

**"It was the circus, and I was the clown": Emma Goldman, Popular and
Avant-Garde Cultures of American Modernity, and the
Politics of (Self-) Performance**

by

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Abstract

My doctoral dissertation examines the plurality of cultural roles performed by American anarchist and feminist Emma Goldman (1869-1940), and focuses upon how she established her iconic position within modern American popular and avant-garde cultures through specific and political strategies of self-representation. Goldman's forceful and unique personality has been the subject of dozens of critical studies, films, novels, and plays. Nevertheless, the full range of her public personae has not been adequately represented in critical studies, which typically focus solely upon the anarchist and feminist aspects of her life and politics. Furthermore, despite Goldman's direct statements concerning the personal politics of subjectivity, especially her controversial assertion that "it is more important to do political work with one's personality than with propaganda," most scholarship virtually ignores the broad range of political ideologies informing her public self-construction (qtd. in Wexler, 1984: 198).¹ Directly engaged with Goldman's critical analysis of the politics of subjectivity, my project examines the myriad of political, artistic, intellectual, and other public roles embodied by Goldman, as well as the various cultural stages upon which they were performed. In particular, I concentrate upon her most prominent roles within modern avant-garde and popular American cultures and consider the political and cultural work performed by her public and highly publicized acts of self-dramatization. Situating her theatrical self-performances within a European anarchist

¹ Emma Goldman, in a letter to Leon Malmed, April 7, 1906.

tradition of “propaganda by the deed,” I argue that her rhetorical and embodied self-stagings, while grounded in anarchist ideologies and practices, were also directly inspired and influenced by avant-garde theories of self-production as well as by popular practices of (self-) performance within modern America. I consider the political functions and cultural implications of her theatrical self-performances in terms of avant-garde aesthetic, popular, feminist and legal contexts of modern American subjectivity, and assess her contributions to modern American cultures of the spectacle, performance, avant-gardism, and the popular.

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“It was the circus, and I was the clown”: Emma Goldman,
Popular and Avant-Garde Cultures of American Modernity,
and the Politics of (Self-) Performance

Introduction

My doctoral dissertation examines the plurality of cultural roles performed by American anarchist and feminist Emma Goldman (1869-1940), and focuses upon how she established her iconic position within modern American popular and avant-garde cultures through specific and political strategies of self-representation. Goldman’s forceful and unique personality has been the subject of dozens of critical studies, films, novels, and plays. Nevertheless, the full range of her public personae has not been adequately represented in critical studies, which typically focus solely upon the anarchist and feminist aspects of her life and politics. Furthermore, despite Goldman’s direct statements concerning the personal politics of subjectivity, especially her controversial assertion that “it is more important to do political work with one’s personality than with propaganda,” most scholarship virtually ignores the broad range of political ideologies informing her public self-construction (qtd. In Wexler, 1984: 198).¹ Directly engaged with Goldman’s critical analysis of the politics of subjectivity, my project examines the myriad of political, artistic, intellectual, and other public roles embodied by Goldman, as well as the

¹ Emma Goldman, in a letter to Leon Malméd, April 7, 1906.

various cultural stages upon which they were performed. In particular, I concentrate upon her most prominent roles within avant-garde and popular American cultures of modernity, and consider the political and cultural work performed by her public and highly publicized acts of self-dramatization. Situating her theatrical self-performances within a European anarchist tradition of "propaganda by the deed," I argue that her rhetorical and embodied self-stagings, while grounded in anarchist ideologies and practices, were also directly inspired and influenced by avant-garde theories of self-production as well as by popular practices of (self-) performance within modern America. Thus, my dissertation draws attention to and critically interprets Goldman's cultural relevance beyond anarchist and feminist studies, particularly in terms of her significant contributions to modern American aesthetic and popular cultures.

Goldman is perhaps best known for her public roles within anarchist and feminist cultures, but she also occupied noticeably visible positions within the pages of popular and avant-garde literary and print cultures and upon the stages of popular audio-visual spectacular cultures of modernity. So much more than "the most dangerous woman in America" and the "red rebel" to which she is frequently reduced in critical studies, Goldman actively constructed for herself a multi-faceted public persona which she tellingly described as her "most powerful creation" (qtd. in Wexler, 1984: 278). She garnered widespread public attention not only on account of her radical anarchist and feminist politics, but also through her prominent

cultural positions as a popular public speaker, writer, editor, publisher, critic and promoter of the modern theatre, intellectual, modern bohemian, factory worker, political agitator, and prisoner. Whereas existing studies of Goldman generally focus upon her participation within and contributions to radical feminist and anarchist cultures, my project concentrates upon her iconic positions within various artistic, intellectual, popular, entertainment, political, legal, and other public cultures of modern America in order to offer a more comprehensive representation of the cultural work performed through her public stagings of self. I consider the political functions and cultural implications of her theatrical self-performances in terms of avant-garde, popular, feminist and legal contexts of modern American subjectivity, and assess her contributions to a range of American cultures of modernity.

Significant Prior Research:

My project is thus not intended to compete with existing biographical studies; indeed, the historical facts of Goldman's life, particularly as they concern the radical political ideologies that gave shape to her life and work, have been covered more than adequately in studies by such authors as Alice Wexler, Alix Kates Shulman, John Chalberg, and most notably, Richard Drinnon, to name but a few. The first of Wexler's biographical studies, *Emma Goldman in America* (1984), focuses on Goldman's political career as both an anarchist and feminist from her early

days in America as a young immigrant to her deportation in 1919; the second, *Emma Goldman in Exile: From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War* (1989) concentrates upon Goldman's political work in Russia, Spain, England and France. Both offer an historical contextualization of her complex and unique role as a radical female agitator, but as Wexler notes, are based primarily upon Goldman's less-than objective memoirs. Similarly, Alix Kates Shulman's *To the Barricades: The Anarchist Life of Emma Goldman* (1971), is also largely based on Goldman's autobiography, and as the title suggests, provides an interpretation of Goldman's "anarchist life." A more comprehensive representation of Goldman's position within American history is offered by Richard Drinnon's *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman* (1961). Seminal to any understanding of Goldman's life and ideas, Drinnon's work provides a historically detailed account of her unique life as a modern female anarchist, as well the literary and ideological foundations of her anarchism. More recent biographies include John Chalberg's *Emma Goldman: American Individualist* (1991), which locates Goldman's anarchism within distinctly American traditions of individualism, and Theresa and Albert Moritz's *Emma Goldman: The Most Dangerous Woman in the World* (2000), which concentrates upon Goldman's radical political ideas and activities. The common link between all of these studies is a sometimes-narrow focus upon her identity as a radical anarchist, with a subsequent dismissal of her other cultural roles.

The work of other scholars, however, notably Candace Falk, Suzanne Clarke, and Christine Stansell, have drawn attention to Goldman's life and ideas outside of strictly radical cultures. Based upon a decade of personal and shockingly erotic correspondence between Goldman and her lover Ben Reitman, Falk's biographical *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman* (1984) paints a complex portrait of Goldman's personal identity as a woman and a lover, whose anarchist ideas of free love were often at odds with the reality of her sexual relationships. The writings of both Clark and Stansell are similar in their focus upon Goldman's relevance to modern cultures. Clark's *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (1991) considers her role as modern female writer and cultural critic; Stansell's *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (2001) devotes a chapter to exploring Goldman's popular position within the modern artistic, intellectual, and conversationalist communities of Greenwich Village, and depicts her intimate relationships with other popular figures of modernity, including Mabel Dodge, Margaret Anderson, John Reed, Eugene O'Neill, Susan Glaspell, and Eugene Debs.

Recent publications related to Goldman's life and ideas have been primarily archival and documentary in focus. During Goldman's lifetime, only a small portion of her literally hundreds of critical and personal writings were published, including her *Anarchism and other Essays* (1910), *The Social Significance of the Modern Drama* (1914), her

autobiographies, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (1922), *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (1924), and her popular *Living My Life, Volumes One and Two* (1931), and her monthly journal *Mother Earth*, which she edited and published for nearly twelve years (1906-1917). Alix Kates Shulman's *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches by Emma Goldman* (1972), reprints a dozen essays and speeches, which are arranged according to subject categories such as "anarchism" and "feminism." Peter Glassgold's *Anarchy!: An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth* (2001) offers a wide selection of material originally published in Goldman's artistic-political journal *Mother Earth*, which ceased publication in 1917, following the passing of the Sedition Act. Most significant to my work are the recent and ongoing publications by the Emma Goldman Papers Project at the University of California at Berkeley. Directed by Candace Falk, the EGPP has dedicated more than ten years to discovering, recovering, and archiving thousands of primary writings by and about Goldman, with the impressive result of the massive four-volume collection *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years* (Volume One, 2003; Volume Two, 2005; Volumes Three and Four, forthcoming). This collection presents original texts, many of which have been published and translated into English for the first time, including Goldman's speeches, essays, unpublished manuscripts and lecture notes, personal correspondence, travel journals, newspaper

interviews, and legal speeches, as well as newspaper articles, government surveillance reports, trial transcripts, and police affidavits.

My project builds upon such archival work by analyzing the cultural relevance of the documents pertaining to Goldman's life and ideas. It is my contention that such archival scholarship, and particularly *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, offers not only a documentary history of Emma Goldman's life and political ideas, but also a documentary history of the political and popular landscapes of modern American culture. Thus, I will critically examine and situate the multitude of writings by and about Goldman which appeared during her lifetime within the artistic, political, and popular modern cultures from which they emerged in an effort to discover the infinite range of cultural roles performed by Goldman upon the stages of American modernity. In particular, I focus upon her theatrical self-representations within avant-garde aesthetic, popular, gendered, and legal cultures of modern America, and consider the political functions and cultural implications of her public stagings of self. I detail my specific theoretical approaches in each chapter, however, the project as a whole is situated within the critical field of cultural studies, and especially feminist, political, American and modernist cultural studies, and is framed in relation to theoretical questions of performance and performativity as they have been articulated in the realms of gender, the law, and modern subject formation. The first chapter establishes Goldman's iconic positions within popular and avant-

garde American cultures and explores the range of particularly modernist ideologies of subjectivity informing her public performances of self. Chapter Two focuses upon Goldman's iconic status as a modern radical anarchist feminist, and analyzes the intersections between American avant-gardism, anarchism, and Goldman's feminist ideas. The third chapter considers Goldman's representation of her gender identity in light of the performative practices of other iconic "New Women" of modernity, and examines the ways in which she and other New Women engaged in cross-cultural exchanges between avant-garde and popular cultures of the spectacle in order to stage their feminist politics of subjectivity. The final chapter explores how cultures of the spectacle were appropriated by Goldman and other political radicals and by legal officials to publicize the conflicts between modern radical politics and the law, and analyzes Goldman's use of the American courtroom as a popular cultural stage upon which to perform her radical politics. My dissertation concludes by exploring both the collisions and collusions between radical anarchist and feminist politics and modern American avant-garde and popular cultures, and considers the various ways in which Goldman's self-performances attest to her dictum that "it is more important to do politics with one's personality than with propaganda."

Overview of Goldman's Anarchist Politics

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the cultural implications and political effects of Goldman's cultural self-stagings, but to fully understand such effects, one must first understand and appreciate the complexity of Goldman's political ideologies. Goldman's important role as a key figure in radical political cultures is somewhat unsurprising, given the historical and political climate in which she came of age. She seemed destined for a political career of sorts from the earliest moments of her life, on account of both the time and place of her birth. Born in the Russian province of Kovno, Lithuania in 1869 to Jewish parents, Goldman would witness throughout her childhood countless acts of oppression against culturally marginalized members of society, including the harsh treatment of workers and women, and the relentless persecution of intellectuals and Jews -- including her own father -- that culminated in the notorious pogroms that swept over Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century. Goldman frequently recounts such experiences, and directly links them to her intellectual development as an anarchist:

Since my earliest recollection of my youth in Russia I have rebelled against orthodoxy in every form. I could never bear to witness harshness [and] I was outraged over the official brutality practiced on the peasants in our neighborhood. I wept bitter tears when the young men were conscripted into

the army and torn from homes and hearths. I resented the treatment of our servants, who did the hardest work and yet had to put up with wretched sleeping quarters and the leavings of our table. I was indignant when I discovered that love between young people of Jewish and Gentile origin was considered the crime of crimes, and the birth of an illegitimate child the most depraved immorality. (1934: 52)

Such personal experiences certainly contributed to the development of Goldman's political consciousness, but it was not until her arrival in America as a sixteen-year-old Jewish immigrant that her political ideologies became solidified and permanently radicalized.

The timing of Goldman's arrival to America could not have been more conducive to the formation of her political consciousness. She disembarked the ship that brought her to New York City in 1885 as a wide-eyed idealist, hopeful and fully expecting that America would promise her the economic, cultural, ethnic, and intellectual freedom that was consistently denied to her in Russia; she soon realized, however, that political and cultural conditions in America were not much better than they were in Eastern Europe. As Goldman herself recalls in a lengthy passage from her essay, "Was My Life Worth Living?":

On coming to America I had the same hopes as have most European immigrants and the same disillusionment, though the latter affected me more keenly and more deeply. The

immigrant without money and without connections is not permitted to cherish the comforting illusion that America is a benevolent uncle who assumes a tender and impartial guardianship of nephews and nieces. I soon learned that in a republic there are myriad ways by which the strong, the cunning, the rich can seize power and hold it. I saw the many work for small wages which kept them always on the borderline of want for the few who made huge profits. I saw the courts, the halls of legislation, the press, and the schools -- in fact every avenue of education and protection -- effectively used as an instrument for the safeguarding of a minority, while the masses were denied every right. I found that the politicians knew how to befog every issue, how to control public opinion and manipulate votes to their own advantage and to that of their financial and industrial allies. This was the picture of democracy I soon discovered on my arrival in the United States. (1934: 52-3)

Late nineteenth-century American society was in the midst of a radical transformation, and the cultural landscape, as Goldman witnessed almost immediately upon her arrival, was characterized by widespread social unrest and cultural upheavals ushered in by industrialization, urbanization, first-wave feminism and the unprecedented arrival of thousands of immigrants to the shores of America. The dramatic and uneasy transition

from a rural, agrarian society to an urbanized, industrialized, capitalist, consumer society not only highlighted social inequalities, but also demanded that such inequalities be addressed publicly. The overwhelming chasms between the rich and the poor, perhaps best symbolized by the massive strikes and demonstrations by workers and labour unions that occurred throughout the nation during the last decades of the nineteenth century, brought glaring public attention to the social inequalities that defined and dictated individual identity. The political groups and individuals who protested against such cultural inequalities also proved to be of public interest, drawing the attention not only of the modern popular press, but also of government and legal officials.

Anarchists in particular came under the glare of the public spotlight, due in part to their public and notorious acts of “propaganda by the deed.” Direct action had long been a traditional practice and theory of anarchism, but the meaning and various nuances of the phrase changed dramatically during the late nineteenth-century. “Propaganda by the deed” became associated almost exclusively with the violent acts and assassination attempts (“attentats”) perpetrated by anarchists throughout Europe during the last two decades of the century. This period was marked by a small number of anarchists assassinating members of the ruling class, including kings, queens and other monarchs, as well as politicians and industrialists.² A variety of factors contributed to the sudden increase in

² Alexander Berkman was convicted and sentenced to twenty-two years in prison for his attempted assassination of American steel magnate Henry Clay Frick in 1892; Spanish

violence committed by anarchists during this time, but most historians identify the bloody aftermath of the Paris Commune in 1871 as the pivotal moment in which anarchists turned to violence against state and government officials. As a result of the French government's brutal suppression of the Commune, more than twenty thousand individuals were killed at the hands of the state, and it was not long after the events in Paris that anarchists sought revenge through violent means.

The events surrounding the Paris Commune carried far-reaching implications for anarchists and other political radicals, who increasingly became the target of government and legal officials anxious to suppress the threats to cultural stability posed by anarchists. The relentless and often violent campaigns against anarchists in America became even more pronounced in later years, and especially during the disastrous events following the Haymarket Riots in Chicago in 1886. The legal events that occurred after the notorious Haymarket Square bombing marked the beginning of a long and brutal campaign against anarchists that led to the establishment of various anti-anarchist laws and the eventual deportation, in 1919, of hundreds of anarchists upon the "Red Ark." On the evening of May 4, 1886, anarchists gathered at Chicago's Haymarket Square to protest the violent actions of police against striking workers at the McCormick Harvester Company the day before, whereby one striking

prime minister Del Castillo, Austrian empress Elizabeth and King Umberto of Italy were assassinated by anarchists in 1897, 1898, and 1900, respectively; and American President McKinley was killed in 1901 by Leon Czolgosz, a self-described anarchist who claimed to have been profoundly inspired by Goldman's and Berkman's ideas and acts of revolt.

worker was killed and an undetermined number injured (Wexler 34). The meeting was largely uneventful until the sudden appearance of nearly two hundred police officers, when suddenly a bomb exploded and the police opened fire, killing and wounding several spectators. Eight anarchists who were involved in the organization of the protest were indicted for murder, despite the absence of any evidence that they were involved in the bombing. Indeed, it was not their actions that were on trial, but rather their radical politics; as the prosecutor himself argued, "Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial . . . Gentlemen of the jury, convict these men . . . and save our institutions, our society" (qtd. in Marsh 7). Though two of the men were not even present at the meeting, all were convicted, and seven were sentenced to death.³

The trial of the Chicago anarchists was given extensive and national coverage in both the mainstream and radical popular press, and introduced anarchism into the popular cultural lexicon. The political, cultural and legal circumstances and implications of the trial made anarchism the subject of popular cultural debate; more importantly, however, the trial also converted many to the ideas of anarchism, including Emma Goldman, who would become America's most popular female anarchist. Though Goldman frequently emphasizes the

³ Following unsuccessful appeals of the verdict at the U.S. Supreme Court, Illinois governor Richard James Oglesby commuted the death sentences of two of the men to life in prison. On the eve of the scheduled executions, one of the men committed suicide in his jail cell; the next day, November 11 1887, the remaining four anarchists were publicly hanged. In June of 1893, Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld deemed all eight men innocent, and two of the men received official pardons.

significance of her personal experiences to her development as an anarchist, she also insists that the events surrounding the Haymarket affair were responsible for her lifelong dedication to the anarchist cause:

[The oppressive American cultural] situation, which was a matter of daily experience, was brought home to me with a force that tore away shams and made reality stand out vividly and clearly by an event which occurred shortly after my coming to America. It was the so-called Haymarket riot, which resulted in the trial and conviction of eight men, among them five Anarchists. Their crime was an all-embracing love for their fellow-men and their determination to emancipate the oppressed and disinherited masses. In no way had the State of Illinois succeeded in proving their connection with the bomb that had been thrown at an open-air meeting in Haymarket Square in Chicago. It was their Anarchism which resulted in their conviction and execution on the 11th of November, 1887. This judicial crime left an indelible mark on my mind and heart and sent me forth to acquaint myself with the ideal for which these men had died so heroically. I dedicated myself to their cause. (1934: 53)

As Goldman herself contends, the trial and subsequent execution of the Chicago anarchists permanently solidified her anarchist ideas, and led to her ceaseless devotion to the anarchist cause. While the events

surrounding the legal trials of the eight men certainly influenced Goldman's anarchism, she was also inspired by a female German socialist, Johanna Greie, whose "passionate indictment" of the injustices of the trial "engrossed" Goldman, such that she left Greie's speech "in a dream," and imagining herself as a future orator for radical political causes (1931: 8-9).

While Goldman's reputation as one of American's most famous and published anarchists is solid, and her iconic position within radical anarchist cultures is secure, her anarchist theories have nevertheless been subjected to frequent misrepresentations and misreadings in both critical literature and the popular imagination. Many critical studies of Goldman's politics, including Bonnie Haaland's *Emma Goldman: Sexuality and the Impurity of the State* (1993); Albert and Theresa Moritz's "*The Most Dangerous Woman in America*": *A New Biography of Emma Goldman* (2000), and John Chalberg's *Emma Goldman: American Individualist* (1991) offer distorted depictions of her anarchism by presenting her theories through narrow political lenses that concentrate upon a single facet of Goldman's anarchist vision, virtually ignoring the plurality of inconsistencies and contradictions presented throughout her writings. Such misreadings are not altogether unsurprising, given the complex layers of political, intellectual, and philosophical thought which underwrite her unique theories of anarchism. Inspired by a diverse array of anarchist writers and agitators, Goldman's anarchist vision was an all-

encompassing one that embraced and enmeshed together a variety of political ideologies; indeed, her ability to bring together distinctly different political ideas is perhaps her most important contribution to anarchist theory. Goldman's anarchism was a unique synthesis of various strains of modern anarchist thought, including individualist anarchism, communist anarchism, collectivist anarchism, syndicalist anarchism, and what would come to be known in the 1970's as anarcho-feminism. As all of these strands of anarchism play central roles in her theories, and present different and often-conflicting definitions and goals of anarchism, it is necessary to examine the implications of the various adjectives used to modify the term "anarchism" in order to more fully understand Goldman's anarchist ideologies.

Throughout her political and personal writings, Goldman reveals the important influences upon her anarchist thought by prominent anarchists, including Peter Kropotkin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, Johann Most, Josef Peukert, Alexander Berkman, and Max Stirner. While all men were foundational anarchist thinkers, their theories were often widely divergent, and the differences between them marked by the adjectives that modify their particular version of anarchism. Tucker, Stirner, and fellow Americans Josiah Warren and Lysander Spooner were associated with individualist anarchism, a political philosophy that is primarily concerned with establishing individual rights and securing the absolute freedom and autonomy of the individual. Stirner's *The Ego and*

its Own, published in 1884, and generally viewed as a foundational text of individualist anarchism, emphasizes the absolute primacy of the individual in anarchist thought. Throughout the text, Stirner negates the validity and relevance of society to anarchism, and instead contends that society is not “an actual entity,” but rather, an illusion, and that “the individuals are its reality” (221). Goldman virtually repeats Stirner’s words in an essay published in 1940, where she declares that “the individual is the true reality in life.”⁴ Stirner’s texts had profound influence upon Goldman’s anarchism, and in the preface to her *Anarchism and Other Essays*, she draws attention to the social implications of Stirner’s individualist theories: “[t]hat Stirner’s individualism contains the greatest social possibilities is utterly ignored. Yet, it is nevertheless true that if society is ever to become free, it will be so through liberated individuals, whose free efforts make society” (44). Goldman insisted upon the political powers of each individual, and claimed that her anarchism was above all “dictated by my faith in the potentialities of the individual” (44). Such declarations, consistently presented throughout Goldman’s writings, emphasize the centrality of individualism to her anarchist thought, yet she also makes clear the significance of society, or rather, social relations, to her political goals and anarchist visions, as well as the mutualist, communist and collectivist anarchist theories that center around ideas of the social.

⁴ “The Individual, Society and the State.” *Free Society Forum*, Chicago (1940).

Rather than concentrating upon the individual, mutualist, communist and collectivist strands of anarchism focus upon the role of society in the transformation of the political order, and stress the importance of creating free, self-governing societies or collectives. Mutualist anarchism is most often associated with Pierre Joseph Proudhon, who was the first writer to describe his theories and himself as “anarchist.”⁵ Dedicated to ideas of free association and mutual financial cooperation between workers, Proudhon’s anarchist mutualism boldly challenged the capitalist basis of modern society. He insisted that workers must organize together to manage both their labour and the products of their labour, and protested against the capitalist ownership of the means of production. The importance of creating free federations of autonomous communities was also emphasized by Peter Kropotkin, who coined the term “anarchist communism” at an international anarchist congress in Switzerland in 1880 (Novak 9). Kropotkin, often viewed as having the greatest influence upon Goldman’s anarchist ideas, concentrated upon concepts of mutual aid and cooperation between humans, and above all, insisted that cooperative social relations were absolutely necessary to individual freedom.

Goldman herself asserted that Kropotkin’s ideas had profound effects upon her anarchism, and indeed all modern anarchists: “We saw in [Kropotkin] the father of modern anarchism, its revolutionary spokesman

⁵ Proudhon first used the term “anarchist” in his 1840 treatise, *What is Property? Or an Inquiry into the Principle of Right and Government*.

and brilliant exponent . . . , our common teacher and inspiration” (1931: 509). She was especially drawn to Kropotkin’s notion of the individual as “essentially a social being who can achieve full dependence only in society, while society can benefit only if its members are free” (qtd. in Marsh 13). Alongside her emphatic insistence upon “the importance of the individual,” Goldman also claims that “[t]here is no conflict between the individual and the social” (1934 speech; 1910:52). These may appear as conflicting statements, but Goldman, like Kropotkin, saw the relationship between the individual and the social as inextricable and mutually reciprocal: “The individual is the heart of society, conserving the essence of social life; society is the lungs which are distributing the element to keep the life essence -- that is the individual -- pure and strong” (1910: 52). Goldman’s belief in the necessary and reciprocal relationship between the individual and society is also presented in a definition of anarchism that she offered, along with Johann Most, in an 1896 article: “[anarchism] actually signifies a social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all government of man by man; in short, it means perfect individual liberty.”⁶ In this definition and others offered by Goldman throughout her writings, she clearly demonstrates her theoretical fusion of individualist, mutualist and communist strands of anarchism, and that both individual and social concerns were of equal importance to her anarchism.

⁶ Emma Goldman and John Most. “Anarchy Defended by Anarchists.” *Metropolitan Magazine*. Vol. 4.3 (October 1896).

Goldman was also profoundly inspired by the ideas of prominent anarchosyndicalists. Anarchosyndicalism also focuses upon the development of an autonomous and self-governing society, but is particularly concerned with the working classes. Directly influenced by and involved with radical labour movements and groups, syndicalist anarchism posits trade unions as a potential force for revolutionary social change, replacing capitalism and the State with a new society democratically self-managed by workers. From her earliest moments in America, Goldman was a public advocate for the rights of workers, and beginning in the 1890s, she became publicly known for her active participation in countless demonstrations, strikes and other protests organized by workers and trade unions.⁷ Goldman repeatedly stresses the importance of labour causes to her politics, and specifically identifies the first “May Day” celebrated in America as being profoundly inspirational to her political views: “In 1890 the First of May was for the first time celebrated in America as Labour’s international holiday. May Day became to me a great, Inspiring event. To witness the celebration of the First of May in a free country -- it was something to dream of, to long for, but perhaps never to be realized” (1923: 48).

Goldman’s anarchism clearly developed out of a broad range of anarchist theories, and certainly the ideas of Stirner, Kropotkin, Bakunin, Proudhon and other prominent male anarchists provided the theoretical

⁷ Goldman’s public roles within radical labour cultures will be examined in more detail in Chapter Four.

foundations for much of her anarchist thought. Goldman, however, strayed far from such foundational theories and thinkers through her anarchist analysis of gender and sexuality. Alongside American anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre, Goldman made feminist concerns an essential component of her anarchist politics, and in so doing, offered a vision of anarchism that directly contradicted both the ideas, and perhaps more importantly, the patriarchal assumptions underlying such ideas, of leading anarchist thinkers, including Bakunin and Kropotkin.⁸ Central to her anarchist philosophies was the cultural oppression of women, and her commitment to emancipating modern women from restrictive moral, social and sexual traditions is made evident throughout her writings, which frequently concentrate upon the particular usefulness of anarchism for modern women who desire absolute personal and social freedom. Goldman also strived to live her personal life in adherence to her feminist ideologies, particularly in terms of her insistence upon women's freedom of self-expression and sexuality.

Goldman provides numerous and at times, conflicting definitions of anarchism throughout her writings, but in her essay "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For," she describes anarchism as "the philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary" (50). With this definition, Goldman

⁸ Goldman's introduction of feminist concerns to her anarchism will be explored in greater detail in the second and third chapters.

corresponds with traditional anarchist thought, and adheres to two defining features of all strands of anarchism: the insistence upon absolute individual freedom and the rejection of authority. Indeed, as Novak asserts,

The essence of anarchist thought is the emphasis on the freedom of the individual, leading to the denial and condemnation of any authority which hinders his [sic] free and full development, particularly the state. The rejection of all authority represents the main contribution of anarchism to political thought and distinguishes it from other political and social theories . . . It may, then, be suggested, that the various anarchist trends have in common a belief in individual freedom and a denial of authority. (6)

Though she certainly locates her anarchism within traditional anarchist discourses, Goldman nevertheless clearly challenged the narrow-mindedness that frequently characterized the cultural concerns of her anarchist contemporaries. Whereas most anarchist writers and activists focused upon challenging and defying the authority of state, church, capitalism and other social institutions, or what Goldman described as the "external tyrants" and enemies of anarchism, she drew attention to the cultural authority of the "internal tyrants" and the moral codes that oppressed the individual mind and body (1910: 50). She emphatically insisted that anarchism and its ultimate goal of absolute freedom must

begin internally, within the personal consciousness of each individual. Inspired by the individualist ideas of American writers Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman, Goldman believed that “the individual instinct is the thing of value in the world. It is the true soul that sees and creates the truth alive, out of which is to come a still greater truth, the re-born social soul” (1910: 52). Goldman’s conviction in the social powers of the individual “true soul” also expanded the scope of anarchism by offering a persuasive analysis of the politics of modern subjectivity. Indeed, for Goldman, the social revolution aspired to by anarchists could only be achieved after an “internal revolution,” within the personal “consciousness” of each individual (1910: 50, 52). Thus, it is the centrality of the individual subject, or more specifically, the politics of (modern) subjectivity that defines Goldman’s anarchism and distinguishes it from other traditional discourses of anarchism. And, as I will argue and demonstrate in the following chapters, it is the centrality of the self within the discourses, theories and practices of modern avant-garde and popular cultures that enabled Goldman to extend the cultural concerns of traditional anarchism, and to forge relationships of political significance with both avant-garde and popular cultures of modern America.

Chapter Summaries:

Chapter One: "Radical Modern Quests for 'perfect individual liberty': Emma Goldman and Ideologies of the Self in Popular and Avant-Garde American Cultures"

Chapter One establishes and examines Goldman's complex self-positioning within popular and avant-garde print and oral cultures of modernity, and considers the intersections between her anarchist notions of modern subjectivity and avant-garde and popular ideologies and practices of modern subject formation. Goldman scholars, most notably Richard Drinnon, Alice Wexler, Candace Falk, and Christine Stansell, generally acknowledge (and, in Stansell's case, actually emphasize) Goldman's iconic positions within modern aesthetic and popular cultures; virtually ignored, however, are the political implications and functions of Goldman's strategic self-representation as a popular public figure. Indeed, Stansell goes so far as to assert that in spite of her deliberate self-construction as a "modern celebrity," as well as her successful deployment of modern techniques of self-amplification, display, and publicity, Goldman was "too much a devotee of high culture ever to be fully capable of utilizing the rhythms and forms" of American popular culture (Stansell 137). A passionate admirer of Nietzsche, Strindberg, Ibsen, and other representatives of "high" modernist culture, Goldman certainly privileged the forms and audiences of a "higher cultural order"; nevertheless, she seduced and was seduced by a developing and particularly American manifestation of modern popular culture (Goldman, 1931: 981).

Rhetorically, at least, she aligned herself with her anarchist comrades in her disdain for popular culture. These same political allies, however, including American anarchists Harry Kelly, Voltairine de Cleyre, Ed Brady, and Goldman's long-time lover Alexander Berkman, repeatedly and publicly castigated her for being "too concerned" with popular culture (Wexler, 1984: 205). Though her writings consistently present her overt scorn for and repudiation of the "vulgarity" of popular cultural forms and audiences, they also reveal her deliberate and strategic efforts to reach out to the American masses through some of the most popular cultural forms, including the modern theatrical stage, the daily press, and the increasingly popular lecture circuit.

