

**A Rothbardian critique of Cuzán and Ostrowski and a Typology of Anarchy**  
(unpublished)

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Abstract:

With his 1979 article "Do we really ever get out of anarchy?" Alfred Cuzán provides us with a wonderful insight: "Anarchy, like matter, never disappears - it only changes form." Cuzán argues that anarchy, defined as the absence of a third party territorial monopolist of ultimate jurisdiction, is omnipresent: Regardless of what political system we live under, there will always be anarchic relationships, namely those between the actual members of government. James Ostrowski, in his article "The Myth of Democratic Peace", extends this argument to show that there are four more anarchic relationships in current society. The omnipresence of anarchy is undeniable. However, there are problems with this analysis. It is not compatible with the root word definition of anarchy as "no rulers", nor does it incorporate such governmental (non-anarchic) relationships as taxation and regulation. Happily, the analysis can be repaired by applying Murray Rothbard's "typology of intervention" and creating a corresponding "typology of anarchy".

## **Introduction**

With his 1979 article "Do we really ever get out of anarchy?" Alfred Cuzán provides us with a wonderful insight: "Anarchy, like matter, never disappears - it only changes form." Cuzán argues that anarchy, defined as the absence of a third party territorial monopolist of ultimate jurisdiction, is omnipresent: Regardless of what political system we live under, there will always be anarchic relationships, namely those between the actual members of government. James Ostrowski, in his article "The Myth of Democratic Peace", extends this argument to show that there are four more anarchic relationships in current society: (a) between government and the individual; (b) between different governments; (c) between governments and citizens of different countries; (d) between citizens of different countries. All four relationships indicate a state of anarchy. However, there are problems with this analysis. It is not compatible with the root word definition of anarchy as "no rulers", nor does it incorporate such governmental (non-anarchic) relationships as taxation and regulation. Happily, the analysis can be repaired by applying Murray Rothbard's "typology of intervention" and creating a corresponding "typology of anarchy".

## **Cuzán, Ostrowski, and omnipresent anarchy**

Cuzán defines anarchy as "a social order without Government... a third party with the coercive powers to enforce its judgments and punish detractors". He thus follows the standard definition of government as a territorial monopolist of ultimate jurisdiction (henceforth TMUJ). He goes on to show how governments "do not get us out of anarchy at all. They simply replace one form of anarchy by another". (Cuzán 1979, p. 1-2)

"Whenever earthly "governments" are established or exist, anarchy is officially prohibited for all members of society... They can no longer relate to each other on their terms... Rather, all members of society must accept an external "third party" - a government - into their relationships". Thus, individuals are no longer free human beings, but governed citizens. They "must accept the rulers of government in [their] relations with others". (Cuzán 1979, p.2)

Next, Cuzán explains how the actual members of government live in anarchy vis-à-vis each other:

"However, such a "third party" arrangement for society is non-existent among those who exercise the power of government themselves. In other words, there is no "third party" to make and enforce judgments among the individuals who make up the third party itself. The rulers still remain in a state of anarchy *vis-à-vis* each other... Anarchy still exists." (Cuzán 1979, p.2)

So, "society is *always* in anarchy. A government only abolishes anarchy among what are called "subjects", or "citizens", but among those who rule, anarchy prevails." (Cuzán 1979, p.3)

Cuzán distinguishes between market anarchy and political anarchy. In the former (Fig. 1), "all members of society relate to each other in strictly bilateral relations without third party intervention." (Cuzán 1979, p.3-4) This would be the market anarchist society of Murray Rothbard, where private, competitive, and voluntary courts and police replace the monopolistic, coercive government. In the latter (Fig. 2), however, "[a]ll relations are legally "triangular" [top compartment], in that all members of society are forced to accept the rule of government in their transactions." Of course, "inside the "government" itself [bottom compartment], relations among the rulers remain in anarchy." (Cuzán 1979, p.4) This is the traditional government we have today.

