



## **HANS JOAS' CREATIVITY THEORY OF ACTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR RECONSTRUCTIVE ANARCHISM**

**Tristan Guillermo Torriani**

Doutor em Filosofia pelo IFCH, UNICAMP – SP - Brasil.  
tristan.torriani@fca.unicamp.br

**Abstract:** *Hans Joas has recently developed a Pragmatist theory of action that posits creativity (understood as an innovative problem-solving solution that alternates between habit and adjustment) as a precondition for all human behavior. His aim is to provide a fundamental action-theoretical alternative that departs from the assumptions of rational action theory, be it teleological (Utilitarian) or normative. While his proposal has been well received, several objections have been raised against it. After presenting his main theses and the major criticisms made to his theory, I examine its implications for a reconstruction of Anarchism. Creativity in the Anarchist tradition is very central as form of human development, both on the individual and collective levels, but Joas' concepts of "situated creativity" and "primary sociality" requires a revision of classical Anarchist demands for individualism and equality. I nevertheless show that Joas' Pragmatism and Bakunin's Anarchism are compatible to a considerable degree.*

**Keywords:** *Hans Joas. Creativity. Action Theory. Anarchism. Pragmatism. M. A. Bakunin.*

### **A TEORIA DA AÇÃO CRIATIVA DE HANS JOAS E SUAS IMPLICAÇÕES PARA UM ANARQUISMO RECONSTRUTIVO**

**Resumo:** Hans Joas recentemente elaborou uma teoria pragmatista da ação que postula a criatividade (entendida como solução inovadora de problemas que alterna entre hábito e ajuste) como pré-condição de todo comportamento humano. Seu objetivo é prover uma alternativa fundamental na teoria da ação que se afasta dos pressupostos da teoria da ação racional, seja ela teleológica (utilitarista) ou normativa. Embora sua proposta tenha sido bem recebida, várias objeções foram levantadas contra ela. Após apresentar suas teses centrais e as críticas principais feitas à sua teoria, examino suas implicações para uma reconstrução do anarquismo. A criatividade na tradição anarquista é uma forma de desenvolvimento humano muito central seja no nível individual ou coletivo, mas os conceitos joasianos de "criatividade situada" e "socialidade primária" requerem uma revisão das exigências anarquistas clássicas por individualismo e igualdade. Mostro contudo que há uma compatibilidade considerável entre o pragmatismo de Joas e o anarquismo de Bakunin.

**Palavras-Chave:** Hans Joas. Criatividade. Teoria da Ação. Anarquismo. Pragmatismo. M. A. Bakunin

## Introduction

Hans Joas is, simply, as Benjamin Dalton (2004, p. 611) notes, “the foremost interpreter of pragmatism to a sociological audience today”. His book, *Die Kreativität des Handelns*, first published in German in 1992 and later translated to English in 1996, has been widely recognized as a substantial and original contribution to action theory. Charles Camic (1998, p. 283) goes so far as to claim that it merits direct comparison to Talcott Parsons' classic *The Structure of Social Action*. In Dalton's words, "Joas' work represents the most significant attempt to date to actively integrate a concept of creativity into modern social theories of human agency and action." (DALTON, 2004, p. 620)

Being both a philosopher and a sociologist, Joas' writings are of great interest for several reasons. On the philosophical side, he shows not only considerable knowledge of classical philosophical texts, but also follows contemporary developments in the field and is highly proficient in the way he formulates and positions his arguments. In addition, his standards of intellectual honesty and clarity are above average in a field where even major authors such as Luhmann and Habermas often exploit the complexity of social reality to provide evasive answers to foundational issues. On the sociological side, although several reviewers have criticized his theory as a mere prolegomenon without operational concepts and have rejected his attempt to extend action theory beyond microlevel analysis to macrosociological discussions, the fact that he visibly did do his philosophical homework makes him a much more trustworthy author (at least for a philosophical audience) than the typical functionalist systems theoretician who rather seems to be speculating *a priori* about how society should be modeled.

