

Transcript ~ Anarchist Property and Marriage

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Now, as I said at the very beginning of this section of the course, when the anarchists criticize institutions, they come on very strong. They're often shocking, they're iconoclastic, and it is therefore very easy to caricature them. If one were not directly in contact with what is really behind the anarchist critique, it is possible to oversimplify because they are really very courageous, standing against the grain of a dominant mode of thought which has simply come to be supported by educational and social conformity and fashion. And to question this requires courage. It requires thinking for oneself, independence of mind; and these anarchists showed independence of mind, and also some of them, because of their immersion in the world of action, independence in the realm of action as activists, as revolutionaries.

When Proudhon in 1840 said that property is theft, it was like a thunderbolt in Europe. And Marx later, when he came to hear about what Proudhon had done, was enormously influenced to go beyond merely criticizing Hegel. He really wanted to think more fundamentally about society and about economics, and this is what laid the groundwork for his immersion into classical economic theory. Then, on his discovery of the idea of the economic interpretation of all institutions, of all history, and the doctrine of class war, it led to the evolution of what we call Marxism. But Marxism still is very strong because it assumes the historical process until now, and looks at complex societies that have emerged, especially capitalist society, in terms of broad classifications. In this sense, Marx was influenced by Saint-Simon, by the new concern with sociology, and this is very relevant to Bakunin.

On the other hand, what is very interesting about Godwin is he's unique in considering these issues from first principles. A self-educated man, but unlike Hobbes, Locke, and all the others who are really trying to explain what is going on and, no doubt at best, as in the case of Locke, give a justification for, you might say, liberal democracy, for the

support and protection of freedom—Hobbes being much more concerned with security—Godwin, because he starts, stays with, and ends with the individual, is willing even to look at communal cooperation severely from the standpoint of the individual.

Now, this is very rare. He was a writer, he was a sensitive man, he was a man who had to struggle all the way, and indeed most of the time, alas, for the worst of the living, had to write potboilers. He also was a person who was so poor, he often had to catch and live on other people. This was very embarrassing to Shelley, and later, when Shelley became his son-in-law, Shelley tried to help Godwin, but also to soften him a bit. But Shelley put into a poetical form what Godwin said. So when you read *Prometheus Unbound*, when you read *The Rape of Islam*, when you read the other, *The Masque of Anarchy*, Shelley—it all comes alive because when Shelley is singing, he is exclaiming against every form of tyranny, and he's especially seeing how it was rooted in priestcraft, and how then it becomes transferred to the secular plane. And Shelley is getting through his immense use of the imagination to get us to look at a totally different way of life, where men and women are independent, thinking for themselves, confident, free, and, on the basis of confidence, relating to each other.

In other words, what the poet saw was, altogether it makes a fundamental difference whether social relations are based upon insecurity and fear, or they are based upon confidence and generosity. This, then, is what is unvanquishable, undefeated, indestructible really in the anarchist dream. Because it speaks to that which we all know, and today in mass society we do experience it; but because the philosophies of history and the ideologies have broken down, we don't really know how to make a difference.

And that is why, especially this term, I've included so much of Godwin, because though Godwin is difficult, Godwin helps you to think in terms of first principles, which also means that even though you may not agree with all his conclusions, you become very flexible in regard to how you are going to implement these ideas. How you are going to implement it, supposing, say, you had to do it entirely on your own. Well, Godwin says, replace crude conceptions of happiness by what he calls a “pure theory of happiness”.

What is a pure theory of happiness? Look at the happy moments in your life, not merely at the time. That is truly happy which, when you look back upon it, still gives you happiness. It must be supported by recollection, and when you look at the moment of death—and Godwin knows that each man is alone: born alone, dies alone, lives alone—at the whole of your life, you will have a very different view of what is true happiness, what he calls “substantial happiness,” from merely what you thought at different times in your life when you were moved by the pressure of the passions and the appeal of the sensations.

