



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCE RESEARCH, IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY

ISSN: 2454-132X

Impact factor: 6.078

(Volume 6, Issue 3)

Available online at: [www.ijariit.com](http://www.ijariit.com)

## Anarchism and Political Obligation

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### ABSTRACT

*The political Obligation behind Anarchism was somewhat elusive all along. There have undoubtedly been almost as many anarchist values as there have been anarchists, but they can be broadly separated into two groups for analysis: the socially positive, and the socially negative. In several sources, the positive anarchist values have originated in William Godwin, but the negative aspects can be chiefly be traced to the influence of Max Stimer.*

**Keywords—** *Morality Obligation, Moral Theory Anarchism*

The political Obligation behind Anarchism was somewhat elusive all along. There have undoubtedly been almost as many anarchist values as there have been anarchists, but they can be broadly separated into two groups for analysis: the socially positive, and the socially negative. In several sources, the positive anarchist values have originated in William Godwin, but the negative aspects can be chiefly be traced to the influence of Max Stimer.

Through his intellectual efforts to escape from bourgeois hypocritical values, Stimer had gone to extraordinary lengths through glorifying crime and rejecting everything that the respectable middle class of his day considered nice. When one began with his assumptions this complete amorality was very logical because, one could not owe allegiances to a society to which one had no obligation. Stimer's skepticism in altruistic behavior, and his virtual deification of the victim were quite consistent with his conviction that others should be treated as little more than means to the end of personal self-realization. But in a sense this justification of theft, dishonesty, rape and murder is very opposite of anarchism. When we complain that the ruling classes are exploiting, we just don't complain that people will continue to endure it. We also complain about exploitation per se; and it is the very act of viewing a individual as a means rather than an end which underlies the philosophy of Stimer.

His attempt to solve this question is to postulate a society of egoists in which cooperation is better served by "enlightened" self-interest, through he prefers to call it rivalry.

An implementation like that is fascinating to imagine.

Like Stimer, Godwin was a democrat who claimed that justice-the general good-was above individual interest, although it was understood that the creation of a person of precisely what was the general good only be matter of conscience. He was significant because he rejected Original Sin's Catholic Doctrine, arguing that we were born neither good nor evil. He was a moral man, claiming that we have "no right to do anything but goodness and to utter anything but fact." Here we can see the utter conflict between his definition of the moral anarchist, and the claim by Stimer that morality is rubbish. However, both of these men made a distinct contribution to anarchist philosophy although we don't think that any of them held opinions that were completely or divergent. It would be incompatible with the spirit of anarchism to say that either one has or one may have the true and absolute reality, for it is impossible that anarchists will ever be totally definitive on anything, particularly as regards morality. In Stimer's mild critique, he would suggest that claiming that we never behave altruistically is tantamount to denying free will, and I think Godwin's rule that we must under all cases obey reality and goodness is rather totalitarian.

Yet I think one of them will borrow points from anarchist morality.

This ideology of absolute freedom and independence is one that should appeal to every strong- minded and determined anarchist, as it profoundly counteracts dogmas of revealed reality which have been the pernicious source must deny to me not only political authority but also moral authority.