



Chao ab Ordo^(*)

(*) The source of the oft used Latin phrase Ordo ab Chao has its roots deeply embedded in the origin story of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry in the Americas.

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with Yves P. Huin



Antipasti

“Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.” Rob Siltanen

You may never have read a single line of *La Divina Commedia*, and yet you've been influenced by it. But it's just one line of the 14,233 that make up The Divine Comedy. The three-part epic poem published in 1320 by the Florentine bureaucrat -turned visionary storyteller- Dante Alighieri. In late 13th Century Florence, books were sold in apothecaries, a solid evidence that words on paper (or parchment) could affect minds with their ideas, as much as any drug.

And what an addiction The Divine Comedy inspired: a literary work endlessly adapted, pinched from, referenced and remixed, inspiring painters and sculptors for centuries! More than the authors of the Bible itself, Dante provided us with the vision of Hell that remains with us and has been painted by Botticelli and Blake, Delacroix and Dalí, turned into sculpture by Rodin -whose *The Kiss* depicts Dante's damned lovers Paolo and Francesca - and illustrated in the pages of X-Men comics by John Romita. Jorge Luis Borges said The Divine Comedy is *“the best book literature has ever achieved”*, while TS Eliot summed up its influence thus: *“Dante and Shakespeare divide the world between them. There is no third.”* Perhaps the epigraph to The Divine Comedy itself should be *“Gather inspiration all ye who enter here.”*



Dante shown holding a copy of the Divine Comedy, next to the entrance to Hell, the seven terraces of Mount Purgatory and the city of Florence, with the spheres of Heaven above, in Michelino's fresco

But it's not just as a fountainhead of inspiration for writers and visual artists that The Divine Comedy reigns supreme –this is the work that enshrined what we think of as the Italian language and advanced the idea of the author as a singular creative voice with a vision powerful enough to stand alongside Holy Scripture, a notion that paved the way for the Renaissance, for the Reformation after that, and finally for the secular humanism that dominates intellectual discourse today. You may have never read a single line of The Divine Comedy, and yet you've been influenced by it. I was, indelibly.

In a way, I did not suspect this lasting influence in 1952, while in Parma squatting the dorm of the *Gruppo di Teatro ca' Foscari*, during the International Festival of the Students Theaters. The Venetian students were all in humanities or law. Until dawn, they would compete in oratory jousts, always declaiming *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* or



Paradiso. I bathed in Dante's verses; they entered the pores of my skin, crawled along the hairs of my scalp to bore into my brain; they reshaped the fine endings of my coronary arteries; they taught me doubt, skepticism, and –of course- love. Dante's verses also soaked in the spiritual writings of *Ibn Arabi* and of the *Isra* and *Kitab al Mi'raj* (night journey of Muhammad to Heaven), and many major scientific notions (e.g. spherical Earth with time zones; astronomy; clockwork; Thales' theorem) that were anathemas, and could have resulted in the pyre –as Giordano Bruno will experience in 1600 on Rome's *Campo de' Fiori*.

The *Ca' Foscari* students will also welcome me in January 1955 (as I describe in my essay *Memoria & Memorie*), and introduce me to Errico Malatesta, Carlo Cafiero, Renzo Novatore and Camillo Berneri – reminding me that my father marched and demonstrated (in Paris) in 1927 to stop the electrocution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti [he was severely beaten by the Fascists *Croix-de-Feu*]. My anarchist horizon grew into the European sphere, soon to include Spain, with its glorious past of 1936-1937.



Primi Piatti

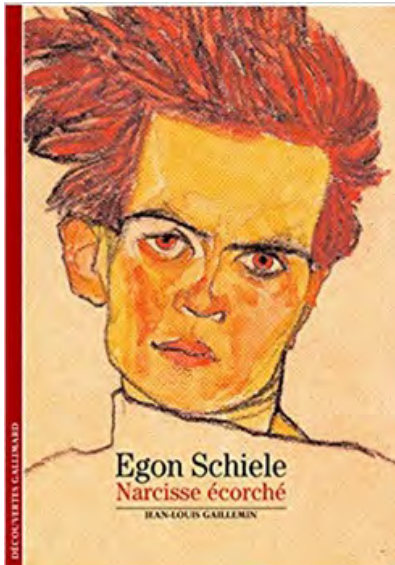
The anarchism I was –unknowingly from my parents- brought into was closely interwoven with literature and visual arts. ***The Artist as the Expression of Anarchy –or total Freedom.*** This never flied well wherever I lived, but I was offered (and grabbed) the foundations for my life in the Paris –then Europe- of after World War II, when there was a window (a skylight!) of tolerance, generosity, and respect for all cultures. It did not last; it never does but remember the motto of Willem van Oranje-Nassau: *‘Exert yourself to the utmost, however hopeless the situation, and persevere even when all attempts have been unsuccessful.’* I always did, and persist!

According to David Gooday, *‘There can be no doubt that one type of intellectual has been consistently drawn to anarchism, placing a premium on absolute freedom and non-interference in their personal and social lives, and belonging, like (Herbert) Read himself, to the artistic and literary avant-gardes. Significant clusters of anarchist painters and writers existed in pre-1914 Italy, New York before and during the First World War and, most impressive of all, the France of the 1880s and 1890s, where the Neo-Impressionists – Camille and Lucien Pissarro, Paul Signac, most probably the enigmatic Georges Seurat – and the Symbolist writers, including one of the greatest poets, Stéphane Mallarmé, all consisted of militant anarchists or sympathizers. In Bohemia, the fact that Jaroslav Hašek had been a member of anarchist groups and worked on anarchist journals helps to explain the subversive genius of The Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk; and Franz Kafka had attended anarchist meetings in Prague, gaining considerable familiarity with anarchist writers and personalities, and mentioning Bakunin and Kropotkin in his diary. The German actor, Ret Marut, fleeing from Munich in 1919, recreated himself in Mexico as the still insufficiently appreciated novelist, B. Traven.’*

When, with Henri Cachin, we met several times André Breton in 1952, he had just written ‘It was in the black mirror of anarchism that surrealism first recognized itself’; he continued to support us (his young kids), with the Fédération Communiste Libertaire, during the Algerian War, when we had organized a network to funnel critical medications to the Algerian Resistance via the Jeanson Network.



But among all the artists whose artworks my mother received, or collected, many of my favorites were by the German Expressionist Egon Schiele.



“Envy those who see beauty in everything in the world.” (Egon Schiele)

To be an artist is to have a particular orientation to the world -the interior world and the exterior world- the exact composition of which is somewhat like temperature, impossible to deconstruct into individual phenomenological components without ceasing to be itself. Perhaps this is why the question of what it means to be an artist has been the subject of myriad theories, even the most insightful of which are complementary to one another but inherently incomplete. For James Baldwin, being an artist meant serving as ‘*a sort of emotional or spiritual historian*’; for Georgia O’Keeffe, it meant ‘*making your unknown known...and keeping the unknown always beyond you*’. For Albert Camus (a former anarchist with whom I worked at *Combat*), the artist was a person endowed with the courage to create dangerously; for E.E. Cummings, with the courage to be oneself. Virginia Woolf believed it requires a certain ‘*shock-receiving capacity*’.

Adding to the richest meditations on the inner life of artists is indeed the visionary Austrian painter **Egon Schiele** (June 12, 1890–October 31, 1918) -an artist whose uncommon genius and creative courage were cut short by his untimely death at



twenty-eight in the grip of the Spanish flu pandemic that had taken the life of his young pregnant wife three days before it claimed his own.

In the spring of 1912, after several exhibitions that scandalized Europe with Schiele's electric eroticism, the twenty-one-year-old artist was arrested for indecency and imprisoned for twenty-four days while awaiting trial -a trial during which the judge demonstratively burned one of Schiele's drawings over candle flame. The charges were eventually dropped, but during his arrest, the police raided his humble studio and confiscated more than a hundred drawings they considered pornographic. That summer, Schiele, still shaken by the experience, contemplated what it means to be an artist in a world so often hostile to new ways of looking that challenge the *status quo* and to the seers who invite the rest of us to view that world with new eyes.

In a letter found in Egon Schiele: Poems and Letters 1910–1912 (public library), he writes:

One needs to observe and experience the world with naïve, pure eyes to attain a great weltanschauung; -that is a living cult -the proper tone is a book which, for some, may be nice to consult, but proves itself completely useless in the world; in other words, there are those who should live through books and those who exist through themselves; who are better? -that is clear. Few see the sun and everyone else must read novels and novellas to finally realize that there is light.

Decades after Kierkegaard insisted that 'truth always rests with the minority... because the minority is generally formed by those who really have an opinion, while the strength of a majority is illusory, formed by the gangs who have no opinion'. Schiele considers the power of the visionaries, who are always in the minority:

The "many" are those who are dependent upon each other, — the people. The "few" are the direct leaders of the world because they introduce only that which is new and are therefore repugnant; that should be clear enough. Beyond that are the fighters -leaders... One battles against the capital and the philistines; the large spirit wishes to see the smaller one equally large whereas the small spirit forever wishes to overshadow every small spirit around him. That is a lack of will and whatever else... Envy those who see beauty in everything in the world.



Complement with Rilke, writing a decade earlier, on what it means to be an artist, and Kafka, writing a decade later, on why we make art, then revisit Baldwin on the artist's struggle for integrity and John Muir on the universe as an infinite storm of beauty.



