members of a community do not take collective political decisions since such a society has the capacity to control and regulate itself thanks to the mechanics of individual economic actions and relations within a free market. But such a regime is not political: rather than making political choices individuals limit themselves to making economic decisions which permit a Stateless capitalist economic regime to regulate itself naturally. In other words, individuals are no longer citizens but producers and consumers: instead of deliberating they buy and sell (goods or their labour). Such individuals ultimately have no need to discuss things, since communication happens via the exchange of money or goods (barter). According to anarcho-capitalism, the owners of the means of production – can legitimately luxuriate in their authority over their employees and can even resort to coercive means in the form of protection agencies. Such a regime, without citizens or political acts, certainly cannot be identified as a political regime. At its best it is an economic regime which deploys relations of authority, coercion, violence and submission (in principle, by mutual consent), at its worst it's chaos. From the point of view of political philosophy, capitalism without politics may be one of the dark sides of anarchy, one of its degenerate form. See David Friedman, The Machinery of Freedom: Guide to a Radical Capitalism (LaSalle [ILL]: Open Court Publishing cie., 1989); Pierre Lemieux, Du libéralisme à l'anarcho-capitalisme (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983).


‘Nowhere at home’, not even in theory: Emma Goldman, anarchism and political theory

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ABSTRACT

In the history of political thought there has been a reluctance to accord Emma Goldman the status of a serious political thinker. Even within the anarchist tradition she is rarely acknowledged as a political theorist. However, Goldman's contribution to political thought was both original and pivotal. Three specific areas of her thought are examined (a) her view of emancipation, (b) her critique of patriarchy and insight that personal relations were power relations, and (c) her analysis of political violence. In each Goldman contributed to our political understanding and therefore should be regarded as a political theorist in her own right.

I

For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live... In the end, the writer is not even allowed to live in his writing. (Adorno, 1978, 87)

Writing from exile while the European struggle against Nazi Germany hung in the balance Adorno's reflections on his situation as 'an intellectual in emigration' provide an apt frame of reference for a consideration of Emma Goldman's writings. For Adorno the condition of exile meant that the 'warm atmosphere conducive to growth... [is]...now left behind, flat and stale', while the 'harden[ing] against self-pity' that is the lot of the exile, likewise hardens and stifles the nurture necessary to foster the writer's sense of creative spirit. Lacking a place to store the refuse and discards of their writing, the exiled writer must perforce carry this detritus wherever they happen to be, at the same time constantly guarding against this detritus becoming a feature of their writing. The writing itself ceases to be a constant, and becomes just as alien a place as the actual geography of exile. Consequently, the writer is nowhere at home, a situation lamented by Emma Goldman who also saw herself as an 'intellectual in emigration'. But it is precisely in relation to the idea that she too was an intellectual, especially with respect to political theory, that sympathisers and critics alike have positioned her at a tangent to, if not completely outside, the circle where political theorists are allowed to dwell.
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Despite the favourable appraisals of her place within the anarchist tradition (Avrich 1995; Drinnon 1982; Falk 1990; Genie 1996; Haaland 1993; Marsh 1981; Marshall 1993; Shulman 1971; Wexler 1984, 1989), despite the supposedly iconic or cult-like status to which she has been elevated in the wake of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Frankel 1996; Rosenberg 1984), Goldman's status as a political theorist is largely non-existent. This paper argues that she was not simply an anarchist agitator who made fiery speeches and who happened to write a few essays. She also contributed to our political understanding on numerous issues and therefore should be regarded as a political theorist in her own right. Her contribution to anarchist thought, in particular, and political thought generally, was both original and pivotal. To demonstrate this, the paper will examine a number of facets of Goldman's thought: (a) her view of emancipation, (b) her critique of patriarchy and her view that personal relations, in particular those based on sex and sexuality, were also power relations and hence political, and (c) her analysis of political violence and the relationship between aims and means. By way of setting the scene, the paper begins with some brief comments that suggest why a case needs to be made for Goldman's place as a political theorist.

II

To suggest that Goldman's status as a political theorist is marginal might seem to be an extravagant claim given her clearly acknowledged standing within the anarchist tradition and her almost cult-like status within American popular culture at the end of the twentieth century (Frankel 1996, 903). For example, eminent historian of anarchist and libertarian ideas George Woodcock noted in 1983 that it was Goldman who brought the questions of feminism and sexual politics to the forefront of anarchist thought such that 'the anarchist movement was completely changed' (Woodcock cited in Haaland 1993, 5); a view taken up explicitly (though to varying degrees) by a number of scholars (Farmer 1993, 265; Haaland 1993, 182; Hewitt 1985-86, 155; Marshall 1993, 406; Shulman 1982, 32; Wexler 1984, 278). And Goldman's general influence can be found echoed in the writings of other post-1960s feminist and anarcho-feminist writers such as Bendall (1993), Brown (1993, 1989), Ehrlich (1979), Genie (1996), Kornegger (1979), and Leighton (1979). As for her cult status, Rosenberg (1984) and Frankel (1996, 903) noted her 'unique position in American politics and culture'. As Frankel pointed out, almost everyone can find an 'Emma Goldman' to suit their particular interests: 'a fighter for free speech, a communitarian, a libertarian, an anti-communist, an extreme individualist, a precursor of modern feminism, a true subversive, a harmless visionary expelled for voicing innocent ideas, a suffering victim, a cheerful life-affirming woman, or an amusing sharp-tongued, Jewish grandmother, ... or the tough politico Goldman and the nurturing, gentle spirit of Emma' (Frankel 1996, 903). Notably absent from the various 'Emma Goldmans' listed by Frankel is 'Emma Goldman', the political theorist. Many within and outside the anarchist tradition have been distinctly reluctant to accord Goldman the status of 'political theorist'. The anarchist tradition has been far less responsive to Goldman's views than is suggested by Woodcock's assessment. Despite its radical espousal of freedom as a good in itself, and opposition to all forms of arbitrary authority, anarchist theory has remained informed by masculinist ontological commitments. Apart from some of the scholars mentioned above, anarchist responses to the questions of patriarchy and women's oppression 'have been few and far between' (Brown 1993, 31), if not 'inadequate' (Genie 1996, 437). Many of Goldman's anarchist comrades, especially men anarchists, were quite vocally opposed to her critiques of patriarchy and sexuality, despite her continual insistence on the importance of such critiques for an anarchist perspective (Goldman 1970a, 253, 271). But even for latter-day anarchists at the end of the century, Goldman's message appears to have fallen on deaf ears. Commenting on the behaviour and attitudes of some men anarchists at an anarchist conference in Sydney in 1995, Guest (1998, 1) noted that there was in evidence 'a dominant brand of anarchism ... hostile to the insights and challenges of (at least) feminist theory'. Echoing Guest's views were those of Fraser (1998, 4) who also added that the Sydney experience was no 'isolated incident' because a similar tale was told of an anarchist conference in London in 1995 in which it was noted that 'much of the organisation and many of the male participants were gender-blind'. It would seem that Goldman's contemporaries and successors have yet to integrate fully her unique contributions.

