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Fundamental Anthropology for an Anarchist Gnosis
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> Chap. V"). The included third party is that state of extreme tension which occurs at the point of equilibrium of any antagonistic system and opens the passage to another *"level of reality"*[40].

One can analogously bring the Lupascian included third to the unknown God of Marcion or to Justice in Proudhon; because the "*war*" against the creator God allows to reach this state of being against the world for the sake of life which is the praxis of the anarchist gnosis.

[40] Sur la notion de "niveau de réalité", voir Basarab Nicolescu, « Le tiers caché dans les différents domaines de la connaissance », Le Tiers caché, Le bois d'Orion, 2016, p. 7–16.



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Jacob Taubes, in Western Eschatology, shows that *"apocalyptic is essentially revolutionary*[38]*."* The apocalyptic spirit contains and unites in itself a destructive power of the figures of authority and a creative power of the figures of freedom. But it is imperative that the revolutionary spirit pursue a telos, an ideal as Proudhon would say, if it does not want to end up in a nihilistic revolution. From the socio-political point of view, the community is the carrier of the telos of the revolution. A community occurs when men cease to group themselves according to their individual interests but choose to put their life in common to live it together:

> "When men are really united by mutual links, when they experience things together and react together to this experience by their concrete life, when men have a "living center" around which they have their place, it is then that a community is formed in them"[39].

The antiterrestrial anthropological dynamic of medieval Catholic theology manufactured the biopsychic individual of Western society by stifling the force of the revolutionary ideal. In some way, the history of our civilization can be read as a continuous alienation of the ternary anthropological structure and of the anarchist community desire. We will be able to find the revolutionary telos only by a dialectic of the included third, that is to say the setting in paroxysmal tension of the flesh of the man with the spirit of the world. Proudhon expressed in a very explicit way this *"balancing of the opposites"*:

> "The opposite terms never do anything but balance each other; the balance is not born between them of the intervention of a third term but of their reciprocal action." ("Pornocratie, Chapitre V") ("Pornocracy,

[38] Jacob Taubes, Eschatologie occidentale, Éditions de l'éclat, 2009, p. 11.

[39] Martin Buber, « Comment une communauté peut-elle advenir ? » (1939) dans Communauté, Éditions de l'éclat, 2018, p. 68.

For Marcion, theodicy is resolved through the dualism that he believes he detects in Paul: the absolute antagonism between the god of the law of the world *(the demiurge)* and the god of the freedom of the spirit *(the alien god)* . Marcion's central thesis is that Jesus Christ did not come to fulfill but to abolish the Law, revealing the ontological contradiction between the Law and the Gospel:

> "Christ made it clear that he came to annul the Law and the prophets."[37]

This is coupled with the belief that the Law is not the same as the prophets. To this is added the eschatological belief that the historical reality of the demiurge, the creator god, will be limited in time: Christ will bring about the decomposition of the world and its spiritual deliverance.

The gnostic vision of anarchist antitheism arises from this aporetic questioning: *why is evil omnipresent in a world created by an all-powerful, just and good God? How can this God justify the order of this world where the villains triumph, where the innocent are oppressed, where the strong exploit the weak?* To the scandal of evil, gnosis brings a very clear answer: *the God creator of this evil world and the good God who, at the end of time, will decide its destruction, cannot logically be the same person.* In that, the destruction of the nomos of this bad world participates in the advent of the anomos of the true communal life between men:

> "The passion of the destruction is at the same time a creative passion"

, it is with these words that Bakunin concludes in 1842 his first revolutionary text, The Reaction in Germany.

[37] Adolf von Harnack, Marcion. L'évangile du Dieu étranger, Cerf, 2003, p. 149.



*You are of this world*
*and I am not of this world.*
*— John 8:23*

**Man is a social animal; humanity is not innate in him: a child raised by wolves will be closer to a wolf than to a man. But the solidarity of the wolves with this child shows us that social relationships are not specifically human and that it is insufficient to define man as a social animal, since sociality is shared by other species.**

Is life in society a means of emancipation for the individual or a cause of enslavement? Does it lead to an extension of individual freedom or to its diminution? These are the determining questions that an anarchist anthropology should ask itself, because, if society transmits to man the possibility of his humanity, it does so only by depriving him of an essential part of his potentiality to live as a human. What makes the humanity of the man is the object of what we could call the fundamental anthropology, science of the recognition of the principial in the human: the conscience of the life against the world.

