Reply to Saul Newman's Review of *Anarchism and Political Modernity* Journal of Political Power, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (2013), pp. 165-166

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I am extremely grateful to Saul Newman for taking the time to review my book, Anarchism and Political Modernity, for this journal. Although some of his remarks are uncharitable and even hostile (for example, when he describes chapters 3 and 4 as "tedious," or when he muses about the alleged "irony" of my employing analytic-philosophical methods), I believe that many of his criticisms are fair. It is unquestionably true, for example, that I could have made a stronger case on behalf of my central thesis—viz., that classical anarchism represents a break with political modernity and, to this extent, prefigures poststructuralism. At the same time, it is clear that Newman and I have different understandings of both classical anarchism as well as post/modernity. The point of my "tedious" discussions of liberalism and socialism is to articulate as clearly as possible what I mean by political modernity, which in turn provides a basis from which to distinguish classical anarchism as a politically postmodern discourse. Nowhere do I claim that every individual anarchist disavows modernity entirely or singlehandedly develops a thoroughly postmodern discourse. My thesis, which is much more modest, is that classical anarchism as a whole may be understood as a postmodern, rather than a modern, political discourse, especially when it is compared with contemporaneous discourses such as liberalism and socialism. As such, Newman's remarks about Bakunin and Kropotkin, even if true, are not especially relevant to my argument. It should come as no surprise that these thinkers exhibit some modern tendencies; the book is interested in the various ways they overcome and go beyond these tendencies.

I also agree that the omission of Stirner is a shortcoming, though I do not think it is quite as grievous as Newman makes it out to be. What I take exception to are his speculations regarding said omission, which come perilously close to accusing me of willful intellectual dishonesty. In point of fact, I omitted Stirner because, at the time I was writing the book, I held the good-faith view that he should not be considered an anarchist in the way that, for example, Bakunin and Kropotkin are anarchists—a view, incidentally, which many scholars happen to endorse. Since that time I have had the opportunity to engage more deeply with Stirner and, as a result, have developed a more nuanced perspective on this issue. I am able to concede, accordingly, that my discussion of Stirner is flawed in many of the ways that Newman suggests, and I agree with him that Stirner should have played a much more prominent role in my argument. However, because I do not entirely agree with Newman's interpretation of Stirner nor assign nearly as much importance to Stirner's ideas as he does, I think he grossly overstates his case when he suggests that the omission of Stirner undermines the thesis of the book.

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Elsewhere—for example, in my contribution to Rousselle and Evren's volume on postanarchism²—I have refined my thesis somewhat in ways which arguably bring it closer to Newman's perspective. In general, I agree with him that the relationship between

¹ See, for example, M. Schmidt and L. van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009), p. 41.

² "Reconsidering Poststructuralism and Anarchism," in *Postanarchism: A Reader*, ed. D. Rousselle and S. Evren (London: Pluto, 2011), pp. 231-249; "Rethinking the Anarchist Canon: History, Philosophy, and Interpretation," forthcoming in *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* (2013).

poststructuralism and classical anarchism is a bit more complicated than I suggest in the book. However, I remain committed to the idea that the kind of postmodern political discourse expressed in the works of, e.g., Deleuze and Foucault is clearly foreshadowed in classical anarchism, and I believe *Anarchism and Political Modernity* succeeds at establishing this despite its omission of Stirner.

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