Explicit comments about Goldman's status as a political theorist can be found in the judgements of various scholars writing about anarchists and anarchism. Both within the historiography of anarchism and various biographies of Goldman, there has been a reluctance to treat her as a theorist, though no such reluctance is evident for various men anarchists, no matter how slight their actual contribution to anarchist ideas. Even when Marshall (1994, 396) acknowledged that Goldman `made a lasting contribution to anarchist theory by giving it a feminist dimension', he still described her as 'more of an activist than a thinker'. In Solomon's view (1987, 38), Goldman was 'not, however, an original 'theorist'', but rather more 'an interpreter' and 'propagandist of anarchism'. As if to underline this, one well-received discussion of anarchist theory (Ritter, 1980) does not even consider Goldman's ideas. And a decade later, Crowley's excellent study of the so-called 'founding fathers', Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, barely gave Goldman a mention (Crowley 1991). Given that part of Crowley's discussion briefly canvassed who should be properly considered as an anarchist theorist, the omission of Goldman from that discussion underscores my general point. Rosenberg, in the course of reviewing an important collection of archival material about the first decade or so of Goldman's American years concluded that 'Goldman was more effective as a
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public speaker than as a writer and thinker' (Rosenberg 2003, echoing her earlier view of Goldman made nearly twenty years earlier (Rosenberg 1984).

As for Goldman's biographers, the following are representative. In concluding his sensitively argued biography Drinnon suggested that she was 'by no means a seminal social and political thinker' (Drinnon 1982, 314). Even so he did note that her attempts at the 1907 Amsterdam Anarchist Conference to go beyond the either/or logic in debates about the relationship between the individual and society 'constituted her nearest approach to an original contribution to anarchist theory' (Drinnon 1982, 107), a point to which I will return later in this paper. Like Drinnon, Falk (1990) and Wexler (1984) both produced studies sympathetic to the contradictions and complexities of her life, especially her anarcho-feminism. However, neither treated her as a theorist of anarchism. Similarly Shulman, who produced one of the first biographies to emphasise Goldman's feminist ideas (Shulman 1971), suggested in her introduction to an important collection of Goldman's essays that Goldman 'was an activist, not a theoretician' and that '[t]he libertarian vision she began with at twenty served for theory, and from it, together with her large emotional resources, flowed her commitment to action' (1979, 21).

Some feminist commentators, for example Dale Spender, have been even less sympathetic in acknowledging Goldman's status as a political theorist. In her influential work, *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them*, she summarily dismissed Goldman's feminism as unsympathetic to women and largely a product of mainstream thought (1982, 364-5). Such a judgement goes beyond challenging claims that Goldman's ideas were significant in transforming anarchist thought; it also helps keep Goldman on the margins of both anarchist and feminist thought thereby making it even more difficult to appreciate Goldman as an original thinker in her own right. It is perhaps ironic that Spender regarded Goldman's ideas as merely a product of mainstream thought because, as will be shown, Goldman's analyses challenged many aspects of mainstream thought. However, there is no denying that some of her arguments reveal strong traces of often-acknowledged masculinist assumptions, even when she was taking issue with some of their social manifestations. This is not surprising if one considers that no individual is ever able to stand outside of their social context to such an extent that their subjectivities remain untouched by the multiple impacts and effects of that context. As will be seen below, Goldman recognised this explicitly and in typical anarchist fashion rallied against it.

Nor is it surprising that there would be explicit masculinist traces in her thought given the nature of anarchist discourses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gemie (1996, 418) has noted that the overwhelming majority of anarchists, despite their "anti-authoritarianism ... their sceptical analysis of power structures" and their challenges to "the dominant political cultures of the nineteenth century" remained "blind to the existence of gender-based tyrannies"; though he also pointed out that "paradoxically ... within this tough masculine culture' there were "rival currents" that gave rise to what he termed "a proto-feminist strand" (Gemie 1996; 418). In Gemie's view, the masculinist biases about men and women within anarchism can be grouped into two broad accounts, those invoking nature and those invoking culture (Gemie 1996, 432-5). In common with many other political theorists across the political spectrum, many anarchists such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon equated women with nature. Grounded in nature, women allegedly were somehow outside of the boundaries of rational political discourse. They lacked whatever it was that was supposed to enable them to participate in revolutionary activities. Moreover, there was often an echo of the Rousseauian vision that women were the "disorderly" element within the body politic and hence had to be kept under control, if not excluded. The second pole of masculinist bias identified by Gemie took an opposite tack by locating the problem in culture rather than nature. Within these views, nature was something that many anarchists identified with, especially as a counterpoint to the juggernaut of industrialisation, and hence was not to be denigrated by being invoked to explain in any causal sense women's subordination. Rather, women (like men) were shaped by culture. But where men could argue that they had the wherewithal to transform culture to return it to something more natural (i.e. more human), when it came to women they argued that women were shaped to an artificial femininity that was docile and conservative. In contrast, to the first pole, it was women's lack of connection to this idealised "nature", exemplified by their "artificiality", that justified their subordination within the political community. Thus this form of anarchist sexism "reversed the argument put forward by most other political philosophies: within their dualism, Woman represented civilisation and politics, Man represented Nature" (Gemie 1996, 435). However, it needs to be noted that within and between these two poles there was considerable variation.

For those seeking to challenge the sexism within anarchism (and other political philosophies), the arguments from culture had a useful "Achilles heel". Their emphasis on the cultural construction of feminine and masculine subjectivities, of what it meant to be "woman" or "man", presupposed the historicity of social relations. It was open to those who could make the connection that our understandings of the natures of women and men, and the relations between men and women, were likewise socially and historically constructed and hence could be changed. Just as society as a whole could be remade through revolutionary activity, so too could the relations between women, men and children. Furthermore, insofar as anarchism espoused variations on the theme of "no god no master", it was also implicit that not only should a man not have a master, but that no man should be a master. Thus anarchism, in principle at least, provided a means to articulate a philosophy of emancipation in which all, regardless of sex, could be free. And Goldman saw it as her task, in both word and deed, to articulate just such a philosophy.
Goldman's aim was the full emancipation of society, not just in a political or economic sense, but across every social dimension. Her view of emancipation and human freedom began from the prevailing definitions of the anarchism of her time. Her essay, 'Anarchism: What It Really Stands For', provided a fairly typical summary of her anarchist principles:

Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the domination of religion; the liberation of the human body from the domination of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth, an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations. (Goldman, 1969, 62)

The familiar causes (at least for anarchists) of human oppression, namely government, property and religion, are clearly identified. But her understanding of what emancipation entailed was not limited to addressing these particular causes, the 'external tyrants' as she called them. Just as important were the 'inner tyrants', the various 'ethical and social conventions ... in the form of public opinion or what will mother say, or brother, father, aunt, or relative of any sort; what will Mrs Grundy, Mr Comstock, the employer, the Board of Education say?'. (Goldman 1969, 221). While it is true that Goldman developed her understanding of 'external' and 'internal tyrants' in her various discussions of women's suffrage and emancipation it formed an important part of her bigger picture of emancipation. As Hewitt has argued it was because of the need to combat the external and internal tyrants that Goldman placed so much emphasis on linking psychological and social transformations (Hewitt, 1985-86).

