

Rethinking Anarchy and the State in IR Theory: The Contributions of Classical Anarchism*

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Abstract:

In this paper I intervene in an ongoing debate between Colin Wight and Alex Wendt regarding the nature of the state. The current debate revolves around whether the state is an agent or a structure and seems to have become stuck as regards to the ontological status of groups. For Wendt the state is a person; for Wight the state is a structure that constrains and enables individuals. Wendt conflates the state with all other groups, and Wight, in an effort to reclaim the individual from Wendt's organicism, posits that it is only individuals and structures that are ontologically significant when discussing state agency – groups have little ontological autonomy. My intervention is based on a reading of the work of the nineteenth-century anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Proudhon argued that the state is a group that, like all other social groups, is emergent from and irreducible to the historically and culturally distinct groupings of the individuals of which they are comprised. Indeed, (global) society is comprised of multiple groups, and individuals who are simultaneously members of many groups at the same time. The structures which bind groups together – or keep them apart – are historically specific, mutable but relatively enduring. The ontological consequences for a theory of anarchy and world politics are clear: if states are but one, relatively small if disproportionately powerful group among many and inter-state anarchy is a form of inter-group relations replicated at all social levels, the anarchy problematique is constitutive of politics as such. Anarchism is not the political ideology of disorder, but of autonomy – the autonomy of groups and individuals – and a framework for understanding how groups and individuals can relate without the need for states.

The problem is this: how to conceive of an order without an orderer and of organizational effects where formal organization is lacking. (Waltz, 1979: 89)

To achieve security in anarchy, it is necessary to go beyond Bull's 'anarchical society' of states to an anarchical global 'community of communities'. Anarchy thus becomes the framework for thinking about the *solution* to global problems, not the essence of the problem to be overcome. (Booth 1991: 540)

Introductionⁱ

Paradoxically, it seems from the above that IR theorists would make excellent anarchist theorists. The 'anarchy problematique', as Ashley has called it (1988), set up in the way that Waltz and Booth framed it, is quintessentially the *anarchist* problematique. Anarchists also seek a political order in anarchy and look to go beyond the anarchical society of states to 'community of communities'. The paradox lies in the ontological argument that precedes both framings. For Waltz it is states, constituted as *sovereign actors* whose inter-relations need explaining, while for Booth we must go *beyond* the state system. But how do we get from here to there? Is it a question of global revolution or is it an ontological question first? Is the solution something we must *do* or is it partly at least to do with the way we *understand* global social relations as such? In this paper I will argue that we must change the way we understand the state in order to see the radical and emancipatory potential of anarchy and the value of the political philosophy most suited to conceptualising it – anarchism.

I will consider the problem as one of ontology – what is the international system made up of? Or put another way, what must be the case in order for us to think that the international system is anarchic? For mainstream IR theorists the answers to these questions are today more or less intuitive. What seems ironic from an anarchist perspective is that states-as-agents, interacting in a so-called 'society' (Bull 1979), constitute the quintessential anarchist community. Yet while anarchism is rarely spared a derisory sideswipe, few consider the international community, an actually existing and relatively ordered anarchical society, to be *utopian*.

While realists fear the ever-present (if not always realized) threat of conflict in an anarchic order, liberals point to the role non-sovereign institutions play in mitigating and avoiding conflict in a system where formal hierarchy is absent (Keohane 1984). Others point to interdependence to explain why a system of nominally self-interested and heavily armed individuals do not routinely engage in blood-letting (Milner 1991). Constructivists and sociological liberals point to the mutually constituted identities of states and the way in which 'anarchy is what states make of it' (Wendt 1991). Critical theorists on the other hand, reflect on the role of structures such as capitalism and statism, which recreate and maintain a particular social order in anarchy in the interests of the informal hierarchies that inevitably emerge (Joseph 2002). Others still seek out those processes and tendencies within the community of states-as-actors which point to a radical overhaul of these hierarchies in the interests of human emancipation as such (Linklater 1998, 2007a, 2007b). If realists are in the minority in the contemporary discipline (Mearsheimer 2005), then it would seem that the rest believe that states-as-actors are heavily constrained and anarchy to be permissive and relatively benign. At this point we might well ask, if we abandoned this statist ontology, would these observations not hold for individuals and groups in an anarchist society too?

Anarchist communities are similar and anarchists think similar things. While the aim of this paper is not to survey the anarchist canon or to give an account of how the anarchical society might be thought of as analogous to an anarchist society, it is worth remarking here that even in anarchist communities, where there are no formal hierarchies, power still operates and informal hierarchies still emerge (Gordon 2008). Anarchists simply refuse to formalize hierarchies and actively seek out ways to ensure they do not adversely skew group interests or undermine individual and group autonomy. They point to the institutions of mutual aid and the emergence of cooperation to show how social processes mitigate and purposefully undermine the logic of self interest that dominates the capitalist society anarchists attempt to subvert (Kropotkin 1989). Anarchists also accept that individuals are always already socialized, that they bring their own identities and values to the group, that they are constrained and enabled by the anarchist community in different ways and that different anarchist societies in different periods and geographical locations display different internal dynamics and systemic pressures.

Anarchism would seem, on the face of it to be an invaluable source for thinking about state behavior. But is this analogy between the state and individual realistic? Are states *really* actors, persons or agents? Indeed, what is the state? The issue here, as innumerable others have pointed out, remains how we conceptualize the state. State theory is highly determinate of international theory. Yet while many have sought to understand the 'agential capacity of the state' and its bearing on international theory (Hobson 2000), and others have sought to explain how states make war and vice versa (Tilly 1985), few in IR have reflected on what the state *is* for the purposes of understanding international anarchy. Indeed, Alex Wendt has claimed (Wendt 2004) that what the state *is*, the ontology of state theory, is routinely elided in IR theory. The consequences are that the ontology of the international system remains largely intuitive; we routinely repeat the analogy between states and individuals, or claim the state is an 'actor', and the possibility remains that our intuitions on this matter may be wrong.

In this paper I continue a line of argument I have been developing elsewhere and argue that returning to Proudhon's thought has the potential to help us conceptualise world politics in ways more conducive to human flourishing. This is the line of argument I will take up here. However, my argument will not be directly concerned with the normative and ethical principles of anarchism, but the ontological preconditions for making the second-level normative arguments. What must be the case in order for us to think of the world as anarchic, are our standard ontologies of IR adequate reflections of reality, and could alternative views of this subject be both more empirically accurate and more emancipatory?