Examining Goldman's discursive and embodied public presentations of self upon a broad range of avant-garde and popular cultural stages, I argue that, contrary to Stansell's claims, Goldman was indeed more than capable of both utilizing and critically responding to the "rhythms and forms" of both avant-garde aesthetic and popular cultures of modern America. I explore her intimate, if conflicted, relationship with popular culture, and suggest that her objections notwithstanding, Goldman was clearly dependent upon the representational strategies offered by modern popular culture in order to promulgate her political ideas to the American masses. With the help of her skillful publicity managers, Goldman deftly manipulated the machinery of popular culture through outrageous publicity stunts and advertising techniques that drew large

audiences to her public lectures. I also consider the ways in which her strategic deployment of popular practices of modern cultural performance enabled her to publicly stage her anarchist politics of subjectivity. Thus, this chapter analyses sites of intersections and conflicts between radical anarchist politics, aesthetic avant-gardism and early twentieth-century American popular culture. It builds upon existing scholarship that examines the relations between modernist and anarchist cultures (e.g. Allan Antliff, 2001; David Kadlec, 2000; and David Weir, 1997) but from a more inclusive perspective that considers not only the influences of anarchism upon modern art and culture, but also the influences of avant-garde and popular modern cultures upon anarchism. This chapter will also contribute to scholarship that explores the self-constructing strategies of modern subjects (e.g. Andrea Barner, 2004; Penny Farfan, 2004; Carolyn Burke, 1996; and William Taylor, 1992). Much of this work situates modernist techniques of public self-performance and self-production within particular contexts of modern gender identity and non-mainstream feminist discourses and practices of early twentieth-century American culture, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Two: "Emma Goldman and the Anarcha-Feminist Politics of the Modern Avant-Garde"

The second chapter expands on the critical issues raised in the first, and specifically focuses upon Goldman's anarchist-feminist notions of

the emancipated modern woman. Tracing both the anarchist and avant-garde foundations of her radical feminist thought, I argue that Goldman's ideas concerning modern women's sexual, moral, creative and economic freedom must be situated within avant-garde aesthetic cultures, and particularly within avant-garde notions of the non-traditional, experimental, expressive and autonomous self, in order to appreciate more fully the broad range of modern cultures and ideologies informing her feminist theories and practices. I argue that Goldman strategically deployed avant-garde theories and practices of modern subjectivity and applied them to traditional -- and traditionally patriarchal and misogynist -- anarchism in order to offer a highly insightful and critically-nuanced analysis of modern gender politics that was multi-faceted in its focus, and which solidified Goldman's cultural iconic position as a modern radical feminist.⁹

An analysis of the similarities between anarchist and avant-garde ideas of the modern self demonstrates that concepts of liberty and freedom of subjectivity provide a critical point of intersection between radical political and aesthetic cultures of American modernity. Goldman's participation within avant-garde literary, theatrical, intellectual and artistic cultures of Greenwich Village enabled her to recognize the ideological links between such seemingly disparate political and aesthetic cultures,

⁹ In my description of Goldman as a "modern radical feminist," I do not mean to suggest that Goldman's feminism should be situated within the contexts of radical second-wave feminism, which often included ideologies of separatism (although there are certain many parallels between Goldman's feminist ideas and some of the tenets of second-wave feminism); rather, I use "modern" to signify that her feminist ideas must be understood within the social, cultural and political contexts of modernity and "radical" to indicate how her feminism extended far beyond the scope of traditional mainstream first-wave feminism.

and she was especially drawn to the ways in which avant-garde ideas of the liberated self echoed or expanded upon her anarchist-feminist notions of the emancipated modern female. In particular, I argue that avant-garde ideas concerning the sovereignty and autonomy of the individual self, the cultural imperative to destroy and experiment with social traditions (including marriage and the nuclear family), sexual freedom and free self-expression played highly influential roles in Goldman's radical feminism, and especially within her feminist politics of women's sexuality. While the primary critical focus of this chapter will be upon the critical intersections between Goldman's feminism, modern anarchism, and Greenwich Village avant-gardism, attention will also be paid to the ways in which such intersections were manifested in late nineteenth-century socio-political and explicitly feminist debates about marriage and "The Woman Question" pervasive within Victorian periodical cultures.

Chapter Three: "The Feminist Politics of Self-Performance by Iconic 'New Women': Emma Goldman, Sarah Bernhardt and Mina Loy"

The third chapter examines Goldman's public personifications of her feminist politics, the self-representational strategies used by Goldman to promulgate such politics, and the iconic feminist roles she embodied within American modern cultures. Critically situating her feminist self-performances within a developing culture of modern women who engaged with similar ideas and self-representational strategies in their roles as

iconic "New Women," I analyze the significance of performance to the politics and cultural iconicity of such women. In particular, Goldman's feminist work and performances will be brought into dialogue with the writings, personal lives, and public self-stagings of popular stage actress Sarah Bernhardt and avant-garde poet and artist Mina Loy in order to gain insight into the ways in which modern practices and cultures of performance enabled such modern feminists to transgress cultural gender norms and boundaries. Described by many of her contemporaries and biographers as the "quintessential New Woman," Goldman discursively and literally embodies the liberated, sexually daring, artistic, and intellectual New Woman of modernity (Christine Stansell, 2001; Richard Drinnon, 1961). As has been aptly noted and discussed by critics such as Bonnie Haaland, Christine Stansell, Suzanne Clark, and Margaret Marsh, Goldman's passionate calls for women's absolute freedom in physical, sexual, moral, and social realms firmly established her permanent iconic status with modern feminist cultures. Whereas most feminist interpretations of Goldman's life and ideologies focus upon her overt and overtly-political statements about modern women, particularly in regards to marriage, birth control, and women's sexuality, this chapter offers a feminist analysis of the less-overt, but perhaps equally important political statements expressed through Goldman's highly theatrical public performances of self. More precisely, I argue that Goldman, like so many other iconic New Women, deliberately deployed performative strategies of

self-representation in order to enact literally new renderings of womanhood that offered a dramatic political resistance to and subversion of cultural gender norms.

Situated firmly within the modern cultures of the spectacle and the celebrity, Goldman's performances of gender are critically considered alongside the performative and public self-displays of Sarah Bernhardt and Mina Loy. Exploring the modernist, feminist and anarchist politics of self-performance, I argue that the performative strategies deployed by such modern women, while grounded in avant-garde aesthetic experiments in expressive self-construction, are also consistent with anarchist politics of free self-expression, and perhaps most importantly, with anarchism's emphasis upon the revolutionary potential of action. I also examine the centrality of the female body to discursive and visual depictions of the New Women within the modern popular press, and consider the ways in which Goldman and other popular modern women used the female body as a site of and tool for political expression. Thus, this chapter will contribute to a growing body of scholarship that examines women's roles within modern popular culture (Alison Piepmeier, 2004; Joanne Hollows, 2000; and June Sochen, 1987) as well as critical works that explore the relationship between modern women and popular performance (Andrea Barnet, 2004; Penny Farfan, 2004; Susan A. Glenn, 2000; Barbara Green, 1997; and Lisa Tickner, 1988).

Chapter Four. “‘Circuses,’ ‘spectacles,’ and ‘staged judicial farces’:
Theatricality, Popular Culture, and the Legal Trials of Goldman and
Anarchism in Modern America

The focus of the fourth chapter shifts from the gendered contexts of Goldman's public performances to legal contexts, and concentrates upon Goldman's theatrical appearances and speeches within the modern American courtroom. I examine how Goldman used the American courtroom as a popular cultural stage upon which to perform her anarchist politics, and analyze what Alexander Berkman described as the “propaganda value” of her trials.¹⁰ Arrested and jailed for charges such as incitement to riot, unlawful assembly, publicly advocating birth control, and obstructing the draft, Goldman, alongside many other anarchists, consistently engaged in cultural activities that were deemed illegal, and as a result, repeatedly found herself and her anarchism on trial in America. Clearly aware of the “propaganda value” of the courtroom, Goldman deliberately represented her trials as theatrical spectacles for the modern American public. Her defense speeches, essays, and public comments about her trials consistently use theatrical rhetoric to characterize the players and procedures of her trials and other legal trials of anarchists, and to encourage the modern public in general, and the modern popular press in particular, to view her trials and those of other American anarchists as “staged judicial farces” (Goldman 1893: 188). Focusing upon the ways in which both Goldman and the modern popular press

¹⁰ Alexander Berkman in a letter to Goldman in 1893. Rpt. in Falk e al., 2003: 161.

made political trials a form of popular entertainment, this chapter also explores the complex relations between law, (anarchist) politics, and popular culture in modern American.

In her 1917 "Address to the Jury", Goldman proclaimed that anarchism, "like every new idea heralding the approach of a brighter dawn . . . has always been considered outside of the law." More specifically, anarchism has always been considered outside of the laws of America. Through my examination of Goldman's dramatic confrontations with American laws, I will also explore the position of anarchism and its trials within American legal history, paying particular attention to the various laws -- including the Anarchist Acts (1902) and the Sedition Act (1917) -- that were enacted as a direct result of Goldman's cultural activities. Moreover, I draw attention to Goldman's direct influence upon the development of various American legal groups and organizations, most notably, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the American Civil Liberties Union. Thus, this chapter will contribute to existing studies on the intersections between law and performance (e.g. Philip Auslander, 1999; Bernard Hibbits, 1996, 1992; and Roxanne Kent-Drury, 1996) and law and popular culture (Michael Asimow and Shannon Mader, 2000; Richard K Sherwin, 2000; and Steve Redhead, 1995), as well as scholarship on the role of anarchism within modern American legal history (Paul Avrich, 1988; Thom Holterman and Henc van Maarseveen, 1984; and William O. Reichert, 1976).

Conclusion:

My concluding chapter synthesizes my research, and will illuminate the political and cultural implications of Goldman's self-representational strategies. I consider the ways in which Goldman's self-performances transgressed class, gender, and ethnic boundaries of cultural identity, and will analyze the modernist, feminist, and anarchist politics of subjectivity informing her various self-constructions. I examine her embodiment of the quintessential anarchist subject, as well as the political work – particularly in terms of modern, aesthetic, and feminist politics – performed by her public personality and representation of it. Furthermore, I consider the ways in which her unique personality and her unique version of anarchism were entirely dependent upon her experiences as a radical feminist immigrant within avant-garde aesthetic and popular cultures of American modernity.

Chapter One: "Radical Modern Quests for 'perfect individual liberty':

Emma Goldman and Ideologies of the Self in Popular and
Avant-Garde American Cultures"

At the tender age of twenty-two, a petite, attractive, and relatively unknown female anarchist performed a theatrical display of political radicalism that both shocked and enthralled the American public. At a May Day celebration in Union Square in 1892, Russian-Jewish immigrant Emma Goldman enacted a sensational disruption of the gathering that became front-page news for days following the event. Members of the Central Labour Union who had organized the mass demonstration wanted the focus of the celebration to remain solely upon the workers and trade unions, and vowing to "let politics alone," refused to let anarchists speak ("Anarchists in Charge," 97). But politics interrupted loudly when Emma Goldman climbed on top of a wagon and, shouting in German, quickly attracted a large audience of curious spectators. Desperate to silence the audacious "agitator in skirts" and to disperse the large crowd that had gathered around her, labour and union officials hitched a horse to the wagon and whipped the horse into action ("Berkman's Career Here," 109). Goldman, however, was far from discouraged, and she could be heard, according to two popular New York newspapers, "wail[ing]," "squeak[ing]" and "shrieking" long after the wagon was out of sight.¹

¹ In their accounts of Goldman's behaviour during the meeting, *The New York World* articles focused upon her "squeaky voice, which sounded as if some one were crying in

This dramatic and highly publicized event marked Goldman's entrance onto the stage of popular culture in America, where she continued to "shriek" and "wail" her anarchist theories and visions right up until her death in 1940, maintaining an iconic cultural position long after her deportation in 1919. As evidenced by the plethora of posters, buttons, and slogans related to Goldman that continue to be produced today, as well as her frequent appearances as a character in postmodern novels, plays, and operas, she clearly remains an important figure in popular culture.² Her notorious acts of political radicalism certainly helped to secure her prominent cultural status, especially among later generations of political dissidents, including (second-wave) feminists, gays and lesbians, environmentalists, and peace and anti-war activists. Yet her politics alone do not justify her cultural iconicity, for while Goldman's name and reputation may be widely known, those of her anarchist comrades, whose words and actions were equally infamous, are not. A variety of factors, which will be explored in the following pages, contributed to Goldman's important cultural standing, but chief among them were

distress" and her "tremendous wail[s]." Similarly, a Yiddish Socialist Labor party weekly newspaper also emphasized Goldman's voice: "Mrs. Goldman blazed and her voice squealed" and she "courageously continued her shrieking, as long as her voice could still be heard" (*New York Arbeiter-Zeitung*, May 6 1892).

² Some of the most well known books, plays and films that feature Goldman as a character include E.L. Doctorow's novel *Ragtime* (1975), Howard Zinn's play "Emma," first produced in 1976 and later published in *Playbook* (Boston: South End Press, 1986), Carol Bolt's play "Red Emma," filmed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and broadcast in January 1976, and perhaps most famously, director Warren Beatty's film *Reds* (1981), which featured Maureen Stapleton in the role of Goldman (and Stapleton's portrayal earned her the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress). One of the earliest fictional accounts of Goldman can be found in the 1941 novel *Red Rose*, written by Ethel Mannin, a British novelist and political activist who worked closely with Goldman in London on behalf of the CNT-FAI during the Spanish civil war.

Goldman's own strategic efforts to situate both herself, as an individual personality, and her politics within both private and public, and avant-garde and popular cultures of American modernity.

Goldman would play an assortment of often conflicting public roles across a broad range of artistic, literary, social, intellectual, sexual, entertainment, and of course, political cultures of modernity, yet the heterogeneous and dynamic nature of her cross-cultural work is often belied by distorted misrepresentations of her politics that abound in both critical and popular literature. Indeed, just a brief perusal of the titles of critical studies of Goldman suggests that her cultural iconicity is due solely to the radical political threat posed by the "red rebel" and "the most dangerous woman in America."³ Goldman's notorious and lifelong involvement with anarchists, labour activists, birth control advocates and free love champions certainly makes clear that political radicalism was a significant, and in many ways, the defining feature of her cultural positioning. But what sets Goldman apart from so many other key figures of modern political radicalism -- including prominent anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin, Rudolf Rocker, Voltairine de Cleyre, and her one-time lover and life-long companion, Alexander Berkman; labour agitators such as "Big Bill" Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and

³ See, for example, Richard Drinnon's landmark biography of Goldman, *Rebel In Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961 and Theresa and Albert Moritz, *The World's Most Dangerous Woman: A New Biography of Emma Goldman*. Toronto: Subway Books, 2000.

Mother Jones; birth control pioneers Margaret Sanger, Mary Stopes and Havelock Ellis; and free love advocates Moses Harman, Josiah Warren, Ezra Heywood and Benjamin Tucker -- is her refusal to limit her radical ideologies to narrow political concerns and traditional political cultures. Instead, and to the consternation of many of her political allies, Goldman applied her radicalism to and situated it within the seemingly apolitical cultures of modern art, literature, philosophy, sexuality, and psychology -- cultures that appeared, on the surface at least, to hold little if any relevance for the workers, political prisoners and impoverished immigrant women on whose behalf she and other radicals so tirelessly crusaded. Her participation within such artistic and intellectual modernist cultures drew widespread criticism from her fellow anarchists; equally, or perhaps even more problematic, however, was her strategic self-positioning within modern cultures of the popular.

This chapter explores and establishes Goldman's culturally iconic status within both avant-garde and popular modern cultures. The critical focus upon Goldman's importance as a political figure, while securing her position within cultures of radicalism, has simultaneously diminished, if not entirely negated, the significance of her contributions to a broad range of both high and low cultures of modernity. Her infamous reputation as a political radical, as well as the coverage devoted to Goldman within the mainstream popular press, certainly contributed to her culturally iconic position within modern society. The exact nature of her iconicity, however,

is complex and paradoxical, for Goldman was simultaneously represented and received as both a cultural pariah and a celebrity. Indeed, she both attracted and repelled specific segments and audiences of modern American society, largely due to her own strategic self-positioning within conflicting intellectual, aesthetic, political, and entertainment cultures. Focusing upon Goldman's active participation within two cultures consistently overlooked by Goldman scholars – avant-garde modernism and popular modern culture – I argue that Goldman successfully bridged the gaps generally understood to separate both cultures, and performatively demonstrated the political implications and possibilities of merging some of the contradictory ideas and practices of high and low cultures of modernity. I contend that in spite of Goldman's professed disdain for the popular, as well as the antagonism frequently displayed between political radicals and mass culture, her anarchist politics enabled her to negotiate and transcend modern cultural boundaries; moreover, her cross-cultural self-(im)positionings performed a variety of political functions.⁴

I further argue that the lynchpin upon which this cultural negotiation depended was the centrality of the individual self not only to Goldman's political visions, but also to both popular and avant-garde cultural practices and theories. As modernist scholar Warren Susman contends, notions of the self are essential and defining features of any given culture,

⁴ I am using the term "cross-cultural" to suggest the ways in which Goldman's political ideologies and activism transgressed socially constructed boundaries between high and low artistic cultures, and between different ethnic, class, and political communities.

and in modern American society, two competing visions of self played out in avant-garde and popular cultures (np). While avant-garde modernism turned inward to the individual, private, personal, and internal self, popular mass culture turned outward to the social, public, external self. Both visions of self are enacted by Goldman throughout her public appearances and her writings, yet the inconsistencies between her various self-presentations and cultural self-positionings, noted but generally dismissed by many Goldman scholars, are of political significance.⁵ In anticipation of late twentieth-century identity politics, Goldman insisted upon the inextricable relationship between politics and subjectivity, and made the controversial claim that “it is more important to do political work with one’s personality than with propaganda” (qtd. in Wexler 198).⁶ Indeed, for Goldman, political propaganda necessarily required an embodied, situated subjectivity, and her deliberate presentations of herself within modern cultures owe less to Goldman’s narcissistic personality than to her anarchist politics of subjectivity.⁷ Examining her strategies of self-

⁵ See Candace Falk’s *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston: 1984), where Falk consistently notes the contradictions between Goldman’s personal life and public politics, and Alice Wexler’s *Emma Goldman in America* (Boston: Beacon Hill, 1984). Although earlier scholarship often failed to adequately assess the cultural and political implications of Goldman’s contrasting forms of self-presentation, more recent scholarship, and especially publications related to the Emma Goldman Papers Project, have sought to address this issue. See Candace Falk’s Introduction to *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Vol. II: Making Speech Free (1902-1909)*, entitled “Raising Her Voices” (p. 1-80), where Falk asserts that Goldman “may well have been the consummate actress ... casting herself simultaneously in the role of very different characters” (1).

⁶ Emma Goldman, in a letter to Leon Malmed, April 7, 1906. Quoted in Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in America*. Boston: Beacon Hill, 1984. 198

representation as well as the avant-garde and popular modern cultures from which such strategies emerged, I explore the political functions and implications of Goldman's cultural productions and presentations of subjectivity; specifically, I argue that Goldman's cultural mediations between popular and avant-garde modernism enabled her to enact her unique vision of the liberated, anarchist self.

Goldman's Iconicity within Cultures of Modernity

In recent years, critics such as Christine Stansell, Suzanne Clark, and Alan Antliff have drawn attention to Goldman's participation within modern literary and artistic cultures, as well as to her intimate relationships with key figures of aesthetic modernity.⁸ Nevertheless, despite situating Goldman within high modernist cultures, such studies at best misrepresent, and at worse entirely negate, Goldman's equally calculated attempts to depict herself as a public and popular figure of modernity. Moreover, despite acknowledging or, in Stansell's case, actually emphasizing Goldman's prominent roles within modern popular cultures, such critics inevitably dismiss the significance of newly developed cultures of the popular to Goldman's political ideas and public

⁷ Christine Stansell contends that Goldman's "dazzle as a speaker came, in part, from her relentless fascination with herself, a narcissistic preoccupation she could effectively project to her listeners." See Stansell's *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*. New York: Metropolitan, 2000. 121.

⁸ See Stansell's *American Moderns*, especially Chapter 4 ("Emma Goldman and the Modern Public"); Clark's *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991 and Antliff's *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 2001.

presentations of self. Indeed, Stansell goes so far as to assert that Goldman was “too much a devotee of high culture ever to be fully capable of utilizing the rhythms and forms” of American popular culture (137). Such statements, not altogether uncommon in critical studies of Goldman, misconstrue not only Goldman’s cultural roles, but also her political agenda; more specifically, such readings ignore or deny the essential, albeit highly conflicted, relationship between Goldman’s radical politics and the high and low modernist cultures in which she situated those politics, as well as the political and cultural implications of her deliberate and simultaneous self-stagings within both the avant-garde and the popular. Contrary to Stansell’s claim, Goldman proved highly adept at utilizing, manipulating and responding to “the rhythms and forms” of modern popular and avant-garde American cultures, and her public representations of herself and her politics were strongly influenced by -- if not largely dependent upon -- newly developed ideas, strategies, and practices of self-presentation offered by both modern cultures.

Known variously by her contemporaries as “the high Priestess of Anarchy,” “a madwoman, and a moral and mental pervert,” “the tender, cosmic Mother,” “a modern Joan of Arc,” and “that free-love sex radical,” Goldman performed a multiplicity of public roles across a vast range of political, artistic, literary, and intellectual, and sexual cultures.⁹ As a

⁹ Goldman was described as the “high priestess of anarchy” in the title of article from the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 8, 1901, while President Theodore Roosevelt deemed her a “madwoman”; Kate Richards O’Hare, a socialist activist imprisoned with Goldman, called Goldman a “tender cosmic mother” (qtd. in Drinnon, 1961: 251); and popular journalist

Russian-Jewish immigrant who was employed, at various times, as a writer, lecturer, publisher, editor, business owner, factory worker, theatre group manager, drama critic, registered nurse, midwife and prisoner, Goldman cast herself in a wide array of public roles and immersed herself within a broad array of public cultures. The conflicts and inconsistencies among these subject positions, especially in terms of class, gender, ethnic, political, and professional affiliations, have been acknowledged by Goldman scholars and by Goldman herself. Her personal and polemical writings are replete with critical self-analysis, where Goldman examines the paradoxical, unstable, and inconsistent nature of her multi-faceted subjectivity. Yet despite her self-representation as a “fiendish contradiction” who “was anything but consistent,” Goldman’s multi-valenced subjectivity is frequently distorted, and the self-contradictions dismissed, by critical interpretations that focus solely upon her identity as a notorious political radical (1931: 633; 582). Anarchism, feminism, labour movements and other political cultures undoubtedly played essential roles in Goldman’s self-development and self-representation; equally significant, however, to any interpretation of Goldman’s subject positions and, more importantly, the conflicts and inconsistencies that characterize her subjectivity, are the myriad of artistic, literary, and intellectual cultures of modernity within which Goldman strategically situated both her self and her politics. Situating her public self-representations and her political

Nelly Bly referred to Goldman as a “modern Joan of Arc” in an article in the *New York World*, Sept. 17, 1893.

writings within both the avant-garde and popular modern cultures from which they emerged is necessary not only to account for the contradictions and inconsistencies within Goldman's subject positions, but also to illuminate Goldman's critical but critically-neglected cultural role and self-representation as a definitively *modern* subject.

Representations of modern identity as fragmented and conflicted abound in popular modern literature, and the ambiguous nature of modern existence is perhaps best summarized by Marshall Berman's oft-cited declaration that "to be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction" (3). Berman's characterization of modern subjectivity is echoed throughout modernist literature and -- nearly verbatim -- throughout Goldman's personal and political writings, where she argues that "[t]o maintain consistency in a world of crass contradictions is not easy, and I had frequently been anything but consistent" (1931: 582). Indeed, throughout her writings, Goldman emerges as the quintessential modern subject, whose identity is perpetually suspended across conflicting lines of identity. She repeatedly emphasizes the conflicts within both her life and her personality, and in her autobiography she confesses, "I was not hewn of one piece . . . I had long realized that I was woven of many skeins, conflicting in shade and texture" (1931: 153). Certainly these obvious contradictions contribute to Goldman's self-presentation as the conflicted and destabilized modern subject, but her direct involvement with both avant-garde and popular cultures of modernity also informed her self-

representation and critical self-interpretations. To appreciate the political functions of Goldman's self-presentations, I turn first to a consideration of the avant-garde and popular cultures within which such subject positions were staged.

Avant-Garde Cultures of Modernity

The historical avant-garde, as a term applied to the opening decades of the twentieth century, is frequently (mis)understood to be synonymous with aesthetic "high" modernism. Certainly as a particular historical and cultural moment, the avant-garde is a crucial aspect of modernism; nevertheless, it should not be simply conflated with modernism. As the editors of *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (1998) maintain, modernism "is not synonymous with the avant-garde, but we do recognize its being charged with the avant-garde's combative energies" (Kolocotroni, Goldman and Taxidou xviii). Peter Burger, one of the leading scholars on the avant-garde, also makes a distinction between the terms, arguing that while modernism was concerned primarily with a formal evolution in aesthetic style, the avant-garde was focused upon radical changes in life. Nevertheless, as Burger asserts, both modernism and the avant-garde developed out of and as a reaction to new artistic movements and practices that emerged in the late nineteenth century.

“Avant-garde” is from the French “advance guard,” a military term used to describe a group of elite soldiers who lead the rest of the army or fleet and pave a path for them. When applied to artistic cultures, the avant-garde can be understood as a particular group of individuals who attempt to expand, explore and experiment with artistic terrain. Or, as Jurgen Habermas notes, the avant-garde “understands itself as invading unknown territory . . . conquering an as yet unoccupied future” (1981: 5). French author and socialist Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon is usually credited with the first use of the term avant-garde in relation to art, which appeared in 1825 in his book *Literary, Philosophical and Industrial Opinions*. Saint-Simon described a group of artists and writers at the forefront of society, who would forge new pathways in both the artistic and socio-political world, thus producing a radical transformation of society. The military connotations of the avant-garde are not lost on Saint-Simon, as he identifies art as the single most valuable and effective political weapon against a stifling social order:

We, the artists, will serve as the avant-garde: for amongst all the arms at our disposal, the power of the Arts is the swiftest and most expeditious. When we wish to spread new ideas amongst men, we use in turn the lyre, ode or song, story or novel; we inscribe those ideas on marble or canvas . . . We aim for the heart and imagination, and hence our effect is

the most vivid and the most decisive. (Harrison and Wood 40)

Seeking to integrate art and political activism, the avant-garde provided a radical critique of the social order, rejecting the authority and domination of “bourgeois society and its stagnating cultural conservatism” (Huysen, 1986: 5). Central to the modernist avant-garde project was the erasure of culturally constructed boundaries between art and life and art and politics, and the attendant politicization of modern aesthetics.

(Anarchist) Politics of the Avant-Garde

While avant-garde tendencies were manifested in a broad range of different aesthetic movements, including Expressionism, Futurism, Cubism, Surrealism, and Dada, all early twentieth-century avant-garde movements were linked through their shared transformative, revolutionary and rebellious energies and goals. Hal Foster provides a succinct, if not reductive definition of avant-gardism as “the ideology of the transgressive” (ix). Seeking to transform the present social order, the avant-garde insisted upon the complete autonomy of the individual and the artist. Centred around principles of liberty, anti-authoritarianism and self-sovereignty, the avant-garde both celebrated and “stood under the sign of subjective freedom” from the authority of repressive social, moral, and artistic codes of the past (Habermas, 1987: 83). Such revolutionary aims inevitably linked the avant-garde with political radicalism; as Huysen

notes, historically the concept of the avant-garde “was not limited to art but always referred to political radicalism as well” (4).

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the avant-garde became associated, in particular, with the politics of anarchism. The relation between the historical avant-garde and modern anarchism has been well documented by the likes of Allan Antliff and David Weir. Throughout *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (2001), Antliff discusses the influence of anarchist theory and figures upon avant-garde artists, and presents the (somewhat inflated) claim that anarchism was “*the* formative force lending coherence and direction to modernism in the United States between 1908 and 1920” (2, italics in original).¹⁰ Focusing in particular upon the personal, political and professional relationships between anarchists such as Emma Goldman, Hippolyte Havel, Hutchins Hapgood and Alexander Berkman, and avant-garde artists including Man Ray, Alfred Steiglitz and Robert Henri, Antliff persuasively demonstrates the theoretical and cultural interactions between anarchism and the modern avant-garde, as well as the relevance of anarchism to the political, social and aesthetic goals of avant-garde artists. Similar claims are presented throughout David Weir’s *Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism* (1997). Weir traces the influence of anarchist principles upon a diverse group of avant-garde

¹⁰ For other critical reviews of Antliff’s inflated claims concerning the influence of anarchism upon modern art, see Patrick Frank’s review in *Anarchy! A Journal of Desire Armed* 53 (Spring/Summer 2002) and Neala Schleuning’s review in *Social Anarchism* 38 (2005), where Schleuning asserts “there are some gaps, outright oversights, and obvious conflation of the relationship between anarchism and modernism in Antliff’s conclusions.”

writers and artists, including modernists Henrik Ibsen and James Joyce, Dadaist Hugo Ball and Surrealist Luis Bunuel, and contends that the cultural success of the avant-garde is due to its aesthetic realization of anarchist politics (2). He further asserts that though anarchism ultimately failed as a political movement, it succeeded culturally within aesthetic avant-gardism.

Emma Goldman and Modern Cultures of the Avant-Garde

Unlike many of her anarchist comrades, who frequently criticized her for being “too concerned with culture,” Goldman was actively involved with a variety of literary and artistic cultures of the modern avant-garde, and especially with avant-garde aesthetic cultures of Greenwich Village.¹¹ A voracious reader from an early age, Goldman admired Friedrich Nietzsche, Oscar Wilde, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Eugene O’Neill, and other modern writers and thinkers who explored both the problems and possibilities attendant to modern subjectivity. During the many years she lived and worked in New York City’s bohemian Greenwich Village, long recognized as the geographical locus of avant-garde modernism within America, Goldman developed relationships of varying degrees of intimacy with artists, writers, and other popular cultural figures of

¹¹ Fellow American anarchist Harry Kelly summed up the feelings of many of Goldman’s political allies, including Alexander Berkman and Voltairine de Cleyre, in his critical pronouncement that Goldman was “too concerned with culture.” Quoted in Alice Wexler’s *Emma Goldman In America*, p.201. De Cleyre also made many public and critical statements concerning Goldman’s attention to “respectable audiences, respectable neighbourhoods, respectable people” (quoted in Stansell, 41-2).

modernity, including Robert Henri, Man Ray, Mabel Dodge, Margaret Anderson, John Reed, Louise Bryant, Eugene O'Neill, Susan Glaspell, and Theodore Dreiser. She was also involved with various experimental theatres of Greenwich Village and with the Provincetown Players, a modern theatre company of amateurs established in Massachusetts in 1915 that sought to promote the experimental writings of such important figures as O'Neill, Glaspell, Dreiser, Djuna Barnes, Neith Boyce and Edna St. Vincent Millay. But it was Goldman's forays into modern periodical culture, and her founding and publication of the "little magazine," *Mother Earth* (1906-1917), which would most firmly establish Goldman's position within the modern literary avant-garde.

In marked deviation from the ideological trajectories of the radical anarchist press, *Mother Earth* sought to focus equally upon both politics and art. Goldman vowed that her monthly journal would "combine my social ideas with the young strivings of various art forms in America" (1931: 377). During the eleven years in which *Mother Earth* was published, Goldman kept her promise to fuse modern art and politics, and the journal lived up to its description, in the first issue, as a "Monthly Magazine Devoted to Social Science and Literature."¹² Featuring drawings by such famous modern artists as Man Ray, Robert Minor and Adolf Wolff, and essays, fiction, plays and poetry by the likes of Oscar Wilde, Friedrich Nietzsche, Eugene O'Neill, Margaret Anderson, Margaret Sanger, Louise Bryant, Mabel Dodge, Elisee Reclus, Rudolf Rocker, Max Eastman and

¹² *Mother Earth*, 1:1, (March 1906).

Floyd Dell, Goldman's journal drew attention to new developments in literary and artistic cultures of modernity, and introduced a host of modern poets and writers to her audience.¹³ Of particular importance to the journal were the "new" dramatists, including O'Neill and Ibsen, whose plays were featured and reviewed in glowing terms throughout the magazine's eleven-year history.

Modern drama figured prominently in Goldman's lectures and writings, and throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, many of her lecture tours were structured almost solely around the politics of modern drama. In January 1909, Goldman presented a series of lectures throughout California on "The Modern Drama as the Most Forcible Disseminator of Radicalism," which drew many of Los Angeles' leading drama critics.¹⁴ In April 1912, her lecture tour in Denver was extended so that she could teach a course on modern drama, and she returned later that summer to teach another course (Falk, Cole and Thomas 1995: np). Most of these lectures concentrated on the "new drama" of European playwrights as well as Scandinavian and Yiddish drama, but Goldman added both American and British dramatists to her lectures in October

¹³ *Mother Earth* boasted impressive subscription rates, as evidenced in 1917 when U.S. government officials raided the offices of *Mother Earth* on account of its anti-conscription stance, and confiscated subscription lists with over eight thousand names. It is difficult to determine the exact size of the journal's reading audience, however, as *Mother Earth* was sold on newsstands for ten cents a copy, and thus was marketed to mass audiences. As Peter Glassgold astutely notes, it is nearly impossible to estimate how many readers bought a newsstand copy solely because of the covers, which frequently featured new drawings by such modern artists as Man Ray and Robert Henri. See Glassgold's introduction to his edited anthology *Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2001. xv-xxxvi.

1914, when she presented a series of lectures entitled “The Modern Drama as a Mirror of Individual, Class and Social Rebellion Against the Tyranny of the Past” in Chicago, Illinois. The success of these lectures was made possible in large part by the financial backing of an unnamed wealthy supporter, who also secured Chicago’s elegant Fine Arts Building as the cultural setting in which such lectures were presented. Again, Goldman drew record audiences comprising individuals from a vast array of political and cultural backgrounds, and she describes the audience of her Chicago Press Club luncheon lecture on “The Relationship of Anarchism to Literature” as “five hundred hard-faced men” (Falk, Cole and Thomas 1995: np).