Just as important, however, was Goldman's recognition that our understanding of these inner constraints was largely shaped by sexist social relations; a shaping that was often invisible to men political theorists. In recognising this, Goldman was expanding the horizons of the anarchist theory of her day.

True emancipation for society as a whole would not emerge unless all human beings, men no less than women, were able to free themselves of their 'inner tyrants'. In her view the mere gaining of economic and political rights was absolutely necessary, but pursued as abstract goals in isolation from other equally important aspects of the lived condition of human existence such rights would be insufficient for a fulfilling or meaningful existence, since men, no less than women, sought 'for beauty and love, for harmony and understanding' (Goldman 1981, 116). Hence at the core of Goldman's anarchism was also a belief in the importance of the emotions and the intimate aspects of human rela-

In numerous essays, speeches and letters she grappled continually with the problem of intimacy and the emotions, seeking to weave them into her various explanations of her anarchism. For example, her discussion of jealousy aimed to untangle the politics of this emotion (Goldman 1979, 168-75). She argued that it should have no place in any truly mutual relationship. However, at the very time that she was writing that essay Goldman was racked with raging emotions of jealousy and obsession, particularly over her lover's numerous infidelities. This has led some (e.g. Wexler 1984) to argue that Goldman's written views contradicted her feelings and actions, and hence the actual living of her life was not quite as her written view of her political philosophy suggested. No doubt this is true, at least in part. However, it is also possible to see her written words as attempts to think through these issues precisely because she had to grapple with them in real life. Questions of sexual desires and sexual feelings and their relationship to one's politics are extremely vexed. Such questions remain controversial and unresolved today, but it is largely due to Goldman that these questions have a place on the political agenda, at least for feminist political theorists. In this respect Goldman challenged the then prevailing conceptions of what anarchists regarded as political, and attempted to include within it all manifestations of power relationships between humans (1969a, 50).

Paralleling her view of emancipation, and in some respects informing it, was her conceptualisation of the individual. For Goldman, the individual 'was the center of gravity for society' (1979, 396); the 'true reality of life' (1979, 88); the 'heart of society' (1969, 52). Goldman's individualism was not the 'rugged individualism' of liberal philosophy. For her this was a corruption and perversion of straight-jacketed individuality, 'convert[ing] life into a degrading race for externals, for possession, for social prestige and supremacy' (1979, 89). Rather, Goldman's individualism was much closer to the idea of the 'socialised individual' that informed Kropotkin's social vision. Granted, there was a tension between these two approaches, and often her ideas could be interpreted as extolling the individual at the expense of the social. Her approach was predicated on the recognition that on the one hand, the ongoing industrialisation of society threatened to subsume human individuality, to destroy all that she believed made men and women truly human; on the other hand she worried about the fostering of 'the power-obsessed, socially irresponsible individual', a form of individualism antithetical to her vision of a free society (Drinnon 1982, 107).

Nevertheless, she tried to go beyond the 'rules of either/or logic' and tried to reconcile these two positions by 'fus[ing] them into a higher synthesis of individualistic communism', most notably in her speeches at the Amsterdam conference in 1907 (Drinnon 1982, 107). According to Drinnon's interpretation this produced in Goldman's thought 'a peculiar kind of elitism' in which particular anarchists, 'distinguished by their efforts for social justice and their own renunciation of power', would take on a heroic or Titan-like status that
would inspire others to emulate their example (Drinnon 1982, 107). He concluded that Goldman’s thinking remained caught up in ‘a never-ending flight from an elite pole to what may be described as a populist pole’ (Drinnon 1982, 107).

On the surface there would appear to be some warrant for this conclusion. There is no doubting the influences of Ibsen, Emerson and Nietzsche on her understanding of the relation between the individual and society. Their critiques of the impact of the various ways in which human individuality was held hostage to prevailing social mores certainly shaped her thinking. However, and as Drinnon conceded, it did not shape it in the direction of the Nietzschean ‘Übermensch’ (1982, 107). Rather their various critiques of social conformity and the concomitant denial of individuality pushed Goldman to develop an anarchist response that was consistent with her vision of a truly free society, in which the freedom of all is the condition for the freedom of any given individual; where the freedom of the many is not conditional on the unfreedom of others. She aimed to produce a political philosophy with such a vision at its centre. She was not arguing for the creation of an ‘anarchist elite’ or for anarchist heroes as such, but rather for the view that by living one’s life according to particular anarchist principles those who did so could provide an example of what might be possible. Recognising that in the absence of a revolution the prevailing oppressive social relations would not be changed overnight she aimed to articulate a view that could suggest ways in which more desirable social relations might be prefigured and acted upon in the here and now. This was not an invocation to some sort of elite-led form of anarchism, nor was it a valorisation of the individual.

The tension between the individual and society, between self and others, was a constant theme throughout her writings, as is summed up in her view that ‘the problem that confronts us today, and which the nearest future is to solve, is how to be one’s self and yet in oneness with others, to feel deeply with all human beings and still retain one’s own characteristic qualities’ (Goldman 1969, 213). In her writings as well as in her own life Goldman strove to develop an anarchist vision aimed at resolving the conundrum of being ‘one’s self’ and yet remaining ‘in oneness with others’. This was a central feature of her view of human emancipation. It was not merely, pace Drinnon, one that ‘constituted her nearest approach to an original contribution to anarchist theory’ (Drinnon 1982, 107). It was clearly an original contribution to anarchist thought. Time and again she drew attention to and discussed in some depth the politics of personal relations, thus laying a basis for others subsequently to explore further the idea that personal was political. In this respect, she added a richer, more nuanced understanding of emancipation to the then prevailing anarchist views of emancipation and freedom. Goldman’s conception of emancipation became central to her critique of patriarchy and indeed, developed in tandem with that critique.