In answering these questions this paper constitutes another round of under-labouring for a wider anarchist theory of IR. However, I will not be advocating a form of radical nominalism, the theory that a change in our ideas is a change in the world around us. Instead I will argue that our ideas are not adequately reflective of the reality of the world around us and in order to understand world politics we need a more realistic political ontology. I will argue that if we change the way we see the state, we will be obliged to change the way we understand anarchy and both the moves I make have significant implications for the normal practice of IR theory.

My way into this problematique is through the writings of Alex Wendt (1991, 2004) and Colin Wight (2004, 2007). I use their argument regarding the ontological status and form of the state as a foil for introducing Proudhon's long-ignored state theory (Proudhon 1860, 1861, 1863a, b). Wendt and Wight first locked horns over this issue in a special forum in *Review of International Studies* in 2004. Their debate has arguably become stuck on the question of the ontological status, emergent reality and relative autonomy of groups for the political ontology of IR. Wendt argues that the state is a person and that the state's personhood is the emergent product of the collective agency of a national or territorially and functionally defined super-group of individuals. However, he argues that the collective agency of individuals is irreducible to their individual agency – states are emergent properties. This theory poses 'uncomfortable truths' for liberals: how are liberals to justify state power if states cannot be reduced to individuals?

This organicist doctrine is familiar and entrenches the standard statist ontology of IR. However, where Wendt sees states as agents, *persons* even, Colin Wight sees states as structures populated by individuals and groups that are constrained and enabled depending on their subject position within the 'complex institutional ensemble', that goes to make up political society. By his analysis, individuals are the only possible bearers of moral or political agency and states are *not* persons but something qualitatively different – the totality of all social relations in a given area. Because states are structures for Wight, they cannot be actors.

The consequences of these two positions for a theory of anarchy are clear. Maintaining an ontology of state personhood allows Wendt to remain well within standard ontologies of world politics. Anarchy becomes 'what states make of it', grouped as they are understood to, in mutual antagonism and crowned with formal sovereignty. But anarchy is also a problem for Wendt and he argues that states will eventually transcend it to form a world state (Wendt 2003). But if Wendt's theory presents 'uncomfortable truths' for liberals vis-à-vis the liberal individualist justification of the state, Wendt's state theory suggests that a world state will be a moral dystopia of epic proportions. Wight sees these problems but it is precisely because of the way Wight understands structures and states that anarchy drops out of his analysis. Structures are only relatively autonomous from one another and because Wight understands individuals to be always already socialised within these structures, anarchy all but

drops out of this social ontology: anarchy is neither analytically or politically significant – there is no anarchy because everything is structured. This is a claustrophobic world where autonomy seems all but impossible. I want to recover the emancipatory potential of anarchy and to do so I will disaggregate Wight's structural ontology. The promise of Proudhon's writings here is to find a way in which groups *and* individuals, structures *and* institutions can be conceptualised as part of the same social whole thereby widening and strengthening the normative force of a social theory of world politics. What I argue is that the question of anarchy is far more complex than we might believe and that anarchism can help us make sense of it.

While others have joined the discussion (Jackson 2004, Neuman 2004, Lomas 2005. Cf. Wendt 2005), and many of the responses are salient to the discussion here, I will nevertheless focus solely on Wight's extended debate with Wendt. There are three reasons for this. First, Wendt and Wight operate within a shared scientifically realist ontology. This sets the ontological and epistemological terms of the debate on coherent, shared grounds and because, as I will argue, Proudhon was also a scientific realist, this makes comparison and dialogue much easier. Secondly, the debate has thus far been framed normatively around the relationship of the individual to the group and the implications of this theory for a wider theory of political legitimacy. This ensures that at least on this issue there is also normative clarity because all three were talking in much the same idiom.

My argument is drawn from an original reading of the fourth *etude*, entitled *L'État*, of Proudhon's untranslated *magnum opus*, *De la Justice dans la Revolution et dans l'Église* (Proudhon 1860). This short synopsis of Proudhon's state theory has not, to my knowledge been systematically analysed in either the secondary French-language or the English-language literature, nor has it been linked to Proudhon's international political theory or to IR. Thus the theoretical contribution of this paper is also supported by a degree of historical originality. What I will show is that going back to Proudhon's thought allows us to unsettle the conventional discursive norms that have settled around concepts of anarchy in contemporary IR theory and unsettle the conventional historiography of the discipline.

The paper proceeds as follows. In part one I discuss Wendt's thesis that 'the state is a person', I argue that his understanding of group agency is sound, but inconsistently applied. States are not the

only groups. To illustrate this oversight I will show that Wendt's understanding of the pluralist literature is thin and his rejection of pluralism weak. I then turn to Colin Wight's rejoinder to Wendt. I set out Wight's contributions in two parts. First, I discuss Wight's critique of Wendt's collectivism and his elision of the individual and secondly, I then set out Wight's structural ontology of states. However, I will argue that while Wight's position is a significant improvement in many respects, he does a disservice to Wendt's theory of corporate agency and his decision to bifurcate the social world almost exclusively between individuals and structures would seem to denude IR theory of a realistic understanding of collective agency, be they classes, trade unions, NGOs, multinationals or anything else. Furthermore, Wight's structural ontology has no 'gaps'. By this I mean that structures seem to envelop the whole of the social world and there is no 'outside' or 'other' in his social ontology. This has implications for how we might seek to defend the autonomy of groups and individuals as I will show, and ultimately while Wight's social ontology is more sophisticated than Wendt's it is no less totalising and suffocating.

Part three seeks to demonstrate the ontological importance of all 'natural groups' as Proudhon called them, and the importance of developing a theory of their complex and cross-cutting inter-relations. Two further concepts bring a more obviously anarchist flavour to the discussion – alienation and appropriation. Using these two concepts I will show how we might more appropriately relate individuals to groups in capitalist and representative democratic societies and give an account of structure that is historically sensitive, irreducible and relatively autonomous, and analytically useful. Structures, I will argue, vary in strength and intensity and it is always an empirical question as to how or whether they exist at all. However, groups and individuals are always ontologically prior since without them there would be no social structures anyway. I will conclude by arguing that if we see states and other natural groups as constituting complex social relations, far from being peculiar to IR, anarchy becomes the *sine qua non* of politics as such and IR becomes the political philosophy of anarchy *par excellence*. It will be left for future papers to set out the normative and ethical implications of this move in more detail.