## 1. The Anarchist Anthropology

Anarchist anthropology is a branch of political anthropology; but, whereas the latter takes as its object all forms of social organization experienced by humanity, anarchist anthropology studies more specifically the societies that have invented forms of resistance to authoritarian institutions of the state type.

David Graeber (1961–2020) proposed this name in his essay "Pour une Anthropologie Anarchiste" *("Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology)"*[1]. The great predecessors of anarchist anthropology

[1] Traduction française parue en 2006 aux Éditions Lux [Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology, Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004].

are Pierre Kropotkin (1842–1921) and, more recently, Pierre Clastres (1934–1977). Among contemporary anthropologists, in addition to David Graeber and Marshall Sahlins (1930–2021), both recently deceased, we should mention Harold Barclay (1924–2017) and James C. Scott.

David Graeber argues that there is an anarchist practice of anthropology that seeks to break free from the ethnocentrism of Western political science. For him, anarchist anthropology must emancipate itself from the grand canonical narrative which, starting with the founding Rousseauist text, the "Discours sur l'Origine et les Fondements de l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes" *("Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men")*, traces the origin of social inequality to the Neolithic period, i.e., the invention of agriculture. This classic account claims that people at the end of the Ice Age lived in egalitarian hunter-gatherer groups. The advent of agriculture, along with private property, caused a population boom, leading to the emergence of state urbanization. According to Graeber, this account is not based on any scientific data.

"Comment Changer le Cours de l'Histoire (Ou au Moins du Passé)" *("How to Change the Course of Human History (At Least, the Part that's Already Happened)"* is the question that an anarchist anthropology must ask. In an article, so titled, written in collaboration with the archaeologist David Wengrow[2], Graeber takes up several ethnographic examples that show the seasonal character of social inequality among certain hunter-gatherer groups. He bases himself on a pioneering article by Marcel Mauss, who established that the Inuit had two social organizations, one patriarchal and authoritarian, during the summer hunts, the other collective and egalitarian, during the long polar night[3].

[2] Cf. David Graeber et David Wengrow, « Comment changer le cours de l'histoire (ou au moins du passé) ? », Revue du Crieur, n° 11, Mediapart-La Découverte, octobre 2018, pp. 6–29.

[3] Mauss, « Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés Eskimos », 1904–1905.



*to that of the Old Testament, is the absolute contradictor of man, he remains dialectically necessary, so that man can struggle against all absolutism, both within and without himself".* This is why Proudhon includes the absolute in a ternary anthropological system, body-soul-spirit, where the antagonistic tension is exercised between the immanence of life in man — a soul in a body — and the spirit, as an idea of God's transcendence inherent in human psychology. This means that the true Proudhonian God, merging with Justice, will no longer have to burden the human being with the combined yokes of fear and servitude, but will have to be constantly reinvented:

> "The God we seek can no longer be as the old theology teaches; he must be quite different from what the theologians do."[34].

In his *"Correspondance" (letter of August 28, 1851)* , Proudhon alludes to a work he never had the leisure to write, the subject of which would have been *"humanitarian theology, the X which must replace the old Catholicism"*[35]. *What is this X, if not the foreign God of Marcion, this God of love of the medieval dualist heresies that Hobbes' Leviathan tried to erase definitively from the memory of men?*

Marcionite gnosis does not deny the reality of the world *(acosmism)* but it refuses it and opposes it *(anticosmism)*[36]. This leads to a radical dualism based on the affirmation that the world is ontologically bad because it is not the creation of the good God but of a demiurge identified with the creator God of Genesis.

[34] P.-J. Proudhon, Philosophie du progrès, Rivière & Cie, Paris, 1946, p. 69.

[35] Cité dans Bernard Voyenne, Proudhon et Dieu. Le combat d'un anarchiste, Cerf, 2004, p. 69.

[36] Cette distinction est primordiale : l'anticosmisme ne doit pas être confondu avec le concept d'acosmisme de Hannah Arendt qui serait, d'après elle, le corollaire du totalitarisme moderne.