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IV

As has already been noted, Goldman’s critique of patriarchy has been seen (at least by some scholars) as her original contribution to anarchist theory. She could not see the point of a movement to put an end to oppression and exploitation if one of the most ubiquitous forms of exploitation remained untouched by it. The various social institutions, such as marriage and sexuality, that regulated the relations between women and men and shaped their possibilities, were no less a problem than government.

In her critique of the institution of marriage Goldman reiterated the view put explicitly by Anna Wheeler and William Thompson (1825) – namely that marriage was a white slave trade, as was echoed in the title of one of her essays, *The Traffic in Women*. In that essay she articulated a view that even today ‘finds strong resonances:

Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sex favours. Thus it is merely a question of degree whether she sells herself to one man, in or out of marriage, or to many men (Goldman 1969, 179).

Goldman was not claiming any originality here. But she was bringing into focus a view that her radical comrades, mainly the men radicals, had forgotten (or if we wish to be charitable, were not aware of). Men, not just anarchist men, needed to be reminded that it was men who actually benefited from the ‘traffic in women’ and that anarchists had to address this. Moreover, she also made explicit the point (also articulated by Thompson and Wheeler [1825]) that women were brought up to accept ‘this modern prison with golden bars ... and to cling to her bondage’ (Goldman 1969, 196), to ‘kiss [...] the rod of domestic despotism, and [to] devote[ ] themselves to its worship’ as Thompson and Wheeler so sharply put it almost a century earlier (1825, 65-6).

Echoing the views of *The Traffic in Women*, she noted in her essay *Woman Suffrage*:

[The misfortune of woman is not that she is unable to do the work of a man, but that she is wasting her life-force to out-do him, ... [on the contrary] Her development, her freedom, her independence, must first come from and through herself. First by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right of anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, etc (Goldman 1969, 211).

Clearly, the issue of sexual and reproductive freedom was of key importance for Goldman. Also being challenged in this passage was the view (contrary to
Spender’s misleading interpretation) that men’s values should provide the yardstick against which women should be measured, or to which women should aspire. Just as importantly, she was also pointing out that women could rely neither on men’s good intentions nor on men to free them. Women had to exert themselves, to lay claim to and seize the possibilities for their freedom. So long as women had to apply to men or men’s institutions for their freedom, yet at the same time insisted on leaving men and their institutions unchanged, they (ie women) would never truly be free. Women would remain as if on parole because those who had the power to grant women freedom could also revoke it.

One of Goldman’s constant themes was the need for women to have control over their sexuality and reproductive capacities. While wealthier women usually had access to contraceptive information and, most importantly, could usually afford the relevant medical technologies and treatments, working-class women were generally denied both the knowledge and the technology. Goldman was an active proponent of birth control and on at least one occasion she was jailed for distributing birth control literature. One of her biographers (Wexler 1984, 210) has suggested that for Goldman the cause of birth control was ‘a somewhat abstract issue’. This diminishes Goldman’s contribution. It is certainly true that Goldman moved on to other issues once she was released from jail, however the fact remains that she did not abandon her interest in or agitation about the issue. Her commitment to birth control was genuine and long-standing, and consistent with her political beliefs. She had trained as a midwife and had worked as one on various occasions for over ten years before her imprisonment (Goldman 1970a passim, 1970b ch. 4). Where the preferred champion (ie preferred by middle-class feminists of the day) of birth control, Margaret Sanger, actually went on to push a more eugenist and increasingly conservative political line, Goldman’s advocacy of birth control information was directed to empowering women so that they regained some measure of political control over their lives. In this sense she saw her work as a midwife as something of a revolutionary act, or at least an act that furthered the emancipatory dynamic of anarchism in enabling women to attempt to transform the actual conditions of their existence.

Given her emphasis on the need to empower women to have control over their lives, her hostility to the suffrage movement of her time warrants some comment. There are a number of reasons for her scepticism over the claim that the right to vote would lead to emancipation. In the first place, this was contrary to her anarchist critique of government and the state, namely that voting to sustain institutions of repression is self-defeating. In principle she believed there were no ‘physical, psychological, [or] mental reasons why women should not have the equal right to vote’ (Goldman 1969, 198 and 224).

However, she was adamant that women would not succeed in ‘purifying something which is not susceptible of purification’ (Goldman 1969, 198). The institutions of government would remain largely unaffected, in any emancipatory sense, by women exercising their right to vote. Their class characteristics and biases would not be altered in any fundamental manner. This points to the second reason. Suffragists were basically middle-class in their origin, orientation and biases. Goldman pointed out that women had the vote in a number of countries, but this had not led to any marked improvement their material and economic conditions. In terms of many of the issues that Goldman held dear, women were no freer than before they got the vote. They were still commodities, still treated according to their sex rather than on the basis of their merits and talents. And perhaps just as important was the fact that the class divisions between women would not be overcome simply by gaining the vote (Goldman 1969, 202-6). The third reason for Goldman’s hostility to the suffrage movements of her time came from her vision of emancipation. This vision has already been discussed above. Suffice it to say here that Goldman believed that ‘true emancipation begins neither in the polls nor in the courts. It begins in women’s soul’ (Goldman 1969, 224). Until women recognised the need to transform the various power structures that defined and constrained them, then no amount of suffrage would emancipate them to the degree envisioned by Goldman.

On this third point some critics suggest that this is evidence of Goldman’s voluntarism in the sense that she placed too much emphasis (like many anarchists) on acts of the will to bring about social and political changes. There is some truth to this criticism. However, it also needs to be remembered that Goldman said that true emancipation begins in woman’s soul. That is, a woman’s soul was the starting point, not the end point. In effect, Goldman was suggesting that some level of consciousness-raising was a pre-requisite for even a reformist strategy of social change. It was certainly necessary for any revolutionary strategy. What was important for Goldman was the need for women to recognise that juridical freedoms within the existing political and social system were only a small dimension of a truly emancipated life. What was needed was a transformation of the existing system. Both the ‘internal and the external tyrants’ had to be overthrown or transformed. The bottom line for Goldman was that no human being, man or woman, could be free if that freedom was at the expense or servitude of any other human being. For Goldman only anarchism held the promise of truly human emancipation.

One further aspect of Goldman’s critique of patriarchy that marks her originality was her emphasis on sexual freedom in general, not just in the area of reproduction. Like many anarchists of her day Goldman was an advocate of free love. But where her anarchist comrades usually meant sex without commitment or consequences (Trimmer 1983), for Goldman it meant relationships between women and men that were based on mutual reciprocity and not constrained by the state’s stamp of approval. Commenting on an incident in a hotel room while on a lecture tour Goldman lamented the view that seemed to predominate amongst too many of her comrades and supporters that free love meant that women should make themselves sexually available whenever they
were propositioned (Goldman 1970a). She was well aware of the inherent gendered meanings attached to the phrase ‘free love’, both in theory and practice, as her writings on marriage clearly revealed (Goldman 1969, 177ff).

