

Anarchist Philosophy~Transcript

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So today we shall look at the philosophy of anarchist thought, and as a starting point, we have already considered Kropotkin's presentation of anarchist philosophy, anarchist thought as formulating an ideal. And Wayne has brought out how, for Kropotkin, to grasp this ideal, one has to get rid of certain misconceptions about anarchist thought and also place it in the context of the modern development of the natural and social sciences. And elsewhere, in the other essay, Kropotkin traces the history of anarchist thought, going all the way back to Zeno, and the Stoics, and also in Lao Tzu. So, he recognizes that in ancient Chinese thought, in Greek and Roman thought, there were anarchist elements from the very beginning, and he supports this by pointing out that the nation-state is a very abnormal modern development, and how it emerged is a very complex story. But Kropotkin has also pointed out in that article, that if you look for example, at Christianity, it's a fascinating story of how what originally was a philosophy of Christian communism, centered upon voluntary action, cooperation by individuals who believed in sharing all their goods, living a life of simplicity and of service to the poor, how Christianity became transformed in the Roman Empire, since Constantine, into a philosophy of the establishment, where Christianity became allied with the nation-state. And for Kropotkin, this marks the long period of collusion between state and church, which was always subverting the natural forces of voluntary action, decentralization at work in society. In all societies, he says there are primary examples of voluntary action and communal living: We have the village commune, we have the clan, the tribe, the great free cities during the Middle Ages, the late Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. And Kropotkin says it is only when these natural modes of social organization have been prominent and allowed full opportunity to create the conditions in which there is a maximization of local initiative, freedom, creativity that great progress has been made in civilization.

So how then this process of subversion takes place has to be explained. And to him this is because, again and again, people arise who recognize that it is possible to take what has been produced by the many and appropriate it on behalf of the few, if they could create a certain kind of mystique, a mythology around the state. And this of course comes especially to the fore in the 16th century, with the emergence of the idea of the modern nation-state, and the idea of sovereignty, that the state is sovereign, and that the state stands apart from all social institutions, and that the state is a supreme authority, that it has a monopoly over all the sources of power in society. And for Kropotkin this is a ghastly, terrible aberration. But most people, alas, regard this as an inescapable fact. This is what Kropotkin is concerned to challenge. And one of the important things that he is wanting to bring out, and therefore he makes the analogy with natural sciences, is that most people really haven't thought about this, and who merely been bombarded by the propaganda in favor of existing institutions.

Most people say, ah, anarchists are dreamers. They are talking of something that doesn't exist. They have visions and dreams about the distant future. And Kropotkin very shrewdly recognizes that actually there is a kind of false utopianism that is behind government. That there is a lot of false idealization that is implicit in centralization. That is, people are made to swallow a certain plausible but false theory of representative government, of so-called democracy, which is really a kind of tokenism, a substitute for real participation. And when people become mesmerized by the tokens and symbols, the rhetoric and the propaganda of representative democracy, they also come to have a certain kind of awe before the mystique of law, and before the mystique of the sovereign state. And in this way, centralization of all authority is supported by the lazy acquiescence in the popular mind, mostly through ignorance. And this, to him, is a kind of false utopianism.

Whereas anarchist thought is concerned with what is more real, but works in a subtle way, works underground. And this is where he makes the analogy with the natural sciences, and here he especially takes the great example of astronomy. He is really recognizing the extraordinary fact that until the Copernican revolution, most people had

a view of the world in which man was the center, and they had a very anthropocentric view of the entire cosmos, and they also had a very anthropomorphic image of God, God made in the image of man. And therefore, to transfer the centrality in the universe from the earth to the sun was a very great revolutionary step. But especially in the 16th century, there dawned the realization that the earth is only one of millions of solar entities, and indeed, later on, that the very solar system is only one of millions. And in the context of the immensity of the natural order, man suddenly loses a false centrality, a false collective assumption about the species. And furthermore, Kropotkin is very struck by the fact, early in the 20th century, what began in the late 19th century, that also the displacement of attention to the sun, because you earlier on had a very simple view of the sun in relation to the solar system, by a view of matter and of energy, which recognized that myriads and myriads of collisions are taking place at the atomic level, that there are innumerable vibrations affecting many small bodies and entities throughout nature, and all of these are involved in a continuous search for equilibrium.