Wendt – the state as person

While, there is a wealth of *implicit* state theory in IR, there is little thorough state theory and little of the type of state theory Alex Wendt wants to see more of: that is, theory that seeks to conceptualise what the state *is* or what it is that gives the state agential capacity (Wendt, 1999: 195-198; 2004: 290-291). It is all very well talking about state agency and looking to understand the things that enable and inhibit it, but how can a state actually *be* an agent? This is an ontological question first – particularly if one approaches this question from the perspective of scientific realism. Wendt posits that the state has agential capacity and, perhaps more controversially, that it is ‘a person’. In order to claim the former, something like the latter would have to be true. So how does he do this? First of all, it is worth noting that Wendt is a scientific realist, and it is worth highlighting again because when he argues that the state is a person, he means it.

Scientific realists ask: what must *be* the case in order for such and such to be possible (Dean et al 2005), what must *exist* in order to explain a certain occurrence. For example, what must *be* the case in order to explain why apples consistently fall downwards from the tree when overripe? The answer, or at least a large part of it, is gravity, and this unobservable background process or mechanism must exist in order to explain like occurrences. This is not to say that once posited gravity takes on a transcendental quality, or that empiricism is the necessary epistemology, only that gravity is intransitive. That is to say no matter what we think about it (though we may come to understand it better), gravity exerts causal pressures that are impervious to our preferences. Moreover, understanding the nature of gravity allows scientists to perform elaborate experiments and launch humans into space. Scientists do not proceed *as if* gravity existed (but some might think like this and this does not affect gravity itself), but know that it must exist in order to be able to explain why it is *always* so difficult to launch a rocket and why things *always* fall towards earth (Bhaskar 1978, 1989). For scientific realists, the same principle of realism applies to ideas, to social forms and facts and to abstract theory. Holding *particular* ideas about the state explains why people act in certain ways, however, our ideas might not correspond to what actually exists. There is always an intransitive reality behind what is directly observable that we gain progressively better (or in degenerating research programmes, worse) access to it through theory building and empirical analysis. The point is that

there is a world out there that exists independently of what we think of it and it is the purpose of science to plumb its depths.

So, for Wendt, positing the reality of the personhood of the state is important because it helps explain effects in the world. It is real rather than a convenient fiction. His theory of corporate agency allows us to theorise anarchy as populated by states-as-persons and it is only if we posit this reality that we can explain why international relations has the character it does. States-as-persons have identities and while anarchy, for Wendt, is permissive, its existence alone cannot explain, nor is it causal of, war, conflict or anything else. For that we need to understand the mutual constitution of state identity and from there we will see that 'anarchy is what states make of it.' (Wendt, 1991) This is not a metaphor, nor is it an analogy. 'States are people too.' (Wendt, 2004)

In order to get to the position where it becomes possible to talk of corporate agency, Wendt, like a good neo-realist, must reject reductionism and must define 'personhood'. In the context of his argument this first involves rejecting the idea that consciousness can be reduced to the hard matter of the brain, a position we might also call materialism or, more technically, 'physicalism'. Drawing on a large and growing body of scientific literature, Wendt sustains the argument that consciousness is more than the sum, or the co-acting parts of the brain. Consciousness is dependent upon, but irreducible to, brain matter. Furthermore, he argues, personhood is irreducible to consciousness, and involves formal and informal social recognition. Identity-production is, Wendt argues, 'mutually constituted' through social interactions, specifically 'process', (learning and ideas), and 'institutions' (or rules, norms etc) (Wendt 1991). But at the core of personhood, for Wendt at least, are three things: intentionality, an organism, and the ability to have 'consciousness, by which I mean a capacity for first-person subjective experience' (2004: 296). In order for states to be persons, they too must exhibit these features and to defend this position Wendt turns to five further bodies of literature that supports the idea that groups can be persons in this way. These literatures focus on the concepts of intentional *systems*, supervenience, emergence, superorganisms and collective conscience. States are people, Wendt argues, because just like people, the state as a collective agent can be shown to be an intentional super-organism with first person subjective experience. The question is, how?

Wendt argues that for groups to have collective intentionality they must fulfil three conditions. First, groups must have a collective 'idea' which provides them with group identity. Secondly, decision-making in the group must be institutionalised. And third, the decisions of the group must be considered authoritative and direct the actions of the constitutive individuals. While 'group intentions [...] are dependent on the structured interaction of individuals' (Wendt, 2004: 298), group intentionality, once constituted, shapes the actions of individuals in turn, through a feedback process. It is this collective decision that is irreducible to any one individual and the fact that it shapes individual behaviour, the fact that it is causal, sustains the argument that it is therefore real (for more on this see Kurki 2008). In this sense, group intentions *supervene* those of individuals. Supervenience is an argument that posits that 'We-intentions' are not reducible to 'I-intentions' but that the collective form of the former needs some form of collective agreement that the supervening nature of group intentions and decisions are consensually acceded to. Take a class action law suit for example, or the democratic decisions of a trade union. So in this sense, groups have first-person-plural-intentionality. This might be possible in relation to a church group or parish council, but Wendt moves from these arguments regarding small groups to his state-as-a-person argument without taking a breath. He argues that 'even though the intentions of a state person at any given moment are ontologically dependent on its constituent members, its intentions are not dependent on any *particular* members' (ibid: 300) and it is in this collective capacity that individuals are simply *supervenied*. The question is, can we make such a leap? Are we all plugged directly into the state person? Clearly not. If democracy was direct, then perhaps, but it is not, so how could we be?

Wendt is understandably unhappy with this supervenience argument for two reasons that I do not share. First, supervenience theory is *too reductionist* for Wendt because it presupposes the formally *structured* interaction of individuals and the clear apportioning of agency to key individuals. He does not state clearly why this is a problem, but we might postulate that it is precisely because in the absence of direct democracy the state clearly cannot be shown to supervene the individual. Wendt turns to the concept of *emergence*, which he argues captures the reality of collective agency more adequately and allows him to ignore the problem of individual agency and individual intentionality. With the concept of emergence, Wendt is better able to argue that collective ideas are *irreducible* to those of individuals irrespective of formal decision making procedures. So-conceived, a collective

'brain state', such as a State's decision to go to war, is 'relatively insensitive to which of its members hold it' (ibid: 299). Again, the point here is to show that collective intentions, 'in this case state persons' (ibid: 304), cannot be reduced to individuals, but that individuals mutually constitute the higher-order relations that emerge from their interactions. Where supervenience theory demands the need to pay attention to the formal mechanisms and processes of decision-making, emergence theory does not.

