Anarchism and Education

Exploring the neglected tradition of anarchist education, this book shows how the ideas traditionally associated with anarchism can lend a valuable perspective to philosophical debates on education and offer a motivating vision for teachers and educational policy makers.

In focusing on the educational ideas associated with the social anarchists, Judith Suissa provides a detailed account of the central features of anarchist thought, dispelling some common misconceptions about anarchism and demonstrating how a failure to appreciate the crucial role of education in anarchist theory is often responsible for the dismissal of anarchism as a coherent position by both academics and the general public. The book also establishes that anarchist education is a distinct tradition that differs in important respects from libertarian or child-centred education, with which it is often mistakenly conflated.

Anarchism and Education offers a historical account of anarchist educational ideas and experiments and situates these in the framework of contemporary debates in the philosophy of education and political philosophy. Anarchism is compared with liberal and Marxist traditions, with particular emphasis on the concept of human nature, which, it is argued, is the key to grasping the role of education in anarchist thought, and on the notion of utopianism. The relationship between anarchist ideas and issues of pedagogy, school climate, curriculum and policy is explored, leading to a broad discussion of the political and social context of educational ideas. The perspective arising from this account is used to offer a trenchant critique of some current trends in educational theory and policy, such as calls for free markets in educational provision.

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In loving memory of my mother, Ruth

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Introduction

'To declare for a doctrine so remote as anarchism at this stage of history', wrote Herbert Read in 1938, 'will be regarded by some critics as a sign of intellectual bankruptcy; by others as a sort of treason, a desertion of the democratic front at the most acute moment of its crisis; by still others as merely poetic nonsense...' (Read 1974: 56).

After several years of working on this project, I think I have some idea of how Read felt. Anarchism is rarely taken seriously by academics, and its advocates in the political arena are generally regarded as a well-meaning but, at worst, violent and at best a naïve bunch. Why, then do I think anarchist ideas merit a study of this scope? And why, particularly, do I think they have something to say to philosophers of education?

Part of my motivation is the need to address what appears to be a gap in the literature. Although the anarchist position on education is, as I hope to establish, distinct and philosophically interesting, and although it has been expressed powerfully at various times throughout recent history, it is consistently absent from texts on the philosophy and history of educational ideas – even amongst those authors who discuss 'radical' or 'progressive' education. Indeed, one issue which I address in this book is the failure of many theorists to distinguish between libertarian education (or 'free schools') and anarchist education. I hope to establish that the principles underlying the anarchist position make the associated educational practices and perspective significantly distinct from other approaches in radical education.

Similarly, both academic texts and public perceptions often involve simplifications, distortions or misunderstandings of anarchism. The typical response of contemporary scholars to the anarchist idea – that it is 'utopian', 'impractical' or 'over-optimistic regarding human nature' (see, for example, Scruton 1982; Wolff 1996) – needs to be scrutinized if one is to give anarchism serious consideration. To what extent are these charges justified? And what are the philosophical and political assumptions behind them? Indeed such charges themselves have, for me, raised fascinating questions about the nature and role of the philosophy of education. In what sense are we bound by the political and social context within which we operate? To what extent should we be bound by it, and what is our responsibility in this regard as philosophers? If philosophy

is to reach beyond the conceptual reality of our present existence, how far can it go before it becomes 'utopian', and what does this mean? And if we do want to promote an alternative vision of human life, to what extent are we accountable for the practicality of this vision? So while the focus of this work is an exploration of the philosophical issues involved in anarchist ideas of education, these broader questions form the backdrop to the discussion.

The bulk of this work consists of an attempt to piece together a systematic account of what could be described as an anarchist perspective on education. This project involves examining the central philosophical assumptions and principles of anarchist theory, with particular reference to those ideas which have an obvious bearing on issues about the role and nature of education. Specifically, I devote considerable space to a discussion of the anarchist view on human nature, which is both at the crux of many misconceptions of anarchism and also plays a crucial role in the anarchist position on education. I also discuss several attempts to translate anarchist ideas into educational practice and policy. This discussion, I hope, serves to highlight the distinct aspects of the anarchist perspective, as compared to other educational positions, and furthers critical discussion of the way in which anarchism can be seen to embody a philosophically interesting perspective on education.

The thrust of my account of anarchist educational ideas and practice is to show how such ideas are intertwined with the political and moral commitments of anarchism as an ideological stance. One cannot, I argue, appreciate the complexity of the anarchist position on education without understanding the political and philosophical context from which it stems. Yet equally importantly, one cannot appreciate or assess anarchism's viability as a political position without an adequate understanding of the role played by education within anarchist thought.

In the course of this discussion, I refer extensively to other traditions which inform major trends in the philosophy of education, namely, the liberal and the Marxist traditions. While I do not claim to offer a comprehensive account of either of these traditions, nor of their educational implications, this approach does, I hope, serve the purpose of situating anarchist ideas within a comparative framework. I believe it establishes that, while anarchism overlaps in important ways with both liberal and Marxist ideas, it can offer us interesting new ways to conceptualize educational issues. The insights drawn from such an analysis can thus shed new light both on the work of philosophers of education, and on the educational questions, dilemmas and issues confronted by teachers, parents and policy makers.

It is important to stress, at the outset, that this work is not intended as a defence of anarchism as a political position. I believe that philosophers of education and educational practitioners can benefit from a serious examination of anarchist ideas, and that many of these ideas have value whether or not one ultimately endorses anarchism as a political ideology, and even if one remains sceptical regarding the possibility of resolving the theoretical tensions within anarchist theory.

More specifically, I believe that the very challenge posed by what I refer to as the anarchist perspective, irrespective of our ultimate ideological commitments, can prompt us to ask broad questions about the nature and role of philosophy, of education, and of the philosophy of education.

Most contemporary philosophers of education acknowledge that philosophy of education has, at the very least, political implications. As John White puts it (White 1982: 1), 'the question: What should our society be like? overlaps so much with the question [of what the aims of education should be] that the two cannot sensibly be kept apart'. Likewise, Patricia White laments the fact that philosophers tend to avoid 'tracing the policy implications of their work' (White 1983: 2), and her essay *Beyond Domination* is a good example of an attempt to spell out in political terms what a particular educational aim (in this case, education for democracy) would look like. A compelling account of the historical and philosophical context of the relationship between educational theory and political ideas has been notably developed by Carr and Hartnett, who lament the 'depoliticization of educational debate' (Carr and Hartnett 1996: 5) and argue for a clearer articulation of the political and cultural role of educational theory, grounded in democratic values. But even work such as this tends to take the present basic social framework and institutional setup as given. Even philosophers of education such as John and Patricia White, Carr and Hartnett, Henry Giroux, Nel Noddings and others who take a critical stance towards the political values reflected in the education system, tend to phrase their critique in terms of making existing society 'more democratic', 'more participatory', 'more caring' and so on. The basic structural relations between the kind of society we live in and the kind of education we have are, more often than not, taken for granted. Indeed, it is this which makes such theories so appealing as, often, they offer a way forward for those committed to principles of democracy, for example, without demanding an entire revolution in the way our society is organized.