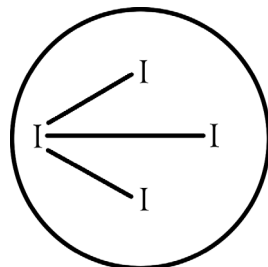


Fig. 1

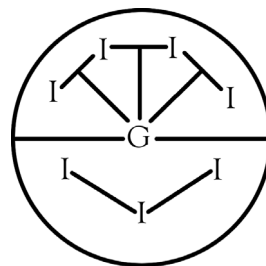


Fig. 2

Ostrowski (2005) builds on Cuzán's insight. With the following diagrams, he shows that there are four more anarchic relationships - with no ruling third party - in current society (Fig. 3). First, the citizen is in a state of anarchy vis-à-vis the government. There is no

third party ruling over the government and the citizen. Second, different governments are in a state of *international anarchy* vis-à-vis each other. There is presently no world government ruling over different nations. Third, citizens are in a state of anarchy vis-à-vis other governments. There is no third party ruling over the Canadian citizen and the U.S. government, for example. Fourth, citizens of one country are in a state of anarchy vis-à-vis the citizens of other countries. There is no third party ruling over the relations between Canadian and American citizens. Of course, the relations between citizens of the same country are non-anarchic.

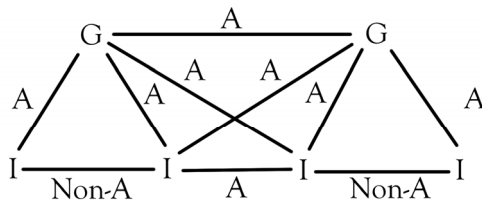


Fig. 3

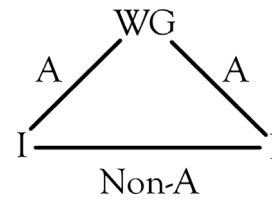


Fig. 4

Even establishing a world government (Fig. 4) cannot abolish anarchy, because, along with Cuzán's insight of anarchy within the government, the world government would still be in a state of anarchy vis-à-vis the citizen. Thus, anarchy is omnipresent.

### Contradictions

However, there are problems with Cuzán's and Ostrowski's proof of omnipresent anarchy. For one, it seems to contradict the root word definition of anarchy as "no rulers". This definition means that anarchy is synonymous with nonaggression and voluntarism. For having no rulers entails no exercising of initiatory-coercive authority over others. Thus, anarchy basically means no crime, whether governmental or private. No initiatory-coercive relationships.

However, the diagrams only indicate whether there is a third party overlord or not. But this is only one type of ruling relationship. Other examples include taxation, regulation and any other crime, which do not appear in the diagrams.

To illustrate this, assume two governments. One is the Jeffersonian minarchist state, voluntarily funded and providing only courts and police. The other is a behemoth

Leviathan, heavily taxing and regulating the citizenry. Now, the diagrams for these two governments (Fig. 3) would be exactly the same! There would be nothing to differentiate between the aggressiveness or invasiveness of the two. That is, the diagrams do not show that one government taxes and regulates the citizenry, while the other government does not.

Moreover, Roderick Long has said<sup>1</sup> that "the problem with the Hobbesian State of Nature is that it is government!" That is, with the root word definition of anarchy, the "war of all against all" of the Hobbesian jungle is actually an artifact of coercive ruling relationships. Thus, it cannot be an example of anarchy. And yet, the diagrams would indicate that the Hobbesian jungle is an example of nonaggressive anarchy, because there is no third party TMUJ. In the same sense, we would have to say that the relationship between a murderer and his victim is anarchic.

It would seem that, to be accurate, it would be necessary to reverse the diagrams, like in (Fig. 5). Here we diagram the relationship between a criminal and two individuals, as in the Hobbesian jungle.<sup>2</sup>

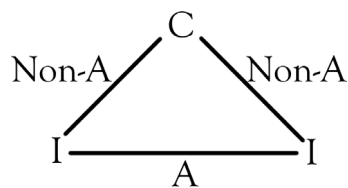


Fig. 5

Here the invasive relationship between criminal and individuals is a ruling relationship (non-anarchic), while the peaceful relationship between individuals is anarchic. However, this creates problems for our omnipresent anarchy argument. There are two possible scenarios. On one hand, either there is no TMUJ ruling over the individual and the criminal (government), in which case their relationship is anarchic. On the other hand, there *is* a TMUJ ruling over the individual and the criminal (government), in which case their relationship is non-anarchic. But (Fig. 5) is showing us that there is no TMUJ ruling

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<sup>1</sup> In conversation with the author.

<sup>2</sup> The relationship between a criminal and a victim is analogous to the relationship between a government and a citizen. After all, what is government but a criminal gang? See Spooner (1992).

over the individual and the criminal (government), *and yet their relationship is non-anarchic*. But as we have seen, if there is no TMUJ ruling over their relationship, then by definition that relationship is anarchic. But at the same time, regardless of whether there is a TMUJ or not, the diagram still has to indicate that there is a ruling relationship (non-anarchic) between the criminal (government) and the individual. Clearly, Ostrowski's diagrams cannot resolve this contradiction.

