through the child's own aesthetic experiences. Because artistic education unleashed the 'innate characteristics'[15] of the child, this perspective represented the ideal medium to develop individual personality.[16]

It is important to emphasise that when Read and Tolstoy use the term 'art' they are not referring to 'something we find in museums and art galleries, or in old cities like Florence and Rome.'[17] Rather, art refers to a sensibility that is 'present in everything we make to please our senses.'[18] Read recognised that this explanation lacked specificity, for he pointed out that art is one 'of those vague spheres of human activity which escape any very precise definition.'[19] Read attempted to narrow this definition by drawing a distinction between entertainment and art: entertainment is 'something which distracts us or diverts us from the daily life,'[20] whereas art is the development of awareness and

movement for radical change along non-hierarchical, libertarian principles.' Sheehan, *Anarchism*, p. 141.

[12] Read, 'Aesthetic Method of Education' in *Grass Roots of Art: Lectures on the Social Aspects of Art in an Industrial Age* (Faber and Faber, London, 1955), p. 101.

[13] Tolstoy, 'The School at Yásnaya Polyána' pp. 345–346.

[14] Herbert Read, *Education Through Art* (Faber and Faber, London, 1944), p. 7.

[15] Herbert Read, 'The Aesthetic Method of Education' p. 106.

[16] William O. Reichert, 'The Relevance of Anarchism: An Introduction to the Social Thought of Herbert Read' *Educational Theory*, 17, no. 2 (April 1967), p. 150.

[17] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 15.

[18] *ibid.*

[19] Herbert Read, 'Civilisation and the Sense of Quality' in *To Hell With Culture, and Other Essays on Art and Society*, intro. Michael Paraskos (Routledge, London, 2002), p. 170.

[20] *ibid.*

consciousness that leads to understanding daily routine. Tolstoy, for instance, developed a definitional understanding of art best described as 'feeling.'[21] For Tolstoy, the term feeling subsumes two further concepts: the process where this reaction is accessible to others, and the process where the recipient himself/herself is 'infected' by artistic expression.[22] In essence, art constitutes an expression of the individual's 'deepest instincts and emotions,' and thereby commonly leads to emotional and social bonding.[23] It would be fair to say, then, that the more 'romantic' interpretation of education is the common thread running throughout the thought of Read and Tolstoy.[24]

Negative Liberty

Set against the backdrop of romanticism, the aesthetic methodology aimed to appeal to the more irrational and emotional characteristics of the student, with particular emphasis on individual initiative, spontaneity and intuitiveness. Education should be based not on rigorous scientific and logical insight, but the immediate experience of observation, spontaneity and existential awareness.[25] In order to accommodate the innate and unconscious features of the student, the central component of the curriculum must be 'artistic.'[26] Hence, pedagogy, or the 'art' of teaching, must be directed in such a way that the environment accommodates the student's own innate disposition. Ideally, the best way to unleash the student's artistic inclinations, and thus facilitate cognition and growth, is through play, that is, games, role–playing and other fantasies of the child. What is therefore vitally important is that the teacher intrudes minimally, or not at all, upon the natural curiosity of the child.

From this perspective, the importance of negative liberty in the classroom was fundamental to create an environment where aesthetic impulses flourish. To that

[21] Gary R. Jahn, 'The Aesthetic Theory of Leo Tolstoy's What is Art?' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 34, no. 1 (Autumn 1975), p. 61.
[22] *ibid.*, p. 60.
[23] Read, 'Civilisation and the Sense of Quality' p. 171.
[24] For instance, Read was heavily influenced by Wordsworth's observation of the relationship between the artist in society and the effects this had on imagination in general. See Smith, *Libertarians* p. 118. While heavily influenced by the *philosophes*, particularly Rousseau, Tolstoy also drew from the German romantics and American transcendentalists. See Archambault, 'Introduction' to *Tolstoy on Education*, p. x.
[25] *ibid.*, p. xvi.
[26] Reichert, 'Relevance of Anarchism' p. 152.

end, it was crucial to remove constraints so that these artistic instincts were not stymied. Both Ferrer and Read, like anarchists in general, recognised the need for negative liberty to initiate natural social forms of growth. Unlike Ferrer, for whom negative liberty was important for holding at bay what he considered objectionable religious and political messages, Read and Tolstoy placed great stress on negative liberty for developing artistic tendencies in an unhindered manner. This nuance is important to recognise. Read in particular developed his viewpoint on negative liberty specifically—but not completely—from his concerns that any intrusion upon these artistic attributes was particularly dangerous. Irrespective of culture, human understanding and consciousness develop largely from individual artistic experience.

Tolstoy developed his own unique perspective on negative liberty when he drew a distinction between 'culture' and 'education.' In 1860, he went abroad and visited a number of schools in Germany, England, Italy and France. After observing curriculum and pedagogical strategies in these countries he concluded that the education he saw in operation contradicted the basic principles by which everyday people live. After all, said Tolstoy, people form their own opinions about life around them freely on the principle that, 'the free relation of people, having for its basis the need of one man to acquire knowledge, and the other to impart that which he has acquired' was a constant and natural phenomenon.[27] More broadly, he recognised that culture is 'understood as the consequences of all those life influences which life exerts on a man…or, as the influence itself of all vital conditions upon man.'[28] By contrast, he saw formal, public education as a conscious attempt to impose a particular viewpoint on the student, often with complete disrespect for the pupil's own needs. Public education is, lamented Tolstoy, 'a compulsory, forcible action of one person upon another for the purpose of forming a man such as will appear to us to be good.'[29]

The real problem with state education lay in its priority to impose knowledge that had little conceptual bearing or direct correlation to the ordinary aesthetic

[27] Tolstoy, 'Education and Culture' in *Tolstoy on Education*, p. 110.
[28] *ibid.*, p. 109.
[29] *ibid.*, p. 110.

experience of living.[30] This problem is what Tolstoy was convinced he had witnessed in the schools in Germany. In these school classrooms, Tolstoy noted that some of the students, while attempting to give answers to certain questions, lacked any real comprehension of what answers they gave. Rather, they seemed to provide answers that they believed the teacher wanted.[31] The school is only a positive institution, Tolstoy said, when 'it has taken cognisance of the fundamental laws by which the people live.'[32] Nevertheless, he argued that contemporary schools were cognisant merely of middle class values that distanced the elite from the uneducated masses. What truly perturbed Tolstoy, however, was that the school is an imposition of western education that, he said, eroded fundamental community values that enable society to function.[33] Compared to city folk, the common people, according to Tolstoy, are independent and uncorrupted, both materially and spiritually, and possess distinct values and attitudes. Aesthetically and emotionally, it is not surprising to Tolstoy that the peasantry instinctually recognise that middle class artistic and cultural values have only limited merit. 'Ivanov's painting,' may, Tolstoy states, 'rouse in the people nothing but admiration for his technical mastery, but will not evoke any poetical, nor religious sensation...'[34] Nor will Beethoven's music produce any sensation; Tolstoy believes, rather strangely, that his music will be anathema to the ears of the people.[35] On a more general level, Tolstoy remained convinced that middle class culture was untruthful and harmful to the majority because it

[30] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 63.

[31] Tolstoy observed that students who answered his questions 'delivered themselves of tirades learned by rote.' In turn he argued that many students failed to grasp the wider significance of the question and, at times, they simply could not provide an answer. Tolstoy believed that students were forced to focus too much on trying to provide the 'right' answer in opposition to grasping a learning 'pattern.' For example, in maths there was, said Tolstoy, 'no general rule: they sometimes answered well, and sometimes very poorly.' Tolstoy, 'On Popular Education' *Tolstoy on Education*, p. 13. For a succinct account of Tolstoy's educational trip to Europe see Henri Troyat, *Tolstoy*, trans. Nancy Amphoux (Garden City, New York, 1967), pp. 201–204.

[32] Tolstoy, 'On Popular Education' p. 19.

[33] The nature of Russian education during this period was both complex and contradictory. In the 1850s most villages in Russia had no school and if a school did exist, most students attended for only a year, as many parents feared their children, when in school, would be conscripted into the armed forces. However, under the 1828 Statures Act, the state was obliged to take responsibility for education that, thus far, had been left to the clergy and local municipalities. Progress was slow and often inconsistent. Although the impact of state education was minimal at this time, Tolstoy recognised that much of the state's educational programme derived from western 'middle class' European values and he was, therefore, wary of any further encroachment of state education into the country areas. See, Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, p. 244; Murphy, *Tolstoy on Education*, pp. 21–22.

[34] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 343.

[35] *ibid.*, p. 344.

subjects the students to artificial urban values.[36] In any case, arguing that high art is corrupted by middle class techniques and images that make little sense to the majority of Russians, Tolstoy maintained that a key cultural problem was the inability of high art to communicate a real sense of emotion.

Here, Tolstoy took some lessons from French *philosophe* Jean–Jacques Rousseau,[37] who, in his polemical work *Émile,* produced the first significant challenge to the philosophy of education since Plato and Aristotle.[38] Instead of focusing on what is taught, Rousseau turned his attention to who is taught.[39] Rousseau's *Émile* is the first sustained plea for freedom, in an educative context.[40] Rousseau wanted to show in the work *Émile* that it is possible to correctly prepare the protagonist for society insofar as *Émile* learns to become independent and authentic to himself, or, to his nature.[41] To avoid suppressing or distorting these fundamental characteristics, education, according to Rousseau, must first identify what is natural and spontaneous to the student. If education fails in that regard the natural development of the student will be immediately compromised. It was thus preferable that *Émile* be subjected to what Rousseau termed 'negative education,' namely the necessity to avoid any instruction that did not meet the child's own needs. Words such as 'obey' and 'command' are not to be used in any capacity while *Émile* is being taught.[42]

This position on negative education is synonymous with anarchism in general. Yet, much like Rousseau, Tolstoy maintained that education and schooling are not necessarily synonymous; 'The direction and spirit of the popular education, both in the cities and in the villages, are absolutely independent from and generally contrary to the spirit which it is intended to instil into the schools. In

[36] Berlin, *Russian Thinkers,* pp. 254–255.
[37] *ibid.*, p. 250.
[38] For a concise abridgement to both Plato and Aristotle's educational theory, Bowen and Hobson provide an excellent condensed summary of the relevant texts in Plato's 'The Republic' and Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics.' See *Theories of Education,* pp. 30–79 and pp. 89–107 respectively.
[39] Bowen and Hobsen, 'Rousseau Commentary' in *Theories of Education,* p. 122.
[40] R. S. Peters, *Essays on Educators* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1981), p. 15.
[41] *ibid.*, pp. 15–16.
[42] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or Treatise on Education*, trans. William H. Payne (Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 2003), p. 53.

this sense education goes on quite independent of the schools.'[43] Where Tolstoy marks out his own territory is the cultural/educative distinction: he believed that, in an educative sense, culture was beneficial for the learning process, providing there were enough stimuli to foster spontaneous learning. These conclusions crystallised in Tolstoy's mind after observing street life in Europe. When passing through France, Tolstoy observed that the citizens in cafes in Marseille, 'give little comedies and scenes, and recite verses' spontaneously.[44] The advantage of this social environment, said Tolstoy, is that people are always learning, almost by de facto, as 'everywhere the greater part of one's education is acquired, not at school, but in life.'[45]

The clear implication here for Tolstoy was that in a cultural setting learning is spontaneous when the individual is not subject to any form of constraint or domination. Indeed, both Tolstoy and Read recognised that the teacher ought to teach in a largely negative manner, in that her/his role is, essentially, to facilitate the learning process without challenging the natural learning processes of the child.[46] In this type of independent educative arrangement, the natural learning processes mirror, according to Tolstoy, wider cultural environments like city streets where no coercion is needed. Elaborating the practical, pedagogical import of Tolstoy's point, Read outlines how this would manifest itself in the classroom. According to Read, a good instructor was one that is:

> ...not a dictator, but rather a pupil more advanced in technique than the others, more conscious of the aim to be achieved and the means that must be adopted, who works with the children, sympathises with them and encourages them... Cast out fear from the child and you have then released all its potentialities for emotional growth and maturation.[47]

For Read, it was the responsibility of the teacher to accept each personality's temperament and talents. The teacher must avoid any recourse to authority in the shape of a raised voice or finger. Read was confident that if the child is liberated from this kind of imposition of authority, then the teacher has a unique

[43] Tolstoy, 'On Popular Education' pp. 24–25.
[44] *ibid.*, pp. 23–24.
[45] *ibid.*, p. 24.
[46] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 56.
[47] Read, 'Aesthetic Method of Education' p. 108.

opportunity to develop a positive relationship with the child. As Tolstoy noted, one of the teacher's major tasks is to find ways in which material has meaning for the student.[48]

The role of the teacher, then, ought to be negative. Ideally the teacher must encourage and direct the student towards interests and talents best suited to the student's innate disposition:

> The business of the teacher is to afford a choice of all known and unknown methods that may make the matter of learning easier for the pupil....For the teacher who has adopted himself to the liberty of the school, each pupil represents a separate character...which only the freedom of choice can satisfy.[49]

The teacher needs to be observant and flexible so that s/he does not impede the child's natural artistic inclination. In the following passage, Tolstoy provides a practical demonstration of this pedagogical imperative:

> I shall be told, and I have been, if drawing is needed in a popular school, it can be admitted only as drawing from Nature, technical drawing, to be applied to life; the drawing of a plough, a machine, a building; free-hand drawing as a mere auxiliary for mechanical drawing...The majority of pupils after four months of careful, exclusively technical drawing, from which was excluded all drawing of men, animals, and landscapes, ending by cooling off considerably in respect to the drawing of technical objects and by developing to such an extent the feeling and need of drawing as an art that they provided themselves with their secret copy-books, in which they drew men, and horses with all four legs coming out of one spot.[50]

Aware that his attempt to instruct 'technical drawing' was ill–directed because his students found it objectionable, Tolstoy adapted his methods to suit their more instinctual inclinations, that is, he allowed students to draw subjects such as horses, aligned presumably, with their own pastoral observations.

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[48] It is interesting to note Tolstoy was criticised by both supporters and detractors for teaching his own children in a very conventional manner. Although he was involved from time to time in teaching his own children, tutors undertook the bulk of the teaching in a manner deemed suitable and respectable for the landed gentry. See Bob Blaisdell, 'Introduction' to *Tolstoy as Teacher: Leo Tolstoy's Writings on Education*, trans. Christopher Edgar, ed. Bob Blaisdell (Teachers and Writers Collaborative, New York, 2000), p. 16.

[49] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásyana Polyána' pp. 268–269.

[50] *ibid.*, p. 341.

Positive Liberty: Aesthetic Development and Curriculum

Given that Tolstoy and Read recognised the importance of negative liberty to help aid aesthetic development, it is somewhat paradoxical that they both recognised that the curriculum must not be completely subordinated to the whims of their students. It was crucial to set in place a coherent educational programme to augment the learning process, not least in terms of providing a framework within which teachers would need to operate. After all, the idea of individual liberation arises from an attempt to build aesthetic and creative experiences in which art is the *means* to acquire knowledge and skills, a sense of morality, and individual freedom. To gain a sense of what positive liberty entails for classroom teaching practice, it is therefore useful to elaborate upon some of the key components of the curriculum.

The aesthetes, in line with anarchist educational theory in general, noted that education had a responsibility to develop the 'whole person.' Read points out that in a normative capacity:

> ...the purpose of education is integration—the preparation of the individual child for his place in society not only vocationally but spiritually and mentally, then it is not information he needs so much as wisdom, poise, self-realisation, zest—qualities which can only come from a unified training of the senses for the activity of living. In other words, the school must be a microcosm of a world, and schooling an activity which grows insensibility into living.[51]

In order to foster the growth of artistic sensibility, the aesthetic curriculum ought to first orientate the individual towards artistic experience.[52] Read argued that children learn primarily not by using formal logic but instead by using colours and patterns which better appeal to a child's senses.[53] Second, the teacher needs to encourage visual communication as it equips the student with the necessary confidence to develop skills in this kind of medium of expression. According to Read, three types of activity combine to create a good starting point to unleash potential skills in visual expression. The first is to recognise the importance of self–expression as an activity, because each individual has an innate need to

[51] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 227.
[52] Wieder, 'Read on Education' p. 89.
[53] Reichert, 'Relevance of Anarchism' p. 152.

communicate his or her thoughts. The second is observation, or accommodating each child's desire to record impressions and memory. The third is appreciation, or the necessity to foster modes of expression with other individuals.[54]

Read was not aiming to sharpen children's rational ability to observe and assess objects that surround them. This would develop, he argued, at what he termed the second stage of education, where this kind of rational formal activity ought to be the responsibility of the science master who is presumably skilled in this kind of activity. Instead, Read was aiming first to educate the senses in terms of aesthetic values.[55] Read wanted the initial stage of education to be sensual and was therefore wary of introducing any formal instruction too early for fear that this might inhibit any creative instinct.[56] Indeed, 'our educational system is grossly outweighed,' he said, 'with intellectual aims...[and] this rationalisation of the child has a stultifying effect on its aesthetic impulse.'[57] Read sought to unleash the child's 'medium of expression' through the extensive use of raw materials of words, art, and sounds, as these materials occupy the child's emotional life. If children develop their visual communication instincts through language and images in conjunction with the wider socialisation process, secondary skills, like using a brush, hand–eye coordination and language skills, would, according to Read, naturally follow with less emphasis or need for direct imposition of teacher–led formal activities. As Read explained, 'a child cannot use a pencil or a pen, a brush or a potter's wheel, without discovering that in order to be expressive, the hand and eye must work in instinctive unison. Art in this way produces an integration of the senses that it called *skill*'[58] and that continually develops through perpetual discovery. Hence direct instruction in education becomes less relevant.[59] Like other anarchists, however, Read assumed that skills in writing and numeracy, while important, would be learnt at a later stage, when self–directed learning was much more predominant.

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[54] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 205.
[55] *ibid.*, p. 216.
[56] Wieder, 'Read on Education' p. 90. Michael Parsons claims that as far as curriculum goes, Read's recommendations are more generally focused on, 'the 'manner' rather than the 'content' of education.' See Michael J. Parsons, 'Herbert Read on Education' *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 3, no. 4 (Oct. 1969), p. 33.
[57] Read, 'A Civilization From Under' p. 72.
[58] Read, 'Aesthetic Method of Education' p. 110. Emphasis original.
[59] Parsons, 'Herbert Read on Education' p. 35.

Practically, Read maintained that the curriculum ought to develop in stages. In the early stages, play activity should constitute the primary means of learning, and the teacher ought to adopt a more 'hands–off' role that entails only supplying and organising materials. The transition from play activities to the rudiments of music, drawing and painting would hopefully occur naturally. Read explains that any child 'can manage a brush, can with immense pleasure dab its fingers into point and transfer the colours, with some sense of purpose.' Shortly afterwards, he notes: 'Where there is a sense of purpose, there is already a rudiment of a sense of discipline...Discipline has begun, has been born in the process of primitive creative activity.'[60] As the student develops this 'discipline,' it is preferable that the teacher encourages the child to expand upon these new horizons. The teacher takes, in other words, a more active role: on the premise that 'means of sympathy and understanding' will liberate the child, the teacher leads the child from her/his initial egotistical stage to a more communal attitude.[61] In the later stages of education, Read noted, art would grow less instinctive as the adolescent develops her/his intellectual and creative faculties.

These curriculum changes had the potential to damage the development of artistic appreciation, but that damage, Read argued, was not necessarily, if at all, a foregone conclusion. In lauding the benefits of aesthetic education, he envisaged that the teacher builds on these changes by deepening the students' interest in art via the introduction of different styles and modes of artistic experience.[62] Depending on their areas of interest, students gradually specialise and have lessons in traditional subjects only in order to integrate these subjects with specialized work so that this process further develops the emotional characteristics of the student. Arbitrary subject matter divisions are only reasonable if teachers regard education as a tool to impart information in an accessible form. Education is best, according to Read, when subjects merge into another: 'How can history be explained without geography, or geography

[60] Herbert Read, *The Redemption of the Robot: My Encounter with Education Through Art* (Trident Press, New York, 1966), pp. 114–115.
[61] This is a Freudian term adopted by Read that refers to his belief that in the early stages of infancy the individual is essentially anti–social.
[62] Keel, 'Read on Education' p. 55.

without political economy, or political economy without natural philosophy…'[63] Although this question has a certain practical import, Read answered the question by underscoring that such interests must be directed towards concern not for practical, real–world applications alone, but rather for their aesthetic and creative qualities: 'the desire to make beautiful things must be stronger than the desire to make useful things; or rather, there must be an instinctive realisation of the fact that beauty and utility, each in its highest degree, cannot be conceived separately.'[64]

It is here that a strict appeal to rational education, evident in the integral educational tradition, contradicted Read's educational programme. Pedagogy based on scientific analysis would limit appeal to, and depth of experience in, artistic expression. This is not to suggest that the integrated model ignored the benefits of artistic growth. However, the difference was one of emphasis and concentration. Owing to the integrated model's focus on rationality, the accommodation of innate artistic features is less significant than it otherwise would have been.

Last, one can see a clear shift away from the centrality of labour activity as the primary means of liberation. Certainly, both Read and Tolstoy, like all anarchists, were critical of the fact, as they saw it, of the way that capitalism enslaved the worker in a totalising manner.[65] Indeed, it would be inaccurate to suggest that neither thinker believed, in principle, that labour activity lacked educational value. It is worth emphasising that Read appreciated the artistic, educative and mental health benefits of experimentation with manual tools: 'The people who make things—I have no evidence beyond my own observation—seem less liable to nervous breakdowns...The artist not only creates an object

[63] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 226.
[64] *ibid.*, p. 216.
[65] Read, for instance, argues that capitalism and socialism 'has not changed the servile nature of human bondage…The motive of his activity remains economic, and this economic motive inevitably leads to the social inequities from which he had hoped to escape.' Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' p. 35. Tolstoy, in tune with his romantic affiliations, believed that work could be enjoyed in 'healthy, varied and intelligible agricultural work' that was far from the corrupting and exploitative nature of work that he believed was evident in urban environments. Leo Tolstoy, 'The Slavery of our Times' in *Social Evils and Their Remedy*, ed. Helen Chrouschoff Matheson (Methuen, London, 1915), p. 67.

external to himself: in doing so he virtually reorganises the balance of impulses within himself.'[66] To Read, manual learning possessed the invaluable asset of advancing aesthetic appreciation and fostering individual creativity through manual/intellectual integration. To that end, he supported various workshops and studios at a secondary school level of school[67] and like Marx, agreed that the alienation of the individual constituted a fundamental problem in society. Therefore, in strictly practical terms, there were areas of overlap between the aesthetic and integrated model.

More fundamental, however, was the peripheral responsibility attributed to the manual/intellectual position as means to liberate the student. Tolstoy and Read moved away from focusing on directly challenging capitalism, either by arming the worker with skills or by generally empowering the worker, particularly through giving them the efforts of their labour. Rather, the role of manual education was valuable only if building the individual's creative instincts took priority. Indeed, the purpose of education was to draw upon a whole range of experiences from 'thought, logic, memory, sensibility and intellect'[68] in order to intensify the student's ability and familiarity in communication, poetry, craftsmanship, music, and painting. The integrated method ran the risk of failure precisely because it abandoned this priority.