But perhaps the most important reason that makes Joas' work relevant is the productive way in which he articulates philosophy and sociology. In spite of recent successful attempts (see: GRANGER, 1988, p. 9 and, in particular, ROS, 2005, p. 91 and ROS, A. 1983, p. 45-48) to analytically demarcate a specific field for philosophical analysis (i.e., the clarification and explanation of concepts and distinctions, logical grammar, etc.) neither philosophy nor sociology benefit from separation, as the former loses content and the latter loses epistemological control or regulation. Joas shows a keen understanding of how a defective conceptual scheme compromises beforehand the empirical research that will be done based on flawed assumptions. He is also very apt at reconceptualizing phenomena by avoiding logical pitfalls such as false dichotomies, residual categories, hidden metaphors, explanatory gaps, etc. His ability to work on both the philosophical and the sociological levels without trying to reduce one to another in a misconceived “naturalization” gives him a clear advantage over other theoreticians who inevitably lose themselves (and their readers) in vague concepts and distinctions.

Joas' Creativity Theory of Action is hence the most important recent attempt to provide a new foundation for sociological theory while not losing sight of its empirical applications. The philosophical starting point of his endeavor is the Pragmatism of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. On the macrosociological level, Joas integrates both Dewey's wish for “creative democracy” and Mead's radical democratic concerns in dealing with issues such as modernization, war, religion and values.

Since creativity is also an ideal for other emancipatory political philosophies such as Anarchism, it is worthwhile to explore its possible role in the reconstruction of social and institutional relations based on the classical principles of non-aggression

and non-deception. This is particularly needed for two reasons. The first is that innovation has become increasingly central in contemporary information society. The second is that globalization (its advances in communication, transport, etc.) is at the same time facilitating multicultural interaction while gradually bringing forth a World State. Understandably, while the former might be enriching, the latter cannot simply be taken for granted. As Saul Newman puts it,

[...] the dominant ideological message today is to accept the "rules of the game" - to accept, in other words, free-market economics and the "security" state, the only alternative being fundamentalist terrorism. Indeed, "terrorism" has shown itself to be a mobile and infinitely extendible signifier that can now be applied to virtually any form of dissident activity, even - and especially - in our so-called liberal democracies. (NEWMAN, 2007, p.3)

Although Liberalism may have shown that the classical Anarchist demand<sup>1</sup> for the indissociability of freedom and equality is both unnecessary and dangerous, Western liberal democracies have admittedly become increasingly authoritarian, if not tyrannical, in their disregard for their citizens' rejection of war as a tool of democratization, the bailout of unethical banking institutions, the abandonment of habeas corpus, the use of torture and the selective suppression of free speech. The Left has been led to accept inclusion into an inherently exploratory system and to condemn exclusion without realizing that it may often rather be an intentional form of resistance to global capitalist exploitation, which is where its focus should have remained. Radical insistence upon equality has at least yielded to a concern for diversity and identity, without which one would pave the way for a totalitarian homogenization of civil society by the coming World State. Peaceful resistance to the enslavement (or enserfment) of humanity requires creativity, and a reconstructive Anarchism can benefit greatly from Joas' Action Theory. In particular, classical Anarchist conceptions of individualism and equality can become incompatible with Pragmatist "situated creativity" and "primary sociality" if they assume autonomous selfhood and means-end rationality.

In section 2 of this paper I will present Joas' main theses concerning (a) what he calls 'situation', i.e., the context of action, which should take the place of the conventional means-end schema; (b) the bodily dimension of action; and (c) the "primary sociality" of action, i.e., its fundamentally intersubjective character. In section 3 I will review some major criticisms of his theory. In section 4 I will discuss several attempts to renew Anarchism from analytical (Alan Carter), Nietzschean (Lewis Call) and Poststructuralist (Saul Newman) perspectives. However, I will show that Bakunin made several well-known statements that emphasize sociality and reject individualism as a bourgeois Liberal myth. In addition, his materialism is compatible with Pragmatist recognition of the body's constitutive role in action.

---

<sup>1</sup>"I am truly free only when all human beings, men and women, are equally free." (BAKUNIN, 2002, p. 237).