In political terms, the acknowledgement by philosophers of the essentially political character of education seems to mean that, as succinctly put by Bowen and Hobson

> It is now clear to most in the liberal-analytic tradition that no philosopher of education can be fully neutral, but must make certain normative assumptions, and in the case of the liberal analysts, these will reflect the values of democracy.
>
> (Bowen and Hobson 1987: 445)

In philosophical terms, what this acknowledgement means is that discussion of 'aims' and 'values' in education often assumes that the kind of social and political values we cherish most highly can be promoted by particular conceptualizations of the curriculum. Richard Pring captures this idea in stating that debates on the aim of education 'take the word aim to mean not something extrinsic to the process of education itself, but the values which are

picked out by evaluating any activity as educational' (Pring 1994: 21). Thus much work by philosophers within the liberal tradition focuses on questions as to how values such as autonomy – argued to be crucial for creating a democratic citizenry – can best be fostered by the education system. Many theorists in this tradition make no acknowledgement of the fact that 'education' is not synonymous with 'schooling'. Even those who do explicitly acknowledge this fact, like John White who opens his book *The Aims of Education Restated* (White 1982) with the comment that 'not teachers but parents form the largest category of educators in this country', tend to treat this issue simply as a factor to be dealt with in the debate conducted within the framework of the existing democratic (albeit often, it is implied, not democratic enough) state. The normative questions regarding the desirability of this very framework are not themselves the focus of philosophical debate.

In short, the sense in which many philosophers of education regard their work as political is that captured by Kleinig, when he states:

> Philosophy of education is a social practice, and in evaluating it account needs to be taken not only of what might be thought to follow 'strictly' from the arguments used by its practitioners, but also the causal effects of those arguments within the social contexts of which they are a part.
> (Kleinig 1982: 9)

Critical discussion about the desirability of this social context in itself, it is implied, is beyond the scope of philosophy of education.

The anarchist perspective seems at the outset to present a challenge to such mainstream views in that it does not take any existing social or political framework for granted. Instead, it has as its focal point a vision of what an ideal framework could be like – a vision which has often been described as utopian. The question of why the anarchists were given the label 'utopian', what it signifies, and whether or not they justly deserved it, is one which is hotly debated in the literature, and which I shall take up later. But what anarchism seems to be suggesting is that before we even engage in the enterprise of philosophy of education, we must question the very political framework within which we are operating, ask ourselves what kind of society would embody, for us, the optimal vision of 'the good life', and then ask ourselves what kind (if any) of education system would exist in this society.

Of course, any vision of the ideal society is formulated in terms of particular values, and many of the values involved in the anarchist vision may overlap with those promoted by philosophers writing in the liberal-democratic tradition (e.g. autonomy, equality, individual freedom). But it is not just a question of how these values are understood and translated into political practice; nor is it a question of which of them are regarded as of primary importance; the distinction is not, then, between emphasizing different sets of values in philosophical debates on education, but, rather, of changing the very parameters of the debate. Thus the question of 'what should our society

be like' is, for the anarchist, not merely 'overlapping', but logically *prior* to any questions about what kind of education we want.

An anarchist perspective suggests that it is not enough to say, with Mary Warnock, that philosophy of education should be centrally concerned with 'questions about what should be taught, to whom, and with what in mind' (Warnock 1977: 9); one has to also ask the crucial question 'by whom?' And how one answers this question, in turn, has important political implications which themselves inform the framework of the debate. For example, if one assumes that the nation state is to be the major educating body in society, one has to get clear about just what this means for our political, social and educational institutions, and, ideally, to be able to offer some philosophical defence of this arrangement. The view of society which informs the anarchists' ideas on education is not one of 'our society' or 'a democractic society', but a normative vision of what society *could* be like. The optimality of this vision is justified with reference to complex ideas on human nature and values, which I explore later.

The question for the philosopher of education, then, becomes threefold: One, what kind of society do we want? Two, what would education look like in this ideal society? And three, what kind of educational activities can best help to further the realization of this society? Of course, the arguments of anarchist thinkers do not always acknowledge the distinction between such questions, nor do they always progress along the logical route implied here, and untangling them and reconstructing this perspective is one task of this book.

Why, then, to go back to the opening quote from Herbert Read, is anarchism regarded as so eccentric – laughable, even – by mainstream philosophers? Is it the very idea of offering an alternative social ideal that seems hard to swallow, or is it that this particular ideal is regarded as so 'utopian' that it is not worth seriously considering? And wherein does its 'utopianism' lie? Is it just a question of impracticality? Are we, as philosophers, bound to consider only those political programmes which are clearly practically feasible? Yet if we are concerned primarily with feasibility, then we have to address the claim, made by anarchist thinkers and activists, that their programme *is* feasible in that it does not demand a sudden, total revolution, but can be initiated and carried out 'here and now'. For the anarchist utopia, as we shall see, is built on the assumption of propensities, values and tendencies which, it is argued, are already present in human social activity. Is it, then, that philosophers believe that this utopian vision of the stateless society goes against too much of what we know about human nature? Yet there is little agreement amongst philosophers as to the meaning, let alone the content, of human nature. Many anarchists, however, have an elaborate theory of human nature which arguably supports their claims for the possibility of a society based on mutual aid and self-government. Is it, then, simply that we (perhaps unlike many radical thinkers of the mid-nineteenth century) are so firmly entrenched in the idea of the state that we cannot conceptualize any kind of social reality

without it? Does the modern capitalist state, in other words, look as if it is here to stay? Have we, similarly, fallen victim to the post-modern skepticism towards 'grand narratives', suspicious of any political ideal which offers a vision of progress towards an unequivocally better world? These are all valid and interesting points against taking anarchism seriously, but they, in their turn, deserve to be scrutinized as they reflect, I believe, important assumptions about the nature and scope of the philosophical enterprise.