The integration of all the senses, both conscious and unconscious, would, Read suggested, lead to the development of the personality of the individual. This stands in opposition to character development, which is a byword for the superficial development of the individual where values and attributes are imposed from above and assumed to be socially acceptable.[69] Once this distinction is recognised and an emphasis on 'character' development is abandoned, human liberation is possible. Autonomy develops when the unique personality is given the fullest opportunity for artistic expression as this enables the student to reach the stage of emotional and artistic integrity.

[66] Read, 'Freedom of the Artist' in *To Hell With Culture*, p. 122.
[67] Keel, 'Read on Education' p. 56.
[68] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 11.
[69] See, for example Read, *Redemption of the Robot*, p. 56 where Read states that this distinction represents the 'antithesis of those totalitarian doctrines of education...which strive to impose a unique concept of human nature on the infinite variety of human happiness.'

Read and Tolstoy lauded autonomy as the goal of education, but were aware of the enormous challenges that this goal constituted. For Read aesthetic education involved overcoming 'overwhelming difficulties.' He went on:

> It was not a question of squeezing in an extra hour for art, or of making handicraft a compulsory instead of an optional subject; it is not even a question of finding teachers with the necessary qualifications. If we are going to solve the problem in this way we shall be faced with the necessary of revising the curricula at every stage of the educational system, because not only must we secure time and opportunity for the positive teaching of good design, but we must also make sure that no negative and frustrating tendencies exist.[70]

Although the instructor needed to be prepared to make revisions of the curricula if deemed necessary, the fine line between permissiveness and development was traversed inconsistently. In fact, and will be seen in the next chapter, which examines Tolstoy's school at Yásnaya Polyána, contradictions do indeed develop, particularly in terms of encroaching upon the autonomy of the student. Whether unwittingly or not, Read seems to suggest an awareness of this problem when he stated:

> ...certain methods lead to results which I consider good, other methods lead to results which I consider bad, or to no results at all...The bad results are always produced by a method which is too conscious and deliberate, by discipline that is imposed from without, which is the command of the drill-sergeant. The good results are produced apparently by no method at all, or by a system of hints and suggestions...[71]

Read is unclear about what he means by 'hints and suggestions,' but in a real, practical sense, he raises the spectre of an educational programme mirroring the criticisms that the anarchists charged characterised other educational programmes: namely, authoritarian teacher intervention.

Egalitarianism and Community

While I examine this tension in more detail in the next chapter, in the meantime it is necessary to recognise that underpinning this aesthetic theory were

[70] Read, 'Civilization from Under' p. 72.
[71] Read, 'Aesthetic Method of Education' pp. 107–108.

revolutionary expectations. Like all anarchists, Read and Tolstoy believed that the praxis of a libertarian education would contribute to a radically changed social consciousness. While aesthetic education may involve facing 'overwhelming difficulties,' ultimately this challenge was worth it. In the anarchist publication *Freedom*, Read wrote that education, if managed correctly, equated to revolution: 'it is only in so far as we can liberate the growing shoots of mankind, shoots not yet stunted by an environment of hatred and injustice, that we can expect to make any enduring change in society.'[72]

To start this process, a total reorientation of the personality vis-à-vis education was required. Importantly, Read's concept of mutual aid is similar to that held by most anarchists, namely that natural social harmony is only possible once authority and coercion is removed. An aesthetic experience would intensify this process because art is, as Read pointed out, innately communal: 'we create to communicate: we create a language out of sounds, we create a pictorial language out of line and colour.'[73] In other words, moral social bonds form naturally in a harmonious and spontaneous process, and thus mirror our organic nature.[74] Therefore, the explosion of creativity would enhance an appreciation for mutual support and non–competitiveness.

When contemplating how both goals would be achieved, Read recognised that an aesthetic education would result, in the short term, in an uneven output of talented artists with unique talents. These individuals would, he assumed, possess greater emotional and aesthetic integrity than most thereby providing a 'beacon in the darkness' that shines the way to social change. Read suggested that: 'The human race evolves in virtue of its collectivity, as a herd,' and added this caveat: 'But the herd generates within itself acuter points of consciousness, which are the minds of the individuals: these individuals relay to the community their creative acts of perception. There is a gradual, a very gradual, change of consciousness in the whole body.'[75] This unequal development of individual talent did not constitute elitism in the form of class or status but instead was, according to

[72] Read, 'Anarchism: Past and Future' in *Freedom* (London, May 17, 1947), p. 6.
[73] Read, 'Aesthetic Method of Education' p. 108.
[74] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 121.
[75] Read, 'Revolution and Reason' p. 24.

Read, the consequence of a radicalised education system that would rebalance itself, in the long term, in the form of complete individualisation.[76] In short, even the most insignificant artwork would contribute to the richness of the collective.

In explaining why natural affectionate, egalitarian and community–minded relationships between people had diminished, Read, for instance, focused on how authoritarian state structures corrupt freedom of artistic expression. The problem of social continuity was best addressed by first understanding the corrupting nature of institutions, because conceptualising the problem in this way offered the most intelligent approach to seeking answers on how to best harmonise individual psychology. In the words of Read the 'worth of civilisation or a culture is not valued in the terms of its material wealth or military power, but by the quality and achievements of its representative individuals—its philosophers, its poets, and its artists.' The progress of humanity therefore constitutes, 'the gradual establishment of the qualitative differentiation of the individuals in society.'[77] In contrast, the authoritarian characteristics of state education in encouraging social homogeneity and discouraging the differentiation of individuals, actively stunts individual development, and therefore liberation. In a vital sense, Read believed that anarchism provides the only real solution to the problem of autonomy in education because it is characterised by fluidity and a rejection of living one's life according to fixed, state–sanctioned precepts.[78]

In developing the theme of community and social dysfunction, Read turned to modern psychology to further explain this. Read asserted that social dislocation occurs when a child experiences biological and moral/social conflict, that is, when systems of morality and their attendant social norms contravene, or negate, the child's biological nature. Biological impulses themselves, Read claimed, stem from certain instincts such as an impulse to celebrate an affinity with

[76] David Thistlewood, 'Creativity and Political Identification in the Work of Herbert Read' *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 26, no. 4 (autumn 1986), p. 351.
[77] Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' in *Anarchy and Order,* p. 38.
[78] Reichert, 'Relevance of Anarchism' p. 147. It is curious to note that Read cites ancient Greece and the Middle Ages as possible examples where art comprised a central component of community spirit and appreciation. Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' p. 38; See also 'Aesthetic Method of Education' p. 108.

nature.[79] Thus, viewing social problems from a biological angle,[80] Read argued that children are incapable of being fully sociable. The process of sociability is a painful one of adaptation, in which children accept compromise by subordinating their personality to 'social normalcy.' This psychological damage is called 'maladjustment,' whereby the 'mental growth of the child [is] impeded, and its psyche distorted.'[81] Read concluded that the, at times, irrational devotion to political leadership was not dissimilar to Freud's argument of 'unconscious infancy,'[82] according to which the transference of devotion to authoritarian figures stems from an inability to reconcile or dissolve deep psychological and biological repression.[83]

In order to alleviate this difficult process of social adaptation, Read was confident that the communal nature of art would go some way to achieving this. According to Read, art is 'a bond.'[84] Colours, lines, shapes and sounds are vital tools to aid communication as they represent essential raw materials from which 'the child has to learn to communicate with the outer world.'[85] Rather than concentrating on understanding verbal signs that the child may or may not use to communicate, it was far more natural, according to Read, for the child to express her/himself by using signs and symbols. And what Read means here were primarily drawings and other spontaneous creative activities. If this develops to its full capacity, that is, if this medium of expression becomes a central feature to

[79] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 27.
[80] Reichert, 'Relevance of Anarchism' p. 148. Read's romantic affiliation with aesthetics was bolstered by his faith in psychology as a thorough method to augment his ideas on art.
[81] Read, 'Aesthetic Method of Education' p. 110.
[82] Freud argued that young children possess a natural aggressive tendency in reaction against the 'authority [normally the father figure] which prevents him from having his first, but nonetheless most important satisfactions' met. For a succinct summary of Freud's position on unconscious infancy see Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, trans. Joan Riviere, ed. James Strachey (Hogarth Press, London, 1982), pp. 60–70.
[83] Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' pp. 39–40. Also see, 'The Cult of Leadership' in *To Hell With Culture*, p. 55. Writing during the fascist period, Read, like all anarchists, drew no distinction between the affects of fascism and those of democracy, noting that democracies are 'more deceitful' because they profess to 'righteousness which hides their real nature and dimensions.' Read, 'The Cult of the Leadership' pp. 48–49. Interestingly, Read may have in fact more in common with Wilhelm Reich's position here on mass psychology in which Reich suggested that the rise and support of extreme authoritarian regimes could be traced to, among other things, bourgeois patriarchal family and its role in continual sexual repression. For a concise account of Reich's position, see Richard King, *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and the Realm of Freedom* (Delta Books, New York, 1972), pp. 65–68.
[84] Read, 'The Aesthetic Method of Education' p. 108.
[85] *ibid.*, p. 105.

understanding what the child is expressing, then he/she is 'liberated by means of sympathy and understanding' as this procedure accords with what comes naturally to the child. In turn, this process intensifies social bonds because these acts of sympathy develop trust and social fulfilment, while the natural artistic inclinations of the child are not repressed.[86] Put simply then, art recaptures a new sense of social unity, or as Read put it, a 'unity of consciousness.'[87]

To emphasise, Read understood the rise of the state, much like Kropotkin, as an historical aberration:

> The individual and the group—this is the relationship out of which spring all the complexities of our existence...Consciousness itself is born of this relationship, and all those instincts of mutuality and sympathy which become codified in morals...Religion and politics follow, as attempts to define the instinctive conduct natural to the group...Man finds his instincts, already deformed by being defined, now altogether inhibited. The organic life of the group...ceases to be life in any real sense...[88]

In the capitalist system, the economic dictates of production marginalise art, because profit, and not beauty, is its overwhelming objective. Consequently, Read noted, art and the artist are largely treated with 'ignorance, indifference and unconscious cruelty' and find themselves 'continually struggling against the general notion that art is unnatural—that the artist is a rare and eccentric individual, having little or nothing in common with the common man.'[89] Thus, the state tends to view artists sceptically, while a select few only appreciate their work.[90] In casting his eyes to Soviet Russia in the 1930s, when perceptions of internal and external threats, real or not, prevailed, Read argued that organic artistic creation was subdued. In Soviet Russia art was important only if it fulfilled a utilitarian purpose consistent with legitimising the state's values.[91]

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[86] *ibid.*, pp. 106–108.
[87] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 70.
[88] Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' p. 40.
[89] Read, 'Aesthetic Method of Education' pp. 100–101.
[90] Woodcock, *Stream and the Source*, p. 212.
[91] Read, 'Poets and Politicians' in *Anarchy and Order,* p. 68. Also see Read, 'To Hell With Culture' in *To Hell With Culture*, p. 16, Thistlewood, 'Creativity and Political Identification' p. 347. Numerous commentators have agreed with Read's proposition that art in the Soviet Union was used extensively to help spur the revolution forward. See, for example Catherine Cooke, *Russian Avant-Garde: Theories of art, Architecture and the City* (Academy Editions, London,

Indeed, there is a close relationship between the state and the use of propaganda: to uphold and celebrate the new values of socialist dogma and practice, the Soviet political hierarchy entrenched its own position, usually didactically, using art. In essence, art fulfilled the role of a 'pin-up' to represent state values where it has a 'social, moral, educational—political—mission.'[92] In this arrangement, autonomous artistic expression is condemned as 'petty bourgeois individualism' and the independent artist viewed with suspicion.[93]

As aforementioned in the introduction to this chapter, Read put his faith in anarcho–syndicalism as the most viable practical social and political arrangement.[94] Tolstoy looked backwards to a pastoral vision of the Russian Mir for a glimpse of how the arrangement would work in practice. He believed that the peasant way of life was superior to any other, and, in particular, Tolstoy admired the patient and empathetic ways of the peasants when dealing with the harsh unremitting realities of peasant life. In spite of their lowly station, the peasants appeared to understand and celebrate an enhanced sense of compassion and sympathy for their fellow members despite the daily challenges that befell them.[95] Tolstoy believed that these social bonds were intensified under the auspices of a more 'natural' relationship in which everyday experience of laughter, grief and happiness cemented a community spirit that was, essentially, aesthetic in nature. Communication between individuals in the Mir was best understood as art, because it was the complete expression of individual sensibility.[96] Progress was measured not by technological sophistication and increased industrial division of labour,[97] but instead by the principles of community, freedom and individuality set in the context of the countryside.[98]

1995), pp. 17–18; Bruce Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell: The Story of a Thousand Years of Artistic Life in Russia* (Penguin, New York, 1998), pp. 332–335.