## 1. Joas' Creativity Theory of Action

To make sense of Joas' proposal<sup>2</sup> it is first necessary to be clear about the problems that he sees in current action theories and then examine whether his alternative delivers a convincing solution. Disagreements are possible not only regarding the diagnosis (i.e., one may prefer to treat the phenomenon of human creativity as a secondary process by means of a residual category) but also concerning the cure (i.e., one may realize that by considering all human action to be creative, Joas privileges creativity and marginalizes habit in a way very similar to how rational action theories leave creativity aside). It is important to note that this discussion is conceptual and therefore primarily philosophical and not applied or empirical. The issue whether all human action ought to be conceptualized according to Dewey's phasic model of creativity cannot be solved only by an appeal to intersubjective shareable experience, because experience interpreted as data will by itself only confirm in a circular fashion what has been already categorized as such by the theoretical model. Just as when we try on different pairs of colored glasses, each theory will form and tinge our experience in a different manner. In the end, our position regarding a new theory will depend at least on three dimensions: (a) what logical problems we find in it (cognitive dimension); (b) what kind of theory we want (conative dimension); and (c) how we feel about it (emotional dimension). While logical argumentation may suffice for the cognitive aspect, the conative and emotional aspects require persuasion and rhetoric (in its proper original sense). Sorting out these dimensions and rendering them as transparent as possible helps us determine the nature of the debate and to estimate the possibility of eventually achieving some kind of consensus.

Joas' dissatisfaction is directed not only towards theories of rational and normative action and their applications in the interpretation of social phenomena, but also to their often tacit assumptions. This creates additional difficulties because often action theorists may prefer to be vague about their assumptions and Joas' claims about them have to be accepted for the sake of the argument.<sup>3</sup> In any case, however, Joas' critique is directed at three major points: (1) the instrumental means-end schema; (2) the absence of the body and an assumed control over it; and (3) the independence<sup>4</sup> of the person in relation to others and the environment.

Against (1), Joas objects that it has no place for impulsive, habitual and autotelic behavior. His proposal is to substitute it for the concept of situation as a foundational category. Dewey's critique of the simplistic model of action as a realization of predetermined ends plays a central role in this line of argument. Originally, his concern was to question the rigid concept of moral action as a mere performance of predetermined rules and values. According to Dewey, actions are generally not directed towards fixed and definite aims. We may redefine our aims when we realize that the means we intend to employ are inadequate. There is, therefore, a mutual adjustment between both that works both forwards and backwards as in a feedback process. We may also discover new aims upon dealing with the means we already have. Aims are therefore not independent from means

<sup>2</sup>The main source for Joas' Creativity Theory is, of course, the third chapter of *Die Kreativität des Handelns*, but it is also worthwhile to read the section on Pragmatism (JOAS, 2011, p. 705ff).

<sup>3</sup>Joas mentions this methodological issue *en passant* (see: JOAS, 1996. p. 256-257), but it deserves more space than it gets.

<sup>4</sup>Joas uses the term "autonomy", but "independence" seems more appropriate to convey the meaning of disconnectedness, which is what he is criticizing, and not the capacity to issue norms for oneself.

and are not only anticipations of completed tasks but dispositions that structure the act while under the potential influence of the means we employ. Neither can we disconnect means and aims from action as an embodied and situated process. This situatedness works for the agent as a pre-reflexive condition, for we always choose aims as a reflection upon what we are in the course of doing. Reflection is only aroused if somehow we are prevented from performing our pre-reflectedly ongoing tasks. Our body is the source of our pre-reflexive dispositions to act and it should not be conceived as a mere instrument, but as a constitutive part of action. While rational action theory maintains a Cartesian dualist view in which mind comes first and the body follows by performing an act, the Pragmatist's model regards perception and thought as a phase of action in its situational context (not as a previous stage). In this phasic model, habitual action can alternate with creative adjustments and pre-reflexive dispositions can be put into practice till some difficulty requires reflection. In this way we can maintain a continual creative adjustment to the world and towards others, because reflection is always embodied and practical. For these reasons, the predetermination of ends is too mechanistic and unrealistic as a model for human action in comparison to Dewey's phasic one.