So Godwin says, really there cannot be a pure theory of happiness, of, you might say, well-being, of feeling good, unless it includes an ethical element. But this ethical element, so far from being moralistic—it is moralistic because it is imposed from outside, then it's like an imposition. It leads to hypocrisy, it leads to evasion, it makes one furtive, afraid; it cripples our sense of initiative, our courage. It also makes us unwilling to acknowledge mistakes. Whereas for Godwin, moral growth must come on the basis of acknowledging the right to error.

But human beings will never really correct errors unless in solitude, on their own, they think about it. This is revolutionary, very relevant to psychiatry and to everything, because we live in a society where the emphasis, under the influence of sociology and psychology, is heavily upon interaction. And therefore, we think we can only cure people who have psychological problems by getting them to bring it all out by speaking, and all of these have failed. In the end, you have got to create a condition where a person, while interacting with other people, can turn back upon himself or herself. This requires leisure, this requires a certain unhurried pace, the ability to look back at what is happening to you and what you have done, and develop the power of discrimination.

So Godwin says if, then, we have a pure theory of happiness, you will really come to see that all human beings, once they are really shown—and they can no doubt vary, vary in the ingredients they put into happiness—but if they recognize they couldn't be happy unless they felt they were just. He also says very rightly, take most human beings—no, don't take the most conditioned, the most depraved, the most mindless—but most

human beings, if you suddenly went and showed them directly pictures of deprivation and poverty and hunger, if you made most people aware that when they are spending so much at a certain dinner, and while they are enjoying it, that that amount of money in America itself could give so many simple meals to so many people, whether they be very old people, senior citizens living on very small Social Security, people in the ghettos, poor at all levels.

And Godwin in one place says, if you want to think of this relation of the species of the whole, there is no other way than by changing the prestige that we attach to distinction. In other words, Godwin, because he is writing in the eighteenth century, before bourgeoisification really became a big thing, is seeing how it arises. Living in villages, small towns, when the pace of society is still slow, when the Industrial Revolution has not yet launched itself fully, when agriculture is still the main mode for society, Godwin is able to see how people are gradually propelled into conspicuous consumption and ostentation because they think if they don't have it, they will not be able to gain the esteem of others. And Godwin knows it always starts with a person's relation to his neighbors, his status in his neighborhood.

So therefore, he says, take food, take shelter; of course human beings need food, they need shelter, they need clothes, they indeed may also sometimes need certain things which are in one sense useless, don't cost very much, and are what he calls inexpensive gratifications. Perfectly true. And it could also be that human beings do have a love of beautiful things.

But the moment human beings become conditioned to thinking, you know, the idea of a certain kind of dinner, you know, steak every time, silver—the moment you get conditioned by a whole lot of other things, and the people who are most vulnerable to it are indeed the middle class, you really have got to think about it, because then you are really moving away from the great mass of people. But you're not, on the other hand, individuated.

And that is why what Godwin knew, one of the great facts of the eighteenth century, was that the aristocracy in England, the aristocracy in Russia, in France, was really repelled by the vulgarity of ostentation. No doubt you got, because of the tie-up between the aristocracy and monarchy, you did get a certain amount of ostentation which, coming out of the palaces, spread into the aristocratic homes. But especially if you look at the English aristocracy, many of whom were very proud peers to be farmers, to be very much in touch with the common farmer, they were people—and I'm speaking from experience, having dined in many of these homes—who really did not like ostentation, who also allowed a tremendous amount of freedom.

And in America, where one can't have the aristocratic principle because it's very much a meritocratic middle-class society, what we find is that the casual approach, where you go and pick a sandwich, this, that, because of the pressure of time, is in effect doing what the aristocratic principle was trying to do but failed to do at the top level in Europe. So in other words, if you really think about it, Godwin says, this love of distinction is artificial, and it only arises because you have made yourself insensitive. In other words, Godwin is saying what Shelley once wrote, that the biggest problem in all ethics is a problem of imagination. It is because we cannot really imagine the consequences of all our acts for everyone else, even in our own little town, let alone in a country, let alone in the world. Therefore, a whole lot of things we think are all right.