[92] Reszler, 'Bakunin, Marx and the Aesthetic Heritage' p. 44.

[93] Read, 'Poetry and Anarchy' in *Anarchy and Order*, p. 65.

[94] Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' p. 51.

[95] Andrew Donskov, 'The Peasant in Tolstoi's Thought and Writings' *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 21, no. 2 (March 1979), pp. 184, 186.

[96] Woodcock, *Anarchism,* p. 214.

[97] Tolstoy's dedication to a pastoral vision was driven, in large part, by his distaste for the way that he believed industrial cities negate the laws of 'brotherhood,' through exploitation and social division. See Tolstoy, 'Tolstoi's Criticism of his Age' p. 47.

[98] Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 216. It is interesting to note that Noam Chomsky argues that within the anarchist tradition the pre-industrial nature of anarchist thought, for which Tolstoy was a particularly strong adherent, does not always follow. According to Chomsky, the anarcho-

Both Read and Tolstoy were hesitant to present a picture of a detailed anarchist society. Like the majority of anarchists, any concept of a future planned society contradicted the anarchist principle of anti–authoritarianism. Unlike the social anarchists, however, both Read and Tolstoy placed far more emphasis on education to transform society. Read stated that it is '...always a mistake to build an *a priori* constitution. The main thing is to establish your principles—the principles of equality, of individual freedom...'[99] Similarly, Tolstoy's programme also addressed the 'treatment of the whole sphere of social and community education.' Tolstoy, as Murphy adds:

> ...wrote extensively on social issues, especially during the last thirty years of his life, and advocated major reforms in various spheres of Russian society. Recognising that such reforms would require fundamental changes...he saw an important role for educators in fostering the attitudes appropriate to such transformation and did much to promote this objective himself through his extensive activities in the whole field of adult and community education...What Tolstoy envisaged was the renewal of society through the fostering of the community spirit—a task he saw as essentially one for educators—and through the promotion of radically democratic structures that would offset the dominance of state monoliths, whether of the totalitarian or capitalist modes.[100]

Any recourse to violent rebellion would fragment what community ethic had developed, certainly in an educative context. Tolstoy claimed that other 'anarchists were right in everything; in the negation of the existing order, and in the assertion that, without authority, there could not be worse violence than that of authority under existing conditions. They are mistaken only in thinking that anarchy can be instituted by a [sudden] revolution.'[101] Eschewing violence as anathema to community life, Tolstoy held, then, that the radical transformation of human consciousness was linked to the individual's aesthetic inclinations. The eventual goal of anarchism would be achieved through individual civil

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syndicalist position represented, on the other hand, a sophisticated mode of organisation that aimed to incorporate a complex advanced industrial society within its social and economic makeup once state capitalism is dismantled. Chomsky, 'The Relevance of Anarcho–Syndicalism' in *Chomsky on Anarchism* p. 136.

[99] Read, 'Philosophy of Anarchism' p. 51. Emphasis original.

[100] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, pp. 7–8.

[101] Tolstoy, 'On Anarchy' in *Social Evils*, p. 185.

disobedience and personal rebellion.[102] 'A man is only free,' Tolstoy said, 'when no one can force him to do that which he believes to be wrong.'[103] In this sense, Tolstoy was committed to changing society through the radical transformation of 'public opinion.'[104] A radical shift in societal initiatives and conception would follow, as a consequence, once each individual recognises the illegitimacy of the state.[105]

Concluding Remarks

Taking its inspiration from the anarchist conception of the good society, the aesthetic educational programme rested on wider anarchist educative goals, where pedagogy, the curriculum and the school as a whole, fulfilled an important function to achieving a sense of autonomy in community. As Read states, each 'individual is born with certain potentialities which have a positive value for that individual' and it is the responsibility of the educator to 'develop these potentialities within the framework of society.'[106]

Where Read and Tolstoy differed from their social anarchist counterparts, at least in an educative approach, was in their specific concern with an aesthetic development. According to both Read and Tolstoy, any recourse to a strict rational education would result only in failure, as rational–minded teachers marginalise art in its broadest sense as a distraction, or, at worst, treat it with utter contempt, as having no educative value whatsoever.

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[102] Tager, *Radical Approach*, pp. 42–43. While Tolstoy vigorously opposed government, he condemned recourse to any violence to oppose the state. Unlike other anarchists, Tolstoy's commitment to the principle of 'non–violence' was absolute and unrepentant. For a summary of why Tolstoy was committed to the principle of non-violence as the most legitimate way to fight the state see, Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You: Christianity Not as a Mystic Religion but as a New Theory of Life*, trans. Constance Garnet (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1984), ch. X.

[103] 'Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy' *Interviews: An Anthology from 1859 to the Present Day*, ed. C., Silvester (Viking Press, London, 1993), p. 193.

[104] Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God,* pp. 254–256.

[105] For a good introduction to this aspect of Tolstoy's thought see, Terry Hopton, 'Tolstoy, God and Anarchism, *Anarchist Studies*, 8, no. 1 (March 2000), pp. 40–43.

[106] Read, *Education Through Art*, p. 2.

The alternative was aesthetic education, under the auspices of which, claimed both Read and Tolstoy, the student develops integrity, independence, self–empowerment primarily in tune with his/her own organic artistic growth. The role of the teacher is to accommodate the more irrational 'emotive' features of the student. In the next chapter I will evaluate Tolstoy's programme to gauge to the extent of which the above suggestions resulted in a positive outcome.

Chapter Five
Tolstoy and his School at Yásnaya Polyána

Tolstoy's discussions on curriculum and teaching methods were all collated in his own school journal, *Yásnaya Polyána*.[1] From 1861 to 1862 Tolstoy wrote 12 issues of his journal that explained his philosophy on educational matters. These writings, initially collated to inform and attract other contemporary educators, were subsequently published in a single book, *Leo Tolstoy on Education*.[2] Unlike Ferrer's writings on education, Tolstoy's school observations offer a clarity and honesty that is refreshing and illuminating, for he did not shun addressing and confronting his own mistakes. Having learnt that what was successful at this school one day was not necessarily successful the next day, Tolstoy constantly fine–tuned its educational programme in order to accommodate and protect the right to negative freedom that he insisted his students have. Without an environment of freedom, said Tolstoy, the process of 'drawing out' aesthetic and emotional potential would be compromised.

I argue in this chapter that, in a practical sense, Tolstoy's extreme position on negative liberty is incompatible with his commitment to aesthetic development. This is not to suggest that Tolstoy's experiment was not without some success. As will be shown, Tolstoy did not propagate—like Ferrer—a prescribed political consciousness in the classroom and his experiment did foster artistic growth. A deliberate prescriptive framework whose agenda was to mould and shape a particular political vision, therefore, did not characterise Tolstoy's experiment. While, in this sense, his school was much more 'free' than Ferrer's, Tolstoy's experimental approach made his school programme somewhat problematic: in a seeming contradiction to his avowedly eclectic and flexible methodology, Tolstoy encroached upon the autonomy of his students by employing authoritarian methods, sometimes out of necessity and sometimes because he saw no alternative. He thereby compromised his staunch position on non–interference, albeit unwittingly.

[1] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, p. 58.
[2] *Tolstoy on Education*, trans. Leo Weiner, intro. Reginald D. Archambault (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967).

To elaborate upon this argument, my aim, like previous chapters, is to make a comparative evaluation between negative and positive liberty, in order to highlight this tension. After noting his commitment to negative liberty and how he practiced it, I will then draw attention to Tolstoy's confused approach to positive liberty. In turn, after then appraising his aesthetic approach, not least in terms of its limited success, I examine Tolstoy's methodology with specific focus on the problems of experimentation. I focus on two areas. First, I explore Tolstoy's attempts to educate his charges in the basics of literacy and art, and show how this process cannot develop without encroaching on the autonomy of the student. Second, I evaluate the nature of the school environment and make mention of some of the less than congenial aspects of student behaviour. Last, I draw conclusions from these problems with a specific focus on the wider political dimensions, most notably how these problems thwarted a radical shift in consciousness.

Negative Liberty

Tolstoy's school operated predominantly between the years 1859–1862 when he set up his own independent school on his estate at Yásnaya Polyána. The school, which constituted the mainstay of Tolstoy's interests until he started work on *War and Peace* in 1862, was comprised of a two–storey building and had four teachers, including Tolstoy. The students were mostly from the local farms that surrounded Tolstoy's estate and the students were not required to bring with them any books or materials. No homework was set, disciplines ranged from literature through to art and music, and each new day started afresh, for the students were not 'obliged to remember any lesson—nothing that they were doing the day before.'[3]

Tolstoy's educational programme emphasised individual spontaneity, emotional growth and the free play of the child. By appealing to the aesthetic impulses of each student, Tolstoy hoped to revolutionize society through the formation of new relationships based on love, equality and appreciation for mutual support.

[3] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' in *Tolstoy on Education*, p. 229.

His programme was, as Blaisdell asserts, 'revolutionary but deliberately nondogmatic.'[4] Shunning (intentionally) the imposing of any one kind of political and social ideology upon his students, and abandoning the traditional approach to education, Tolstoy concentrated instead on liberating what he regarded as the original, innate and therefore uncorrupted nature of the student.[5] Tolstoy saw children as individuals who possessed abundant imagination, were perpetually keen to learn and curious.[6] Human potential, thus developed, is built around the creation of artists, poets and pastoral visionaries and not well–skilled workers ready to challenge the capitalist state.[7]

Tolstoy aimed to create a culture in his school that reflected the life in the streets of Marseille. He rejected any pedagogical practice that he believed created false motivations to learn. Indeed, he did not use grades or examinations, asserting that, 'the recitation of lessons and the examinations were a remnant of the superstitions and the mediaeval school, and that the present order of things they were positively impossible and only injurious.'[8] Although students may well, as Tolstoy recognised, learn and develop intellectually to avoid punishment or receive a reward, this kind of education lacked worth because the motivation behind punitive punishment is one–dimensional. As Smith argues, in the context of Tolstoy's educational thought, rewards and punishments are 'not so much accounts of motivation as projections of the materialist, competitive value systems of society outside the classroom. The problem is not so much that they are false…as that they are incompatible with the kind of natural motivation that plays such a large part in cultural learning.'[9] In essence, motivations drawn from rewards and punishments minimise, rather than maximise, the potentialities of students.

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[4] Bob Blaisdell, introduction to *Tolstoy As Teacher: Leo Tolstoy's Writings on Education* trans. Christopher Edgar, ed. Bob Blaisdell (Teachers and Writers Collaborative, New York, 2000), p. 11.

[5] Tolstoy was heavily influenced by Rousseau's argument that individuals come into the world comprised of innate qualities of piety, sympathy, and a sense of equality. For a succinct summary of Tolstoy position on human nature see Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, pp. 240–46.