Then, of course, we detach the idea of equilibrium either from the notion of something that is fixed at the center or the notion of something pre-established by some personal God. And therefore, for Kropotkin, once you overcome the view of pre-established harmony, and replace it by a dynamic view of harmony, in which millions upon millions of little elements are involved in collision, in agglomeration, in dispersion, that there is a ceaseless dynamic process of interaction going on, then, of course, you really come to understand what is the real nature of the cosmos in which we live. And in this context, it is extraordinary, mind-blowing, and Kropotkin recognizes this, to see man as a cosmos, a universe in himself. Because once you recognize that within man there are also millions of elements and parts involved in a dynamic interaction, you see man as a cosmos of organs, each organ itself a cosmos of cells, then you really come to be amazed by the mirroring at the microcosmic level within the human being of what is true of the macrocosm. And then he uses a very great phrase, which was a mystical phrase in earlier times. He says that the center is everywhere and nowhere. And once you grasp this, then you get away from the idea of seeing everything in relation to one fixed center. The center

is everywhere and therefore nowhere. And what he's really doing is applying to man and to social activity and to human creation a very mystical concept of God, which you find in many of the mystics in different religions and traditions.

Notably, we find this in Nicholas of Cusa. At the time of the Renaissance, Nicholas of Cusa pointed out that instead of having some kind of ported view of God, no man or woman really is entitled to pronounce upon God unless that person has studied the mathematics of the infinite. That is, Nicholas of Cusa recognized many difficulties in this narrow anthropomorphic image of God, and therefore, he revived the ancient saying that God is a circle with its center everywhere and circumference nowhere. So this very great mystical idea that the divine is diffused throughout nature, that there are myriads of centers of action for the divine, that we are dealing with theurgy, the energy of the divine, and that human beings have access to this universal energy, and it is up to human beings by creativity, by self-discovery, by taking the initiative to release these potentials of creative energy, this is a mind-blowing idea. And therefore, Kropotkin says, certainly if you begin to look at societies in this way, that is, you get away from the three-dimensional snapshots in terms of existing institutions, existing hierarchical structures, and you can see America in terms, you might say, of the geography of Washington, where the Pentagon is, where the White House is, but this is false, because this is only got to do with one very small aspect of what is really going on in any society. So once you are able to penetrate the façade, the institutional cloak within which the real constant dynamic interaction among human wills, human minds is taking place, then you really come to see that what anarchist thought is talking about is that which is grounded in the very nature of the cosmos, it is grounded in something which is quintessential to being human, it is grounded also in what is in all the invisible spaces in social life. Now Kropotkin especially uses a wonderful phrase, he speaks of interplanetary and interstellar spaces, which you might say look void. But within the seeming void of these interplanetary and interstellar spaces, a tremendous amount of activity is going on, which is invisible to the naked eye, but which has to do with atomic movement and vibration.

So also, in every society there are interspaces, interstitial spaces, spaces that cannot be appropriated by institutions, that cannot be invaded by the state, because however complex your social system, however complex your legal system, it simply cannot take into account every moment of your life, every single thought, every single act. And therefore, it is up to the individual to free himself or herself from the false spell cast by the structure and to recognize that you can create free space, that you can psychologically create free space in your mind, in your consciousness, and you can in society also discover free space in relation between human beings. And when you see society in this way, then you come to see that especially as central institutions become more and more inefficient, they work in a very mechanical manner, they become irrelevant, maintain themselves through a false rhetoric and through pseudo-democracy, you really come to see that what is going on, truly significantly in society, has nothing to do with the political system in its conventional sense. That has got to do with this myriads of experiments made by human beings in reference to lifestyles, in reference to modes of living, but not only what they do in the realm of action, it has to do with the awakening that is taking place within the human mind, millions of human minds, which may not be visible on the surface because it does not relate to the existing structure. So Kropotkin then is wanting us to change our very way of looking at the world, and for him anarchist thought is no doubt concerned with an ideal, an ideal of society without government, but anarchist thought is also grounded in certain real factors and processes that already exist and which work analogically at the cosmic level, at the human level, in nature and in society. And once anarchist thought frees individuals to see themselves and to see society differently, then they become far more aware of the extraordinary potential, energy and power that lies within the human species as a whole. And no doubt for Kropotkin in the long run it is inevitable that this energy will prevail because the mystique, the mythology of bourgeois capitalism, or of state socialism, of pseudo-democracy is short-lived. When enough people come to see through it, then there will be a universal awakening. And when that will take place of course is very difficult to say, but everything will lead towards it, everything will help towards it, and no doubt especially if systems break down and people have no longer the external crutches, the

external sources of reliance which they have got habituated to, they will be forced to think in terms of alternatives and even within the voidness, possibly even after nuclear war on a small and limited scale, people may then begin to rethink, to rethink the possibilities of society. So you can certainly see that what Kropotkin says is very fascinating and one might also remember that to some extent there was a certain majestic optimism in Kropotkin which had to do with the fact that given his very extraordinary life, he was able to spend about 30 to 40 years in England in the late 19th century.