Egon Schiele: Self-Portrait with Physalis

Besides the artists who populated my childhood (thanks to my mother; to the schoolteachers who took the whole class to weekly visits of the greatest museums), my adolescence (blessed by Ginette Signac, Henri Cachin and his sister Françoise Cachin-Signac, their private collections; Pierre Schaeffer who revolutionized music and created the *musique concrète*, and molded Jean-Michel Jarre; Samuel Beckett at the ephemeral Théâtre de Babylone where I watched him create *En Attendant Godot*;

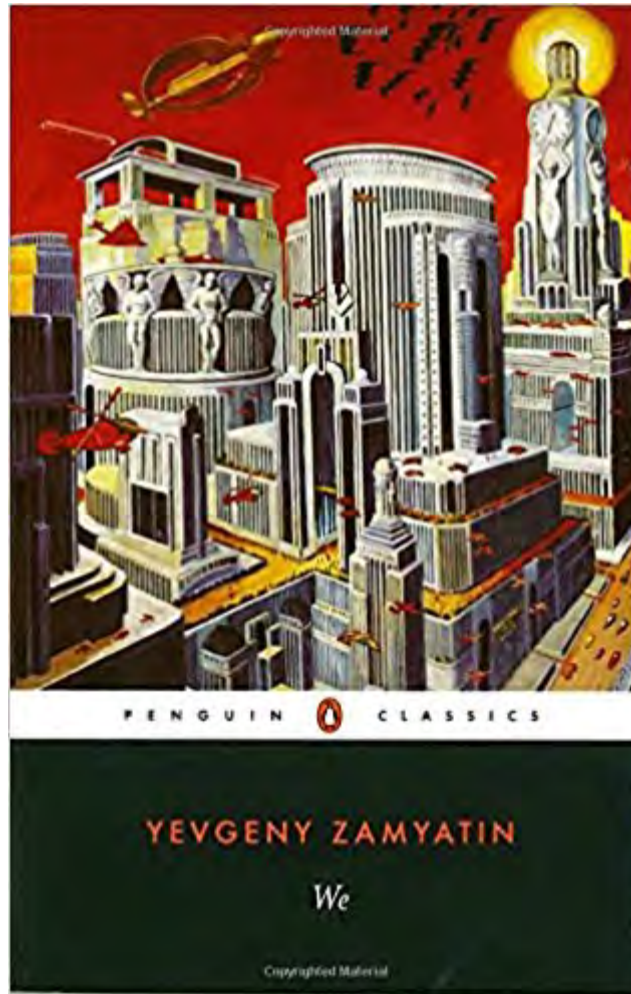


Eugène Ionesco who welcomed me at the backstage of the Théâtre de la Huchette during the performances of his *Cantatrice Chauve*; Roland Petit and Zizi Jeanmaire who wanted me to take ballet and join their troupe;...) and my whole adult, professional life that was and remains bathed in the disruption, the sting, the challenge, and the elation of all forms of art (with my wife's heritage and our daughter Emilie's sublime creations) –the evidence is that **chaos** –not order- makes us uniquely human.

In his 1921 essay *"I Am Afraid,"* Yevgeny Zamyatin wrote: *"True literature can only exist when it is created, not by diligent and reliable officials, but by madmen, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels and skeptics."*

His novel, *"We"*, is set in the future. D-503, a spacecraft engineer, lives in the One State, an urban nation constructed almost entirely of glass, which assists in mass surveillance. The structure of the state is Panopticon-like, and life is scientifically managed F. W. Taylor-style. People march in step with each other and are uniformed. There is no way of referring to people except by their given numbers. The society is run strictly by logic or reason as the primary justification for the laws or the construct of the society. The individual's behavior is based on logic by way of formulas and equations outlined by the One State.

Orwell began *"Nineteen Eighty-Four"* in 1949, some eight months after he read *"We"* in a French translation and wrote a review of it. Orwell is reported as *"saying that he was taking it as the model for his next novel"*. Brown writes that, for Orwell and certain others, *"We" appears to have been the crucial literary experience*". Shane states that *"Zamyatin's influence on Orwell is beyond dispute"*. Robert Russell, in an overview of the criticism of *"We"*, concludes that *"1984 shares so many features with We" that there can be no doubt about its general debt to it"*. Further, Russell finds that *"Orwell's novel is both bleaker and more topical than Zamyatin's, lacking entirely that ironic humor that pervades the Russian work"*.



These novels (*We*, *1984* and hundreds of others) are the canaries in the coal mine, warning us of permanent attempts to impinge, damage, eventually destroy our freedom(s), and enslave us in religion, totalitarianism, absurd diets, the military, etiquettes (*good manners*), education whose goal is to make young people serve as cannon fodder in wars decided and run by senile “leaders” or paranoid politicians (often both).

Another canary that sang beautifully was **Anarchism in Spain**; it has historically gained more support and influence than anywhere else, especially before Francisco Franco’s victory in the **Spanish Civil War** of 1936–39.

Anarchists played a central role in the **fight against Francisco Franco** during the Spanish Civil War. At the same time, a far-reaching social revolution spread



throughout Spain, where land and factories were collectivized and controlled by the workers. All remaining social reforms ended in 1939 with the victory of Franco, who had thousands of anarchists executed. Resistance to his rule never entirely died, with resilient militants participating in acts of sabotage and other direct action after the war, and making several attempts on the ruler's life.

Their legacy remains important to this day, particularly to anarchists who look at their achievements as a historical precedent of anarchism's validity.

On and after 1936, along with the fight against fascism was a profound anarchist revolution throughout Spain.

Much of Spain's economy was put under worker control; in anarchist strongholds like Catalonia, the figure was as high as 75%, but lower in areas with heavy socialist influence. Factories were run through worker committees; agrarian areas became collectivized and run as libertarian communes. Even places like hotels, barber shops, and restaurants were collectivized and managed by their workers. George Orwell describes a scene in Aragon during this time period, in his book, *"Homage to Catalonia"*:

I had dropped more or less by chance into the only community of any size in Western Europe where political consciousness and disbelief in capitalism were more normal than their opposites. Up here in Aragon one was among tens of thousands of people, mainly though not entirely of working-class origin, all living at the same level and mingling on terms of equality. In theory, it was perfect equality, and even in practice it was not far from it. There is a sense in which it would be true to say that one was experiencing a foretaste of Socialism, by which I mean that the prevailing mental atmosphere was that of Socialism. Many of the normal motives of civilized life—snobbishness, money-grubbing, fear of the boss, etc.—had simply ceased to exist. The ordinary class-division of society had disappeared to an extent that is almost unthinkable in the money-tainted air of England; there was no one there except the peasants and ourselves, and no one owned anyone else as his master.

The anarchist held areas were run according to the basic principle of "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need". In some places, money was entirely eliminated, to be replaced with vouchers. Numerous sources attest that



industrial productivity doubled almost everywhere across the country, and **agricultural** yields being "30-50%" larger, demonstrated by Emma Goldman, Augustin Souchy, Chris Ealham, Eddie Conlon, Daniel Guérin and others.

Anarchic communes often produced more than before the collectivization. Yields were increased by as much as 50% because of newly applied scientific methods. Currency remained in use as a 'family wage' in some areas, while in other areas the use of currency was abolished. The newly liberated zones worked on entirely socialist libertarian principles; decisions were made through councils of ordinary citizens *without any sort of bureaucracy*.

In addition to the economic revolution, there was a spirit of cultural revolution. For instance, women could have abortions, and the idea of "free love" became popular. In many ways, this spirit of cultural liberation was like that of the "New Left" movements of the 1960s.

Spanish individualist anarchism was influenced by American individualist anarchism but mainly it was connected to the French currents. At the start of the 20th century people such as Dorado Montero, Ricardo Mella, Federico Urales, Mariano Gallardo and J. Elizalde translated French and American individualists. Important in this respect were also magazines such as *La Idea Libre*, *La Revista Blanca*, *Etica*, *Iniciales*, *Al margen*, *Estudios* and *Nosotros*. The most influential thinkers there were Stirner, Émile Armand and Han Ryner. Just as in France, Esperanto, **anationalism**, anarcho-naturism and free love were present as philosophies and practices within Spanish individualist anarchist circles. Later Armand and Ryner started publishing in the Spanish individualist press. Armand's concept of amorous camaraderie had an important role in motivating polyamory as realization of the individual.

Anarcho-naturism was quite important at the end of the 1920s in the Spanish anarchist movement. In France, later important propagandists of anarcho-naturism include Henri Zisly and Émile Gravelle who collaborated in *La Nouvelle Humanité*, *Le Naturien*, *Le Sauvage*, *L'Ordre Naturel*, and *La Vie Naturelle*. Their ideas were important in individualist anarchist circles in France as well as Spain, where Federico Urales (pseudonym of Joan Montseny) promoted the ideas of Gravelle and Zisly in *La Revista Blanca* 1898-1905):



‘The linking role played by the Sol y Vida group was very important. The goal of this group was to take trips and enjoy the open air. The Naturist athenaeum, Eclético, in Barcelona, was the base from which the activities of the group were launched. First Etica and then Iniciales, which began in 1929, were the publications of the group, which lasted until the Spanish Civil War. We must be aware that the naturist ideas expressed in them matched the desires that the libertarian youth had of breaking up with the conventions of the bourgeoisie of the time. That is what a young worker explained in a letter to Iniciales. He writes it under the odd pseudonym of ‘silvestre del campo’ (wild man in the country). "I find great pleasure in being naked in the woods, bathed in light and air, two natural elements we cannot do without. By shunning the humble garment of an exploited person, (garments which, in my opinion, are the result of all the laws devised to make our lives bitter), we feel there no others left but just the natural laws. Clothes mean slavery for some and tyranny for others. Only the naked man who rebels against all norms, stands for anarchism, devoid of the prejudices of outfit imposed by our money-oriented society."



Isaac Puente, Spanish anarchist naturist and anarcho-communist



Isaac Puente, an influential Spanish anarchist during the 1920s and 1930s and an important propagandist of anarcho-naturism, was a militant of both the CNT anarcho-syndicalist trade union and Iberian Anarchist Federation. He published the book *El Comunismo Libertario y otras proclamas insurreccionales y naturistas* (*Libertarian Communism and other insurrectionary and naturist proclaims*) in 1933, which sold around 100,000 copies, and wrote the final document for the Extraordinary Confederal Congress of Zaragoza of 1936 which established the main political line for the CNT for that year. Puente was a doctor who approached his medical practice from a naturist point of view. He saw naturism as an integral solution for the working classes, alongside Neo-Malthusianism, and believed it concerned the living being while anarchism addressed the social being. He believed capitalist societies endangered the well-being of humans from both a socioeconomic and sanitary viewpoint, and he promoted anarcho-communism alongside naturism as a solution.

The "relation between Anarchism and Naturism gives way to the Naturist Federation, in July 1928, and to the IV Spanish Naturist Congress, in September 1929, both supported by the Libertarian Movement. However, in the short term, the Naturist and Libertarian movements grew apart in their conceptions of everyday life. The Naturist movement felt closer to the Libertarian individualism of some French theoreticians such as Henri Ner (real name of Han Ryner) than to the revolutionary goals proposed by some Anarchist organizations such as the FAI, (Federación Anarquista Ibérica)". This ecological tendency in Spanish anarchism was strong enough as to call the attention of the CNT-FAI in Spain.

