

*Psychodore* and *Le Fils du Silence*, as well as *Les Paraboles Cyniques*, present in fictional form the author's reflection on the continuing validity of Stoic and Cynic philosophy, often understood within a syncretistic vision that includes elements of the Christian scriptures interpreted in an anarchist individualist fashion.

In his introduction, Ryner presents this work as 'an attempt to render the grandeur of cynical thought' (p26). While to a certain inevitable extent educational in intent, these stories do however escape the ever-present trap of didacticism. Indeed, Ryner presents their goal as 'to sing the floating dreams that clergies and universities will disfigure and paralyse within systems' (p24). In their preface, Pierre-Yves Ruff and Marie-France David de Palacio offer a clear and useful discussion of the form as well as of the content of these parables, thought of as 'the clothing around the body of the idea' (p 5), and show how in Ryner's view poetry was not to be understood separately from action. Through an analysis of the ambiguous relationship between the sage Psychodore and his disciples, they highlight the essence of Ryner's profoundly individualistic view of knowledge and of how to achieve happiness, fundamentally based on reliance on a person's inner strength. And they also stress the writer's ability to play with conventional wisdom, within a worldview in which it becomes difficult to tell apart the Stoics from the Cynics, and while the latter's label is used for its provocative value in the title, the author's lessons seem mostly imbued of a Stoicism cleansed of pessimism. Poetry, dream, and the right to constructive contradiction characterise the thought of this most significant writer. Laudable publishing initiatives such as this one will help bring him back to the forefront of anarchist individualist reflection, where he so clearly still belongs.

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### Christos Memos, *Castoriadis and Critical Theory: Crisis, Critique, and Radical Alternatives*

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; 200pp; ISBN 9781137034465

Memos's book examines the life and work of a major twentieth-century critical thinker, Cornelius Castoriadis. He belonged to, and influenced, the continental philosophers which included such intellectual movements as the French-based Situationist International. Castoriadis corresponded with such figures as Anton Pannekoek (a main theorist of council communism) regarding the bureaucratic state capitalist nature of the USSR. Their discussions included work councils as a true break from hierarchical systems (including capitalism and socialism) into substantive

direct democracy or theoretical communism. Castoriadis also engaged fiercely with Louis Althusser, declaring Marxism as a dead theory. Unfortunately, those few in the US who are familiar with his work mostly see him as a philosopher, often discounting him as a career economist at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and, later, celebrity psychoanalyst.

The book is well referenced and refreshingly concise, making it an excellent primer for college courses and accessible to a broader audience. The author properly separates Marx the theorist from Marxist ideology, and Castoriadis the critical theorist from the misunderstood, academically stereotyped or celebrated psychoanalyst. Moreover, the book neither glorifies nor demonises the Greek thinker. Rather, it is a fair and balanced assessment of the person and his thought, properly situated in the milieu that shaped his ideas.

We learn of his experiences in Greece, hunted in turn by the Nazi occupiers, by his own communist comrades, and by Greek rightists. Here the book offers insight into the little discussed history of Greece from the 1920s to the 1940s. This includes the murkiness of competing communist revolutionary factions, the rightwing government slaughter of peaceful communist protesters known as the Dekembriana, and the Greek civil war that included British armed intervention against Greek communists (their erstwhile anti-Nazi allies). We also learn of Castoriadis's troubled early life as an immigrant to France and the continued threats from French Stalinist factions. It is noteworthy that Castoriadis spent most of his life in Greece and France where criticism of the USSR, Stalinism, or party ideology was not practical nor accepted by communist parties and intellectuals – though he did so throughout his life. Together with Claude Lefort he founded the French journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (*Socialism or Barbarism*). Through the journal they criticised Trotskyism as contradictory and critiqued other post-Leninist ideological tendencies.

Castoriadis's thought would be best described today as Autonomist. Memos doesn't discuss it and also overlooks many affinities between Castoriadis and anarchist theory. However, Memos shows how Castoriadis evolved from a Marxist defending Marxism to critiquing Marx's thought and ultimately rejecting Marxism while retaining the better analytical or critical contributions. In many ways Castoriadis was to continental Europe what George Orwell was to Britain in terms of identifying and criticising totalitarianism including its US and USSR variants. Here is where we see Castoriadis as an independent critical theorist opposed to all types of oppression.

Perhaps Castoriadis's greatest contribution is in saving the left by untangling left theory from ideological Marxism, socialism and their variants. This presents us with a way forward in addressing the decay of both neoliberalism and socialism as counterparts of the same discredited ideology. Here lies the value of connecting equality, not to economic relations, but to all social relations with his conception

of direct democracy as the only true communism or democratic system. Memos' only shortcoming is that he needs to further elaborate Castoriadis's conceptualisation of direct democracy as continuous praxis tied to pedia, autonomist society, and so on. In this sense, the book succeeds in enticing readers to go delve further into Castoriadis's writings.

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**Martin Veith, *Unbeugsam: Ein Pionier des rumänischen Anarchismus: Panait Muşoiu***

Lich/Hessen: Verlag Edition AV, 2013; 340pp; ISBN 978-3-86841-076-1

Romanian anarchism is a *terra incognita* in the history of European anarchism – neither George Woodcock nor Peter Marshall write about it, only Max Nettlau in his *Geschichte der Anarchie* (Volume 5) has devoted some informative pages to Romania. Therefore, every publication dealing with this movement is welcome. Panait Muşoiu (1864-1944) was one of its founding fathers and a lifelong publisher of an impressive amount of anarchist material, much of which he had translated from the French. These publications must have been very important in elevating the ideological level of the Romanian anarchists and syndicalists, even if they may have been too academic for ordinary workers (the majority of whom were illiterate). His national and international network was considerable and comprised leading anarchists in Europe and North America. His correspondents in the latter mostly consisted of emigrated Romanians like Joseph Ishill.

During the second half of the 1880s Muşoiu became a socialist, tending to the Marxist variety of socialism. But in 1891, after the Brussels congress of the Second International, he started to criticise parliamentarianism and called for direct action instead – he was thrown out of the Romanian Socialist Party in 1892 because of this. From then on, together with his friend Panait Zosin, he started to propagate anarchist and syndicalist ideas and organise syndicalist trade-unions in more radically inclined areas, like the centre of Romania's oil industry in the dale of Prahova near Ploieşti. After 1900 Muşoiu increasingly retreated to editing and publishing his important journal *Revista Ideei* (1900-1916). In the second half of the 1920s he was seen as somewhat of a hermit. Among his publications were translations of Grave, Kropotkin, Elisée Reclus and Malatesta. Four characteristics mark these publications: firstly, their choice was not sectarian, because Muşoiu believed in the tolerant working together of all kinds of anarchism; secondly, Muşoiu was a