[6] Adir Cohen, 'The Educational Philosophy of Tolstoy' *Oxford Review of Education*, 7, no. 3 (1981), p. 243.

[7] Tager, *A Radical Approach*, p. 94.

[8] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 295.

[9] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 67.

Compulsory school attendance, as Tolstoy warned, is incompatible with developing in students the motivation to learn. Tolstoy maintained that the requirement to come to school and, while at school, remain there, was optional: '[the student] has the right not to come to school or, having come, not the right to listen to the teacher.'[10] The teacher ought not to impose his or her will over pupils, because if pupils are going to develop their own instinctual interests, the teacher/student relationship must draw on emotional support where both parties develop trust. Consequentially, independence was crucial if this kind of relationship was to develop.[11]

To generate an environment conducive to independence, Tolstoy attempted to remove as many coercive elements as possible.[12] Accordingly, before any general teaching practices began, Tolstoy did not impose any strict regime on his pupils; generally, he let them organise themselves. Initially, however, as Tolstoy himself observed, this approach was not without its challenges:

> Before these classes there is animation, fighting, shouting, and the most pronounced external order: some drag the benches from one room into another; some fight; some of the children of the manorial servants run home for some bread, which they roast in the stove; one is taking something away from a boy; another is doing some gymnastics, and....the louder the teacher calls,—this has actually happened,—the louder they shout: his loud voice only excites them.[13]

While this may challenge the most ardent supporter of permissiveness, Tolstoy observed that this chaos subsided, and his students generally calmed down under their own initiative. Eventually, in 'the majority of cases,' Tolstoy noted, 'there is no need to say anything.'[14] Tolstoy goes on to say that his pupils developed their own order based on mutual adjustment: 'We think that the disorder is growing greater and greater...we think there is no means of stopping it but by the use of force,—whereas we only need to wait a little, and the disorder (or

[10] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 233.
[11] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 65.
[12] *ibid.*, p. 66.
[13] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 232.
[14] *ibid.*, p. 233.

animation) calms down naturally by itself, growing into a much better and more permanent order than what we have created.'[15]

It is instructive to note here that wider anarchist theory argues, as Tolstoy did, that a 'natural' social order emerges, or ought to emerge, without interference from the state. Anarchism is constructed on the importance, and very possibility, of small group organisation that is freed from an overarching coercive institution. Tolstoy's above observations provide a glimpse of this possibility. Tolstoy maintained that in order to crystallise a reciprocal relationship between student and teacher it was first necessary to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, that is, in a democratic and organic fashion and not by purely teacher–directed means. Face to face interaction and organisation create the conditions for open discussions and sharing responsibility, and this also enhances a sense of autonomy in its broadest sense.

Positive Liberty

Nonetheless, there are objections, as will be seen below, to Tolstoy's observations concerning natural order. When we turn our attention to his principle of positive liberty and what this encompassed in terms of teaching experiences aimed at building self–development, we see a paradox: some of the free conditions Tolstoy created were undermined by his experimental approach to curriculum content and classroom teaching practices, because the very nature of experimentation (trying one thing one day, another thing the next day, and so on) invariably led to intrusive practices being used to guide experimentation. It is pertinent, then, to start off our evaluation of positive liberty with a focus on Tolstoy's overall methodology. Here we can grasp Tolstoy's technique while noting the benefits that evolved.

Tolstoy provides illuminating accounts of his interactions and approaches to instruction in a series of essays entitled 'The School at Yásnaya Polyána.' Here Tolstoy set out in detail his teaching style free from formulas and other theoretical concepts. Arguably, the greatest strength of Tolstoy's insights into

[15] *ibid.*, p. 234.

education is the very descriptiveness that he provides, often with brutal honesty. Tolstoy reflects on his experiments without censoring any allusions to his own mistakes or misjudgement.

This honest descriptiveness is apparent form the very outset of his journal. He starts the journal with an introduction about his curriculum:

> We have no beginners. The lowest class reads, writes, solves problems in the first three arithmetical operations, and reads sacred history, so that the subjects are divided in the programme in the following manner:
> (1) mechanical and graded reading, (2) writing, (3) penmanship, (4) grammar, (5), sacred history, (6) Russian History, (7) drawing, (8) mechanical drawing, (9) singing, (10) mathematics, (11) talks on the natural sciences, (12) religion.[16]

While this curriculum framework may look traditional, Tolstoy intended it to be flexible in its application. After all, he was committed to maintaining a broad range of disciplines so that the school could draw from an overarching framework to sequence school activities in an organic as opposed to a regimented manner. Tolstoy rejected a definite prescriptive curriculum, as antithetical to the open exploratory and problem–solving manner in which students encounter subject–content. A prescribed curriculum would depersonalise the process of learning by divorcing knowledge from its meaning.[17] 'According to the programme,' Tolstoy states, 'the teacher may begin with arithmetic and pass over to geometry, or he may start on sacred history, and end up with grammar.'[18] This flexibility complemented the cultural settings of his students—it did not seek to impose an artificial fabricated culture on the student via regimented subject division. Moreover, it provided the student with individual choice. In opposition to traditional education, the student is subject to 'dynamic involvement' in which aspects of the student's interests are mutually agreed upon by both the instructor and student, providing the instructor deems this 'worthwhile.'[19]

[16] *ibid.*, p. 227.
[17] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, p. 108.
[18] Tolstoy, 'The School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 232.
[19] Archambault, 'Introduction' to *Tolstoy on Education*, p. xii.

To achieve these ends, Tolstoy based his curriculum on five general methods that he believed complemented the natural curiosity of students.[20] First, Tolstoy hoped that a general permissive environment would encourage student participation precisely because this kind of atmosphere was flexible. Second, he encouraged student participation by simply ensuring that he was sensitive to his student's requests. If they wanted to be read to, then it was the responsibility of the instructor to meet this request so long as it was reasonable.[21] If a student exhibits enthusiasm, the teacher must not dampen it. Third, Tolstoy encouraged his students to learn to read independently. In the below passage, he describes a lesson in fluid reading:

> [The lesson] consists in giving the pupil a book and leaving it entirely to him to spell and understand as well he can. The pupil, who has learned to read by syllables so fluently that he does not feel the need of asking the sexton to read with him, but depends upon himself, always acquires that passion for the process of reading which is so ridiculed in Gógol's 'Petrúshka,' and on account of that passion advances.[22]

Fourth, Tolstoy honed these inclinations: pupils were encouraged to learn poems and other stories and then the teacher would ask each student to repeat what they knew. Tolstoy gave his students examples in sentence construction that utilised the different aspects of speech. This he hoped would instil in his students a sense of understanding of the wider implications of language. In addition, Tolstoy used verses, wrote sentences from given words and even encouraged games that involved a student having to guess any given word in a sentence. These exercises were designed to convince students that; 'the word is one having its own immutable laws, changes, endings, and correlations between these endings—a conviction which is late in entering their minds, and which is needed before grammar.' Tolstoy went on: 'All these exercises give them pleasure; all the grammatical exercises breed tedium. The strangest and most significant thing is that grammar is dull, although there is nothing easier.'[23]

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[20] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, pp. 137–146.
[21] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 267.
[22] *ibid.*, p. 267.
[23] *ibid.*, p. 285.

The last method culminated in fostering spontaneous self–motivation where, according to Tolstoy, his pupils were reading books with ever–growing interest and comprehension on their own.[24] This final approach was important to Tolstoy because this kind of self–motivational pedagogy meant that the possibly coercive element in instruction is at least diminished precisely because, if the student is motivated to learn, the teacher is forced to intervene less regularly. From a wider perspective, these methods were aiming to emphasise and develop literacy skills through channelling the imaginative and emotional characteristics of students. Here Tolstoy used various forms of literature, from parables through to poems, in an effort to unleash the artist within.[25]

Tolstoy dealt at length with these themes of self–motivation, understanding and the creative nature of learning through writing in an important essay on education entitled, 'Are the Peasant Children to Learn to Write From Us, or Are We to Learn from the Peasant Children?' In the following narrative from this essay, Tolstoy observes each member contributing to this process.

> I began the story…and wrote down the first page. Every unbiassed [sic] man, who has the artistic sense and feels with the people, will, upon reading this first page, written by me, and the following pages of the story, written by the pupils themselves, separate this page from the rest, as he will take a fly out of the milk: it is so false, so artificial, and written in such a bad language. I must remark that in the original form it was even more monstrous, since much has been corrected, thanks to the indications of the pupils.
>
> Fédka kept looking up from his copy-book to me, and, upon meeting my eyes, smiled, winked, and repeated:
>
> 'Write, write, or I'll give it to you!' He was evidently amused to see a grown person write a theme.
>
> Having finished his theme worse and faster than usual, he climbed on the back of my chair and began to read over my shoulders. I could not proceed; others came up to us, and I read to them what I had written.
>
> They did not like it, and nobody praised it. I felt ashamed, and, to soothe my literary ambition, I began to tell them the plan of what was to follow….One would say that the old man should be a magician; another would remark: 'No, that won't do—he will be just a soldier; the best thing will be if he steals from him; no, that won't go with the proverb', and so forth.
>
> All were exceedingly interested. It was evidently a new and exciting sensation for them to be present at the process of creation, and to take part in it. Their judgments were all, for the most part, of the same kind,

[24] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 269.
[25] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, p. 138.

> and they were just, both as to the very structure of the story and as to the details and characterisations of the persons. Nearly all of them took part in the composition; but, from the start, there distinguished themselves positive Semka, by his clearly defined artistic quality of description, and Fédka, by the correctness of his poetical conceptions, and especially by the glow of and rapidity of his imagination
>
> ...I was strongly possessed by the demands of a regular structure, and of an exact correspondence of the idea of the proverb to the story; while they, on the contrary, were only concerned about the demands of artistic truth.[26]

In essence, Tolstoy sought a synergistic balance between freedom and self–discipline that would facilitate student interaction in classroom learning activities. Indeed, his students demonstrated an intense ambition to participate in the activities: 'We worked from seven to eleven o-clock; they felt neither hunger nor fatigue and even got angry with me when I stopped writing.' Reflecting on the merits of his open approach to student participation, Tolstoy went on to describe his sense of glee when two of the most talented students showed what Tolstoy thought was an extremely high level of artistic maturity. Making reference to Fédka, Tolstoy observed that 'the feeling of measure, was developed in him to an extraordinary degree.'[27]

Tolstoy's analysis in his essay, 'how children learn,' concentrates on the emotional compression of Fédka's narrative during a lesson where Fédka composed his own story. After reading some of Fédka's compositions, Tolstoy observed that his student demonstrated extraordinary emotional and artistic maturity. In a story about the life of a soldier's wife, Fédka, according to Tolstoy, wrote with an uncanny ability to draw the reader's attention to the emotional state of the characters. Indeed, Tolstoy described Fédka's account of a wedding scene as 'uncommonly good' because:

[26] Tolstoy, 'Are the Peasant Children to Learn to Write From Us, Or Are We to Learn from the Peasant Children?' in *Tolstoy and Education*, pp. 193–194.
[27] *ibid.*, p. 197.