Against (2), Joas employs arguments drawn from Dewey, G. H. Mead, Merleau-Ponty, Plessner, Gehlen and Winnicott to argue for the embodiedness of human behavior and how our relation with respect to our bodies cannot be reduced to mere instrumentality, as if the body were a mere tool of the mind and will. Joas demands a clarification of the developmental stages of body control. As Plessner noted, when we laugh or cry we lose control of our bodies but these behaviors are normal, not pathological. Merleau-Ponty and G. H. Mead argue that behavior is only possible on the condition of there being a body scheme that is constituted intersubjectively in childhood. Mead pointed out that hand-eye coordination was indispensable to construct the experience of permanent objects. Only after we develop self-identification in the course of continuous communication with others can we come to realize the inanimate, non-social character of physical objects and their difference in relation to our own bodies and self-consciousness.

Against (3), Joas also follows G. H. Mead in arguing for the "primary sociality" of the individual person. Human individuality cannot be taken for granted as in Descartes' *cogito*, but is the result of a complex developmental process. Moreover, sociality is indispensable not only to account for subjective development, but also as a condition for its continued maintenance.

It is worth noting that, concerning creativity, Joas also adopts Abraham Maslow's distinction between primary, secondary and integrated creativities (JOAS, 1996, p. 372). Maslow considers imagination, fantasy, play and enthusiasm as more fundamental, or primary, processes, while rational production of new things in any field would be secondary. Integrated creativity would articulate both primary and secondary processes under the control of the Self.

## 2. Criticisms of Joas

Points (2), embodiedness, and (3), sociality, are relatively unproblematic. Cartesian substance dualism has been left behind and survives perhaps only as a faint residue among tacit assumptions behind certain approaches in the life and social sciences. Joas' job is to hunt down these last remnants and bring them to light. For this he should be commended. Point (1), the critique of the means-end model,

however, suffers from some analytical and theoretical deficits that would be worthwhile to point out.

In the following I will list some of the most prominent objections to Joas' Creativity Theory.

1) *The "non-operational Prolegomenon" Objection:* Several reviewers (Campbell, Camic, McGowan, Déchaux) of *Kreativität* fault it for being still too preparatory in character and for not having clearly operational concepts for empirical research. Campbell writes, "No sociologist, having read this book, would be in any position to go out and apply Joas' theory of creative action. Indeed, nothing reveals the undeveloped state of his "theory" so much as the fact that nowhere are we provided with a definition of action, nor - what presumably might have served almost as well - a definition of creativity." (CAMPBELL, 1998, p. 1067)

2) *"Tu quoque"-type Objection:* Some reviewers respond to Joas' critique of rational action theory's bias towards rationality by alleging that his own attempt to place creativity as a central feature of human action marginalizes other types of action. In this way, he would be committing the very same sin he blames others for. Callaway (1995, p. 247) misunderstands Joas' theory as a "supplementation" of rational and normative theories, whereas it is intended as a substitute. Déchaux (2002, p. 567) considers Joas' theory to be compatible with a wider concept of rationality. Camic argues that Joas "neglects [...] to problematizes and to investigate systematically the status of creativity in models of rational action" and that his "[...] theoretical reasoning [...] is reminiscent of the problem he finds in Parsons and others whom Joas charges with overextending *their* action models to cover all forms of human conduct." (CAMIC, 1998, p. 286, 289)

3) *The "Habit-or-Creativity?" Objection:* A logical consequence of Joas' privileging of creativity is the doubt concerning what happens to habit in his framework. Camic (1998, p. 289) suggests that Joas should have formulated his theory around a "habit-creativity nexus" to balance it. Dalton (2004, p. 620) insists that "To overcome this dichotomy, we must recognize the simultaneous presence in all action of habitual and creative elements. Creativity emerges from the nature of routine activity itself [...]" However, Joas (1996, p. 287) says clearly that not all actions have the same degree of creativity in comparison to habits.

4) *Objection on Teleology:* Joas' use of the adjectival term "teleological" is not precise enough and requires further differentiation. On the general theoretical level, Joas explains his position concerning teleological action as being intermediate between Luhmann and Habermas. Luhmann rejected the idea that organizations operate according to higher order objectives on the Weberian model, so he abandoned action theory and adopted functional structural explanations till he developed an autopoietic systems theory. Habermas argued that communication is not teleological because of its open-endedness, but did not further analyze strategic action. In distinction from Luhmann, Joas remains an action-theorist but also differently from Habermas, he rejects strategic action and follows Dewey in proposing creative action as being more fundamental. However, throughout his writings, Joas seems to use *Zweck* (function) and *Ziel* (aim) interchangeably. Camic (1998, p. 288) observes a similar problem with other concepts such as actor, self, ego, and personality. Ros (2005, p. 329 and p. 325) distinguishes not only between function and aim, but also between teleonomic, teleomatic and psychological explanations. Teleonomic (organic) and teleomatic (mechanic) explanations deal with functions,