In this way, we come to be conditioned by fear-ridden, furtive selfishness. Whereas, if human beings were really aware, and their imagination was aroused by the implications of the inequality of conditions, Godwin says, you will not find it hard to persuade people. If you made some person aware, when let us say he and his family are going on some incredibly expensive trip—all waste really, and they're not going to be happy also, as you can see at such hotels—that really 500 people would get benefit, much more happiness, than they could on that one trip. That doesn't mean to say they don't have to have any alternative to a trip, but people don't think of this. It's mind-blowing.

And in other words, Godwin says, this whole thing arises because we have not only got used to it, we have finally got to a position where we are justifying the worst kind of

property, which is property based upon expropriation of the fruits of labor of others. This is, of course, central to Marxism, because for Marxism all property is expropriation.

Godwin wants to make distinctions. He recognizes that this is not true, that human beings, out of basic needs, also even for their intellectual and moral improvement, will need to hold something, to cherish it and value it. Which is why what later became a conservative idea, very much stressed by Burke, the idea of holding in trust, was very important to Godwin. You may only be, you know, in charge of just a very few books or just a few possessions, which are very much a stereo system, something which gives great pleasure to you; but if somebody comes along who can get a lot of pleasure from it, and you are not going to be using it for a few months, and if you can trust him—that is, if he's somebody you can trust, he's a friend—you certainly don't mind his using it.

That is, Godwin says that human beings, when they know that something which is important to them, they need and they can use it, they are not going to grudge it to anyone else. And furthermore, if it is needed for intellectual and moral improvement, reading, thinking, out of their very intellectual and moral improvement, they are going to recognize the needs of others. And also if a person, let's say, happens to be very hardworking or very inventive, and just happens to earn more, and because he has earned more, therefore, you might say, the products of his own labor, he's able to live better, in a sense that's all right also. Though you will find, Godwin says, that once you withdraw prestige from merely living better in terms of possessions, people will not necessarily, even if they had more money, be merely accumulating possessions. I mean, you might, let us say, go for works of art, this/that; they might be concerned more with refinement than with accumulation.

So Godwin does realize, like Marxists later on, that the biggest problem is property based upon the expropriation of labor. But Godwin says, it isn't really that simple, because people who justify the system of inequality more generally are assuming sometimes either that human nature cannot change, or that it is unavoidable, or they're assuming, in some cases, that it is necessary to a high civilization.

And one of the most impressive things about Godwin here is, he is willing to face the force of these objections. He said, based upon human nature, in what sense? Godwin himself, of course, allows for Epicureanism, for pleasures, but he believes that human beings, though constantly concerned with pleasure, are always willing to give up a pleasure for a greater pleasure. But what is a greater pleasure depends upon their capacity to think for themselves. That is, if you took out of a human being's conception of pleasure what he merely borrows from other people, which comes out of pure imitation, and if you asked him what truly makes him happy, really many people haven't thought about it.

And therefore, you find people constantly involved in situations where they think they ought to be happy, you know, with liquor or whatever. Whereas really, if you really thought it out, what is it that they actually enjoy, one would be surprised. In every human being there is an element, you might say, of wanting to enjoy something new, but there is also an element of wanting to simplify, of not wanting merely to keep changing. And this is very true in regard to basic things. If you are very busy reading and creating and painting, then you are really not on food. And if you are very happy in a pleasant climate, in the open, doing something, you are not very hung up on furniture, and so on and so forth.

So Godwin says really human beings in this sense are very similar, and it is because they have not had a chance to individuate. We get back to individuation. They have not really had a chance to assess their own lives. Perfectly true. In this sense, of course, human nature will not change, because human beings will constantly be subject to impressions, which will be crowding in, and therefore you only become an individual by conscious self-effort. So you might say what is difficult is to become a true individual. What Thoreau said, that only one out of a thousand is a real man, is someone who has truly taken his life into his own hands. You could say the same about women. Only one out of many is a real woman who has really thought out to the core of what is it that she really wants, how she sees herself, and not merely how she projects herself.