> When, for example, he wanted some bread, he did not say that he asked his mother for it, but that he bent his mother down. This is not said by accident, but because he remembers his relation to his mother at that stage of his growth, and because he remembers how timid that relation was in the presence of others, and how familiar in their absence. There is one other thing out of a mass of observations which he could have made during the wedding ceremony which seemed to have impressed him, and which he noted down, because to him and to each of us it pictures the whole character of these ceremonies.[28]

The narrative is significant because Fédka focuses primarily on how the hardships and challenges of life affect his characters. Through his use of language in that way, Fédka drew the reader's attention to the underlying state, both emotional and cultural, of each character. For this reason, Tolstoy was drawn to 'the simplicity of his heart' in which he saw 'the artist' when examining Fédka's writings. What is striking about this composition of the soldier's wife is the importance of imagination to foster reading and artistic expression, especially within the domain of the student's own worldview where, according to Tolstoy, 'the germination of the mysterious flower of poetry' flourished.[29]

Experimentation and the Problem of 'Authority'

In order to develop the 'unique personality' mentioned in the previous chapter, Tolstoy sought to connect the educative experience with meaningful learning. Learning has meaning, claimed Tolstoy, when emotional and artistic integrity arise predominantly in an environment where the student is constantly learning, evaluating and challenging his/her conclusions and observations in conjunction with a fluid pedagogical experience. Instruction in the rudiments of education is thus fundamental so that artistic and intellectual growth can occur in the first place. Without this instruction and consequent growth, students cannot fully

[28] *ibid.*, pp. 210–211.

[29] *ibid.* It is useful to note that in other disciplines, Tolstoy used a similar technique. In teaching grammar, he appealed to students by connecting language with everyday meaning. Moreover, he maintained that individuals acquire language skills without any formal training: '…why do I teach them all that, when it appears that they know it as well as I do? Whether I ask him what the genitive plural feminine gender of "great" is, or where the predicate, and where the modifiers are, or what the origin of such and such a word is,—he is in doubt only about the nomenclature, otherwise he will always use an adjective correctly in any case and the number you please. Consequently he knows declension...he naturally feels the radical relation of words, and he is more conscious than you of the laws by which words are formed, because no one more frequently invents new words then children.' (Tolstoy, 'School at Yásyana Polyána' p. 286).

actualise their potential for emotional and artistic growth: and this potentially stunted the road to self–empowerment, with self–empowerment being the destination of knowledge acquisition. In these facets of his educational programme, particularly with regard to the more aesthetic and artistic characteristics of his students, Tolstoy had some success.

On reading Tolstoy's essays, it becomes clear that he provided detailed discussions of ways and means of teaching the rudiments of art, literacy and music. Tolstoy, therefore, employed both non–directive and directive approaches in his teachings.[30] In a non–directive sense, Tolstoy believed it was crucial not to impose his own agenda on his charges. Conversely, Tolstoy, in a directive sense, also recognised that the instructor has the responsibility of finding ways to make material accessible to students while instilling in them knowledge that will encourage them to develop.[31]

Tolstoy's methodology, however, is at times problematic, precisely because he accepted that the teacher is responsible for making material accessible to students. Sometimes techniques work and require little or no modification, while at other times, techniques do not work at all. Tolstoy adopted traditional rote learning techniques, or intervened in an authoritarian manner, or was simply indecisive, often owing to no clear alternative methods and solutions becoming available to him.[32] While this lack of consistency is wholly in line with wider anarchist principles on education, (it stood in stark opposition to the predetermined nature of state education) it led to unforeseen problems arising.[33]

Tolstoy, who argued that fostering creative potential was a highly formative process, regarded encouragement and interference as necessary in order to ensure that pupils mastered the rudiments. Tolstoy paid meticulous attention to revising, trimming and restructuring as he went along. Therefore, to create writing that was lucid, imaginative and interesting, as Fédka seems to have done, Tolstoy emphasised the power of suggestion to stimulate intellectual and moral

[30] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, p. 142.
[31] Smith, *Libertarians,* p. 71.
[32] Armstrong and Pinch, *Tolstoy and Education*, pp. 35–36.
[33] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 71.

development. Where this emphasis became problematic is the sometimes traditional, authoritarian technique Tolstoy adopted to encourage the process of revising and restructuring.

The below passage provides an example of this problem. During an exercise in comprehension, Tolstoy requested that his students try to use the word 'ascertain' in their response to a question he posed. Below is Tolstoy's description:

> We read Gógol's 'The Elf King,' repeating each period in our own words. Everything went well to the third page, where the following period is to be found: 'All those learned people, both of the seminary and of the 'búrsa,' who fostered a certain traditional hatred against each other, were exceedingly poor as regards their means of subsistence and, at the same time, uncommonly voracious, so that it would have been an absolutely impossible matter to ascertain what number of flour and suet dumplings each of them got away with in the course of a supper, and therefore the voluntary contributions of the well-to-do proprietors could not be sufficient.'
> *Teacher.* Well, what have you read? (Nearly all the children are very well developed.)
> *Best Pupil.* In the búrsa the people were all big eaters, poor, and at supper got away with a lot of dumplings.
> *Teacher.* What else?
> *Pupil. (a rogue, and having a good memory, says anything that occurs to him).* An impossible matter, the voluntary contributions.
> *Teacher (angrily).* You must think. It is not that. What is an impossible matter?
> Silence.
> *Teacher.* Read it once more.
> They read it. Another boy, with a good memory added a few more words which he happened to recall...They began to talk the merest nonsense. The teacher became insistent.
> *Teacher.* What is an impossible matter?
> He wanted them to say: 'It was impossible to ascertain.' [34]

That Tolstoy subjugated his students to this kind of highly directed learning does not evoke the kind of cheerful, informal atmosphere that anarchists imagined. Rather, it is evident that Tolstoy inculcates fear of the teacher when his students do not readily provide the answer that he is seeking. In his effort to extract what he regarded as the 'correct' answer from his pupils, Tolstoy resorted, unwittingly or otherwise, to methods that he disavowed.

[34] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' pp. 276–277.

Tolstoy was aware that this kind of formal teaching method was fraught with challenges. After his attempts at teaching comprehension using the word 'ascertain,' he concluded that he had 'crushed and ruined a mass of budding flowers of a many sided comprehension.'[35] Tolstoy hoped that this tension might be transcended by the creation of a loving relationship between the teacher and student based on mutual respect and love. In 'Education and Culture' he argued that if 'you wish to educate the students by science, love your science and know it, and the students will love both you and the science, and you will educate them.'[36] If this relationship is constructed on a love of learning, the formative element of education may occur in collaboration between the student and instructor.[37]

This conception of a 'loving' collaboration in pursuit of learning, is consistent with Read's argument that a positive relationship between teacher and the student does not need to compromise the principles of freedom. Similarly, Tolstoy warned against excessive intervention by the teacher during formal writing lessons. After instructing Fédka on the finer points of creative writing, Tolstoy reproached himself thus for his shortcoming as a teacher:

> The fault is all my own, for I could not keep, during the writing of this chapter, from suggesting to him and telling him how I should have written. If there is a certain triteness in the introduction, when describing persons and dwellings, I am exclusively to blame for it. If I had left him alone, I am sure he would have described the same in action…much more artistically.[38]

Tolstoy went on to reflect on this delicate balance between positive guidance versus the possible dangers this may entail. For instance, he remarked:

> In the second chapter there may still be noted my influence of triteness and tampering, but here again the profoundly artistic features in the description of the pictures and of the boy's death redeem the whole matter.[39]

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[35] *ibid.*, p. 278.
[36] Tolstoy, 'Education and Culture' p. 149.
[37] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, p. 146.
[38] Tolstoy, 'How Peasant Children Write' p. 207.
[39] *ibid.*

Strictly, the real difficulty that confronted Tolstoy pertained not to his undue influence, but rather to the 'content' and methods of teaching grammar. Tolstoy maintained that to express ideas, it was important to learn the laws of grammar. In this case, the kind of teacher–student relationship he had in mind was offset by his inability to draw on a suitable, or as yet undiscovered, method that aids revision and development without compromising the principle of autonomy. In a frank admission of that inability, Tolstoy said that he 'was not yet able completely to renounce the tradition of grammar,' as it is 'necessary for the regular exposition of ideas.'[40] Simply learning grammar and syntax was important for, without these skills, developing good writing habits would not develop sufficiently. Again, then, Tolstoy compromised—and indeed even jettisoned—his strict allegiance to the principle of negative liberty.

A similar problem pervades Tolstoy's art lessons. Tolstoy believed that students ought to be given access to artistic learning, as this activity would foster aesthetic integrity. He rejected contemporary arguments that assumed artistic lessons be restricted to only a select few, and asserted that all children have the right to participate in art lessons.[41] His approach to art lessons echoed his approach to grammar instruction, for he scorned the view that art lessons are best boiled down to a few rudimentary exercises. To master art and its wider expressive potential, it was crucial, Tolstoy argued, to develop a logical strategy that progressively encourages artistic complexity. Hence his technique was comprised of a progressive tactic that aimed first to encourage interest and then to develop this interest further. That initial step involved building a reciprocal approach in collaboration with his students:

> The pupils were constantly called upon to criticise the lines and their relations, as I had drawn them. I frequently drew the lines wrong on purpose, in order to get an idea how much judgement they had formed about the correlation and regularity of the lines....I drew some figure, where some line ought to be added in their opinions, and I even made now one boy, now another, suggest some figure.

[40] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 287.
[41] *ibid.*, p. 341. For a very good introduction to an historical account of Russian education in the nineteenth century see Murphy's *Tolstoy and Education*, ch. 2.

> In this manner I not only roused a greater interest in the boys, but also a free participation in the formation and development of the figure.[42]

When Tolstoy concentrated on fostering greater artistic aptitude, he employed what appeared to be highly directed techniques:

> The drawing of figures from the board took place in the following manner: I first drew a horizontal or vertical line, divided it by points into different parts, and the students copied that line. Then I drew another, or several other lines, perpendicular to slanting to the first, standing in a certain relation to the first, and divided into units of the same size. Then we connected the points of division of these lines by straight lines or arcs, and thus formed a certain symmetrical figure, which, step by step as it grew up, was copied by the boys. I thought that this would be advantageous, in the first place, because the boy learned objectively the whole process of the formation of the figure, and, in a second, because through this drawing in the board there was developed in him the conception of the correlation of lines much better then through the copying of drawings and originals. With such a process there was destroyed the possibility of copying directly, but the figure itself, as an object from Nature, had to be copied on a diminished scale.[43]

Tolstoy failed, however, to provide any further information on other techniques he may have used, and did not explain how much attention he paid to art pedagogy in the context of his wider pedagogy. What can be concluded from his art pedagogy is that he seemed to revert to adopting a teacher–centred, repetitive methodology, probably because he knew of no other alternative.

Particular problems with his grammar and art pedagogy aside, Tolstoy's developmental programme raised a more general, basic problem: at times he is unclear about what resources are appropriate to use. This problem surfaced most profoundly when the issue of textbooks arose, that is, with regard to their role in encouraging literacy. Tolstoy's approach to teaching literacy started with using fairy tales and biblical stories, writing on the board a wide range of their own words and expressions. In this approach Tolstoy emphasised the need to incorporate student–centred activities and to cater to individual choice. Indeed, 'pupils....learned to read sentences written on the board by pupils themselves.'[44]

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[42] *ibid.*, p. 350.
[43] *ibid.*, pp. 349–350.
[44] *ibid.*, p. 270.