Daniel Guérin in *"Anarchism: From Theory to Practice"* reports:

"Spanish anarcho-syndicalism had long been concerned to safeguard the autonomy of what it called "affinity groups." There were many adepts of naturism and vegetarianism among its members, especially among the poor peasants of the south. Both these ways of living were considered suitable for the transformation of the human being in preparation for a libertarian society. At the Saragossa congress the members did not forget to consider the fate of groups of naturists and nudists, "unsuited to industrialization." As these groups would be unable to supply all their own needs, the congress anticipated that their delegates to the meetings of the confederation of communes would be able to



negotiate special economic agreements with the other agricultural and industrial communes. On the eve of a vast, bloody, social transformation, the CNT did not think it foolish to try to meet the infinitely varied aspirations of individual human beings”.

Feminism has historically played a role alongside the development of anarchism; Spain is no exception. The CNT's founding congress placed special emphasis on the role of women in the labor force and urged an effort to recruit them into the organization. There was also a denunciation of the exploitation of women in society and of wives by their husbands.

Women's rights had been integral in anarchist ideas such as coeducation, the abolition of marriage, and **abortion rights**, amongst others; these were quite radical ideas in traditionally Catholic Spain. Women had played a large part in many of the struggles, even fighting alongside their male comrades on the barricades. However, they were often marginalized; for example, women often were paid less in the agrarian **collectives** and had less visible roles in larger anarchist organizations.

A Spanish anarchist group known as *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women) provide **day-care**, education, maternity centers, and other services for the benefit of women. The group had a peak membership of between 20,000 and 38,000. Its first national congress, held in 1937, with delegations from over a dozen different cities representing about 115 smaller groups. The statutes of the organization declared its purpose as being "a) *To create a conscious and responsible feminine force that will act as a vanguard of progress; b) To establish for this purpose schools, institutes, lectures, special courses, etc., to train the woman and emancipate her from the triple slavery to which she has been and still is submitted: the slavery of ignorance, the slavery of being a woman, and the slavery of being a worker.*"

Eskalera Karakola is a current squat in Madrid, Spain, which is held by feminists and works on '**autogestion**' principles. It was situated in the Lavapiés barrio from 1996 to 2005, and is now in Calle Embajador. The squat organizes activities focusing on domestic violence and women's precarity in post-industrial capitalism. In 2002, it created a *Female Workers' Laboratory* (*Laboratorio de Trabajadoras*), and has carried out anti-racist activities, in particular with female immigrants, since 1998. *Eskalera Karakola* also took part in the organization of the LGBT Pride Parade and the forum "*Women and Architecture*". It participated in alter-globalization events



such as the European Social Forum and is part of the European nextGENDERation network. It publishes a review, *Mujeres Preocupando* ("Concerned Women").

The Spanish War –the ‘rehearsal for WWII’- was deeply felt in France, notably in the recently naturalized community like my parents’. They knew fascism from the Marshall Józef Piłsudski’s Poland; they knew the pogroms; the persecutions; the propaganda; the nefarious influence of the Catholic church (and the Vatican); the consequences of the Molotov-von Ribbentrop pact; the blockade of the Southern borders by Benito Mussolini and Franco; the massacres of over 400,000 political opponents by the Falange; and soon to come the Abwehr major outposts in Spain; the delivery to the Nazi death camps by Vichy of the political refugees, the Roma, the homosexuals, the atheists, the handicapped... Indeed, Anarchism in Spain was the last salvo of hope, the ultimate fireworks of joy, the sunset of love, the farewell to the future.

Thirteen years later I was immersed in Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (where I learned my Russian basic vocabulary); André Malraux *L’Espoir*; Hugh Thomas’ *The Spanish Civil War* (the best).

Among my friends, then, was Rafael Martins, whose family had been leading the FAI (*Federación Anarchista Ibérica*); he was smart, funny, adult for our age, and early 1952 he asked me if I could carry a package to the Spanish side of Portbou (Pyrenean-Mediterranean border); someone would look for me on the Spanish train station platform; I just had to give the package and take the train back to Paris-Austerlitz.

What I did not expect was the passport/customs control **on the train**. The Spanish *Guardia Civil* (*los Grises*) climbed on the train in Collioure and zeroed in on me: *What is this package?* I told the truth: *I don’t know*. But *they* knew; they had been tipped. Fortunately, I was still on French soil, and had not committed any crime or felony. I got a one-hour severe fit of cold sweats, playing unwillingly the role of a dying-of-fright small mouse surrounded by a squadron of sadistic cats... Finally, they took me to the departing train, soaked in my only clothes, starting to reek of the stink of death. I doubt that my act of stupid bravery made it into the Annals of the FAI. I was blacklisted and forbidden to enter Spain, until the amnesty declared by Felipe Gonzalez early 1983.



But Anarchism, historically and in many parts of the world has been (and sometimes remains) the cornerstone of **free thinking, free speech, social justice, human** (and especially **immigrants, refugees, children, women's**) **rights, drastic reduction of inequalities by redistribution according to needs**, etc. It is not an utopia; just a tough-to-reach goal.

Secondi Piatti

I love the sheer weirdness of the kitchen life: the dreamers, the crackpots, the refugees, and the sociopaths; the professional kitchen is the last refuge of the misfit.
(Anthony Bourdain, *The New Yorker*, April 19, 1999, 'Don't Eat Before Reading This')

In his novel *Jurassic Park* (1990), Michael Crichton, MD, alternates chapters distilling the story (suspense!) and discussions on '**chaos theory**' –that fascinated him then.

'**Chaos**' is an interdisciplinary **theory** stating that within the apparent randomness of chaotic complex systems, there are underlying patterns, constant feedback loops, repetition, self-similarity, fractals, self-organization, and reliance on programming at the initial point known as *sensitive dependence on initial conditions*. The butterfly effect describes how a small change in one state of a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state, e.g. a butterfly flapping its wings in China can cause a hurricane in Texas.

Small differences in initial conditions, such as those due to rounding errors in numerical computation, yield widely diverging outcomes for such dynamical systems, rendering long-term prediction of their behavior impossible in general. This happens even though these systems are deterministic, meaning that their future behavior is fully determined by their initial conditions, with no random elements involved. In other words, the deterministic nature of these systems does not make them predictable. This behavior is known as **deterministic chaos**, or simply **chaos**. The theory was summarized by Edward Lorenz as: "*Chaos: When the present determines the future, but the approximate present does not approximately determine the future.*"

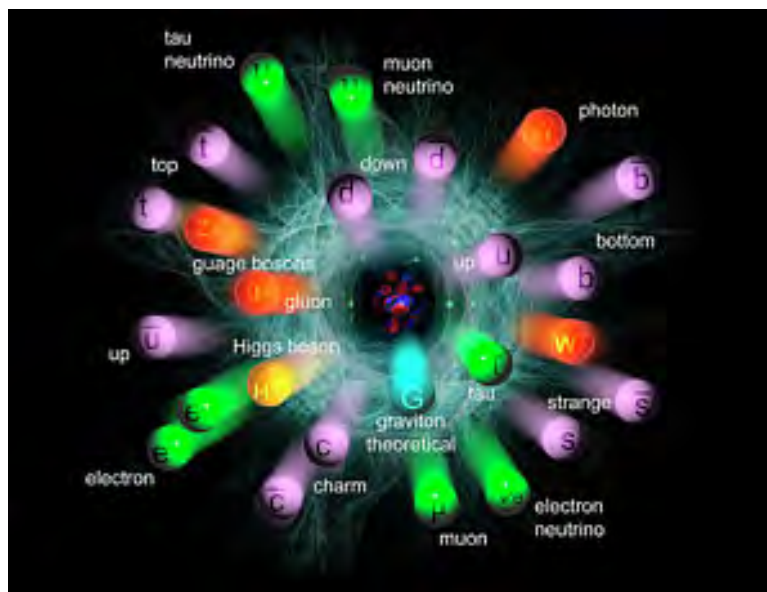
This definition of **chaos**, in modern mathematics and physics, is part of the novel



world of science that emerged at the very end of the XIXth century, and developed thanks to Albert Einstein, quantum physics, radioactivity, cosmology and space science, modern biology and genomics, and everything that we discover every day – and shall keep discovering and exploring in the future.

One early observation was **Brownian motion** or **pedesis** (from πήδησις /πέδεισις/ "leaping") is the random motion of particles suspended in a fluid (a liquid or a gas) resulting from their collision with the fast-moving molecules in the fluid.

This **pattern of motion** typically **alternates** random fluctuations in a particle's position inside a fluid sub-domain with a relocation to another sub-domain. Each relocation is followed by more fluctuations within the new closed volume. This pattern describes a fluid at thermal equilibrium, defined by a given temperature. Within such fluid there exists no preferential direction of flow as in transport phenomena. More specifically the fluid's overall linear and angular momenta remain null over time. It is important also to note that the kinetic energies of the molecular Brownian motions, together with those of molecular rotations and vibrations sum up to the caloric component of a fluid's internal energy.



Atoms and molecules had long been theorized as the constituents of matter, and Albert Einstein published a paper in 1905 that explained in precise detail how the



motion that Brown had observed was a result of the pollen being moved by individual water molecules, making one of his first big contributions to science. This explanation of Brownian motion served as convincing evidence that atoms and molecules exist and was further verified experimentally by Jean Perrin in 1908. Perrin was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1926 "*for his work on the discontinuous structure of matter*". The direction of the force of atomic bombardment is constantly changing, and at different times the particle is hit more on one side than another, leading to the seemingly random nature of the motion.

The many-body interactions that yield the Brownian pattern cannot be solved by a model accounting for every involved molecule. In consequence, ***only probabilistic models*** applied to molecular populations can be employed to describe it. We had left the sensory perception of the world that Pythagoras (570-495 BCE), Euclid (323-283 BCE), and even Isaac Newton (1642-1727) only knew and used to build their *systems*. These mathematics, geometry, and eventual concepts of the "*world*", even the "*universe*" required **order**. The molecular, atomic and subatomic substratum (that controls the 'above'; the one we can see, touch, smell, measure, and take for unique) is **random**, can be **dead or alive** at the same time (Schrödinger cat), or **at 2 places simultaneously** (electron). There is **NO** *ordo ab chao*!

On June 21, 2018, another major step was reached: **BQP** (Bounded-error Quantum Polynomial time, problems that *only* quantum computers can solve) were indeed solved by a quantum computer!