Proudhon, both order and disorder. Such a predicate is therefore opposed to the principle of identity *(A is A)* and non-contradiction *(A is not non-A)* . And it is understandable that one cannot grasp the meaning of the term anarchy, except by what the philosopher Stéphane Lupasco has called a logic of contradictions that Proudhon had intuited with his dialectic of antinomies[31].

## 7. The Nomos of the World and the Anomos of Life

The theology of Judeo-Christian monotheism has consecrated the oikonomia of the Western world, that device of political domination which is the nomos of the earth, according to Carl Schmitt[32]. *"God is evil"*, Proudhon asserted in his "Système des Contradictions Économiques" *("The System of Economic Contradictions")*, professing anti-theism — and not atheism, since to oppose it is to recognize the existence of what one is fighting.

Proudhon emphasizes the *"profound misanthropy"*[33] of divine providence, which, by setting the implacable rigor of the laws of economics, has stifled the aspiration of men to a just distribution of goods. Some passages suggest that the Christian God could be the creator of evil. In one of his Notebooks, he dares to make this Cathar-inspired statement: *"There is not one God, there are two antagonistic Gods. However, although the God of the Gospel, identical*

[31] Sur le parallélisme entre Lupasco et Proudhon, voir mon intervention au Troisième Congrès Mondial de la Transdisplinarité, « Vers un anarchisme transdisciplinaire » :contrelitterature.com/archive/2021/04/26/proudhon-lupasco-interferences-electives-6312041.html

[32] 36. Carl Schmitt, Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum, 1950. Édition française : Le Nomos de la Terre, Paris, PUF, 2001.

[33] Système des contradictions économiques ou philosophie de la misère, t.1, Paris. Marcel Rivière, 1923, p. 114.



Since ethnology is called *"anthropology"* by English speakers, David Graeber has circumscribed anarchist anthropology to ethnology and its libertarian lineage.

At the end of the 19th century, just after the founding period of Godwin, Proudhon or Bakunin, the anarchist doctrine was enriched by the contribution of a generation of geographers concerned with indigenous groups and considering that the analysis of nature cannot be separated from that of its inhabitants. We find Pierre Kropotkin with Élisée Reclus (1830–1905), and Léon Metchnikoff (1838–1888)[4]. From Marshall Sahlins and Pierre Clastres to Graeber, contemporary anarchist anthropologists have always drawn their critical tools from the corpus of these so-called *"primitive"* societies, but in doing so, they have forgotten that institutions against the state also exist in the West, as in the customary law of the medieval society, the village commune, the guilds, the free cities of the XIIth century, what Kropotkine, on the other hand, had known how to emphasize in "L'Entraide, Un Facteur de l'Évolution" *(Mutual Aid, A Factor of Evolution) (1902)* and "La Science Moderne et l'Anarchie" ("Modern Science and the Anarchy) (1913)".

*"Whether anthropology proclaims itself to be social or cultural, it always aspires to know the total man"*, wrote Lévi-Strauss[5]. We will not question here the distinction between social anthropology and cultural anthropology because it is only a difference of point of view, according to whether one considers the man as a social animal that endows itself with ethnographic customs or as a cultural animal capable of making tools. More important in our eyes is the expression total man that Lévi-Strauss takes back to Marcel Mauss and that he underlines in italics.

[4] Sur les géographes anarchistes du XIXe siècle, voir Philippe Pelletier, Géographie & anarchie. Reclus, Kropotkine, Metchnikoff, Éditions du Monde libertaire/Éditions libertaires, 2013.

[5] Anthropologie structurale, Paris, Plon, 1958, p. 389.

In his inaugural lesson to the College of France (1960) Lévi-Strauss, paying homage to Marcel Mauss, the founder of the social anthropology, declared:

> "If your last goal, one will say, is to reach certain universal forms of thought and morality (because the Essay on the gift ends by moral conclusions) why to give to the societies that you call primitive a privileged value? Should we not, by hypothesis, arrive at the same results, speaking of any society?"

The field of anthropology is the study of man in its universality, it cannot be confined to primitive ethnography. It appears primordial for anarchist anthropology not to cut itself off from the historical approach proposed by Kropotkin because, under the pretext of rejecting all ethnocentrism, the error would be not to realize that there is a perfect correlation between the emergence of the State and the process of psychological individuation. It is only in the Western civilization that the history of the human self merges with the "political" history of the society.