Moreover, Tolstoy not only used Russian proverbs and the Gospels, but also requested that his students devise their own stories. 'In the first and second class,' Tolstoy notes, 'the choice of compositions is left to the students themselves. A favourite subject for compositions for the first and the second class is the history of the Old Testament, which they write two months after the teacher has told it to them.'[45]

At first glance, Tolstoy is consistent in attempting to balance self–discipline with the necessity (for the teacher) to foster a non–coercive environment. Problems begin to surface in Tolstoy's strategy when he attempts to introduce the students to more complex literature. Tolstoy recognised that in order to develop literacy skills, it was important to use more complex texts to augment comprehension and reading ability. Tolstoy said that if the 'more difficult and more complicated' language is to be learned, then the 'language of Karemzín, Púshkin, and the Code of Laws' provide good examples.[46] After introducing his students to these examples, Tolstoy discovered that his pupils struggled to grasp the meaning of this new literature and lost interest. Strictly speaking, he believed that his student's inability to understand these texts arose simply because of their complexity.[47] As Tolstoy laments "After 'Robinson Crusoe" I tried Púshkin, namely his "Gravedigger;" - but without my aid they were still less able to tell it than "Robinson Crusoe," and "The Gravedigger" seemed much duller to them.'[48]

His concerns with textual difficulty notwithstanding, Tolstoy, more crucially, was concerned about the content of these texts and what they potentially represented. If we recall, Tolstoy rejected the way middle class culture forced a 'foreign' agenda on the peasantry. He similarly recognised that, owing to the kind of vernacular employed in these texts, along with their foreign sentence construction, that studying Púshkin and Defoe represented an imposition:

[45] *ibid.*, p. 288. On the Old Testament and 'scared history,' see also pp. 293-307.
[46] *ibid.*, p. 270.
[47] *ibid.*, pp. 270–271.
[48] *ibid.*, p. 271.

> Strange to say, I came to the conclusion that everything that we had been doing in those branches had been done along a false, exceptional path, which had no meaning and no future, and which was insignificant in comparison with those demands and even with those productions of those same arts, samples of which we find among the people....I have for years vainly endeavoured to transmit to the pupils the poetical beauties of Púshkin and of our whole literature...without being able to obtain any results...[but] it was enough for me accidentally to open Rýbnikov's collection [of folk-songs] and the poetical demand of the pupils found its full satisfaction.[49]

Tolstoy was not surprised then when his students had trouble comprehending these kinds of 'poetical' texts because their rejection constituted, he argued, an instinctual emotional reaction against, and innate critical appreciation for, what the texts represented—namely, a foreign artificial culture that is out of step with their own.

Tolstoy's explanations for why his students rejected Púshkin and others may be open to debate, but for our purposes two points can be noted. First, Tolstoy could not resolve this tension, because he claimed it was also counter–intuitive not to encourage and develop literacy in this artificial manner. In a reflection reminiscent of utopianism, Tolstoy forlornly hoped that:

> ...the seeming defeat does not lie in the essence of the case, but in our prepossession with the thought that the aims of language instruction is to raise the pupils to the level of the knowledge of the literary language and, above all, in the rapid acquisition of that knowledge. It is very likely that the graded reading, the subject of our dreams, will appear of itself, and that the knowledge of the literacy language will of its own accord come to each pupil....[50]

In another moment of optimism, Tolstoy even thought that, in the long–term this above paradox would be of less significance once the individual is freed from the dominating 'false' affects of wider societal institutions. In the new society, what constitutes higher art in its broadest sense, suggested Tolstoy, will be completely different:

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[49] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' pp. 345–346. On Tolstoy's critique, see also Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, p. 240.
[50] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásnaya Polyána' pp. 274–275.

> Only those productions will be considered art which transmit feelings drawing men together in brotherly union, or such universal feelings as can unite all men. Only such art will be chosen, tolerated, approved, and diffused. But art transmitting feelings flowing from...voluptuous art, transmitting feelings of superstitious fear, of pride, of vanity, of ecstatic admiration of national heroes...will be censured and despised by public opinion. All the rest of art, transmitting feelings accessible only to a section of people, will be considered unimportant.[51]

These peculiar solutions only serve to highlight the untenability of Tolstoy's extreme position. Apart from abandoning these texts altogether, which Tolstoy was reluctant to do, there is no instant solution to transcending the gulf between popular and highbrow culture. Tolstoy pinned his hopes on discovering a 'carry–over' method that would not lead to the problems described above. Later in life, Tolstoy dedicated his energies to writing the *ABC Reader.* This effort was nothing less than an attempt to publish a book on transitional literature—or literature that would help encourage student's to enjoy more complex texts without compromising their instinctual rejection of middle class literature.[52]

The second point one can make about Tolstoy's explanation for why his students rejected Púshkin and others, is that Tolstoy's own indecisiveness must have confused his pupils. Given his own misgivings about how best to encourage literacy, his attempts to foster comprehension swung from one solution to the next: in one instance, he simply tried to coax the correct answer from his students, while in another he attempted to use substitution words as a means to encourage language comprehension.[53] For instance, Tolstoy would explain a word and then ask his students what other words mean the same thing. Here, too, Tolstoy remained vexed about this strategy. He complained bitterly, at one point, that 'you give a whole series of words, the connection of which is as unintelligible as the word itself.'[54] This experimentation resulted in his approach becoming progressively teacher–centred. Furthermore, his imposition of one new methodology on top of another, by default, meant that he was increasingly eroding the fluid nature of his experiment.

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[51] Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art*, trans. Aylmer Maude (Walter Scott, London, 1899), pp. 92–193.
[52] Murphy, *Tolstoy and Education*, p. 141. On transitional literature, see also Tolstoy, 'The School at Yásnaya Polyána' p. 274.
[53] Tolstoy, 'School at Yásyana Polyána,' p. 275.
[54] *ibid.*

A Natural Order?

This somewhat blind, *ad hoc* experimentation also had negative repercussions for other more general aspects of his programme. This, perhaps, is best exemplified in an incident Tolstoy describes with remarkable candour. In the incident one of his students steals a Leydon jar along with numerous pencils and books. The culprit turns out to be a 'manorial boy' from a distant village who, says Tolstoy, had influenced a 'peasant child' from the same village to cooperate in committing the act of thievery. After a few days the thief is discovered although Tolstoy does not explain how.[55]

In giving the matter some consideration, Tolstoy decided it was best to leave his students to decide what was 'best.' In this decision, Tolstoy is guided by a statement he made shortly before describing the thievery incident: The school 'has no right and ought not to reward and punish; [and]....the best police and administration of a school consist in giving full liberty to the pupils to study and settle their disputes as they know best.'[56] After much debate from the group about what constituted the most appropriate means to deal with the issue, they agree that the boys must wear a label with the word 'thief' sown onto their shirts. After their shirts were tagged and worn, the punished boys wept while the others looked on in glee. Tolstoy describes his reaction with brutal honesty:

> This punishment, to our shame be it said, had been used by us before, and the very boy who the year before had worn such a label, with the inscription 'liar,' was the most persistent in demanding that label for the thief. We agreed on the label, and while a girl was sewing it on, all the pupils, with malicious joy, looked at the punished boys, and made fun of them. They demanded that the punishment be increased... "Let them keep on the labels until the holidays," said they.'[57]

After much humiliation bestowed upon the student, Tolstoy eventually tore the label off in repulsion.[58] After the main culprit stole property for a second time, and, again, the label was sown on the culprit's shirt, Tolstoy admitted:

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[55] *ibid.*, 238–39.
[56] *ibid.*, p. 237.
[57] *ibid.*, p. 239.
[58] *ibid.*, pp. 238–239.

> I began to feel vexed. I was almost enraged against the thief. I looked at the face of the punished boy, which now was even paler, more suffering, and more cruel than before; I for some reason thought of prisoners in jail, and I suddenly felt so ashamed and felt such loathing for myself that I tore off the stupid label…I convinced myself that there were secrets of the soul, hidden from us, upon which only life can act, and not moral precepts and punishments.[59]

The conundrum for Tolstoy, then, was how to punish the act of thievery but not shame the thief in such a way that encouraged his larcenous impulses and discover a method that avoided evoking in the other students a sadistic enjoyment of humiliating others.[60]

Two important points can be gleaned from this incident. One, Tolstoy contradicts himself here when he accepts his young charges resorting to using punitive punishment even if he will not. He is consistent, then, in that he allows his students to be autonomous, but the incident demonstrates the 'problem' of unforeseen consequences because he is ill prepared for this unexpected outcome; he has no clear strategy to deal with it. Tolstoy was insistent that the teacher must not intervene in the 'disorder, or free order' of an autonomous classroom environment.[61] Yet he recognised the necessity to intervene given the unfortunate outcome of the whole affair. That very necessity forced Tolstoy to confront the question—what is the role of the instructor if this kind of natural order is not 'just'?

In grappling with this question, Tolstoy gives a pragmatic answer: the relationship between the pupil and teacher, he says, is reciprocal. If the pupils have the right to express their point of view regardless, so does the teacher: 'The teacher has had the right not to admit a pupil, and has had the possibility of bringing to bear all the force of his influence on the majority of pupils.'[62] This pragmatic yet ominous observation came to fruition when Tolstoy is forced to intervene, and thereby encroach upon the rights of his students to autonomy,

[59] *ibid.*, p. 240.
[60] See *ibid.*, p 240.
[61] *ibid.*, pp. 234, 237.
[62] *ibid.*, p. 233.

because, in a developmental sense, his permissiveness had led to a negative outcome.[63] Crucially, a reciprocal relationship, where both parties have rights, is consistent with wider anarchist principles of education. The difficulty arises when Tolstoy was forced to overstep this reciprocal relationship and impose an authoritarian—namely, traditional and punitive—solution to draw the matter to a close.

Concluding Remarks: Utopian Liberty versus Authoritarian Education?

It is at this junction that some conclusions can be drawn. Tolstoy's experiment was an odd mix of success and failure. It is evident that his attempt to foster aesthetic growth met with some success. His appeal to the more emotional, as opposed to rational, features of his students seems to have encouraged the development of individual 'personality,' rather then 'character,' that Read also argued constituted autonomy. Tolstoy's central yet flexible focus on un–leashing individual sentiment intensified the emotional and imaginative experience of his students, not least Fédka. Moreover, this focus potentially created conditions that constituted a revolutionary shift in 'consciousness.' By his own account, Tolstoy was successful when his students became 'more independent, their characters more sharply defined, with every day.' In turn, 'the more the pupils become educated, the fitter they become for order, and the more strongly they themselves feel the need for order.'[64]

It is difficult to know with certainty if this was the case, as Tolstoy's confused agenda also helped to undermine these achievements.[65] Paradoxically, Tolstoy

[63] *ibid.*, pp. 234–237.
[64] *ibid.*, pp. 229, 234.
[65] It is interesting to note that Alexander S. Neill (1883–1973), who founded the Summerhill schools in 1921, provides a kind of surrogate model to gauge further evidence when addressing this question. Like Rousseau and Tolstoy, Neill was convinced that the only proper role of education was to unleash the inner drives and interests of the child (see Bowen and Hobsen, 'A.S. Neill Commentary' in *Theories of Education*, p 307). Given this, Neill's educational and philosophical ideas were similar to Tolstoy's. Indeed, Neill's educational theory was characterised by his commitment to the right of the child to freedom. Like anarchists generally, Neill was critical of the capitalist system because it emphasised the instinct of possession over and above the creative instinct. Neill argued that state education and state authority is detrimental to individual liberation. His preferred political structure was socialism where, according to him, the 'free development of the individual will not clash with the interests of the state if the latter is just and humane': see A.S Neill, 'Authority and Freedom in the School,' *The New Era*, 16, no. 23 (January, 1935), p. 25. As with Tolstoy, Neill held no place for the teaching of political consciousness in his school because 'Politics, like religion, is a matter for personal choice to be

recognised, developmentally and practically, that he must encroach upon the right to negative liberty to maximise and foster self–development. To do this, and with no obvious alternative becoming available, Tolstoy resorted to using teaching techniques and, at times, pedagogical frameworks that appeared no different to orthodox education. Moreover, Tolstoy's aesthetic programme was hindered by his doubt about the curriculum. In recognising the dangers of teaching 'high' literature, particularly with a focus on its corrupting nature, illusory or not, Tolstoy's curriculum was one of trial and indecision. The development of the 'unique personality,' based on aesthetic growth, was compromised precisely because the extreme emphasis on negative liberty was completely impractical when placed alongside the goals of self–development.[66]

It is not surprising, then, that Tolstoy could not traverse the tension between theory and practice without also compromising his original vision for the school at Yásnaya Polyána. While Tolstoy denounced authoritarianism, his own programme employed authoritarian methods, inadvertently, or out of necessity. This may provide clues as to why the kind of community envisaged by anarchists in a permissive school environment did not eventuate in any real sense. A kind of natural community did evolve when Tolstoy left his young charges to organise themselves, although on closer examination the character of this community was highly suspect given the cruel behaviour of the students towards the thieves.