Goldman’s critical appreciation of the politics of modern drama culminated in her 1914 book-length study, *The Social Significance of the Modern Drama*, where she offers a critical assessment of plays by Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Gerhart Hauptmann, George Bernard Shaw, Leo Tolstoy, William Butler Yeats and Anton Chekhov. Based on Goldman’s successful lecture series at New York’s famed Berkeley Theatre in 1913, this critical work focuses upon the political implications of modern drama and theatrical practices. Throughout her study, Goldman argues that drama will continue to play significant roles in social revolutions, and contends that the social significance of modern forms of dramatic art will “arouse the intellectuals of this country, [and will] make them realize their relation to the people, to the social unrest permeating

the atmosphere” (3). By merging her anarchist politics with her interest in modern theatre, Goldman certainly sought to attract middle-class audiences and to bring anarchism to the bourgeois classes. But she also wanted to bring art to the working classes, on one occasion even going down into the shafts of a Colorado coal mine to give a lecture on modern drama to the miners. Goldman was determined to demonstrate not only the relevance of anarchism to modern drama, but also the relevance of modern drama to anarchism and the working classes.

The polar opposition between the cultural settings of the Chicago Fine Arts Building and the shafts of a coal mine reflects not only Goldman’s cross-cultural transgressions, but also the nature of the relationship between traditional anarchism and avant-garde aestheticism. Throughout her lifetime, Goldman faced extreme opposition from both her American and European anarchist counterparts for merging cultures of political radicalism and avant-garde aestheticism. Some of Goldman’s most famous contemporary political allies, including anarchists Peter Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin, and Johann (John) Most, were intolerant of such cultural transgressions, insisting that anarchism devote itself to traditional political and social issues affecting the working classes and the socially marginalized. In his critical study on the tenuous relationship between anarchism and aesthetic modernism, David Weir offers a brief overview of the role of avant-garde aesthetic cultures in classical anarchist thought, and contends that the reigning forefathers of modern anarchism –

Kropotkin, Bakunin, and Joseph Proudhon – were concerned that art and culture not usurp the place of politics. Weir also claims that many anarchists, including Bakunin, demonstrated “genuine hostility” and “outright antagonism” to art, literature, and other so-called “cultural” issues (Weir 39, 34).¹⁵ Kropotkin also revealed similar attitudes toward artistic cultures, arguing that the progress of anarchism in America “would have been far greater, I am sure, if the American anarchists had succeeded in merging themselves into the mass of the workingmen. So long as they . . . keep apart from the mass of the working men . . . their efforts will remain fruitless and their teachings will appeal more to the intellectual bourgeois who rebels against certain restraints in Art, in relations between man and woman, than to the worker.”¹⁶ Yet in the face of such mounting criticism, Goldman continued to defy and transgress the cultural boundaries of anarchism by presenting lectures on modern drama, literature and poetry in the unlikeliest of “bourgeois” cultural settings, including theatres, universities, public parks, town halls, churches and synagogues.

The topics and settings of such lectures clearly signify Goldman’s marked departure from anarchism’s general disregard and dismissal of artistic cultures, as well as her concerted efforts to explore and represent both her politics and her identity outside of strictly political cultures. Such

¹⁵ While Bakunin and Kropotkin certainly displayed such negative towards such “cultural” issues in general, both actually wrote on literature. In 1901 Kropotkin lectured on “Russian Literature in the Nineteenth Century” at the Lowell Institute in Boston; these lectures were later published as “Ideas and Realities in Russian Literature” (1905). Bakunin also read and admired the writings of James Fenimore Cooper, and was a friend and admirer of Richard Wagner.

¹⁶ Kropotkin, personal letter to Alexander Berkman, November 20, 1908.

cross-cultural work was also performed, however, throughout her writings, including, surprisingly, her 1910 collection, *Anarchism and Other Essays*. In the title essay, "Anarchism: What it Really Stands For," Goldman situates anarchist theory in a particularly modernist discourse that directly invokes the avant-garde rhetoric of the "new." Indeed, this essay, typically viewed as seminal to any understanding of Goldman's anarchism, begins with two sentences that read less as an introduction to anarchism than as an introduction to avant-garde modernism: "The history of human growth and development is at the same time the history of the terrible struggle of every new idea heralding the approach of a brighter dawn. In its tenacious hold on tradition, the Old has never hesitated to make use of the foulest and cruelest means to stay the advent of the New, in whatever form or period the latter may have asserted itself" (47-48). In his study of avant-garde modernism, Leonard Leif uses similar language to present one of the defining features of modern cultures: "while old standards and values are dying, new ones must take their place" (3). By representing anarchism not as a political ideology, but rather as a "new idea," Goldman specifically aligns anarchism with other "new" cultural phenomena of avant-garde modernity, including the New Drama, the New Art, the New Poetry, the New Architecture and the New Woman (Drinnon, 1961: 146). Moreover, she boldly asserts that modern anarchist theory is directly grounded in personal experiences and public cultures of modernity, arguing that anarchism is not "a wild fancy or an aberration of the mind. It is the

conclusion arrived at by hosts of intellectual men and women the world over; a conclusion resulting from the close and studious observation of the tendencies of modern society” (62-3). Through her specific appeals to “modern thinker[s]” of the “modern society,” Goldman reaches out to and embraces intellectuals, artists and writers of Greenwich Village’s avant-garde bohemia, and makes explicit her desire to dismantle cultural boundaries between political radicalism and avant-garde aestheticism (57,63).

Emma Goldman and Modern Cultures of the Popular

Throughout her lectures, writings and cultural roles, Goldman insists upon the mutual and significant relationship between anarchism and avant-garde modernism. While Goldman certainly privileged the forms and audiences of a “higher cultural order,” she also seduced and was seduced by a developing and particularly American manifestation of modern popular culture (Goldman, 1931: 981). Nevertheless, her relationship with modern popular culture is complex and characterized by extreme ambivalence. Rhetorically, at least, Goldman aligned herself with her anarchist comrades in her disdain for popular culture; these same political allies, however, including American anarchists Harry Kelly, Voltairine de Cleyre, Ed Brady and Alexander Berkman, repeatedly and publicly castigated her for her attention to the forms and mass audiences of modern American popular culture. Though Goldman’s writings consistently

present her overt scorn for and repudiation of the “vulgarity” of popular cultural forms and audiences, they also reveal her deliberate and strategic efforts to reach out to the American masses through some of the most popular cultural forms, including the modern theatrical stage, the daily press, and the increasingly popular lecture circuit. Goldman delivered her radical lectures in the unlikeliest of cultural settings, including Ivy League universities, churches, synagogues, public libraries, elegant ballrooms, hotels, restaurants and theatres that catered to middle- and upper-class audiences -- including New York City’s posh Carnegie Hall and other famed theatres in Times Square, which Christine Stansell describes as the geographical heart of modern show business and entertainment (125). While her anarchist comrades typically lectured to primarily working class audiences, Goldman sought to attract doctors, lawyers, students, teachers, rabbis, librarians, municipal reformers and middle-class housewives -- audiences traditionally dismissed as “bourgeois” and insignificant to the concerns of anarchist politics. Goldman’s attention to such mass audiences and popular cultural settings clearly marks her deviation from the propaganda strategies of fellow anarchists, but it is her relentless efforts to publicize herself as a popular cultural figure that most definitively present the importance of popular culture to Goldman’s political agenda.¹⁷

¹⁷ It is also important to note that while Goldman did appeal to bourgeois audiences as part of a political strategy that sought to bring anarchism to different classes of American society, she also appealed to them for financial support of the anarchist cause and for the legal trials of anarchists.

Despite her overtly negative and even hostile attitudes towards the American masses, which she disparagingly referred to as the “dumb multitude,” Goldman clearly recognized the subversive potentials of popular culture, and vowed to bring her anarchism “closer to the heart of American life” (1931: 524). The “heart of American life,” as Goldman saw it, was found to be beating loudly within the broad range of public and widely disseminated forms of modern cultural expression, and particularly within the most popular forms of early twentieth-century print and entertainment cultures. She etched out for herself and her anarchist politics a highly visible position not only through her well-attended and highly publicized lectures and speeches, but also through some of the most popular expressive forms of modern print culture, including daily and weekly newspapers and magazines of the mainstream popular press. Using a multiplicity of popular writing genres, such as personal essays, political essays, journalistic interviews, autobiography and personal memoirs, political tracts and travel journals, Goldman sought and loudly demanded the attention of the American public. She proved difficult to ignore not only because of her nearly constant presence in the modern press, but also because of her consistent and theatrical appearances in the most public urban spaces of popular culture. A master of public relations, Goldman, with the help of her public-relations manager and lover Ben Reitman, deftly manipulated the machinery of popular culture through outrageous publicity stunts and strategies of advertising that

directly appealed to the masses of modern America, and ensured her status as an iconic public figure.

Goldman's iconic cultural status was also established through her theatrical representations of her self and her personality during her public lectures, which were often viewed by both the press and the American public not as political events, but rather as popular entertainment. As modernist historian Christine Stansell asserts, public speeches and lecture tours constituted a "major form of popular entertainment in an age when the movies had yet to take hold" (121). Her disdain for mass culture notwithstanding, Goldman enthusiastically displayed herself within this popular cultural sphere for nearly two decades. Her cross-country lecture tours also attracted the attention of popular journalists and cartoonists, who simultaneously represented her as a dangerous political radical and as an entertainer for the masses. She is directly represented as a popular entertainer in an article that appeared in the *San Francisco Call*, in April 1898, where she is aligned with two of the most popular modern female performers: "You should hear her talk . . . You can better afford to miss hearing [Nellie] Melba or even [Sarah] Bernhardt than listening to this genuine creature. She is San Francisco's sensation, as she was that of New York and Chicago, and . . . there is nothing so thrilling as listening to Emma Goldman" ("Emma Goldman, Anarchist," 331-32). This oft-cited comparison of Goldman to a world-renowned opera singer and a famous actress, in its complete neglect of her anarchist politics, enabled her to

reach popular audiences that likely had no interest in her anarchism, and helped to solidify her reputation as a popular modern celebrity.¹⁸

Goldman's participation within such modern cultures of performance and entertainment certainly succeeded in attracting popular attention, yet it also elicited critical responses from some of her closest political allies. Ed Brady, a fellow anarchist who was also Goldman's lover for several years, struggled to understand her seemingly insatiable "craving for applause and glory and the limelight" (Goldman, 1931: 183). Brady proved unwilling or perhaps unable to support Goldman's devoted attention to and performances within popular culture, and their relationship ended after Brady accused Goldman of being "married to public life" (Goldman, 1931: 207). Other American anarchists, including Alexander Berkman, Harry Kelly and Voltairine de Cleyre also criticized Goldman's "insistent self-dramatization," and questioned whether or not her popularization of her personality helped or hindered the ultimate goals of anarchism (Stansell 3).

Goldman responds to such criticisms throughout her writings, providing pronounced, if inconsistent statements concerning her cultural role as a popular public figure, as well as her conflicted relationship with popular culture. She repeatedly laments the loss of her privacy, particularly throughout her autobiographies and personal correspondence, and reveals her personal and continuous struggles with her new identity

¹⁸ Equally interesting is that while Goldman was often compared to female entertainers, she was rarely, if ever, compared to male orators.

as “more of a public than private person.”¹⁹ Especially during the times of her greatest popularity, Goldman writes frequently about the “painful task of always having to be before the public” (1931: 534). Alongside this acute awareness of her highly visible role as a public figure, however, stand Goldman's strong objections to Brady's claim that she was “married to public life.” She directly addresses the allegations and accusations presented by her critics and, claiming that she desires neither fame nor notoriety, repudiates what she describes as the “unfair motivations” Brady and other critics attribute to her (Dec. 1897: 301).

Goldman's writings are replete with strong denials of any affinity for either her public role or the popular cultural stage upon which it was performed. Though her reputation in America was clearly dependent upon her participation within modern cultures of popular entertainment, she consistently presents her cultural elitism through her celebration of modernist “high culture” and her denigration of the popular. Her lectures and critical writings on the modern drama and modern art simultaneously promote high culture and scorn what she describes as the “vulgarity” of modern popular cultural forms and the “inertia, the cravenness, the utter submission” of popular cultural audiences (1911:72, 71). Goldman is especially critical of modern entertainment and popular performances, particularly Broadway plays and vaudeville. Her elitist cultural attitudes are tellingly revealed during a conversation with two popular actors, Julia

¹⁹ Goldman, letter to Theodore Dreiser, 1911.

Marlow Sothern and Gustave Frohman, which she relates in her autobiography: "Frohman was sure [that the modern drama] did not interest the theatre-going public, and I argued that New York had also another public, more intelligent and appreciative than the one in the habit of flocking to Broadway" (1931: 534).

While she praises the audiences of "high intellectual order" that attended modern dramatic productions and her own lectures on modern drama, which, as Suzanne Clark notes, were certainly dramatic productions in their own right, she dismisses and denounces both the audiences and techniques of vaudeville, one of the most popular forms of performance and entertainment at the time (Goldman, 1931: 981; Clark 63). In 1913, following a series of lectures at New York's Berkeley Theatre, Goldman was approached by a representative of Oscar Hammerstein, who after witnessing her oratorical performances, offered her the outrageous salary of one thousand dollars per week to appear on the vaudeville stage twice weekly. Intrigued by the proposition, which seemed to her the solution to her financial problems, Goldman initially welcomed the idea and the "advantages of reaching large audiences" (1931: 527). But, as she reveals in her autobiography, her response quickly and dramatically changed during what was to be her first performance:

We went back-stage, where he introduced me to some of the performers. It was a motley crowd of dancers, acrobats, and

men with trained dogs. "I'll have to sandwich you in," the manager said. He was not sure whether I was to come on before the high kicker or after the trained dogs. At any rate I could not have more than ten minutes. From behind the curtain I watched the pitiful efforts to amuse the public, the horrible contortions of the dancer, whose flabby body was laced into youthful appearance, the cracked voice of the singer, the cheap jokes of the funny man, and the coarse hilarity of the crowd. Then I fled. I knew that I could not stand up in such an atmosphere to plead my ideas, not for all the money in the world. (1931: 526)

Such a horrified reaction to what she describes as the "vulgar" and "ignorant" performers and audiences of popular culture is also presented throughout her controversial 1911 essay, "Minorities Versus Majorities," in which she lashes out against the demands of popular culture. Here, she offers the following description of popular mass audiences: "[They] care little for ideas or integrity. What [they] crave is display. It matters not whether that be a dog show, a prize fight, [a] lynching, . . . the marriage . . . of an heiress, or the acrobatic stunts of an ex-president" (74). Refusing to perform the role of the "modern clown," Goldman also refused, at least rhetorically, to answer the modern public's call for display, and promised that she would not allow her political work to be turned "into a circus for

the amusement of the public" (1931, 164).²⁰ Nevertheless, she and her long-time publicity manager Ben Reitman relied heavily upon the techniques of both vaudeville and the circus to attract and "warm up" audiences before her lectures. Directly soliciting the attention of the mainstream press, which had long been recognized as the enemy of anarchists, Reitman advertised Goldman's lectures as entertaining spectacles, and supplemented such efforts at publicity with handbills, programs, and flyers.²¹ Immediately preceding Goldman's lectures, Reitman would use his charisma and skills of showmanship on the stage, encouraging audiences to "'take a chance' on anarchist pamphlets and 'invest a nickel' before the 'big show' began" (Stansell 137). Though Goldman professed her desire to "shrink from the vulgarity of being made a public show," she and her publicity manager clearly made concerted efforts to publicize and situate both Goldman and her politics within modern cultures of the popular (1931: 433).

Goldman's insistent participation within both avant-garde and popular cultures of modernity is clearly of political significance, especially given the widespread criticism she faced from fellow anarchists on account of her cross-cultural positionings. Not only were Goldman's

²⁰ Goldman also characterized modern political cultures as "circuses," as evidenced by the title of an unpublished 1908 lecture, "The Political Circus and its Clowns."

²¹ Goldman consistently attacks the mainstream popular press, and in a speech delivered in 1933 at a Literary Luncheon, she declared, "I realize that most of you have but a very inadequate, very strange and usually false conception of Anarchism. I do not blame you. You get your information from the daily press. Yet that is the very last place on earth to seek for truth in any state of form." "An Anarchist Looks at Life." Speech given by Goldman. From transcripts of proceedings of the *Foyle's Twenty-Ninth Literary Luncheon*. March 1, 1933.

cultural concerns often at odds with traditional anarchist theories, but the methods in which she presented such concerns, and moreover, the cultural realms in which such presentations were made, also deviated from typical anarchist practices of propaganda and promulgation. Goldman deliberately situated her anarchism within both avant-garde and popular cultures of modernity, and was severely criticized by her anarchist comrades for her politicization of such cultures. But as the inclusive nature of her unique anarchism demonstrates, Goldman was determined to cross cultural barriers, and her personal and theoretical immersion in avant-garde and popular cultures performed a variety of political functions. The theories and practices of the modern subject formation that emerged within both avant-garde and popular cultures contributed to Goldman's anarchist theories of the self; perhaps more importantly, however, such theories and practices enabled Goldman to embody and represent publicly the "free and sovereign individual soul" she deemed so crucial to her anarchist politics (Goldman and Most, 1896: np).

Modernity, the Subjective Self and the Cult of Personality

Like most other historical and cultural periods, the turn of the twentieth century can be defined by its unique ideas and practices of subjectivity. According to modern historian Warren Susman, "the nature of cultural development specifically depends for its forms on the existing vision of self," particularly in terms of the "development and presentation"

of the self in society (np). The relationship between a particular historical culture and its "vision of self" is characterized by a dynamic reciprocity; not only are cultural forms and practices dependent upon existing notions of the self, but notions of the self are also dependent upon, and indeed, defined by, particular historical and cultural conditions and circumstances. Thus, drastic differences between cultures inevitably produce radically different ideas about the self.

Ideas about the self dramatically shifted in America at the turn of the twentieth century. During the nineteenth century, notions of the self consistently emphasized the moral and civic duties and responsibilities of individuals. Defined by the word "character," the nineteenth-century's cultural vision of self idealized and stressed the importance of citizenship, honour, morals, manners, and duties (Susman np). Throughout the century, popular literature was dominated by manuals, pamphlets, and both fictional and non-fictional books that drew attention to the cultural significance of "character" and provide overwhelming evidence of the "culture of character" that reigned over nineteenth-century America.

This culture of character began to alter in radical ways during the last decades of the nineteenth century, and in response to massive changes in the social order, ultimately transformed into what is frequently described as a "culture of personality" (Henderson; Susman; Stansell, 234). In both popular literature and cultural discourse, the term "character" was replaced by the modern term "personality." Derived from the Latin

“persona,” meaning mask, “personality,” by its very definition, signalled a marked change from nineteenth-century visions of self, particularly in terms of the relationship between the individual self and society.²² Ideas of the self consistently were linked with, if not defined by, the social world in which the self developed. But as the social world of modern America experienced major and unprecedented changes, so too did understandings of the relationship between the self and the social. Whereas popular nineteenth-century visions of self stressed the social *duties* and *obligations* of the individual, modern ideas of the self, signified by the term “personality,” emphasized the social *identities* of the individual self. Of utmost importance to modern concepts of self, subjectivity and personality was the public presentation of self in society, particularly in terms of the methods of and cultural responses to self-presentation in society.

Emma Goldman and Modern Subjectivity

Throughout her public behaviour and her writings, Goldman consistently demonstrates a particularly modernist consciousness of self informed by artists, writers, and the increasingly popular psychologist Sigmund Freud, whom she heard lecture in Vienna in 1895. Goldman explicitly depicts herself as a modern subject throughout her writings, and

²² See Raymond Williams' entry for “Personality” in his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford UP, 1976).

identifies her arrival to New York City in 1889 as the moment she became modern:

The door upon the old had now closed forever. The new was calling, and I eagerly stretched my hands towards it [...] A new world was before me, strange and terrifying. Whatever the new held in store for me I was determined to meet unflinchingly. (1931:3)

Her use of modernist discourses is exhibited throughout her writings, and particularly through her repeated use of the word “new” to characterize the unique social conditions and subjective experiences of modernity.

Guided by modern ideas of the self, Goldman embraced the multifaceted and contradictory nature of her identity, which she situated firmly within the modern culture of personality. Indeed, the word “personality” appears frequently throughout her writings, as do references to Oscar Wilde’s notions of the “perfect personality,” which he defines as “one who develops under perfect conditions” (qtd. in Goldman, 1911: 55). Like Wilde, Goldman believed that the ultimate social goal should be “the freest possible expression of all the latent powers of the individual” (55). Wilde uses similar language throughout his 1891 book, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, where he contends that the “growth” and “the full expression of a personality [...] will be a marvellous thing -- the true personality of man - - when we see it. It will grow naturally and simply, flower-like, or as a tree grows” (7). Goldman explored and represented her personality not only

during her public appearances, but also throughout her writings. Her *Anarchism and Other Essays*, published in 1911, features a lengthy (forty pages) “Biographic Sketch” by Hippolyte Havel, a fellow anarchist, popular writer, cultural critic and, for a short time, Goldman’s lover. Havel’s devoted admiration of Goldman and her political activism is as unrestrained as it is passionate, and yet it produces not so much a “Biographical Sketch” as a “Personality Sketch.” Havel admits that he hopes his introduction to Goldman will demonstrate the powerful “personality of the pioneer” (2). He also quotes Goldman at length, enabling her to respond to anarchist comrades who criticized her glorification of her personality; indeed, it is ironic, that within her own “biographic” (and not autobiographical) sketch, Goldman argues that “strong, self-conscious personalities” like herself are of essential importance to any revolutionary movement (36). Comparing Goldman to the likes of Mary Wollstonecraft and Louise Michel, Havel’s introduction emphasizes the daring and rebellious aspects of Goldman’s personality, representing her as an iconic personality belonging to the great tradition of fascinating, exciting, and heroic female martyrs. Goldman also identifies herself with “all the great pathfinders, dissenters, and martyrs of the past,” particularly in her controversial essay “Minorities versus Majorities” (Wexler 197). She goes to even greater lengths to “self-mythologize” throughout her two-volume autobiography, *Living My Life*, published in 1932 (Wexler 198). As a literary critic for the *London Times* writes,

Goldman's biography "reveals a personality that might well form the subject of a psychological treatise" (1932; qtd. in Drinnon, 1961: 18).

Goldman's overt focus upon her personality and her public representation of it reveals what Christine Stansell describes as a "relentless fascination with herself, a narcissistic preoccupation" (121). Perhaps more importantly, however, such deliberate self-mythologizing also draws attention to Goldman's conscious and strategic efforts to create and construct particular presentations of her public personae. Indeed, much to the consternation of many of her fellow anarchists, she insisted that "it is more important to do politics with one's personality than with propaganda," and her public presentations of herself within modern society became an integral facet of her anarchist theory and practice.²³ Avant-garde and popular cultures of modernity provided Goldman with the ideas, practical strategies and cultural settings necessary to her embodied representation of the liberated self. Before considering the anarchist politics of subjectivity, as expressed and embodied by Goldman, it is necessary first to examine the primary roles played by the subject in the practices and discourses of avant-garde and popular cultures of modernity.

Avant-garde Theories and Practices of Modern Subjectivity

²³ Emma Goldman, in a letter to Leon Malmed, April 7, 1906. Quoted in Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in America*. Boston: Beacon Hill, 1984. 198

The modernist preoccupation with the self emerged as a critical issue for artists, writers, bohemians, intellectuals, and other members of the modern avant-garde. As Stuart D. Hobbs argues, “the problem of self-definition [...] fuelled avant-garde creativity” (9). Modernist aesthetic principles of experimentation, expansion and expression were applied to avant-garde notions of subjectivity, such that the ideal self was posited as a completely liberated, creative, multifaceted and ever-expanding individual. Creating a culture that both “enshrined consciousness” and demanded “absolute inwardness,” the modern avant-garde reconceptualized subjectivity, grounding its notions of the modern self in ideologies of individual freedom and self-sovereignty (Levenson 22; Habermas, 1987: 18). The social responsibilities and duties so important to nineteenth-century definitions of self became completely eclipsed by personal responsibilities to the self, or what Margaret Finnegan describes as the “culture of personality’s concomitant emphasis on self-realization” (107). Self-actualization was to be achieved through creative and expressive acts of experimentation that simultaneously destroyed the moral, social, and cultural traditions of the past while constructing new ways of living and being that dramatically embodied the modernist dictum to “make it new.”

The “new” visions of self presented in avant-garde cultural discourses and practices resisted the homogenous nature of nineteenth-century models of the self, and enabled new constructions of a multiple,

contradictory and heterogeneous self. As Finnegan asserts, while the culture of character “promised emotional and psychological stability, a vibrant personality assured a rich and varied emotional and social life” (80). Stansell agrees, noting that the modern avant-garde and its “incipient cult of personality” “replaced the Victorian construct of a stable character” with ideas of the “ever-expanding capabilities [...] of human development” (234). While notions of the destabilized subject certainly contributed to the cultural anxieties afflicting America, they also enabled new concepts of the self that offered freedom from the limitations and boundaries of past definitions. No longer confined to the restrictive values of stability, singularity, and unity that dominated past visions of the subject, the modern self, as imagined by the avant-garde, was to explore and experience the limitless possibilities of human expansion through the creation of a multi-faceted, contradictory, heterogeneous self.

In its insistence upon individual freedom and self-sovereignty, the avant-garde’s concept of the modern individual paralleled Goldman’s anarchist politics of modern subjectivity, and her active participation in avant-garde aesthetic cultures no doubt contributed to her understanding of modern identity, enabling her to fuse her anarchist politics with avant-garde notions of the self. She explicitly links anarchism with aesthetic modernism throughout her writings, where she celebrates the spirit of rebellion and freedom adopted by both anarchists and modernists, and in a letter to Max Eastman, Goldman declared “[a]narchism is a natural

philosophy of artists” (qtd in Antliff 208). She also identified individual freedom as the ultimate goal of modern artists and anarchists: “For in the last analysis, the grand adventure -- which is liberty, the true inspiration of all idealists, poets and artists -- is the only human adventure worth striving and living for” (1933: np).

The avant-garde emphasis upon the necessity of free self-expression to the liberated modern subject also provides another point of contact with Goldman's anarchist concept of the free subject. Despite facing criticism from anarchists such as Harry Kelly for turning anarchism into “a movement for individual self-expression rather than collective revolution,” Goldman, throughout her writings and speeches, echoed the avant-garde's demand for freedom of self-expression (qtd. in Wexler, 205).²⁴ The necessity of free self-expression to her vision of the liberated modern self is emphasized in her essay “Anarchism: What it Really Stands For,” where she asserts that the “goal” of anarchism is “the freest possible expression of all the latent powers of the individual” and that “freedom, expansion [and] opportunity [...] can teach us the [...] wonderful possibilities of human nature” (55, 62). According to both Goldman and to many avant-garde writers and artists, the goals of self-expression and self-expansion were to be fulfilled through liberating acts of self-creation, and in particular, the creation of an individual personality. Modernist

²⁴ Goldman's involvement with and contributions to the modern free-speech movement culminated in her co-founding of the “The Free Speech League,” which later became the American Civil Liberties Union. Her significant role within such modern legal cultures will be further explored in chapter four.

scholar Rosalind Krauss, in her article “The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition,” contends that avant-garde notions of the modern self and personality were dominated by the “parable of absolute self-creation” (53). Somewhat surprisingly, decades before the avant-garde reconceptualized subjectivity, Russian anarchist Nicholas Berdyaev insisted that the each individual must create itself as a “personality,” and that through the act of self-creation, individuals can achieve freedom:

Personality is not a substance but an act, a creative act. It might be said that society and nature provide the material for the formation of personality. But personality is emancipation from dependence upon nature, from dependence upon society and the state [...] Personality defines itself from within, [...] and determination from within and arising out of freedom, is personality. (152-3)

Whether or not Goldman was familiar with Berdyaev’s writings is unclear, though they clearly share a culture of ideas, but she was certainly well acquainted with the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, who similarly suggests, in his 1878 book *Human, All Too Human*, that the autonomous creation and invention of the self is a liberating and necessary act in the larger political struggle: “I have sought shelter in this or that [...], where I could not find what I needed, I had artificially to enforce, falsify and invent a suitable fiction for myself” (qtd. in Kolocotroni, Goldman and Taxidou, 17). Goldman not only agreed in theory with avant-garde ideas of self-

creation, but also put such ideas into practice through her public presentations of her various “cultural personae,” which she once described as her “most powerful creation” (qtd. in Wexler, 278).

Goldman was drawn not only to the avant-garde’s emphasis upon self-creation, but also to its theories and practices of (self) experimentation. Her writings repeatedly endorse the modernist value of experimentation, and in the final issue of the *Little Review*, the “little magazine” founded by Margaret Anderson, Goldman tellingly reveals that she “welcomes the restlessness and experimentalism of modern art, . . . its discontents and its desperate effort to find itself” (May 1929). She provides in her autobiography perhaps the most compelling evidence of her own restlessness and “effort[s] to find” herself when she relates a conversation with modern artist Robert Henri before he was to paint a portrait of her. In response to Henri’s declaration that he wanted to depict “the real Emma Goldman,” Goldman asks, “But which is the real one?” and confesses, “I have never been able to unearth her” (1931: 529). Goldman’s reply clearly engages with avant-garde notions of multiplicity and heterogeneity of self, yet it also suggests another point of intersection between her anarchism and the ideas of the avant-garde: the notion that the process of creating and developing the individual personality is more important than the final product. As Goldman boldly asserts,

What I believe is a process rather than a finality. Finalities are for gods and governments, not for the human intellect

[...] life is something more than formulas. In the battle for freedom, as Ibsen has so well pointed out, it is the *struggle* for, not so much the attainment of, liberty that develops all that is strongest, sturdiest and finest in human character.
(July 1908: 340)

For both Goldman and the avant-garde, then, the modern self would achieve liberty only through individual acts of self-creation, and the creative acts themselves would be of political significance.

Popular Cultures of Modernity and the Self

The notion of the self as something to be created or constructed also became increasingly important within popular modern cultures, but the creative acts necessary to define the self became explicitly linked with acts of (self) performance. Unlike nineteenth-century visions of self, in which individual "character" was presented as traits that could be honed or strengthened, the modern culture of personality presented a "performative model" of self, where personality was understood to be "a strategy of self-presentation," something "to be learned or performed" (Glenn 88).²⁵ As Warren Susman argues, "the social role demanded of all in the new culture of personality was that of a performer. Every American was to become a performing self" (np). Such ideas about the performing self in the social world were not entirely new, but performance as a strategy of

²⁵ A series of popular self-help books published by Funk and Wagnalls in 1915 contains volumes which, by their very titles, clearly distinguish character ("How to Strengthen It") from personality ("How to Build It)." Cf. Warren Susman, 1984.

self-development and self-(re)presentation carried particular connotations that reflected and responded to new practices of self-representation performed by writers, artists, intellectuals, political activists, actresses, entertainers and other public figures of modern popular culture.

Described by William Taylor as “a new era of self-amplification and self-production,” modern cultures of the popular provided a dramatic social stage upon which publicly prominent individuals could present their performative self-explorations (129). Modern subjects, and particularly those with famous or notorious positions within popular culture, increasingly relied upon theatrical techniques to create and perform a vast array of new social roles that were created in response to changing and unstable cultural conditions. Characterized by Christine Stansell as “terrific self-dramatizers and self-aggrandizers,” modern subjects whose lives played out under the relentless gaze of the public used their cultural prominence for various personal and political ends, and secured their public positions through overt and theatrical acts of self-promotion that captivated popular audiences (3). The demand for self-performance was closely linked to one of the defining aspects of modern popular culture, identified by Susan A. Glenn as the “phenomenon of the spectacle” (3). For cultural theorists Jonathan Crary and Guy de Bord, the phenomenon of the spectacle can be understood as “the dramatic expansion and industrialization of visual and auditory cultures” that occurred from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, creating what de Bord terms the

“society of the spectacle,” “a media and consumer society, organized around the production and consumption of images, commodities, and staged events” (de Bord 1). Glenn specifically links the modern culture of the spectacle with the birth of radical experiments in individual self-expression, self-promotion and conspicuous self-display, and she argues that the modern project of “self-production” was achieved, in large part, through “stage[d] spectacle[s]” (7).

Goldman’s self-production as a culturally iconic figure also owes much to her strategic acts of self-performance and self-spectacularization. She captivated the masses of popular America through her outrageous self-dramatization upon the most public stages. Whether making an appearance on the lecture platform, on the stages of popular New York City theatres, in public parks, cafes, churches, and universities, or upon the steps of a courthouse or prison, Goldman consistently provided dramatic and exaggerated presentations of self that commanded public attention. As Stansell asserts, Goldman “owes much of her political success,” and indeed, her cultural popularity, to her “incredible theatricality” and her inimitable “flair for the dramatic,” which were effectively presented through Goldman’s physical behaviour, gestures, attitudes, body language, and theatrical rhetoric (121).