## 2. The Anti-Ternary Dynamics of Medieval Theology

As Jérôme Baschet notes in his introduction to his book "Corps et Âmes. Une Histoire de la Personne au Moyen Âge": "The anthropology of the medieval West was built more against Paul than from him.." Let us consider the different anthropological paradigms that mark out the Western cosmovision :

> Monistic anthropology includes three types: materialist, idealist and immanentist. For materialist monism everything is matter in evolution (Marx). For the idealist monism, only the spirit is real and the matter is only



the beginning of the 20th century, called into question Aristotelian logic. Jean Bancal, who was one of the best exegetes of Proudhon, understood this well, as he did not hesitate to declare:

> "The theory of the particle and the antiparticle constitutes in modern physics a confirmation of the Proudhonian theory of the antinomic organization of the world"[30].

One should read the whole Proudhonian work in the light of this fact.

Proudhon opposes the system of transcendence, which is that of the Church, to the system of immanence, which is the doctrine of the Revolution. From the point of view of transcendence, justice is based a priori on the word of God interpreted by the priesthood, it is the *"divine right"* which has as its maxim the authority. In the vision of immanence, justice is the product of the conscience and constitutes the *"human right"* whose maxim is freedom. The secularized authority of divine right takes the form of property and capital in economics and the state in politics. On the contrary, the freedom of human right gives rise to mutuellism in economics and anarchist federalism in politics.

Proudhon can be considered the promulgator of the political meaning of the word anarchy, which appears in his first work, "Qu'est-ce que la Propriété ?" *("What is Property ?")* (1840). While anarchy, in its common meaning, means disorder and chaos, Proudhon issues a paradoxical idea that defines a positive form of anarchy: *"The highest perfection of society is found in the union of order and anarchy."* Anarchy is thus, for

[30] Jean Bancal, Proudhon, pluralisme et autogestion, t. 1, Aubier, 1967, p. 118.

> World War, to prefer simple and dualistic antitheses to the triasic schemes of the preceding philosophy"[27].

If he was an attentive reader of Bakunin, Carl Schmitt seems to have read Proudhon less acutely, reproaching him for his moral conception of social reality. However, Proudhon, well before Schmitt and even Bakunin, had perceived that political theology founded the power of the State:

> "It is surprising that at the bottom of our politics we always find theology" </quote>, he declared in Confessions of a Revolutionary[28].
>
> The friend/enemy dialectic, which defines the essence of politics for Carl Schmitt, is of a Hegelian nature *(the enemy of my enemy is my friend)* and remains fixed to the Aristotelian logic of the excluded third party. In "De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église" *("Justice in the Revolution and in the Church: Preliminary Discourse")*, Proudhon denounces what he considers to be Hegel's error:
>
> > "Not having understood that "the antinomy is not resolved but indicates an oscillation or antagonism susceptible only of equilibrium"[29].
>
> According to Proudhon, any synthesis of the antagonistic couple is negative of freedom. The author of the System of Economic Contradictions anticipates the epistemological rupture of quantum theory which, at

[27] Voir Res Publica, op. cit, p. 107.

[28] P.-J. Proudhon, Les confession d'un révolutionnaire, Paris, Au bureau du journal La voix du peuple, 1849, p. 61.

[29] P.-J. Proudhon, De la justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église [1848], t. 1, Fayard, 1988, p. 35.



> illusion (Hegel). For the immanentist monism, reality is unique but bifacial, at the same time spirit and matter (Spinoza). The dualistic anthropology, on the other hand, affirms that man is constituted of a body and a soul, radically distinct from each other (Descartes). Finally, ternary anthropology confers on man a tripartite structure: body-soul-spirit (Paul of Tarsus)[6].

The thirteenth century marks the epochal inflection point of the *"anthropological"* passage to modernity, with the emergence of the bourgeoisie and the centralizing monarchist state. From the 13th century onwards, Christian theology imposed the binary conception of the human person — soul and body — rejecting the Gnostic vision of primitive Christianity, still alive in Occitan Catharism, which distinguished the body * (soma)*, the soul* (psychè) *and the spirit* (pneuma or noûs). *The Church, at the same time as the dogma of the transubstantiation of the species[7], adopted the hylemorphic anthropology of Thomistic Aristotelianism: man is composed of a soul and a body ordered to each other in a relationship of matter* (hylé) *to form* (morphê). *The soul is the form of the body.*

The ternary anthropology comes from the Gnostic traditions of Hellenism and Judaism. It can be found in the epistles of Paul of Tarsus as well as in the Enneads of Plotinus.