So if human beings get an opportunity to become more thinking individuals, they will then formulate varieties of modes of enacting ways and means to increasing and maximizing happiness. Now Godwin realizes that this, of course, will not happen when you come to it being inevitable. He says no, it is only inevitable because people are conditioned by social norms, and all these social norms arise out of opinions, and they certainly change. And if you talk of the emergence of bourgeoisie, if you talk of bourgeoisification, if you talk of the last 300 years—why, even if you talk of the last 30 years—fashions are constantly changing, people are continually changing, whether it be in regard to music or clothes or food, as to what is it they think is great, what is it they really enjoy, or what is it they think they really need, or what is it they really feel adds joy and brings beauty to their lives. If this is the case, Godwin says, surely it should be possible to get people to withdraw approbation, that is, to withdraw prestige from anything ostentatious.

Now, this is not false. Some of this started to happen at the time of the hippie movement in the late '60s. I remember it very vividly. It is now fashionable to dismiss it all, but believe me, it was very important. I said at the time to the Diggers, who were only a handful, and who were more thoughtful and concerned about the future exploitation of the hippie movement, I said, look, of course, hippies—and this is on a mass scale now—they want 100 percent of everything. This gives a certain innocence and a certain kind of strength to their appeal.

And yet you know, and they are not going to recognize it now, but certainly I know, that that isn't going to last, because to get the 100 percent solution, you will need far more than mere *eros*, enthusiasm, and love. But if we can, through this, over a period of seven to ten years, get 10 percent hippieism in bank managers, in people who are middle-aged, in older people, that would be the real revolution.

Now, what really happened then was, you might say, the young produced enormous unhappiness to their parents, and there was a lot of wildness about what happened. Then, of course, alas, because of their vulnerability to drugs and much else, there were many victims. But what did happen was that within a decade, a whole lot of people

loosened up, and it would be very difficult even for you to know the difference. But I do remember it, coming in '63 to the United States, the stiffness of the square American. Utterly false. You know, all that changed. There is a more relaxed attitude among middle-aged people in various positions in American life. So in other words, 10 percent hippieism did work. But meanwhile, there are various people, mostly coming out of academic life, because of their problems with their children, their dissatisfaction with their lives, who are trying to rewrite history and dismiss the '60s and the '70s.

Well, here, thank heavens, necessity is working on our side: economics. Because with the economic pressures, more people are forced to think about what is it they really need, about the very notion of a standard of living. There is nothing more mythical, nothing more confusing, and nothing more captivating and hypnotizing, though it is not rooted in a sufficient analysis, than the idea of a GNP, a standard of living, in terms of goods. When human beings really come to question fundamentally this older, mechanistic notion of a standard of living—and especially in modern mass societies and capitalist societies, it was natural early on to value a person in terms of quantitative criteria, especially addressed to income.

But many people now come to see, because of the enormous health problems in our affluent societies, how important health is. The Buddha said, "Health is the greatest wealth". And over a lifetime you will see, especially when you are deprived of health, how very valuable this is, and it is not something money can buy. Contentment, he said, is the greatest happiness, because as long as you are discontented, you will never really ever find happiness. Creative discontent is good, to be discontented with forms, to be discontented with the present, as a spur to creativity. But the kind of discontent which actually eats away, and prevents you ever from relaxing and being happy, is no good. So, in other words, on a large scale, human beings are really coming to think about all of these things, but then they are looking, because of panic and desperation, for gimmicks.

Godwin, of course, lived in a very leisurely time, a very slow-moving time, and to him all of this is going to take time. He cannot really be attracted to any quick solution. It is as if he is fully aware from his own experience how lazy the human mind is, that the

human mind is very easily enslaved by impressions, by what is erroneous and plausible. Therefore, it is going to take time, and this is not a matter, for Godwin, of educational institutions, but of self-education. It is going to take time for enough people to individuate, and as a result of their individuating, for them to be able to carry conviction with enough other human beings. Now, though you might say it is slow—well, what is meant by slow? We are talking of ratios and proportions. You could say you are talking in terms of percentages, but within a few generations, you can have revolutionary consequences, if you see clearly what is happening.