It is apparent that the kind of revolutionary expectations this Tolstoyean education entailed did not eventuate. It is difficult to know with precision what became of his students for records, not surprisingly, are scarce.[67] In the remaining years of his life Tolstoy choose to focus primarily on social and political issues and moved away from his interest in education. He became an advocate for the Dukhobors and Molokans, who were religious groups

made later in life as the child grows up.' A.S Neill, *Summerhill,* (Penguin books, Harmondsworth), 1980) p. 307. With this in mind, it is interesting to note that Neill acknowledged that, in a real practical sense, his educational experiment failed to produce revolutionaries of any significance. Instead he conceded that most students simply assimilated into the community. See Neill, *Summerhill*, pp. 41–45.

[66] Smith, *Libertarians*, p. 71.

[67] Although Blaisdell notes that Fédka ended up as a work hand on Tolstoy's farm and was eventually dismissed for theft. Blaisdell, intro. to *Tolstoy as Teacher*, p. 19.

persecuted by the state, and wrote his book *Resurrection* to raise funds to sponsor their forced migration to Canada. In addition, he also put his energies into raising money to save those affected by drought and famine in the early 1890s in Russia.[68]

However, from analysing Tolstoy's experiment during its short life, it is evident that the 'free expression of the imaginative faculty' did not develop to its full extent. A concrete sense of mutual support, creativity and community did not blossom successfully. The 'recovery of individual creative fulfilment,' and therefore autonomy, as envisaged by Tolstoy and Read, was never a practical possibility, because the principles of negative and positive liberty competed with each other, thereby leading to contradictions between the theory and practice of anarchist education. Consequently Tolstoy's educative aesthetic experiment is left haunted by a Utopian dimension.

[68] *ibid.*, p. 18.

Conclusion

> We are so perverted by an education which from infancy seeks to kill in us the spirit of revolt…Our society seems no longer able to understand that it is possible to exist otherwise than under the reign of law, elaborated by a representative government and administered by a handful of rulers.
>
> Kropotkin, 'Law and Authority'

> We know that our arguments will not convince many. We know that our fundamental convictions that the only method of education is experiment, and its only criterion freedom, will sound to some like a trite commonplace, to some like an indistinct abstraction, to others again like a visionary dream.
>
> Tolstoy, 'On Popular Education'

Anarchist concerns about the prevailing, traditional desiderata on education are clear: in the anarchist mindset, education is fundamentally coercive because it 'is one of the central controlling agencies in society.'[1] The teacher controls education in the school itself, and the education process as a whole serves the established authority in society. Because the learner has no choice but to accept a submissive role, his/her right to autonomy is immediately subdued, or, at worst, sacrificed. Anarchists thus regard state authority as antithetical to the idea of freedom, and condemn what they regard as the stultifying effect of governmental power on community life and human potential.

Motivated by what Kropotkin called 'the spirit of revolt,' and what Tolstoy called a 'visionary dream,' anarchist education resides outside the reforming tradition of educational theories, because its goal is ultimately to challenge all social and political structures that support the state. The anarchists examined in this thesis did not seek, however, to do away with the school as an institution. For anarchists, radical pedagogical practice would go some way to developing a specific social consciousness in which autonomy in community was the primary, overarching concept of human action. Anarchist education was hence to serve as a preparatory institution to initiate students into specific, yet fundamental 'anarchist' values including equality, 'brotherhood' and a commitment to mutual respect and cooperation. Irrespective, though, of how the anarchists envisaged

[1] Spring, *Primer*, p. 145. For the Kropotkin quote, see 'Law and Authority' in the *Essential Kropotkin*, pp. 27–28. For the Tolstoy quote see, 'On Popular Education' *Tolstoy on Education*, p. 31.

the 'good society' and what constituted the most feasible way to achieve it, a developed sense of autonomy based on a transformation of consciousness with an appreciation for community would help to challenge the state–controlled social mores of contemporary culture.

Anarchists maintain that if education is to achieve this vision of a radical shift in consciousness, it must concentrate on protecting the student from the imposition of state ideals and values. In turn, education must, say the anarchists, develop the student's faculties where moral and rational 'self–mastery' is the goal. That goal is paramount, as a developed sense of independence, self–empowerment and critical awareness will enable the individual to embrace freedom confidently and distrust authoritarianism, whether latent or manifest in society. Moreover, an educational programme that protects the right of the student to develop unhindered by imposition will create, anarchists believe, fertile conditions where individual development will progress freely. This programme and its underlying goal, as I have argued in this thesis, therefore equates to a microcosm that mirrored the anarchist society writ large—not least in terms of the fundamentality of freedom in a devolved community context.

More specifically, I have argued that the anarchist response to educational theory 'is rich in insights relevant to issues in philosophy of education.'[2] This response encompasses broad solutions that unfold into specific strategies to effect social change. Finding its origins in socialism, at one end of the spectrum is integral education, which aimed to integrate all human faculties by using the school as a 'workshop.' In essence, the school is a production arena where students develop, both intellectually and practically, through the educative process of manual construction, social interaction and intellectual development under the tutelage of rational and scientific deliberation. At the other end of the anarchist educational spectrum was an aesthetic model, which emphasised the exploration of autonomy via imaginative and creative learning activities. Unlike the social anarchists, who situated autonomy within a nineteenth century socialist–inspired framework of rational and scientific development, Read and Tolstoy constructed their educative

[2] Suissa, 'Anarchism, Utopias and the Philosophy of Education' p. 627.

theories upon an impetus to unleash and liberate innate aesthetic sensibilities. That impetus was vital, they argued, because any reference to stratifications of class would undercut this aesthetic growth. In short, then, the integral model aimed to create a class–conscious revolutionary, while the aesthetic model aimed to produce the artistic rebel by unleashing the emotional and artistic potential of the student.

To cast light on the pedagogical and curriculum implications of both models, this thesis evaluated two educational experiments in two models. In this comparative evaluation of Ferrer and Tolstoy, I noted that tensions emerged in both experiments. Ferrer's experiment imposed a specific left–oriented political worldview upon students, but this very imposition was incompatible with, and indeed compromised, the right to develop freely. Evaluating texts used in the classroom alongside, for instance, his persistent reference to political economy when teaching maths, provided evidence of this contradiction. Here, Ferrer's educational experiment compromised the principles of negative liberty and transgressed anarchist principles. I concluded, therefore, that Ferrer's educational experiment was best described as a composite model that drew from both anarchist and socialist educative traditions.

Tolstoy's educative experiment also transgressed anarchist principles, but for different reasons. While Tolstoy eschewed disseminating political messages in the classroom, he ultimately accepted that, as a teacher, he had to compromise his staunch support for negative liberty in order to maximise self–development. Consequently, he resorted to using teaching techniques that appeared very similar to orthodox education. Moreover, his doubts about curriculum matters further hindered his aesthetic programme. In recognising the dangers of teaching 'high' literature, particularly its corrupting influence, illusory or not, on the natural instincts of the peasant children, meant that Tolstoy's curriculum was one of trial and indecision. Notwithstanding some of the successes that Tolstoy's educative model achieved, the perpetual experimental nature of his school led to persistent infringements on the student's right to autonomy. One such infringement was the recognition by Tolstoy himself that he had a duty to intervene on occasion to end certain matters in a decisive manner.

It is at this junction of autonomy and duty where the paradox of anarchist education surfaces most profoundly, and, indeed, where anarchist attempts at education fail. In using the positive/negative framework as a theoretical tool to navigate anarchist education, this thesis uncovered an irreconcilable tension: the anarchist's fervent defence of negative liberty conflicted with their attempts to develop practical teaching methods that aimed to enhance personal independent development. Any educational programme will find it difficult to translate theory into practice. Nonetheless, the compromises with respect to freedom and teaching methods in the anarchist experiments were, at times, excessive. The anarchists accepted that without a directive approach in order to 'create' the moral and rational independent individual their educational methodology would make little sense. As Sheehan notes, anarchism 'needs to show that it can offer a credible programme for effecting a transition from one to the other,' and education provides one possible coherent solution.[3]

Anarchism lacked, however, credibility and coherence in that regard. On the one hand, their extreme focus on negative liberty was in keeping with their commitment to removing constraints in order to permit free development. Anarchists demanded that the teacher must, at all times act as a 'facilitator' of learning and not intervene in an authoritarian manner. On the other hand, it was unfeasible that this extreme focus on negative liberty could ever operate in an educative environment that also concentrated on developing students so that they maximise their potential. Therefore, the anarchist position on radical education was certainly, at a practical level, riddled by confusion, inconsistency and contradiction.

It would be no exaggeration to say, then, that 'Utopian' elements haunt anarchist thoughts on education. Arguably, this Utopianism surfaces even more profoundly when anarchists insisted that an educational programme *could* be impartial, that is, operate without the teacher imposing an ideology or value system upon students. Despite his claims to the contrary, Ferrer, for one, could not extract

[3] Sheehan, *Anarchism*, p. 156.

himself from the polarised political environment of Spain. He was adamant that the state rules at the behest of the ruling class and perpetuates the inequities of capitalism. Matching Ferrer's commitment to challenging political institutions was his commitment to disseminating a similar radical political message, if not from the opposite end of the political spectrum, in the classroom. Compared to Ferrer, Tolstoy was far more consistent and committed to overcoming this problem of partiality. Yet, though he recognised that using 'middle class' texts carried the danger of exposing students to subtle messages in these texts, even Tolstoy could not solve the 'problem' of how to remove these subtle messages in pedagogy. Tolstoy's programme hence failed to deflect (possibly) the very values he was hoping to eradicate in education.

That anarchist education fell far short of its avowed goal of impartiality raises broader implications about the feasibility of the anarchist project in general. The anarchist theory of education is inextricably linked with questions about how to effect social change: to initiate the transformation of human consciousness that anarchists believed was necessary to effect social change, the anarchists insisted that education could help to instigate this transformation. In this sense, 'educational systems…provide a method which liberates individuals so that they will act to bring about a radical change in society.'[4] That anarchist attempts at liberating students were muted, particularly in terms of teachers not imposing any ideology—including anarchism—upon students, raises questions about the ability of radical education to 'prepare' students for radical social change in tune with anarchism. Without 'preparation' through pedagogy and curriculum, any transition from a centralised coercive political arrangement to one that is non–authoritarian and self–regulating is, surely, made more difficult. Indeed, if anarchist education is a microcosm of the anarchist vision, the very authoritarian 'top–down' practices that persisted in the classrooms of both Tolstoy and Ferrer, raises the wider question of whether any small community can operate logistically and consistently without authoritarianism being exerted, at least, minimally.

[4] Spring, *Primer,* p. 134.

The above questions and shortcomings in anarchist education do not detract, however, from the broad positive legacy of anarchist education. After all, anarchist thinkers encourage their readers to confront and re-evaluate educational norms from a fresh and unique perspective. Anarchist objections to traditional educational concepts highlighted the necessity of an educational system that facilitated community and sociability. The daring approach that anarchists took in overcoming the limits on freedom in traditional authoritarian teaching practices highlights optimism, compassion and visionary convictions on education. While this approach must be put in its historical context, the 'visionary dream' of anarchist education clearly invites the reader to imagine a very different world, and perhaps this is where the real strength of anarchist education lies.

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