Finally, Stefan Molyneux has argued that our own lives are the best example of a functioning anarchic society: "All of your personal relationships are voluntary, and do not involve the use of force. You are an anarchic microcosm – to see how a stateless society works, all you have to do is look in the mirror." (Molyneux 2008, p.50) Thus, we do not pull out a gun and threaten violence when we go to a job interview, or buy groceries, or get married. Rather, our relationships with other people are voluntary and mutual. They are anarchic.

However, the diagrams do not show this. Instead, they indicate that relationship between individuals is governed. Again, it would seem necessary to alter the diagrams as in (Fig. 5), so that the relationship between individuals is anarchic. Again, however, this means abandoning our omnipresent anarchy argument.

At this point, it was clear to me that, to reconcile the root word definition with omnipresent anarchy, we needed to distinguish between the broad category of ruling relationships on one hand and the specific category of TMUJ on the other. But I didn't have any idea on how to proceed from there.

### **Rothbard to the rescue**

Then I had an epiphany: Rothbard. Didn't Rothbard distinguish between different types of intervention in "Power and Market"? Yes, Rothbard had created a *typology of intervention*, distinguishing between autistic, binary, and triangular hegemonic relations.

In his groundbreaking "Power and Market", Rothbard set out to analyze the economics of

violent intervention into the market. He saw himself as following in the footsteps of Franz Oppenheimer, who famously distinguished between the "economic" and "political" means of satisfying wants. The former is by "production and voluntary exchange", while the latter involves "violent expropriation of the wealth of others". The state, of course, is an "organization of the political means." (Rothbard 2004, p.1057)

Rothbard defined intervener as "one who intervenes violently in free social or market relations. The term applies to any individual or group that initiates violent intervention in the free actions of persons and property owners." (Rothbard 2004, p.1058) (Note that Rothbard's definition of intervener is similar to our definition of ruler. Anarchy is therefore synonymous with "free market".)

Next, Rothbard distinguished three categories of intervention. Autistic intervention occurs "when the aggressor uses force on an individual such that no one else is affected." (Murphy 2007, p.181) Specifically, "he restricts the subject's use of his property when exchange is not involved." (Rothbard 2004, p. 1058) Examples include "homicide, assault, and compulsory enforcement or prohibition of any salute, speech, or religious observance." (Rothbard 2004, p.1059) With the case of homicide, for example, it doesn't matter whether it is committed by a criminal or the government. It is still autistic intervention.

Binary intervention occurs when the aggressor establishes a coerced exchange or payment between the aggressor and the victim. In other words, there is a hegemonic relationship that does involve exchange. "Highway robbery and taxes are examples of binary intervention, as are conscription and compulsory jury service." (Rothbard 2004, p.1059)

The last category is triangular intervention, where "the aggressor uses force to alter the relations between a pair of subjects." (Murphy 2007, p.181) That is, "a hegemonic relation is created between the invader and a pair of exchangers" (Rothbard 2004, p.1059). Examples of triangular invention include price and product controls. In the

former, "the intervener attempts to influence the terms on which products or services exchange", while the latter is "a coercive influence on the product or service itself, including the individuals who sell it." (Murphy 2007, p.189) Price controls can be either maximums or minimums, such as rent control and minimum wages, respectively. Product controls include prohibition and monopoly grants. The latter category includes compulsory cartels, licenses, immigration restrictions, child labor laws, antitrust laws, and conservation laws.

As Rothbard notes, "[a]ll these types of intervention, of course, are subdivisions of the *hegemonic* relation - the relation of command and obedience - as contrasted with the contractual relation of voluntary mutual benefit." (Rothbard 2004, p.1059)

### **A typology of anarchy**

Rothbard's typology of intervention classifies the different types of hegemonic, i.e. ruling relationships. Recall that anarchism is literally the absence of ruling, hegemonic relationships. So, if we have a typology of ruling relationships (intervention), we can create an opposing typology of *anarchy* - non-ruling relationships. In other words, whereas Rothbard classified hegemonic relations, we can create a typology of voluntary relations.

And seeing as anarchism is the absence of ruling relationships, our typology of anarchy (henceforth ToA) will be the negation of hegemonic relations. That is, the ToA classifies the relations exactly opposite those in the typology of intervention. Thus, along with autistic, binary, and triangular intervention, we can also identify autistic, binary, and triangular anarchy.