We can make this clear in the following way. Wendt's aim is to consistently distance himself from the physicalist bias in supervenience theory and avoid reductionism. He needs to do this for three reasons. First, to be a consistent neo-realist, he must be able to avoid 'second image' theory. Secondly, he must make this move in order to sustain the argument that the state is *sui generis* and *also* the collective and irreducible expression of the intentionality of all that reside within its jurisdiction. Finally, if we are to maintain the statist ontology of the international system, this is what he *must* do. The problem is that Wendt is inconsistent in his definition of emergence. Wendt defines emergence like this: 'in the emergence approach individual intentions are constituted by shared meanings in which they are embedded, making the relationship between individual and group intentions *mutually* constitutive rather than asymmetric' (ibid: 305). But if Wendt is to be consistent he must surely argue that emergence produces qualities that are *irreducible* to their constituent units – otherwise some sort of physicalism would do just fine – as Wight argues (see below).

I hope I have now outlined coherently how Wendt conceptualises the *possibility* of collective intentionality, it remains to be seen how Wendt describes how states *are* collectively *conscious* and organisms. First of all, Wendt employs two further theories or concepts to sustain the unitary collective intentions of his states-as-persons. The concept of a superorganism is quite straightforward to explain. An anthill or a termite mound, for example, is a superorganism. It is irreducible to an ant but through the collective actions of ants, the anthill is a living thing and is the precondition of the life of an ant. It is not the vessel for a lot of ants; it is fundamentally part of the possibility of being an ant and yet is irreducible *to* ants. A vast school of fish, a flock of starlings coming in to roost, a hive of bees and so on, might also be thought of in this way. Wendt argues that states are the same and echoes centuries of political theory in suggesting that life without states is nigh impossible.

We might argue for the sake of illustration, that religions are a manifestation of collective conscience. They are functionally and conceptually distinct conceptual systems, internally complex and structured, *and* they are irreducible to the intentions of individuals and the material institutions and social structures in which they exist. They nevertheless give meaning to an individual and a social group that is derived from the collective itself, and for many their existential existence would be incomprehensible without it. It is irrelevant whether religion is true or not, or whether God exists or not (the existence of religion does not prove the existence of God). It suffices to say that religion does exist, as does the idea of God, and that both are causal and dependent on collective consciousness. This is what I would call the 'Tinkerbell thesis' – when the last person to remember what a fairy is finally forgets about fairies, they will cease to exist. However, the concept of 'collective conscience' is relatively under-developed by Wendt and this is a shame. Wendt does not discuss it in nearly as much detail as he does the other concepts.

I will develop this analysis considerably in my discussion of Proudhon's work, but a few conjectures as to why Wendt leaves this part of his work relatively under-exploited will open this up to some critique. We might conclude from the narrative, a narrative I cannot for reasons of space reproduce adequately here, that Wendt feels uncomfortable with the logical conclusions of his argument. If we marry collective conscience with his argument that the state is a 'homeostatic cluster' of sovereignty, an authoritative and determining legal institutional-order, a monopoly of legitimate violence, an undifferentiated society and a determinate and defended territory (Wendt 1999: 202 emphasis added), the 'uncomfortable truths' Wendt highlights for liberals become more pronounced. Wendt argues that liberal individualism simply cannot be squared with this organismic theory of state agency and yet it is uncomfortably familiar when we read it against the history of statism of the right and left (Wendt 2004: 292). What worries Wendt is the idea that the scientific literature points in precisely *this* direction. The statism that Wendt knew was 'depressingly familiar' in his early work (Wendt 1991: 163), here takes on a far more ominous tone. Indeed, how ought we to consider the world state Wendt sees as inevitable (Wendt 2003) if individuals are not even politically significant in relation to states!?

But is Wendt right to see states as the only groups? Would it not be more realistic to keep the theory of group personhood at the level of groups? Is the state really a super-group? Does he not recognise the existence of a huge body of *pluralist* literature? The answer is no. In *Social Theory of International Politics* in a somewhat thin analysis of pluralist state theory that extends across less than two pages, Wendt summarises that for pluralists the term 'state' '*is really just society*', more narrowly still it refers to 'interest groups and individuals' (Ibid: 200 emphasis added). While he recognises the importance of the literature, in Wendt's hands interest groups drop out and society becomes composed of nothing more than atom-like individuals united in a common sense of a shared destiny. Social pluralism can be ignored because if pluralism is nothing more than society, that can simply be explained away as the 'shared knowledge that induces them [people] to follow most of the rules of their society most of the time' (ibid: 209). This disaggregated or homogenous conception of society is a huge oversimplification, but one that is central to sustaining the parsimony and coherence of Wendt's social theory, in particular his theory of the personhood of the state. Wendt is quite explicit that his argument that 'states are people too' (ibid: 215) reaffirms the explanatory efficacy of the "billiard ball" model of states in systemic IR' (ibid: 202).

State sovereignty trumps pluralism. Wendt argued that the mutual recognition of sovereignty by states in 'mature anarchies' 'determines the qualities of their interactions'. Sovereignty provides 'a social basis for the individuality and security of states [and ...] The essence of this community is a mutual recognition of one another's right to exercise exclusive political authority within territorial limits.' (Wendt 1992: 146-147) This internal constitution of a state's 'individuality' is sustained and enforced by 'regular practices [which] produce mutually constituting sovereign identities (agents) and their associated institutional norms (structures).' (ibid: 151)

Wendt has hoped from the outset of his investigations that the state has a progressive nature (Wendt 1991: 163-164), but not only is it hard to see where it derives its legitimacy from in this analysis, but it seems his own conclusions lead him to the position that it is fundamentally illiberal. The harder Wendt pushes in the directions he wishes to, the less Kantian states seem and the more Hobbesian they become.ⁱⁱ If a world state is inevitable at all, I think Wendt has mischaracterised its cause and future form. At least if we follow his way of conceptualising state agency the future is dystopian.

Wight – the state as structure

Wight, sensing the morally questionable direction this sort of theory leads, rejects it. His conclusion is that 'we must reject any notion of the state as a psychological person and *inter alia* any ascription of moral personhood to the state. This is not to say that the state cannot be held causally, or legally accountable, but it is in its status as a structural entity that this accountability occurs.' (Wight, 2007: 194) For Wight, Wendt's personification 'accords human *agency* no role', because real human agents that act in the world are 'theoretically redundant' 'cultural dopes' (ibid: 198, 183). Despite both scholars sharing a scientific realist philosophy of science, Wendt and Wight disagree fundamentally in their analysis of the nature of the state. They primarily disagree over the ontological status of individuals, structures and groups. However, like Wendt, Wight refuses to engage with pluralist state theory. Wight prefers to reduce agency to individuals and all other forces in the social world are a manifestation of the enabling and constraining powers of structures. What I will show is that Wight has thrown the proverbial baby out with the bathwater.