Now, why is this relevant? Now Kropotkin's life is fascinating if you go into it because of here you find a boy at the age of 12 renouncing out of conviction the title of prince of how very few people can imagine. So great a step at so early an age and then you also find him after his early experience in the Corps of Pages and then in the army. He becomes intensely fascinated by Siberia, one of the great wastes so-called, which nobody really wanted to go to in 1960 Russia. So when he got the opportunity to go with the government general to Siberia at a very young age, there he became enormously interested in and fascinated by many groups, tribes, cultures, which had been insulated from the life of the city, and in which there was an extraordinary richness of folk wisdom and custom, and where they were not involved in formalization and centralization of authority. So, Kropotkin became intensely fascinated by this. Also, because of his interest in geology and geography, he came to find that there were many false assumptions that had been made about the movement of the earth. He became intensely interested to see how volcanic explosions arise and how over a very long time, indeed over millions of years, certain movements take place which seem to be so slow and imperceptible, but which then produce at certain times violent volcanic eruptions. Furthermore, Kropotkin also from his short experience in prison was enormously fascinated by people in prison in Russia, and later on in France, and he really saw prisons as what he called universities of crime. So, he really came to see that crime is caused by a wretchedness and a falsity in the very punitive approach of law and the punitive approach of prisons.

And Kropotkin therefore came to rethink his whole view of what is human nature. But later on, when he settled down as an exile in England and concentrated a great deal upon

his work in geography but also in the dissemination of anarchist thought, he had, even though he lived at a very simple level, on very little money, in a cottage outside London, but he had a long period of leisure where he was able to watch the heyday of the Victorian age, the emergence of great institutions, free libraries, free museums, public responsibility for the postal service, for the probation of a number of other services. He saw the enormous influence of these building societies and insurance companies that emerged, helping really vast numbers of relatively low-income families. And when he saw the extraordinary importance of these but also the proliferation of voluntary societies which linked up with societies in other parts of the world, and many of these indeed laid the basis for the extraordinary explosion of science in the 20th century, Kropotkin recognized that a great deal could go on in the Victorian Age which had nothing to do with Whitehall, nothing to do with Parliament, nothing to do with conventional politics. And this was very important in opening up channels of communication all over the world, but also in disseminating knowledge and making knowledge available to vast masses of people. It's very difficult today, at this point of the century in America, to recognize the thrill of people a hundred years ago when they had access to free libraries, to books, to museums, when they had access to popular accounts of what is going on in astronomy and biology and chemistry in reference to electricity and magnetism. So, it was really an extraordinary time in its way, and this had nothing to do with capitalism, it had nothing to do with imperialism, it really had, according to Kropotkin, to do with that underground creativity which is always there in human affairs. And Kropotkin saw that what had emerged there will become global. So he was very prophetic in seeing ahead, and especially he felt that after the early industrial powers had been challenged by the emergence of many industrial nations, which were capable of developing the entire infrastructure but also of expanding markets, he then came to see that you would get a situation where there would be so many industrial crises. And therefore, in times of recession, in times of difficulty, more human beings all over the world would come to recognize not only the fact of global economic interdependence, but also of global human solidarity, the solidarity of the great mass of human beings.