So, if autistic intervention is aggression against an individual when exchange is not involved, then the opposing autistic anarchy would be voluntary, nonaggressive interactions between individuals when exchange is not involved. Examples could include talking to your neighbor, watching TV with your family, playing pickup basketball - any nonaggressive relationship.

Next, binary intervention is a hegemonic relationship between aggressor and victim where exchange is involved. Binary anarchy is therefore any voluntary exchange between individuals. This includes any buying or selling: employment, a farmers market, an economics lecture - any voluntary exchange.

Last, if triangular intervention is a hegemonic relation between an aggressor and a pair of individuals, then triangular anarchy is any voluntary relation between an individual and a pair of individuals. This largely takes place through refraining from aggressing against others, for example, not enforcing price or product controls on your neighbors. Another example is an arbitrator mediating a dispute between two parties.

### **Victory**

So how does this solve our problems with Cuzán and Ostrowski?

First, they define government as a TMUJ, and anarchy as the absence of government. Recall that Cuzán said that under political anarchism, "[a]ll relations are legally *"triangular"*" (Cuzán 1979, p.4, emphasis added). I will argue that we can identify government *qua* TMUJ as an instance of triangular intervention. Note that monopoly grants are an instance of triangular intervention. Then, we can see that the government arrogates to itself a monopoly grant on the provision of courts and police, and so establishes itself as a TMUJ.

Thus, government *qua* TMUJ is simply one example of triangular intervention. Therefore, Ostrowski's diagrams are lacking in that they deal only with triangular intervention and triangular anarchy. With our typology of anarchy, we know that along with autistic and binary intervention, there is also autistic and binary anarchy. So, to repair the diagrams we must distinguish between autistic, binary, and triangular intervention as well as autistic, binary, and triangular anarchy.

Note that the triangular relations are exactly the same as Ostrowski's diagrams. Again,

this is because government *qua* TMUJ is a form of triangular intervention. The aggressive relations (non-anarchic) between government and individual are now indicated, solving one problem with Ostrowski.

Between government and individual, the relation is one of autistic government (AG)<sup>3</sup>, because the government coercively regulates the individual's life. The same relationship is also binary government (BG), because the government robs ("taxes") the citizenry of their private property.

Between individuals of the same country, as well as between citizens of different countries, the relationships are always autistic anarchy (AA) and binary anarchy (BA), provided they are voluntary, that is, non-criminal. As soon as one individual commits a crime against another, i.e. initiates violence, the relation is AG or BG.

### **Bringin' back Cuzán**

However, using our new ToA will require some tinkering with Ostrowski's diagrams. The diagrams work with autistic and binary relations, as they are strictly bilateral, i.e. between two parties. But they do not incorporate triangular relationships - those between an actor and two parties. To show triangular relations, the diagram would have to have a line emanating from the government and affecting the *relationship* between the individuals, and not the individuals themselves. Remember what Cuzán said: under government, "all members are forced to accept the rule of government in their *transactions*." (Cuzán 1979, p.4, emphasis added) In other words, in triangular relations the actor affects the *relationship* between the two parties. Incidentally, Cuzán's diagrams show this properly. Thus, the solution is to combine Cuzán's diagrams with Ostrowski's.

We indicate the triangular government (TG) relationship between government and both individuals with a line emanating from government and affecting the relationship between the individuals. Note that between the individuals we indicate only autistic and

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<sup>3</sup> Although Rothbard refers to autistic, binary, and triangular intervention, I will henceforth change the terminology to autistic, binary, and triangular *government*. The purpose of this is to underscore the totally antithetical relation between government and anarchy.

binary relations, while between government and individual we indicate autistic, binary, and triangular relations. This is to emphasize the triangular anarchy (TA) between government and individual: the absence of a TMUJ. In other words, the absence of a TG relation – also known as omnipresent anarchy.<sup>4 5</sup> The repaired diagrams are shown in (Fig. 6), (Fig. 7), and (Fig. 8).