So what is the bathwater in this instance? What is it Wight objects to? There are two types of objections: ontological and political. Turning to the first set first, Wight objects to Wendt's structurationist approach to emergence, which he understands as 'mutual constitution'. If it is the constituent parts that are ontologically determinate, if it is individuals in groups that are the ontologically prior, why postulate an emergent property? This goes for state agency also. If individuals is all the state is comprised of, at least all that is ontologically and politically significant, surely on this basis, Wight argues, a 'reductionist explanatory programme would suffice' (Wight 2007: 145). I'm not sure this is an accurate reading of Wendt's position, because Wendt does defend emergence, but still the argument is sound vis-à-vis Wendt's defence of supervenience and the mutual constitution of sovereignty. However, this claim does draw our attention to one other inconsistency. If Wendt is serious about emergence, the attribution of human characteristics to something which must be *irreducible* to individuals, it implies that either Wendt is *personifying* states, which is not a realist position, or he is not committed to emergence theory at all. States cannot *be* persons, because we all know what persons are. Wight is surely right to argue therefore that 'Wendt's theory of the state rests

on the classic error of methodological structuralism: the attribution of the agential powers and attributes of human agents to a collective social form.’ (Ibid: 188) But can we not postulate two types of agential powers: those that are human and those that are emergent collective powers? This is something I will turn to below.

In an attempt to sort this out, Wight turns to his structure/agent dyad and setting out this problematique will help us make sense of why Wight rejects corporate agency in relation to state theory. First of all, all sorts of things can be classed as structures for Wight: rules, buildings, capitalism, and so on, and this makes his analysis somewhat loose. Furthermore, ‘[s]tructure’ he argues, also ‘binds the various planes of the social world [e.g., resources, rules, class, identity] together’ (Wight 2007: 175). Turning to individuals, and paraphrasing Roy Bhaskar, Wight supports the argument that ‘nothing happens in the social world but through the actions of individuals’ (Wight, 2007: 187), and from the relevant passages in Bhaskar’s work it is clear that Bhaskar also means that there are two things in the social world, individuals and structures. It is unclear whether Bhaskar intends structures to include such things as trade unions or prayer meetings, transnational de-centred social movements or just formal institutions, but it is clear for Bhaskar that structures are ‘*enabling*, not just coercive’ of *individuals* (Bhaskar 1989: 43). In sum, for both Wight and Bhaskar, just about anything that is not an individual is a structure.

The way this works out in state theory is to see states as ‘rule structures’, and ‘the idea of a rule structure that authorises some agents to act in certain ways does not require that we then assign intentionality and personhood to the structure. The state functions well enough in this role as structure whilst leaving room for human agency.’ (Wight, 2007: 185) Wight fleshes this out with smatterings of twentieth century Marxist state theory. For example, paraphrasing Bob Jessop, Wight posits that ‘[a] state can be considered a structuratum consisted of many structured organisational entities and institutions, which are themselves structured in certain ways.’ (Wight 2007: 219) Within these structures, the only things that exist that are of sufficient ontological import to warrant inclusion in any state theory are individuals. Wight leans on Ralph Miliband for support and argues that ‘it is the government which speaks on the state’s behalf ... It is these [governmental] institutions in which state power lies and it is through them that this power is wielded in its different manifestations by the people

who occupy the leading positions in each of these institutions' (Ibid: 182). In these, 'complex institutional ensembles', a phrase Wight takes from Marx, individuals are both constrained and enabled depending on their subject-position. State activity cannot be reduced to individuals, but we can see the state as 'the totality of this structured ensemble' (Ibid: 220). Wight is categorical: 'State activity is always the activity of particular individuals acting within particular social forms.' (Ibid: 188). 'If the state has agency, it can only be accessed through the agency of individuals' (Ibid: 189). 'In short the state does not exercise power, but facilitates the exercise of power by agents.' (Ibid: 220)

But what does Wight explicitly say about groups? He first defines them on methodologically individualist grounds, as a collection of individuals, and then dismisses them on these grounds as being unrealistic. Wight argues that '[t]he simple point is that the state is not simply a group of individuals, nor is it composed of only a collection of groups. Groups are not the issue in relation to state agency unless the state is nothing more than a group of individuals.' (Wight, 2007: 186) Clearly Wight is right that if Wendt sees the state as nothing more than a large group of individuals then he is wrong, but he also agrees with Wendt that 'individuality presupposes the group' (ibid) and on this reading, while Wight is right to criticize Wendt's methodological individualism, he has overlooked his organicism and elided the problem of non-state groups altogether. Groups are the issue at hand if we refuse to supervene them with an organicist state theory. Wendt can only sustain his notion of the state-person by presupposing the state to consist of nothing other than individuals, but this is all Wight will subscribe to too. Wendt refuses the idea that states might be composed of multiple groups *and* individuals that are free to move between them, and refused to acknowledge that a quite separate theory is needed to show how relatively autonomous groups can cohere in a particular time and place in such a way as to make the state. The shape of any actually existing state must always be specified empirically as a specific constellation of groups and individuals cohering within very specific structures, or, in the absence of structures, informally or accidentally.

Colin Wight also rejects pluralism. Following Seamus Miller, Wight argues that to explain social outcomes we need to distinguish between social groups, institutions and organisations. This should be a fantastic addition to his theory. By showing that groups, institutions (rules, norms etc) and organisations (structures) are functionally distinct but overlap, this would allow us to disaggregate

states and embedded them in wider social complexes. Yet Wight maintains that 'social groups consist of a set of individuals who participate in a number of spheres, or fields, of activity governed by a common structure'. (ibid: 201) This is not exactly reductionist, but it is clearly not emergentist either. It makes one wonder why Wight would criticise Wendt for failing to take account of the flaws of individualism and reductionism if he is not willing to pursue emergence theory himself. Wight is surely right to bring *individual* agency back to IR and to show how the state is a complex structure, but is this really all there is? When Wight discusses groups, organisations and institutions, it is only individuals and structures that are ontologically significant. The emergent, irreducible group drops out. It seems Wendt does not have the conceptual tools to relate individuals to groups in ways that respect the autonomy and irreducible quality of both and he is so intent to criticise Wendt's organicism that he leaves no room for considering that the state might actually be a group – even if one amongst many.