Until the end of the Romanesque period, that is, the articulation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, anthropological tripar-

[6] Dans le vocabulaire religieux des langues occidentales, comme le français, les termes âme et esprit sont fluctuants. Si l'on pose seulement deux termes (le corps et un principe immortel qui diffère de lui), on utilise généralement le mot âme ; mais, quand on pose trois termes (corps-âme-esprit), l'âme renvoie à la partie intermédiaire entre le corps et l'esprit, ce dernier terme correspondant alors à l'âme immortelle dans l'anthropologie dualiste.

[7] Sur le rôle de la transsubtantiation dans la généalogie de la marchandise capitaliste, voir mon article Profaner le Graal, Contrelittérature n° 2, 2020, pp. 41–59.

En ligne : contrelitterature.com/archive/2020/02/29/le-mythe-germinal-de-la-marchandise-6216285.html

tition had been a constant reference in Western Christian theology, but the *"crisis of the thirteenth century"*, as Claude Tresmontant[8] called it, was to prepare the irremediable passage towards Cartesian biopsychic anthropology.

The tripartite conception of the world and of man was transmitted simultaneously to the Roman West by the two sources of Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion. However, there is a very important distinction between these two ternary anthropologies, which few historians note: unlike the Greek ternary, where the immortal soul *(psyche)* is linked to the spirit *(pneuma)* and separated from the body *(soma)*, in the Hebrew ternary, the body *(gouf)* and the soul *(nephesh)* both belong to the plane of creation and merge in the flesh *(baschar)* — only the spirit *(rouach)* being in the realm of the Uncreate. Thus, the Greek ternary, *"soma-psychê-pneuma"*, where soul and body do not come from the same world — the soul being spiritual and the body material — can only appear *"gnostic"* in comparison with Judaism, where soul and body both belong to creation — the essential break being here between soul and spirit.

Following scholasticism, Thomas Aquinas rejected the Pauline ternary conception. The soul, defined as the *"substantial form of the body"*, in a manner quite analogous to the Hebrew ternary, is no longer conceived as an autonomous entity added to the body: *man becomes a unitary structure in which the soul-form and the body-matter are in total interdependence.* Thomasian theology announces modern anthropology, it initiates an anti-ternary dynamic which leads to think positively about the relation of the soul and the body, by insisting on the psychosomatic unity of the human person.

In the line of the Marxist or structuralist anthropologies, the anarchist ethnological glance adopts a priori a materialist monism, ideological postulate whose epistemological value remains indemonstrable. It also takes up the distinction advanced

[8] Claude Tresmontant, La métaphysique du christianisme et la crise du XIIIe siècle, Éditions du Seuil, 1964.



there can be no human society without an embryonic state, Bakunin enunciates a counter political theology that rests on the revolutionary capacities of the collective Being. Bakunin makes of the commune, the base of an atheological anarchist politics which is founded on the social capacity for self-organization.

## 6. The Proudhonian Dialectic of Anarchist Gnosis

The Kropotkinian socio-historical dualism could be circumscribed to that between society and community. Society is a *"union of interests"* while community is a *"union of life"*, wrote Martin Buber[25]. Carl Schmitt would not admit to such a definition, as shown in one of his little-known articles, "The contrast between community and society as an example of a dualistic distinction"[26].

In this text, Schmitt takes up the opposition that Ferdinand Tönnies theorized in "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft" between the communal and societal modes. While the community organizes itself around local customary law, society submits to centralized legal law. According to Schmitt, the dualistic relationship between society and community can only be resolved through a value judgment, by considering one term as superior to the other. Only value would allow the dualist cleavage to be overcome, since the Hegelian dialectic would have been abandoned:

> "It seems to us that it is a general trait of this epoch of German thought that ends in 1914, during the First

[25] Martin Buber, « Comment une communauté peut-elle advenir ? » [1930], dans Communauté, Éditions de l'éclat, 2018, p. 63.