So, if then this is all true, Godwin is right. It is not inevitable what exists, if you realize it is based upon certain social norms. If these social norms can be changed, and sometimes even shocked—such as in the play of Anouilh, where the millionaire comes to the peasant and, late in life, he wants, he thinks his life is no good, and he suddenly offers a million-pound note to the peasant, and the peasant takes it, thanks him, and tears it up. And this is very significant. In other words, to him, it simply does not have the value which we take for granted coming out of a society based upon exchange and money. And this is still true of a lot of people all over the world.

But this is, of course, a shock effect; but in fact, merely by shock effects you cannot do enough if you really want to fundamentally change enough people's thinking about what is it they really value. So you really have to, you might say, get a shock to a system as a whole. And I am very pleased that a student of mine ten years ago has just brought out a book called *Voluntary Simplicity*, which has reached very widely. A lot of people find this idea very interesting: voluntary simplicity, very different from enforced simplicity. What is involved in simplifying your life? What is involved in gaining strength and self-dependence?

So, if you start thinking this way, then Godwin says, it becomes easier to visualize an ideal situation where, he says, if you don't have excessive needs, all can manage with one-twentieth of the labor that they now need. But instead of having some people do it all and a few people get all the benefits—no, we will distribute it all around. But each person doesn't have to do more than about one-twentieth. But this is just a rough figure

for Godwin. But actually, when you think of the age of microelectronics and the enormous implications of microelectronics and leisure in a new kind of society, this suddenly becomes very, very relevant.

And then Godwin says, if you start thinking this way, you will find that even your concept of culture and civilization can change. It may be in the past cultures had to be inegalitarian to produce great works of art. Maybe this is so, but never mind, we can take it from there. We can then visualize a state of affairs where more people are able to individuate, where there is more leisure for all, where all are able to share and thereby minimize hard labor, and thereby all may have access to the increase of the range of choices, to the improvement of the quality of happiness. So certainly, when he puts it like that, it is something that is a challenge to our thinking.

Bakunin, on the other hand, who is not starting with and staying with the individual, but like a good Marxist, thinking in terms of class analysis—but unlike Marxists, he's far more concerned out of his own inner sympathy and passion with the masses, especially the masses of peasants. For Bakunin, then, it becomes very important to give a rallying cry. And he very shrewdly sees that a superb rallying cry before masses of workers and peasants would be the abolition of inheritance of property. To him, the abolition of the state is tied up with the abolition of property rights of inheritance. And either it is going to come because the masses demand it, and the power of the masses makes it as part of a revolution, inescapable, or it is going to come through violence and chaos. But what Bakunin says, but once you really abolish the right to inheritance, that takes away straight away 90 percent of the bogus mystique, the pseudo-theology attached in bourgeois civilization to property. So for Bakunin, then, in fact, he says explicitly, it is obvious. See, for Bakunin, some of this is not a matter of argument; that is why he's very different from Godwin. He's concerned with campaigns, and there is, of course, something here which we can admire.

On the other hand, living today after what has happened, after seeing the emergence of world communism, after seeing what happened to international socialism, after recognizing all the ways in which not only, as Bakunin saw in *The International*, there

can be subversion and exploitation, a repetition of the same old pattern of oligarchism and centralism—but we can, in other words, be less impressed by the automatic forces in history. That is really the point.

Hegel cast a spell on Marx. He cast a spell on Proudhon. He cast a spell on Bakunin and many others. And that is a very powerful spell because it was in the name of a philosophy of history. There is very much to be said for thinking about what is the meaning of history, what is the meaning of the present historical moment. But we can no more do it in terms of these large philosophies that somehow assume, by analogy with the natural sciences, or as in social Darwinism, they assume that things are going to happen inevitably. I am one of those who does not believe that a consciousness revolution takes place inevitably—that inevitably, because of something happening in evolution, there is going to be a breakthrough. No, you could say there is a ripeness, there is a ripeness in human consciousness, there is a ripeness in historical conditions. But it will not happen unless enough individuals have the courage to pioneer in new ways and carry through.

