

Anarchism and Romanticism in the work of Herbert Read and Paul Goodman

Introduction

The aim in this paper is to suggest a perspective on twentieth century anarchism which challenges the way it has traditionally been treated as an ideology. By identifying the manner in which two anarchist figures, Herbert Read and Paul Goodman, utilise Romanticism as part of their anarchist philosophies it is possible to offer some reinterpretations of anarchism.

As a political tradition, anarchism has been neglected in the study of modern political ideology, this neglect operates via three main kinds of treatment. Firstly, anarchism is treated as anachronistic. This kind of treatment of anarchism centres around the claim that the relevance of anarchism has been diminished in the face of industrialisation and modern society. Anarchism, it is claimed, is not a modern ideology, it is backward looking, pre-industrial and anachronistic.¹ Woodcock, for example, states that anarchism 'lost its relevance because it lost its constituency among the peasant and artisan masses of the Latin and Slav countries'.² This kind of 'historical dustbin' type argument ignores the work of more modern theorists in the anarchist tradition. Later twentieth century anarchist thinkers, and these have been predominantly American and British, such as Herbert Read and Paul Goodman can be characterised as developing a 'new' anarchism which draws heavily from areas of thought which emerge in the twentieth century such as sociology and psychology. This observation also highlights the Anglo-American nature of the type of anarchism that emerges in the later twentieth century and this challenges the notion of anarchism as a predominantly continental European peasant-based phenomenon.

Secondly, anarchism has been generally understood as exterior to, hostile, destructive and disruptive to established ideological traditions. Woodcock refers to English anarchism as 'voices crying in the wilderness'³, this phrase describes well the general perception of anarchist theory. This goes with the claim that anarchism is radically utopian, a bizarre offshoot of socialism rather than constituting an ideological tradition of its own. Looking at the two thinkers under examination here highlights the fact that anarchism is more subtle than this characterisation, neither straightforwardly backward or forward looking, with its own pattern of development and ideological relationships.

Thirdly, anarchism is charged with being esoteric and incoherent. It is true that anarchism resists definition, it is amorphous, with paradoxes and contradictions. Asserting core assumptions of anarchism is not straightforward. Miller states that since identifying core assumptions in anarchism is so tricky; 'We must face the possibility that anarchism is not really an ideology, but rather the point of intersection of several ideologies.'⁴ This type of approach to anarchism often includes the claim that anarchism's coherence is dogged by the irreconcilable tension between individual autonomy and social solidarity, and that this tension means that anarchism actually describes two distinct systems of thought. The work of Herbert Read in particular constitutes a development of anarchism in relation to this point. Read's aesthetic philosophy included an attempted reconciliation of these two approaches within anarchism.

Focusing on later twentieth century anarchist thought, specifically in the Anglo-American tradition, it has become apparent that these interpretations are inadequate. Some of the characteristic motifs and themes in the ideas of Read and Goodman have suggested values and orientations drawn from Romantic movements. Attention to their arguments and themes has suggested an anarchist appropriation of Romanticism. This appropriation functions within their anarchism in three main ways. Firstly, it provides

¹ Miller, p. 175

² Woodcock 'Anarchism Revisited', p.25 in Perlin 'Contemporary Anarchism'

³ Woodcock, 'Anarchism, p. 370

⁴ Miller, p. 3

Read with a way of reconciling individual autonomy with its social context. Secondly, it is used by Goodman to reconcile the negative and positive elements of his assessment of modern civilisation, and, thirdly, it facilitates the development of anarchism away from a strictly rationalist interpretation of human experience. Further elements of the thinking of Read and Goodman suggest a certain conception of freedom which exacts a stringent moral claim on personal behaviour. This not only challenges the permissive caricature of anarchist notions of liberty but bears a strong relationship to some Romantic notions of the ethical significance of the heroic independent personality. Identifying the significance of some of these connections emphasises the fact that anarchism must be understood as influenced by and related to a matrix of ideological traditions and not as an isolated philosophical anomaly. Reporting on the link between anarchism and Romanticism offers a medium for responding to the inadequate interpretations of anarchism highlighted above.

Herbert Read and Paul Goodman

Herbert Read was a British poet, literary critic and anarchist writer before and after the Second World War. He was primarily an art critic and social commentator. As art critic he was an important figure in the emergence of modernism in Britain and he was knighted for services to literature in 1953. Read wrote much about Romanticism in his literary criticism. Through looking at this work and his anarchist writing it seems that his defence of the Romantic tradition feeds directly into his anarchist outlook. Viewing his work from the perspective of Romanticism offers a way of understanding his position on the individual versus the community, a choice which commentaries on anarchism conclude is a divisive one, necessarily dividing anarchism into two disparate camps.