while psychological explanations involve conscious aims only persons can have. Scruton (1997, p. 458) distinguishes between function (explained by an observer of a social behavior, for ex.) and purpose (the behavior explained by the subject as a participant). Joas must, however, realize that this distinction exists, for he quotes a passage in which Scheler confusedly argues that nothing can become a function (*Zweck*) if it was not earlier an aim (*Ziel*), for the functions are based upon aims. Contrary to functions, aims could exist without functions, but not the other way around (JOAS, 1999, p. 143).

5) *The “Praxis-or-Poiesis?” Objection:* Joas does not clarify enough the distinction between a creative act that produces a new external object and a creative act that is merely innovative and is the result of flexible adjustment to the environment. Dalton points out that, “To *create* means to produce - a product, something that exists in a social and physical environment - and not simply to solve (intellectually or internally) a problem or to negotiate the disjuncture between general intentions and specific contexts” (DALTON, 2004, p. 617). In music, this corresponds to the distinction between composition and performance. Scruton (1997, p. 285, 490) examines how the Adorno-Schönberg thesis of the “exhaustion” and “banality” of tonality generates a serious and perhaps unsolvable difficulty for creative composition. As is well known, jazz and aleatoric music try to avoid the finitude of the tonal system by exploring improvisation and chance. But Joas does not seem to deal in depth with the creative crisis in contemporary art forms, their loss of meaning and of audiences.

6) *The “Status of the Actor” Objection:* One should include under this head a certain set of objections that question the apparent absence of the actor him- or herself in action theory and the degree of actors' self-consciousness, autonomy and rationality. Ricoeur (1990, p. 73ff) called into question the attempt to analyze actions without clear reference to actors (*l'action sans agent*). As I mentioned earlier, Camic sees difficulties that follow from the lack of systematization of Joas' theory, with its emphasis on situatedness, but an unclear logical place for the self. Dalton is not satisfied with mere context, but insists upon interaction: “Creativity is not only contextualized socially, which Joas makes clear, but also is often socially interactive, involving routines that can be only accomplished jointly.” (DALTON, 2004, p. 616). He claims Joas' model is “heavily individualistic”. According to McGowan, “The pragmatist model cannot survive an ‘error theory’, that is, any account of behavior which places the self's ability to know what it is doing into radical question. Pragmatism depends on the fundamental trustworthiness of consciousness [...]” (MCGOWAN, 1998, p. 296). Déchaux (2002, p. 567) is unconvinced of the need to place creativity as the foundation for rationality and argues that rational action *can* account for creativity by adequately distinguishing between intentions that precede an act (e.g., I go to ask my neighbor to pick up my mail during my absence) and the performance of the act (I end up talking with him about our children's school). Neither does he consider that the pre-reflexive intentionality of our bodies obliges us to abandon the assumption of rationality.

## Concluding Remarks: Implications for Reconstructive Anarchism

Although Joas mentions Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in his discussion of Marx in *Die Kreativität des Handelns*, Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin is regrettably ignored

and one of the purposes of this paper is to correct this situation. In *Praktische Intersubjectivität* (JOAS, 1989, p. 21ff) Joas insightfully described G. H. Mead's development as a radical democratic intellectual and in *Kreativität* he draws more on J. Dewey's idea of "creative democracy". As Novak (1958, p. 325 and 328) noted, during the lifetimes of Pragmatism's founding fathers Anarchism had been discredited by terrorist attacks and assassinations. Writing in 1958, Novak argued that Anarchism suffered logically from a genetic fallacy because it denied *a priori* the possibility of changing the state while politically it rejected minor improvements obtained by political negotiation. This left the field clear for democratic socialists to arrange a compromise with the welfare state. These concrete gains for the working class made Anarchist proposals seem unrealistic, utopian, and even counterproductive when individual acts of terrorism were undertaken by extremists. As a consequence of this, Anarchism's influence "in the present century has declined to infinitesimal proportions." (NOVAK, 1958, p. 329)