In her essay, ‘Marriage and Love’, Goldman exclaimed: ‘Free love? As if love is anything but free!’ (Goldman 1969, 236). Providing love (and sex) was the price that women, but rarely men, paid for some degree of economic security. Moreover, she was well aware of the quite different ways in which women and men experienced love, especially those who were politically active. Where it was taken for granted by politically active men that they could pursue their causes with total commitment as well as expect unconditional love, politically committed women (indeed women engaged in public lives generally) were faced with the prospect of having to choose between one and the other. As Goldman brought out in her autobiography when discussing her relationship with fellow activist Ed Brady, her commitment was seen by him as ‘vanity, nothing but your craving for applause and glory and the limelight’, and consequently she was deemed by him to be ‘incapable of deep feeling’ (Goldman 1970a, 193).

Brady’s view of Goldman’s commitment was that it interfered with his need for her to love him unconditionally, and he presented her with the all too familiar ultimatum: ‘you will have to choose’ (Goldman 1970a). Granted, this was Goldman’s version of events in her life but it resonates with considerable force with the choices with which women have been confronted when seeking to live the same freedoms and privileges accorded to men, and which men have been able to take for granted (Trimberger 1983; MacKinnon 1997). In a long letter published in 1923 in the *Yearbook for Sexual Intermediate Types* Goldman noted that “[m]odern woman is no longer satisfied to be the beloved of a man; she looks for understanding, comradeship; she wants to be treated as a human being and not simply as an object for sexual gratification” (Goldman 1923, 380); a view she had articulated throughout her writings (1970a; 1970b; 1969; 1979). Her voluminous correspondence published several decades after her death in 1940 reveals that the theme of love, its many gendered meanings and the social implications and consequences for women active in the public sphere, was something that Goldman returned to over and over again (Goldman 1983 and 1975 passim). And while she never found a satisfactory solution, either for herself or in theory, her attempts to grapple with this particularly vexed issue remain insightful for readers in the twenty-first century.

What is significant is that her writings and actions exposed and challenged the masculinist assumptions taken for granted by her contemporaries. This might seem an exaggerated claim given the various criticisms that Goldman’s views often reflected the masculinist assumptions of other political thinkers, particularly where notions of ‘womanhood’, ‘femininity’ and ‘sexuality’ were concerned. Indeed, Spender explicitly dismissed Goldman’s views as merely the products of malestream thought and claimed that there is not much evidence to suggest that Goldman challenges the propositions that male experiences are the norm, that male problems the universal problems, and male solutions the total solutions. Nor was there any likelihood that these propositions would be challenged while she made no attempt to construct and understand women’s reality or to assess the discrepancies between the way men perceived themselves and the way women perceived themselves. (Spender 1982, 366)

This is a harsh judgment and one not supported by Goldman’s own writings. As has already been made clear above in the brief discussion of the issues of birth control and the tensions between love and freedom, Goldman was well aware of these discrepancies. More importantly, she did not take men’s experiences as the norm and was well aware that many of these so-called norms were merely men’s desires writ large. For example, in a letter to Alexander Berkman, she noted that she had ‘yet to meet the woman who wants to have many children’ and that while many women do indeed want children she was of the view that this desire ‘has been exaggerated by the male’. Indeed, she chided Berkman that she had ‘seen too many tragedies in the relations between the sexes; ... [and had] seen too many broken bodies and maimed spirits from the sex slavery of woman not to feel the matter deeply or to express my indignation against the attitude of most of you gentlemen’ (Goldman 1975, 186).

She explicitly challenged them and tried to shift anarchist thinking in more nuanced directions. It is certainly true that on numerous occasions Goldman’s thinking exhibited contradictory tensions, or more accurately different pieces of writing exhibited emphases that were not always consistent with each other. And it is certainly true that her language remained masculinist insofar as it used the so-called generic ‘man’ and masculine pronouns without any apparent recognition of their gendered ontological commitments. But the fact remains that for Goldman women’s lives and experiences had to be part of the larger anarchist worldview. Goldman did not treat men’s experiences and problems as universal problems in the sense claimed by Spender. To the extent that women and men shared common problems, Goldman often drew no distinction. But in areas where there were clear differences (and occasionally some not-so-clear differences) Goldman explored the politics of these issues.

In the area of sexuality for example, where time and time again Goldman wrestled with numerous conflicting issues, her insights were certainly not constrained by malestream assumptions. Not only did she consistently defend the right to free love and sexual expression, she was possibly the first anarchist to defend publicly the rights of people to form and enjoy same-sex relationships (Goldman 1970a 269; 1970b; 1923). In the letter to Dr Hirschfeld cited above (Goldman 1923), Goldman noted her public statements in America in defence of Oscar Wilde, and reiterated her view that his ‘persecution and sentencing’ was ‘an act of cruel injustice and repulsive hypocrisy’ (Goldman 1923, 334).
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1923, 379, emphasis in original). Her stand, she noted, was motivated by her anarchist principles. But, pace Shulman, these were not the anarchist principles that she found ready-made in her youth. Goldman's anarchist principles were her own, shaped by a view of emancipation that was a significant improvement on that articulated by many of her predecessors or contemporaries. Goldman's anarchist principles were also informed by her criticism of the prevailing attitudes of her time; she noted that '[i]t is a tragedy ... that people of a different sexual type are caught in a world which shows so little understanding for homosexuals, is so drastically indifferent to the various gradations and variations of gender and their great significance in life' (Goldman 1923, 378-9). Goldman was clearly not merely reproducing prevailing mainstream views on sexuality. And even though there might be some degree of heteronormative bias influencing her understanding of human sexuality, given her own preference for men as her lovers, it remains the case that her views on love, sexuality and the relations between men and women were a central part of her critique of patriarchy. Thus she made a significant contribution to anarchist theory, far beyond the boundaries of what many of her anarchist comrades thought safe or acceptable.