Her use of dramatic rhetoric and techniques of self-presentation is unsurprising, given her lifelong experiences and involvement with various theatre groups, playwrights, actors, critics and promoters. She was

exposed to theatrical cultures during her childhood years in Kovno, Lithuania, while her father worked as a theatre company manager (Havel 5). Goldman herself took on a similar job in 1905, when she managed the American tour of the Russian-speaking Paul Orlenneff troupe. She remained involved with theatrical groups and companies throughout her lifetime, including the Provincetown Players, experimental Yiddish theatre groups of New York City, and the Birmingham Repertory and the Drama Study League of London. Goldman would also perform the cultural roles of promoter and critical reviewer of the modern drama, combining both in 1914 with the publication of her book-length-study, *The Social Significance of the Modern Drama*.

Goldman's theoretical and personal interests in theatricality and performance no doubt enabled her to recognize the subversive political potentials of both performance and self-spectacularization. As Suzanne Clark argues, Goldman herself literally "functions like a work of art, like a dramatic production . . . [and] in becoming the story rather than writing it, she takes up the position of the women in modernism, within the spectacle" (63). As a radical social activist, a bohemian artist, writer, and intellectual, and as a social and moral educator, Goldman consciously made herself into a modern spectacle by displaying herself in a variety of public settings that commanded public attention. She occupied a noticeably visible position within modern print culture, not only through her writings in radical political journals, her own journal *Mother Earth*, which

she edited and published from 1906-1917, and her literary and dramatic criticism, but also through the nearly constant attention paid to her by journalists and cartoonists. She also subjected herself to the gaze of the modern American public through her intensive lecture tours throughout the U.S, which, according to Goldman's own accounting, drew an audience of between fifty to seventy-five thousand people each year (Glassgold, xxvi).²⁶ The most compelling evidence of the spectacularization of Goldman is to be found in the relentless surveillance activities and government files of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Military Intelligence Division, Immigration and Naturalization Services, the Department of Labor, and the F.B.I. Her public performances of political radicalism helped to establish her role as a modern celebrity of notoriety, and encouraged all members of the modern public to gaze upon the theatrical spectacle of her politics. Speaking of the "spectacle" of Goldman's 1916 legal trial for publicly speaking about birth control, Richard Drinnon notes that one reporter observed "hundreds" who attended the trial as if it were "a play, with Emma Goldman in the leading role" (1961: 168). Goldman also viewed herself as a performer, and in her autobiography, she describes a particular lecture event as a "circus" in which she was playing the role of "the clown" (1931: 52).

²⁶ Goldman's accounting of the size of her audiences each year is, as Candace Falk has pointed out, likely inflated, as the size of her audiences undoubtedly varied depending on weather, political elections, and the venue in which she delivered her lectures.

Conclusion: Goldman's Cultural Performances of Anarchist and Modernist Politics of Subjectivity

Goldman deliberately cast herself in a broad range of conflicting cultural roles, and performed such roles upon a variety of modern public stages that challenged and expanded the terrain of traditional anarchism. Her use of and, indeed, her dependence upon the strategies of self-production offered by both avant-garde and popular cultures demonstrate not only her cross-cultural self-positionings, but more importantly, the political functions of such cross-cultural transgressions. In bringing together newly developed ideas and practices of the self as they emerged from both cultures, Goldman performatively embodied her all-encompassing vision of the liberated anarchist subject – a vision that carefully negotiated between the conflicts of the individual and the social, the internal and the external, and the personal and the political. Avant-garde theories and practices of (self-) expression, expansion, experimentation and creation enabled Goldman to perform publicly the role of the anarchist individual, and her anarchist desire “to rescue the self-respect and independence of the individual from all restraint and invasion by authority. Only in freedom can man [sic] grow to his full stature [...], will he learn to think and move, and give the very best in him” (1910: 61). Her public experimentations of self also enacted her definition of anarchism as a philosophy “based on the released energies of the

individual” (1940, np). The practices of performance and self-spectacularization so significant to modern popular cultures further enabled Goldman to promulgate her anarchist ideas, and particularly her anarchist ideas of the liberated modern self, to the masses of modern America, and her public performances of self dramatically conveyed her belief that all individuals, but particularly anarchists, “are by no means passive spectators in the theatre of social development” (July 1908: 340). Thus, both avant-garde and popular strategies and practices of modern self-presentation and self-construction facilitated Goldman’s politicization of subjectivity by offering her the means by which she was to publicly embody her anarchist politics of self – a liberated, multi-faceted, experimental self that defied all political, aesthetic, and other culturally constructed boundaries, including perhaps most notably, gender boundaries. Indeed, and as I will argue in the following chapters, Goldman’s cultural negotiations between radical politics, avant-gardism and modern popular culture also enabled her to develop and enact her feminist politics of the female self, and her highly nuanced analysis of modern gender politics owes much to her participation within both avant-garde and popular cultures.

Chapter Two: Emma Goldman and the Anarcha-Feminist Politics of the Modern Avant-Garde

The previous chapter highlighted the necessity of situating Goldman's politics, and particularly her political ideas of the self, within both avant-garde and popular cultures of modern America. This chapter builds on the critical issues raised in the first chapter by focusing specifically upon Goldman's feminist ideas of the liberated modern *female* self, and will analyze the ways in which her radical feminist politics were informed not only by her anarchist beliefs concerning individual freedom, but also by liberating ideals of the individual self upheld by and practiced within avant-garde cultures of modernity. Tracing both the anarchist and avant-garde foundations of her radical feminist thought, I argue that Goldman's feminism, and especially her ideologies of modern women's freedom, must be situated within modernist avant-garde aestheticism in order to better understand and appreciate the cultural implications of Goldman's feminist politics.¹ Distinct from and in many ways oppositional to the political concerns of the mainstream modern feminist movement, Goldman's feminism was deemed to be decidedly "radical," not only on account of Goldman's anarchist politics, but also because of her active participation within avant-garde literary and artistic cultures. Such participation enabled Goldman to recognize the feminist links between

¹ Again, I am using the term "radical" not in the context of second-wave feminism and separatist ideologies, but rather as an adjective to emphasize how Goldman's feminism markedly differed from traditional and mainstream first-wave feminism.

anarchist and avant-garde theories, and her incorporation of avant-garde principles into her radical feminism enabled her to broaden the terrain of both her anarchist and feminist politics. Most notably, her strategic use of avant-garde ideas concerning the sovereignty and autonomy of the individual self, the cultural imperative to destroy and experiment with social traditions, sexual freedom and free self-expression allowed Goldman to expand upon her anarchist concepts of feminism, and provided her with another cultural set of political tools that contributed greatly to her highly insightful analysis of modern gender politics and her iconic cultural position as a radical modern feminist.

Anarchist Politics and Goldman's Radical Feminism

As discussed in the previous chapter, Goldman's anarchism is unique amongst the theories of her predominately male anarchist contemporaries primarily on account of her insistent politicization of the modern individual self; however, perhaps the more obvious, and for the purposes of this chapter, the most significant differences between Goldman and other leading modern anarchists lie within her explicitly feminist (re-) visions of anarchist ideals related to individual freedom. On the surface, anarchism certainly appears to be inherently feminist, as it opposes all forms of authority, including patriarchal authority, that suppress and repress individual liberty. The specific cultural positions and experiences of women as a collective group, however, were often

unaccounted for within the theories and writings of leading male anarchists, including Peter Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin, John Most and Pierre Proudhon. As Alice Wexler contends, “a distinct strain of misogyny” appeared not only in the theories and writings of such men, but also in their personal lives and relationships (94). American anarchist Benjamin Tucker overtly displayed his misogyny and sexist attitudes when he publicly proclaimed women to be inferior to men, and thus undeserving of the equal pay and economic independence demanded by modern women’s groups: “Apart from the special inferiority of woman as printer . . . there exists the general inferiority of women as worker” (qtd. in Marsh 55). Even “skilled women, he insisted, demonstrated ‘a lack of ambition, of self-reliance, of a sense of . . . responsibility’” (Marsh 55). Patriarchal notions of marriage and the nuclear family played integral roles in Bakunin’s, Proudhon’s and Kropotkin’s anarchism, and all men were married and held “traditional beliefs about the role of women . . . [as] mother, wife and nurturer” (Leeder 143). Kropotkin typically depicted women as useless and invisible members of public society, and confined women to the private sphere of the home and to the restrictive roles of wives and mothers. Furthermore, his theory of anarchism fails to address power relations within the family and within the domestic sphere, which Goldman described as a “modern prison with golden bars” for women (1910: 196).

Prominent male anarchists were also known for their sexist and

misogynist treatment of women anarchists, including Goldman.² During her many affairs, she discovered that most of her anarchist lovers, and especially John Most and Ed Brady, expected her to remove herself from the public spotlight and to settle into “traditional” domestic roles and marital relations with them, and their relationships ended when she refused to do so. Kropotkin also proved to be unsympathetic, if not downright hostile, to Goldman’s feminist concerns. While he expected women to engage in active political work, he also “expressed impatience with those women who put feminism ahead of their devotion to the (male) working class” and “counselled American women radicals to be more concerned with the liberation of ‘workers’ than of women” (Marsh 19; 54). Though Goldman and Kropotkin shared a close personal relationship, they nevertheless disagreed on many issues, and he repeatedly condemned her critical focus upon “personal” issues -- including sexuality, marriage, free love, birth control and the abolition of the nuclear family -- that he considered peripheral, if not altogether irrelevant to anarchism. Throughout their frequent arguments about the scope of anarchist theory, Kropotkin consistently praised Goldman’s efforts to promulgate anarchist

² Goldman discusses the sexist attitudes she encountered with anarchist men in her autobiographies; see especially *My Disillusionment in Russia*, 253. Anarchist and feminist Voltairine de Cleyre also experienced misogyny within her predominantly male anarchist circles, and “publicly castigated anarchist men for their ambivalence and sometimes outright hostility to [women’s] demands for equality: ‘So pickled is the male creation with the vinegar of Authoritarianism, that even those who have gone further and repudiated the State still cling’ to a belief in male supremacy” (qtd. in Marsh 53-4). Anarchist and feminist Florence Finch Kelly shared similar experiences and views, and she “damned the whole sex as tyrants, including ‘the best of men and the most imbued with a desire for justice and equality’” (Marsh 54). For more detailed accounts of misogyny and sexism within the modern anarchist movement, see also Elaine Leeder’s “Let Our Mothers Show the Way” in *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, Ed. Howard J. Ehrlich, 142-148.

propaganda, but could rarely refrain from condemning her attention to more personal matters, especially in the realms of sexuality. During their 1895 meeting in London, Kropotkin lauds the “splendid work” Goldman performed for the anarchist paper *Free Society*, but contends that “the paper . . . would do more if it would not waste so much space discussing sex” (Goldman, 1923: 253). His dismissal of the political relevance of sexuality and women’s issues suggests, as George Woodcock has argued, that Kropotkin, “like many of the older anarchists, was a very Puritanical man at heart” (qtd. Drinnon, 1983:13). Woodcock also contends that Kropotkin’s problems with Goldman’s theories were complicated and perhaps intensified by his critical judgment of her personal life, and particularly her daring and unconventional sexual life. As Woodcock notes, Kropotkin found Goldman’s “life, her continued series of love affairs, her advocacy of free love and so forth rather disconcerting” (qtd. in Drinnon, 1983: 13). Goldman herself was aware of Kropotkin’s misogynistic attitudes towards her personal life, as she reveals in a letter to her lover Ben Reitman: “One more thing about Kropotkin, he does not like me – thinks me too ‘loose’” (qtd. in Falk, 1984: 137).

Goldman deviated from the traditional concerns of anarchism by focusing specifically upon the cultural oppression of modern women and by making issues related to gender, sexuality and the (female) body absolutely integral to her anarchist ideals. Her earliest speeches and writings clearly demonstrate that women played a central role in

Goldman's critical analysis of modern life, and she once declared, "I shall strive until I die to break the shackles that make [women] the chattels of men. My whole life shall be a plea for their freedom" (1908: 286). Goldman was a passionate activist not only for women's rights within the public spheres of labour, education and economics, but also, and more controversially, within the private spheres of the family, the home and the bedroom. Out of her anarchist convictions in the freedom of the individual body grew Goldman's feminist calls for the liberation of the *female* body, and her specific demands for women's sexual freedom from restrictive moral and social laws. Goldman's experiences as a nurse and midwife to some of the poorest women living in immigrant enclaves of Greenwich Village, during which she witnessed dozens of women die in childbirth or as a result of illegal and unsafe abortions, also solidified her belief that women's freedom was ultimately dependent upon their sexual and reproductive freedom. As she recounts in her autobiography, "I had definitely decided some time previously to make public knowledge of contraceptives, particularly at my Yiddish meetings, because the women on the East Side needed that information most" (569). Goldman's advocacy of free love, sexual education for women and birth control drew the critical attention of both the mainstream press and federal authorities, who eventually arrested Goldman in 1916 under the Comstock Law for her

lectures on birth control.³

Goldman clearly stands as the most prolific, most outspoken and most well known female anarchist, but she was not the only American woman to recognize the intersections between anarchism and feminism. Lucy Parsons (1853-1942), Florence Finch Kelly (1858-1939), Helena Born (1860-1901), Kate Austin (1864-1902) and Voltairine de Cleyre (1866-1912) also introduced gender politics to their anarchist ideals, and all of the women laid the foundations for current strands of anarcho-feminism. Nevertheless, as Elaine Leeder, Peggy Kornegger and Carol Ehrlich note, Goldman undoubtedly emerges as the most influential figure for contemporary anarcho-feminists.⁴ During the 1970's, a new generation of radical women began to explore the parallels between feminism and anarchism, and discovered that many of their most fundamental tenets, and in particular, their famous dictum that "the personal is political," had already been explored decades earlier by Goldman. Though the phrase "anarcho-feminism" did not exist during Goldman's lifetime, the corpus of her writings and lectures demonstrate unequivocally that she can be considered the "mother" of contemporary anarcho-feminism (Leeder 142).

³ As Margaret Anderson, editor of the radical journal *The Little Review*, declared, Goldman was imprisoned for advocating that "women need not always keep their mouths shut and their wombs open" (qtd. Alix Kates Shulman, *Red Emma Speaks*, p. 105). Goldman's arrest and subsequent trial will be explored in greater detail in the fourth chapter.

⁴ See Elaine Leeder's "Let Our Mothers Show the Way," Peggy Kornegger's "Anarchism: The Feminist Connection," and Carol Ehrlich's "Socialism, Anarchism, and Feminism" in *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, ed. Howard J. Ehrlich (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1996), pp. 142-148, 156-168, and 169-186, respectively.

Also known as “anarcho-feminism” or more simply, anarchist feminism, anarcha-feminism considers the critical relationship between anarchist and feminist ideologies, focusing primarily upon the social and cultural oppression of women under patriarchal systems of authority. Hence, the defining hallmarks of traditional anarchism – the freedom of the individual subject and the rejection of all authoritative structures – are applied specifically to women and gender-related social issues. As Carol Ehrlich notes, anarcha-feminists “are concerned with a set of common issues: control over one’s own body; alternatives to the nuclear family and to heterosexuality; new methods of child care that will liberate parents and children; economic self-determination; ending sex-stereotyping in education, in the media and in the workplace; the abolition of repressive laws; an end to male authority, ownership and control over women; providing women with means to develop skills and positive self-attitudes; an end to oppressive emotional relationships; and . . . ‘the reinvention of everyday life’” (174). Thus, in addition to the liberation of the female body, the politics of the personal are also a defining feature of anarcha-feminist thought. Goldman’s intense focus upon the politics of the personal clearly distinguished her from most mainstream first-wave feminists, and marked her as a definitively “radical” modern feminist.

While Goldman’s feminist politics were criticized by male anarchists, they were met with absolute ire by mainstream feminists, who felt that Goldman’s demands for women’s sexual freedom did more harm

than good to the modern feminist movement. Her lectures on feminism, and especially her assessment of the ways in which men were also socially oppressed, incensed many of the suffragists and other mainstream feminists, who made their feelings known during Goldman's speeches. Goldman recounts in her autobiography that during one of her lectures on feminism, in which she expressed her resentment at "my sex's placing every evil at the door of the male," female members of the audience stood up and loudly proclaimed, "you're a man's woman and not one of us" (1931: 556; 557). Goldman likewise condemned modern mainstream feminists, and explains that her "quarrel with the Feminists wasn't that they were too free or demanded too much. It was that they are not free enough and that most of them see their slavery apart from the rest of the human family" (qtd. in Wexler 197). Her antagonism towards the mainstream feminist movement is expressed most overtly in Goldman's controversial essay, "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" (1906). Though Goldman is a feminist in the sense that she desires "liberty and equality for woman," her use of the word "tragedy" in the title of her essay implies from the outset that she believes there are negative and undesirable aspects of modern women's freedom (134). In particular, she argued that "the emancipation of woman, as interpreted and practically applied today, has failed . . . Now woman is confronted with the necessity of emancipating herself from emancipation, if she really desires to be free. This may sound paradoxical, but is, nevertheless, only too true" (135).

Thus, Goldman was certainly not against the idea of female emancipation per se, but rather, the particular manifestations of this emancipation as embodied by mainstream feminists.

First-wave feminists were concerned primarily with women's right to vote and participate in electoral politics, but as an anarchist opposed to all systems of government, Goldman also was opposed to the voting process, and thus viewed suffragism as irrelevant to women's freedom. Moreover, while the suffragists advocated women's rights within what Goldman termed "external" public realms, including electoral politics and the law, Goldman advocated not only women's rights, but more importantly, their *freedom* within the "internal" personal realms of marriage, motherhood, the family and sexuality. In "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation," she explicitly disparages mainstream modern feminists for failing to consider the psychological aspects of modern women's oppression:

[T]hey never truly understood the meaning of emancipation. They thought that all that was needed was independence from external tyrannies; the internal tyrants, far more harmful to life and growth – ethical and social conventions – were left to take care of themselves. . . . These internal tyrants, whether they be in the form of public opinion or what will mother say, or brother, father, aunt, or relative of any sort . .

. All these busybodies, moral detectives, jailers of the human spirit, what will they say? (221-2).

Throughout the essay, Goldman challenges the narrow focus of the mainstream feminist movement, and insists that women's freedom must begin internally, within the consciousness of each woman: "[T]rue emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in courts. It begins in a woman's soul. . . . It is, therefore, far more important for her to begin with her inner regeneration, to cut loose from the weight of prejudices, traditions, and customs" (142). Goldman also objects to the Puritanical and sexually repressive ideals of mainstream feminists, who generally defended and indeed, reinforced the patriarchal institutions of marriage, motherhood and the nuclear family. Her essays and lectures, as well as her personal life, consistently illustrate Goldman's critical anarcha-feminist analysis of the patriarchal authority of such social institutions as well as her insistence that modern women must free themselves from domestic "slavery" and from the "despotic rule" of marriage (1898: 323). Her bold feminist statements and the personal and taboo issues upon which she focused clearly differentiated her from mainstream feminists; this distinction, as well as the anarchist underpinnings of her feminist politics, contributed greatly to the identification of Goldman's feminism as decidedly "radical." Goldman's cultural identity as a radical modern feminist certainly owes much to the undeniable anarchist foundations of her feminist thought; equally important to her cultural status as a modern

feminist radical, however, are the critical connections between her feminist ideals and the fundamental tenets of modern avant-garde aesthetic radicalism.

Modern Cultures of the Avant-Garde and Goldman's Feminism

While Goldman's anarchism certainly played a significant role in her radical feminist politics, the principles and practices of modern avant-garde cultures also contributed greatly to her feminist concerns and arguments. As discussed in the previous chapter, obvious political affinities exist between the ideologies of modern avant-gardism and anarchism, but there is also significant overlap between avant-garde and feminist notions of the emancipation of the modern self. Of particular appeal to Goldman's feminist consciousness was the avant-garde's emphasis upon the cultural imperative to challenge and destroy traditions and conventions of the past in aesthetic, moral, social and personal contexts, the absolute sovereignty, freedom and autonomy of the individual, and the demand for sexual liberation and freedom of self-expression. All of these foundational ideas of avant-gardism are linked through their shared focus upon the individual, internal self and an insistent politicization of the modern self, and played a significant role in Goldman's antagonism towards the "external" concerns of mainstream feminism and her focus upon the "internal" dimensions of modern women's liberation. Central to Goldman's feminist ideologies was her

vision of the modern woman as emancipated through her refusal to conform to oppressive social traditions and through expressive and experimental acts of self-realization in social, aesthetic, sexual and professional realms.

The Modern Avant-Garde and Anti-traditionalism

Literary and artistic cultures of the modernist avant-garde, despite sometimes vast differences between its various manifestations in Impressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, Dadaism and other notable movements, consistently demonstrated an anti-traditionalist stance that rejected the authority of past conventions and insisted upon the creation of the “new.” Indeed, as Renato Poggolio suggests in *The Theory of the Avant Garde* (1968), an essential and defining characteristic of modern avant-gardism is “antagonism” toward tradition, and particularly those traditions and conventions established by mainstream bourgeois culture. Catherine Cameron concurs, and argues that a fundamental hallmark of the modern avant-garde is an overt “antipathy for established traditions and conventions of the past” (Cameron 221). Avant-gardists sought to challenge and undermine conventions and traditions not only in literary and artistic practices, but also in life and in politics, such that a primary project of the avant-garde was the destruction of past social traditions and their authority over individual subjectivity. As Poggolio asserts, “every avant-garde movement, in one of its phases at least, aspires to realize

what the Dadaists called 'the demolition job,' an ideal of the tabula rasa which spilled over from the individual and artistic level" (1967:182).

Greenwich Village Avant-Gardists and the Provincetown Players

For modern women, and especially for those who were consciously seeking personal and social liberation, the avant-garde's emphasis upon the destruction of past traditions and conventions held particularly gendered meanings. Goldman and many other Greenwich Village women, who were disillusioned with and unsatisfied with the mainstream first-wave feminist movement and its focus upon suffragism, were drawn to the avant-garde's anti-traditionalist rhetoric and principles, and applied it specifically to the traditions and conventions associated with limiting definitions of "womanhood." Of particular importance to Goldman and other "radical" feminists of Greenwich Village was the avant-garde's opposition to the social institution of marriage, as presented throughout the fictional and non-fictional writings as well as the personal lives of leading avant-gardists, and especially among the Greenwich Village radicals with whom Goldman lived and worked. Prominent New York avant-garde writers, including Eugene O'Neill, Susan Glaspell, Neith Boyce, Louise Bryant, Mina Loy, Floyd Dell, Max Eastman and Crystal Eastman, offered insightful critiques of marriage and the nuclear family and advocated alternative relationships outside the authoritative social

institution of marriage.⁵ Many of these same writers were also involved with the experimental Provincetown Players theatre, whose plays frequently explored and exposed “the frequent brutality of marriage” (Scott and Rutkoff 93). Goldman had longstanding personal friendships and working relationships with several key members of the theatre group, including anarchist Hutchins Hapgood, and writers Floyd Dell, Max Eastman, Neith Boyce, Louise Bryant, Jack Reed and Eugene O’Neill, and she spent a month living at Provincetown with the group and attended some of their plays before she was imprisoned in 1916 and later deported to Russia for her anti-war and anti-conscription activism and writings (Goldman, 1931:582-3). She discovered multiple affinities between herself and both the individuals involved with the Provincetown Players as well as the liberating and rebellious experimentalism of the group not only on account of her dedication to the modern American experimental theatre, but also because of the insistent anti-traditionalist stance, especially as it was applied to marriage and notions of repressed female sexuality, that was adopted and portrayed throughout the Players’ repertoire. Indeed, Adele Heller, the producing director of the Provincetown Playhouse,

⁵O’Neill, Glaspell and Boyce all wrote plays for the Provincetown Players that offered scathing critiques of marriage, and these plays will be discussed in further detail in the following pages. Bryant’s play “The Game” (1915) and Loy’s “Feminist Manifesto” (1914) and many of her poems – most notably, “The Effectual Marriage or the Insipid Narrative of Gina and Miovanni” (1920) also present radical views on marriage. For polemic examinations of marriage by New York avant-gardists, see also Crystal Eastman’s “Marriage Under Two Roofs” (1927) in *Crystal Eastman on Women and Revolution*, ed. Blanche Weisen Cook, p. 76 and Floyd Dell’s “Outline of Marriage,” *Birth Control Review Series* 10:1 (January 1926): 8-9; 10.2 (February 1926): 47-48; 10.3 ((March 1926): 83-84; 10.4 (April 1926): 129-30; 10.5 (May 1926): 156-57; and 10.6 (June 1926): 191.

proclaimed that she decided to work with the theatre group because of its consistent anti-traditionalist feminist stance: "I had been reading a great deal about the Provincetown Players, and I realized that four of the major issues at the time were the 'New Art,' the 'New Politics,' the 'New Woman,' and the 'New Psychology.'" When I read the first four plays staged by the Provincetown Playhouse in 1915, I realized they were about the 'New Art,' the 'New Politics,' the 'New Woman,' and the 'New Psychology.'" (Bennetts, np). Goldman, too, was drawn to these four major themes and contexts of the Players' repertoire, and it is no surprise that significant links exist between her feminist writings and theories and the staged productions of the avant-garde theatre group.

The Provincetown Players repeatedly staged plays that challenged the social, moral and patriarchal authority of the institution of marriage and demonstrated how marriage repressed individual personalities and prohibited individual freedom in love and sexuality. One of the first and most famous plays produced by the Players was Susan Glaspell's "Trifles," written and performed during the first summer season in Provincetown in 1915. Glaspell's one-act play, which was inspired by an actual murder case in Iowa in 1900 that Glaspell reported on for the *Des Moines Daily News*, portrays the patriarchal power dynamics at play between a husband and a wife, and demonstrates the devastating consequences of a marriage in which the husband exerts complete authority over his wife. After enduring years of social isolation and

emotional abuse throughout their marriage, the wife kills her husband because he has killed her soul, her freedom and her individual personality. Perhaps more shocking than the wife's murder of her husband, however, is the deception practiced by the two female characters, one of whom is the wife of a prominent local law official, who discover the motives underlying the wife's crime and decide to hide the evidence from their seemingly incompetent husbands, who cannot comprehend how or why or a woman could murder her husband. The women, despite their professed respect for the law and their husbands, determine that the wife had legitimate reasons to commit the murder, and bond together in a subtle protest against the patriarchal authority of the law and marriage.

While Glaspell's play is certainly the most well known Provincetown play to critique marriage from an explicitly feminist perspective, several other prominent plays also problematized and satirized marriage. The first bill of the summer 1916 New York season featured Neith Boyce's "Winter's Night," a one-act parody of her own marital conflicts with her husband, anarchist and writer Hutchins Hapgood. The second bill, in November 1916, followed with "Enemies," co-written by Boyce and Hapgood. Two characters, named He and She, argue for the duration of the play about the problems in their marriage, focusing specifically upon the husband's jealousy of his wife's personal and professional relationships with other men and his desire for her to be more interested in "household matters," their children and her role as a wife. After quarrelling

back and forth, they both come to understand that their love for each other and their individuality has been destroyed by their marriage:

SHE: You have gone your own way, and I mine--and there is a gulf between us.

HE: Now you see what I mean--

SHE: Yes, that we ought to separate--that we *are* separated--and yet I love you.

HE: Two people may love intensely, and yet not be able to live together. It is too painful, for you, for me—

SHE: We have hurt one another too much—

HE: We have destroyed one another--we are enemies. (133)

The play presents a damning condemnation of the loss of love and individuality that can result from marriage, and particularly from the forced cohabitation required by marital vows. The two characters of the play are intentionally unnamed, referred to in the script merely as “He” and “She,” suggesting that their marital conflicts are not unique to their relationship, but rather are characteristic of most modern marriages:

SHE: [Men and women] are forced to live together for a time, or this wonderful race couldn't go on. In addition, in order to have the best children, men and women of totally opposite temperaments must live together . . . Well, we have fulfilled our fate and produced our children, and they are good ones. But really--to expect also to live in peace together -- we as

different as fire and water, or sea and land -- that's too much!
(130).

The language used above, and particularly the repetition throughout the play of the words "forced" and "must," emphasizes the social, sexual and moral imperatives of marriage, and underscores the authoritative power of the institution of marriage as well as the ways in which such authority has destroyed individual personality. The play's overt condemnation of marriage is clearly rooted in feminist politics, as it depicts a man who wants to control every aspect of his wife's life and individuality; such feminist politics, however, are clearly "radical," for the play also insists that marriage has equally detrimental effects upon men.

Similar challenges to marriage are also presented in Eugene O'Neill's "Before Breakfast," which also draws attention to the loss of freedom experienced by both men and women in marital relationships. Appearing on the third bill of the New York season in December 1916, O'Neill's play also features a husband and wife, and consists of one long monologue by a bitter, resentful, angry and nagging wife, who must begin each day with a "large dose of alcohol" in order to cope with her unhappiness (np). She "is in her early twenties but looks much older," and the "several potted plants dying of neglect" further symbolize the inner death she has experienced as a result of her unhappy marriage (np). After discovering a letter that proves her suspicions of her husband's infidelity and learning of the pregnancy of his mistress, the wife continually berates

and insults the husband, played by O'Neill, who is off-stage and not seen, but whose incomprehensible mutterings and moans can be heard throughout the duration of the play.

While the play clearly presents the unhappiness of the wife due to her husband's deception, it draws equal attention to the unhappiness of the husband and suggests that his alcoholism and depression are the result of his marriage. The wife's continuous nagging of her unemployed husband for failing to find a well-paying job also underscores the loss of individuality for married men:

Mrs. Rowland: I'm about sick of all this life. I've a good notion to go home, if I wasn't too proud to let them know what a failure you've been — you, the millionaire Rowland's only son, the Harvard graduate, the poet, the catch of the town— Huh! (*With bitterness*). There wouldn't be many of them now envy my catch if they knew the truth. What has our marriage been, I'd like to know? Even before your *millionaire* father died owing everyone in the world money, you certainly never wasted any of your time on your wife. I suppose you thought I'd ought to be glad you were *honorable* enough to marry after getting me into trouble. (np)

Throughout her long monologue, the wife continually attacks her husband for failing to fulfill traditional expectations of his role as husband, and the negative effects of both his wife's demands and general social pressures

to conform to traditional and confining definitions of marital roles are suggested through his strangled utterances heard during the play. It is the husband's apparent self-inflicted death at the end of the play, however, that most dramatically presents the extreme lengths to which an individual can go to escape the oppressive confines of marriage. Towards the end of the play, the husband's trembling hand appears from off stage to reach for water with which to shave, and after he spills the water, he is heard groaning as he slits his throat. The play ends with the wife finally looking at her unseen husband, and "transfixed with horror," she "shrieks wildly and runs to the other door, unlocks it and frenziedly pulls it open, and runs shrieking madly into the outer hallway" (np). Through their dramatic depictions of physical and psychological death as a result of marriage, both O'Neill and Glaspell suggest that the institution of marriage and its powerful social authority destroy not only love, but also personal freedom and the individual self. Moreover, the themes and images of death and destruction presented throughout their plays further imply that the tradition of marriage must be destroyed in order to guarantee individual liberty and self-sovereignty.

Goldman's Feminist Anti-Traditionalism

Similar ideas about marriage are presented throughout Goldman's writings and lectures. In her quest for the emancipation of the modern woman, Goldman applied avant-garde anti-traditionalism to her visions of

the liberated female self, and continually demonstrated her desire to destroy social traditions of the past that confined women to the private sphere of the home, and to the restrictive and passive roles of wife and mother. Like the avant-gardists and Provincetown Players, she consistently revealed her extreme antagonism to the tradition of marriage and its negative implications for women's freedom. Goldman, however, presented her opposition to the marriage tradition years before the early twentieth-century Greenwich Village radicals began to articulate similar ideas, and her critical views on marriage, therefore, must also be situated within the socio-political debates about marriage that were pervasive throughout late Victorian culture. In particular, Goldman's writings about the "tyranny" of marriage, and its diminution of women to the status of slaves, can also be located within a late nineteenth-century English tradition of polemical writings by the likes of philosophers including John Stuart Mill; socialists and early gay rights activists, including the poet Edward Carpenter and the renowned physician and sexologist Havelock Ellis; and liberal feminists and writers, including Barbara Leigh Smith, Frances Power Cobbe and Bessie Parks, that relies upon similar rhetorical tropes to denounce marriage.

In *The Subjection of Women* (1878), John Stuart Mill overtly equates the married woman with a submissive slave through his bold declaration that "the wife is the actual bond servant of her husband: no less so, as far as legal obligation goes, than slaves" (57). He is particularly

critical of the oppressive effects of marriage upon modern women, and presents the following claim: "The law of servitude in marriage is a monstrous contradiction to all the principles of the modern world. . . . Marriage is the only actual bondage known to our law. There remains no legal slave, except the mistress of every house" (152). Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, and South African author and political activist Olive Schreiner deployed similar rhetoric in their polemical and fictional writings on marriage, but it is within the writings of Victorian feminists and journalists where we may find the most compelling evidence of the rhetorical uses of the master/slave trope in the social debates surrounding marriage in late nineteenth-century Victorian cultural discourses.