Finally, it is because Wight sees everything that is not an individual as a manifestation of structure that he has an extremely thin understanding of anarchy. In one of the two places Wight mentions the concept of anarchy he sees it as a structure: 'Anarchy [...as a structure] has to be seen as part of what a state is, and what a state does' (Wight, 2007: 293). It seems that what Wight is implying here is that the structure of anarchy is implicated in the structure of the state, but this theory of anarchy is inevitably lame and Wendt's social ontology is over determined and overly structured. Wight's social ontology feels almost claustrophobic. Anarchy could be considered emancipatory in this context too.

Proudhon, social pluralism and the state as a 'natural group'

If Wendt sees the state as a person and for Wight it is a structure, for Proudhon the state was a relatively distinct body of people who constituted themselves, and were historically impelled to so constitute themselves as a group. For Proudhon, 'natural groups' emerge in time and out of the confluence of social forces and individual and collective initiative. They are irreducible to any given individual, but, as I will show, individuals are central to this political ontology. The implications of this theory for a theory of anarchy are clear. Multiple groups presumes a far more complex anarchy. Normative theories of sovereignty are second order theories that are applied to explain and justify a particular constellation of social groups and key individuals within them. What I will do here is explain

how we might understand the ontology of society from a Proudhonist perspective so that we might not only resolve some of the issues at stake in the debate between Wight and Wendt, but also so that we can open up our understanding of anarchy, anarchism and emancipation.

I will first set out Proudhon's credentials as a scientific realist and then I will set out his theory of corporate or group agency. It will become clear that on many issues Wendt would likely concur with Proudhon's ideas. I will spend rather more time on the discussion of the relationship of individuals to groups in order to demonstrate that we need not lose a sense of individual agency when defending corporate agency and the irreducible and emergent properties of collective conscience and superorganisms. The key then is to show how we might link individuals and groups to some theory of the emergence of social structures which constrain and enable groups and individuals. I do this by discussing Proudhon's understanding and use of the concepts of alienation and appropriation to the already rather long list of novel concepts dealt with here. This will develop the argument in directions heretofore ignored in IR – that is in anarchist directions.

As the eminent Sorbonne sociologist George Gurvitch has argued, Proudhon set out his 'social science' in the context of the twin intellectual hegemony of the sociological positivism of Auguste Comte, which claimed the historically predestined triumph of the technocratic bourgeois state, and individualist tendencies of neo-Kantianism (Gurvitch 1965) which celebrated the rights of man. Positivism had a bad name even then, and it is for this reason that Proudhon refused either the term sociology or positivism for his work, and preferred the term 'social science' to describe what he did (Noland 1967).

It is impossible to set out in detail here the complexities of the intellectual context, but suffice to say that the core features of Comte's sociology was its philosophical realism and its structural materialism. What riled liberal and neo-Kantian commentators, such as J. S. Mill for example, was the total erasure of the individual by this realist philosophy (Mill 1993).ⁱⁱⁱ For the Kantians the solution was an idealist philosophical ontology and political philosophy to reclaim the free-thinking individual from the collectivism of the Positivists. Proudhon also refused the collectivist path, synonymous with the republican communism of Louis Blanc amongst others, and embraced the individual. And yet he also

refused the tendency towards the nominalism of philosophical idealism that 'made collective beings and the power (*puissance*) within them [...mere] words or conceptions' (Proudhon 1860: 135). For Proudhon, 'collective beings are realities in the same way as individuals' (ibid: 112). The question is how does Proudhon understand this relationship?

Proudhon's philosophical realism was characterised by a relational ontology. Throughout his works there is constant reference to debates in philosophy that attempted to divine the final or true nature of being, or the 'thing in itself'. This was a chimera in Proudhon's eyes. For him, as for Comte, the only way to understand ontology and being was relationally.

Science tells us that all bodies are *composite* [...] held together by an attraction, a force [...] What is force? It is like substance, like atoms which it holds together, a thing that is inaccessible to the senses, which the intelligence can only grasp through its manifestations and as the expression of a relation.

The RELATION, there, in the final analysis, is what all phenomenology, all reality, all force, all existence, boils down to' (ibid: 135).

The concept of force is central to Proudhon's naturalist political ontology. On the first page of his 'Short Political Catechism' Proudhon argues that 'force is inherent or immanent in being' (ibid: 111). While inanimate objects exert force-as-resistance, when force emerges through the layers of society, from natural forces to social ones, it changes in quality. Other things exert force in different ways, either through their combination in chemical processes, by being ruled by gravitational forces, and so on. In the social world force also underlies all social relations, but what distinguishes society from nature is our ability to reflexively coordinate and control forces to our own ends. Proudhon distinguishes between *la force*, *puissance* and *pouvoir* (Proudhon 1998: 140). The former is a base capacity, the second an emergent collective product (for example, three men combining their force to move a large rock), and the third is a political and social capacity. In the latter, the way in which force is organised and directed is what gives it its distinctive and emergent quality as *power*. Viewed in this way we can see what Proudhon means when he argues that 'power is immanent in society'

(Proudhon 1863: 116). These distinctions become important when we discuss the nature of collective forces, but all we need retain here is that force is at the base of Proudhon's realist, relational ontology.

For Proudhon, all things in nature exert force differentially and all social relations are thus of necessity asymmetric. To understand a force one must understand it within the relations which constitute it as he puts it, out of the free arrangement of the parts 'a force emerges (*jaillit*)' (ibid: 117). Thus, any force is always already an emergent property. However, when forces cohere and combine, 'the synthetic *puissance* is consequently unique to the group, superior in quality and energy to the sum of the elementary forces of which it is composed.' (Ibid: 112) It is the cohesion of forces which give 'things' their particular quality. Proudhon argues that the relations that constitute social force, *puissance* or *pouvoir*, are, of necessity, 'commutative' (Proudhon 1860: 133, 114), which implies two things for Proudhon. First, relations imply no transcendent principle of ordering, and secondly that the ordering exhibits no necessary or natural hierarchy.