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Turning to Goldman's analysis of political violence it is also clear that many of her radical comrades, both in and beyond anarchist circles, found her views disconcerting. In part this was as much due to the timing of Goldman's public statements as to their content. The two fundamental manifestations of political violence that concerned Goldman were, firstly, the individual acts of violence perpetrated against some public figure thought to personify oppressive or tyrannical rule, and secondly, the violence accompanying the revolutionary overthrow of an existing system of government (and the aftermath of revolutionary reconstruction). In some respects, the specific colourings of these two forms of political violence may well shade into each other. Individual acts of violence directed against public figures were seen by a number of influential nineteenth-century anarchists as a form of propaganda by deed, 'propagande par le fait' as Joll (1969, 95) described it. In Joll's view, one could date 'the passionate praise of terror, in which violence is almost accepted as an end for its own sake' from Bakunin's association with Sergei Nechaev in the early 1870s (Joll 1969, 95). Despite Bakunin's eventual realisation that Nechaev and his ideas were of doubtful value to the anarchist cause, the idea of 'propaganda by deed' remained attractive to many anarchists and it exercised considerable influence over anarchist thought for at least a further thirty years (Joll 1969, 95-6). And even though anarchists gradually distanced themselves from the use and advocacy of propaganda by deed in the sense of acts of violence, it became entrenched within the popular imagination (with considerable assistance from the sensationalist representations of anarchism in the popular press) as the definitive anarchist archetype. As Redding (1995, 8) has suggested, 'the doctrine of "propaganda by deed" was poor public relations'.

Public relations, however, was not the driving factor in Goldman's early years as an anarchist. In those years there is no doubt that she was a fervent advocate of the idea of 'propaganda by deed', or 'attentat' as she termed it (Goldman 1970a, 87), but it is doubtful that it 'was central to her weltanschauung', as Hawkins (1999, 3) has argued. For Goldman, individual acts of violence, at least in part, were to do more than simply strike terror into the heart of the bourgeoisie. An attentat would bring the plight of the oppressed, on whose behalf such acts were carried out, to public consciousness. At the same time an attentat would serve as a signal, a clarion call, to the oppressed group to rise up against their oppressors. Underlying this reasoning was the idea that eliminating a perpetrator or symbol of oppression was justified by the injustices for which they were to be held responsible. In short the ends justified the means. This was certainly a view that informed the young Goldman's developing anarchism in the late 1880s and early 1890s. When Alexander Berkman confided to her, not long after they first met in 1890, that one day he would avenge those comrades and relatives who had been victimised by the state for their beliefs, Goldman expressed complete agreement, exclaiming that 'their death[s] gave me life' (Goldman 1970a, 31). Neither doubted that state violence was the greater evil. Both agreed with the view expressed by one of the Haymarket anarchists, Louis Lingg, that '[i]f you [ie the state] attack us with cannon, we will reply with dynamite' (Goldman 1970a, 31). In their view, state violence or violence perpetrated by private organisations sanctioned by the state provided them with a moral justification for responding in kind, the end justified the means and in Berkman's view 'all means are justifiable; nay advisable, even to the point of taking a life ...[for]... the removal of a tyrant ... is the highest duty of every true revolutionist' (Berkman 1970, 7).

This reasoning underpinned their decision to avenge the steel workers at the Homestead steelworks of the Carnegie Steel Company near Pittsburgh. In 1892 a bitter dispute had emerged that resulted in workers being locked out of their employment. Since most of the workers and their families lived in company-supplied housing, the company had considerable leverage; not surprisingly, the struggle turned violent as the workers resisted evictions and other tactics employed by the company. One of these tactics included bringing in strike-breakers such as Pinkerton detectives (or men hired by the Pinkerton Detective Agency). One night a strike-breakers' armed attack on the steelworkers' camp left several of the workers dead, 'among them a little boy' (Goldman 1970a, 86-7). This was the catalyst that pushed Goldman and Berkman into planning their own attentat. They decided to assassinate the manager of the Homestead plant, Henry Clay Frick. Since the killings were
widely condemned, even within the mainstream press of the time, Goldman and Berkman thought that the time was ripe for an *attentat*. The workers would be avenged. But more importantly they would be inspired to rise up and seize the moment. For various reasons Goldman and Berkman decided that Berkman alone would carry out the actual killing, though Goldman was not happy about that decision and on numerous occasions expressed regret that she was not actually a part of the action (Goldman 1970a, passim). In the event, Berkman failed to kill Frick, succeeding only in wounding him. Berkman was quickly arrested, tried and sentenced to imprisonment for twenty-two years (of which he actually served thirteen). But perhaps more humiliating for both of them was the fact that the steel-workers did not rise up, nor did they appreciate (or support) the attempt to kill Frick. In this respect, 'Berkman's act was a crushing failure for Berkman, his friends, and the anarchists' (Hawkins 1999, 5).

However, this apparent failure did not deter Goldman's basic approach. While she never repudiated political violence as such, she did abandon the idea of *attentat* as an acceptable means of furthering the anarchist cause. Over time she developed a view that individual acts of terror were not an appropriate means to bring about changes to the social structures, no matter how oppressive such social conditions might be. Rather she developed the view that if the aim was to bring into being a free, just and non-exploitative society then the methods being used had to be consistent with this aim. For Goldman, anarchism was also theory put into practice, and this meant that one had to live one's ideals rather than simply espouse them. This was a far more profound version of the idea of propaganda by deed than the limiting, and perhaps self-defeating, idea of an *attentat*. In this specific respect, propaganda by deed was certainly central to her *weltanschauung*, as Hawkins suggested. But contrary to his interpretation of her view of political violence, it was not cut from the same philosophical cloth as an *attentat*.

It must be acknowledged, however, that her views did not change overnight. At different times she made written and spoken comments that could be interpreted as defending the *attentat*. Such might be the case of a letter to the journal *Free Society* in 1901 to protest the way in which she was quoted (in a newspaper, the *New York Sun*) as never having advocated violence. It is cited by Rosenberg (2003) as evidence of 'uncomfortable aspects of her biography': Goldman's darker side. In the passage cited by Rosenberg (2003), Goldman wrote:

I have never opposed force or propaganda by deed, either publicly or privately. I demand and acknowledge the right of an individual, or a number of individuals, to strike back at organised power, and to defend themselves against invasion; and I have and always will stand on the side of the one who has been courageous enough to give his own life in taking

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or attempting to take the life of a tyrant, whether industrial or political.

On Rosenberg's interpretation the issue boils down to Goldman's acceptance of the right for anybody to decide that 'someone is so terrible as to deserve death', and hence has the right to take on the role as 'self-appointed judge, jury and executioner'. Certainly after her experience of the Frick affair Goldman never again saw herself in that light. To the contrary she expressed the view, much later in her life, in a context where political violence was very much a concern, that '[i]f ever I believed in taking a human life, no matter how dangerous that life and how evil, I was entirely cured from it after Sasha's act' (Goldman 1983, 227-8). While Rosenberg was correct to point to the fact that Goldman was clearly defending the right of an individual to resort to violent means to defend their rights, she glossed over what was central for Goldman, namely the emphasis on context and motive. Political violence could not be dismissed simply as the act of bloodlust perpetrated by some (possibly deranged) individual, but rather it was an act generated within particular concrete social relationships. On its own, however, individual acts of political violence would never change prevailing social relationships. Goldman was well aware, from her own experience, that the opposite was more likely to be true, namely that the prevailing social relationships were likely to be strengthened in even more repressive directions. This was why she placed so much emphasis on the demonstration effect of living one's ideals.