[26] Cet article, hommage à Luis Legaz y Lacambra, est paru en 1960. Voir Res Publica : revue de l'Institut belge de science politique, 17, n°1, 1975, p. 99–119. ojs.ugent.be/RP/article/view/19556/16936

*not remarkable that this similarity between theology — this science of the Church — and politics — this theory of the State -, that this meeting of two orders of thought and facts, apparently so contrary"*, in the same conviction :

> "That of the necessity of the immolation of human freedom to moralize men and to transform them — into saints, according to the one, and virtuous citizens, according to the other"[22].

Bakunin, by inverting the anthropological axiom of theology, does not emancipate himself from the theological discourse; hence his apology of Satan, expression of his revolutionary anti-theological romanticism. This will allow Carl Schmitt to end his chapter *"La Philosophie de l'État dans la Contre-Révolution"* with this pirouette:

> "For the greatest anarchist of the nineteenth century, Bakunin, one arrives at the strange paradox that he necessarily had to become theoretically the theorist of anti-theology and, in practice, the dictator of an anti-dictatorship"[23].

Bakunin, as Jean-Christophe Angaut[24] has very judiciously noted, considers the anthropological question, not from the ethical point of view, where Schmitt tries to confine it, but from the political point of view: *is humanity capable of freely reaching, without coercive authority — theological or state — its collective autonomy?* To this question, anarchist anthropology answers in the affirmative: man is capable of conceiving an atheological good. Whereas for Carl Schmitt, in the lineage of the *"German School"*,

[22] Michel Bakounine, Fédéralisme, socialisme et antithéologisme, dans Œuvres, vol. 1, Paris, Stock, 1980, p. 166–167.

[23] Carl Schmitt, Théologie politique, op. cit., p. 74–75.

[24] Jean-Christophe Angaut, op. cit.



by Radcliffe-Browne's social anthropology between the individual, perceived as an organism, and the person, defined as "a complex of social relations" with the others[9].

In this view, persons, not individuals, are the basic units of a society. This relational conception of the person, as an individuated social being, refers to Marcel Mauss's founding article, "Une Catégorie de l'Esprit Humain: La Notion de Personne Celle de "Moi"" *("A Category of the human mind: the notion of person") (1938)*[10].

According to Paul, the anthropological structure of man is made up of two antithetical poles, the body and the spirit, between which a third term is inserted: the soul:

> "May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole being, spirit, soul and body, be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:23).

We are born in the state of the old man, the one that Paul calls the animal man — psychikos anthrôpos — that *"psychic man"*, endowed with a reflexive thought, that modern paleontologists call homo sapiens sapiens *(the man who knows he is thinking)*. In a letter that Paul wrote to the Christian community of Rome, around the years 57–58, he explains that the old man must die in order for the new man to be born, the spiritual man — pneumatikos anthrôpos. If this second birth does not take place, then man condemns himself to that *"second death"* of which the Apocalypse speaks (Rev 21:8); but then, having lost his soul, he loses even his humanity. The completed man, the total man, the teleios, is the one who is born with the spirit. This is the ontic and existential project that Paul proposes to man.

What is important to us here is not so much this process of spiritual transformation *(theosis)* as the historical advent of the notion

[9] Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, Structures et fonction dans la société primitive [1952], Paris, Minuit, 1969, p. 149.

[10] Article repris dans Sociologie et anthropologie, PUF, 1985, p. 331–362.

of the human person, which was erected from the erasure of the universal self and its capture by the individual self.

Paul is the heir of Hebrew anthropology. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the Greek term sôma *(body)* designates the whole person, like the Hebrew baschar *(flesh)*, that is to say the body-soul couple (sôma-psychê).

It is thus the spirit *(pneuma or rouach)* that the anti-ternal dynamic of Catholic theology has evacuated. In that, the semantic transformation which takes place, at the beginning of the XIIIth century, with the substitution of the word persona for homo to designate the human being, constitutes a decisive *"cultural moment"*: the disappearance of the ternary anthropology marks the end of this historical period that Kropotkine names, in his booklet The State — its historical role, *"the first Renaissance, that of the XIIth century"*.

## 3. The Socio-Historical Dualism of Pierre Kropotkin

Martin Buber is one of the rare authors who have underlined the influence exerted on Kropotkin by the slavophile philosophers Ivan Kireïevski and Alexeï Khomiakov. According to Buber, it is by taking inspiration from their presentation of historical duality that Kropotkin would have simplified the multiple Proudhonian *"social antinomies"* by the fundamental dualism between the principle of the struggle for existence and that of mutual aid[11].