Here's the problem. Imagine you have two random number generators, each producing a sequence of digits. The question for your computer is this: Are the two sequences completely independent from each other, or are they related in a hidden way (where one sequence is the "Fourier transform" of the other)? Aaronson introduced this "*forrelation*" problem in 2009 and proved that it belongs to BQP. That left the harder, second step — to prove that forrelation is not in **PH** (Polynomial Hierarchy, any problem workable by a classical computer). Which is what Ran Raz [theoretical computer scientist at Princeton University] and Avishay Tal [at Stanford University] have done, in a particular sense. Their paper achieves what is called "*oracle*" (or "*black box*") separation between BQP and PH. This is a common kind of result in computer science and one that researchers resort to when the thing they'd really like to prove is beyond their reach.



The actual best way to distinguish between complexity classes like BQP and PH is to measure the computational time required to solve a problem in each. But computer scientists “*don’t have a very sophisticated understanding of, or ability to measure, actual computation time,*” said Henry Yuen, a computer scientist at the University of Toronto. So instead, computer scientists measure something else that they hope will provide insight into the computation times they can’t measure: They work out the number of times a computer needs to consult an “*oracle*” to come back with an answer. An oracle is like a hint-giver. You don’t know how it comes up with its hints, but you do know they’re reliable.

If your problem is to figure out whether two random number generators are secretly related, you can ask the oracle questions such as “*What’s the sixth number from each generator?*” Then you compare computational power based on the number of hints each type of computer needs to solve the problem. The computer that needs more hints is slower. “*In some sense we understand this model much better. It talks more about information than computation.*” said Tal.

The new paper by Raz and Tal proves that a quantum computer needs far fewer hints than a classical computer to solve the forrelation problem. In fact, a quantum computer needs just one hint, while even with unlimited hints, there’s no algorithm in PH that can solve the problem. “*This means there is a very efficient quantum algorithm that solves that problem,*” said Raz. “*But if you only consider classical algorithms, even if you go to very high classes of classical algorithms, they cannot.*” This establishes that with an oracle, forrelation is a problem that is in BQP but not in PH. Raz and Tal nearly achieved this result almost four years ago, but they couldn’t complete one step in their would-be proof. Then just a month ago, Tal heard a talk on a new paper on pseudo-random number generators and realized the techniques in that paper were just what he and Raz needed to finish their own. “*This was the missing piece.*” said Tal.

Basically, **Anarchy** runs everything! If **Symmetry** (from Greek συμμετρία “*agreement in dimensions, due proportion, arrangement*”) in everyday language refers to a sense of harmonious and beautiful proportion and balance, it is exceptional in nature: animals and humans, or plants are almost always asymmetric, and when a plastic surgeon attempts to create perfect symmetry, the result creates malaise and looks strange –even ugly or morbid.



Contorni

Since every ‘nation’ will eventually become an active member of the United Nations, and has –as lip service- to abide by its Chart, ‘Universal’ Declaration of Human Rights, and thousands of other piled up generous, humane, idealistic proclamations, these pages are known to be essentially soiled toilet paper by the plutocrats who get the sinecure in New York, or in the myriads of UN Agencies – where their incompetence competes with their bad faith. Among them are the worst offenders on tolerance, the thieves without remorse, the protectors of torturers, the organizers and shameless defenders of genocides, the drafters of persecutions based on [you name your choice:] skin color, gender, faith or religion, ethnicity, familial or geographic origin, etc. Then how can you even dare to *think* about **religious tolerance**?

On June 22nd, 2018, Simon Rabinovitch, Assistant Professor of History at Boston University, published an important 3,400 word-article in **AEON: What is Wrong with Tolerance?** The following paragraphs are his, or summarized.



“La Tolérance? Il y a des Maisons pour ça!” (Paul Claudel)



“The purpose of religious tolerance has always been, and remains, to maintain the power and purity of the dominant religion in a given state. Most dominant religions in most states today profess tolerance, but they also seem to feel especially threatened. Religious nationalist movements in the United States, Europe, India, Turkey and Israel all want to strengthen the relationship between state identity and the dominant religion. In each case, “democratic” elections have reinforced the significance of the majority’s religion to the meaning of state and nation, elevating the power of that religion. We can see a rising chauvinism in the mix of Catholicism and politics in eastern Europe today that portrays liberals and communists (often a code for ‘Jews’) as enemies. We can see a similar dynamic in the Turkish celebration of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. And we can also see it in the reemerging influence of Evangelicals in the US, as defenders of ‘religious liberty’ in their associations and businesses, and against ‘Sharia’ – as they imagine it – in the public sphere.

Even as religious nationalism gains strength, claims to membership in the ‘West’ rest in large part on a political avowal of religious tolerance. When religious nationalists claim the mantle of tolerance based on the legal protections that exist for religious minorities in their states, they are not wrong. Tolerance has indeed historically been a framework for people fundamentally different from one another to live peacefully together. Which is precisely why it is time to dispense once and for all with tolerance as a model for relations between groups.

Tolerance skepticism has a long history, stretching back to the German author J. W. Goethe, who said ‘to tolerate is to insult’. It faced a sustained critique after the Second World War from philosophers and political theorists such as Karl Popper, Herbert Marcuse and many others who saw liberal tolerance as guilty of passively acquiescing to the rise of fascism in the first half of the 20th century. Where Popper saw that a liberal society required repression of some intolerant views for self-preservation, Marcuse saw liberalism’s tolerance of injustice as the problem itself.

Following Marcuse, in the 1960s the New Left asked if the idea of tolerance – especially of speech and political diversity – served only to shield



governments, corporations and the elite in continuing policies of economic and racial oppression. More recently, a school of international-relations scholarship has emerged emphasizing how the foreign policy guiding Western governments now divides the world between the tolerant and the intolerant in much the same way that it has always distinguished between the civilized (whites) and the barbaric (everyone else). Even so, the question of how tolerance – religious tolerance in particular – could be a tool of domination strikes many people as counterintuitive or perverse. Tolerance is deeply rooted in the canon of *apparent* modern ideals: as an inherent good, a necessary individual ethic, a pillar of Western civilization and proof of its superiority.

Yet tolerance, as an idea and an ethic, obscures the interaction between individuals and groups on both a daily basis and over the *longue durée*; the mutually reinforcing exchange of culture and ideas between groups in a society is missing in the idea of tolerance. Groups do not interact in isolation; they share reciprocally, sometimes intentionally and sometimes inadvertently. If it is true that a global society exists, what its best parts embody today is not tolerance, but *reciprocity*, the vital and dynamic relationship of mutual exchange that occurs every day between individuals and groups within a society. For teachers, journalists and politicians to begin to speak in terms of reciprocity instead of tolerance will not do away with intolerance or prejudice. But words are important and, as much as they reflect our thoughts, they also shape how we think. Idealizing tolerance embeds dominance. Speaking in terms of reciprocity instead of tolerance would both better reflect what peaceful societies look like, and also tune people's minds to the societal benefits of cultural exchange.

The idea of tolerance owes its origins in part to the Augustinian tradition of the early Christian Church, which was greatly concerned with defining the boundaries of the Christian community. How could Christians live peacefully with people they believed to have crucified their god? St Augustine's position on the Jews held that these crucifiers should be allowed to live in the midst of Christians and to bear witness to the fate of those who reject Christ. Jews would remain on the outside of the holy Christian community –tolerated, as a



remnant of the pre-Christian past. But Christian tolerance of Jews also created a theological problem: how to square the premise of God's punishment of the Jews with the simultaneous reality of Jewish agency, sometimes prosperity, and sometimes power (even over Christians).

To take one example, during Poland's late-medieval and early modern expansion, the need for mobile, literate managers with commercial experience (and preferably few political demands) led the Polish nobility and the Crown to welcome Jews to Poland to fulfil important socioeconomic roles. Some towns in the 14th century wrote charters for the Jews, outlining explicitly their freedom to organize their autonomous religious and communal life for the benefit of mutual Jewish and Christian prosperity. Yet this prosperity also brought increased competition between Jews and Christian burghers, to whom, by the 16th century, the Crown granted in some towns the *Privilegium de non tolerandis Judaeis* (the right not to tolerate Jews). The town of Lublin received such a privilege in 1535, but then the Jews, who formed a Jewish town at the foot of the castle walls (on the outside) received a parallel privilege, *de non tolerandis Christianis* in 1568. These arrangements successfully created a stable society with co-dependent and reciprocal relationships between groups, even while the goal of tolerance for all parties remained the greatest possible isolation, or perhaps insulation, from one another.

Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Sikhism and many other civilisations have historically maintained their own traditions of religious tolerance. On the other hand, Europe's Reformations, if anything, *expanded intolerance*. The Reformation made stamping out heresy a marker of religious devotion. Before the compromises required for different Christians to live among one another were made, violent religious wars plagued Europe for 100-plus years in the wake of the Protestant and Catholic reformations (from the mid-16th to the mid-17th century). Legal tolerance might have been the winning solution to resolve that century-long descent into fratricide but, for a long time after the reformations, intolerance was seen as a worthwhile theological attribute. A Christian refusal to tolerate significant deviation from doctrinal orthodoxy –or the Jew or the Muslim, or the 'heathens' and 'savages' whom Europeans were first encountering in their Age of Discovery– was a marker of holiness and



purity, and of a leader's willingness to put spiritual matters above earthly concerns. A certain notion of tolerance, and the necessity of freedom of conscience in places where the balance of military power was not held overwhelmingly by one group or another, did indeed grow from the reformations and the wars of religion. But it took many years, with dramatic downs and ups, for the idea of tolerance to become a positive good valued in European society.

Tolerance was not a virtue brought to America: it was imposed by Europe to administer its overseas empires.

For the first English theorists of tolerance such as John Locke, tolerance was necessary first and foremost to protect Christianity and Christians' souls. As Locke put it, *'that I esteem that toleration to be the chief characteristic mark of the true Church'* (some have tried to differentiate between tolerance and toleration –using the latter to refer to state policy– but the two words remain synonymous in common usage). It was in the 17th century, at the very earliest, that the idea of tolerance began to take root in Europe as a principle consistent with good and effective government, and only with the European Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries that philosophers, theologians, political theorists and men of letters argued that tolerating difference was necessary for a functioning and prosperous society. The idea of a citizen or subject's 'right to toleration' circulated throughout Europe with the *philosophes'* project of the *Encyclopédie* (1751-72), an attempt to reorganize human knowledge in a way that its editor Denis Diderot believed would *'change the general way of thinking'*. Not only republicans, but enlightened absolutists too, such as Prussia's Frederick the Great and the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II, became proponents of tolerance -always, of course, defined on their own terms.