So certainly, Kropotkin's picture is a very attractive one, and it really makes you think, even if to some extent it was naturally shaped by the conditions of his day. At the same time, as Wayne pointed out, Kropotkin, having come under the influence of Marxist thought, and with his feeling for pure communism, he became absolutely convinced that while state communism, state socialism was wrong, was in fact a regressive movement about human affairs, but that true communism, both on a large scale and a smaller scale, when the idea, the true spirit, the true philosophy of communism rooted in voluntary action spreads among workers and peasants, and they also recognize their collective strength through the strike, through insurrection, how they can withdraw support from these small groups that control power and wealth, then of course to him there would be an immense revolutionary explosion. And Kropotkin felt, well this will involve violence, but he felt that violence was already there in every part of society, and the hope would be that if the great masses had been educated into a clear perception of where they want to go, what is it they truly want to do, then there would be a minimizing of violence, because when the great opportunities come, they will move as rapidly as possible towards a new kind of society, a new kind of civilization. Now of course there are many problems with such a view, and they will come up at different times in our course. Nonetheless, at this point we don't want to go into that, we really want to see the extraordinary flexibility of thought which Kropotkin brought to his perception of social reality, and also his understanding that any centralized model or picture of the universe or of society, but also any linear model, any linear view of progress is very misleading. Progress is not in a straight line. Humanity, he said, is not a marching column, because what is really going on is very much more complicated. It involves a lot of interaction between myriads upon myriads upon myriads of circles and spheres, and in this a great deal of what is going, by analogy with what happens in geology, is under the surface and very slow, and that is what is going on in human consciousness. But there are certain times which are very difficult to predict and anticipate when there can be volcanic explosions, when you can no longer hold down the momentum of what has been accumulated in human consciousness. And it is in this sense that Kropotkin believed that

the future was on the side of the anarchist dream. The future was necessarily on the side of the great masses.

Now, leaving Kropotkin aside for a moment and trying to look more generally at anarchist philosophy, we really have to go back to the very term 'anarchist', to the very term 'anarchy'. The term 'anarchy' can be broken up into *An* plus *Arche*. It goes back to the Greek. *Arche* in Greek meant a beginning, or a principle, or a rule, or command. So, *An-Archy* is without a commanding beginning principle, you might say, without rule. And therefore, if we generalize the idea, you could say it is without government, without central control. Now, this word was no doubt linked up also to the Greek understanding that there was something creative about chaos, because there was always a fascination about how in primordial chaos a cosmos emerged. And unlike the later Christian idea, the world when it begins, does not come out of nothing. There is no single god who creates the world out of nothing. There is always present some primordial matter, and that is primordial chaos. And out of that primordial chaos a cosmos emerges, but what is potential in that chaos is greater than any particular system, any particular world. Now, this is very important, because it's really got to do with your view of space. If you have a view of boundless space, and you see all human beings as living in many possible worlds, which means we must imagine not only a world in which all live, but a world in which all human beings may be able to generate mental conceptions of myriad possible worlds. And if so, you must get away from the false idea of a limited linear sequence to cosmogony and therefore to social evolution. So, it is very interesting.

On the other hand, the Greeks also understood the importance of the *Arche*, of beginning. And this is very important at all levels. It's very important for a society to have and to value a moment of beginning. This is the time the Constitution has been adopted. It is very important for a human being to have a sense of a proper beginning, in reference either at dawn or early in the morning when you begin your day, in reference to your beginning a week, beginning a month, beginning a term, beginning a course. And if you are cool and wise, you will recognize that there is a certain golden moment to that beginning which transcends time, which is timeless. So, it is up to you then to

recognize that there is of course a natural process of entropy, of fatigue, of routinization. So, one can't mechanically go back to the beginning unless one becomes a ritualist. And therefore, you have to, in your mind, create the capacity to recover freshness, to bring back the hidden golden moment in the beginning. This has to do with creativity. This has to do with the release of will. So, if you look at it this way then, an anarchist is one who recognizes that it is always important, while respecting beginnings in the past, to refuse to confine them to external institutions, external forms, to refuse to crystallize the process. Crystallization, said Kropotkin, is the enemy of progress. Which means it is very important to recognize that there is a continual beginning. And also, it is very important to recognize that the moment you become routinized and lean back upon habits, structures, external forms, then you merely become a creature of habit, repetitive. And then of course you're going to become fatigued, but you're also going to become more a creature than a creator, acted upon rather than acting, and you lose initiative.

Whereas anarchist thought really has to do with the recovery of initiative. But this recovery of initiative is not artificial or arbitrary. Man is essentially a self-determining agent, a self-initiating being. That is what it means to be a human being, to initiate, to release new directions, to create, to create at the level of mind in reference to new perspectives, new conceptual frameworks, but also a new way of looking at the world. It is up to the human being to alter the perspective. You can be in IV and yet you can imagine what kind of vision you might have had when you went up the La Cumbre Peak. It is possible for the human being to alter perspective at will, and this is not in reference to space, but also in reference to time. And when human beings become self-conscious in reference to their own power of initiative, instead of saying most of the time: "Oh, what is it I can't do?" They will say: "Well, I realize that these are things I can't change, but what is it I can change? What is it I can do? What is it I can do in the realm of the mind? What changes can I make? What is it that I can do in reference to the spaces and times available to me?"