In the social world, at least in the social world of mid nineteenth-century France, the primary political force was the individual, himself (rarely were women accorded political capacity) a bundle of composite forces, but irreducible to the matter of the body and the unique nature of each individual is what makes them inviolable. Proudhon follows Kant here arguing that 'the end of man is in himself' (Proudhon 1988/1998: 347). However, Proudhon also argues that 'collective beings are as much realities as individuals' (Proudhon 1988/1998: 694); 'just as individualism is the primordial factor in humanity, so association is its complementary term. Both are present constantly.' (cited in Edwards 1969: 232) While they are present constantly, and individuals are ends in themselves, *pace* Kant, Proudhon argued that 'the action of society on the individual is also immense. The result is that man can never completely escape this influence in any of his acts, in any of his sentiments, in any of his predispositions or in the potentialities of his nature'. (Proudhon 1988/1990: 1565) Also, Proudhon is quite clear that the 'synthetic ideas' that arise from the confluence of opinions are 'very different, often also the inverse of my own conclusions [...] But let it be noted that this conversion does not assume the condemnation of individuality; it presupposes it.' (Proudhon 1988/1990: 1261)

So what constitutes the political capacity of the 'social' or 'collective being'? Proudhon argued that for a group or individual to have real capacity it must fulfil three criteria, reminiscent of Wendt's criteria for the intentionality of groups (see above). First, a group must have consciousness of itself, its dignity, value and place in society. Secondly, the group must *affirm* this idea as a manifestation of its *understanding* of social life. Finally, it is no good to simply think it through and proclaim it – the idea of collective or individual capacity must be affirmed *practically* (ibid: 88-89). This process would formalise society's 'natural groups', which Proudhon defined as any groups that 'willy-nilly impose upon themselves some conditions of solidarity [...] which soon constitutes itself into a city or a political organism, affirms itself in its unity, its independence, its life or its own movement (autokinesis), and its autonomy.' (cited in Vincent 1984: 218)

Note here the distinction between Wendt's criteria here and Proudhon's. For Wendt the final criteria for group intentionality is that the group decision must be binding and authoritative – none can disobey. For Proudhon this criterion is not a pre-requisite of group agency. There are two reasons for this. First, groups can act without some of their members and even without the consent of some of their members. And one of the qualities of states, for example, is that they rarely ask for permission to act – it is presumed that they can. For Proudhon, groups cohere and dissolve with changes in social and internal circumstance and individuals need not be coerced. Indeed, the 'collective being is neither phantom nor abstraction, but an existence' and the 'quality of social power will vary, its intensity will rise and fall, depending on the number and the differences of groups'. (Proudhon 1988/1990: 724) 'Unity' however, 'is immutability.' (Proudhon 1863: 118) This distinction is key, since for Proudhon it is the free movement of people and groups which generates social dynamism.

Over time, different groups emerge and constitute themselves in various ways for collective ends and treaties and law constitutes not only the internal relations of groups, but also inter-group relations. Society is naturally composed of plural social forces, collective and individual. While modern liberal society might have individuated its constitutive elements 'natural groups' persist *without* political form, solely as *puissance* – the working class may not have consciousness of itself now, perhaps we need to re-specify its contours, but it is a latent force nonetheless. The *Magna Carta*, for example, specified the inter-relationships between the King and Barons, while the contemporary constellation of the

British political system is one which originally recognised a *particular* constellation of quite distinct collective force: the Lords, the Commons, the King or monarchy, and with the emergence of the Labour party in the twentieth century, the workers or people. For as long as groups remain sociologically distinguishable one from the other, social pluralism exists. Moreover, social groups need not be part of the political order in order to have collective force and constitute social power. Consider the emergence of an industrial labour movement and its unionisation, the rise of religious groups, student groups, terrorist groups, and so forth. Each of these groups is historically situated and distinct, and asymmetrically related.

All human groups, families, workshops, battalions, can be regarded as social embryos; consequently, the forces which inhere in these groups can to a certain measure form the base of political power. But in general, it is not from the group as we have defined it that the polity, the State, is born. The state results from the reunion of many different groups in nature and object, each formed for the exercise of a special function and the creation of a particular product, then brought together (*ralliés*) through common law and identical interest. (ibid: 112-113)

It is clear that Proudhon is here claiming the state to be an emergent totality of all social forms, but I want to reject this theory for third reasons. First, even if we allow that states are a totality of social relations, what exactly that totality is will be an empirical question and the emergent properties of the state will reflect the specific content of those relations. However, the historical record suggests that the most totalising states, the most organically coherent, failed because it was clear that they could neither be maintained nor could they resist the wrath of 'the other'. I speak here of Nazi Germany and Stalin's Russia of course, but others examples are legion. Secondly, totalising the state in this way concedes too much to the statist ideology and makes real an unhelpful metaphor. be from the confluence of social groups or whether this is an idealised metaphor. Thirdly, elsewhere in his writings, Proudhon argues for a functionalist democracy (ibid: 142), and elsewhere he states quite clearly that the normal functions of the state, *Conseil d'État*, the *Corps Legislatif*, *Sénat* and so on, would be superfluous to a better organised society. What the state can or cannot do is intimately

related to what we think the state is and Proudhon's emaciated state was surely not the totality of social relations.

What is perhaps even more interesting for our purposes is that for Proudhon law, constitutions and treaties were essentially the same thing: the codification of the 'balance of economic and social forces' (Proudhon 1860: 131; cf. Proudhon 1863:129) and the mark of civilisation, Proudhon argued, is the ability of social groups and inter-group relations to self-regulate harmoniously and continue to do so on the basis of both unspoken and formalised constitutional agreement; the more complex, harmonious and auto-kinetic, the more civilised that society. When the social conventions which hold these relations of group-power break down, society collapses, illustrating how fragile social order is, but also, given the relative infrequency of civilisational collapse, how relatively enduring and stable it is. (Proudhon 1998: 143) What we need then is some idea of how this takes place.

This way of understanding law as the formalisation of social order is important. There is however one other way in which we must consider the relation of law to the real social order in order to get a handle on anarchy. Proudhon argues that there are two types of capacity – "legal" and "real". Legal capacity is treated by Proudhon as relatively self-evident. It refers to all those human and collective activities that are recognised and either sanctified or prohibited by law and underpinned by force. Law "confers" capacity upon individuals and groups by supporting their occurrence or prohibiting them by force. "Real" capacity, on the other hand, is pre-legal or socially emergent derived from the forces that underpin law (Proudhon 1982: 88). We need to make this distinction in order to understand how the formal legal and juridical order ought not to be conflated with the real social order. Sovereignty might be a principle of social order, but it is not reflected in the real social world as most in the modern world recognise.

Thus far I have set out Proudhon's theory of force, *puissance* and *pouvoir*, his relational ontology a realist approach to 'collective beings' and a defence of the individual. We should also by now have some idea of how groups cohere and form themselves into larger polities. What we need in order to complete this social ontology is some sense of how these forces and powers are structures socially and exactly how we ought to consider the relationship of the individual to the group and how *particular*

constellations of social forces create objective contradictions which lead to their collapse. Let us flesh this out with the example of an orchestra, a workshop and a democratic polity, all constituted in different ways, and let us add two additional concepts, 'alienation' and 'appropriation', both of which are central to Proudhon's political ontology.