While this may be true during the middle part of the twentieth century, there have been recent attempts to reconstruct Anarchism's foundations that are worth looking into. On the concrete practical side, Neo-Liberal policies of privatization in Latin America have led to an increasing condition of citizen vulnerability (HOPENHAYN, 2002, p. 9). The Argentinean economic crisis of 2001 led workers of the "*fábricas recuperadas*" movement to attempt and successfully implements measures of self-management. On the theoretical side, already in 1970, Robert Paul Wolff published a book (WOLFF, 1970) defending philosophical Anarchism and questioning the argument that the state has the right to command and the citizen to obey. More recently, Alan Carter developed analytical Anarchism in response to G. A. Cohen's analytical Marxism. He proposes a State-Primacy theory in opposition to Marxist economic determinism (which Joas also rejects) that shows how equality becomes incompatible with the state's interests.

The state is likely to think that workers in control of their own production will either choose to work less arduously or to consume more of their own produce, thereby offering less of a surplus to the state. In a word, egalitarian economic relations are not in the state's interests. Hence, structures of inegalitarian political relations will only select structures of economic relations that are inegalitarian. (CARTER, 2000, p. 249)

While Carter assimilates concepts from analytical Marxism and reverses its functional explanations so as to explain the economic by means of the political, Lewis Call incorporates Nietzsche's radical critique of Modernity, in this way adding a cultural dimension to Anarchism's political and economic critiques of capitalism (CALL, 2001, p. 49). Call admits that Nietzsche was critical of Anarchism but explains that his rejection was due to a perception of Anarchists as a narrow resentful sect, while he was interested in developing a Pan-European alternative. Noting Nietzsche's critique of the state and the failure of Liberal democracy to uphold Enlightenment ideals of rationality, uncoerced consensus, representation, self-determination, free speech, morals, culture and education, Call draws the conclusion that there is no possible return to those past ideals after Nietzsche's demolition of their metaphysical foundations. Liberalism's collapse produces a postmodern anarchism that is based on two basic theses: the anarchy of the subject and the anarchy of becoming. The former dissolves the concept of rational subjectivity that is assumed by all modern political philosophies (Liberalism, Marxism, and even



classical Anarchism), while the latter postulates an unending process of self-overcoming and self-invention. Hence, philosophy should not be just a prescriptive doctrine, but performative endeavor too, i.e. it should transform us from within.

Saul Newman shares Call's damning assessment of current Liberal democracy and speaks of post-anarchism, which he understands as a postmodern form of anti-authoritarian egalitarianism. In his words, "Post anarchism can be seen as a project of renewing the anarchist tradition through a critique of essentialist identities and the assertion instead of the contingency of politics." (NEWMAN, 2007, p. 4)

Part of the difficulty in reconstructing Anarchism lays in the avoidance by major theoreticians of any direct reference to it. Newman therefore calls Anarchism the "hidden referent" of current radical politics.

[...] perhaps anarchism can be seen as the hidden referent for a contemporary radical politics. Given the decline of Marxism as both a political and theoretical project - and given the desire for a politics that avoids statism, authoritarianism, class essentialism and economism - perhaps it is time to invoke the anarchist tradition, or at least reflect more seriously upon it as a radical political alternative. It is surprising, given its theoretical proximity to the project of thinking radical politics in the post-Marxist era, that there is a general silence about anarchism on the part of the very thinkers who are engaged in this project. Badiou, Ranciere, Laclau and Agamben all veer quite close towards anarchism in a number of important respects, and yet they make virtually no mention of the anarchist tradition at all. (NEWMAN, 2007, p. 12)

This applies to Joas as well. In *Kreativität* (JOAS, 1996, pp. 159, 164, 168) he examines the concept of revolution as a metaphor of political creativity. Marx's economic determinism, however, creates a fundamental contradiction that both Habermas and Castoriadis, following Merleau-Ponty, are forced to contend with. On the one hand, Marx tries to explain politics by means of economic interests, but in his 1852 essay on the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, he distinguishes up to five or six different classes besides other collective actors such as state employees and the military. He has difficulty reducing all their interests to economic ones following a model of strategic, means-to-ends action. But even if he were successful, this economic determinism would call in question, on the other hand, the rationale behind working class mobilization. The very concept of class conflict and revolutionary emancipation become senseless within a general framework of economic determinism. If everything is economically predetermined and the fall of capitalism is inevitable, then revolution is unnecessary. As Joas sees it, this is what leads Castoriadis to abandon Marx, and Joas also commends Gramsci for having developed a concept of political action not based on the model of rational performance of historical forces.