In her study of the prevalence of feminist and anti-marriage discourses within both the mainstream and subcultural Victorian press, Susan Hamilton argues that "marriage as a form of slavery was a central rhetorical and conceptual framework" in Victorian critiques of marriage, and was especially prevalent within the writings of English feminist journalists, including Frances Power Cobbe and Bessie Parks (442). Cobbe was a well-known (and frequently front-page) journalist for London's daily newspaper *Echo*, author of more than twenty books on the oppressive position of women within Victorian society, an "incisive critic on the Victorian idea of marriage," and a "passionate advocate for women's suffrage and right to bodily integrity" (Hamilton 441). Cobbe's writings, and perhaps most notably, her article "Celibacy v. Marriage," published in the

mainstream magazine *Fraser's* in 1862, and her more controversial essay, "Wife Torture in England" (1878), are replete with images of marriage as a modern form of slavery, and she consistently depicts the relationship between the husband and wife as comparable to the relationship between the master and the slave. In "Wife Torture in England," Cobbe explores the physical, social, and psychological "torture" and "abuse" experienced by married women at the hands of their husbands and the marriage institution itself, and argues that "the whole relation between the sexes . . . is very little better than one of master and slave" (137). The figure of the black American slave figures prominently within the essay, and Cobbe boldly maintains that "the condition of the [married] women may be most accurately matched by that of the negroes on a Southern plantation before the war struck off their fetters" (137). Other Victorian feminists, including Barbara Leigh Smith, Bessie Parkes, and Lydia Becker, also made frequent comparisons between married British women and black American slaves, and Becker's *Women's Suffrage Journal* consistently featured anti-marriage articles that characterized married women as slaves to men (Hamilton 452). The trope of master and slave relations was clearly pervasive within cultural and political critiques of marriage circulating within late nineteenth-century Victorian society, and the efficacy of this particular trope soon proved to be of particular importance to radical feminist thinkers in America, including Emma Goldman.⁶

⁶ It is also important to note that the Civil War and the events that preceded it were also still very much in the public memory.

Beginning as early as 1897, Goldman boldly challenged the institution of marriage, and declared that she considered it her “greatest duty to denounce marriage, not only in the old form, but the so-called modern marriage, the idea of taking a wife and housekeeper, the idea of private possession of one self by the other” (1897: 272). Goldman’s description of marriage mirrors the depictions of marriage presented throughout late nineteenth-century Victorian marriage debates as well as in the fiction and plays of leading New York avant-garde writers and playwrights, and she clearly suggests that marriage exerts an oppressive authority over individuality and personal freedom. While Goldman’s primary focus is upon the ways in which marriage oppresses women, she also contends that the institution equally oppresses men. In the opening sentences of her essay “Marriage,” Goldman argues: “How much sorrow, misery, humiliation; how many tears and curses; what agony and suffering has this word [marriage] brought to humanity. From its very birth, up to our present day, men and women groan under the iron yoke of our marriage institution, and there seems to be no relief, now way out of it” (July 1897: 269). Goldman’s description of marriage as an “iron yoke” emphasizes her contention, shared by the Victorian radicals and Greenwich Village avant-gardists, that the institution of marriage is akin to slavery, in that all modern individuals feel compelled to marry and are thus slaves to its social and moral authority. Deeming marriage to be “the crudest, most tyrannical of all institutions,” Goldman calls on modern individuals to reject

and destroy the tradition of marriage in order to preserve individual personality and autonomy, and in the final sentence of the essay, she makes explicit demands for the modern destruction of the tradition of marriage: "Marriage, the curse of so many centuries, the cause of jealousy, suicide and crime, must be abolished if we wish the young generation to grow healthy, strong and free men and women" (273). Her insistence upon the necessity of rejecting the social tradition of marriage was thus grounded not only in her anarchist principles, which rejected notions of love sanctioned by government or religious authority, but also in avant-garde anti-traditionalist perspectives on marriage.

Goldman's opposition to marriage was also strongly rooted in her radical feminist principles that rejected notions of women's economic and psychological dependence upon men. Indeed, Goldman considered marriage to be "an economic arrangement, an insurance pact" which condemns women "to life-long dependency, to parasitism, to complete uselessness, individual as well as social" (1910: 228). Goldman, however, was neither unique nor original in her characterization of marriage, for, as Jenni Calder contends, similar rhetorical devices, and especially the representation of marriage as an economic transaction, were prominent within canonical Victorian novels by authors including Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, and Thomas Hardy.⁷ Goldman's use of the word "parasite" can also be situated within the rhetorical practices of other early

⁷ See Calder's *Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction*. New York: Oxford UP, 1976.

twentieth-century feminist writers, including Olive Schreiner and avant-garde artist and poet Mina Loy. Schreiner deemed married women to be “parasites” in her book *Women and Labour* (1911), while Loy argued in her “Feminist Manifesto” (1914) that modern women had the limited choices of either marriage, which amounted to the condition of “parasitism,” or prostitution (259). Goldman also emphasizes the ways in which marriage denies women economic, psychological and sexual independence in an earlier version of her essay “The Tragedy of Woman’s Emancipation,” originally published in *Mother Earth* in March, 1906:

For over a hundred years, the old form of marriage, based on the bible, “till death us do part” has been denounced as an institution that stands for the sovereignty of the man over the woman, of her complete submission to his whims and commands and the absolute dependence upon his name and support. Time and again it has been conclusively proven that the old matrimonial relation restricted woman to the function of man's servant and the bearer of his children.

And yet we find many emancipated women who prefer marriage with all its deficiencies to the narrowness of an unmarried life; narrow and unendurable because of the chains of moral and social prejudice that cramp and bind her nature. (183)

In her persistent focus upon the restrictive “deficiencies” of marriage, as well as the “moral and social prejudice” that compels modern individuals -- and especially modern women -- to marry, Goldman highlights the powerful authority of the social tradition of marriage, and underscores the notion, shared by the modern avant-garde, that the marriage tradition must be destroyed if individual liberty and autonomy are to be preserved. Avant-garde poet Mina Loy also used similar rhetoric in her critical writings on marriage, and particularly in her “Feminist Manifesto,” where she insisted that modern women participate in the “Absolute Demolition” of the “rubbish heap of tradition,” particularly in regards to social expectations of marriage (1914: 259).

While Goldman repeatedly draws attention to the oppression experienced by both women and men under the marriage institution, she also makes clear that marriage has particular implications and consequences for modern women. In an interview with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in October, 1897, Goldman asserts that the married woman “is the servant, the mistress, and the slave of both husband and children. She loses her own individuality entirely, even her name she is not allowed to keep” (Oct. 1897: 291). She further maintains, in her essay “Marriage,” that “[marriage] always gives the man the right and power over his wife, not only over her body, but also over her actions, her wishes; in fact, over her whole life” (July 1897: 269). The above statements clearly reveal the feminist underpinnings of Goldman’s critical analysis of marriage, and

substantiates Margaret Marsh's contention that modern feminist anarchists were aligned in "their belief that the source of women's oppression was rooted in the domestic relationship, specifically, in monogamous marriage and the nuclear family, with its interlocking elements of financial, psychological, and social dependence" and in "their belief that [women's] liberation would come only with the abolition of marriage and the conventional family structure" (Marsh 56).

Goldman also believed that marriage and the moral values attached to it demanded monogamy, and in so doing, severely restricted freedom in love and sexuality. Inspired by the American "free love" tradition and its most outspoken proponents, including Ezra and Angela Heywood and Moses Harmon, Goldman spoke passionately about the importance of liberating love and sexual relationships from moral and religious authority, and moreover, practiced her theories throughout her lifetime, engaging in multiple and simultaneous affairs with many men. When asked by a reporter from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1897 whether or not she "believe[d] in marriage," Goldman offered the following response:

I do not. . . . I believe that when two people love each other that no judge, minister or courts, or body of people have anything to do with it. They themselves are the ones to determine the relations which they shall hold with one another. When that relation becomes irksome to either party,

or one of the parties, then it can be as quietly terminated as it was formed. (Oct. 1897: 289-90)

Goldman's response clearly indicates her passionate belief that the social institution of marriage is oppressive to both men and women because it permanently binds them together, and thus limits their capacity to love others. While she is certainly not opposed to monogamous relationships between men and women, Goldman is adamant in her conviction that marriage does not solidify love, and that love can only blossom in relationships free from the authority of the marriage tradition. Unlike American mainstream feminists, who generally promoted marriage and the traditional nuclear family structure, Goldman advocated alternative relationships, insisting that love and sexuality could be fully realized only within relationships free from social, religious, state and moral authority:

Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage? Free love? As if love is anything but free! . . . Yes, love is free; it can dwell in no other atmosphere. In freedom it gives itself unreservedly, abundantly, completely. (1914: 236)

Relentless in her scathing attacks upon the institution of marriage, Goldman boldly declared that “marriage and love have nothing in common” and that “they are as far apart as the poles; are, in fact, antagonistic to each other” (1910: 227). She was also unyielding in her criticism of American mainstream feminists for their support of marriage and for teaching the young American woman that “her one aim in life is matrimony” (“Talk with Emma Goldman” 423). The “aim in life” of women, according to Goldman, should not be marriage, but rather the full exploration of their individuality and sexuality, and she persuasively argued that by rejecting the tradition of marriage, modern women could achieve not only social, psychological and economic independence, but also individual and sexual freedom.

Emma Goldman, the Modern Avant-Garde, and the Politics of Sexuality

Goldman’s insistent emphasis upon the politics of sexuality is perhaps the defining feature of both her anarchism and feminism, and consistently appears as a primary focus of her lectures and writings throughout her lifetime.⁸ Anarchism had always demanded the freedom of the individual, but Goldman expanded this tenet through her sustained focus upon the freedom of the individual female body. For Goldman, freedom of sexual expression and desire was crucial to women’s social

⁸ The issue of violence as a means of political propaganda is also a critical thread that runs throughout Goldman’s oeuvre, and some critics have argued that it is the topic most consistently addressed by Goldman; see Arthur Redding’s “The Dream Life of Political Violence: George Sorel, Emma Goldman, and the Modern Imagination,” *Modernism/Modernity* 2.2 (April 1995): 1-16.

liberation and personal self-realization. As Alice Wexler notes, Goldman repeatedly argued that the “sexual liberation of women was, moreover, integral to their emancipation as fully developed human beings” (94). Drawing upon the distinctly modern ideas of Sigmund Freud, free love advocates, and avant-garde artists and writers, including Oscar Wilde, D.H. Lawrence and Henrik Ibsen, Goldman made sexuality, and specifically, the free expression of any and all sexual desires, a fundamental aspect of her anarchism, arguing that the social revolution envisioned by anarchists necessarily required a complete revolution in all matters pertaining to sex, and that the feminist revolution envisioned by “radical” women demanded the absolute sexual freedom of the modern female.

While Goldman’s anarchism certainly contributed greatly to her insightful analysis of the politics of (female) sexuality, the avant-garde’s emphasis upon sexual liberation and freedom of the body also informed her anarchist and feminist politics of sexuality and the individual body. As noted by several modernist scholars, including Christine Stansell, Ross Wetzstein, and Margaret Marsh, a defining hallmark of the modern Greenwich Village avant-garde is its emphasis upon sexual freedom, and as Marsh astutely observes, the Greenwich Village radicals and their views on sexuality “closely resembled the attitudes of the [modern] anarchist-feminists” (164). Prominent New York avant-garde writers and artists with whom Goldman lived and worked presented their views

regarding emancipated sexuality not only through their creative and polemic works, but also through their personal lives, which were lived in accordance with their principles of sexual freedom. Modern women were especially drawn to the liberating sexual politics of the avant-garde not only on account of its principles of sexual freedom, but also because, as Marsh contends, the women of Greenwich Village “possessed the additional advantage of living in a social environment supportive of those views. Perhaps the most important aspect of that supportive community was the active participation of Greenwich Village men in the feminist cause” (164). Two of the most influential men of avant-garde literary cultures of Greenwich Village who also happened to share close personal relationships with Goldman -- Max Eastman and Floyd Dell -- were particularly responsive to the plight of modern women who desired sexual equality and liberty, and they frequently used their radical journal *The Masses* “for vigorous advocacy of feminist issues” (Marsh 164). Eastman, in particular, took a bold stand against his radical male political allies who were blind to the social and sexual oppression experienced by women, and asserted that “[t]he question of sex equality, the economic, social, political independence of woman, stands by itself parallel and equal in importance to any other question of the day” (qtd. in Stansell 229).

Modern women who desired sexual liberation discovered that avant-garde cultures of bohemian Greenwich Village allowed them to experience freedom of sexuality, love and the body. Several famous

avant-garde women, including Mabel Dodge, Margaret Anderson, Jane Heap, Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy, Mary Heaton Vorse, Neith Boyce and Louise Bryant demonstrated their sexual freedom through multiple and often simultaneous love affairs and through experimentation in lesbianism and bisexuality. While their scandalous affairs and blatant sexuality often resulted in sensationalist stories in the mainstream press, such women continued to defy traditional expectations of female sexuality, not only in their personal lives, but also throughout their writings, which consistently focused upon the social necessity of liberating women's sexuality from the confines of marriage and traditional social and moral values. Flouting all social conventions and traditions of gender, avant-garde women also performed their passionate calls for the liberation of the female body through their physical appearance and public behaviour. Eschewing corsets and other restrictive clothing in favour of loose-fitting and flowing clothes that often revealed bare necklines, shoulders, ankles and knees, the radical women of modern Greenwich Village defied images of sexually chaste and passive females, and embodied their visions of the sexually liberated modern woman. Perhaps more shocking to the modern public than their physical appearance and notorious sexual affairs, however, were the attitudes of avant-garde women in regards to motherhood. Many of the most famous women of New York's avant-garde, including Mina Loy and Mabel Dodge, not only gave birth to "illegitimate" children outside of marriage, but also rejected their roles as mothers, often leaving their

children with nannies or relatives for years at a time. Such women demonstrated, both through their personal lives and their writings, their passionate belief that women's sexuality was severely confined by the socially prescribed roles of wife and mother, and that only "free motherhood" and love outside the restrictive enclosure of marriage would enable modern women to experience and achieve sexual equality and liberty.

In her 1897 essay "Marriage," published in the free love journal *Firebrand*, Goldman explicitly links her feminist views on marriage with her ideas of sexual freedom: "I demand the independence of woman; her right to support herself; to live for herself; to love whomever she pleases, or as many as she pleases" (July 1897: 272-3). Goldman believed that marriage was a social institution specifically designed to prevent women from exploring their sexuality, and claimed that "the marriage institution is our only safety valve against the pernicious sex-awakening of woman" (1914: 237). Goldman rebelled against the socially accepted notion that women should experience sex only within monogamous marital relations, and paints a dreadful portrait of the married woman's sex life:

Can there be anything more outrageous than the idea that a healthy, grown woman, full of life and passion, must deny nature's demand, must subdue her most intense craving, undermine her health and break her spirit, must stunt her vision, abstain from the depth and glory of sex experience

until a “good” man comes along to take her unto himself as a wife? The prospective wife and mother is kept in complete ignorance of her only asset in the competitive field – sex. Thus she enters into life-long relations with a man only to find herself shocked, repelled, outraged beyond measure by the most natural and healthy instinct, sex. (1914: 231)

In declaring sexuality to be the “most intense craving” and “most natural and healthy instinct” of women, Goldman, alongside prominent British sexologists and Freud, presents a bold challenge to traditional Puritanical and Victorian-era ideas of female sexuality and desire, and dares modern women to explore, express and experiment with sexuality before and outside of marriage. Moreover, her assertion that sex is “the most important part of [a woman’s] life” offered a new and liberating image of female sexual identity that countered the figure of the chaste, virginal and passive female (sexual) body (1910: 184).

Goldman also drew attention to “the double standard of morality” applied to the sexual experiences and identities of men and women (1910: 186). She argued that while men were expected to engage in sexual relations at a young age and outside the confines of marriage, social and moral rules demanded that women repress and suppress their sexual desires, and legitimized female sexuality only within marriage: “We have long ago taken it as a self-evident fact that the boy may follow the call of

the wild; that is to say, that the boy may, as soon as his sex nature asserts itself, satisfy that nature; but our moralists are scandalized at the very thought that the nature of a girl should assert itself" (1910: 184-5). Moreover, Goldman identifies the sexual experiences of men and women as central to their gender identities, explaining that "society considers the sex experiences of a man as attributes of his general development, while similar experiences in the life of a woman are looked upon as a terrible calamity, a loss of honor and of all that is good and noble in a human being" (1910: 185-6). Hence, masculinity was associated with uninhibited sexual relations, while femininity was aligned with sexual passivity, repression and inhibition. The liberation of female sexuality would thus enable new definitions of womanhood and female identity, and perhaps more importantly, would allow women to play sexual roles not associated with the domestic sphere.

Goldman's anarchist and feminist convictions in the freedom of female sexuality eventually led to her involvement with the modern birth control movement. Long inspired by and interested in the ideas and practices of birth control advocates Moses Harmon, Ezra and Angela Heywood and most notably, Margaret Sanger, she firmly believed that women should be educated about birth control methods and modern contraceptives, yet she initially refused to become involved with the movement because of unrelenting efforts to prosecute Sanger, and Goldman's own fears that she would also be arrested. As she recounts in

her autobiography, "the question of limiting offspring represented in my estimation only one aspect of the social struggle and I did not care to risk arrest for it. Moreover, I was so continually on the brink of prison because of my general activities that it seemed unjustifiable to court extra trouble" (1931: 552-3). Nevertheless, her attitude changed after she attended the Neo-Malthusian Conference in Paris in 1900 and returned to America, with smuggled birth control literature and contraband contraceptives, to learn that Sanger's husband had been arrested for giving a pamphlet on birth control methods to an undercover Comstock agent. Both the conference and Sanger's arrest led to Goldman's decision to "do the subject" of birth control "practical justice," and she continually risked arrest through her lectures that openly discussed methods of contraception (1931: 553).⁹

Goldman was surprised to discover that individuals of all classes, ethnicities, and professions, including impoverished immigrants, university students and professors, doctors, lawyers, judges, artists and factory workers, attended her birth control lectures, but she clearly directed her lectures to women and was most gratified by their attendance. In regards to a series of sex lectures in Butte, Montana, she writes, "Very significant also was the presence of many women, especially at my lecture on 'Birth-control.' Formerly they would not have dared to inquire about such matters even privately; now they stood up in a public assembly and frankly avowed their hatred of their position as domestic drudges and child-

⁹ Goldman's expectations of arrest and legal persecution were so strong that she always carried a book with her when she gave a lecture on birth control, in case she "should have to spend the night in the station-house" (1931: 553).

bearers. It was an extraordinary manifestation, most encouraging to me” (1931: 539). The presence of women at her lectures and their committed interest in the subject of birth control inspired Goldman to continue with her work in the movement, and encouraged her belief that modern American women would be receptive to her ideas. Nevertheless, not all American women supported her birth control activism; most notably, middle-class mainstream feminists attended her controversial lectures only to protest her ideas. Invited in 1915 by the Women’s City Club of Los Angeles to give lectures related to feminism and “the sex question,” Goldman faced “[f]ive hundred members of my sex, from the deepest red to the dullest grey, . . . [who] branded me as an enemy of woman’s freedom, and club members stood up and denounced me”(1931: 556).

Goldman’s dedication to the birth control movement was certainly related to her experiences as a nurse and midwife and her related beliefs that women should be educated about contraceptive methods in order to prevent the often-disastrous results of illegal abortions and multiple childbirths. It was also, however, grounded in her feminist conviction that the social institution of motherhood severely restricted the social and sexual freedom of women. Nevertheless, despite her consistent attacks upon the institution of motherhood, Goldman recognized that maternal identity was for many women a desired identity; indeed, she made the shocking claim that a woman’s “most glorious privilege” is “the right to give birth to a child” (1911: 140). Moreover, Goldman’s choice of the name

"Mother Earth" for her journal also suggests an exalted representation of the maternal figure.¹⁰ In other works, however, she offers a scathing indictment of motherhood, declaring that women have been "coerced," "made," and "forced" to "breed": "What a hideous thing this much-lauded motherhood!" (1913: 131). Such statements reveal that Goldman was not wholly adverse to motherhood, but rather, to the patriarchal social structures that impinged upon, if not totally erased women's choices in issues pertaining to motherhood. Thus, Goldman advocated "free motherhood," which not only argued for the rights of all women to choose when and if to have children, but also for women's rights to have children outside of marriage. In her essay "Marriage and Love," she points out that motherhood is socially sanctioned only within marriage, and asks:

Does [marriage] not say to woman, Only when you follow me shall you bring forth life? Does it not condemn her to the block, does it not degrade and shame her if she refuses to buy her right to motherhood by selling herself? Does not marriage only sanction motherhood, even though conceived in hatred, in compulsion? Yet, if motherhood be of free choice, of love, of ecstasy, of defiant passion, does it not

¹⁰ Goldman initially wanted to name her journal *The Open Road*, after a poem by Walt Whitman, but was forced to consider other names when threatened with a lawsuit from another publication with the same name. It was during a buggy ride in the countryside that Goldman decided upon the name *Mother Earth*, after she noticed early signs of spring "indicating life was germinating in the womb of Mother Earth" (Goldman, 1931: 378).

place a crown of thorns upon an innocent head and carve in letters of blood the hideous epithet Bastard? (235-6).

Goldman's advocacy of "free motherhood," as articulated in the above quote, clearly functioned as a critical response to the authority of prevailing social and moral traditions and expectations of motherhood, and explicitly illustrated her intense conviction that women were entitled to reproductive liberty free from the social power of oppressive cultural customs and traditions associated with motherhood. Her ideas on free motherhood can be situated not only in her anarchist convictions, but also in the writings of avant-garde feminists, and especially those by Mina Loy, which will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

Goldman also presented her ideas of liberated sexuality free from repressive and authoritative moral and social traditions through her outspoken pleas on behalf of homosexuals. No doubt influenced by the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895, during which she consistently and passionately defended his actions and his sexual rights, Goldman shocked both her anarchist comrades and mainstream feminists through her writings and lectures on homosexuality, which she identified as "the problem most tabooed in polite society" (1931: 555). Inspired by the writings of late nineteenth-century sexologists Havelock Ellis, Richard Krafft-Ebing and Edward Carpenter, and by American avant-garde writers and artists, who, as Bonnie Haaland notes, "did much to publicize the work of the sexologists," Goldman made the defense of homosexuality an

integral component of her sexual politics (140). According to feminist historian Blanche Wiesen Cook, Goldman was “the only woman in America to defend homosexuality in general and Oscar Wilde in particular” and was “absolute about a person’s right to sexual choice” (56). She also defended the anarchist and lesbian Louise Michél, and in a letter written by Goldman in 1923, she asserts that Michél was, “in short, . . . a complete woman, free of all prejudices and traditions which for centuries held women in chains and degraded them to be household slaves and objects of sexual lust” (rpt. in Katz 380). In championing the sexual rights of two public figures who experienced extreme social ostracization and moral judgements, Goldman defied and challenged traditional attitudes towards (homo)sexuality, and made the daring demand that all individuals, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, deserved absolute freedom in their sexual desires, acts and relationships.

Goldman’s demands for the social acceptance of homosexuality offended not only mainstream feminists, who advocated sexually conservative values, but also male anarchists, who wished to “censor” her discussions of “such ‘unnatural’ themes as homosexuality” (Goldman, 1931: 555). In the face of mounting public criticism from both (male) anarchists and feminists, she continued her controversial lectures on the sexual rights of homosexuals, and throughout her autobiography, she immodestly describes the effects of her talks upon young gay men and women. In reference to one young lesbian who approached Goldman and

thanked her after her lecture, Goldman writes, “[m]y lecture had set her free; I had given her back her self respect” (556). Goldman also makes clear that the social intolerance of homosexuality, and particularly as this intolerance was revealed to her through the “pitiful stories” of the young gays and lesbians she met, helped convince her that “anarchism was not a mere theory for a distant future; it was a living influence to free us from inhibitions, internal no less than external” (556). Indeed, Goldman not only advocated anarchist theory as a “living influence” in matters pertaining to free sexuality, but also lived her sexual life in accordance with her ideals, participating in many highly publicized affairs throughout her life, and often with younger men. While her multiple heterosexual relations made for scandalous headlines and articles in the popular press, it was her alleged sexual relationship with her openly lesbian friend and colleague Almeda Sperry that proved to be most shocking not only to the modern public, but also to Goldman’s anarchist comrades.¹¹ As Lori Jo Marso asserts, Goldman “flirted with the idea of having a lesbian love affair (and she may have even done so) with . . . Almeda Sperry who clearly adored her” (Marso 317). Whether or not an actual sexual relationship existed between Goldman and Sperry remains to be accurately determined; it is clear,

¹¹ In an article from the *New York World*, June 18, 1906, a headline that reads “Berkman Kissing Emma Goldman At Big Public Meeting” appears above a sketch of Berkman passionately kissing Goldman upon the lecture stage shortly after his release from prison. The first sentence of the article highlights the spectacular nature of both this particular public event and Goldman’s sexual life in general: “With a salutary kiss that awed into silence the fifteen-hundred spectators in the Grand Central Palace, Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, high priest and priestess of anarchy, proclaimed to their adherents yesterday that they had accepted each other as husband and wife on a limited contract and without transgressing the cardinal rule of their creed with a civil or religious ceremony.” Reprinted in Falk et al., 2003: 192.

however, from personal correspondence between the two women that their relationship was characterized to some degree by a sexual dimension that demonstrates not only Goldman's acceptance of individual homosexuals, but also her willingness to experiment with her own sexuality.¹² Goldman's emphasis upon sexual experimentation was clearly tied to her beliefs concerning absolute sexual freedom, but it was also closely linked to the modernist avant-garde's insistence upon self-experimentation.

As discussed in the previous chapter, self-experimentation came to be a defining feature of both the theoretical principles and the lives of individuals involved with the modern avant-garde. Experimentation was closely related to the avant-garde's desire for revolution and transformation in aesthetic, social and personal contexts, and their insistent calls to "make it new." As Catherine Cameron asserts, the "most central value in avant-gardism has long been the high premium placed on change, change of an absolute and total nature. [Avant-gardists] exhort one another to counter what exists with something new and to expand the boundaries" (221). The avant-garde viewed experimentation and

¹² While Goldman never wrote about nor confirmed the exact nature of her relationship with her openly gay friend and colleague, their personal correspondence to each other suggests that at the very least, Goldman and Sperry had discussed the idea of becoming sexually involved, if not actually acting upon their apparent desires. The letters also indicate, however, that Sperry was graphically explicit about her sexual desire for Goldman, which bolsters the argument put forth by many Goldman scholars that Goldman may not have shared the same feelings, and that the women did not actually develop a sexual relationship. For a more detailed account of the relationship between Sperry and Goldman, as well as reprints of their personal letters to one other, see Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* New York: Penguin, 1992, especially pp. 523-9.

expansion of the self as essential requirements to achieve free self-realization, and this principle was found to be especially liberating for modern radical feminists. As Janet Lyon maintains, avant-garde writers and artists advocated "the cause of experimentalism, not only in novelistic technique, but also in the sexual and social lives of women" (88). Notable women involved in the American avant-garde scene, including Margaret Anderson, Mina Loy, Djuna Barnes, Neith Boyce, Louise Bryant, Susan Glaspell, Margaret Sanger, Crystal Eastman and Mabel Dodge not only participated in sometimes highly-publicized sexual experiments that defied sexual traditions, but also engaged in self-experimentation in professional and creative realms by embarking upon multiple careers as writers, journalists, actresses and political activists.

Goldman conducted similar experiments in her numerous and often divergent public roles and occupations, and actively demonstrated, alongside the avant-garde women named above, that absolute liberty for women necessitated the absolute freedom of women to experiment with professional, aesthetic, political and intellectual roles. Most shocking for her mainstream feminist counterparts, however, was Goldman's insistence that modern women would achieve liberty and social equality only when they were free to experiment sexually. Condemning traditional ideals of female virginity, chastity and celibacy as "crime[s] against humanity," Goldman argued that all women, whether single or married, young or old, must claim their right to sexual freedom through sexual experimentation

and the breaking of moral and social taboos and traditions. The sexual experimentation both preached and practiced by Goldman involved not only sex outside of marriage and with multiple partners, but also “free love,” “sexual varietism” and alternative living arrangements that rejected the tradition of the nuclear family and embraced communal living (Haaland xii).¹³ Throughout her lifetime, Goldman consistently lived with several men and women in one household, even living for a time with two men with whom she was sexually involved. Shortly after moving to New York and beginning a sexual relationship with Alexander Berkman, Goldman moved into an apartment with Berkman, his cousin, Modest “Fedya” Stein and Goldman’s friend Helen Minkin. From the very beginning, the four were determined to demonstrate that communal living arrangements were not simply a utopian ideal, but rather a realizable alternative family structure that would allow for greater individual liberty, and they “agreed to share everything, to live like real comrades” (Goldman 1931: 44). Despite their intentions to live harmoniously with one another, their living arrangements soon became complicated by Stein’s love and desire for Goldman, and by Goldman’s sexual attraction to Stein. As she recounts in her autobiography:

[Fedya] had so much that Sasha [Berkman] lacked and that I craved. His susceptibility to every mood, his love of life and of colour, made him more human, more akin to me. . . . I felt

¹³ An important early influence upon Goldman’s ideas concerning alternative family structures was the novel *What is to be Done*, written by Russian anarchist Nikolai Chernishevsky in 1863, which Goldman read as a teenager while living in St. Petersburg.

release with him. One morning . . . [Fedya] sat up and broke loose in a torrent - said he loved me, that he had from the very beginning, though he had tried to keep in the background for Sasha's sake; he had struggled fiercely against his feelings for me, but he knew now that it was of no use. He would have to move out. I sat by him, holding his hand in mine and stroking his soft wavy hair. Fedya had always drawn me to him by his thoughtful attention, his sensitive response, and his love of beauty. Now I felt something stronger stirring within me. Could it be love for Fedya, I wondered. Could one love two persons at the same time? (1931: 45).

Although Goldman repeatedly professed her "free love" sexual politics, she found the emotional conflict and confusion precipitated by her simultaneous relations with both men to be the first of many experiences in which she found it difficult to live her sexual life in strict adherence to her feminist politics of free sexuality. Despite such conflicts between her private life and her public politics, Goldman's public experimentation in sexuality and her defiance of traditional female sexuality, in both her political theories and her personal life, successfully functioned as cultural experiments that dramatically expressed her radical views on liberated female sexuality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Goldman's radical feminist politics, and specifically her insistent politicization of marriage, motherhood, sexuality and the female body were clearly rooted in both anarchist and, perhaps more importantly, avant-garde ideals of individual freedom, personal sovereignty, anti-traditionalism, sexual freedom and self-experimentation. Biographers and scholars of Goldman typically turn to the writings of leading male anarchists to establish the theoretical foundations of both her anarchist and feminist thought, but as this chapter illustrates, the principles and practices of modern avant-garde literary, theatrical and artistic cultures also played essential roles in Goldman's politics that must be considered to fully understand and appreciate the cultural implications of her feminist ideals. By incorporating avant-garde tenets into her radical feminism, Goldman successfully demonstrated the political possibilities of transgressing divergent cultures, and her cross-cultural activism in anarchist and avant-garde circles enabled her to develop a nuanced analysis of modern gender politics. Moreover, her feminist use of avant-garde ideals, and in particular, the avant-garde's espousal of free self-expression, also enabled Goldman to position both herself and her feminist politics within modern cultures of the popular. Goldman consistently identified free personal self-expression as necessary for the liberated personality; her feminist writings and lectures, however, reveal that she was particularly concerned with the importance of free self-

expression for the modern woman. In "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation," she argues that "[e]mancipation should make it possible for woman to be human in the truest sense. Everything within her that craves assertion and activity should reach its fullest expression; all artificial barriers should be broken, and the road towards greater freedom cleared of every trace of centuries of submission and slavery" (214). Her repeated desire for "freedom, the right to self-expression" was viewed by both Goldman and the avant-garde as central to both a social revolution and an individual, personal revolution, such that expressive acts of self-actualization and self-definition were viewed as essential to the liberation of modern individuals (1931: 56).

The emphasis placed upon free self-expression by both Goldman and avant-gardists adhered to their beliefs in activism, and their concepts of self-expression as public and political activism can be linked with newly developed ideas of the liberated self as practiced within modern American popular culture. Leading scholars of the American avant-garde, including Renato Poggioli, Peter Burger, Vassiliki Kolocotroni and Charles Russell, consistently identify "activism" as one of the defining characteristics of the modern avant-garde, and free self-expression was one method by which avant-gardists could demonstrate their activism. Their political ideas were not merely rhetoric and theories, but were practiced and embodied by avant-gardists throughout their personal and public lives. The determination of Goldman and the Greenwich Village radicals to live their

personal lives in absolute accordance with their public politics offers clear evidence of their insistence upon physically embodying and expressing their political ideals before the modern public. Most significantly, through their public displays of self upon popular cultural stages, avant-garde radicals, including Goldman, dramatically personified their espousal of free self-expression and their contention that the modern individual, and especially the modern woman, could not achieve true liberty without freedom of expression.

