

The Difference Between Archism And Egoism

Sidney E. Parker

1987

The Difference Between Archism And Egoism (Alan Koontz)

While you make a distinction between anarchism and egoism, you didn't make one between archism and egoism. Indeed, it appeared to be your point that there was no difference between archism and egoism and therein lay the difference between egoism and anarchism. I beg to differ with you on this point insofar as I perceive a difference between archism and egoism.

It is implied in the article that the State is simply a condition of domination. An individual or group dominates another group. This definition is, however, incomplete for it leaves out that which makes it static.

The State is in fact the condition of domination wherein only a certain individual or group is permitted to dominate another group. The authority to dominate resides in a portion of the population over which the State reigns. The remainder of the population lacks such authority and indeed must renounce all desire to dominate (in the spirit of anarchism, no less).

The difference between the State and simple archy is that the former is tied to a concept while the latter is not. That concept is the authority to use force or impose one's will on another – i. e., to dominate. The reign of the State depends on the reign of this concept.

The reason the egoist and the State are incompatible is that the former is the ruler of all concepts: including the concept on which the State depends. As far as the egoist is concerned, no one is authorized to dominate another. One possibly has the power to dominate another i.e. the former possesses some sort of advantage over the latter – but no one has the authority. The egoist has no compunction about dominating another “if this is in his interest.” Nor is the egoist offended by domination as such. What the egoist doesn't recognize is anyone's exclusive authority to dominate another. This calls for renunciation on the part of the other even if it is not in his interest. Such authority is antagonistic to egoism.

The difference between the archist and the egoist is that the former could be possessed by the exclusive authority to dominate others whereas the latter could never be, even though neither is ever “bound by any demand for the renunciation of domination.” The archist thus could dominate not because it is in his interest, but simply because he is authorized to do so. That wouldn't be egoistic.

In Reply To Koontz (S. E. Parker)

I am no believer in the authority of the State. In the essay from which I quoted Dora Marsden draws a distinction between “archistic” and “archonistic”. The first she defines as “any kind of initiatory action, any kind of ‘setting to’ of the living unit to the task of dominating the conditions which lie between it and the goal of its desire.” The second she defines as relating to “the highest State magistrate” (the Archon) – i. e. the political ruler. In her use of the term “archism” therefore it is quite compatible with egoism, but “archonism”, *insofar as it involves for its exercise a belief in authority*, is not. Nonetheless, I can see no sound egoistic reason why an egoist should not

assume the mantle of an authority towards others if it facilitates any act of domination he wishes to carry out and is competent to achieve. Of course, if there are egoists among these others they will not be taken in by this authority but will simply estimate how powerful the dominator is when deciding how to deal with him. Conscious egoism does not mean that I must necessarily expect all other egoists to be my allies. They may be the opposite.

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Retrieved 10/16/2021 from <https://www.unionofegoists.com/journals/ego-1982/ego-09/>
A reply to commentary on Parker's article "Archists, Anarchists and Egoists" from *The Egoist*
(Formerly EGO), Issue 8 (1986). Printed in *The Egoist* (Formerly EGO), Issue 9 (1987).

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