In declaring publicly her solidarity with those who perpetrated acts of political violence she was not thereby saying that what they did was right (as she was wont to do in the early 1890s) in any absolute sense, but that their acts were intelligible, that they had a social causation that could be, and needed to be, understood. In several of her discussions of political violence (eg 1969, 79-126; 1979, 301-27) she drew attention to the various ways in which prevailing repressive social relations generated or caused violent responses. Thus in defending herself in her final address to the jury during her trial in 1917, she reiterated her views published in her essay on the psychology of political violence and summarised what she regarded as the key issues.

To simply condemn the man who has committed an act of political violence, in order to save my skin, would be as unpardonable as it would be on the part of the physician, who is called to diagnose a case, to condemn the patient because the patient has tuberculosis, cancer, or some other disease. ... [The physician] will not merely give him medicine. He will tell him the cause of his disease. And that is precisely my position in regard to acts of political violence. And that is what I have said on every platform. I have attempted to explain the cause and the reason for acts of political violence ... It is organised violence on top which creates individual violence at the bottom. It is the accumulated indignation against
organised wrong, organised crime, organised injustice which drives the
tactical offender to his act. To condemn him means to be blind to the
causes which make him. I can no more do it, nor have I the right to, than
the physician who were to condemn the patient for his disease. You and I
and all of us who remain indifferent to the crimes of poverty, of war, of
human degradation, are equally responsible for the act committed by the
political offender (Goldman 1979, 317-8).

Suggesting that members of the jury no less than the defendants were also
complicit in acts of political violence, if only by their silence or acquiescence,
could be considered either brave or foolhardy. But it was consistent with her
understanding of American political processes; she would be found guilty
hence it was imperative that she at least should take the opportunity to have
her views lodged in the public record, where the sting in the tail could be used
to best effect. What is evident from her comments is that it was not merely the
psychological motivation of the perpetrator that concerned her. It was also the
prevailing social relationships that had a large hand in producing the psychol-
ogy of those who ended up taking matters into their own hands to seek some
sort of justice, not just for themselves, but for others similarly situated. This
view was consistent with her views on human emancipation and her passion-
ate commitment to working towards the conditions that would be able to
provide genuine human freedom and social justice. This was why her under-
standing of propaganda by deed moved beyond that of the attentat.

For Goldman the relationship between aims and means had to be such that
the latter was as consistent as possible with the former; aims and means had
to be in tune with each other. These considerations were clearly articulated in
her analysis of the Bolshevik revolution. Far from building the conditions for
human emancipation as Goldman understood it, the Bolsheviks were, in her
observation, strangling the revolution by eliminating all who did not share the
official line. For Goldman a revolution was ‘a fundamental transvaluation of
all values ... not only of social, but also of human values’ (Goldman 1979,
354; her emphasis), a process that could not proceed with any success unless
human emancipation remained its centre of gravity. And by this Goldman
meant that the revolution had to have at its heart such ethical values as ‘the
sanctity of human life, the dignity of man, the right of every human being to
liberty and well-being’ (Goldman 1979, 356). Goldman had no illusions that a
revolution was a violent process. She was not critical of the Bolshevik revolu-
tion because Lenin and his fellow revolutionaries had to break a few eggs to
make their socialist omelette. Her letters reflecting on the violence attending
the anarchist revolution in Spain nineteen years later attest to her awareness of
the realities faced by those attempting to defend their gains (Goldman 1983,
216-41). Rather the Bolshevik omelette was lacking in nutritional value, if not
inedible, because it was grounded in repression, in disempowering those who

were waging the revolution (Goldman 1979, 342-3). Centralising power in the
hands of a new dictatorial elite was, in effect, merely ‘a shifting of names and
political personalities’ (Goldman 1979, 353).

At issue for Goldman was a conflict between two diametrically opposed
trajectories: on the one hand was the spirit of a revolution imbued with liber-
tarian principles aiming at full human emancipation and, on the other, the
coercive methods of the Bolsheviks that ‘necessarily developed into systemat-
ic violence, oppression and terrorism’ (Goldman 1979, 345, 352-3). It was not
just that the means were incompatible with the aims, but that the steps taken
by the Bolshevik government to secure the revolution, ostensibly to save it
from collapsing, diminished and eventually excluded the very aims that set the
revolution in motion in the first place. For her the ends could not and should
not justify the means. On her analysis,

methods and means cannot be separated from the ultimate aim. The means
employed become, through individual habit and social practice, part and
parcel of the final purpose; they influence it, modify it, and presently the
aims and means become identical. ... Psychologically and socially the
means necessarily influence and alter the aims. (Goldman 1979, 355-6).

No amount of appeals to ‘expedience’ or ‘transitional period’ could justify rein-
venting centralised oppression in the name of the revolution. For Goldman,
‘the ethical values which the revolution is to establish in the new society must
be initiated with the revolutionary activities of the so-called transitional
period (Goldman 1979, 358).

Goldman’s emphasis on the necessity to harmonise aims and means as
discussed above was a fundamental rethinking of her understanding of
political violence. It was a conception of propaganda by deed that was light
years away from the narrow version framed within the nineteenth-century
confines of the attentat. She did not eschew political violence as such, nor
did she harbour any illusions that revolutions would be anything but violent
and bloody. It was a theme that she repeated in many of her letters, espe-
cially those written during her visits to Spain to report on the anarchists’
attempts to secure their revolution (Goldman 1983). Indeed, that struggle
called her to rethink yet again the problems that anarchists faced in waging
their goals. And while she publicly defended the Spanish anarchists and their
cause, she also wrestled with the problems of reconciling anarchist aims with such methods. But what separated the Spanish anarchists from the Russian Bolsheviks was that the former did not resort to ‘organised dictatorship and organised terror’ to realise their political
goals, and for that, suggested Goldman, ‘they deserve the highest credit’
(Goldman 1983, 227).
This paper began by invoking Adorno’s reflections on the plight of the exiled writer – that even their writing ultimately fails to provide them with a home worthy of the name. As a writer living in exile Goldman too was literally ‘nowhere at home’. She also struggled to find comfort, in Adorno’s sense, in her writing. But more importantly, her writings themselves have been homeless in the sense that they have not been considered worthy of inclusion within the terrain of political theorists. The central argument of this paper has been to make the case for Goldman to be taken seriously as a political theorist. To substantiate that argument, three particular aspects of her contribution were examined: her view of emancipation, her critique of patriarchy, and her emphasis on the relationship between aims and means in her discussions of aspects of political violence. Within her various writings, these three aspects are inter-related in that, in varying degrees, they presuppose and inform each other. Nevertheless, in respect of each of these areas, Goldman developed anarchist theory in significantly original ways. As was noted at the beginning of the paper, Goldman’s critique of patriarchy has been seen by some scholars as her distinct contribution to anarchist theory. Yet even that significant contribution has not led to any serious re-evaluation of her status as a political theorist. It is clearly demonstrable that prior to Goldman’s writings, and indeed for some decades afterwards, anarchist thought and ideals were predominantly as men anarchists had defined them. But as the above argument has demonstrated, Goldman’s contributions went beyond challenging and reworking the masculinism of her contemporaries.