The work of Paul Goodman constituted a critique of contemporary America and his years of public prominence coincided with the youth movement in America. He is recognised primarily as a key figure in the rise of youth and student radical politics in the 1960s. Goodman became something of a campus cult, such that Rozsack could state in 'The Making of a Counter-Culture' that 'Whenever he speaks one feels for sure there is a contingent of the young somewhere nearby inscribing his words on a banner.'⁵ His Romanticism makes sense of his ambiguous response to progress and the role of science in modern American society. Examining Goodman from a Romantic perspective also serves to highlight his conservatism and thus the necessity for a more subtle understanding of anarchism's ideological relationships.

Romanticism

The two features of the philosophy of Romanticism most relevant to this discussion are, firstly, its reaction to Enlightenment rationality and, secondly, its emphasis on the individual creative activity involved in perceiving reality. Berlin offers a useful perspective on Romanticism, he interprets it as an 'invasion' of the confidence of 18th century rationality and belief in the application of universal reason. The term 'invasion' particularly appeals because it does not simplify Romanticism's response to the Enlightenment as a straightforward refutation, more of an attempt to assert a balance. This is a balance between an understanding of knowledge as a collection of general propositions and universal truths, and the recognition that these generalisations can be crude and unwieldy when applied to diverse individual experience. The sciences are appropriate for their own purposes, it is claimed, but applied to the human spheres of ethics and aesthetics they leave out that which is particular. Science negates those realms of understanding for which it is necessary to reach beyond rational appreciation of facts or delve beneath conscious modes of knowledge. The application of science to individuals and society, it is argued, forces human experience into rationalised categories ignoring variety and difference. The features of Romanticism emphasised in this discussion are those concerned with variety and specificity and the significance of human creative powers. This is often demonstrated as a glorification of the active, dynamic, imaginative individual. The sense of creation is vital, the assertion is that individuals and their

⁵ Rozsack, p.184

experiences are not determined by external mechanical processes but are formed as part of internal subjectivity and self-creative activities. In the context of anarchist appropriation, particularly in the case of Goodman, Romanticism offers an individualising ethic with which to counter the homogenising dynamic of a rationalising culture. This crucially reinforces the link between individuality and freedom,

Herbert Read's Interpretation of the Romantic Tradition and Romantic anarchism

Herbert Read's interpretation of the Romantic tradition is closely related to his anarchist approach. Read produced many works of literary criticism concerning the English Romantic traditions in poetry. Most indicative of his interpretation of this movement are his essays on Coleridge and Shelley. Through these works he outlines his interpretation of the principle components of the Romantic outlook. Read refers to the thought of Coleridge as completing the 'glittering pinnacles' on 'that mansion of thought whose foundations were laid by Kant'.⁶ In the same essay, Read identifies Kant as establishing a connection between the objective reality of nature and the subjective perceptions of the creative instinct in the artist. This, Read states, led him to suggest analogies between beauty and morality, and creative activity and the underlying principles of the universe.

This discussion of Coleridge in relation to Kant is directly parallel to Read's discussion of Shelley in relation to Plato. The combined argument is the assertion of the Romantic identification of the relationship between imagination and reality. The Romantic principle, as identified by Read in his work on Coleridge, is the idea that the imagination shapes the fragments of information gleaned from the world through perception and orientates them into an order. This orientation is according to internal aesthetic principles of beauty and harmonious order which produces a result, a work of art, in accord with essential reality.⁷ Similarly, in Read's discussion of Shelley, imagination reproduces and arranges perceptions according to a rhythm and order, which is at once beautiful and moral. The poet apprehends a harmony and truth in the universe which exists beneath the conflicting fragments and transitory details of daily life. Read interprets the Romantic tradition in terms of three main characteristics; firstly, the distinction between the knowledge gained from reason and that from intuition and imagination, secondly, the notion of individual imagination as the primary interpreter of nature and experience, and thirdly, the glorification of the intuitive conceptions and creative expressions of the artist.