It was in the American colonies where European powers – first the Dutch and then the British, seeking peace among their colonists – instituted protection of individual religious conscience. Contrary to American national mythology, tolerance was not a distinct virtue carried to America by those who built their imagined city upon a hill: it was imposed by European colonial powers to better administer their overseas empires. The ideal of religious tolerance was



sewn further in the colonies by transplanted Londoners such as William Penn and Roger Williams, but always to protect Christianity from politics, and not the other way around.

The US, from its birth, marked groups for tolerance and intolerance. The country attempted to conquer, control and Christianize the native people and, until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, the very minimum tolerance –the simple ability to live– was denied to them in most places, and in others was the most they received. Africans fell into an entirely different category; slavery reflects neither tolerance nor intolerance, but rather inhumanity. Even so, the idea that the foundation of the American polity is a multiplicity of ideals – religious and political– was a tension among the founders of the early republic who themselves debated which Enlightenment principles should stand at the forefront of their ideological experiment. It was Thomas Jefferson and James Madison’s vision that an enlightened state must resist creating a religious foundation upon which other dissenting views are dependent for toleration. Jefferson’s view of the political community failed to include women, African Americans or native people, but he grasped the danger of premising citizenship on the tolerance of one religious group by another.

The Enlightenment, the rise of nation states, two world wars and post-war European decolonization transformed tolerance from a legal concept that regulated the privileges and disabilities of minority religions to a philosophical and ethical ideal. With the ascension of international human rights law following the Second World War, states stopped articulating the protection of minorities in edicts of tolerance or guarantees of minority rights. They instead created legal protections for speech and conscience and laws protecting against discrimination. Many of the old compromises of early modern toleration live on in state churches, officially recognized religious minorities and the accommodations to religion (especially in family law) that remain in many states. But for the most part, as the political theorist Wendy Brown has observed in *Regulating Aversion* (2008), the sites of tolerance have changed. Tolerance is discussed today as a moral rather than a legal question, and as a matter of civic and cultural life rather than as a practical answer to theological problems.



In fact, tolerance has never escaped its origins as a means for the majority to regulate the minority. It continues to be the case that in today's national state system the overwhelming majority of governments associate the state directly or indirectly with the majority religion. This is even true in states with legal neutrality on matters of religion such as the US and France. As such, tolerance remains a one-way relationship between the tolerating and the tolerated that, intended or not, keeps the tolerated outside of full membership in the dominant group. In contrast to tolerance, reciprocity recognizes that strong and dynamic societies are based on social and cultural exchange.

Pluralism and multiculturalism are variations on toleration, with appreciation for the benefits of diversity.

A focus on reciprocal exchange first emerged in the social philosophy of the early pluralists of the American intellectual tradition about 100 years ago, who battled nativism and resistance to immigration. For instance, in 1915 the philosopher Horace Kallen attacked the sociologist and eugenicist Edward Alsworth Ross for his claim that 20th-century immigrants to the US brought with them dual allegiances that could not be assimilated into American society. Kallen argued in the *Nation* that what the '*dominant classes in America*' fear is precisely the fact that, in the process of becoming American, religious and national groups create something new and different that in turn affects American civilization. Kallen, who coined the term '*cultural pluralism*' in 1925, and others among the first theorists of pluralism in the country, argued against a kind of toleration contingent on groups effacing their origins. Rather, the pluralism that took hold in some universities and urban landscapes – and certainly not without resistance – presumed that the US and its immigrants benefited reciprocally from immigration.

The early pluralists' preferred metaphor for American civilization was a symphony. In this metaphor, each group contributed a distinct sound to an evolving and harmonious musical arrangement. But the fact that each group played its own instrument, and performed from its own music, became a problem for later critics of both pluralism and multiculturalism. The symphony is fine and good, so the argument goes, except when everyone is too concerned with the musicality of their own performance. For liberal doubters, pluralism's



emphasis on ethnic and religious identities only serves to draw boundaries that exaggerate differences. For conservative critics, multiculturalism is incoherent compared with patriotism to country, the only identity of significance. Without all groups adopting a shared civic identity, the ideals of pluralism and multiculturalism are just variations on the old idea of toleration, albeit with a greater appreciation for the benefits of diversity to society.

However, using reciprocity as a lens to view society, the instruments themselves change, and are exchanged, along with the music. Like pluralism and multiculturalism, reciprocity exalts the virtuous circle by which the many cultures of groups shape the culture of a state, and the evolving culture of a state in turn changes the cultures of the groups. Yet unlike pluralism and multiculturalism, reciprocity, as a term, directly evokes active mutual interaction and influence. And as a philosophy, reciprocity recognizes the mutual collective responsibilities, and even sacrifices, necessary for such symbiosis. All individuals, in our daily choices and conduct, give up some element of our identities to belong to the broader society. In Émile Durkheim's great work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), he argued that every individual must transcend his or her own needs to participate in a society. The 'collective effervescence' that the individual feels in being a member of that community and participating in its rituals is not only very real, but is the essence of every religion and society. At the same time, societies and states – be they civic empires or federations, nation states, ethno-religious states or something else– *need* reciprocity to thrive. History has left us no examples of civilizations that have flourished without the exchange of cultures, ideas and people.

What about those who refuse to acknowledge that reciprocity is the root of all healthy societies? The question of the limits of toleration has provided grist for the mill of many political theorists; is reciprocity vulnerable to the same vexations? If reciprocity's binary is understood to be total isolation, then the answer is **no**. Perhaps one of the benefits of reciprocity as a philosophy or an individual and collective ethic is that it is impossible for any group to live in a society, or at least a liberal-democratic society, non-reciprocally. There are always individual non-contributors, but no group can exist within a society



without reciprocal exchange. Individuals and groups might see themselves as living in tolerated isolation, but it is very unlikely that reciprocal exchange is not going on. If a group was to say *we* don't want to behave reciprocally with the state, other groups or society, the response must be that, willingly or not, *you* already do. American reciprocity has shaped religious groups extolling isolation –such as the Amish in Pennsylvania or Hassidim in New York– no less than anyone else. As for those who claim that *they* (being some other group) do not behave reciprocally, the response must be that reciprocity posits the impossibility of such an existence.

One of Simon Rabinovitch students astutely pointed out that the problem with reciprocity is that the mutuality it invokes does not take proper account of the hierarchies that exist in all societies. *How, for example, would reciprocity resonate with a group that is impoverished and marginalized?* Such a group is unlikely to see its relationship with the dominant society through the lens of reciprocity. Nonetheless, reciprocity remains a helpful ideal from which to approach this structural inequality. Social marginalization, for example of African Americans in the US or Muslims in Europe, reflects a breakdown in reciprocity that can only be improved by greater recognition of the contributions of all groups to our collective wellbeing. The logic and psychology of reciprocity suggests that humans feel a sense of obligation to behave reciprocally toward one another, and that reciprocity is the source of such basic human activities as the rituals of gift-giving. Similarly, civic reciprocity already regulates the relationship between states and groups: the treatment of groups by a state or society tends to determine the sense of obligation to that state or society among individuals in those groups.

We can shift away from a binary vocabulary that counters intolerance with calls for tolerance

Reciprocity is a philosophy, a social ethic, a way of seeing the world, and a psychology. At its most basic distillation, it can serve as a description of both what binds individuals and groups to and within a society, and the mutual exchange of culture that serves as the lifeblood of all prosperous societies. Finding a new framework to approach societal problems is important at a time when ideological differences resting on economic worldview seem to be



fading. Because one set of ideals (for diversity, pluralism and exchange) is being challenged by another (for intolerance or, at best, a return to a highly contingent tolerance), a space has opened for a new civic philosophy.

To develop the concept of reciprocity as an individual and collective political ethic we can teach it, study it and write about it. Most of all, we can **talk** about it, shifting away from a binary vocabulary that counters intolerance with calls for tolerance, and toward a discussion of shared histories and mutual obligations. We must also individually and as groups acknowledge our own civic responsibilities, to our society and to one another, as we respect the contributions of others. In the elected representatives, we choose, the policies we support or oppose, and the causes we take on, we can idealize reciprocity as a positive good, and measure ourselves and the progress of our societies against that ideal.

The Constitution of the French Second Republic, enacted during the wave of democratic revolutions known as the *Springtime of the Peoples*, which swept through Europe in 1848, includes one simple article that grants no right or power to either the state or the people. Article VI states only: *Reciprocal duties bind the citizens to the Republic and the Republic to the citizens.* Reciprocity makes this claim but goes further: the more we acknowledge what reciprocally binds each group to the society, and the society to each group, the better off we will all be.”

Amen!

Anarchism is usually considered a recent, Western phenomenon, but its roots reach deep in the ancient civilizations of the East. The first clear expression of an anarchist sensibility may be traced back to the Daoists in ancient China from about the sixth century BCE. Indeed, the principal Daoist work, the *Daodejing*, may be considered one of the greatest anarchist classics.

The Daoists at the time were living in a feudal society in which law was becoming codified and government increasingly centralized and bureaucratic. Confucius was the chief spokesman of the legalistic school supporting these developments, and called for a social hierarchy in which every citizen knew his place. The Daoists for their part rejected government and believed that all could live in natural and



spontaneous harmony. The conflict between those who wish to interfere and those who believe that things flourish best when left alone has continued ever since.

The Daoists and the Confucians were both embedded in ancient Chinese culture. They shared a similar view of nature, but differed strongly in their moral and political views. They both had an attitude of respectful trust to human nature; the Christian notion of original sin is entirely absent from their thought. Both believed that human beings have an innate predisposition to goodness which is revealed in the instinctive reaction of anyone who sees a child falling into a well. Both claimed to defend the Dao or the way of the ancients and sought to establish voluntary order.

But whereas the Daoists were principally interested in nature and identified with it, the Confucians were more worldly-minded and concerned with reforming society. The Confucians celebrated traditionally '*male*' virtues like duty, discipline and obedience, while the Daoists promoted the '*female*' values of receptivity and passivity.

Although it has helped shape Chinese culture as much as Buddhism (more on that later) and Confucianism, Daoism by its very nature never became an official cult. It has remained a permanent strain in Chinese thought. Its roots lay in the popular culture at the dawn of Chinese civilization but it emerged in the sixth century BCE as a remarkable combination of philosophy, religion, proto-science and magic.