Perhaps the very perspective implied by taking a (possibly utopian) vision of the ideal society as the starting point for philosophical debates on education is one which deserves to be taken seriously. It is certainly one which challenges our common perceptions about the role of the philosophy of education. We are already well acquainted with talk of 'the good life' and 'human flourishing' as legitimate notions within the field of philosophy of education. But how broadly are we to extend our critical thought and our imagination in using these notions? If we admit (with John Dewey, Paul Hirst, Richard Peters and others) that such notions cannot be understood without a social context, then is it not incumbent on us – or at the very least a worthwhile exercise – to consider what we would ideally like that social context to be? We are accustomed to the occasional philosophical argument for states without schools. Yet how often do we pause to consider the possibility of schools without states?

An analysis of anarchist thought seems unlikely, due to the very nature of the subject, to yield a coherent, comprehensive and unique philosophical account of education. Indeed, part of anarchism's complexity is a result of its being intellectually, politically and philosophically intertwined with many other traditions. Thus any questions about anarchism's uniqueness must remain, to a certain extent, open. Nevertheless, in the course of exploring the educational ideas associated with the anarchist tradition, and their philosophical and historical connections with other traditions, many – often surprising – insights emerge. Some of these challenge common perceptions about anarchism; some of them suggest important links between anarchist ideas and liberal aspirations; some of them prompt a rethinking of the distinctions between various educational traditions; and some of them prompt questions about how we see our role both as educators and as philosophers of education. All of them deserve exploration.

1 Anarchism – definitions and questions

Before moving on to a discussion of the educational ideas associated with anarchism, we need a broad understanding of what the anarchist position involves – and, perhaps equally importantly, what it does not involve.

As a political ideology, anarchism is notoriously difficult to define, leading many commentators to complain of its being 'amorphous and full of paradoxes and contradictions' (Miller 1984: 2).

One reason for the confusion surrounding the use of the word 'anarchism' is the derogatory meanings associated with the connected terms 'anarchy' and 'anarchic'. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *anarchy* as (1) absence of government or control, resulting in lawlessness (2) disorder, confusion; and an *anarchist* as 'a person who believes that government is undesirable and should be abolished'. In fact, the title 'anarchist' was first employed as a description of adherence to a particular ideology by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in 1840 and, as shall transpire, the substantial part of this ideology consisted in far more than a simple rejection of government. Indeed, as many anarchists have stressed, it is not government as such that they find objectionable, but the hierarchical forms of government associated with the nation state.

A second reason for the difficulty in reaching a conclusive definition is the fact that anarchism – by its very nature – is anti-canonical, and therefore one cannot refer to any single body of written work (unlike in the case of Marxism) in the search for definitive answers to questions on the nature and principles of the anarchist position. Furthermore, those anarchists who have written extensively on the subject have seldom formulated their views in the form of systematic works – largely out of a conscious commitment to the popular propaganda of their ideas.

Yet in spite of these difficulties, and in spite of the great variance amongst different anarchist thinkers at different times in history, it is possible to approach a working definition of anarchism by asking what it is that distinguishes it from other ideological positions. From this point of view, Reichert is undoubtedly right in pointing out that anarchism is 'the only modern social doctrine that unequivocally rejects the concept of the state' (Reichert 1969: 139).

As the discussion in the following chapters will reveal, as a theory anarchism also addresses basic philosophical issues concerning such notions as human nature, authority, freedom and community. All of these issues have an important bearing on philosophical questions about education, and can be usefully understood in contrast with the views articulated from other ideological perspectives. It is, though, perhaps in light of its rejection of statehood that the theoretical cluster of anarchist ideas is best understood.

Historically speaking, it has been argued (e.g. by Miller, Chomsky and Guerin) that the origins of anarchism as a comprehensive political theory can be traced to the outbreak of the French Revolution. Miller claims that the Revolution, by radically challenging the old regime, opened the way for other such challenges to states and social institutions. Specifically, institutions were now regarded as vulnerable to the demand that they be justified in terms of an appeal to first principles, whether of natural right, social utility, or other universal abstract principles (see Miller 1984: 2–4). Yet anarchism as a political movement did not develop until the second half of the nineteenth century, especially in conjunction with the growing workers' movement. Indeed Joll argues that although philosophical arguments for anarchism can be found in texts of earlier historical periods, as a political movement, anarchism is 'a product of the nineteenth century' (Joll 1979: ix). As Joll points out, 'the values the anarchists attempted to demolish were those of the increasingly powerful centralized, industrial state which, in the nineteenth and twentieth century, has seemed the model to which all societies are approaching' (ibid.).

However, the philosophical ideas embodied in anarchist theory did have historical precedents. Some writers have made the distinction between anarchism as a political movement and 'philosophical anarchism' which consists of a critique of the idea of authority itself. Miller, for example, notes that, as opposed to the political objection to the state, philosophical anarchism could entail a very passive kind of attitude, politically speaking, in which the proponent of this view evades 'inconvenient or immoral state dictates whenever possible', but takes no positive action to get rid of the state or to propose an alternative form of social organization. On this view, one can be an anarchist without subscribing to philosophical anarchism – that is, without rejecting the idea of legitimate authority, and vice versa. However, other theorists, such as Walter, argue that, irrespective of the existence of a philosophical position against authority, all those who identify themselves as anarchists share the positive idea that a stateless society is, however remotely, possible and would be preferable to current society.

Most theorists, in short, seem to agree that, as a political movement, albeit not a continuous one, anarchism developed from the time of the French Revolution onwards, and that it can thus be seen as historically connected with the other major modern political doctrines which were crystallized at round this time, namely, liberalism and socialism. It is indeed around the question of the relationship between these two intellectual traditions that many of the criticisms of anarchism and the tensions within the movement

can be understood. In a certain sense, the tensions between liberal and socialist principles are reflected in the contradictions often to be found within the anarchist tradition. While many commentators (see for example Joll 1979; Miller 1984; Morland 1997) describe these apparently irreconcilable tensions as obstacles towards construing anarchism as a coherent ideology, anarchist thinkers writing within the tradition often refuse to see them as contradictions, drawing on particular concepts of freedom to support their arguments. Thus Walter, for example, notes that anarchism

> may be seen as a development from either liberalism or socialism, or from both liberalism and socialism. Like liberals, anarchists want freedom; like socialists, anarchists want equality. But we are not satisfied by liberalism alone or by socialism alone. Freedom without equality means that the poor and the weak are less free than the rich and strong, and equality without freedom means that we are all slaves together. Freedom and equality are not contradictory, but complementary [...] Freedom is not genuine if some people are too poor or too weak to enjoy it, and equality is not genuine if some people are ruled by others. The crucial contribution to political theory made by anarchists is this realization that freedom and equality are in the end the same thing.
>
> (Walter 1969: 163)

Walter, like many anarchist theorists, often fails to make the careful philosophical distinctions necessary to fully appreciate these complex conceptual issues. Presumably, he does not wish to argue that freedom and equality are actually conceptually identical. Rather, the point he seems to be making is that they are mutually dependent, in the sense that the model of a good society which the anarchists are defending cannot have one without the other. I shall examine these conceptual issues in greater depth in the following discussion.