So in the end, I do believe, like Gandhi, that nothing is as effective as a force of example, and this is based upon choice and commitment. This is something that Godwin would appreciate. So you might say we can appreciate what Bakunin is saying, and yet what Bakunin is saying cannot be dismissed because if you can make it part of a program, and if ever we want to really look at what is good in communism—as the Dalai Lama suggested recently in an article in *The Wall Street Journal*, October 29th—we have seriously got to now look at what is good in communism. It is too late to be hating it, but certainly if America is going to go back to the '50s, it is too late for that. We know too much. Communism has got problems; we have got to find out what is good in it.

But it is not the only answer, it is not the only alternative. We have also got to find what is good in all the religions, and one of the attractive things in Godwin, more than in Bakunin, is, Godwin, though he rejected religion, recognizes that religion at its best played a very important part in history, in playing down human appetites, in withdrawing prestige from possessions, and that is true. That is why even today the

message of the Gospels of Jesus, you know the words of the Sermon on the Mount, the message of the other spiritual teachers—the Buddha I had already quoted—these really speak to something in all human beings regardless of religious affiliation.

So religion is not a matter of institutions and affiliations; there is something in the prophetic impact, the wisdom rooted in common sense but taken with courage to its highest level, that we find in religious teachers. But Godwin says, though he did all of this, of course religion very quickly becomes itself an instrument of social corruption and elitism. So this is partly a matter of distinguishing between the innovators and the pioneers in the great religions, the great teachers, and the institutionalization of religion. Same problem, of course, we have in politics; you're going to have the same problem in socialism, you're going to have the same problem in communism, you're also going to have the same problem in anarchism if one is not careful—though usually in practice the problem with anarchists is chaos rather than over-organization.

Now, of course, when you turn to the whole question of marriage, there also, there were a lot of shock effects in the nineteenth century. Balzac went much beyond *Madame Bovary*, which showed what a bourgeois marriage is like, really based upon money, upon class, you know, moving up in class. See, today, since Freud, unfortunately, people suddenly think as if sex is a new invention in the history of mankind, and they are suddenly giving it so much importance they don't understand most of human history. In most of human history that was not the issue; people had it and moved on. Sex meant children. They were concerned with how to live, they were concerned with economic considerations, they were concerned also with happiness.

And therefore, if you look at human history as a whole, you do find that the property idea was so dominant it completely distorted the notion of marriage. So marriage became a means of enslavement, but this is true speaking of it as a social institution. But Balzac, just as Proudhon said property is theft, he said marriage is rape—it's disguised rape. And it's true because in the nineteenth century, where you get all the stress on virginity and so on, and suddenly the fear of the young, shy girl before the man, his awkwardness and crudity, the violence in the act creating a tremendous distortion. Indeed, it is still true for

every human being: how you have sex the first time is going to somehow condition you, especially for a woman, all your life. So if it was had in conditions where it had no dignity, no meaning, no joy, where it was only an annex to gaining self-confidence, very sad—they are going to have sex problems. In other words, this is a modern, abnormal phenomenon in modern society because of the enormous insecurity. Here we are talking of a sacred language, a language of communion and communication between a man and a woman, and that language is as rich as is the content behind it, behind two people.

So if you start to think in this way, then you can begin to see that there was a lot of meaning to the anti-Victorian cries of people like Balzac that marriage was a disguised rape. Tolstoy said the same thing in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, that marriage is a form of licensed prostitution. In other words, they saw the connection with possessiveness; they also saw that male dominance prevailed.

And someone who went even much further than these was Edward Carpenter, who late in the nineteenth century wrote a remarkable book, *Love's Coming-of-Age*. And he said in this book, very little known to most people and at the time very remarkable, he said in the twentieth century there will be many revolutions: revolutions in the relation between classes, revolution in the relation between races, revolutions in the relation between nations, revolution also above all in the relation between men and women. And to Edward Carpenter, the most fundamental of all the revolutions was a revolution in the relation between men and women.