Daodejing



The principal exponent of Taoism is taken to be Laozi (or Lao Tzu), meaning 'old Philosopher'. He was born around 604 BCE of a noble family in Honan province. He rejected his hereditary position as a noble and became a curator of the royal library at Loh. All his life he followed the path of silence - '*The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao*', he taught. According to legend, when he was riding off into the desert to die, he was persuaded by a gatekeeper in north-western China to write down his teaching for posterity.

It seems likely however that the *Daodejing* which is attributed to Laozi, was not written until the third century BCE. It has been called by the Chinese scholar Joseph Needham '*without exception the most profound and beautiful work in the Chinese language*'. The text consists of eighty-one short chapters in poetic form. Although often very obscure and paradoxical, it offers not only the earliest but also the most eloquent exposition of anarchist principles.

It is impossible to appreciate the ethics and politics of Daoism without an understanding of its philosophy of nature. The *Daodejing* celebrates the Dao, or way, of nature and describes how the wise person should follow it. The Daoist conception of nature is based on the ancient Chinese principles of *yin* and *yang*, two opposite but complementary forces in the cosmos which constitute *Qi* (matter-energy) of which all beings and phenomena are formed. *Yin* is the supreme feminine power, characterized by darkness, cold, and receptivity and associated with the moon; *yang* is the masculine counterpart of brightness, warmth, and activity, and is identified with the sun. Both forces are at work within men and women as well as in all things.

The Dao itself however cannot be defined. It is nameless and formless. Laozi, trying vainly to describe what is ineffable, likens it to '*an empty vessel, a river flowing home to the sea, and an uncarved block*.' The Dao, he asserts, follows what is natural. It is the way in which the universe works, the order of nature which gives all things their being and sustains them.

The great Dao flows everywhere, both to the left and the right. The ten thousand things depend on it; it holds nothing back. It fulfils its purpose silently and makes no claim; Needham describes it not so much as a force, but as a '*kind of natural curvature in time and space*'.



Like most later anarchists, the Daoists see the universe as being in a continuous state of flux. Reality is in a state of process; everything changes, nothing is constant. They also have a dialectical concept of change as a dynamic interplay as opposing forces. Energy flows continually between the poles of yin and yang. At the same time, they stress the unity and harmony of nature. Nature is self-sufficient and uncreated; there is no need to postulate a conscious creator. It is a view which not only recalls that of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, but coincides with the description of the universe presented by modern physics. Modern social ecology, which stresses unity in diversity, organic growth and natural order, further reflects the Daoist world-view.

The approach to nature recommended by Laozi and the Daoists is one of receptivity. Where the Confucian wants to conquer, and exploit nature, the Daoist tries to contemplate and understand it. The Daoists' traditionally '*feminine*' approach to nature suggests that their way of thinking may well have first evolved in a matriarchal society. While at first sight it might seem a religious attitude, in fact it encouraged a scientific and democratic outlook amongst Daoists. By not imposing their own preconceptions, they were able to observe and understand nature and therefore learn to channel its energy beneficially.

The Daoists were primarily interested in nature but their conception of the universe had important corollaries for society. A definite system of ethics and politics emerges. There are no absolute Daoist values; for good and bad, like yin and yang, are related. Their interplay is necessary for growth, and, to achieve something, it is often best to start with its opposite. Nevertheless, an ideal of the wise person emerges in Daoist teaching who is unpretentious, sincere, spontaneous, generous and detached. For the Daoists, the art of living is to be found in simplicity, non-assertion and creative play.

Central to Daoist teaching is the concept of *wu-wei*. It is often translated as merely non-action. In fact, there are striking philological similarities between '*anarchism*' and '*wu-wei*'. Just as '*an-archos*' in Greek means absence of a ruler, *wu-wei* means lack of *wei*, where *wei* refers to '*artificial, contrived activity that interferes with natural and spontaneous development*'. From a political point of view, *wei* refers to the imposition of authority. To do something in accordance with *wu-wei* is therefore considered natural; it leads to natural and spontaneous order. It has nothing to do with all forms of imposed authority.



The *Daodejing* is quite clear about the nature of force. If we use force, whether physical or moral, to improve ourselves or the world, we simply waste energy and weaken ourselves: *'force is followed by loss of strength'*. It follows that those who wage war will suffer as a result: *'a violent man will die a violent death'*. By contrast, giving way is often the best way to overcome: *'Under heaven nothing is more soft and yielding than water. Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better; it has no equal. The weak can overcome the strong; the supple can overcome the stiff.'* The gentle peacefulness recommended by the Daoists is not a form of defeatist submission but a call for the creative and effective use of energy.

'Practice non-action. Work without doing', Laozi recommends. In their concept of *wu-wei*, the Daoists are not urging non-action in the sense of inertia, but rather condemning activity contrary to nature. It is not idleness that they praise, but work without effort, anxiety and complication, work which goes with and not against the grain of things. If people practiced *wu-wei* in the right spirit, work would lose its coercive aspect. It would be undertaken not for its useful results but for its intrinsic value. Instead of being avoided like the plague, work would be transformed into spontaneous and meaningful play: *'When actions are performed without unnecessary speech, People say, "We did it!"'*

If people followed their advice, the Daoists suggest, they would live a long life and achieve physical and mental health. One of their fundamental beliefs was that *'whatever is contrary to Dao will not last long'*, while he who is filled with virtue is like a new-born child. In order to prolong their lives, the Daoists resorted to yoga-like techniques and even alchemy.

The most important principle at the center of their teaching however was a belief that *'The world is ruled by letting things take their course. It cannot be ruled by interfering.'* The deepest roots of the Daoist view of *wu-wei* probably lies in early matriarchal society in ancient China. The Daoist ideal was a form of agrarian collectivism which sought to recapture the instinctive unity with nature which human beings had lost in developing an artificial and hierarchical culture. Peasants are naturally wise in many ways. By hard experience, they refrain from activity contrary to nature and realize that to grow plants they must understand and cooperate with the natural processes. And just as plants grow best when allowed to follow their natures, so human beings thrive when least interfered with. It was this



insight which led the Daoists to reject all forms of imposed authority, government and the State. It also made them into precursors of modern anarchism and social ecology.

It has been argued that Daoism does not reject the State as an artificial structure, but rather sees it as a natural institution, analogous perhaps to the family. While the *Daodejing* undoubtedly rejects authoritarian rule, it does read at times as if it is giving advice to rulers to become better at ruling: *'If the sage would guide the people, he must serve with humility. If he would lead them, he must follow behind. In this way when the sage rules, the people will not feel oppressed'*. Bookchin goes so far as to claim that Daoism was used by an elite to foster passivity amongst the peasantry by denying them choice and hope.

Certainly, Laozi addresses the problem of leadership and calls for the true sage to act with the people and not above them. The best ruler leaves his people alone to follow their peaceful and productive activities. He must trust their good faith for *'He who does not trust enough will not be trusted.'* If a ruler interferes with his people rather than letting them follow their own devices, then disorder will follow: *'When the country is confused and in chaos, Loyal ministers appear.'* In a well-ordered society,

*Humans follow the Earth,
Earth follows Heaven,
Heaven follows the Dao,
Dao follows what is natural.*

However, a closer reading shows that the *Daodejing* is not concerned with offering Machiavellian advice to rulers or even with the *'art of governing'*. The person who genuinely understands the Dao and applies it to government reaches the inevitable conclusion that the best government does not govern at all. Laozi sees nothing but evil coming from government. Indeed, he offers what might be described as the first anarchist manifesto:

*The more laws and restrictions there are,
The poorer people become.
The sharper men's weapons
The more trouble in the land.
The more ingenious and clever men are,*



*The more strange things happen.
The more rules and regulations,
The more thieves and robbers.*

*Therefore, the sage says:
I take no action and people are reformed.
I enjoy peace and people become honest.
I do nothing and the people become rich.
I have no desires and people return to the good and simple
life.*

Contained within the marvelous poetry of the Daodejing, there is some very real social criticism. It is sharply critical of the bureaucratic, warlike and commercial nature of the feudal order. Laozi specifically sees property as a form of robbery:

*When the court is arrayed in splendor,
The fields are full of weeds,
And the granaries are bare.*

He traces the causes of war to unequal distribution:

Claim wealth and titles, and disaster will follow.

Having attacked feudalism with its classes and private property, he offers the social ideal of a classless society without government and patriarchy in which people live simple and sincere lives in harmony with nature. It would be a decentralized society in which goods are produced and shared in common with the help of appropriate technology. The people would be strong but with no need to show their strength; wise, but with no presence of learning; productive, but engaged in no unnecessary toil. They would even prefer to reckon by knotting rope rather than by writing ledgers:

*A small country has fewer people.
Though there are machines that can work ten to a hundred
times faster than man, they are not needed.
The people take death seriously and do not travel far.
Though they have boats and carriages, no one uses them.
Though they have armour and weapons, no one displays them.
Men return to the knotting of rope in place of writing.*



*Their food is plain and good, their clothes fine but simple, their homes secure;
They are happy in their ways.
Though they live within sight of their neighbors,
And crowing cocks and barking dogs are heard across the way,
Yet they leave each other in peace while they grow old and die.*

The anarchistic tendency of the Daoists comes through even stronger in the writings of the philosopher Chuang Tzu, who lived about 369–286 BCE. His work consists of arguments interspersed with anecdotes and parables which explore the nature of the Dao, the great organic process of which man is a part. It is not addressed to any particular ruler. Like the *Daodejing*, it rejects all forms of government and celebrates the free existence of the self-determining individual. The overriding tone of the work is to be found in a little parable about horses:

Horses live on dry land, eat grass and drink water. When pleased, they rub their necks together. When angry, they turn round and kick up their heels at each other. Thus far only do their natural dispositions carry them. But bridled and bitted, with a plate of metal on their foreheads, they learn to cast vicious looks, to turn the head to bite, to resist, to get the bit out of the mouth or the bridle into it. And thus, their natures become depraved.

As with horses, so it is with human beings. Left to themselves they live in natural harmony and spontaneous order. But when they are coerced and ruled, their natures become vicious. It follows that princes and rulers should not coerce their people into obeying artificial laws, but should leave them to follow their natural dispositions. To attempt to govern people with manmade laws and regulations is absurd and impossible: *'as well try to wade through the sea, to hew a passage through a river, or make a mosquito fly away with a mountain!'* In reality, the natural conditions of our existence require no artificial aids. People left to themselves will follow peaceful and productive activities and live in harmony with each other and nature.