In all of this, however, the contribution of the Anarchist tradition could have made a difference, for Bakunin's confrontation with Marx's notorious authoritarianism is also relevant to the way both hoped to bring about social change by means of political creativity. Given this neglect, I would like to conclude with six quotes from the Russian anarchist himself. I believe that they speak for themselves and help to show the compatibility between Pragmatism and Anarchism.

1) Bakunin's explicit materialism makes any suspicion of hidden Cartesian dualism problematic: "Who are right, the idealists or the materialists? The question, once stated in this way, makes hesitation impossible. Undoubtedly the idealists are wrong and the materialists right." (BAKUNIN, 2009, p. 9)

2) Bakunin follows the Enlightenment's rejection of heteronomy: "The liberty of man consists solely in this: that he obeys natural laws because he has himself recognized them as such, and not because they have been externally imposed upon him by any extrinsic will whatever, divine or human, collective or individual." (BAKUNIN, 2009, p. 30)

3) Bakunin does not reject all authority, but defends the individual's capacity to use his or her reason.

Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a savant. But I allow neither the boot maker nor the architect nor the savant to impose his authority upon me. I listen to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism censure. I do not content myself with consulting authority in any special branch; I consult several; I compare their opinions, and choose that which seems to me the soundest. But I recognize no infallible authority, even in special questions; consequently, whatever respect I may have for the honesty and the sincerity of such or such an individual, I have no absolute faith in any person. Such a faith would be fatal to my reason, to my liberty, and even to the success of my undertakings; it would immediately transform me into a stupid slave, an instrument of the will and interests of others. (BAKUNIN, 2009, p. 32)

4) Bakunin notes the contradictory behavior of Liberals who pretend to be critical of the State but, when in need, rush to use it for their own bourgeois interests.

The doctrinaire liberals, reasoning from the premises of individual freedom, pose as the adversaries of the State. Those among them who maintain that the government, i.e., the body of functionaries organized and designated to perform the functions of the State is a *necessary evil*, and that the progress of civilization consists in always and continuously diminishing the attributes and the rights of the States, are inconsistent. Such is the theory, but in practice these same doctrinaire liberals, when the existence or the stability of the State is seriously threatened, are just as fanatical defenders of the State as are the monarchists and the Jacobins. (BAKUNIN, Man, 2002, p. 235)

5) Liberalism assumes, according to Bakunin, an independent individuality with an immortal soul, thus being inescapably dualist.

According to them individual freedom is not a creation, a historic product of society. They maintain, on the contrary, that individual freedom is anterior to all society and that all men are endowed by God with an immortal soul. Man is accordingly a complete being, absolutely independent, apart from and outside society. As a free

agent, anterior to and apart from society, he necessarily forms his society by a voluntary act, a sort of contract, be it instinctive or conscious, tacit or formal. In short, according to this theory, individuals are not the product of society but, on the contrary, are led to create society by some necessity such as work or war. It follows from this theory that society, strictly speaking, does not exist. The natural human society, the beginning of all civilization, the only milieu in which the personality and the liberty of man is formed and developed does not exist for them. On the one hand, this theory recognizes only self — sufficient individuals living in isolation, and on the other hand, only a society arbitrarily created by them and based only on a formal or tacit contract, i.e., on the State. (BAKUNIN, 2002, p. 235)

6) Bakunin would certainly agree with Mead's "primary sociality":

Man completely realizes his individual freedom as well as his personality only through the individuals who surround him, and thanks only to the labor and the collective power of society. Without society he would surely remain the most stupid and the most miserable among all the other ferocious beasts [...] Society, far from decreasing his freedom, on the contrary creates the individual freedom of all human beings. Society is the root, the tree, and liberty is its fruit. (BAKUNIN, 2002, p. 236)

7) Not only does Bakunin accept "primary sociality", but he also has an articulated understanding of human development, both individual (ontogenetic) and as a species (phylogenetic).