And there, Edward Carpenter said something quite shocking and strong. He had a kind of theory of contradiction in a man-woman relationship that is as powerful and potent as such theories of contradiction are in other contexts, say in Marx or elsewhere. He said the problem with a man-woman relationship, which has been for a long time, is that the woman is expected to look up to a master, and most of the time she's looking up to a master, to a masterly man. But unfortunately, the man is looking to her for mother love. So there is a contradiction. It may be for a while, initially, a woman may actually look up enormously to a man whom she's married, but very quickly she starts to find that he is constantly wanting mothering. He becomes really more like the children. And

because of this contradiction, there is frustration. In other words, he says the relation between man and love raises expectations in a woman which are not fulfilled because men typically are not really able to fulfill it. And he was not thinking in purely physical terms, but he was thinking in terms of a lifetime. A lot of things that make sense at one moment don't make sense over a period of years.

So therefore, Edward Carpenter said when in the twentieth century women are able to work, women are able to find economic independence, then you will really see. Because it is because they were economically dependent that they put up with this fraud of being denied any pleasure, and being the instruments of, as almost slaves, of male chauvinism. But once they have economic independence in the twentieth century, they are going to assert their rights, and that is, of course, what they are doing.

And once they assert their rights, this is going to really shake up everything, because the men are also going to find that they can't anymore simply, using one or another justification, psych out women purely from the point of their own pleasure. In other words, they cannot anymore make the thing go on the basis of looking at woman as a sex object. Here is a human being with a soul, a mind, a heart, capable of thinking, creating. And unless a man and a woman can relate to each other, in that Shakespearean sense of a marriage of true minds—which has nothing to do with being intellectual, but really in terms of the whole man, the whole woman—there cannot be true companionship, there cannot be true comradeship, there cannot also really be true fulfillment even on the sexual plane over years.

So if this is so—and of course this is an ideal, but what is wrong with the present system is it creates expectations that cannot be fulfilled with a lot of moralistic padding. It's a pseudo-idealism like with the state and much else. So pseudo-idealism produces so-called realism, which comes in the way of true idealism. So looked at it this way, then, Godwin is saying something very profound, and for the most important argument is this: On what grounds can you assume, between any two people, they could be even friends, just two friends in the same sex over a lifetime—but take a man and a woman where sex is also involved, where children are involved, on what grounds can you

assume that all their lives they will be at the same point, they will be at the same position. See, two people change, and there is no reason to assume that the curves of change of two people will coincide for a long time.

So if Godwin's concern is mainly with individuation and finding the highest in you potentially through individual solitude, individual meditation, and so on, then he says you must recognize, if you look honestly, that the so-called lifetime comradeship can become an imposition. So you might say, then, Godwin says people should enter into such a comradeship willingly and leave it willingly; and so does, of course, Bakunin say.

But on the other hand, Godwin and Bakunin were saying something very important at that time. But we who live today in societies where divorce is very common—indeed, in certain years there are more divorces than marriages in California, just as there are more abortions than births—that is, we who live in extremely abnormal conditions, where things have gone to the other extreme, we know that merely given the option to walk out at any time isn't really going to change anything. In other words, we are concerned with deeper problems Godwin also was concerned with: of the self, of selfishness, of true egoity, true individuation.

In other words, we are really talking in terms of the moral and spiritual development of human beings. And love, marriage, all relationships will be as good as the quality of development that human beings attain. But when they become institutionalized, there is a grave danger of seeing them as panaceas, or props to confidence, or pillars to strength, or the means by which individuation takes place, and this is perilous. Because it's a very rare marriage, such as, say, that of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, where there's so great a respect between man and wife that they could both individuate.

And it was very interesting what Beatrice Webb said about Sidney. They did all that work together all their lives, died very happy, married young. Somebody said, "How is it that you can be so happy when Sidney is very busy in the evenings, all day, and you're also very busy doing something else, and you're sitting in the same room but you hardly even talk to each other?" She said, "Yes, Sidney wanted someone who would be in the

same room doing something, concentrating while he's concentrating, because the thought of that was very important to him, and I find that extremely enjoyable." And therefore, they had a tremendous companionship. It's rather like what Maeterlinck wrote about "the silences in love".