In spite of Walter's observation, it is undoubtedly true that, throughout history, different people calling themselves anarchists have often chosen to place more weight on one rather than the other side of the 'old polarization of freedom versus equality'. Specifically, it is common to find a distinction between anarchists of more 'individualist' leanings, and 'social anarchists', who see individual freedom as conceptually connected with social equality and emphasize the importance of community and mutual aid. Thus writers like Max Stirner (1806–1856), who represents an early and extreme form of individualism (which Walter suggests is arguably not a type of anarchism at all) view society as a collection of existentially unique and autonomous individuals. Both Stirner and William Godwin (1756–1836), commonly acknowledged as the first anarchist thinkers, portrayed the ideal of the rational individual as morally and intellectually sovereign, and the need to constantly question authority and received opinion – to engage in a process which Stirner called 'desanctification'. However while Stirner seemed to

argue for a kind of rational egoism, Godwin claimed that a truly rational person would necessarily be benevolent. Although sharply critical of the modern centralist state, and presenting an elaborate doctrine of social and political freedom, Godwin, writing in the aftermath of the French Revolution, placed great emphasis on the development of individual rationality and independent thinking, believing that the road forward lay not through social revolution but through gradual reform by means of the rational dissemination of ideas at the level of individual consciousness.

As Walter comments (Walter 1969: 174), such individualism, which over the years has held an intellectual attraction for figures such as Shelley, Emerson and Thoreau, often tends towards nihilism and even solipsism. Walter ultimately questions whether individualism of this type is indeed a form of anarchism, arguing rather that libertarianism – construed as a more moderate form of individualism which holds that individual liberty is an important political goal – is simply one aspect of anarchist thought, or 'the first stage on the way to complete anarchism' (ibid.). The key difference between this kind of individualist libertarianism and social anarchism is that while such libertarians oppose the state, they also, as Walter notes (ibid.), oppose society, regarding any type of social organization 'beyond a temporary "union of egoists" ' as a form of oppression.

Many commentators have acknowledged that leading anarchist theorists did not see individual freedom as a political end in itself (see, for example, Ryth Kinna, in Crowder 1991). Furthermore, central anarchist theorists, such as Kropotkin and Bakunin, were often highly disparaging about earlier individualist thinkers such as William Godwin and Max Stirner, for whom individual freedom was a supreme value. 'The final conclusion of that sort of Individualist Anarchism', wrote Kropotkin in his 1910 article on 'Anarchism' for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,

> maintains that the aim of all superior civilization is, not to permit all members of the community to develop in a normal way, but to permit certain better- endowed individuals 'fully to develop', even at the cost of the happiness and the very existence of the mass of mankind....

Bakunin, another leading anarchist theorist, was even more outspoken in his critique of 'the individualistic, egoistic, shabby and fictitious liberty extolled by the school of J.J. [Rousseau] and other schools of bourgeois liberalism' (Dolgoff 1973). Accordingly, several theorists have proposed that it is in fact equality, or even fraternity (see Fidler 1989), which constitutes the ultimate social value according to the anarchist position. Others, like Chomsky, have taken the position that anarchism is simply 'the libertarian wing of socialism' (Chomsky, in Guerin 1970: xii) or that 'anarchism is really a synonym for socialism' (Guerin 1970: 12). Indeed, Adolph Fischer, one of the 'Haymarket martyrs' sentenced to death for their part in the libertarian socialist uprising over the struggle for the eight-hour work day in Chicago, in 1886, claimed

that 'every anarchist is a socialist but not every socialist is an anarchist'. (quoted in Guerin 1970: 12).

The arguments of anarchist theorists such as Chomsky and Guerin, to the effect that the best way to understand anarchism is to view it as 'libertarian socialism', are also supported by the work of political scientists such as David Miller, Barbara Goodwin and George Crowder. Goodwin, for example, states that 'socialism is in fact the theoretical genus of which Marxism is a species and anarchism another' (Goodwin 1987: 91), whereas Crowder goes so far as to say that 'from a historical point of view classical anarchism belongs more properly within the socialist tradition' (Crowder 1991: 11).

It is certainly true that the most influential anarchist theorists in recent history, in terms of developing and disseminating anarchist ideas, belonged on the socialist end of the anarchist spectrum. Many of the central ideas of this tradition were anticipated by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), commonly regarded as the father of social anarchism. Yet the bulk of social-anarchist thought was crystalized in the second half of the nineteenth century, most notably by Michael Bakunin (1814–1876) and Peter Kropotkin (1842–1912). Other significant anarchist activists and theorists in this tradition include Errico Malatesta (1853–1932), Alexander Berkman (1870–1936), Emma Goldman (1869–1940), and, more recently, Murray Bookchin (1921–), Daniel Guerin (1904–1988) and Noam Chomsky (1928–).

Apart from the differences in emphasis in terms of the individualist–socialist continuum, one can draw other distinctions within the broadly socialist approach amongst different variants of social anarchism which have been expressed in different political and historical contexts. Briefly, these five main variants are: mutualism, federalism, collectivism, communism and syndicalism. Although this taxonomy is conceptually useful, it is important to remember that the views of many leading anarchist theorists often involved a combination of strands from several of these different traditions.

Mutualism represents the basic anarchist insight that society should be organized not on the basis of a hierarchical, centralist, top-down structure such as the state, but on the basis of reciprocal voluntary agreements between individuals. Perhaps the best-known, and certainly the earliest, proponent of this type of anarchism was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, envisaged a society composed of cooperative groups of individuals exchanging goods on the basis of labour value, and enjoying the credit of a 'people's bank'. Proudhon was criticized by later anarchists for appealing primarily to the petit bourgeoisie, and for failing to deal with the basic issues of social structure as regards the class system, industry and capital. Indeed, he often wrote with horror of the increasing threat of massive industrialization, expressing a romantic wish to preserve small-scale trade, artisans' workshops and cottage industry. Nevertheless, his views on private property and his argument that social harmony could only exist in a stateless

society, were highly influential and were later developed by leading anarchist thinkers, notably Bakunin.