On this basis it would seem that Goldman’s status and legacy should be reassessed so that she is accorded a home within political theory. Explaining why she has been excluded has not been the purpose of this paper. However, if an explanation was to be pursued it would first of all have to begin from a consideration of how we might define ‘political theory’ and hence who and what might get included within that rubric. This is a distinctly different set of questions from those that might arise over the idea of a canon of political theory (cf Dunn 1996, Ch.2). Then secondly, we would have to accept that Goldman does not fit neatly into any given category or strand of political theory. She was too anarchist for feminists (both in her own time and subsequently), too feminist (or at least too concerned with women’s issues) for her fellow-anarchists, and for far too many historians of political theory she was too politically engaged in a very public sense in a branch of political thought that has always struggled to be considered either relevant or legitimate. The periodic resurgence of interest in anarchist ideas over the past fifty years has seen some tempering of this disdain towards anarchism, with scholars paying much more attention and respect to its development and theoretical claims (eg Crowder 1991). Yet even within this context of renewed interest Goldman and her ideas struggle for adequate recognition, even though for other anarchist writers (eg Errico Malatesta, Alexander Berkman), whose contribution to anarchist theory arguably has been far less original than Goldman’s, the label ‘theorist’ is seen as neither controversial nor inappropriate.

Space precludes pursuing these questions beyond the following remarks. On the question of what should count as political theory or who should count as engaging in political theorising, the views (though deriving from differing starting points) of Stokes (1990) and Cook (1991) are instructive. As Cook (1991, 514) succinctly put it, ‘political theorising is an activity of historically located individuals who are responding to issues that arise in their immediate social environment’. On this basis Goldman clearly engaged in political theorising, and warrants being accorded the status of political theorist. The second set of issues concerning the lack of a neat fit within the categories of political theory does not bear so much on the question of her status as a political theorist as it does on the question of why scholars have found it difficult to take Goldman seriously as a theorist.

The brief answer to this question is her direct challenge to the masculinist biases within anarchism; biases that are not confined to anarchism but which also permeate political theory in general. As has been demonstrated above, her challenges to these biases emerged explicitly in her discussions of the various issues concerning the relations between men and women. These were concerns that many of her contemporaries (anarchist and non-anarchist alike) regarded as of secondary or marginal importance. Indeed as numerous feminist scholars engaged in rethinking the masculinist presuppositions of political theory over the past forty years have argued, women’s issues have often been seen or interpreted as something other than proper objects of theory, political or otherwise. Goldman’s contribution was to place these issues at the centre of her conception of anarchism. For Goldman, anarchism aimed at human emancipation and this meant that it had to be inclusive of men and women. That Goldman may have failed on occasion to live up to her own ideals or that her writings betray contradictory, and at times even a masculinist cast, does not detract from the fact that she took these problems seriously. But more importantly, however, is that in pursuing those aims she engaged in political theorising.

Hence the argument presented in this article has been to demonstrate why her contribution to anarchist theory, and by extension political theory, should be considered as original and pivotal. The burden of the argument has been to demonstrate that she did not merely reproduce and perpetuate the anarchist theory to which she had been introduced in the late 1880s. Contrary to Shulman’s judgement (1979, 21), Goldman took the core aspects of late nineteenth-century anarchist theory and reworked them, adding dimensions that by any measure mark her originality. Many of the ideas she put forward nearly a
century ago remain at the centre of political debates today – a judgement that is not as easy to make for some of her comrades and predecessors.

This paper was originally presented at the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference, University of Tasmania, Hobart, 29 September – 1 October 2003. I would also like to thank the journal’s reviewers for their helpful comments. The phrase ‘nowhere at home’ comes from an Emma Goldman quotation reproduced as one of three epigraphs to the ‘Introduction’ by Richard and Marie Drinnon in Goldman (1975, no page number). The quotation is: ‘It is only now when most of my friends have gone by the board and I myself feel so cast out, pursued by the furies and nowhere at home that the love of the few friends [left] has begun to stand out more beautifully than ever.’

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Proudhon, from aesthetics to politics

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ABSTRACT

Recent debates on anarchist aesthetics have focused on the historical relations
between anarchism and modernism, in particular during the birth of modern litera
ture and art in the early 1890s in France. The nature of this relation, however, is
the subject of much disagreement. A careful study of the aesthetic theories of
Proudhon in their historical and literary contexts contributes to a better under-
standing of the contradictions that have plagued a coherent anarchist theory of art
and literature. Proudhon's writings on aesthetics can be situated at the intersect-
ion of several aspects of his thought, as well as mutations in the field of literature
during the Second Empire that shifted the role of the writer and his place in
society, and transformed the nature of writing and language. Though not directly
engaged with these problems, Proudhon's final book on Courbet forced him to
think them through and partly overcome the influences that his childhood read-
ings of conservative and Catholic writers had left on him. Furthermore, his
implicit recognition of the historical mutation of language and writing, as well as
the shift in the idea of le peuple, introduce a new framework for his thought on
the historical role of the working class, that can be found in his last work De la
capacité politique de la classe ouvrière.

Given the crucial role that anarchist aesthetics played in the development of
modern literature and painting, it is curious that critics and historians overlooked
it for so long. The Symbolist generation in France was almost entirely captivated
by the anarchist wave that overtook Paris in the early 1890s. According to his
disciple Camille Mauchair, even the gentle Mallarmé was no exception to the
anarchist fever. Among the Post-Impressionists, a number of painters and critics
were converted to anarchism, such as the Pissaros (father and son) and the critic
Félix Fénéon, to mention only two names among so many. Was the conversion
to anarchism of so many writers and artists at the moment of the birth of modern
or modernist literature and art a mere accident, or does it reveal a deeper corre-
lation? The dominance of the conservative and ahistorical school of New
Criticism in Anglo-American universities and Marxism on the Continent
accounts for the lack of any serious investigations into the role played by anar-
chism, a lapse that lasted until the last quarter of the twentieth century. It was not
until the aftermath of 1968 that historians and theorists began to look for alter-
native versions of the history of modernism, and to attempt to wrest it from