The materialistic, realistic, and collectivist conception of freedom, as opposed to the idealistic, is this: Man becomes conscious of himself and his humanity only in society and only by the collective action of the whole society. He frees himself from the yoke of external nature only by collective and social labor, which alone can transform the earth into an abode favorable to the development of humanity. Without such material emancipation the intellectual and moral emancipation of the individual is impossible. He can emancipate himself from the yoke of his own nature, i.e. subordinate his instincts and the movements of his body to the conscious direction of his mind, the development of which is fostered only by education and training. But education and training are preeminently and exclusively social [...] hence the isolated individual cannot possibly become conscious of his freedom. (BAKUNIN, 2002, p. 236-7)

By and large, Bakunin seems therefore to have been on the right track for a long time, and was prescient not only concerning Marxist authoritarianism, but also on future developments in the social sciences.

\* \* \*

## References

- BAKUNIN, M. A. *God and the State*. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009.
- BAKUNIN, M. A. Man, Society, and Freedom, in *Bakunin on Anarchism*. Dolgoff, S. (trans.) Montréal, CA: Black Rose Books, 2002.
- CALL, L. Toward an Anarchy of Becoming: Postmodern Anarchism, in Nietzschean Philosophy. *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, n. 21 , p. 48-76, Spring 2001.
- CALLAWAY, H. G. Die Kreativität des Handelns by Hans Joas. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, v. 45, n. 179, p. 247-249, Apr. 1995.
- CAMIC, C. Reconstructing the Theory of Action. *Sociological Theory*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 283-291, Nov. 1998.
- CAMPBELL, C. The Creativity of Action by Hans Joas. *American Journal of Sociology*, v. 103, n. 4, p. 1066-1067, Jan. 1998.
- CARTER, A. Analytical Anarchism: Some Conceptual Foundations. *Political Theory*, v. 28, n. 2, p. 230-253, Apr. 2000.
- DALTON, B. Creativity, Habit, and the Social Products of Creative Action: Revising Joas, Incorporating Bourdieu. *Sociological Theory*, v. 22, n. 4, p. 603-622, Dec. 2004.
- DÉCHAUX, J.-H. L'action rationnelle en débat: Sur quelques contributions et réflexions récentes. *Revue française de sociologie*, v. 43, n. 3, p. 557-581, Jul.-Sep., 2002.
- GRANGER, G.-G. *Pour la connaissance philosophique*. Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1988.
- HOPENHAYN, M. A cidadania vulnerabilizada na América Latina. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de População*, v.19, n.2, p. 5-18, jul./dez. 2002.
- JOAS, H. *Die Entstehung der Werte*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999.
- JOAS, H. *Die Kreativität des Handelns*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996.
- JOAS, H. *Praktische Intersubjektivität: Die Entwicklung des Werkes von G. H. Mead*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989.
- JOAS, H.; KNÖBL, W. *Sozialtheorie: Zwanzig einführende Vorlesungen*. Aktualisierte Ausgabe. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2011.
- MCGOWAN, J. Toward a Pragmatist Theory of Action. *Sociological Theory*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 292-297, Nov. 1998.
- NEWMAN, S. Anarchism, Poststructuralism and the Future of Radical Politics. *SubStance*, v. 36, n. 2, Issue 113: The Future of Anarchism, p. 3-19, 2007.
- NOVAK, D. The Place of Anarchism in the History of Political Thought. *The Review of Politics*, v. 20, n. 3, p. 307-329, Jul. 1958.
- RICOEUR, P. *Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990.
- ROS, A. *Die Genetische Epistemologie Jean Piagets*. Resultate und offene Probleme. Tübingen: Mohr, 1983 (= Philosophische Rundschau, Beiheft 9).

ROS, A. *Materie und Geist. Eine philosophische Untersuchung*. Paderborn: Mentis, 2005.

SCRUTON, R. *The Aesthetics of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

WOLFF, R. P. *In Defense of Anarchism*. New York: Harper and Row Torchbooks, 1970.