Khomiakov, in his Memoir on Universal History, thought that the history of mankind is played out between two principles that he named *"Iran"* and *"Kush"*, these geographical terms designating the places of their emergence — Iran going from the Himalayas to the Euphrates River and Kush being the biblical name of Ethiopia,

[11] Voir Martin Buber, Utopie et socialisme, Aubier Montaigne, 1977, p. 71.



*To the optimistic anthropology of the anarchists is opposed the pessimistic anthropology of the conservatives. * While in his "Théologie Politique"* ("Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty") *of 1923, Carl Schmitt designated the antagonism between Donoso Cortes and P.-J. Proudhon as the paradigmatic conflict of politics, in "Parlementarisme et Démocratie"* ("The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy") *he will specify that this opposition, is valid only* "within the framework of the Western cultural traditions [...] It is only with the Russians, notably with Bakunin, that the enemy proper of all the received ideas of the European culture appears[19]."

Thus, *Bakunin is promoted to the rank of absolute enemy*[20], because he embodies, according to Schmitt, the will to put an end to politics assimilated to the state — the State being, for Bakunin, only a theological secularization. This supposed *"depoliticization"* allows Schmitt to amalgamate anarchism with liberalism and Marxism:

> "Nothing is more modern today than the struggle against politics. American financiers, industrial technicians, Marxist socialists and anarcho-syndicalist revolutionaries join forces with the slogan that it is necessary to eliminate the non-objective domination of politics over the objectivity of economic life[21]."

Schmitt found in Bakunin the schema of his political theology. A passage in "Fédéralisme, Socialisme, Antithéologisme" ("Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism") underlines the fact that the State and theology presuppose the intrinsically evil nature of man: *"Is it*

[19] Carl Schmitt, Parlementarisme et démocratie, trad. Jean-Louis Schlegel, Paris, Seuil, p. 87.

[20] Sur l'interprétation schmitienne des grands thèmes bakouniniens, on se reportera à l'article de Jean-Christophe Angaut, « Carl Schmitt, lecteur de Bakounine », Astérion, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, 2009. En ligne : journals.openedition.org/asterion/1495.

[21] Carl Schmitt, Théologie politique, op. cit., p. 73.

> "Man has lived in societies for thousands of years, before he knew the State [...] The most glorious periods of humanity were those in which freedoms and local life were not yet destroyed by the State, and in which the masses of men lived in communes and free federations"[16].

This dualism between state sovereignty and free federative association between Kropotkin and Ratzel mirrors the antagonism that emerges between Carl Schmitt and Michael Bakunin.

It should be remembered that the idea of a political theology arose in Carl Schmitt's mind from a critique directed against Michael Bakunin, author of *La Théologie Politique de Mazzini et l'Internationale* (1871). In his 1922 book, Schmitt took up the expression *"political theology"* and turned it against the one he called his absolute enemy.

In the chapter entitled "La Philosophie de l'État dans la Contre-Révolution" of his "Théologie Politique" *("Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty")*[17], Carl Schmitt points out that counter-revolution and anarchism share the idea of the absolutism of all government:

> "All sovereignty acts as if it were infallible, all government is absolute — a proposition that an anarchist could have taken up word for word, albeit with an entirely different aim"[18].

This divergence of "aim" stems from their opposite conception of human nature: "Every political idea takes, in one way or another, a position on the "nature" of man and presupposes that he is either "good by nature" or "bad by nature" [22].

[16] Pierre Kropotkine, La science moderne et l'anarchie, op. cit., p. 170–171.

[17] Carl Schmitt, Théologie politique [1922], trad. Jean-Louis Schlegel, Paris, Gallimard, 1988.

[18] Carl Schmitt, ibid., p. 64. [22] Carl Schmitt, ibid., p. 65



the cradle of Egyptian civilization. All religious beliefs and ideologies would be divided into these two categories: *the Iranian cult of the spirit as creative freedom and the Kushite cult of matter as indefinite necessity. Human history would be the product of the antagonistic tension between these two poles. In Kushitism, Khomiakov saw the religion of necessity, of the determinism of nature, of magic; in Iranism, the religion of the spirit, of freedom and of love.* Latin Catholicism comes from Kushitism, Greek-Russian Orthodoxy from Iranism. The Western world has not received true Christianity in its essence. In the course of the ages, these two antinomic principles have been brought into contact with each other through mutual tensions or concessions.