The necessity of free self-expression, as presented throughout the writings and lives of well-known avant-gardists, clearly offered a liberating image of modern selfhood and individuality, but it also contributed to new images of liberated female identity presented throughout modern popular culture that personified the feminist politics of “radical” women whose ideas of women’s freedom were markedly distinct from those upheld by mainstream modern feminists. Thus, the free self-expression publicly practiced by Goldman and other radical modern feminists functions as a site of intersection between American avant-garde and popular modern cultures. More specifically, the principles of free self-expression embodied by radical modern women and deployed as strategies of public self-representation provide a correlative link between avant-garde anarchist feminism and ideas of female liberation presented within modern popular culture, personified most dramatically through the iconic figure of the “New Woman.” The following chapter will explore the cultural significance of

Goldman's public role as the modern new woman, and will analyze the ways in which she and other iconic new women – notably, popular actress Sarah Bernhardt and avant-garde poet Mina Loy – engaged in cross-cultural exchanges between the avant-garde and the popular in order to publicly perform and promulgate their radical feminist politics, and particularly their emphasis upon the liberated and expressive female personality and female body.

Chapter Three: The Feminist Politics of Self-Performance by Iconic “New Women”: Emma Goldman, Sarah Bernhardt and Mina Loy

This chapter will situate Goldman’s public personifications of her feminist ideologies within a developing culture of modern women who enacted similar claims for female liberation and used similar acts of public self-expression and self-dramatization for political and feminist purposes. Women such as the popular stage actress Sarah Bernhardt and the avant-garde poet, artist, actress and clothing designer Mina Loy shared Goldman’s disdain for mainstream feminism, and went to great lengths to distance themselves and their politics from the suffragist movement. The polemical, fictional and autobiographical writings of these three women, however, unequivocally present undeniable feminist ideals that both challenged and radicalized traditional definitions of modern feminism and femininity. Bringing Goldman’s feminism into dialogue with the work performed by Bernhardt and Loy, I argue that despite vast differences in their public roles as activist, actress, and artist, all three women belong to a critically neglected, yet critically important group of modern women who used popular and avant-garde cultures of the spectacle to stage theatrical and performative embodiments of the emancipated modern female personality and body. I further contend that Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy strategically deployed and manipulated a range of iconic female images and roles – including the “New Woman,” the modern celebrity, the radical

outlaw, the sexually dangerous femme fatale, the public intellectual, and the independent artist – in order to reclaim cultural power and authority and to challenge traditional nineteenth-century discourses of femininity and womanhood including gender hierarchies and divisions between the private and public spheres.

My decision to consider Goldman's feminist performances alongside those of Sarah Bernhardt and Mina Loy may seem odd, given the differences between their professional roles, but the surprising similarities between their feminist ideologies -- especially concerning the emancipated, experimental, and dynamic female personality, as well as the sexual freedom of modern women – and, perhaps more importantly, the performative strategies and female images deployed by all three women, demand critical attention. The repeated descriptions of Goldman, Bernhardt, and Loy as iconic "New Women" throughout modern avant-garde and popular literature unequivocally demonstrate that all three women were considered by their contemporaries to be emblematic of the changing position of women [at the turn of the century. Analyzing the intersections between Goldman's, Bernhardt's and Loy's public embodiment of the modern New Woman I propose a new way of considering the cultural phenomenon of the New Woman. I ultimately argue that their through their performative strategies of self-representation and self-production, their embodiment of a multiplicity of roles and images, and the hybrid nature of the cultural milieus in which such performances

were staged, Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy offer a comprehensive representation of the "New Woman," one that emphasizes the importance of performance and (self-) spectacularization to any critical examination of the emancipated modern woman. Moreover, I contend that bringing Goldman's feminist practices of performance, into a critical dialogue with Bernhardt's and Loy's ideologies and practices of self-production offers a more critically-nuanced analysis of Goldman's feminism, and conveys the importance of modern practices of self-performance and self-spectacularization to her public presentations of her feminist politics and her outrageous personality.

Goldman, Bernhardt, and Loy performed, embodied, and in some cases parodied traditional male roles to demonstrate the potential of women in a range of public contexts, and the heterogeneous nature of such roles functioned to challenge notions of a stable and unified feminine identity. That such roles and images were frequently circumscribed within explicitly heterosexual and patriarchal contexts is problematic for feminists, but these women manipulated and exploited such images for transgressive purposes that were grounded in a modern feminist politics of performance.¹ Such politics of performance were rooted in an awareness of the power of the female (sexual) body that was informed not only by modern psychoanalytical theories, but also by the strong public response to the increasingly public visibility and presence of modern women with

¹ A more detailed examination of the some of the feminist critical debates surrounding modern women's deployment of patriarchal female imagery will be offered in the following pages.

popular cultures, as evidenced in both the mainstream and the radical political press, avant-garde little magazines, modernist fiction, poetry, paintings, manifestos, cartoons, and posters. Modern oral, visual and print cultures of the spectacle, and indeed, the predominance of images of Goldman, Bernhardt, Loy and other iconic New Women within such cultures, functioned not only to foreground the centrality of the liberated modern female figure, but also provided such women with the public cultural stages upon which to perform their ideas of the emancipated modern woman.

By performing and physically enacting their feminist politics within the most publicly visible spaces of modern literary, artistic, entertainment and political cultures, Goldman, Bernhardt, Loy and other famous New Women successfully embodied their theoretical espousal of the politics of the personal, and exploited their personal and sexual lives, bodies, and selves in order to publicly represent their radical philosophies before popular mainstream American audiences. Successfully using their bodies as sites of and tools for both personal and political expression, the New Woman feminists offered a radical dramatization of the revolutionary potential of public action, as well as the politics of modern performance, thereby illuminating, whether consciously or not, the relevance of the anarchist tradition of "propaganda by the deed" to modern radical feminism.

Modern Women and Popular Cultures of Performance

In recent years, scholars including Maria Elena Buszek, Penny Farfan, Susan A. Glenn, Angela Latham, and Peggy Phelan have argued that performance became the primary means through which modern women asserted and defined their public identities.² At the turn of the century, within both avant-garde and popular cultures, the forms and practices of performance expanded dramatically, particularly through the stages of vaudeville, Broadway, experimental theatres, and music and dance halls. As Glenn argues, this range of venues provided female performers with “important new sources of cultural authority and visibility” (8). Equally important to modern women’s cultural visibility were the urban stages of the bohemian cafes and intellectual salons of Greenwich Village and European expatriate communities, the increasingly popular lecture circuit, and streets and parks, where women performed spectacular acts of radicalism for mass audiences through public demonstrations of protest. Indeed, as Margaret Finnegan asserts, public space at the turn of the century “served as an arena of theatricality and display,” particularly for women who actively sought roles and identities outside of the private domestic sphere (47). By offering women a highly visible performative space in which to become agents and icons of the newly defined woman,

² See Buszek’s *Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2006), Farfan’s *Women, Modernism and Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), Glenn’s *Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000), Latham’s *Posing a Threat: Flappers, Chorus Girls, and Other Brazen Performers of the American 1920s* (Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 2000) and Phelan’s *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

the public cultures of modernity enabled women to stage a dramatic resistance to and subversion of off-stage gender norms by literally performing new ways of acting female.

In her study of early twentieth-century American women, Angela Latham persuasively argues that “performance was a primary means by which women contested, affirmed, mitigated, and revolutionized norms of female self-presentation and self-stylization” (5). Peter Jelavich agrees, arguing that modernists and modern feminists “turned to theatre” as a source of cultural, social and political power, and that “physical performance” and “activist theatrical practices” became increasingly important to feminism, especially regarding (female) sexuality and the body, as well as turn-of-the-century cultural debates surrounding marriage and the anxiety-inducing “Woman Question” (236).³ Susan A. Glenn makes similar claims, focusing upon how women experimented in performative acts of “public self-fashioning” upon a wide range of cultural stages (28). Such acts enabled women to construct both private and public selves that carefully negotiated between the personal and the social, as well as the internal and the external dimensions of subjectivity that came to dominate cultural debates about the nature of modern identity.

³ For a detailed discussion of the sexual politics of modern theatrical practices, see especially Chapter Two (“Carnavalesque Modernism: Sexuality and Satire”) of Jelavich’s *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting and Performance, 1890-1940* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985): 53-73.

Most scholars of modern performance and self-representation contend that performance must always be critically situated within both personal and public contexts. Latham's critical analysis of modern American women focuses upon two distinct kinds of performances: "internally monitored portrayals of self that occur throughout the ordinary moments of life defined not by a particular activity but by the performer's ambition to present herself before others in a certain way," and performances that are "overtly theatrical" and which "occur in a place and time set aside for the occasion of the performance and involve the display of a performance-specific skill" (2). Penny Farfan analyzes modern women's performance from a similar critical perspective that considers both overtly theatrical and staged public events as well as the equally "calculated and experimental presentation of self in everyday life" as common practices of modern female performance (Chansky 155). Both Latham and Farfan thus draw critical attention to how women used performative techniques, in both covert and overt ways, to construct both private and public personalities, and moreover, point to the centrality of personality to the feminist ideologies and self-performances of such women. Performance thus enabled women to embody particular roles and images that responded to traditional – and traditionally patriarchal and misogynistic – discourses of "womanhood" pervasive within both avant-garde and popular cultures of modernity, and offered modern women an effective political tool for their feminist goals.

Latham, Jelavith and Glenn demonstrate the political and feminist possibilities concomitant with public performance in modern cultures, focusing especially on the ways in which both specific cultures and acts of female performance enabled women to transgress and challenge stereotypical images and ideologies of female identity. All three scholars argue that women's public performances particularly in theatre, art, and politics, imbued modern women with unprecedented cultural power that threatened the patriarchal authority of such public cultures. Not only recognized by contemporary (feminist scholars, the political power of such acts was also recognized by the modern public itself. Both the popular literature of the period, including mainstream newspapers, magazines and popular fiction, as well as avant-garde periodicals, literature, poetry, and manifestos were dominated by critical discussions of the increasing pervasiveness of female cultural performances, as well as the problems and possibilities attendant with such practices. Latham notes that popular cultural discourse was dominated by a "rhetoric of censorship" in regards to women's public behaviour and performances, especially within the theatre and entertainment industries, and argues that strenuous efforts were undertaken to silence and censor particular kinds of female performances (4). Indeed, Goldman, Bernhardt, and Loy each faced public efforts to silence or censor their performances, and such efforts reveal the powerful cultural effects of modern female performances.⁴

⁴ Goldman's direct experiences with censorship are explored in greater detail in Chapter Four.

As noted earlier, Latham claims two important cultural effects of modern women's performances: that they "revolutionized norms of female self-presentation and self-stylization" (5). Certainly, while Goldman, Bernhardt, and Loy performed upon different stages and for different motivations, all three women earned iconic positions in feminist cultures largely due to their shared determination to "revolutionize" traditional modes of female "self-presentation and self-stylization" through their highly unorthodox public performances of modern female selfhood. By (re)-appropriating and manipulating traditional images of women's public, political, sexual, intellectual, and aesthetic roles, these women publicly performed new ways of acting female, thus enacting new definitions of womanhood that liberated modern women from oppressive gender norms and expectations and the confines of the private sphere. Before examining these performative strategies and their effects, it is first necessary to consider the particular cultural contexts and stages in which such images circulated .

The Spectacle of Women within Modern Popular Cultures

Feminist scholarship has corrected male-dominated notions of modernist art, literary and popular culture by establishing the importance of women ⁵ within such cultural milieus and by considering how such

⁵ For scholarly and feminist accounts of modern cultures that challenge the patriarchal underpinnings of foundational modernist scholarship and which emphasize the centrality of women to aesthetic and literary modernism, see, for example, Ann L. Ardis and Leslie W. Lewis, ed., *Women's Experience of Modernity, 1875-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

participation signalled a marked departure from traditional notions and social expectations of women's domestic roles as wife and mother. Women's visibility within "male" public space, not only enabled them to perform new female roles, but also to publicly construct their selves and personalities. Indeed, the consistent public presence of women through both physical appearances and (re-) produced commodified images, firmly established the spectacular roles played by women within modern popular culture.

As scholars including Liz Conor, Susan A. Glenn, Barbara Green, Ruth E. Iskin, and Lisa Tickner have noted, the newly developed culture of the public spectacle at the turn of the century became increasingly important both to popular cultural images and representations of modern women and to modern women's own opportunities and strategies for self-representation.⁶ Both Iskin and Conor emphasize the link between modern commodity and consumer cultures in the pervasiveness of images of

UP, 2003); Margaret Dickie and Thomas Travisano, ed. *Gendered Modernisms: American Women Poets and Their Readers* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996); Gabriele Griffin, ed., *Difference in View: Women and Modernism* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994); Elizabeth Jane Harrison and Shirley Peterson, ed., *Unmanning Modernism: Gendered Re-Readings* (Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1997) and Bonnie Kime Scott's *Refiguring Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995).

⁶ See, for example Conor's *The Spectacular Modern Woman: Feminine Visibility in the 1920s* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004), Lisa Tickner's *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907-1914* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988), which offers a detailed account of the spectacular strategies of representation and public visibility deployed by (especially militant) British suffragists and the influence of such techniques upon American first wave feminists, Barbara Green's *Spectacular Confessions: Autobiography, Performative Activism, and the Sites of Suffrage, 1905-1938* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997) and Iskin's *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist Painting* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2007).

modern women, and contend that publicly prominent women and images of them helped define and shape popular cultures of modernity, and specifically the culture of the spectacle. Iskin argues that the prominence of “visual images of women” must be situated within modern “visual culture[s] of consumption,” while Conor maintains that “the commodification of [women’s] stylized images” played a pivotal role in modern popular visual cultures (Iskin, 2; Conor, 18). Thus, as Conor contends, “the spectacularization of modern women” occurred “both as they entered public space and as they were produced as images in cinema, print, and commodity cultures” (15). Such embodied public representations of self and commodified images of modern women, and indeed, the consumer and popular cultures of the spectacle in which they were situated, allowed women to play highly visible roles in the most public venues, and this visibility itself provided women with social stages rife with “transformative power” that opened “‘a range of behaviours and roles’ to modern women” (108).⁷ As Conor persuasively argues, modern consumer, commodity, and spectacular cultures functioned to “invite women to produce their modern selves through techniques of appearing” that provided women with new and liberating ways of constructing their subject positions (128). But while the modern culture of the popular

⁷ Conor here refers to William Leach’s assertion that the increasing popularity of female mannequins in modern visual cultures functioned as “radical display fixtures” that “helped transform the character of the female public image” and ultimately suggested “not one kind of behaviour, but a range of behaviours and roles”; see Leach’s “Strategists of Display and the Production of Desire” in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: Norton, 1989): 113.

spectacle undoubtedly created new public roles for women, it also created new problems regarding issues of women's representation, and led to much popular debate.

Conor offers a succinct explanation of the key critical issues at the core of these debates: "[t]he spectacularization of modern women created a deep ambivalence about the cultural, political, and subjective status of their new-found visibility. Did women's magnified visibility render them merely objects, 'subsisting' as images, or could it have been integral to their cultural presence and political representation, even to realizing the emancipated ideal of the Modern Woman?" (16). Here Conor points to the contrasting positions found not only in the writings of modern individuals, but also in contemporary feminist scholarship. Following Laura Mulvey, contemporary critics have explored the objectified position of women within popular visual and commodity cultures, and have made persuasive claims that popular images of women, whether appearing on the stage, the screen, in art or in literature, are always subjected to an authoritative and active male gaze that renders women as passive objects.⁸ Other feminist critics, however, including Liz Conor, argue that a "reappraisal" of the "newly emerged subject position of the modern appearing woman"

⁸ See Mulvey's highly influential essay "Visual Culture and Narrative Cinema" in *Feminism and Film Theory*. Ed. Constance Penley. New York: Routledge, 1988: 57-68, where Mulvey presents the following claims: "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Woman displayed as sexual object . . . holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire" (62).

suggests that spectacularized modern women challenged and subverted traditional divisions between object and subject, the spectacle and spectator, and “the gendered divide of scopic relations, namely that men look and women appear” (16; 18). Connor further contends that popular cultures of the spectacle not only granted women social and cultural power, but also a high degree of political agency and autonomy, for “by constituting themselves as spectacles,” modern women were able to “articulate themselves as gendered, modern subjects” (18).

The Feminist Politics of Performance and the Spectacle of the Modern Female Body

The feminist politics of performance has become a primary field of academic study for contemporary feminist scholars, and particularly for researchers concerned with the political functions, implications and possibilities of the female body. Such scholars, including Judith Butler, Elin Diamond, and Peggy Phalen, contend that the physical body must be situated within political, historical and cultural contents, and that the body always functions as a political and cultural “sign” (Butler 405). As Butler notes, the body can be “understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities” (403). As a cultural signifier, the body, and especially the female body, can thus simultaneously reinforce and transgress cultural norms and traditions, particularly as they relate to gender identity. The body, then, “extends the individual’s power of

agency,” and serves as a spectacular site of and tool for the enactment and expression of political ideologies (Garner 51-2). The political possibilities present within the individual body and public acts of embodiment clearly carry specific implications for women. By extending the powers of individual and political agency, the female body enabled modern women to experiment with and redefine not only their own personal identities, but also the identities and social roles traditionally prescribed to all women.

Through their rebellious challenges to traditional notions of femininity, the New Woman feminists positioned the female “gendered body” as a political and cultural sign that is not only structured “by existing political arrangements, but affects and structures those arrangements in turn” (Butler 405). Goldman’s, Bernhardt’s and Loy’s physical embodiment of their radical politics and the popular iconicity of such embodiments both structured and were structured by newly developed discourses and images of modern women presented throughout the mainstream press and by the cultures of the spectacle so pervasive within modern American society. Although the modern culture of the spectacle framed, influenced, and perhaps even constructed public perceptions and receptions of Goldman, Bernhardt, and Loy, these women certainly went to great lengths to situate their subjective bodies, personal lives and feminist politics within the modern culture of the spectacle. Indeed, despite being frequently subjected to the relentless gaze of the modern public, these

women most certainly did not play a passive role; instead, they actively positioned themselves within cultures of the spectacle not only as a means of propagandizing their politics, but also because the cultures of the spectacle provided them with highly public sites in which to become active agents in their own personal self-construction and in their social representation of female emancipation.

Activist, Actress and Artist: The Cross-Cultural and Transgressive Performances of Goldman, Bernhardt, and Loy

Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy are known primarily for performing three very different kinds of public roles: activist, actress, and artist, respectively. While the differences between such roles clearly point to the different motivations underlying each woman's self-performative strategies, it is important to recognize the links between such seemingly disparate roles and cultures. Modernist scholars have long insisted upon the complex interrelations between political, popular and aesthetic cultures of modernity, but more importantly, for the purposes of this chapter, feminist scholars have illuminated the ways in which modern women played pivotal roles in bringing together such different cultures.⁹ The modern political and oratorical cultures in which Goldman performed enabled her to stage her radical ideologies and self-presentations in a public sphere that ensured her public visibility, and one which not only

⁹ See, for example, Alice Gambrell's *Women Intellectuals, Modernism, and Difference: Transatlantic Culture, 1919-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997 and Lisa Rado's *Rereading Modernism: New Directions in Feminist Criticism*. New York: Garland, 1994.

allowed, but even encouraged her to be as dramatic and rebellious as possible. Sandra Gustafson, in her critical studies on women and American cultures of oratory, examines public speeches as political performances, and as a primary means through which American women “strategized power” (xxi). Gustafson also analyzes “the performative force of women’s public speech” and persuasively argues that oratorical performances, and specifically, radical political speeches, offered American women “unprecedented” social, cultural, and political power (xix; 40). Her critical overview of the historical efforts to silence, through both legal and illegal means, women’s voices and especially women’s public acts of expression, demonstrates not only the cultural recognition of the political powers of oratory, but also the perceived cultural “dangers of [women’s] popular speech” (xxiv). Closely related to such political and oratorical stages was the theatrical stage, and the analogies between modern female activists and actresses have been carefully delineated by scholars including Elaine Aston, Maria Elena Buzsek, Sue-Ellen Case, Susan A. Glenn, Kirsten Pullen and Michelene Wandor, who consider how the roles of actress and activist both involved embodied female self-representations upon public stages.¹⁰

¹⁰ See Aston’s *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1995), Case’s edited collection of essays, *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1990), Pullen’s *Actresses and Whores: On Stage and in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), and Wandor’s *Carry on Understudies: Theatre and Sexual Politics* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

Indeed, what the lecture platform afforded to Goldman in terms of cultural power and what Pierre Bourdieu terms “cultural capital,” the theatrical stage afforded Sarah Bernhardt.¹¹ Both stages enabled the women to achieve a public prominence that ensured their status as iconic figures of modern popular culture. Mina Loy also benefited from the cultural powers extended by the theatrical stage through her performances as an actress with the avant-garde Provincetown Players, but it was her role as a bohemian artist, writer, and sexually daring iconic “New Woman” that secured Loy’s prominent position within both avant-garde and popular cultures. Thus, political, oratorical, theatrical and aesthetic cultures of modernity extended to all three women public stages upon which to perform their roles as iconic New Women, and to enact the feminist politics of female liberation that underwrote their particular female performances of self.

The Iconic New Woman and the Self-Liberation of Public Performance

A symbol and icon of modernity as well as its gendered anxieties, the “New Woman” is an expression bandied about in scholarship of gender and modernism, yet the capital letters and singular case of the phrase belie its multiple meanings and paradoxical cultural representations. A brief glance at some of the most daring early twentieth-

¹¹ Bourdieu first used the term “cultural capital” in “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction” (1973) *Power and Ideology in Education*. Ed. J. Karabel and A. H. Halsey. New York: Oxford UP, 1977. 487-511

century women, including Goldman, Bernhardt, Loy, avant-garde salon hostess and art patron Mabel Dodge, and dancer Isadora Duncan, reveals how modern women redefined themselves and their gender identity in various political, aesthetic, sexual, intellectual and professional terms. As Lois Rudnick notes, the “definition of the new woman of this era . . . runs the political and social gamut from freedoms related to personal self-development to freedoms related to equalizing the class system” (163). Though these “new” women sought and achieved liberties in different and sometimes contradictory fields of experience, their articulations of freedom are linked by one constant: the shared conviction that their embodiment of the New Woman must be performed upon the public stages of modern culture.

From its inception, the concept of the New Woman has been subjected to a variety of interpretations and applications which have failed to generate a single and concise definition. The phrase first appeared in Britain in 1894, in two articles written by Sarah Grand and Ouida, who offered contradictory images of this new modern female figure. For Grand, the New Woman was a morally superior, middle-class, married woman who embodied traditional maternal roles, while Ouida, whose works Goldman read during her various prison stints, casts the New Woman alongside the “working man,” thereby associating her with the working classes and radical politics, including syndicalism, socialism, and anarchism. In the six years following the first appearance of the term, the

New Woman became the primary subject and character of more than one hundred novels (Richardson 1). An endless source of inspiration for American writers, journalists, and cartoonists, the New Woman was variously figured as bourgeois, educated, wealthy and morally superior; as a working-class, immigrant social activist with a radical leftist political agenda; and as a sexually daring, artistic bohemian. Out of these contradictory representations of the class, economic, political, and sexual identity of the New Woman develops an equally important question about the identity of this modern female: was she an actual living figure, or simply a cultural construct, the product of journalistic and fictional discourse, that emerged in response to the changing roles of modern women? In her exploration of this debate, Sally Ledger concludes that the New Woman was "largely a discursive phenomenon," while Michelle Elizabeth Tusan argues that many modern women, and especially those with feminist agendas, were acutely aware of their gendered subjectivity and positions as iconic representations of female freedom (3).

While such questions regarding the identity of the New Woman prompt conflicting responses, some general consensus, though rarely stated directly, can nevertheless be inferred. The concept of "*the* New Woman," though certainly useful for understanding the real and fictional lives of modern women, is surely a misnomer, for if she was anything, she was multiple, heterogeneous and resistant to the confines of any singular discourse or personification. Nevertheless, various representations and

embodiments of the New Woman consistently associate her with absolute freedom performed in public cultural venues. Whether making a discursive appearance to the modern reading public in the pages of novels, newspapers, journals and the “little magazines,” or physical appearances as actresses, social activists, artists, salon hostesses and sexual radicals, the New Women, in all of their manifest forms, occupied highly visible roles upon the most public stages of modernity. And while the mainstream popular press certainly contributed to the public fascination with the New Women, the women themselves actively sought attention through public and theatrical acts of self-representation. Modern women redefined themselves by performing non-traditional gender roles both on stage and off, and publicly constructed their unconventional personae through acts of self-spectacularization. Moreover, such acts functioned as political statements that clearly marked them as “radical” New Women feminists who publicly enacted their principles of women’s free self-expression, experimentation, and self-realization in aesthetic, professional and sexual realms.

Emma Goldman, Sarah Bernhardt and Mina Loy as Iconic New Women

“The most daring, reigning New Woman”: Goldman’s Iconicity as the Modern New Woman

Described by Christine Stansell as the “most daring, reigning New Woman” of Greenwich Village and by her biographer Richard Drinnon as

“the archetype New Woman,” Goldman overtly presented herself as a definitively modern woman who lived her life in accordance with her principles of women’s freedom of self-expression, creativity, sexuality and the body (Stansell 109; Drinnon, 1961:147). According to one of her political comrades, “the secret” of Goldman’s “power lies in the fact that she is the very embodiment of the doctrine she preaches. Every fibre of her being is electrified by the spirit to which her lips give utterance” (qtd. in Wexler 85).¹² Goldman strived to live her life in absolute adherence to her feminist political ideologies, although as noted by many critics, she was not always successful.¹³ Nevertheless, she clearly practiced her beliefs in women’s sexual freedom, as made evident through her scandalous and highly publicized love affairs with leading men of the modern anarchist movement, including Johann Most, Ed Brady, Alexander Berkman, Hippolyte Havel and Ben Reitman, as well as several other men, who were often several years younger than Goldman. In accordance with her “free love” and mutualist-anarchist principles, she refused to play the traditional roles of wife and mother, even though such refusals often led to the end of her affairs, and she lived much of her life in communal households. Goldman’s economic independence and her sustained and highly publicized participation in a wide variety of literary, artistic, theatrical, entertainment, intellectual and radical political cultures also

¹² Article in *Free Society*, June 18, 1889.

¹³ For an insightful analysis of the conflicts Goldman experienced in attempting to live her sexual life according to her anarchist and feminist ideals, see Candace Falk’s *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman: A Biography* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1990).

contributed to perceptions of Goldman as an iconic representative of the liberated New Woman of modernity. Her unconventional and defiant personal life and her radical politics played out upon the pages of the mainstream modern press for two decades, such that she became both an adored and abhorred modern celebrity.¹⁴ Her position as a popular celebrity proved controversial to many of her anarchist colleagues, particularly given the mainstream press's general antagonism towards and blatant misrepresentations of anarchism and its adherents.

On account of her public embodiment of her politics, and particularly the feminist politics that she preached, Goldman earned the popular reputation as an iconic "New Woman" of modernity. As early as 1898, she began lecturing and writing on the New Woman, and argued that "the new woman" must understand that the "individual is the ideal liberty" (1898: 322-3). Crucial to her ideas about the liberated individual woman was the attendant emancipation of the individual female personality. As Richard Drinnon asserts, Goldman believed that "woman simply had to assert herself as a personality" in order to achieve liberation (1969: x). Goldman "assert[ed] herself as a personality" not only through her writings, but more importantly, through spectacular acts of self-performance within a range of public cultures. She boldly flaunted and publicized her daring, unconventional and decidedly liberated personality,

¹⁴ This was certainly due, in large part, to the ambivalence Goldman elicited from reporters and the public at large, who were simultaneously charmed by her personality and receptive to some of her ideas, and particularly her ideas about women, while also fearing the notorious dangerous anarchist woman.

and like many other iconic New Women, she used the modern popular cultures of the spectacle as public stages upon which to perform new and liberating visions of the modern woman. Her well-known theatrics during her lectures not only enabled her to attract large audiences and to present her radical ideas and politics to mainstream and popular cultures, but also allowed her to publicly construct and exploit her radical, liberated personality and to solidify her celebrity status. Indeed, as Christine Stansell asserts, Goldman “proved adept at techniques of publicity and self-amplification” and “was pivotal in the transformation of ideas and politics into spectacle and celebrity and in using the space where the left and entertainment converged” (134-5). As discussed in the previous chapters, Goldman consistently demonstrated a lifelong theoretical interest in the political functions of theatre and drama, but she also embodied such principles through her performative representations of herself and her liberated, dynamic, and multi-faceted personality. Her public attempts to embody her idealized visions of the emancipated female personality align Goldman with a diverse cast of other famous modern women who used performance and self-spectacularization to promulgate feminist politics. Indeed, Goldman was not alone in her use of excessive theatricality to publicly present herself and her politics, and it was no coincidence that her public lectures and appearances drew repeated comparisons to the performances of famous stage women, including the iconic stage actress and early movie star Sarah Bernhardt.

“The sine qua non of feminine power”: Sarah Bernhardt’s Embodiment of the Liberated Female Personality

Described by Anne M. Windholz as the “prototype of the New Woman,” popular stage actress Sarah Bernhardt began her acting career during the mid- nineteenth-century at a time when acting was still considered a scandalous profession for women, and she caused an even greater scandal when she supplemented her acting income with a second job as a courtesan (436). Trained in Paris, Bernhardt soon received critical accolades for her acting abilities and was in high demand across Europe and the United States. A highly popular actress who could draw mass audiences to performances, Bernhardt quickly garnered a reputation as a serious and professional dramatic actor, but she also used her theatrical skills to draw attention to her daring personal life. As Glenn asserts, the “self-magnifying tactics of her off-stage spectacle” as well as her first two American tours “only served to confirm her reputation for publicity seeking” (25). Like Goldman, Bernhardt actively promoted and advertised her work, but more importantly, she also went to great lengths to advertise herself as an individual personality. As John Collins contends, Bernhardt “had long been regarded in Europe as a complete mistress of the art of self-advertisement by methods so closely resembling those of one of our countrymen as to gain her the nickname of ‘Sarah Barnum’” (232). Characterized by American journalist Frank Lloyd as “the greatest self-

advertiser in the world,” Bernhardt clearly demonstrated what George Bernard Shaw critically described as a “self-promoting dramatic style” in order to construct and publicly represent herself as an iconic modern personality (qtd. in Glenn, 24).¹⁵

Bernhardt shared Goldman’s feminist view that the liberated, self-expressive female personality was integral to women’s freedom, and in a 1906 interview with reporter Fanny Fair, she argued that “personality” is the “sine qua non of feminine power” (qtd. in Glenn 31). Accordingly, she created for herself an expressive, unique and iconic persona that drew the admiration of many reviewers. As one contemporary declared, Bernhardt was “the greatest feminine personality . . . that France has known since Joan of Arc” (Berton 209). Reviews of her performances typically commented upon her on and off-stage personality, and a critic from *Le Journal*, in 1923, confirmed the power of her personality by describing the absolute “submission of the audience to the ascendance of this exceptional personality” (qtd. in Horville 57). Bernhardt actively embodied and publicized her feminist ideas concerning the emancipated female personality through her conspicuous self-displays and exhibitions of her “curious and flamboyant personality” (Glenn 29). Using both avant-garde and popular literary cultures, Bernhardt promoted and publicized her eccentric personality through interviews, published photographs, her own essays on modern drama and her autobiography, drawing specific

¹⁵ See Lloyd’s article “Sarah Bernhardt’s Latest Folly,” *Broadway Magazine* 8 March, 1902: 381.

attention to those aspects of her life and personality which most deviated from traditional gender expectations.

As Susan Glenn argues, Bernhardt, from an early age, was determined to “turn herself into a female curiosity,” and she achieved fame and cultural iconicity as much for her acting career as for her well-publicized eccentricities, including her use of a coffin as a bed (27).¹⁶ In her autobiography, Bernhardt recounts how her odd sleeping habits became public gossip, when her manicurist discovered Bernhardt sleeping in the coffin and “rushed away shrieking wildly. From that moment all Paris knew that I slept in my coffin, and gossip with its thistle-down wings took flight in all directions. (1907: 184). Though blaming the manicurist for spreading gossip about her eccentric sleeping habits, Bernhardt herself placed an active role in advertising her eccentricities. Demonstrating a keen awareness of the opportunities for publicity offered by modern photography, she posed for the famous French photographer Melandri in the coffin she used as a bed, creating a shocking visual spectacle that commanded public attention. She also encouraged the public to view her as a spectacle through her much publicized menagerie of exotic animals, which at various times included a lynx, a lion, monkeys, an alligator, a crocodile, a turtle, a boa constrictor and several dogs and cats. As she recounts in her autobiography, the visual and auditory spectacle of her animals consistently drew the attention of her neighbours in London, such

¹⁶ Nevertheless, Bernhardt clearly had limits as to how far she was willing to go in order to cast herself as a “female curiosity”: in 1915, at the age of 70, one leg was amputated and she refused an offer of \$10000 from P.T. Barnum to perform as a “medical freak.”

that in London, “the chief topic of conversation was the Bedlam that had been let loose at [Bernhardt’s residence]. . . So much was made of it that our doyen M. Got, came to beg me not to make such a scandal, as it reflected on the *Comedie Française*. (1907: 221). Although she repeatedly declared that she owned exotic pets simply because she had a passion for animals, Bernhardt was clearly aware of her position within the public spotlight, and undoubtedly realized that her exotic menagerie would attract attention and incite gossip and rumours.