Federalism is basically a logical development from mutualism, referring as it does to social and economic organization between communities, as opposed to within communities. The idea is that the society of voluntarily organized communities should be coordinated by a network of councils. The key difference between this anarchist idea and the principle of democratic representation is that the councils would be established spontaneously to meet specific economic or organizational needs of the communities; they would have no central authority, no permanent bureaucratic structure, and their delegates would have no executive authority and would be subject to instant recall. This principle was also elaborated by Proudhon and his followers, who were fond of pointing to international systems for coordinating railways, postal services, telegraphs and disaster operations as essentially federalist in structure. What is notable about the elaborate attempts by Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and other anarchists to show how federalist arrangements could take care of a wide variety of economic functions, is that they illustrate the point that anarchism is not synonymous with disorganization. As the twentieth century anarchist Voline clarifies:

> it is not a matter of 'organization' or 'nonorganization', but of two different principles of organization.... Of course, say the anarchists, society must be organized. However, the new organization must be established freely, socially, and, above all, from below. The principle of organization must not issue from a center created in advance to capture the whole and impose itself upon it, but, on the contrary, it must come from all sides to create nodes of coordination, natural centers to serve all these points...
>
> (quoted in Guerin 1970: 43)

It thus seems appropriate to view federalism not so much as a type of anarchism but, as Walter suggests, 'as an inevitable part of anarchism' (Walter 1969: 175).

Collectivism takes the aforementioned points one step further and argues that the free and just society can only be established by a workers' revolution which will reorganize production on a communal basis. Many central figures of the twentieth century anarchist movement – notably Bakunin and his followers in the First International – were in fact collectivists. They opposed both the more reformist position of the mutualists and federalists, on the one hand, and what they saw as the authoritarian revolutionary position of the Marxists on the other.

Anarchism and Marxism

Many of the central ideas and principles of social anarchism overlap with those of Marxism, perhaps nowhere more explicitly than in collectivism, the form of anarchism most closely associated with Marxist socialism in that it focuses on the class struggle and on the need for social revolution. However, there are crucial differences between the anarchists and the Marxists, and indeed much of Bakunin's political theory took the form of an attack on Marx. Specifically, the anarchists opposed common, central ownership of the economy and, of course, state control of production, and believed that a transition to a free and classless society was possible without any intermediate period of dictatorship (see Walter 1969: 176).

Fundamentally, the anarchists consider the Marxist view of the state as a mere tool in the hands of the ruling economic class as too narrow, as it obscures the basic truth that states 'have certain properties just because they are states' (Miller 1984: 82). By using the structure of a state to realize their goals, revolutionaries will, according to anarchism, inevitably reproduce all its negative features (the corrupting power of the minority over the majority, hierarchical, centralized authority and legislation, and so on.) Thus the anarchists in the First International were highly sceptical (with, it has to be said, uncanny foresight) about the Marxist idea of the 'withering away of the state'.

The anarchists also argued that the Marxist claim to create a scientific theory of social change leads to a form of elitism in which the scientific 'truth' is known only to an elect few, which would justify attempts to impose this truth on the 'masses' without any critical process. Bakunin, in a speech to the First International, attacked Marx as follows:

> As soon as an official truth is pronounced – having been scientifically discovered by this great brainy head labouring all alone – a truth proclaimed and imposed on the whole world from the summit of the Marxist Sinai – why discuss anything?
>
> (quoted in Miller 1984: 80)

In contrast, a fundamental aspect of the anarchist position is the belief that the exact form which the future society will take can never be determined in advance; the creation of the harmonious, free society is a constant, dynamic process of self-improvement, spontaneous organization and free experimentation. In keeping with this view, anarchist revolutionary theorists insisted that the revolution itself was not subject to scientific understanding, and its course could not be determined in advance, favouring instead an organic image of social change. As Bakunin wrote:

> Revolution is a natural fact, and not the act of a few persons; it does not take place according to a preconceived plan but is produced by uncontrollable circumstances which no individual can command. We do not, therefore, intend to draw up a blueprint for the future revolutionary campaign; we leave this childish task to those who believe in the possibility and the efficacy of achieving the emancipation of humanity through personal dictatorship.
>
> (Dolgoff 1972: 357)

It is in the context of this position that anarchists have consistently refuted the charges of utopianism – charges made both by right-wing critics and by orthodox Marxists. This point shall be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

Anarcho-Communism is the view that the products of labour should be collectively owned and distributed according to the principle of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. Those anarchists – notably Kropotkin, Malatesta, Berkman and Rocker – who proclaimed themselves to be communist-anarchists shared the collectivists' critique of Marxist socialism, but rejected the title 'collectivist', saw themselves as presenting a broader and more radical vision, involving the complete abolition of the wage and price system. Most revolutionary anarchist movements have in fact been communist in terms of their principles of economic organization – the most notable example being the anarchist communes established during the Spanish Civil War.

Anarcho-Syndicalism is that strand of anarchist thought which emphasizes the issue of labour and argues that the trade unions, as the ultimate expression of the working class, should form the basic unity of social reorganization. There is naturally considerable overlap between the syndicalist view and the collectivist or communist form of anarchism, but historically, anarcho-syndicalism as a movement is closely tied with the development of the French syndicalist (i.e. trade unionist) movement at the end of the nineteenth century. As the anarcho-syndicalist position emphasizes workers' control of the economy and means of production, its proponents have tended to be less libertarian in their sympathies.

In summary, it is abundantly clear that people of fairly diverse political views have, at one time or another, called themselves anarchists. Indeed, as Walter remarks, it is hardly surprising that 'people whose fundamental principle is the rejection of authority should tend to perpetual dissent' (Walter 1969: 172). Nevertheless, a few general points emerge, based on the aforementioned passage:

1 All anarchists share a principled rejection of the state and its institutions; and in doing so they:
2 Do not reject the notion of social organization or order *per se*;
3 Do not necessarily regard freedom – specifically, individual freedom – as the primary value and the major goal of social change, and;
4 Do not propose any 'blueprint' for the future society.