And when a human being becomes a truly Promethean, self-initiating, creative being, then that human being is also able to recognize out of creative imagination myriads of

possibilities, untapped, ignored, and also develop a certain eye for that in other human beings which is creative, which is Promethean, which is positive. Which also means that especially before you really have taken enough trouble over this and made enough progress in this, become strong enough, you want to be particularly careful, despite the imperialism of being on good terms with everybody, saying hi to everybody, to really draw away from those influences which are negative, which are debilitating. Because you will of course find large numbers of people who because of tension, various reasons, are going to become periodically involved in negativity, but they're also going to, after a point, become involved in passing this around. And you don't really want to take on any more of this pollution than you can handle. So, this requires courage, the courage to individuate, the courage to draw apart from orbits and arenas in which you're going to be weakened. But when you're strong enough, when you have made some testing of your own strength, in reference to your own creativity, in reference to your own capacity to alter perspective, no doubt then you can reach out to others, help others, and also be able to draw strength from others and not be weakened by those who have become great merchants of despair. Now this of course is up to the individual, by its very nature it cannot be coerced, it cannot be compelled, it cannot even be coaxed from outside, and if so, it is really where the individual is thrown back upon himself.

So, if you really understand even the meaning of the term 'anarchy', you can see why Proudhon, the French thinker, who was the first to use the term 'anarchist' in 1840; Proudhon knew that by 1840 the term 'anarchist' was a word of contempt because he knew the story of the French Revolution. And what had really happened then was that at the time of the Revolution there were the Jacobins who were very concerned to take hold of power, to repress opposition, and to create a kind of regimentation of thought and they hid behind the rhetoric of '*liberte, equalite, fraternite*'. There were many more people involved in the Revolution who were concerned with going back to communal ownership of land because they knew from peasant memories that there was communal ownership of land in France as in other parts of the world and that these lands had been appropriated, expropriated by the churches, by the monasteries, by kings, by nobles. So,

they really wanted a social revolution. They wanted to go back to communal ownership of land and also, they wanted to make these fundamental changes to the social structure. And many of these people, because they were wanting to do more and were not going to glorify the initial revolutionary act of destruction, they came to be treated with contempt, these communards, they were called anarchists.

Now Proudhon, who was a very shrewd person, at a relatively young age written a very remarkable essay on equality, lived in the country, relatively poor family. Proudhon, a self-educated man, in his forties, when he came to write a book on the idea of revolution, after he had already written on property and said property is theft, when he came to write the idea of revolution, he said, if people ask me what is it I am, I call myself an anarchist. Meaning I am willing to take on this very term that has been falsely applied, because I am really concerned with, you might say, destruction of the existing social order, but I am also concerned with understanding that creative process of permanent revolution that is always present in human society and in human history. So that was how the term 'anarchist' came to be used.

Now Kropotkin, in his account of the history of anarchist thought, realises that actually the first great anarchist thinker was Godwin, though Godwin did not use the word anarchist. Now we should of course consider Godwin quite a bit, and he is really interesting. It is important here to note that Kropotkin saw this, because Kropotkin himself was an anarchist communist, and did not like the extreme individualist anarchists like Tucker, Warren (in America) or like Stirner (in Germany, who had a philosophy of egoism). But Kropotkin understood that there was a difference between true individualization and individualism. This is what's so implicit in your assignments. True individuality is linked up integrally with true solidarity. You cannot really become a fulfilled individual capable of realising your potential unless you enter into creative interaction with other human beings, free minds must get together, free men and free women must interact. And therefore, the very process of individuation presupposes and requires creative interaction between human beings as free agents, free minds, and it is only out of this interaction that they will enrich and deepen their own inner recognition

and their actualization of their individual potential. And at the same time, they will also come to increase their spontaneous and effortless recognition of social solidarity. But once you feel it in the heart then you will not link up this natural sense of fellowship with other human beings with external institutions.

The state has got nothing to do with your fellow feelings with other human beings, with your natural sociability. And therefore, you will really come to see that external institutions can never become the means either for creating or affirming authentic solidarity.