In his political thought Read appears to mirror the thoughts of the Romantics as he has characterised them, suggesting that even in his characterisation of them he is working towards his own aesthetic philosophy of anarchism. There exist a number of recurrent symbols in Read's presentation of his anarchist philosophy. These are; the artist as revolutionary, creativity as freedom, art as insurrection, and spontaneity as autonomy. Thus, for Read, inhibition or suppression of the artist is the model of coercion. For Read, art is that which pleases the senses and the senses are pleased by good 'form'. Good form is that which achieves its highest potential according to the standards of nature, those of balance, harmony, and rhythm. Good aesthetic form indicates good moral form and art is an innate discipline, part of the physiological and psychological constitution of man. This is an anarchism based on an aesthetic assertion of natural harmony and universal physical laws of good 'form', information accessible to the individual via his internal condition of creativity and initiative. Characteristically for anarchism, individuality is reconciled with community through the notion of organically constituted networks of relationships premised on individual specificity.

Viewing Read from the Romantic perspective and emphasising the aesthetic nature of his anarchist philosophy leads to a useful insight into one of the perceived tensions in anarchism. This is a tension between the claims of the individual and those of the community, and it is one that is taken to exist throughout anarchist thought. Read states that: 'Progress is measured by the degree of differentiation within a society...by richness and intensity of experience'.⁸ This process moves alongside the parallel

⁶ Herbert Read 'Coleridge as Critic', p.11

⁷ Herbert Read 'The True Voice of Feeling', p.10

⁸ Herbert Read, 'The Philosophy of Anarchism' in 'Anarchy and Order', p. 37

development of the 'social consciousness' or 'social initiation' of the individual. One of the difficulties in understanding Read's anarchism is assessing the relative significance he ascribes to the full and vital, uninhibited expression of individuality and the communitarian values of social cohesion and co-operation. Anarchism is generally understood in terms of two distinct types 'individualistic' and 'communitarian'. This represents a difference in emphasis as to whether the locus of free experience is the unrestrained exercise of individual subjectivity or whether the individual enjoys the sensation of freedom as an interactive one, the liberation of co-operative impulses and sociable enterprise. The egotism of Max Stirner represents the former 'individualist' form of anarchism, and the mutualism of Kropotkin falls into the 'communitarian' form. Woodcock claims that Read rejects Stirner's individualistic philosophy of egotism in favour of Kropotkin's communitarian anarchism.⁹ This interpretation conceals some of the subtleties of Read's anarchism, subtleties which point to his synthesis of the two tendencies. This is a synthesis which is orientated around the conception of freedom as a creative, aesthetic experience, and of the individual as an artist, which Read draws from the Romantic elements of his philosophy.

In his writing on education the teaching style that Read advocates is intended to allow social interaction to emerge on its own terms. Children, he argues, if left unhindered, will elaborate their own rules, develop their own mechanisms of control, and will naturally co-operate. These are spontaneously evolved patterns. Woodcock interprets Read to mean that it is co-operation that is the essence of the child's development. However, it is more accurate to say that the individual development of the child is essential for co-operation, this being the order of importance in which they stand for Read. For Read, the development of the individual is logically prior to the cohesion of a social group, cohesion is premised on such individuation. Read states that '...a society can only function harmoniously if the individuals composing it are integrated persons, that is to say they are whole and healthy, and by that very reason competent to render mutual aid.'¹⁰ Art, for Read, depends on the full and free development of personal capacities through perception and expression. This is an essentially individualistic approach, but Read goes on to emphasise a perspective on art which has much in common with the Romantic assertion that art must be understood as the creation of the artist and his attempt to communicate his inner world. For Read, through the dynamics of perception and expression, art is a communal creation, a system of signs, and thus, a social bond. The quality of individuality includes, as part of its nature, the facilitation and exercise of interaction of such richness and complexity that social bonds, cohesion and reciprocity emerge in direct relation to its development. What Read offers is a set of social bonds premised on sophisticated communicative tools not on identification with the common good. Individuation involves the concurrent development of uniqueness and sociability. Sociability emerges from the highly subjective nature of perception and the egotistical drive for expression. But because Read makes an element of this expressive drive the desire to communicate symbols and images between individuals, sociability becomes a part of individualism via his specifically aesthetic approach to anarchism. This insight, the reconciliation of individuality and sociability in the work of Read, is one that is achieved through an emphasis on the Romantic orientation of his ideas.