In an essay *'On Letting Alone'*, Chuang Tzu asserted three hundred years BCE the fundamental proposition of anarchist thought which has reverberated through history ever since:



There has been such a thing as letting mankind alone; there has never been such a thing as governing mankind. Letting alone springs from fear lest men's natural dispositions be perverted and their virtue left aside. But if their natural dispositions be not perverted nor their virtue laid aside, what room is there left for government?

The Daoists therefore advocated a free society, without government in which individuals would be left to themselves. But while pursuing their own interests, they would not forget the interests of others. It is not a sullen selfishness which is recommended. The pursuit of personal good involves a concern for the general well-being: the more a person does for others, the more he has; the more he gives to others, the greater his abundance. As the Daoist text *Huai Nan Tzu* put it, 'Possessing the empire' means 'self-realization. If I realize myself then the empire also realizes me. If the empire and I realize each other, then we will always possess each other.'

Human beings are ultimately individuals, but they are also social beings, part of the whole. Anticipating the findings of modern ecology, the Daoists believed that the more individuality and diversity there is, the greater the overall harmony. The spontaneous order of society does not exclude conflict but involves a dynamic interplay of opposite forces. Thus, society is described by Chuang Tzu as:

... an agreement of a certain number of families and individuals to abide by certain customs. Discordant elements unite to form a harmonious whole. Take away this unity and each has a separate individuality... A mountain is high because of its individual particles. A river is large because of its individual drops. And he is a just man who regards all parts from the point of view of the whole.

Daoism thus offered the first and one of the most persuasive expressions of anarchist thinking. Its moral and political ideas were firmly grounded in a scientific view of the world. Although Daoist philosophy (*Dao chia*) contains spiritual and mystical elements, the early Daoists' receptive approach to nature encouraged a scientific attitude and democratic feelings. They recognized the unity in the diversity in nature and the universality of transformation. In their ethics, they encouraged spontaneous behavior and self-development in the larger context of nature: production without possession, action without self-assertion and development without domination. In their politics, they not only urged rulers to leave their subjects alone and opposed the bureaucratic and legalistic teaching of the Confucians, but advocated as an ideal



a free and co-operative society without government in harmony with nature.

Daoism was not aimed by an elite at peasants to make them more docile and obedient. The Daoists social background tended to be from the small middle class, between the feudal lords and the mass of peasant farmers. Nor were they merely offering advice on how to survive in troubled times by yielding to the strong, keeping a low profile, and by minding their own business. On the contrary, Daoism was the philosophy of those who had understood the real nature of temporal power, wealth and status, sufficiently well to find them radically wanting.

Far from being a philosophy of failure or quietude, Daoism offers profound and practical wisdom for those who wish to develop the full harmony of their being.



Recent scholars of the history of writing describe what was first and foremost an administrative tool. According to their '*administrative hypothesis*', writing was invented so that early states could track people, land and economic production, and elites could sustain their power. Along the way, writing became flexible enough, in how it captured spoken language, to be used for poetry and letters and, eventually, word games such as Mad Libs and fortune cookies.



The writing/state connection sailed out most recently in *Against the Grain* (2017) by James Scott, a political scientist at Yale whose goal is to overturn the usual story about how civilization came to be. In his book, he draws from accumulated archaeological findings to show that large sedentary populations and grain agriculture existed long before the first states in both Mesopotamia and China. These operations came to be coopted by rulers, ruling classes and elite interests. The elite didn't invent agriculture or urban living but fashioned the oft-told narrative giving them credit for these achievements. In his book, Scott assembles a political counter-narrative to up-end their story of progress and show how people were better off when they weren't subjects.

This counter-narrative needs villains and writing serves this purpose brilliantly, because it's the tool of power that makes subjects *subjects*. '*The state is a recording, registering, and measuring machine,*' writes Scott – and a coercive machine that makes lists of names, levies taxes, rations food, raises armies, and writes rules. '*The coincidence of the pristine state and pristine writing,*' he writes, '*tempts one to the crude functionalist conclusion that would-be state makers invented the forms of notation that were essential to statecraft.*' Without writing, Scott argues, there could be no state –and without the state, there could be no writing. He seems to be saying that everything that humans would come to write –myths, epic poems, love letters, essays, re-assessments of the history of civilization– was an epiphenomenon of bureaucratic paperwork.

This got much, much worse...



Insalate

Although at the age of ten I ignored the teachings of Laozi and the verses of the *Daodejing* (but not Anarchism!) and after recovering a hope of peace and freedom (both rapidly shattered). In 1945, the taste of this magic philter inebriated me forever. The conflict between total individual freedom and life as a social animal is artificial: compatibility is symbiotic.

Humans, we are **social animals**. We live in groups. We care for our offspring for years. We cooperate with each other (the United States Congress notwithstanding). Most of all, we have lasting relationships with other individual humans – what biologists call '*long-term pair bonds*'. Some of these pair bonds are healthier than others. That's where the field of relationship science comes in. Relationship scientists study how to build and maintain strong, intimate relationships; they perform laboratory experiments to understand the factors that make a relationship flourish or wither.

In recent years, some researchers in relationship science have turned to a surprising resource for inspiration: **Buddhism**. It is 'surprising' because one of the central tenets of Buddhism is letting go of strong attachments and a relationship is the very definition of a strong attachment. How can these opposing ideas be reconciled? And what does science have to say?

In a healthy relationship, the consequential good feeling happens because the two partners regulate each other's nervous systems. The process starts with our brain. Contrary to popular belief, our brain's most important job isn't thinking. It's maintaining all the biological systems in our body so our organs, hormones and immune system run efficiently and remain in balance. Our brain does this by predicting and fulfilling our bodily needs 24/7.

A key idea of Buddhism is that everything constantly **changes**. Any object, such as a red tulip in your garden, changes moment after moment. Its colors change depending on the light. The sheen on its petals changes depending on moisture in the air. Placed in the wrong location, such as a vegetable garden, a tulip ceases to be a flower and becomes a weed. The tulip has no single, unchanging essence. The same is true for us. We are real but, from a Buddhist perspective, we have no intrinsic identity that is



separate from the things going on around us. Our identity is constituted in the moment, in part, by our situation. If one believes that she has a single, consistent, unchanging, core 'self' that uniquely defines her, this belief, according to Buddhist philosophy, is the foundation of human suffering; suffering is not merely physical discomfort, like having the flu or shutting a door on our hand. Suffering is personal. In this sense, believing that one has one true self is worse than a passing physical illness; it is an enduring affliction (translation: a chronically imbalanced body budget).

Appreciate the tulip because it's there, not because *you're* there.

I have no merit in **never** identifying with/to a **Nation**: I was born –by chance- in Warsaw, Poland [cf. *Ubu Roi*: 'La scène se passe en Pologne. C'est-à-dire nulle part'] from parents who had been naturalized French a few months earlier; my mother was born a "Jew" (= a non-citizen of Poland), and my father's birthplace, Tarnoruda, had changed nation **seven** times since 1904 (his year of birth). In 1941, we were stripped of our French citizenship by the Vichy government. We were *apatrides* (stateless); in 1945, to be able to exit Switzerland –and its camps-, we were issued a Nansen passport.



It took almost two years to the French administration, populated by the same,



irremovable bureaucrats –racist, anti-Semite, xenophobic- to reinstate us in our French citizenship. And –icing on the cake! - I was asked on my 18th birthday, at the Mairie of the VIIth Arrondissement of Paris, to choose my *final*, definitive nationality between Poland (the bureaucrat pushed me that way) and France.

No wonder I have always been suspicious of police and gendarmes; of flags and national anthems; of hymns and *Te Deums*; of military parades and mass demonstrations; of politicians and regimes.

The only French politician I served with passion and respect was Pierre Mendès-France, as member of the directorate of the Club des Jacobins: Pierre was the President. He has one flaw for the French populace: besides being scrupulously honest and impossible to bribe, his ancestors were Jewish (Pierre, as all his Jacobin Directors, was atheist). He was insulted, scorned, hated beyond belief. My father had been the physician of the family of Pierre (his father and his uncle) and was also trusted by the Servan-Schreiber: another influential Jewish liberal from a large family involved in leftist politics.

This may have played a role to deny my father the Nobel prize in Medicine he was promised by the Americans and the Swedish Academy for bringing to patients the first anti-allergy medications. But the flag bearer of the French conservative, anti-Semitic medical establishment, the mediocre Dean Léon Binet (who claimed all his life against every evidence that *he could have discovered insulin* (sic)) hated all true scientists, and –having been elected to the French Academy of Sciences during and thanks to the Vichy torturers in 1942- had the nefarious position as chairman of the French Consultative Committee that had to approve any French candidacy for the Nobel prize in Medicine. When asked about Bernard N. Halpern, he replied: “*He is an Ukrainian Jew. Not a Frenchman*”. But *scripta manent* and Ulf von Euler (President of the Swedish Academy at the time) and Yngve Zotterman (chairman of the consultative committee in Sweden) did forward Binet’s missive to my father. My dad never expressed any rancor or bitterness against Léon Binet or the French medical establishment, or its *numerus clausus* against Jews (at least in public), but much later, when in her 90s, my mother told me that the family was ready to move to the United States in 1954; only the intervention of Louis Bugnard (Institut National d’Hygiène and the Association Claude-Bernard) who helped create his Institut d’Immunobiologie, kept my father –and us- in Paris.



If my father, in love with his idea of the France of Pasteur and Hugo, could swallow all these vipers, I refused. As I often quote my Professor of Letters of the Lycée Henri IV, Monsieur Santoni: '*Corneille décrit les hommes tels qu'ils devraient être; Racine les décrit tels qu'ils sont*' (Corneille describes men as they should be; Racine as they are). My father was Cornelian; I am Racinian, with open eyes and mind.

A **nation** is a stable community of people, formed based on a common language, territory, economic life, ethnicity or psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. A nation is distinct from a people, and is more abstract, and more overtly political than an ethnic group. It is a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its autonomy, unity, and *particular* interest [I could **never** identify to any such entity!].