On the surface, Bernhardt’s macabre sleeping habits and exotic menagerie may appear to be mere publicity stunts, calculated to lure and secure the gaze of the modern public. A closer examination, however, suggests that Bernhardt’s eccentric behaviour was deeply rooted in her ideas about the self-constructed individual personality that are surprisingly akin to Goldman’s ideas about the emancipated female personality. Throughout her writings on the theatre, and particularly in her critical work, *The Art of the Theatre* (1924), Bernhardt insists that a unique, individual and carefully cultivated personality is essential to the success of the actor, and contends that performing artists must have “absolute possession and mastery” of their personalities as well as the “power to project” their personalities (97; 101). She further argues that the individual personality, if it is to be completely liberated, must be as unconventional and experimental as possible:

The Tradition! That which must not be touched! Horrible and stupid tradition! The axe with which they try to cut the sprouting wings of neophytes. 'Tradition,' such a solemn word, and uttered by such solemn voices! a word that freezes budding personalities! (1924: 190).

She also demonstrated her antagonism towards "tradition" when she became a teacher of elocution at the Conservatoire, and announced that one of her primary duties would be to "fight what is called 'Tradition'" (qtd. in Horville 39). Eschewing traditional theatrical practices of constancy and consistency of character and roles, Bernhardt instead insisted that "[e]ach actor brings his own tradition with him" (qtd. in Horville 39).¹⁷ Like Goldman, she considered tradition to be "narrow and outworn," and perhaps more importantly, believed that tradition had the serious and undesirable consequences of suppressing, changing and ultimately depriving the actor of his or her unique personality (qtd. in Horville 39). The individual personality, liberated from limiting theatrical and social practices of tradition and homogeneity, was thus viewed by Bernhardt as critical both to the success of the actor and the self-realization of the individual.

Bernhardt's personal eccentricities no doubt proved helpful to her self-representation as a highly unconventional and unique individual. They also, however, allowed to her to embody her ideas about the free, non-

¹⁷ Bernhardt presented such claims in a letter to the editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, June 16, 1899, in response to published criticism of her unique and unconventional portrayal of Hamlet in London.

traditional and mutable (female) personality. Asserting that personality should not only be unique, but also pluralized, Bernhardt argued that individuals, and particularly artists and actors, “should not only transform themselves, but split their personalities in halves each day” (1924: 203). Continuously transforming her own personality and image, Bernhardt was paradoxically and simultaneously viewed as both the “Divine Sarah” of “the golden voice” and the modern “Whore of Babylon.”¹⁸ Considered in light of her views on the liberated personality, her decision to keep exotic animals as pets emerges as more than a mere publicity stunt. These pets, each specifically chosen by her, embodied and represented for Bernhardt the unconventional, unique, “curious” and “exotic” personality that she sought to embody publicly and to develop for herself.

Of all of her pets, perhaps none best represents her ideas about the unconventional and liberated personality than a particular chameleon with which she constantly travelled. In her autobiography, Bernhardt offers a vivid description of this “prehistoric, fabulous sort of animal” that was her favourite pet:

It was a veritable Chinese curiosity, and changed colour from pale green to dark bronze, at one minute slender and long like a lily leaf, and then all at once puffed out and thick-

¹⁸ Oscar Wilde is generally credited as being the first to call Bernhardt “the Divine Sarah,” while several clergymen in America, including the Bishop of Chicago, denounced her during their religious sermons as the “Whore of Babylon.” Another Presbyterian Reverend, James H. Brook, was publicly quoted as describing Bernhardt as a “notorious prostitute.” See John Collins, “Henry Abbey: Image Maker of the Flash Age,” *Educational Theatre Journal* 18:3 (October 1966): 230-237.

set like a toad. Its lorgnette eyes, like those of a lobster, were quite independent of each other. With its right eye it would look ahead and with its left eye it looked backwards. I was delighted and quite enthusiastic over this present. I named my chameleon "Cross-ci Cross-ca," in honour of Mr. Cross [the zoo owner]. We returned to London with [...] Cross-ci Cross-ca on my shoulder, fastened to a gold chain we had bought at a jeweller's. (221)

Bernhardt's choice descriptive phrases about the animal's exotic features could also be applied to Bernhardt herself. Like her chameleon, Bernhardt was also culturally received as a "veritable curiosity," and was praised for her on-stage ability, especially during periods of serious health problems, to transform her body from a weak, fragile and vulnerable physical state to one of strength, power and undeniable force. She too looked in multiple directions, especially in artistic matters, and pursued her interests in painting and sculpture, much to the consternation of her theatrical managers, who felt that she should devote herself solely to acting.¹⁹ Her chameleon, with its appropriate paradoxical name, can thus be viewed as a spectacular representation of Bernhardt's ideas about the exotic, unconventional, multiple, and ever-changing personality that she sought to create for herself.

¹⁹ The negative attitudes of Bernhardt's male colleagues in regards to her experiments outside of strictly theatrical cultures will be discussed in more detail in the following pages.

Mina Loy: "that rare and exotic species called the 'new woman'"

As an artist, poet, playwright, actress, and designer of magazine covers, theatrical stage sets, clothing and lampshades, Mina Loy, like Goldman and Bernhardt, also occupied a noticeably visible position in public modern cultures as an iconic New Woman and sought to create for herself a multi-faceted public persona. Born as Mina Lowy in London in 1882, Loy grew up in an unhappy household as a lonely child who, at a young age, began to show signs of rebellion against Victorian-era notions of women's roles within the public sphere. As a teenager, Loy's active resistance to traditional women's roles caused conflict with her bourgeois parents, and especially with her mother. Against her parents' wishes, Loy made the independent decision to move to Munich in 1899 to pursue her interests in painting and art, and during her two years of study in Germany, she proved her talent as an artist and sculptor. After a brief return to London, Loy moved to Paris in 1903, where she met and soon married a fellow art student, Stephen Haweis, after becoming pregnant with his child. Ironically, however, Loy's first marriage allowed her to express her feminist politics through a much publicized act of self-definition: she not only refused to take her husband's surname, but also decided to change her last name officially from Lowy to Loy, immediately preceding her first exhibition of watercolour paintings at the Salon d'Automne in Paris. This was the first of many acts of self-definition and self-realization that, as Carolyn Burke argues, reveal the importance of

the “self-constructing strategies” deployed by Loy throughout her lifetime to identify herself as a liberated and definitively *modern* woman (Burke vi).

Described by an American female reporter as “representative” of “that rare and exotic species called the ‘new woman,’” Loy publicly embodied the emancipated modern female (“Do You Strive to Capture the Symbols of Your Reactions?” 10). As Andrea Barnett contends, Loy was “self-consciously, willfully modern; determined to live and speak in the emancipated voice of the ‘new woman,’” and her life is representative of “a modern self-experiment” (6, 15). Loy consistently and publicly presented her unconventional and non-traditional personality as emblematic of the modern New Woman. As presented within the pages of the popular press, and particularly the daily New York newspapers, which consistently featured Loy in interviews, articles, editorials, drawings and photographs, Loy and her image came to embody a spectacular representation of not only the ideal liberated personality of modernity, but more specifically, the liberated female personality associated with the modern New Woman. This association was firmly established in an article in the February 13, 1917 edition of the *New York Evening Sun*, where the author defiantly asks, “Mina Loy, if she isn’t the Modern Woman, who is, pray?” (qtd. in Conover xlili). The reporter’s lengthy description of Loy’s aesthetic interests and talents also points to her status as a New Woman:

She can and she does write free verse and hold the intuitional pause exactly the right length of time. . . . She can

and does paint lampshades and magazine covers. She can and does act, design her own stage and social costumes and then wear them as if she had a whole regiment of customers . . . [She] is of English birth and training but she is particularly proud of the fact that like Columbus she was discovered by America. . . . This woman is half-way through the door into To-morrow. (qtd. in Conover xlv)

The reporter's focus upon Loy's numerous creative and professional interests distinctly mark her iconic cultural position as a New Woman by highlighting the aesthetic independence practiced by Loy throughout her lifetime. Perhaps even more significant, however, are the references to her national identity, for although Loy was born in England and spent many years living in European countries, she achieved fame and celebrity within definitively *American* cultures of the popular and avant-gardism, particularly in Greenwich Village. As Conover notes, Loy's final statements to the reporter "made clear that three months of residency in New York had convinced her that she had found the capital of *modernismus*: 'No one who has not lived in New York has lived in the Modern World'" (Conover xlv). Thus, like Goldman, Loy identified New York City, and especially the bohemian subcultures of Greenwich Village, as the geographical nexus of American modernism and as the birthplace of her iconic identity as a modern subject.

Loy's Feminist Strategies of Self-Production and her Creation of "Other Selves": Self-Naming as a Performative Feminist Act

As Cristanne Miller argues, "self-naming may be an intensely political act" and Loy's practices of self-naming may be considered "as a mode of gendered identity performance" (64; 89). Though Loy did not officially change her name until her first marriage, at a young age she already demonstrated her desire to create for herself a multiplicity of identities through a variety of first names that she attributed to herself, and throughout her personal correspondence and official documents, she variously signed her name as "Dusie," "Doosie," "Doose," "Minna Ley," "Minn Lowey," "Minna Loy" and "Jemima" (Miller 67). Indeed, like Goldman, Loy used several different names throughout her life, and in her final years, she usually signed her name as "Mina Lloyd" (Sheffield 628).²⁰ Loy's use of multiple names reveals not only her determination to define her identity according to her own terms (and not according to her

²⁰ Goldman also took on several aliases, including "E.G. Brady" and "E.G. Smith," following Berkman's failed attempt to assassinate Henry Clay Frick and the assassination of president McKinley, and the historical circumstances surrounding Goldman's use of such names suggest that her aliases were used, at least in part, to give her some degree of anonymity and to protect her from harassment from legal officials and the general public. Given Goldman's construction of her multi-faceted public persona, and her frequent use of the pseudonym "Sonya" in her personal correspondence with Alexander Berkman (likely inspired by the heroine of the same name in Chernishevsky's *What is to be Done*), however, it is certainly possible that her use of different names was also related to her ideas about the values of self-experimentation. Loy's second husband, who disappeared within a year of their marriage and whose body was later discovered in a Mexican desert, was the famous modern boxer Arthur Craven, whose original surname was Lloyd. Given Loy's utter devotion to Craven even decades after his death, it is quite plausible that she used the name Lloyd to suggest that her identity was still closely intertwined with Craven, who she considered to be the greatest love of her life. Nevertheless, it is important to note that throughout her personal correspondence and poetry, Loy frequently added or changed letters to create personal names with multiple meanings; thus, her addition of the "l" and the "d" may also be considered to be yet another syntactical experiment with self-naming.

father's or husband's identity), but also her refusal to be limited to any one singular identity. Such acts of self-naming also illuminate Loy's feminist politics, and particularly her contention that the emancipated modern woman must independently create her own unique identity and personality.

Loy also performed such political acts of self-naming in her poetry, where she frequently inserts autobiographical references to herself and her personal experiences. Many of Loy's poems, plays and other prose narratives contain multiple anagrammatic references to Loy that enable her to enact literary performances of her multi-faceted and liberated identity. As Miller suggests, the "lyrical I" featured so prominently within Loy's poetry functions as a political act of "self-naming," as an "assertion of linguistic agency and as an opportunity for identity performance," and finally, as a means of creating "different formulations of selfhood" (51; 52).). Aaron Jaffe makes similar claims in his *Modernism and the Culture of the Celebrity* (2005), and contends that both the literary and perhaps more importantly, the *popular* cultural success of famous avant-garde modern poets, including Loy, were highly dependent upon the poets' deliberate "literary self-fashioning" (3). Jaffe further claims that the avant-garde poetry written by Loy and other modernists "is at once too, too clever (by turns, too self-conscious, too experimental, too obscure, too indecent) to be denied as *a form of personality* – as a highly personalized, even outré, form of showing off" (16; my italics). Focusing on the celebrity

status of such canonized modern poets as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marianne Moore, James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis, Jaffe presents the compelling argument that, contrary to Eliot's statements regarding the "impersonality" of the modern poet, modern poets consciously used their writing as a means of self-fashioning, self-promotion and self-publicity.²¹ Jaffe's arguments are not entirely new, and as early as 1914, Ford Maddox Ford noted that the modernist poem, "the whole poem, is merely an expression of [the writer's] personality" (326). Such statements prove to be especially relevant to Loy's poetry and experimental plays, which, as Carolyn Burke notes, consistently "spring from passionate self-revelation" and offer insight into the new woman feminist politics performed through both the direct and indirect references to Loy's own self and name throughout her non-fictional writings.

Loy's satirical long poem, "The Effectual Marriage or The Insipid Narrative of Gina and Miovanni," published in the *Others* in 1917, presents an ironic and politically charged account of her turbulent relationship with Giovanni Papini, an Italian futurist who frequently displayed misogynist attitudes in both his professional and sexual relationships with women. Loy clearly presents the autobiographical foundations of her poem with her inversion of the "G" and the "M" in the first names of the two lovers, and the poem's depiction of Gina (Mina) as

²¹ Eliot ideas regarding the "impersonality" of the "great" modern artists and poets are concisely presented in his assertion that modern poetry should be an "escape from personality." See Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in *Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960: 10.

a “madwoman” trapped in the prisons of marriage and traditional gender roles presents Loy’s insightful analysis of modern gender politics:

In the evening they looked out of their two windows

Miovanni out of his library window

Gina from the kitchen window

From among his pots and pans

Where he so kindly kept her. (l. 11-15)

In consciously exposing her own private relationship and experiences, Loy also exposes a much larger social problem: the cultural divisions and inequalities between men and women in modern society. The poetic character of Miovanni, like his living namesake, Giovanni, embodies traits traditionally associated with men and masculinity – intellect, activity, strength and power -- while Gina is “kept” in the private domestic sphere, passively submitting to her husband’s whims. Unlike Gina, however, Loy consistently challenged Papini’s sexist attitudes and ideas, though she continued her conflicted relationship with him for two years. Nevertheless, in keeping with the obvious autobiographical nature of the poem, Loy does not confine Gina to the role of victim, but instead allows her the possibility of freedom from traditional gender roles and expectations:

The door was an absurd thing

Yet it was passable . . .

So here we might dispense with her

Gina being a female

But she was more than that . . .
Gina was a woman
Who wanted everything
To be everything in woman
Everything everyway at once
Diurnally variegated. (l. 1-2; 20-22; 83-87)

From the first line of the poem, Loy focuses upon the social and cultural barriers (symbolized by “the door,” an image that frequently appears throughout her poetry) faced by the modern woman, yet she is more concerned with mocking and satirizing such barriers and discovering ways in which women can “pass” through such doors. For Loy, as presented throughout this poem and her personal life, the key to the cultural freedom of modern women was “to be everything . . . everyway” through expressive acts of self-realization and self-actualization. The writing of “The Effectual Marriage,” with its highly personal background, was one such act that enabled Loy to create her public persona as a modern woman oppressed by traditional gender norms and as a radical feminist determined to challenge such norms.

Loy’s satirical poem “Lion’s Jaws,” published in the September-December 1920 issue of Margaret Anderson’s *the Little Review*, also draws upon Loy’s experiences with misogyny within modernist literary circles, as well as her conflicted sexual relationships with famous avant-garde artists and writers, to present her feminist politics and expose the

sexism in male-dominated avant-garde literary cultures. Creatively involved with futurism for a short time, Loy was also sexually involved with many of its leading figures, including Papini, Filippo Marinetti, and Gabriel D'Annunzio.²² In direct defiance of Eliot's demand for the poetic impersonal, Loy indirectly, but quite obviously, refers to herself and her lovers throughout the poem in her scathing indictment of the gender and sexual politics of the futurist movement and its male leaders. Marinetti's foundational "The Manifesto of Futurism," published in *Le Figaro* in 1909, described futurism as a virile, powerful, and decidedly masculinist avant-garde movement in revolt against the established order, but Marinetti and the futurists were at best blind to the social oppression of women and at worst, overtly hostile to women and their desire for freedom. Marinetti's manifesto presents the futurists as insistently and exclusively male, proudly declaring "*We will glorify . . . scorn for women*" and "*We will destroy*" and "*fight . . . feminism*" (251, italics in original).

Loy presents an explicit counter-proposal to Marinetti's masculinist "Manifesto" with her own futurist and "Feminist Manifesto" (1914), but also used her poem "Lion's Jaws" to challenge the male authority within the futurist movement in particular and within avant-garde literary cultures in general. Satirizing the intellectual and creative authority of the male futurist leaders by collectively referring to them as "the Flabbergasts,"

²² Loy was initially drawn to the spirit of rebellion and revolt that characterized futurism, but she soon distanced herself from the movement due to her personal and professional experiences with sexist male futurists and on account of futurism's later association with militarist and fascist politics.

Loy's poem portrays both the male futurist and his movement as a powerful beast, a "lion" whose "jaws" are waiting to trap and ensnare the independent modern woman (l. 81). Once again, Loy inserts herself into the poem as the embodiment of the liberated new woman who will challenge such masculine authority:

These amusing men
 discover in their mail
 duplicate petitions . . .
 from Nima Lyo alias
 Anim Yol alias
 Imna Oly (l. 97-99, 101-3).

With such overt anagrammatic self-references, Loy creates for herself a multiplicity of names and thus, a multiplicity of selves. Thus, Loy's anagrammatic experiments in poetic self-naming allow her to construct a plurality of identities, and foreground Loy's personal experiences with and challenges to the sexism and misogyny embedded within modern avant-garde cultures of futurism.

Loy's insistent self-referentiality within "Lion's Jaws" and other poems enable her self-representations as a modern new women, "a secret-agent buffoon to the Women's Cause," who demonstrates her resistance to patriarchal control and authority by escaping the "lion's jaws" (l. 104). By making her personal identity and experiences central to the political and feminist themes of her poems, Loy effectively uses her poetry

to perform and represent her ideas about the liberated, multi-faceted, and expressive modern new woman. Equally important, her explicit self-referentiality within her poetry defied the traditions of both literary conventions and the mainstream modern feminist movement by “transform[ing] the personal into the political” (Kinnahan 53). Indeed, the political implications of the links between Loy’s individual self and her poetry are further emphasized through the photograph of Loy taken by Man Ray, and appearing opposite “Lion’s Jaws.” Loy faces the poem, with her “prominent jaw” clearly pointed to the title (Churchill 219). As Churchill astutely notes, the “presence of the portrait evinces the way in which Loy’s public persona – the bold, beautiful, and highly unconventional woman – was tied to her challenging poetry and used to promote it [...] The details of Loy’s photograph suggest that she [...] was consciously asserting intimate connections between her persona and her poetry” (219). These “intimate connections” were grounded in radical political and feminist ideologies that insisted upon the politics of the personal, and Loy used her poetry as a political expression of her personality and her New Woman feminism.

Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy as Modern Female Celebrities

Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy also performed the roles of iconic modern female celebrities, and their status as celebrities was due, in large part, not only to their public positions as New Women, but more

specifically, to their public presentations and productions of their liberated personalities. Susan Glenn argues that the culture of the modern celebrity depended entirely upon “the creation of a distinctive public persona that would make the performer appear to be an exemplary or unusual representative of her or his gender” (27). Leading scholars of the culture of the celebrity, including Richard Dyer, Loren Glass, P. David Marshall and Graeme Turner, similarly consider the public cultivation of unique personalities as perhaps the defining feature of modern celebrities.²³ Indeed, Turner contends that it is the “privileging of the private self (‘the personality’) as the object of publicity” that defines modern celebrity culture (13). Glenn’s critical analysis of the modern celebrity, however, differs from the accounts offered by Dyer, Marshall, and Turner by highlighting the gendered implications of celebrity, and especially through her contention that the celebrity embodies an “unusual representative” of his or her gender. Modern female celebrities in particular enacted a range of personae that challenged traditional images of women, and it is thus unsurprising that both modernist and contemporary critical accounts of the modern female celebrity frequently consider her a “dangerous” woman with tremendous cultural power to transgress and dismantle traditional gender roles.

²³ See P. David Marshall’s *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota p, 1997; Dyer’s *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. New York: Routledge, 2004, and *Stars*. London: British Film Institute, 1998; Glass’s *Authors Inc.: Literary Celebrity in Modern United States, 1880-1980*. New York: New York UP, 2004; and Graeme Turner’s *Understanding Celebrity*. London: Sage, 2004.

As discussed in previous sections of this chapter, Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy all constructed for themselves “unusual” and multi-faceted personalities that deviated from traditional and singular definitions of femininity and womanhood while appealing to modern celebrity culture. All three women certainly achieved cultural fame and popularity through their highly publicized work in their particular cultural fields (political radicalism, the theatre, and avant-garde art and literature), but their positions as modern celebrities were also established through their performances of transgressive gender identities and through the modern media’s depiction of them as dangerous and threatening female figures. As Marsha Meskimmon asserts, the “popular representation” of modern female celebrities “often bore a strong resemblance to the iconography of the prostitute. Generally, the association of a [female] celebrity with prostitution was used by the media to add a form of dangerous titillation to the star’s image for a male audience or by contemporary moral or religious commentators to slander a woman assuming too much power” (51). As Dyer, Marshall, and other critics of the modern culture of celebrity consistently argue, the celebrity undoubtedly possesses an undeniable cultural power, but for modern female celebrities, this power was typically viewed as dangerous, for such women were “economically empowered and highly visible female figures [who] could blur strict boundaries in their social and sexual lives” and thus posed serious threats to traditional and patriarchal gender norms and cultural hierarchies (Meskimmon 51). This

perceived cultural threat was based not only upon the rebellious images and roles enacted by Goldman, Bernhardt, Loy, and other modern female celebrities, but also upon the performative strategies practiced within the culture of celebrity and deployed by the women to represent publicly their feminist politics and ideologies of the liberated modern woman.

*"[C]ast as a modern celebrity": Goldman's Culture Iconicity as Celebrity*²⁴

Goldman's celebrity status and her conflicted response to this status have been discussed in the previous chapters, but the feminist implications of her position as a modern celebrity are also of critical relevance, especially when considered alongside Bernhardt and Loy. Goldman's celebrity role was established early on in her career, following her first arrest, trial, and subsequent imprisonment for "incitement to riot" in 1893. Popular mainstream newspapers in New York City and throughout America, brought glaring attention to this dangerous female figure, and continued to do so throughout Goldman's career as a political agitator. But while the popular press certainly played a pivotal role in creating her iconic celebrity status, Goldman herself – despite her consistent claims to the contrary – strategically positioned herself within the modern culture of celebrity not only to promulgate her anarchist politics to the American masses, but also to demonstrate and perform her rebellious personality. Bernhardt and Loy were also constructed as iconic

²⁴ Oz Frankel, "Whatever Happened to Red Emma? Emma Goldman: From Alien Rebel to American Icon." *The Journal of American History* 83.3 (December 1996): 913

female celebrities by the popular press, but they also actively situated themselves within the culture of celebrity in order to embody their ideals of female emancipation. Thus, the modern culture of the celebrity granted to these women, and indeed, other iconic female celebrities and New Women, a degree of political agency and an overtly public platform that enabled them to construct both personal and public selves that defied traditional and patriarchal notions of women's roles within the public sphere.

"Sarah Barnum": Bernhardt as Popular Modern Celebrity

Bernhardt's reputation as one of the earliest historical examples of an iconic modern female celebrity is discussed in nearly all contemporary biographies, by her own contemporaries, and indeed, by Bernhardt herself. Just as Goldman used her autobiography to reveal her conflicted responses to her new position as a modern celebrity, Bernhardt used her autobiography, as well as published letters to the editors of mainstream newspapers and magazines, to present public statements concerning her role as modern celebrity, and especially of the personal conflicts she experienced as a result of this new role. In her autobiography, Bernhardt admits, "[m]y fame had become annoying for my enemies, and a little trying, I confess, for my friends" (217). Like Goldman, she demonstrated a keen awareness of her position as a celebrity, and asserted that cultural fame and popularity was an inevitable experience for successful artists,

writers and actors. Though Bernhardt clearly exposed her love of the public spotlight, she nevertheless went to great lengths to repudiate her reputation as an egotistical “self-promoter” and represented herself as a victim of the modern culture of the spectacle. In a chapter from *The Art of the Theatre* entitled “The Actor and the Public,” Bernhardt writes: “how many times have I not been accused of an immoderate liking for advertisement. The public imagine [sic] that the noise made about famous artists is deliberately provoked by these artists themselves, in their anxiety to see their names cropping up continually under all sorts of pretexts. Alas, we are the victims of advertisement” (1924: 149). She presents a similar argument in her autobiography, and overtly criticizes the modern preoccupation with advertisement and publicity:

The public is very much mistaken in imagining that the agitation made about celebrated artists is in reality instigated by the persons concerned, and that they do it purposely. . . . [T]he public declares that the artist who is being either slandered or pampered is an ardent lover of publicity. Alas! three times over alas! We are victims of the said advertisement . . . that monster advertisement. . . . I have been delivered over to the monster, bound hand and foot, and I have been and still am accused of adoring advertisement. (1907: 226-27)

Bernhardt's depiction of "that monster advertisement" and "those stupid, tyrannical reporters" in many ways echoes Goldman's criticisms of the modern popular media, but for very different reasons (1907: 226, 164). While Goldman rhetorically disavowed the modern press because of its hostility towards and misrepresentation of anarchism, Bernhardt was critical for reasons that were much more personal.

Bernhardt was incensed by depictions of her as a fame-loving celebrity, and in an effort to negate such (mis)representations, she consistently denied her own efforts to publicize herself:

I did nothing to attract attention. My somewhat fantastic tastes, my paleness and thinness, my peculiar way of dressing, my scorn of fashion, my general freedom in all respects, made me a being quite apart from all others. I did not recognise the fact. I did not read, I never read, the newspapers. So I did not know what was said about me, either favourable or unfavourable. Surrounded by a court of adorers of both sexes, I lived in a sunny dream. (1907: 195-196)

Such statements clearly seek to portray Bernhardt as a helpless and naive victim of the modern media who had neither interest in nor knowledge of her increasing popularity and reputation as a famous celebrity. Her countless interviews and published letters in mainstream newspapers, however, reveal otherwise, and suggest that Bernhardt worried about

negative representations of her by the modern popular press. In stark contrast to Goldman, who despite her criticism of the mainstream press generally paid little attention to the false stories written about her, Bernhardt demonstrated an almost obsessive preoccupation with media constructions of her image and reputation. Her autobiography frequently draws attention to negative reviews of her performances published in such popular newspapers as London's *Daily Telegraph*, and addresses and counters the disparaging remarks made against her. And, despite her claim that "I did not read, I never read, the newspapers . . . I did not know what was said about me, either favourable or unfavourable," Bernhardt displayed her fixation upon the modern press and its representation of her through numerous letters to the editors of popular newspapers.

In response to a critical article about her in *Le Figaro*, on June 27, 1879, which represented Bernhardt as a publicity-seeking celebrity, she dispatched a telegram to the editor in which she presented her "most emphatic denial to this misrepresentation":

I only went once to the exhibition which I organised, and that was on the opening day, for which I had only sent out a few private invitations, so that no one paid a shilling to see me. It is true that I have accepted some private engagements to act, but you know that I am one of the least remunerated members of the *Comedie Française*. I certainly have the right, therefore, to try to make up the difference. . . . And

now, if the stupidities invented about me have annoyed the Parisians . . . I will send in my resignation to the *Comedie Française*. (1907: 224-225)

This letter provides a quintessential example of Bernhardt's meticulous and point-by-point rebuttal of the critical attacks launched against her; it also reveals her apparent need to justify her acts of creative independence and the financial success she achieved through her non-theatrical artwork. Yet Bernhardt likely had other motives besides self-defense, for her melodramatic rhetoric and declaration that she would resign from the *Comedie Française* "caused much ink to flow" and generated even greater publicity for her within theatrical and artistic cultures, as well as within the popular press (225).

Indeed, notwithstanding her claims to the contrary, it is clear from both her actions and her own words that Bernhardt was not one to shy away from public scrutiny, and she actively sought the attention of both the popular press and the general public both on and off the theatrical stage. As she tellingly revealed to a reporter,

I love, I adore my profession. I serve it constantly. I never stop acting. I've always acted — always and everywhere, in all sorts of places, at every instant — always, always. I am my own double. I act in restaurants when I ask for more bread. I act when I ask [actress] Julia Bartet's husband how

his wife is feeling. Blessed work that fills me with drunken joy and peace, how much I owe to you! (qtd. in Gottlieb np).

Bernhardt's statements demonstrate her penchant for self-dramatization, "in all sorts of places, at every instant," and admit that her professional success and cultural iconicity as a famous modern celebrity "owe[s]" much to her consistent acts of performance in every context. Even more importantly, perhaps, her assertion that these performative acts enabled her to be her "own double," illuminates the personal benefits of performance to the construction of Bernhardt's individual identity. Self-performative acts allowed Bernhardt to expand and experiment with her personality, to create a unique, multi-faceted, self-expressive and liberated personality that conformed to her feminist ideologies of free and unrestricted individuality. Like Goldman, Bernhardt's own personal and critical writings also convey her awareness of the social relevance of theatrical self-practices and the art of performance. In *The Art of the Theatre*, she argues: "In all times the theatre has been a vehicle of instruction and even an arena for artistic revolutionary movements; the theatre is the most direct speaking-trumpet of new philosophical, social, religious and moral ideas. This century, which seems to be the era of liberty, will doubtless bring us many surprises, and the theatre will give us our first intimation of them" (179). Bernhardt's contentions regarding the relationship between theatrical practices and "revolutionary movements" in many ways echo the arguments presented by Goldman throughout her

book, *The Social Significance of the Modern Drama*, and undeniably present Bernhardt's awareness of the politics of performance. Indeed, Goldman argued that modern dramatists such as Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, and Gerhart Hauptmann, "mirror in their work as much of the spiritual and social revolt as is expressed by the most fiery speech of the propagandist," and claimed that modern drama "may be a greater menace to our social fabric and a more powerful inspiration than the wildest harangue of the soapbox orator" (1914: 1,2). Through her constant self-performances, Bernhardt also highlights the feminist politics of performance informing her public self-representations, for by using her personality, private life, sexuality and body to theatrically create her liberated subjectivity, Bernhardt actively embodied new and rebellious gender roles and ideals that defied social traditions and dared modern society to rethink modern female identity.

"In love with fame": Mina Loy as a Culturally Iconic Modern Celebrity

When asked by a reporter for the *New York Evening Sun* how to live one's life as "a modern," Loy replied that the "modern way meant not caring if you transgressed familiar categories. . . . The antique way to live and express life was to . . . say it according to the rules. But the modern flings herself at life and lets herself feel what she does feel" (qtd. in Conover xlv). Loy publicly practiced transgressions of "familiar categories" of gender identity such that her unique and liberated

personality became a popular subject of articles and editorials in the mainstream press, poems and “personality portraits” in avant-garde journals, and of autobiographical writings and personal correspondence by several notable modern writers associated with avant-garde Greenwich Village literary cultures, including John Reed, Mabel Dodge, Harriet Monroe, Margaret Anderson and Alfred Kreymborg. Ironically, Loy first came to the attention of modern America while she was still living in Europe, when her erotic and unconventional poetry began appearing in American avant-garde little magazines, including *Rogue* and *Camera Work*, in 1914. Just a year later, Loy found herself turned into an overnight celebrity on account of the literary success and cultural scandal surrounding the publication of her sexually erotic and most famous poem, “Love Songs.”

Published in the 1915 debut issue of the *Others*, a radical New York avant-garde little magazine, “Love Songs” marked not only Loy's new woman feminism, but also her status as what Rob Sheffield describes as “a starfucker . . . , a femme fatale in love with fame” (625). The success of the poem instantly turned Loy into a celebrity within avant-garde and bohemian circles of Greenwich Village; it also brought her to the attention of the popular press. Indeed, as Sheffield asserts, Loy's sexually erotic, even obscene poem, “had made her, the magazine, and the entire New York poetry scene instantly notorious. She was the most famous of the New York poets, attacked in tabloid papers and literary

journals" (Sheffield 625). Ross Wetzsteon concurs, and asserts that Loy's "scandalous poetry, lovely looks, and cosmopolitan personality made her one of the most talked-about women" in Greenwich Village (352). While the poem itself attracted popular attention, the critical reaction to the both the poem and its author also contributed greatly to the iconic celebrity status of Loy. American modernist poet Harriet Monroe, editor of the little magazine *Poetry*, consistently demonstrated her "strenuous opposition" to the subject matter of Loy's "Love Songs," and her repeated castigations of Loy published in both the popular press and in avant-garde magazines made Loy "the *cause celebre* of the *Others*" (Conover xxiv). Monroe's descriptions of Loy as a "dangerous woman," an "extreme otherist" and "one of the long-to-be-hidden-moderns" served not to negate the popular and literary success of Loy, as Monroe likely intended, but instead drew even more public, literary and press attention to Loy through Monroe's representation of her as the quintessential modern personality and celebrity (Conover xxxiv-xxxv). Indeed, Monroe later confessed that she found herself unable to resist the powerful force of Loy's modern and liberated personality. In one of her Chicago columns, Monroe describes Loy as "too beautiful for description" and admits, "I may never have fallen very hard for this lady's poetry, but her personality is quite irresistible" (qtd. in Conover, xx).