Authentic solidarity only comes out of work, out of dialogue, out of creative interaction between human beings as free agents, as free minds, exploring in free space their potentialities, learning from each other, helping each other, sustaining each other. This is rather reminiscent of the statement of Lao Tzu that you cannot place any limitations upon the human heart. Or as one of the disciples of Lao Tzu said, that human beings are really like wild steeds and especially the heart. The heart is like a wild steed; you can't coerce it. In other words, no external agent or institution still less, can force you to feel in a particular way. They could affect you in reference to behavior. They could also affect you in reference to certain psychological reflexes. But there is something that is innate to the human heart that has to be freely given. And that is true of love, that is true of loyalty, that is true of fellowship.

And therefore, the anarchist recognizes that there must somewhere be a connection between the courage of the independent free mind and the abundance, the generosity of the free heart. But you cannot coerce that heart. And therefore, there is a limitation to all institutions which try to exact through sanctions, loyalties and sacrifices to individuals when these are forced. And indeed, human beings will only do the minimum, or what they do, they will do reluctantly, or they will do it out of fear. It is polluted. But the energy that can be released when human beings voluntarily release energy out of love, out of something that is innate in the human heart, is vastly greater. So therefore, it also follows that human beings are underemployed. Underemployed... That most of the

creative potential in the human brain is untapped. But also, most of the creative energy in the human heart is untapped. So therefore, human beings are living and partly living in modern structures. They are not really themselves. And therefore, a great deal is wasted, because you can only up to a certain point release energy for external reasons, out of fear, out of love of reward, on the basis of a separatist psychology. You can't really tap the depths of energy in human beings or the depths of creativity unless you really have a universal ideal, and a certain universal conception of human potential, and of the richness of the possibility of the future. So, when you then come to see it in this way there is quite a lot in that word 'anarchist thought'.

Now let me put this in a way that is simple and easy to recollect. Take the very word A-N-A-R-C-H-Y. 'A' for affirmation. 'A' for affirmation. Affirmation of what? Affirmation of the moral authority. You might say 'A' for autonomy. 'A' for autonomy. 'A' for the affirmation of moral authority at the individual level. So that is very crucial at the start.

'N'. 'N' for negation. Negation of what? Negation of all institutions. Negation of institutional authority. Negation of legal positivism. Negation of state sovereignty. Negation of all mythology in relation to centralized and hierarchical structures. Negation... Now you might be able to negate a line of action. This negation might be collective, but at all times you can individually negate. It is up to you to see through the system, to see beyond, to prevent it from getting to you. So, negation.

That second 'A'. 'A' for affirmation of individual potential, authority, autonomy. 'N' for negation of all external institutions. 'A' for the awakening of the masses. And for all anarchists, individual awakening was to be seen in terms of the tremendous latent possibilities in vast masses of human beings. That there was a certain natural fellowship between the exploited, regardless of race, regardless of creed, regardless of sex, regardless of economic condition, regardless of nation, regardless also of ideology. And therefore, in times of extreme misery there is a recognition of the solidarity. That the earth groans because of the curse of the poor. And there is meaning to this for the

anarchists that this is a force that is at work. And therefore, if only you insert your own individual affirmation and negation into mass awakening, then of course you become much more capable of understanding the historical moment, the historical period in which you live, its limits, its dangers, but also its extraordinary possibilities.

So, then you come to 'A-N-A-R'. 'R' naturally for revolutions. Not just 'the revolution', but revolutions of every kind: Revolutions in human consciousness, revolutions in human relationships, revolutions in technology, revolutions in modes of work, revolutions in education, revolutions in one's very conception of the cosmos and of man, revolutions in scientific thought, revolutions in the social sciences. But above all what Kropotkin called the spirit of revolt, the willingness to rebel, the Promethean act of rebelling. Rebelling creatively, constructively so that you free yourself from the handcuff in reference to Zeus, in reference to the father figure, in reference to the authority figure. And by freeing yourself from the hypnosis that is connected with external paternal patriarchal authority, but especially of impersonal laws and institutions, you become capable of releasing creative energy in yourself out of the very act of rebelling. And this rebelling can be very meaningful, very noetic, very constructive, but you can't get to it without making mistakes, without therefore having false elements of rebelling in your natures, pseudo-rebellion. But all of this is part of the process, and you've really got to understand again that the whole of society works through a series of successive, visible, invisible, manifest, unmanifest, partial, and also total revolutions.