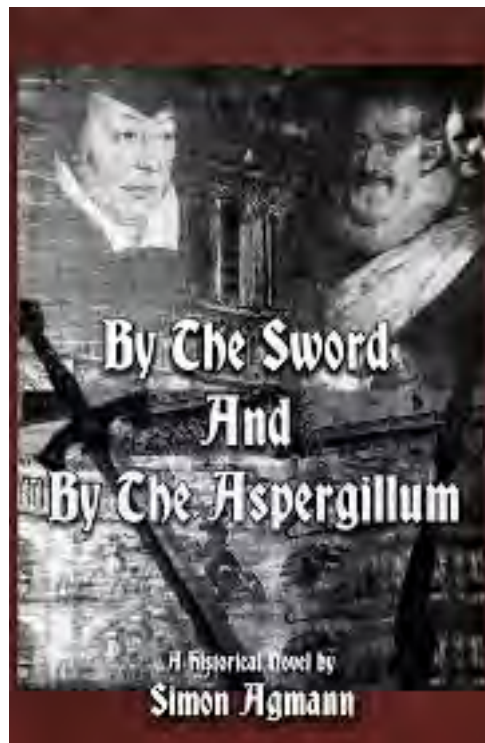
Ernest Renan's *What is a Nation?* (1882) declares that "*race is confused with nation and a sovereignty analogous to that of really existing peoples is attributed to ethnographic or, rather linguistic groups*", and "*the truth is that there is no pure race and that to make politics depend upon ethnographic analysis is to surrender it to a chimera*", echoing a sentiment of civic nationalism. He also claims that a nation is not formed based on dynasty, language, religion, geography, or shared interests. Rather, "*A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form*", emphasizing the democratic and historical aspects of what constitutes a nation, although, "*forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation*". "*A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity*", which he said is reaffirmed in a "*daily plebiscite*". [The word "*plebiscite*" horripilates me!]

All this (and much more) explains –but does not justify– lots of my actions; e.g. the support to the Algerians during the French massacre (1954-1962) and, generally speaking, to the persecuted, the victims of imperialism, of colonialism, of discrimination, of apartheid. I know that there is **never** a cause that is just enough to support a war, or a single death. *Who kills a Soul kills a whole World...* I know that **all** religions are intolerant. I know that **all** nations are xenophobic. I also **know** how migrants, refugees, strangers, wetbacks feel: **I was one of them** as a 7-year old child.



The solace I found in discovering and studying Asian cultures, and importantly the *Daodejing*, gave me more solid footage, more confidence in my choices, more comfort for the future. It also confirmed that our respect and support for Nature and the environment was indispensable, that the enemies of this strategy are criminals, and should be neutralized. They populate most groups I always despised. Indeed, this needed, indispensable, visceral love of nature (and uniqueness) is shattered, annihilated, vaporized by several institutions (mostly in the industrialized world): the ***Military, Established*** (mostly Abrahamic) ***Religions***, the ***Legal and Prison System***, and ***Hospitalization*** (notably ***Psychiatric***).

The most notable denier of human freedom is the infamous alliance of the **Military and Christianity** or ***The Sword and the Aspergillum***.



It did (and still does) reign over a large part of our planet with dire, catastrophic consequences: annihilation of most aboriginal First Nations; irremediable destruction of the environment; loss forever of cultures and precious symbiotic knowledge; tattooing in the mind of generations of racism, discrimination; and



perpetuation of wars for the profit of the <1% rich individuals or anonymous corporations. We are living it every day, without end in sight.

Barracks, Prisons, Convents, Hospitals share a lot: the walls are painted in the same hue; the smell –a faint, slightly acidic and sweetish, blend of rotten apples, moldy bread, vomit, grime, floor cloth, and cheap chlorinated washing powder; the sounds (at times TV...) made of clangs and clings, anytime; the most stupid TV programs; disgusting food; and, in all, the alienating loss of liberty, and every basic freedom –even right. All these institutions impose the objectifying of the individual; repress nature; delete, erase the bricks of personality and social connections. Even when humans are released, the scars are long-lasting; some may turn into keloids.

Dessert & Dolci

This 'meal' (pasto) lasted forever. It was not sedate; more a roller-coaster!

To end with even more controversy or fodder for discussion, there is Law.

Law is a **system** of rules that are created and ***enforced through social or governmental institutions*** to regulate **behavior**. Law is a system that regulates and ensures that individuals or a community adhere to the ***will of the state***. The law shapes politics, economics, history and **society** in various ways and serves as a mediator of relations between people.

By the 22nd century BCE, the ancient Sumerian ruler Ur-Nammu had formulated the first law code, which consisted of casuistic statements ("if ... then ..."). Around 1760 BCE, King Hammurabi further developed Babylonian law, by codifying and inscribing it in stone. Hammurabi placed several copies of his law code throughout the kingdom of Babylon as stela, for the entire public to see; this became known as the Codex Hammurabi.



Stele with law code of Hammurabi, Susa, Iran, 1780 BCE

Just reading these definitions gives me goosebumps. They bring too many memories of abuse; the news are replete with –often only made of- the malevolence, the creep of the legal system. The crimes of the police are (almost) never sanctioned; the color of your skin, or the shape of your eyes, or the spelling of your name, put you, by themselves outside this legal system. Racism, exclusion, persecution, execution a.k.a. killing are all legal –if not officially, they are *de facto*.

Despite cosmetic adjustments, we still apply the *law* of the retaliation. ‘*La raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure*’ (the reason of the strongest is always the best) as in ‘*The Wolf and the Lamb*’ of Jean de La Fontaine. If one studies the composition of



the prison population in **any** country in the world, La Fontaine is vindicated: the poor; the mentally impaired or deranged; the colored; the minorities; the undocumented immigrants (who support large, promising families); the ones with the *wrong* religion or the atheists; the LGBT; and anyone you know, including yourself could, can, (will???) be or was there.

I am not even citing this travesty of words "*Law and Order*" as it is the blatant excuse for the police or the military to kill as please, now more often with drones.

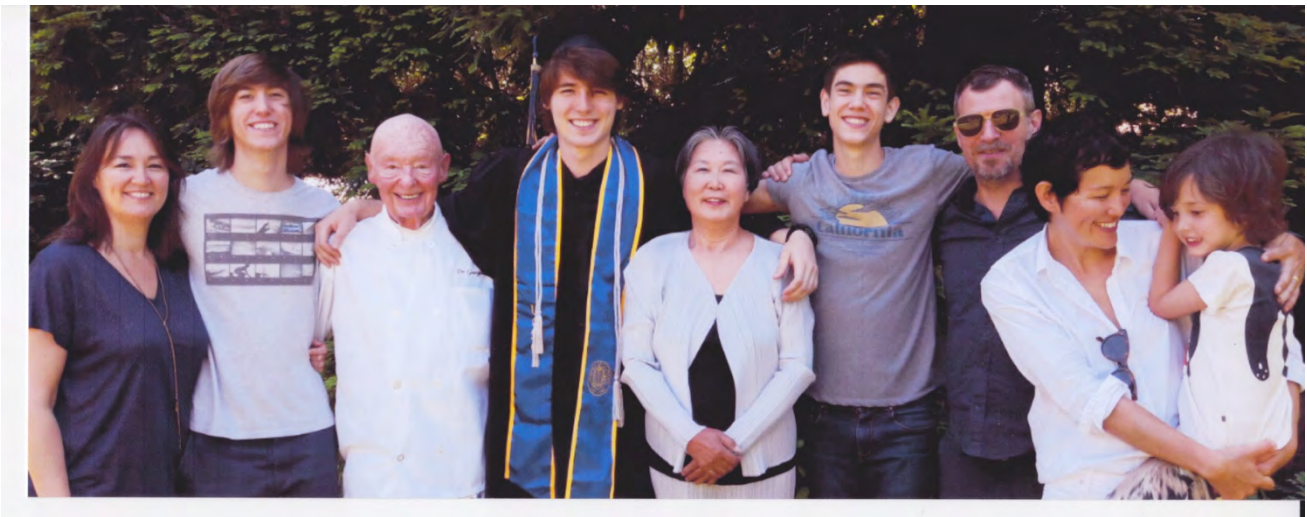
This (too) long essay was drilling my mind for many months, but when waking up every morning one or the other part had escaped, vanished. Eventually, recently, ideas and memories surged back. They were still vivid in the morning; they did not fade away with the vapors of ethanol, the miasma of sleep. I tried to hierarchize the concepts but failed. Hence my plea for the freedom brought by anarchy in every sub-particle of the universe, including us, may not resonate. My tune is not necessarily accommodating.

And I do not know how you are going to take it. Consider that it is also an attempt to look at a life that was so hectic; so full of events, places, people and peoples; so filled with savors, flavors, odors, perfumes, tastes, sights, tunes, arias, songs, and complex sensations; so rich in opportunities (most were squandered); in incredible encounters; in human exchanges that most should envy; in chances offered to students or to dispossessed; in successes in science, healing, comforting, and reinserting in a welcoming community; a life that is still full of projects, friendship, love, and everything I can dream –that I do a lot- of.



Acknowledgements

Nothing would have been doable during the last five decades, then worth it, without my wife Emiko, our daughters Emmanuelle and Emilie, and their (total!) four superb sons.



Our family assembled for Marin's graduation (UCSC), 16 June 2018

A life blessed by them and many, many others –who will identify their silhouette in this maze.

Two friends were present until they died too early: Henri Cachin and Pierre Denivelle; we met on October 1st, 1946 when entering Class 6 B of the (Petit) Lycée Henri IV, Place du Panthéon in Paris. France. We shared the same thoughts, the same ideals, parallel hopes, and I am the one who survived to keep the flame of our friendship burning for decades.

Then there's Chopin a.k.a. Gianfranco Mantovani, son of Lambrusco winemakers of Modena, a brilliant lawyer and de facto president of the students of Ca' Foscari in Venezia; he introduced me to his group of artist friends, including Guido Cadorin, successor of Il Tiziano to the Cattedra di Pintura de l'Accademia; both managed to insert themselves into the FIAT Topolino yellow of Chopin, and visited me in Paris in 1958! They made Venezia, the city of the Dogi, my favorite city –by far.



Closer to these days, the team that Jan Wouter Vasbinder assembled as speakers in and for Para Limes at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore; Andrew LT Sheng, a polymath and eminent Chinese scholar has been more than a guide and keeps on opening my mind relentlessly.

I owe much to my sources, mostly Wikipedia, that I pilfered and copied –too often verbatim.

But the conductor, the referee, the formatter, the editor and the caring friend who brings my essays –including this one- to being is Yves P. Huin; he is the one you should thank. Any blame should be mine.

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