Read's Romanticism points to developments he introduces to anarchist philosophy. On the basis that there are truths that the intellect cannot perceive, Read advocates a greater role for the creative instincts. He challenges the Enlightenment faith in the relationship between progress and the systematic accumulation of knowledge. This faith characterised the thought of Godwin and anarchism generally in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Anarchist thought has generally been heavily rationalist, often defining itself by its antipathy to the irrationalism of church and state. Read's stance towards rationality demonstrates the influence of English Romanticism with its emphasis on the importance of the artist, the role of the imagination in human growth and freedom and the naturalness of creativity. Using two great advocates of Reason, Godwin and Plato, as his starting point, Read comes up with a system which draws the emphasis of anarchism away from rationality, reason and the virtues of the intellect. The perception of form and virtue is exercised at an individual level, and it is perceived 'naturally', through

⁹ George Woodcock 'The Philosopher of Freedom', p.79

¹⁰ Herbert Read 'Education Through Art', p.18

spontaneous impulses. Read is torn between art as truth and a suspicion of the monopoly of logical categories and their imposition on the creative impulses. His recourse was to celebrate 'form' as an alternative source of experience of the world, a kind of indirect, unconscious window on truth. Where for Godwin reason could not lead men astray, for Read it was the artistic instinct upon which the same faith was based.

By following the themes of Read through to the work of another British thinker, Alex Comfort, it is possible to identify a tradition of Romantic anarchism in British thought. Comfort was associated with a small group of poets strongly influenced by Reads utilisation of Romanticism and who formulated their critical responses to the Second World War according to his philosophy. Alex Comfort was a prominent and consistent figure in the pacifist traditions that form an important part of British radical currents. He is worth drawing attention to here because his work demonstrates the intersection of these two important native ideologies, Romanticism and Pacifism, through the ideas of British anarchists.¹¹ Another key factor of Comfort's philosophy is the centrality he accorded scientific endeavour within a commitment to Romantic ideology, a centrality that is not a reflection of Read's philosophy. This provides a transatlantic link with the ideas of Paul Goodman and demonstrates that the utilisation of Romantic motifs does not need to entail a rejection of science as part of its scepticism concerning rationalised society.

Paul Goodman

Paul Goodman was an American intellectual who moulded himself as an iconoclast of mid-twentieth century American social forms and impoverished processed culture, with his critical ideologies of education and decentralisation. He initially identified himself with the New York intellectual scene of the 1940s, particularly those writers surrounding the Partisan Review. Goodman is a figure very much shaped by the image of the independent literary critic and his political significance as the conscience of society that the New York intellectual community fostered.

A critique of modern impersonal social ordering, particularly as evidenced in contemporary American culture, provided the libertarian crux of Goodman's views. His discussion of the problem of teenage dropout rates in American schools, 'Growing Up Absurd', set up the dichotomies that were central to his critique of systematic organisation. Through his ideas the contrast between society as it is and society as it should be runs according to binaries of usefulness/uselessness, meaning/meaninglessness, authenticity/in-authenticity, and natural/processed. He argued that the young in America experience disaffection, frustration and eventually apathy because they are unable to mature in a society without heroic identities around which to aspire and achieve a sense of meaning and worth. The advocacy of ideals and meaningful work is a recurrent motif for Goodman, in it lies the source of all authentic community and individuality. Goodman argued that usefulness and meaning in activity is subverted by the modern bureaucratic commercial culture, by its 'useless production and advertising' and 'synthetic demand'.¹² There is in his work a strong sense of the natural heroic nature of the individual, longing to be useful and adventurous and achieve ends with meaning and significance. The heroic impulse is suppressed by the culture of systematic organisation; the imposition of synthetic processes, indirect engagement, and unnatural dynamics. This had become in America, he argued, a culture and society so removed from natural human drives by process and rationalisation and the goals of profit and consumption, that there were no real ideals driving social activity, only the logic of the maintenance and efficiency of the processing machinery. He argued that American society has been so rationalised into a 'system' that by its very nature was not referenced according to its human components for any other objective than the continuing operation of the system for its own sake. These industrial, mechanistic metaphors of the in-authenticity of a rationalised society bears a strong resemblance to Romantic idealisations of the organic qualities of nature and their unaccountability to anything other than individual emotional responses.

¹¹ For instance see Alex Comfort 'Art and Social Responsibility: Lectures on the Ideology of Romanticism', Falcon Press, 1946.