Well, after 'ANAR' we come to 'C': 'C' for communes, 'C' for cooperatives, 'C' for cooperation, as against coercion. Anarchist thought is against the state, it is against state sovereignty, it is against legal positivism, it is against external authority, it is against institutional rigidity, but anarchist thought is also against coercion. And if it is against coercion, what is it for? It is for cooperation, voluntary cooperation. And this applies at all levels, but let us especially think of communes, communes that are acts of will, that are intentional communes that emerge out of human concern to find new ways of doing things, to affirm new lifestyles, new modes of social cooperation, new ways of sharing, living conditions, working conditions, new ways of helping each other.

Then we come to 'H'. 'H' for historical optimism. Because you can't really do all of this if you don't have at least some measure of faith, not just in yourself, not just in other people in your country, but in the whole of humanity, in the whole of history. So historical optimism, that what you're really feeling is what is felt by millions upon millions of human beings all over the world, now and at all times. But if you're tuned to what is unspoken in the point of the human heart, globally you have a sense of recognition of the great affirmation at the global universal human level in the future, and you're optimistic about it, it gives you faith. That is, you're glad that there are other human beings alive. So, you don't get hung up on your own success and failure, and thereby shrink your orbit, thereby congest yourself. You're happy to breathe fresh air, you're happy to recognize the blue of the imperium, the sky. You're happy to recognize that not only do vast numbers of other human beings exist, but that somewhere your personal destiny is not that important. But it could be linked up to the destiny of millions of human beings, the destiny of the whole of humanity. So, this is a kind of historical optimism that doesn't depend upon any specific agreement in reference to the past historical process. Because what is the past—6,000 years? Well, we know that man has lived 18 million years, according to Leakey, according to ancient Hindu cosmology, and if you only see a million years, well what is 6,000 in relation to that? From a few fossils we know nothing about human beings and human societies for millions upon millions of years, lost civilizations, forgotten ways of life. So therefore, we can be truly agnostic, agnostic in reference to the past, and also, positively and constructively agnostic in reference to the future.

So, this then brings you to 'Y'. And 'Y' is yearning. 'Y-E-A-R-N-I-N-G'-- yearning. This deep feeling, this tremendous thing going on in the heart. A yearning for The Golden Age. Why not? A yearning for The Kingdom of God, a yearning for The New Jerusalem, yearning for The Ideal Society. That doesn't mean to say you are so foolish as to think it's going to happen tomorrow, that everybody is going to agree about it. Even if you can merely create a society in which large numbers of human beings at many levels all over the world in small groups, voluntary associations at all levels, could be talking, could be

talking about The Golden Age, could be talking about a better state-of-affairs, this yearning is a very powerful force.

And this yearning is linked up with also what I said last time, the ancestral memory in the race mind of a golden age in the past. Because according to many myths such as among the ancient Hindus, among people like Hesiod in Greece, Plato, there was at one time a golden age, followed by a silver age, and then a bronze age, and then an iron age. And in The Golden Age according to the Hindu text there were no institutions of any kind, there was no state, there were no groupings. All men experienced a spontaneous sense of universal fellowship. They were of one race, one lip, one mind, one heart. And you might say that there is something here corresponds to what one experiences in early childhood, which made a French thinker say as long as there are little children there is a golden age, that spontaneous affirmation of universal fellowship. And especially among people whose senses, as the American Indians, were so highly developed that a lot is unspoken, a lot is really intuitive. Then in The Silver Age there emerged, there emerged, social groupings, social sanctions and therefore a tremendous kind of emphasis upon uniformity. There also emerged codes. And then in The Bronze Age there emerged the state—centralization—central authority. And then finally we come to The Dark Age--The Iron Age--there emerged regimentation. A tremendous monopoly of imposition through all powerful authority, you might say authoritarianism.