Consider first an orchestra. The individual material instruments used by an orchestra are obviously vital to the emergent music, but the music which issues cannot be reduced to any one material instrument. Indeed, in the same way that instruments are collections of forces (the density of the wood, the tension in the strings), the individuals that play instruments have their own irreducible styles and characters with which they relate to the instrument and the score. In an orchestra musicians do not do as they please; they *alienate* that part of their autonomy necessary to produce collective ends, i.e., the music. The musicians also alienate part of their autonomy to the conductor who then guides the music and gives it his or her own interpretation. The musicians are not 'cultural dopes' in this schema even though the collective force or music is clearly emergent. Indeed, they are presupposed by the collective force itself. Furthermore, maintaining our relational ontology, the conductor cannot 'be' without his or her orchestra – his or her social power is dependent on the willing self-coordination of the musicians under his or her direction. These social relations constitute the social force, or *pouvoir politique*, of the orchestra and the political role of the conductor. However, the relationship is *not* mutually constitutive, since the collective force that emerges from the orchestra, rather than each individual musician, is irreducible, directed by an individual *and* there is a process of feedback when the conductor imparts his style and interpretation to the music. Mutual or co-constitution does not capture the emergent relations intrinsic to being able to explain this process.

Another example prominent throughout Proudhon's work is that of the workshop. Let us assume a *capitalist* workshop in which the workers produce and the manager coordinates. We have brute force, tools, social *puissance* again and social *pouvoir*. However, the *alienation* of the workers' autonomy is of a quite different sort to that of our orchestra. In capitalist social relations the workers alienate not only their individual labour-time but also their right to the collective surplus product of that collective labour. Collective forces produce surplus irreducible to any one individual, since without the collective labour the surplus would be impossible to attain (for a full discussion of these issues see Proudhon

1994). However, the capitalist has legal title to this surplus, sustained by state force, and can make off with it *alone*. The relation of the capitalist individual to the workshop-as-group is characterised by alienation *and* appropriation with the social relations sanctified by law and defended by force.

Proudhon also made a similar argument vis-à-vis representative democracies (Proudhon 1989). Rousseau's General Will, for example, is the collective expression of the political agency of a distinct group of individuals (the limited suffrage of men). But as Proudhon pointed out, in reality, in the representative system the state as a group *appropriates* this alienated political autonomy and the political class constitute the state-as-group with an emergent force, puissance and *pouvoir* of their own: it is, he argued, as in the factory system, 'collective force converted into monopoly' (Proudhon 1860: 120).

What Wendt saw as 'uncomfortable truths' for liberals, Proudhon saw as a deliberate policy by elites to curtail the franchise they were loath to accede to. In order to counter this, Proudhon turns liberal theory on itself as part of an immanent critique. In order to respect the autonomy of the individual and to give full voice to her agential capacity, groups must institute direct, rather than representative democracy. As Proudhon argued,

If political right is inherent in man and the citizen, consequently if all suffrage must be direct, the same right is also logically inherent to each group naturally formed by citizens, to each corporation, each commune or city; suffrage in each of these groups must be equally *direct*. (Proudhon 1865:286 emphasis added)

If these groups are constituted by direct democracy it follows that while the group decision is emergent, each had a hand in coming to it and alienated only that portion necessary to come to the decision. Proudhon argued that the only system that could adequately accommodate this social pluralism and direct democracy is asymmetric federalism (Proudhon 1979). Here, groups of all different sizes and functions would align according to function or geography in an infinitely complex tapestry of contractual relations. This system would be a radically decentralised neo-medieval order in which 'the circumference is everywhere, the centre nowhere. This is unity.' (Proudhon cited in Vincent

1984: 215) Groups like trade unions, towns, regions and nations have both relative ontological and political autonomy and individuals are free to come and go or join as many groups as they chose. This is no utopia – this is what is happening on a daily basis anyway. Without the state's claim to sovereignty, a claim we each collude in daily by refusing to reject it, the social order would be anarchic. That is to say it would be without a formal hierarchy. This is not to say that it would come to a transcendent order, but we would, by this analysis, have a far more autonomous existence in our relative groups than we are expected to enjoy in the state. Indeed, seeing the social and the political in this way is far more realistic than the image of the political handed down to us by realists and liberal realists such as Alex Wendt. Indeed, as Proudhon argued in *Si les Traités de 1815 ont cessé d'exister* (1863) the anarchic, relatively autonomous relations of states, but one group among many, provide a suitable model for the wholesale reorganisation of groups relations as such. The interrelations of groups would be embedded in treaty and social contract, and their relations asymmetrically federated. Individuals and social groups would be related to one another formally through constitutions that set down their mutual rights vis-à-vis one another and the formal anarchy of the system would ensure that none was legally mandated to be sovereign – a world without sovereigns. Anarchy, for Proudhon, was not only the underlying pre-requisite of all social change (if social order did follow some trans-historical law freedom would be chimera), it ought also therefore be the regulative principle of social order. For Proudhon, like for Kant, the critical project involved bringing political society into harmony with the underlying forces of the universe. Since the latter were anarchic – exhibiting no transcendent principle – so should society.

Conclusion

Ironically, as I suggested in my introduction, IR theorists are uniquely positioned intellectually (if not necessarily politically) to be the most rigorous anarchist theorists. IR theorists have spent the past fifty years moving from a crude realism to a sense of how social groups cohere and self-regulate or self-govern their interrelations without a sovereign. While a realist might argue that a world of plural social groups would be more dangerous than one with fewer, liberals would surely point to the mollifying effects of institutions, while constructivists and sociological liberals would look to the character of the groups and the norms groups of groups subscribe to which help regulate and shape their interactions

in cooperative ways. Critical theorists would again simply point out how capitalism and the state-group, rather than anarchy *per se*, produce objective contradictions which bring disequilibrium to the social order, and so on and so forth. A world of 147 state-groups would feel far less threatening if these state groups were actually answerable or controlled by the millions of other groups of which world society is formed.

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ⁱⁱ Robert Paul Wolff (1998) has argued that any consistent Kantianism leads directly to anarchism not a world state, which at a minimum complicates Wendt's neat theory, but more damagingly illustrates what a poor political and social theorist a background in IR makes us.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is worth noting that Hegel was relatively unknown in France at this time. See Kelley (1981).