¹² Paul Goodman 'Growing Up Absurd' p.28

In 'Growing Up Absurd' Goodman introduces a dark symbolic terminology to describe his conception of contemporary civilisation. Goodman's model of the organised society is, in his words, 'An apparently closed room in which there is a large rat race as the dominant centre of attention.'¹³ He goes on, 'In the closed room...there is only one system of values, that of the rat race itself. This shared by everybody in the room and held in contempt by everybody in the room.'¹⁴ This is strongly reminiscent of a Weberian picture of modernity in which the logic of rationalisation has claimed victory over society, imposing structural obstacles to individual freedom, and displacing personal freedom and moral responsibility with the concern for the most efficient ways of realising given ends. Goodman claims, for example, that the schooling system goes on less because of true educational function than because, like much else in the American economy, it engages in self-rationalisation and self-perpetuation. Goodman approached this picture of seeming pessimistic inevitability with apparent inconsistency. He took a cautious and suspicious stance towards the rationalising dynamics of modern society and this encompassed the modern achievements of big science and technology. On one hand, he describes youth experience in terms of the weary melancholic boredom caused by the lack of heroic opportunity in rationalised society. On the other hand, Goodman avoids the idea that there may be inherently dominating and centralising tendencies in these models of progress by focusing on the initiating powers of the individual. Once these liberating individual powers are activated by the kind of radical de-centralist philosophy he advocated, the dangers of rationalisation will have been countered. Despite his suspicions, Goodman was an avowed Enlightenment thinker, treating Western science as moral virtue, advocating complete freedom for the pursuit of scientific knowledge and identifying the Enlightenment project as one of independence and freedom. Science, for Goodman, was still the route to human salvation but to be authentic it needs to be re-grounded in human experience. Whilst rejecting the generalisations of centralised processing and rationalised bureaucracy, Goodman maintained his faith in the liberating truths of scientific enquiry.

It is important to note the tone of Goodman's Enlightenment faith. In Goodman's ideas there is a strong sense of the betrayal of the Enlightenment project. What had happened, according to Goodman, was that the liberating principles had been betrayed in the modern formulation of knowledge and social control. The tension in Goodman's work between his optimistic and pessimistic assessments of the products of progress and his abiding faith in the resilience of the creative, free essence of individuals, is strongly reminiscent of the 19th century American literary figures, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman. Theirs was a Romantic response to Enlightenment rationalism and materialism which emphasised the values of individuality, subjectivity, emotion and imagination. Goodman was tempering the claims of rationalism, rather than denying them, using a Romantic emphasis on the specificity of human experience and the importance of the interior condition of 'heroism' which flows from individual attachment to values and ideals. Goodman tells a story of betrayed values. But not betrayed by their own inevitable logic. Youth spontaneity will win the day by their reluctance to conform and their readiness to drop out of school. Goodman escaped the inevitability and pessimism suggested by his critique of modern rationalised social ordering via the Romantic impulse that it is necessary to initiate your way to freedom.

A second way in which Goodman criticised the modern shape of civilised American society and demonstrated a Romantic attachment is through his persistent reference to what he sees as the original ideals of the American democratic project. The American Romantics similarly dedicated themselves to an idealised picture of American democratic theory, which in turn restated the 18th century belief in the perfectibility of mankind. Like Goodman; Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman were struck by the clash of these ideals with the realities of, among other things, pervasive inequality. These writers attacked the materialism and inequities of American society with a renewed response to the memory of the American tradition. Contrary to the heroic model of the Declaration of Independence, they argued, men had allowed themselves to be turned into shells of social habits. The American literary Romantics saw themselves as trying to save the logic of a free society by administering moral correctives to the practice of democracy. Goodman echoes this attempt to recall America to an awareness of its moral greatness. His radicalism is directed towards putting the American democratic project back on track by revealing the hypocrisy of the

¹³ Paul Goodman 'Growing Up Absurd' p.133

¹⁴ Paul Goodman 'Growing UP Absurd', p.140

espoused values of American society. This orientation has much in common with the values of the American New Left for whom Goodman was an important figure. Goodman shared the Romantic values and sense of disillusionment with the gap between the ideals and the reality of his age. He saw democracy as America's native anarchist tradition. Goodman argued consistently that the root of the problems he identifies was the betrayal of a specifically American set of values. To the founders of the democratic ideal in America, Goodman stated, 'citizen' meant society-maker, not one 'participating in' or 'adjusted to' society, 'to make society was their breath of life.'¹⁵ For Goodman, the ideal of proud and independent productive citizens has been distorted in an economy dominated by monopolies. This revival of already existing values reinforced Goodman's critique of contemporary civilisation and located it firmly within native political traditions. It is also strongly linked to an important feature of his thought, his self-confessed conservatism.