Now the point of these models, as Plato realized when contrasting Cronos and Zeus, is to say, that once we appreciate certain limits in The Dark Age we all the more come to cherish the Promethean in man. Wherever there is an act of courage that is shown by one human being it is relevant to all other human beings. Wherever there is a courageous Promethean social experiment, maybe just in your hometown, in your little village just a few people did it and stayed with it for ten years it becomes relevant to people all over the world. In other words, you have to get away from the statistical mesmerization of everybody involved in it and many people involved in it. We must get away also from that kind of moral blackmail which weakens the will. Why should I do it unless everyone is doing it? Well once you start that way, you will all your life live backwards, and late

in life you will discover that you have missed opportunities. You've got to ask yourself, why can't I do it regardless of who else is doing it? And how far can I do it? What experiments can I make on my own? This means really tapping the very source, the inward source of self-initiative, becoming an initiator, taking initiative. And then of course you will expand the arena of creative action, of creative energy in your own sphere, in your own interaction with other human beings. And you will also become more responsive and attentive to creative possibilities in society at certain times.

So, when you begin to see this in this way, you really see that regardless of whether or not you agree with every word of Kropotkin or any of the anarchists, you really can intuitively understand that it is important to affirm potential against the actual. It is important to see beyond crystallization, actualization in institutions, in existing accounts of history, in static pictures of the world, in anthropomorphic views of God, in also anthropocentric views of the good. And it's very important also to see beyond your own social structure, institutions, rules, norms, existing relations, specialization, differentiation, sterilization. It's very important beyond all of this to rescue and recover your sense of the boundless potential of human creativity and human energy and of free exploration by free minds in reference to myriads of miniature examples of the free society of the future.

And in this you may find, to put it in another way finally, that you can enjoy all colors in the spectrum. You may enjoy the violet, the violet in those anarchist thinkers who emphasize biological interdependence, who emphasize the sameness and commonality at each level of matter, whether they put it in materialist terms or they put it in contemporary scientific terms, you can enjoy this. But you will also enjoy the indigo of concentrated thought, such as you find in Godwin, where you are concerned with pure possibilities, pure reason, how far intense concentration of pure reason could take you in reference to understanding human perfectibility and human growth. You will also come to have an appreciation of blue in the spectrum, the blue of the sky, which is represented by Shelley and all the poets, that which represents boundless expansion in free space, boundless space, the imperium. And you will also come to recognize the value

of green, the green of Kropotkin, the green of Proudhon, those anarchists of the love of the land, love of the soil. In Proudhon's case, a tremendous love of agriculture, of rural civilization, rural society. In the case of Kropotkin, a tremendous love of creating new modes of work that bring people closer to the land and that are rooted, you might say, in the soil, that also have reference to local custom and folk wisdom. And then you can also appreciate, of course, the yellow, the yellow of, the golden yellow of love, which you find especially in Tolstoy, who is always concerned with The Law of Love, who is concerned with the spiritual side of anarchist thought, who sees it as a true revolutionary message of that great communist called Jesus, one of the greatest communists of all time—Jesus Christ. And Tolstoy was inspired by this communist called Jesus Christ. And he saw a message in that communist called Jesus very similar to that of all the other great prophets, it was an understanding of the law of love, golden yellow of love. And then there is the orange, the orange of compassion, the orange of self-discipline, of monasticism, and you might even say asceticism, but out of compassion, which was enormously developed by Gandhi, created into a whole science of self-control, of self-transformation, self-regeneration. And when you appreciate all these different shades, then you won't be either frightened of or wholly fascinated by the red of revolution, which you find in, say, Bakunin. Destroy! Destroy! says Bakunin. And here comes out Bakunin looking larger than life, with his enormous beard, with his extraordinary boundless energy, and this giant of a man comes and says, Destroy! Destroy! Destroy! And it really gets to you, because you suddenly feel you're not living, and he's asking you to destroy everything. He's saying there is something creative about destruction. You see, red, red. And of course, there are some intellectuals who vicariously and parasitically are always hoping that other people will shed blood, other people will die, they are fascinated by this red, but this red, really, you've got to see it in perspective. You can't have it really without the orange and without the yellow, and you also need the blue, and you need the indigo, and you have to be in the middle on the green, and you also have to appreciate the violet.

In other words, you must see all the colors in the spectrum, you must see many modes of anarchist affirmation, anarchist negation. And in this way, you really come to see that the philosophy of anarchist thought is not any one thing, it is a philosophy of self-definition. So there could be as many philosophies of anarchist thought as there are individual human beings who have freed themselves from the hypnosis and mesmerism and the stealth of past structures and existing structures, and who are able to persist in the process of decentralization of authority and power, but also in the process of creation, creation of new modes of voluntary cooperation, new ways of doing things, new affirmations of that shared but unspoken universal vision of The Civilization of the Future.