As discussed earlier, it is the work of the social anarchists which constitutes the bulk of the theoretical development of the anarchist position. Likewise it is, I believe, these theorists who offer the most interesting insights into the relationship between education and social change. Thus, in what follows, I shall refer primarily to the tradition of social anarchism and the philosophical and educational ideas associated with it.

However, in adopting this perspective, I by no means wish to gloss over the tensions and apparent contradictions within anarchist theory. These tensions are perhaps an inevitable historical consequence of the fact that, as Joll puts it:

> On the one hand, they are the heirs of all the Utopian, millenarian religious movements which have believed that the end of the world is at hand and have confidently expected that 'the trumpets shall sound and we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. [...] On the other hand, they are also the children of the Age of Reason [...] They are the people who carry their belief in reason and progress and peaceful persuasion through to its logical limits. Anarchism is both a religious faith and a rational philosophy ...
>
> (Joll 1979: x)

In fact, as I shall argue, it is these tensions which make the anarchist tradition so fascinating and rich in philosophical insights. Futhermore, the process of trying to resolve and understand these tensions is part of the process of making sense of anarchist ideas on education.

Anarchism, philosophy of education and liberal suspicions

At first glance, trying to construct an anarchist philosophy of education may seem to the reader an unpromising line of enquiry, or at least one which, while perhaps being of some scholarly interest, has little to offer in the way of practical or philosophical value.

There are several reasons why this may be so. Some of these concern anarchism's viability as a political ideology, and some refer more explicitly to what are assumed to be the educational implications of such an ideology.

As far as the first group of concerns go, most of these involve, whether implicitly or explicitly, assumptions about the alleged utopianism of the anarchist position. This common line of critique, which encompasses both the charges of utopianism from classical Marxists and the scepticism of contemporary liberal theorists, can be broken down into several distinct questions. Most critics have tended to focus (often implicitly) on one or the other of these points.

1 Are the different values promoted by anarchist theory mutually compatible? Many contemporary liberal theorists, for example, working with the notion of personal autonomy, have argued that freedom, in this sense, is incompatible with the ideal of the anarchist community. Similarly, it is almost a built-in assumption of the neo-liberal position that individual freedom and social equality are mutually exclusive. It is from this perspective that some critics have argued that anarchism, as a political theory, lacks internal cohesion (see Taylor 1982).

2 Is the anarchist vision of the ideal human society feasible given the structure of human nature? This question can be broken down into two further questions: (a) The question of inner consistency – that is, is the anarchist social ideal consistent with human nature as the anarchists understand it? and (b) The question of external validity – is the anarchist social ideal feasible given what we know about human naure? This second line of criticism inevitably takes the form of a challenge to the anarchist view of human nature – a view which, as shall be discussed later, is regarded as unrealistically optimistic, as opposed to the rather more pessimistic view, according to which the inherently egotistical, competitive elements of human nature could not sustain a society organized along anarchist lines.

3 Can anarchism be implemented on a large scale in the modern industrialized world? This line of criticism focuses on the problems of translating anarchist ideas about self-governing, freely established communities based on mutual aid and non-hierarchical forms of social organization, into the world of industrial capitalism, global economy and multi-national corporations. In other words, while the previous two points concern primarily the feasibility of establishing and maintaining an anarchist community, this point is more concerned with the problem of relations between communities.

As this brief summary suggests, the anarchist conception of human nature is the key to understanding much of anarchist thought and thus to addressing the criticisms of anarchism as a political theory. Furthermore, this notion is an important element in the anarchist position on education.

It is harder to articulate the criticisms of anarchism from an educational perspective due to the simple fact that very little has been written, from a systematic philosophical point of view, about the educational ideas arising from anarchist theory. On the face of it, there are many ways in which anarchist theory could have implications for our ideas about education. These concern both the policy level (i.e. questions about educational provision and control), the content level (i.e. questions about the curriculum and the underlying values and aims of the educational process) and what could be understood as the meta level (i.e. questions about the moral justification of education *per se*). In spite of the dearth of philosophical literature on this subject, the remarks made informally by philosophers of education on encountering work such as my own suggest that their suspicions, apart from reflecting the above broad scepticism with regard to anarchism's feasibility as a political programme, reflect problems such as the following:

1 First, the anarchist challenge to the idea of authority may seem in itself to undermine our basic assumptions regarding the very legitimacy and value of education as an intentional human endeavour. If anarchists reject authority and hierarchies, one wonders whether it is possible to develop a coherent theory of education within the context of a commitment to anarchist ideals.

Thus the concept of authority and its interpretation within the anarchist tradition needs to be examined further, with this question in mind.

2 Second, the central anarchist argument against the state in itself goes against the ideal of universal educational provision, which has become an implicit assumption in nearly all contemporary philosophical debates on education. This challenge to the liberal ideal of universal, compulsory, state-controlled education is both implicit in the anarchist critique of the centralist state as a mode of social organization, and explicitly argued in anarchist work, from the time of William Godwin's classic argument against state control of education in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Political Justice*, in 1793. Of course, the anarchist argument for abolishment of the centralist state is based on an understanding of and commitment to specific human values and, connectedly, to a specific view of human nature. If one accepts these values, the rejection of the liberal democratic state as the optimal framework for social organization then prompts the question of what framework is to replace it and whether these same values would indeed be better promoted and preserved under alternative arrangements.

3 Although anarchists – as shall be discussed later – advocate a broadly libertarian approach to education, their normative commitments imply a vision – some would argue a utopian vision – of social change. If anarchist education is to be consistent with anarchist principles, then this suggests the following dilemma: either the education in question is to be completely non-coercive and avoid the transmission of any substantive set of values, in which case it is hard to see how such an education could be regarded as furthering the desired social change; or it is to involve the explicit transmission of a substantive curriculum regarding the desired social order – in which case it would appear to undermine the libertarian ideal. In effect, if the anarchist position is actually a libertarian one, is not all educational intervention morally problematic from an anarchist point of view? This issue poses both internal and external problems: the internal problem has to do with the consistency between a substantive educational agenda and a broadly libertarian outlook, whereas the external problem has to do with the difficulty of accommodating a normative – perhaps utopian – vision with the liberal commitment to autonomy.

In order to address these often interconnected issues, it is important to untangle the conceptual web of educationally relevant concepts in anarchist thought, and to understand more fully the basis for the anarchist rejection of the state. One can then pose the question of whether any qualitatively different educational perspective, or indeed any philosophically defensible advantage, is gained by simply replacing the state with, for example, the community.