Goodman's connection to Romanticism is strongly evident in his confessions of conservatism. He quoted and identified himself with Burke and Coleridge, saying of Burke that he 'had a good idea of conservatism, that existing community bonds are destroyed at peril'. He interpreted Coleridge as focusing on the quality of individual men rather than consigning them to the march of progress, and stated that like Coleridge he was 'not overly impressed by progress'.¹⁶ The implication is that a conservative disposition maintains freedom where progress has often undermined it. Goodman, according to his moral dichotomy of nature and artifice, stressed that anarchism as not essentially a destructive tradition. Goodman is apprehensive about the tendency of progress to break the lines of connection between past and present culture and to allow science to break from the moralising influence of the humanities. He saw the radical agenda as, at least partly, a mission to conserve and return. The following quotes is particularly illustrative of this point:

'Important reforms did not occur when they were ripe, and we have inherited the consequences: a wilderness of unfinished situations, unequal developments and inconsistent standards...sometimes the remedy must be stoically to go back and carry through the old programs.'¹⁷

Romanticism and the Reinterpretation of Anarchism

Read and Goodman appropriate Romanticism in three main ways. The first is with regard to the relationship between the individual and his community. Read's use of the artist as the model of the autonomous individual involves a strong assertion of individuality whilst at the same time identifying the creative capacity as a social bond. This offers a method for reconciling what has been taken to be a divisive tension in the anarchist tradition. The second manner of appropriation is demonstrated by the manner in which Goodman is able to engage with and critique the progress of modern civilisation whilst still asserting its original values and offering an optimistic analysis for moving past its negative dynamics. Thirdly, the Romantic impulse moves anarchism towards a more cautious approach to reason and a more subtle evaluation of progress and change.

A Romantic interpretation of Read and Goodman offers the following responses to inadequate interpretations of anarchism. Regarding the interpretation of anarchism as anachronistic, both of the thinkers discussed, but especially Goodman, were specifically struggling with how to formulate a radical critique of contemporary social developments and offer consistently anarchist interpretations and strategies for autonomy in the face of these new kinds of danger. What emerges in the anarchist responses of these two thinkers, and other later twentieth century anarchists, is a new formulation of anarchism which combines some of the traditional anarchist concerns with human agency and natural order with markedly modern intellectual developments in fields like sociology and psychology. These new anarchist formulations also mark a shift in the geographical location of anarchist to Anglo-American thinkers. It is

¹⁵ Paul Goodman 'Compulsory Miseducation', p. 22

¹⁶ Goodman, 'Notes of a Neolithic Conservative', in Stoehr, p.193

¹⁷ Goodman, 'Growing Up Absurd', p.24

significant in this respect that both Herbert Read and Paul Goodman drew on their respective native varieties of Romantic ideology. This implies that these anarchists encountered Romantic ideas through an awareness of their native traditions of thought, this is true to a certain extent, but the relationships are more complicated than this. Both Read and Goodman demonstrate the influence of both English and American strands of Romanticism. As with other aspects of Anglo-American anarchism, a significant feature of the relationship is a considerable degree of transatlantic cross-fertilisation.

Regarding the analysis of anarchism as essentially exterior and hostile to ideological tradition, this discussion calls attention to the location of anarchism within central currents and traditions of ideology, in this case Romanticism. A wider concern regarding the relationship between anarchism and Romanticism is the question of how to characterise this relationship. Rather than identify Romanticism the key feature of anarchism, the aim here is to identify it one of a number of appropriations and significant relationships with other bodies of thought which form into a cluster of relationships between anarchism and other traditions. The anarchist appropriation of Romanticism suggests ways of identifying connections with other social and intellectual movements, for example in an exploration of Goodman's relationship with the American New Left. Similarly, the neo-Romantic tradition to which Herbert Read contributes in Britain and Alex Comfort draws on has important connections with pacifist traditions. The British pacifist tradition, strongly motivated by objection to the emergence of state conscription in the First World War, had a certain logical appeal to British anarchists. The pacifist tradition, especially its anti-nuclear formations, in turn had certain significant relationships with American civil rights movements. This sample of the matrix of social and intellectual connections illustrates the manner in which it is appropriate to investigate and understand the ideology of anarchism as it appears in the later twentieth century.

In relation to the charge that anarchism is too esoteric and incoherent to be considered an ideology at all, we could say that firstly, anarchism is not alone amongst ideologies in having to deal with challenges such as this. More importantly this discussion has shown that anarchism is an ideological tradition that develops according to attempts to tackle tensions. In the cases discussed here, it does this with a critical awareness of other traditions of thought.