This vision can be compared with the passage in "La Science Moderne et l'Anarchie" *("Modern Science and Anarchy")* where Pierre Kropotkin writes: *"Throughout the history of our civilization, two opposing tendencies have been present: the Roman tradition and the popular tradition, the imperial tradition and the federalist tradition, the authoritarian tradition and the libertarian tradition.*

In the Middle Ages, this socio-historical dualism was illustrated for two centuries by the struggle between communal institutions of mutual aid and political-religious state Caesarism. The movement of free communes, which began in the 11th century, continued until the 13th century. This "first Renaissance" has remained obscure because it is ignored by official history[12].

The libertarian revolution of the urban communes, born of the union between the village commune and the artisanal and merchant associations, was an absolute negation of the Roman centralizing spirit. The 12th century European, Kropotkin said, was *"essentially federalist. A man of free initiative, of free agreement, of desired and freely consented unions"*[13].

[12] Sur cette période, Augustin Thierry est la référence historiographique de Kropotkine.

[13] Pierre Kropotkine, La science moderne et l'anarchie, op. cit, p. 203.

The movement began in Italy *(Tuscany and Lombardy)* and in the Occitanian South, where towns freed themselves from all lordly control, and spread very quickly throughout northern Europe, where the guilds were the vector of social emancipation. The independent cities, capable of fighting against the great lords, were called communes, while those that placed themselves under the protection of a lord or the king were called cities of the bourgeoisie.

On the bangs of the feudal system, the communes were real collective lordships that administered themselves autonomously, appointing their own judges and federating among themselves. In northern Italy, there was the Lombard League, in Germany the Hanseatic League. In Occitania, since the cities were not federated, and fearing that this federative role could be taken over by Catharism, the Roman Church promulgated the Albigensian Crusade, which would destroy the Occitanian civilization of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Pierre Kropotkin does not seem to have perceived this concomitance of the dualist heresies with the medieval communist. However, the *"first European Renaissance"* was also that of heretical movements that crossed Europe from one side to the other, threatening the unity of the Roman Church and the feudal system that it was trying to impose. It was with the same ferocity that the Church and the kings crushed the popular communes and the religious heresies. The invention of the Inquisition, promulgated by Gregory IX in 1231, marked the advent of the state machinery of social control. Thereafter, all totalitarianisms will use the same terrorist device. The politico-religious institution of the Inquisition led to the birth of the centralizing State.

The Cathar religion, adopting the ternary anthropology of primitive Christianity, was based on the Gnostic dualism of Marcion. It is remarkable that the movement of the communes died out at the same time as this heresy. By the time Philip VI of Valois came to power in 1328, there were no real free towns left in France; all



the communes had become towns of the bourgeoisie — *"the king's good towns"*. The last Cathar, Guilhem Bélibaste, was burned alive in 1321. This synchronization between the medieval communalist movement and what was the last expression of dualist thought in the West is not without interest in the perspective of our search for an anarchist gnosis.

## 4. The Counter Political Theology of Michael Bakunin

In "La Science Moderne et l'Anarchie" *("Modern Science and Anarchy")*, Pierre Kropotkin criticizes the thinkers of the *"German School"* for whom any form of social organization is a potential state structure. In his sights, there is the geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904), whose theses Carl Schmitt will take up again.

Friedrich Ratzel is one of the main instigators of human geography — which he calls *"anthropogeography"*[14]. In his political geography[15], he equates the variety of all socio-political organizations, from primitive tribes to modern political structures, with the social conformation of the state. According to him, the state is a living organism, a biological system whose spatial expansion is a vital necessity — hence the notion of Lebensraum *(living space)*, which was later recuperated by Nazi ideology.

Contrary to Ratzel and the *"German School"* — in which we must include the Marxist social democrats -, Kropotkin does not assimilate society to the State. Society is given by nature. Man did not create society: society is prior to man. The State is only one of the forms that society has taken in human history:

[14] Friedrich Ratzel, Anthropogéographie, Munich, Oldenbourg, 1882 (vol. 1) et 1891 (vol. 2).

[15] Politische Geographie, Munich, Oldenbourg, 1897.