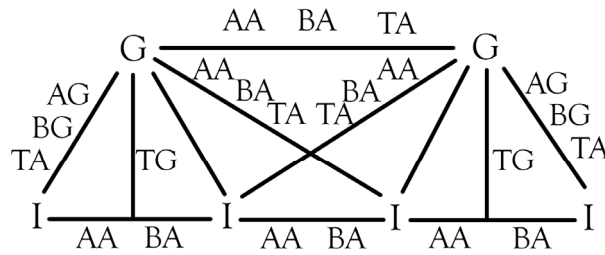


Fig. 6

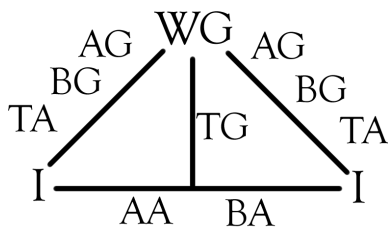


Fig. 7

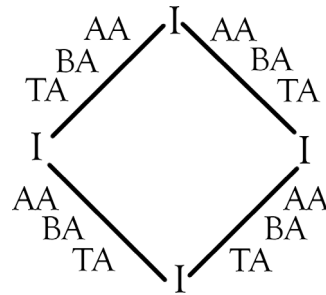


Fig. 8

## Resolutions

Thus, our ToA allows us to reconcile Molyneux's insight that our lives are mostly anarchic, with the omnipresent anarchy argument. Molyneux says that when we peacefully enter into employment, buy groceries, or get married, we are living anarchically. But, obviously, we do all of this under the rule of a government. We can resolve this apparent contradiction by pointing out that Molyneux is referring to autistic and binary anarchy, while the acting individuals are in a state of TG vis-à-vis each other.

<sup>4</sup> That is, the fact that the relationship between the individual and government is TA indicates that there is no third party from which a line affecting their relationship can emanate. Hence, omnipresent anarchy.

<sup>5</sup> Technically, we could indicate that the triangular relation between I1 and the relationship between government and I2 (i.e. a line emanating from I1 affecting the relationship between government and I2) is TA, and vice versa, but for simplicity's sake we can leave it out. If we did indicate it, we would only be showing that I1 is not coercively ruling over the government and I2. The relation that interests us the most is the lack of a TMUJ ruling over the government and individual, so we will emphasize that only.

We can also resolve the inconsistency between omnipresent anarchy and Long's insight that the Hobbesian State of Nature is a form of government, not anarchy. While omnipresent anarchy refers to the TA between individual and government, the relations in the Hobbesian jungle would be both TA and TG, as well as AG and BG. Because it is a war of all against all, all relations are coercive and invasive, and everyone is ruling over everyone. Thus, the bilateral relations between individuals are governmental. We can also posit that there might be some tribal chieftains in a TG relationship with their tribe. But, of course, TA is omnipresent because there is no third party ruling over chieftain and subject.

Next, because our diagrams are more precise, we can graphically (Fig. 9) show the difference between a Leviathan state and a Jeffersonian limited government, whereas the Ostrowski diagrams cannot. Under a taxing and regulating Leviathan, the relation between government and individual is AG, BG, and TA. Under a minarchist state, the same relationship is AA, BA, and TA, assuming a voluntarily funded government (no taxation). In both cases, the triangular relation between the government and both individuals is TG - the government still rules over the citizens' relations with each other.

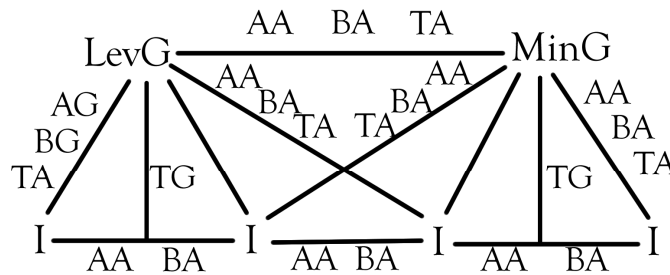


Fig. 9

Thus, by applying the typology of intervention and the typology of anarchy to the relations between government and individuals, we can delve much further and develop a much more precise understanding of the different relationships.

## Conclusion

Beginning with Cuzán and Ostrowski's presentation of the omnipresent anarchy argument, I have shown that this insight seems to have contradictions with the root word definition of anarchy, among other difficulties. However, we can resolve these problems

by using Rothbard's typology of intervention to create an opposing typology of anarchy. With this new typology, we can identify government *qua* territorial monopolist of ultimate jurisdiction as one example of triangular intervention. Thus, because this is Ostrowski's definition of government, the triangular relationships are the same as his diagrams. But we expand on their analysis by adding autistic and binary relations to allow a more detailed understanding of the relations between government and individual. Then, armed with this knowledge, we can resolve Long's insight that the Hobbesian state of nature is government, Molyneux's insight that our lives are mostly anarchic, and accurately distinguish between a Leviathan state and a minarchist government. Thus, our root word definition is saved, and we have a new arsenal of tools with which to analyze governmental and anarchic relationships.

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