Furthermore, it is important to clarify the way in which anarchist ideas on education are connected to anarchist values and ideals and thus to articulate an anarchist conceptualization of the role of education in achieving social

change. One important aspect of this project is the distinction, to be discussed later, between anarchist educational practice and other broadly libertarian approaches.

The aim of the following chapters, then, will be to explore the philosophical underpinnings of central concepts in anarchist thought and to articulate the picture of education which emerges from this thought. Specifically, I will address the question of whether anarchists regard education as primarily a means to achieving the political end of establishing an anarchist society.

In the course of this analysis, I will try to establish whether the anarchist position on education is significantly different from other positions, and whether it can shed any new light on common philosophical debates on the nature and role of education.

As mentioned earlier, one cannot begin to answer any of these questions without a detailed understanding of the anarchist conception of human nature – a notion which is central both to the charges of utopianism raised against anarchism, and to the role assigned to education in the process of social change. Indeed, it could be argued that any philosophical position on the nature and role of education in society involves, at least implicitly, assumptions about human nature. A key step, then, will be to unpack the anarchist notion of human nature, and to provide an account of the values associated with it. This task is relatively straightforward as several leading social-anarchist theorists, notably Kropotkin, and several anarchist commentators, have addressed the issue of human nature explicitly and at some length in their writings.

Unpacking the other educational questions is a somewhat more complicated task. The anarchist theorists who wrote about education did so in a rather unsystematic and often sketchy way, so this book is largely a project of reconstructing their position.

It is possible to formulate a further, broad question which links both the aforementioned sets of questions: Does the question of whether or not anarchism is viable as a political ideology have any direct bearing on its educational value? In other words, if it can be convincingly argued that the anarchist vision of a free, equal and harmonious society is hopelessly unrealistic, does this fact detract from its ability to function as an animating force in educational thought and practice? I hope to suggest some answers to this meta-question in the course of discussing the philosophical perspective on education embodied in anarchist theory.

Liberalism and liberal education

In order to create a coherent framework for this discussion, the position broadly referred to as the liberal theory of education shall form my main point of reference for much of the following comparative analysis. Apart from methodological considerations, there are several connected reasons why this approach makes sense. First, as Anthony O'Hear (1981) puts it, many of the central ideas of liberal education have become so common as to be almost

axiomatic within the field of educational theory and practice. Indeed, liberalism as a political theory has, as many theorists note, achieved such ascendancy, at least in the West, that in a certain sense, 'from New Right conservatives to democratic socialists, it seems we are all liberals now' (Bellamy 1992: 1). This is hardly surprising when one considers that 'liberal ideals and politics fashioned the states and social and economic systems of the nineteenth century, creating the institutional framework and the values within which most of us in the West continue to live and think' (ibid.). In as much as this is true, it is certainly the case that the central values of liberal theory underly much contemporary philosophical discourse on the role, aims and nature of education, and most participants in this discourse take it for granted that the education under consideration is education in – and controlled by – a liberal state. In addition, anarchist theory itself, as a nineteenth century tradition, is often most interestingly and constructively understood when compared and contrasted with the other nineteenth century tradition of liberalism, with which it is closely connected. Indeed, some commentators (notably Chomsky) argue that anarchism is best understood as a logical development out of classical liberalism. I shall examine this argument in the course of the following discussion for, if anarchist ideas can be construed as a variant of liberalism, then it may be possible to construct an anarchist view of education that can be accommodated within, and perhaps shed new light on, the paradigm of liberal education.

In order to identify some useful points of reference for further discussion, I shall now turn to a brief outline of some of the central ideas of liberalism and the liberal view of education.

Before attempting to outline what is meant by the term 'liberal education', it may be useful to present a brief discussion of some of what are generally accepted as the basic assumptions of liberalism as a political theory and to indicate how these assumptions have come to be associated with certain educational ideas.

Liberal theory

Some theorists claim that liberalism is not, in fact, a single, coherent doctrine, but a 'diverse, changing, and often fractious array of doctrines that form a "family"...' (Flathman 1998: 3). Indeed, one can draw distinctions, within this 'family', between fairly different perspectives – for example, the central distinction between philosophical, or neutralist liberalism (most notably represented in recent years by the work of Rawls, Dworkin, Hayek and Nozick), versus what Bellamy dubs 'communitarian liberalism' (as exemplified in the work of Walzer and Raz). Yet it is possible to identify a few basic ideas – or, as Andrew C. Gould puts it 'aspirations' common to all variants of liberalism:

1 The commitment to constitutional parliamentary government as the preferred form of political rule. This idea developed out of the rejection

of monarchism, reflecting the view that the arbitrary authority of monarchs and their officials should be replaced by predictable, rational decision-making processes established in written laws.

2 The commitment to individual freedoms laid down and protected by constitutions.

3 The pursuit of enlightened self-interest and the idea that such self-interest, if pursued in the framework of free markets, can lead to public benefit. Connectedly, the expansion of markets is usually one aim of liberal theory, although nearly all contemporary liberal theorists acknowledge the need for some regulation of the market.

(Gould 1999)

Meira Levinson, in her overview of contemporary liberal theory, offers an account similar to Gould's, but adds as a further liberal commitment: 'An acceptance – and more rarely, an embracing – of the fact of deep and irremediable pluralism in modern society' (Levinson 1999: 9). John Kekes, writing from a more conservative position, has expressed these liberal ideas in negative terms, arguing that 'essential to liberalism is the moral criticism of dictatorship, arbitrary power, intolerance, repression, persecution, lawlessness and the suppression of individuals by entrenched orthodoxies' (Kekes 1997: 3).

Kekes, citing the classic Lockean position that the only reasonable justification of government is an appeal to the argument that individual rights are better protected than they would be under a different arrangement, supports the view that the individual and individual freedoms and rights are the basic units of liberal theory. While certain theorists, notably Kymlicka, have defended an interpretation of liberalism which, while championing individual liberty and property, at the same time stresses the cultural and communal context which 'provides the context for individual development, and which shapes our goals and our capacities to pursue them' (Kymlicka 1989: 253), it nevertheless seems reasonable to accept that, in some basic sense, liberalism is a doctrine in which, as Gould puts it, 'individuals count'.