In other words, because in modern society through various forms of expressivism, but also with the enormous insistence upon ostentation and show, we overemphasize demonstration. As long as you overemphasize demonstration, you're going to get into the world of competition, envy; you're going to get into contradictions and inbuilt frustration. Whether there's marriage, divorce, whether people live together without marriage, with ties, whatever, in every case it's going to come out. So in other words, you've really got to change the very ratio of individual, you might say, richness and socialization. You've got to change the very ratio of the manifest to the non-manifest. And people have got to learn that there is a silence in love, that there is communication which is non-verbal, but also non-tactile, that there is a kind of communion between people, each of whom independently is concerned imaginatively with ideals.

So unless, in other words, we can rethink our whole view of human nature and get to the very depths of human beings, of human souls, human motivation, we cannot really recover the depths in love or in marriage. And then we would see that they are indeed very rare, few and far between. But to the extent to which, as a social institution, marriage either puts certain people at a tremendous disadvantage or creates false expectations, it is very important to think about it in the way that Godwin and Bakunin suggested, and also to think about it in other ways.

And lastly, I might just mention that one of the great anarchists from America, Emma Goldman, who came as a young girl from Russia to Rochester and went into a marriage, had a very difficult early life, very unhappy childhood, and then she heard about all these strikes among working men and became interested, came under the influence of a man called Most, an anarchist. But then discovered as she grew up, and she became more and more dynamic and successful in creating sympathy for the workers, that there was male chauvinism in the anarchist movement. And therefore, eventually she came to

believe, “No! Woman's liberation is fundamental.” What could make anarchism really get off the ground is the emphasis upon the liberation of woman from the mental enslavement by men. Because she saw that even her lovers would never take her seriously, and then she saw a connection between this and compromises and corruption in the anarchist movement.

And later, when she went to Russia with great enthusiasm, had many conversations with Lenin which she wrote about in an autobiography, she then found that actually Kropotkin had so much guts and integrity. He wouldn't receive money from the government because Kropotkin knew that communism had already become corrupt. That the communists—because in those days to be a communist was a great title—they were already living like a privileged class, having access to special shops, special goods. And when Emma Goldman saw all this, and she spoke this frankly to Lenin—and Lenin admired frank talk because he was worried about this, it was just beginning to happen—then, of course, the secret police started to make trouble. Emma Goldman then left and came back to the West. She couldn't come back to America because she had been in Russia, but she came back to Canada and elsewhere to talk about what has gone wrong in the Communist Revolution, and she never sold out. So it was very moving that after she died her body was then, because of the insistence of many people in the Midwest, brought to Chicago and buried in the USA.

So there was a leading anarchist who saw the enormous importance of the liberation of womanhood. This will be much bigger than can take place merely through making a kind of a general declaration like you get in Bakunin. It will be as hard and as slow as all individuation as Godwin understood. And has certainly taken some very quirky forms already, but nonetheless, dialectically, it's only one stage in the process. There'll be many more stages. Eventually we'll get to a point where there will be so different a concept of self-liberation and freedom in women and men; and you can never get integrity to this whole question unless you bring children into the picture, because for Bakunin children should all be maintained by the community, should be looked after entirely by public

institutions. At the same time they should have mother love. Well, this raises more questions.

So in other words, at some point anarchist thought gets you to ask basic questions about men, women, children. And the fact that these are difficult questions, and the fact that the answers of the anarchists are only approximations, should not be held against the anarchists, nor should the difficult questions be regarded as insoluble. If we can link this up in our own lives to what is going on. Sift out of all the chaos as to what is really meaningful. Because there's always something meaningful going on hidden behind the chaos. If you can look for what is meaningful in the way of true change, but above all make experiments in your own lives, and discuss with like-minded friends and make experiments in communes and experiments in other kinds of collective contexts. Then one will really keep coming back to these questions, and one will be very glad that the anarchist at least liberated you from mindless conformity to all the claptrap that we associate mostly with modern education.