It is thus no coincidence that liberal views are often associated with the promotion of the value of individual autonomy. Indeed, it has been argued by several theorists that autonomy is the central value in liberal theories – even, as John White argues, within the neutralist liberal position (i.e. the position which holds, with Dworkin, that the state should be neutral with regard to different conceptions of the good life) – which 'collapses in to a hidden perfectionism in favour of autonomy' (White 1990: 24). Kekes too notes that 'the central importance that liberalism attributes to individuals is greatly enhanced by the idea of autonomy as formulated by Kant' (Kekes 1997), while Meira Levinson goes so far as to argue that 'liberal principles depend for their justification on an appeal to the value of individual autonomy'. (Levinson 1999: 6). Thus the ideal of the autonomous individual – the person who reflects upon and freely chooses from amongst a plurality of conceptions of the good – both justifies the establishment of liberal freedoms and

rights and the institutions intended to guarantee these rights, and, so the argument goes, is fostered within the framework of the liberal state. To this view is often added the insight that in exercising autonomy one is in some sense fulfilling one's essential potential as a human being, as expressed by J.S. Mill in his classic statement of liberalism:

> He who lets the world, or his own position in it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself, employs all his faculties.
>
> (Mill 1991: 65)

It is therefore not surprising that many educational philosophers, writing within the liberal tradition, have chosen to emphasize autonomy as a central educational goal or value, relying on the argument that each person has the right to determine and pursue her own vision of the good life. This argument yields, at the policy level, the view that, in the context of a liberal state, the national system of education must refrain from laying down prescriptive programmes aimed at a particular vision of the good life. On the content level, such views often assume (whether explicitly or not) a view of human nature which puts great emphasis on the rational capacities deemed necessary for the exercise of autonomy and construct curricula designed to foster these capacities.

However, even if one accepts the position, as argued by Levinson and others, that autonomy is a necessary component of contemporary liberal theory, this does not, of course, lead to the conclusion that liberalism is the only political theory consistent with the value of autonomy. Indeed, autonomy can – and perhaps, as John White argues, should – be justified as a human value on independent grounds (e.g. from a utilitarian perspective, within a Kantian view of morality, or by reference to a notion of personal well-being). Thus one could acknowledge, with the liberals, the value of autonomy, but question the framework of the liberal democratic state and its institutions. One could, in fact, with the anarchists, argue that alternative social and political arrangements are more suited to the promotion and maintenance of autonomy. In order to examine this position, I shall, in what follows, discuss the anarchist understanding of autonomy, compare this with the liberal notion, and ascertain whether the anarchist idea of the community as the basic unit of social organization is consistent with the value of personal autonomy. Does a rejection of the framework of the liberal, democratic state yield new insights into the philosophical issues which are generally associated with the role and nature of education within a liberal framework?

Liberal education

The idea of 'liberal education', as suggested earlier, is logically connected to the idea of liberalism *per se* by virtue of the fact that the underlying values of

education assumed in this context overlap with central liberal aspirations. Furthermore, the connection has obvious historical and political dimensions, for the idea of a liberal, universal education developed in conjunction with the ascendancy of liberalism as a political theory. However, it is important to refer also to the systematic work of leading philosophers of education who, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, developed a coherent analytical account of the notion of 'liberal education'. In addition to the aforementioned points, an examination of this account yields the following insights.

Philosophers within the liberal tradition, from Richard Peters on, have focused on the idea of non-instrumentality as central to the philosophy of liberal education. As Peters puts it, 'traditionally, the demand for liberal education has been put forward as a protest against confining what has been taught to the service of some extrinsic end such as the production of material goods, obtaining a job, or making a profession' (Peters 1966: 43). Similarly, Paul Hirst, in his classic account (Hirst 1972), notes that the liberal educational ideal is essentially non-utilitarian and non-vocational. Hirst also emphasizes the idea of the mind and mental development as essential features of liberal education, involving a conception of human nature that regards human potential as consisting primarily in the development of the mind.

To talk of intrinsic aims of education is to imply that a particular aim 'would be intrinsic to what we would consider education to be. For we would not call a person "educated" who had not developed along such lines' (Peters 1966: 27). Thus, for example, an aim such as 'developing the intellect', would be intrinsic in the sense that this is arguably one aspect of what we understand education, as a normative concept, to be. In contrast, to say that it is an aim of education to contribute to the productivity of the economy is to say something that goes beyond the concept of education itself and is, therefore, 'extrinsic' to it. This classic view of liberal education has been the subject of much criticism in recent years (see, for example, Kleinig 1982). Indeed Levinson, in her recent book *The Demands of a Liberal Education*, is rather disparaging of Peters and his defence of the idea that the concept of education is logically connected with the idea of intrinsically worth-while activities. In claiming that this assertion is simply wrong (Levinson 1999: 3), however, Levinson misses the point, which is a purely analytical one: namely, that one's idea of which educational aims are worthwhile is inherently built into one's concept of education – or, more explicitly, to one's concept of what it means to be educated. It may of course be true, as John White and others have argued, that the conception of education as having intrinsic aims – a conception underlying much of the liberal educational tradition – is in conflict with the conception of education as having extrinsic – for example, economic – aims. For example, one can argue, albeit with a certain degree of simplification, that specific aims typical of the liberal educational tradition, such as autonomy, reflectiveness, a broad and critical understanding of human experience, etc. can very well conflict with typical extrinsic aims of education – specifically those construed as 'economic' aims – for example,

obedience to authority, specialized training and knowledge of specific skills, and an uncritical attitude to existing socio-economic reality.

The liberal-analytical tradition in philosophy of education, as opposed to the rather more cynical Marxist view, rests, of course, as John White (White 1982) points out, on the assumption that it is possible to provide a 'neutral', logical analysis of what is involved in the concept of 'education'. Yet although this analytic enterprise has been the subject of much criticism in recent years, the analytical distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic aims of education seems to have practically achieved the status of orthodoxy in contemporary philosophy of education and is undoubtedly useful as a conceptual tool to highlight certain differences in emphasis between varying positions on the nature and role of education.

I turn now to a discussion of some key anarchist ideas, before going on to examine the implications of these ideas for education, especially in the context of the liberal tradition. My aim in this discussion, in keeping with the earlier analysis, is to establish whether the anarchist position yields a different philosophical perspective on education from that embodied in liberal thought. This will necessitate addressing the question of whether or not anarchism can arguably be construed as an extension of liberalism, or whether it is qualitatively distinct from liberalism. Consequently, we will be able to determine whether or not the anarchist position implies a challenge to the basic values underlying liberal educational ideas and whether a consideration of this tradition can yield philosophical insights which contribute to our thinking about educational issues.