Loy's personality also proved to be "quite irresistible" to both avant-garde and popular literary cultures, which fetishized Loy's unconventional

and emancipated personality and life, and solidified her status as a modern celebrity. Although the popular press's attention to Loy's New Woman status and other literary accounts of Loy's personality in memoirs by notable American modernists certainly attracted public attention, Loy herself used a variety of self-defining strategies to create a liberated, self-expressive and multi-faceted personality that became an object of public fascination. While both Goldman and Bernhardt relied primarily upon highly theatrical acts of conspicuous self-promotion and advertisement within popular and avant-garde cultures of celebrity, Loy turned instead to more subtle self-performative tactics that nevertheless produced similar effects. Indeed, with the exception of a few minor public events, including Loy's much-publicized "ménage a cinq" with Marcel Duchamp and three other modern artists and writers, the scandal surrounding Loy's personal life and personality was less dependent on her overt self-publicization than upon her daring creative and self-experiments in her writings.²⁵ Such acts of poetic self-experimentation, and indeed, the taboo subject matter of her poetry, drew the attention of other avant-garde writers and artists, and

²⁵ As Conover notes, "Within two months of her arrival in New York, Mina Loy was taking part in some of the most bizarre stunts" and one of the most notorious occurred after a "riotous costume affair billed as 'The Blind Man's Ball' in celebration of the New York Independents' Exhibition at Grand Central palace" on May 25, 1917 (Conover xlvi). When Loy left the ball that evening, she led a highly publicized "ménage a cinq" back to Marcel Duchamp's apartment. Duchamp had invited Loy, (Dada artist and ceramicist) Beatrice Wood, artist Arlene Dresser, and painter Charles Demuth "to spend the night in his four poster. Their common bond was a fascination with the extreme, outlandish gesture" (Conover xlvi). Beatrice Wood depicted this scene in her painting, *Le Lit de Marcel*, and also writes about it in her autobiography, *I Shock Myself: The Autobiography of Beatrice Woods* (1985). San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2006. p.33.

eventually the modern popular press, and ultimately played a pivotal role in Loy's embodiment of the modern female celebrity.

Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy as Dangerous Female "Others"

Goldman, Bernhardt, Loy and other New Women also performed the role of the dangerous female "other" who posed a threat to the patriarchal structure of modern cultures through their enactments of liberated and powerful female personalities. While Goldman's perceived threat as a dangerous exotic other can be attributed largely to her status as a politically radical Jewish immigrant, as well as her frequent arrests, trials, prison stints, and other highly publicized confrontations with the American legal system, she also performed a dangerous feminist role through her liberated views of female sexuality and the body.²⁶ Bernhardt and Loy, on the other hand, embodied the role of the seductive femme fatale so popular within late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cultural discourses, and their strategic manipulation and exploitation of this female image served to perform and promulgate their political views on women's sexuality and freedom of the female body.

As Cassandra Laity has noted, the "cult of the demonic femme fatale" dominated modern literary, artistic, and popular cultures, and the prevalence of this image within print and visual cultures, like the "historical

²⁶ Goldman's radical feminist ideologies concerning women's sexuality are discussed in the previous chapter, while her role as a dangerous outlaw and her frequent confrontations with the American legal system will be analyzed in greater detail in the following chapter.

phenomen[on] of the New Woman,” provoked “ongoing debates about sexuality and gender” (ix). Central to all modernist accounts and images of the femme fatale is an emphasis upon her sexual powers, her physical body and appearance, and her sexual desires. Such emphasis clearly marked the femme fatale as the “other” to traditional and patriarchal stereotypes of women’s sexual identity, which were represented through the iconic image of the virgin or Madonna. Indeed, as Suzanne Clark contends, this “female otherness” threatened the prevailing patriarchal social order (103). The perceived cultural danger posed by the modern femme fatale is explicit in both modernist and contemporary debates about the nature of this female figure, for as Gudrun Brokoph-Mauch asserts, the femme fatale, and especially her sexuality, has consistently been associated with images of women’s “lethal, demonic power” (470). This “demonic power” was frequently represented through serpentine images and rhetoric that functioned to emphasize not only the “so-called destructive energy” of the femme fatale, but also the power of female sexuality and the female body (McCabe 135).

“The most dangerous anarchist in America”: Goldman’s Performances of the Dangerous Female Other

Goldman’s public role as a dangerous female other was certainly related to her status as a Russian-Jewish immigrant and ethnic “other,” but it was her position as a political radical, and more specifically, as a

female political radical that led J. Edgar Hoover and popular newspapers throughout the country to deem her one of “the most dangerous anarchists in America.” As Candace Falk, Christine Stansell and other historians assert, modern political radicals were consistently viewed as posing dangerous threats to American culture, but women involved in cultures of political radicalism, including Goldman, were subjected to even more vitriolic depictions within the popular press on account of their gender. As Falk notes, it was “uncommon in the 1890s to see a woman on the lecture circuit, especially one in her early twenties. Goldman would later attribute her success as a lecturer in part to being a woman, claiming that the novelty of a female speaker always guaranteed an inquisitive audience” (2003: 6). Falk further asserts that Goldman’s speeches, with their defiant and aggressive tone, “terrified not only those wary of anarchism but also those accustomed to relegating women to the background of political debate” (2005: 9). Goldman’s lectures drew audiences comprised of not only the modern public and the popular press, but also of legal officials who were determined to censor her speeches and monitor the cultural effects of her public appearances. The very appearance of such legal officials marked her status as a dangerous other, but Goldman welcomed their presence. In an interview published in the *Ohio State Journal* in 1907, Goldman offers the following statements: “I see the newspapers and police here have been making a lot of trouble. . . . They must think I am dangerous. . . . They adopt the surest method to draw a big crowd to my

meetings" ("High Priestess of Anarchy Here," 209). Her insightful remarks reveal that public perceptions of her as dangerous worked to her benefit, as they increased her publicity and the propaganda value of her very presence in public. Legal officials who monitored Goldman's public activities also demonstrated an awareness of the ways in which her status as a dangerous other publicized Goldman and her politics. As one officer wrote to the Bureau of Immigration in 1907, "The general opinion of the officers who have been following her up is that she will welcome arrest; that it will not only advertise her and add to her prestige, but will be the means of bringing her in considerable sums in the way of contributions" (Strauss 256). Thus, Goldman was certainly constructed as a dangerous female other by the modern press and legal authorities, but also represented herself as dangerous in order to draw attention to her radical politics and to herself as an iconic embodiment of a threatening female figure.²⁷

²⁷ While Goldman was certainly constructed by the mainstream press and constructed herself as a dangerous and threatening figure, such construction cannot be separated from what Candace Falk describes as Goldman's "darker shadows of her political militancy" (2003:3). Indeed, as discussed in previous chapters, Goldman was intimately involved in the planning of Berkman's failed assassination of Henry Clay Frick, going so far as to attempt to prostitute herself in order to raise money to buy a gun with which to kill Frick. Moreover, despite her efforts to downplay the violent aspects of her anarchist theory and practices, Goldman's writings – and especially those written for immigrant radicals who were firmly entrenched within European anarchist traditions of violent acts of "propaganda by the deed" – consistently present her belief that "individual acts of political violence were an inevitable response to the State's use of violence to maintain its power" (Falk, 2003:9). The actual and very real threat posed by anarchists is perhaps most clear from a resolution adopted by anarchists in July 1881 at the London International Social Revolutionary Congress that endorsed

Bernhardt's Roles as the Exotic Female "Other" and her Transgressive Performances of Gender Identity

As Richard Findlater notes, Bernhardt achieved an unparalleled reputation among popular female stage actresses of her time not only because of her penchant for "self-promotion," but also because she was culturally received as an exotic other on account of her French nationality (95). France, French culture, and particularly Parisian theatre cultures were considered, he argues, as "the pulsating source[s] of sin and pleasure, out of bounds: the capital of theatre – and the capital of sex" (94). Bernhardt's association with French exoticism and eroticism further contributed to her cultural celebrity, as Aston asserts:

[w]ith the aid of the press and her own propensity for self-advertisement, [Bernhardt] had successfully created an all-encompassing image of seductress. She had permitted and even to an extent encouraged or condoned her "private life" being transformed into another factional spectacle. In the public eye, Sarah was as legendary and seductive as the heroines she played. (69)

propaganda by the deed and advocated "the study of 'chemistry' in preparation for the use of explosives" (Falk, 2003: 15). For more detailed examinations of Goldman's complex stance on violence as a means of political propaganda, see Kathy E. Ferguson's "Discourses of Danger: Locating Emma Goldman," *Political Theory* 36:5 (2008): 735-761; Theresa Moritz and Albert Moritz, *The World's Most Dangerous Woman: A New Biography of Emma Goldman*, Toronto: Subway, 2001; and *The FBI: A Comprehensive Reference Guide*, ed. Athan G. Theoharis et al., Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999, p. 49-50.

Aston's statements also suggest that while Bernhardt's off-stage performances of gender, especially as they were portrayed in popular representations, contributed to her public persona of the female seductress, her on-stage performances of seductive female heroines also shaped public perceptions of Bernhardt's gender and sexual identity, and Bernhardt herself went to great lengths to exploit and construct her image as an exotic sexual other. Through strategic acts of self-representation, Bernhardt performed her feminist views of the sexually emancipated modern woman, and demonstrated her own agency in constructing her role as the sexually exotic other.

Many of the female stage roles for which Bernhardt was most well known, including the prostitute Marguerite from "La Dame aux Camelias" (known more commonly as "Camille" in North America), Cleopatra, and Phédre offered depictions of seductive women who boldly challenged social expectations of female sexual passivity and "purity," and controversially "established and highlighted the image of amorous womanhood" (Aston 39). Bernhardt's unorthodox performances of gender attracted the attention of not only the mainstream press, but also of London's Lord Chamberlain, who in 1892 banned production of *Salomé* after viewing Bernhardt's performance of the lustful and erotic heroine during rehearsals.²⁸ Reviews of Bernhardt's performances of such exotic

²⁸ Oscar Wilde wrote *Salomé* exclusively for Bernhardt, and just before it was to debut in London, Chamberlain publicly banned production; Bernhardt later went on to produce the play in Paris in 1894.

female roles typically focused less on her acting abilities and more on her physical embodiment of the female seductress, such that her body, and particularly the sensual movements of her body, became a spectacular site and representation of female sexuality and exoticism. In a 1879 review of Bernhardt's performance of Mistress Clarkson in "L'étrangere," London's *Daily Telegraph* presents a typical description of the actress's body: "What is there in this most graceful and elegant figure, in these thin, expressive features, and in the snake-like movement of the artist that causes such a glow of satisfaction and pleasure?" (qtd. in Aston, 27-28).²⁹ As Aston contends, such "[r]eference[s] to Bernhardt's 'snake-like' movement identifies the characteristically undulating, seductive body gestures which she later developed in the portrayal of such *femme fatale* creations as Cleopatra" (28). Marguerite Coe also refers to the exotic and "snake-like" movements and characteristics of Bernhardt's female stage characters, and argues that Bernhardt "sought to please, even seduce, her audience with famous smiles, serpentine movements, flowing gowns, . . . and a face painted in enthralling shades of crimson, pink, and white" (71). The serpentine images so frequently used to describe Bernhardt's physicality solidified her reputation as a sexual seductress by aligning her with sexual desire and lust. Bernhardt herself, however, encouraged such interpretations. She insisted on choosing, and in many cases, designing her own lavish costumes for her roles, and as Aston notes, many of Bernhardt's costumes were specifically "designed to accentuate her

²⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, June 5 1879.

serpentine movements, with folds of drapery which hugged the contours of her body, whirling out behind her in trains of fabric" (28). Bernhardt also dressed in an unconventional manner off the theatrical stage, and presented an image of the liberated female body through her rejection of corsets, petticoats and other restrictive clothing in favour of flowing "scarves, trailing veils and dresses which might have doubled as nightgowns" (Skinner 147).

Clearly Bernhardt's performances of seductive female characters contributed to her image as a sexually immoral woman, but her private life, and especially her personal relationships, were equally important in establishing her iconic position as a sexually liberated modern woman. Indeed, the lines between Bernhardt's public life as an actress and her private life as a woman and a lover repeatedly crossed, such that the seductive and subversive gender roles she played on stage became intertwined with her personal experiences and identity. At the age of twenty, Bernhardt created a scandal of almost epic proportions within both her family and the Parisian theatrical community when she gave birth to an illegitimate son of a Belgian nobleman.³⁰ Almost twenty years later, in 1882, she married a Greek aristocrat, but the marriage fell apart within a year, after both partners participated in extramarital affairs. As a young single mother and later, as a married woman, Bernhardt consistently engaged in multiple and sometimes simultaneous relationships with many

³⁰ John Collins has argued that Bernhardt "did not hesitate to capitalize on the publicity surrounding her [illegitimate] son – her 'petit accident,' as she called him" (232).

famous men, including French authors Victor Hugo and Pierre Loti, French artist Gustave Doré, Italian poet, novelist, and playwright Gabriele d'Annunzio (who was the lover of Bernhardt's stage rival, Eleanora Duse and one-time lover of Mina Loy), and most shocking to the general public, the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward. She was also known to have been involved in at least one sexual relationship with a woman, French painter and sculptor Louise Abbéma, and though very little is known about this relationship, Bernhardt is still celebrated within gay and lesbian cultures. Her numerous affairs and sexual promiscuity were the subject of countless articles and editorials within the mainstream press, and at a young age, she came to represent the sexually liberated modern woman who, both off-stage and on, continuously "subverted the Victorian ideology of passive femininity, of the sexless female" (Aston 81).

While the mainstream press provided Bernhardt with a popular cultural space in which to embody, whether by choice or not, alternative gender roles, the theatre itself was also important to Bernhardt's unconventional representations of gender identity. The theatrical stage offered Bernhardt a legitimate cultural space in which to perform a variety of subversive gender roles; her female characters, including Camille, Cleopatra, Phédre, Lady Macbeth and Joan of Arc, often defied traditional expectations of femininity not only through their blatant sexuality, but also through their social power and public roles outside the domestic sphere, while her male characters, including Shylock, Napoleon's son L'Aiglon and

Hamlet, were scandalous for the very fact that they were performed by a woman. Indeed, for all the attention she received for her unconventional performances of female identity, Bernhardt was perhaps more (in)famous for her gender-bending portrayals of male characters. Bernhardt shocked both theatre critics and the general public alike by wearing wigs and beards on stage to play her male roles; she further extended the shock value of her gender performances off the stage by wearing trousers and other “masculine” clothing in public.³¹ As Aston maintains, the “tradition of the ‘breeches role’ in opera burlesque, music-halls and in the principal boys of Victorian and Edwardian pantomime was accepted, popular and flourishing, but on the ‘legitimate’ stage, it was considered very daring and risqué for an actress to appear in male attire” (113). Theatre critics, interviewers and the general public were fascinated with Bernhardt’s interest in playing male roles, and she directly addresses the issue throughout her writings. In *The Art of the Theatre*, she writes: “I have often been asked why I am so fond of playing male parts, and in particular why I prefer the part of Hamlet to that of Ophelia. As a matter of fact, it is not male parts, but male brains that I prefer” (1924: 137). She further reveals that “the secret of my preference” for male parts is that they are, “generally speaking . . . more intellectual than female parts” (139). Bernhardt’s statements provide a feminist justification for her decisions by emphasizing the “intellectual” differences between male and female roles,

³¹ Bernhardt further publicized her penchant for men’s clothing and her subversion of gender roles when she posed for a photograph wearing a man’s white pantsuit while sculpting.

and suggest that her controversial decision to portray male characters was not simply another publicity stunt, but was rather a conscious attempt on her part to experiment with gender identity and to expand her professional opportunities and experiences. Moreover, her insistence upon playing male roles also suggests that like Goldman and Loy, Bernhardt was consciously enacting a modern form of gender parody that transgressed traditional divisions between male and female roles, both on and off the theatrical stage.

“[S]omething a little reptilian about her”: Mina Loy as Dangerous Sexual Other

Mina Loy was also viewed as an iconic representative of the sexually daring and dangerous female “other.” Like Bernhardt, Loy was also frequently depicted through serpentine imagery that explicitly linked her with sexual vice and sin. Even her good friend Mabel Dodge could not refrain from employing such connotative imagery and diction in her description of Loy:

She was beautiful, with dark hair parted and with a great knot on the nape of her neck, a fair, fine skin with high cheekbones, and she was graceful . . . Her eyes were long and narrow of a nondescript colour, something pale. There was something a little reptilian about her, too . . . she made

one think of serpents. Lilith her name might have been. (337-341)

Dodge was certainly not the only modern contemporary to depict Loy as a sexual seductress, and the memoirs of famous modernist writers as well as articles in the popular press consistently focused upon Loy's eroticism, such that like Bernhardt, she too came to be associated with the femme fatale. As Conover notes, the "two qualities most often described by [Loy's] contemporary observers – seductive charm and physical beauty on the one hand and psychological distance and indifference on the other – are precisely the factors which Moira Roth plots in her study of the *Femme Fatale Complex*" (xxxii). American journalist and playwright John Reed, who came to know Loy through Mabel Dodge and their shared work in *The Provincetown Players*, wrote a play with a leading "femme fatale" character specifically for Loy. His description of the femme fatale character is notable, in that it describes the liberating behaviour and appearance of both the fictional character and Loy herself: Reed's character must demonstrate a "thorough consciousness of Matisse; more than a touch of languor; a dash of economic independence; dark eyes, dark past" (qtd. in Burke 1985: 54). Reed's detailed description suggests that the femme fatale must necessarily possess the qualities and traits associated with the new woman: intellectual, creative, and economic independence, as well as sexual desire and desirability. Indeed, as Emily Apter notes, in the early years of the twentieth century, the femme fatale

image was associated not only with sexual exoticism, but also with absolute independence, demonstrated through intellectual, creative and reformist activities (135).

Such feminist effects and implications of the familiar trope of the femme fatale are frequently overshadowed by contemporary feminist arguments related to the patriarchal contexts in which the image of the femme fatale is most often presented, whereby the woman who embodies and performs the role of the femme fatale is reduced to a passive object whose body is on display for the visual pleasures of a desiring male subject. In addition, there is certainly some validity to the idea that women who were publicly perceived as femme fatales were not performing feminist acts of defiance of traditional sexual and gender roles, but were rather simply playing into heterosexual and definitively male sexual fantasies. Nevertheless, the political and cultural circumstances in which Loy, Bernhardt, and Goldman presented images of the sexually daring and dangerous femme fatale suggest that the women's deployment of this particular image not only strategically transgressed and challenged traditional expectations of women's sexual purity and passivity, but also demonstrated the cultural power and autonomy that could be reclaimed through staged exhibitions of the female body.

Loy's physical image was consistently represented in the pages of both the avant-garde and popular modern press, and her body frequently served as the primary subject matter for several notable artists. Like

Bernhardt, Loy also acted as a muse for many famous modern photographers and was one of the most frequently photographed women of the period (Dunn 1999 np). Man Ray, who took several photographs of Loy, was particularly enthralled by her body and beauty, and described her as a “stunning subject” for his camera (98). Ray’s photographs, particularly the portrait published in the *Others* in 1920, provide a compelling visual spectacle of Loy’s seductive and powerful physicality. Wearing a dress with an open neckline that exposed part of her shoulders and chest, as well as a single earring, designed by Loy from a thermometer, that dangles down to and draws attention to her bare neckline, Loy poses with her head tilted slightly upward, her eyes closed in a seemingly rhapsodic reverie. As Cristanne Miller, Roger Conover and Susan E. Dunn astutely note, this famous photograph of Loy solidified her popular cultural reputation as one of the most quintessentially feminine beauties of modernity. Perhaps more significant, however, are some of the other effects of the photograph, and particularly the feminist and political statements expressed through Loy’s deliberate posing and self-presentation within the photo.

As Miller argues, Ray’s photograph of Loy is characterized by stark contrasts, especially between the body of Loy and the adornments she has chosen to add to it: “the delicate ear and graceful eyebrows stand in marked contrast to the angular thermometer earring dominating the profile and casting a straight shadow across the curves of her bare breastbone

and shoulder" (112). The soft curves of her shoulders, breastbone and ear, as well as the soft lighting Ray used to highlight Loy's delicate facial bone structure, clearly appear incongruous with the angular and hard lines of both the earring and Loy's jaw, positioned pointing up and outward at a prominent angle. Such contrasts emphasize the conflicted identity of Loy and other iconic modern women whose physical images frequently dominated modern visual and literary cultures. By simultaneously portraying both the "soft" and the "hard" images of women so frequently deployed in a multiplicity of traditional historical, literary, religious and cultural discourses -- the stereotypical roles of either "virgin" or "whore" -- Loy visually embodies her radical feminist principles, expressed throughout her fictional and non-fictional writings, that modern women need not be confined to one image or the other, but rather must explore and experiment with all facets of their identities to be liberated from restrictive stereotypical gender roles. Indeed, as Carolyn Burke argues, Loy demonstrated a keen awareness, if not preoccupation, with two particular images of womanhood pervasive in traditional Victorian cultures: the virgin and the whore, and when Loy "began to write poetry from a woman's perspective, the imagery of the [1890s] rose to the surface of her consciousness: women were either sensitive Ophelias or dangerous Salomes, or these two extremes might seem to be combined in such complex female presences as [...] Sarah Bernhardt" (1985: 49). In this particular photograph by Ray, and indeed, throughout most of the images

of Loy presented in both avant-garde and popular cultures, Loy strategically uses her original and unorthodox clothing and jewellery designs to challenge such stereotypical gender roles and creatively enact new images of modern female identity. Loy's professional experience in clothing, hat, lampshade and jewellery design and her insistence upon wearing her own designs in published photographs convey her feminist principles of creative and expressive acts of self-realization and self-definition, and as Dunn suggests, Loy used fashion both to cross and to parody the boundaries of modern gender identity, enacting a sensationalist disruption and transgression of traditional ideals of femininity (1999 np).

Like Goldman and Bernhardt, Loy's iconic popular status as the sexually daring modern New Woman was also solidified by her liberated personal life, and especially by her scandalous sexual life. At the age of twenty-one she married artist Stephen Haweis after an unexpected pregnancy, and their marital relationship was scandalous from the very beginning due to both partners participating in highly publicized affairs. While Haweis lived with his mistress, Loy took on several male lovers, and one of these affairs produced a second child in 1907. She gave birth to a third child, a son, with Haweis, and a fourth fathered by her second husband, Arthur Craven. While the birth of Loy's four children may initially appear to be at odds with her rhetorical rejections of motherhood, Loy refused to adhere to traditional duties and concerns associated with her

maternal role, and indeed, she was often subjected to public criticism for failing to live up to this socially prescribed role. Her children spent several years living apart from Loy, often on different continents, and being raised by nannies or nurses, and Loy's decision, in 1916, to leave her children behind in Paris with their nanny so that she could move to New York to pursue her interests in the avant-garde art and literature scene of Greenwich Village scandalized the modern public. The public scandal surrounding her private life, however, functioned to solidify Loy's iconic reputation as a modern femme fatale.

Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy and Professional Self-Experimentation

Goldman, Bernhardt and Loy also solidified their positions as iconic New Women through their creative, aesthetic, and professional autonomy, and through the plurality of roles they performed within public spheres traditionally dominated by men. Goldman's roles as a public intellectual, cultural critic, writer, publisher and editor, which have been discussed at length in the previous chapters, unequivocally signalled her determination to independently pursue a range of professional opportunities, but they also demonstrated her feminist convictions in the importance of women's self-experimentation and self-expansion within public and professional realms. By performing public and professional roles traditionally performed by men, Goldman, Bernhardt, Loy, and other New Women not only demonstrated their refusal to be confined to roles within the private

“feminine” spheres, but also their desire to challenge, if not usurp, male authority within particular political, aesthetic, literary and other professional cultures. All three women presented deliberately self-stylized images of themselves that invited the public to view them as women who were embodying “male” roles, while defying traditional images of women and their professional roles. They each used the culture of the spectacle to present such images, posing for photographs published in the mainstream press that solidified public perceptions of them as women who were determined to embody, if not parody, male roles. Their creative autonomy and experimentation thus not only ensured their economic independence, but also inserted women into male-dominated public spheres and demonstrated the potential of modern women within a range of professional cultures.

Bernhardt's Public Acts of Self-Experimentation and Creative Autonomy

Bernhardt's insistence on choosing her own roles and ignoring the advice of play directors and stage managers highlights yet another personal characteristic that established her as an iconic New Woman and aligns her with both Goldman and Loy: her absolute creative, artistic and professional independence and experimentation. As Glenn argues, Bernhardt offered a new “model of femininity” that embodied a central tenet of modern feminism – women's right to expressive self-realization, particularly within professional and creative realms (29). By the early

1880s and right up until her last performance, at the age of seventy-eight, Bernhardt controlled nearly every aspect of her performances and staged productions: she personally chose not only the plays and roles she performed, but also her theatrical cast mates; she revised and translated scripts according to her own personal preferences; she designed her own lavish and expensive costumes; she was often in charge of lighting and scenery; and she secured her position as an economically independent woman through her ownership and management of several theatres throughout her career. She was frequently criticized, especially by powerful men within the theatrical community, not only for asserting her power and independence on the stage, but also for her decision to pursue other artistic interests, including writing (of fiction, plays, personal memoirs and critical essays), painting and sculpting.³² Bernhardt began devoting long hours to her painting and sculptures as early as the 1870s, and achieved some success through her several exhibitions in Paris, London, and New York. She further asserted her creative independence when she began to offer private theatrical performances and readings, as well as exhibitions of her paintings and sculptures, within homes and "drawing-room salons," and she soon attracted much popular attention within various artistic, literary, and political cultures for her private performances.

³² Some of Bernhardt's most well-known art works present sensuous and erotic depictions of real, fictional and mythological female figures, and include her bust of French artist (and reputed lover) Louise Abbéma (exhibited at the 1873 World's Exposition), and her many self-portraits, most notably her bronze sculpture "Inkwell, Self-Portrait as a Sphinx" (1880). In 1878 she published a prose sketch, *Dans les nuages; les impressions d'une chaise*, and her comedic play *L'Aveu* was produced in 1888.

At one such gathering, Bernhardt, to the consternation of many of her fellow actors, held a famous “one-woman exhibition . . . [that] attracted crowds of dignitaries from the world of the arts, politics ([Prime Minister William] Gladstone), royalty (the Prince and Princess of Wales) and high society” (Aston 32).

Bernhardt’s artistic independence drew the scorn of her fellow male actors, theatre managers and directors, and especially from those involved with the French national theatre company, the *Comedie Française*, with which she was most associated. The men disapproved of not only her participation within other artistic cultures, but also the fame and popularity she achieved on account of her artistic success. As she recounts in her autobiography, she repeatedly found herself confronted with questions about and criticism of her non-theatrical creative projects:

Why did I always want to be before the public? [...] My little exhibition was a great success, but I never thought that it was to be the cause of so much gossip and of so many cowardly side-thrusts, until finally it led to my rupture with the *Comedie Française*. I had no pretensions either as a painter or a sculptress, and I exhibited my works for the sake of selling them, as I wanted to buy two little lions, and had not money enough. I sold the pictures for what they were worth - that is to say, at very modest prices. (219).

Bernhardt's explanation of her financial reasons for creating and selling her art suggest that the "gossip" and "cowardly side-thrusts" she faced were due not only to the cultural fame she was achieving, but also to her financial success and independence, and more significantly, to the threat such success and independence posed to her male counterparts. Henry James, an ardent admirer of Bernhardt, also points to this factor in his description of her as "one of the great figures of the day. It would be hard to imagine a more brilliant embodiment of feminine success" (qtd. in Richardson 65).

Mina Loy's Aesthetic and Professional Experiments

Loy also established her cultural position as the modern New Woman through her aesthetic experimentation, artistic independence, and her creative and professional involvement with a diversity of modern literary, artistic and political cultures. Loy is perhaps best known for her high modernist free-verse poetry, but long before her poems were published, Loy's name was popular in modern European art circles, where she achieved considerable success as a painter. As early as the age of six, Loy displayed "artistic aptitude in drawings," but Loy's traditional mother "repeatedly stifled" her daughter's artistic interests (Conover lxiii). In her autobiographical "Notes on Childhood," Loy remembers her mother, "in one of her excesses of outraged morality," destroying her young daughter's drawings (314). As a teenager, however, Loy resumed her

artistic interests and later her artistic education, such that, as Conover observes, “[a]mong art critics, she had been called a prodigy even before she started writing poems” (xvii). Her paintings were exhibited at some of the most significant modern art exhibitions, including the Salon D’Automne in Paris (1905), the Free Exhibition of International Futurists in Rome (1914), and the Independents’ Exhibition in New York City (1917), and her paintings received critical accolades. By the 1920s, however, Loy’s artistic medium changed, so that her creative works of art were no longer paintings, but rather unorthodox and highly outlandish jewellery fashioned out of “ready-made” objects, hats that often resembled lampshades, and lampshades that often resembled hats or other artistic sculptures.³³ Her broad range of artistic pursuits, in addition to the actual creative products themselves, unequivocally embodied her anti-traditionalist principles and her determination to follow Ezra Pound’s famous modernist dictum to “make it new.”

Loy’s decorative designs not only enabled her to experiment with a variety of artistic cultures and mediums, but also allowed her to live as a financially independent woman, for her unorthodox pieces achieved a considerable degree of cultural attention and commercial success. Her fashion designs, which ranged from bathing suits to evening gowns, were published in several avant-garde and popular magazines, including *Rogue* and *Playboy*, and as Dunn asserts, such venues allowed Loy’s modernist

³³ One of Loy’s most famous and “artistic” lampshades was made entirely out of calla lilies.

creations to be brought to the attention of the general public (1999: np). Loy revealed, however, that her commercial success caused her much anxiety and created tensions with her fellow artists: "I am supposed to be a fine artist and everybody thinks I am mad because I have to make lampshades" (qtd. in Conover lxxiii).³⁴ Loy's statement points to the cultural conflicts between avant-garde artists and commercial cultures, but also suggests the financial imperative ("I *have*", my italics) underlying the commercialism of her artistic works, for as a New Woman, Loy was determined to live a life of absolute economic independence, and the commercial success of her aesthetic creations enabled her to remain financially independent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Goldman's public embodiment of the role of the New Woman, especially when analyzed alongside the iconic gender roles performed by Sarah Bernhardt and Mina Loy, demonstrates the importance of performance and self-spectacularization to the feminist strategies of self-construction and self-representation used by them and other New Women. All three women used modern techniques and practices of performance to dramatically express and enact their idealized

³⁴While Loy's remarks certainly highlight the cultural and personal anxiety Loy experienced on account of her decision to turn her art into commercial products, they also suggest some of the other cultural anxieties, particularly in terms of gender, related to Loy's multiple artistic pursuits. As Roger L. Conover argues in "(Re)Introducing Mina Loy," Loy's readers "were suspicious and binary in their thinking [...] They preferred to see a woman express herself as one type of genius, or not at all. Better to be a poet, painter, actress, designer than to be all of them at once. Better to be a mother of a wife than a lover and a wife" (256).

concepts of the liberated female personality upon the most public literary, oral and visual cultural stages of avant-gardism and the popular, and their consistent use of such performative strategies emphasizes a defining hallmark of the elusive discursive figure of the New Woman that is often overlooked in critical studies: the fundamental necessity of performance and public cultures of the spectacle not only to the New Women's techniques of self-presentation, but also to the public reception of these liberated women. Their highly theatricalized and publicized presentations of self enabled them to actively embody their feminist theories of the expressive and liberated female self and body, while at the same time demanding the attention of the modern public and thus, a reconsideration of traditional gender roles, particular in terms of the gendered boundaries between private and public cultures. Moreover, Goldman's, Bernhardt's and Loy's strategic deployment and manipulation of a range of traditional images of womanhood and femininity found throughout both popular and avant-garde discourses reveals not only the cross-cultural foundations of their feminist ideas and the ways in which they chose to represent such ideas, but also the centrality of culturally hybrid roles to iconic images of the New Women.

Indeed, the range of iconic female images deployed by these three women, including the modern celebrity, the dangerous female, the exotic femme fatal, and the independent intellectual and artist, underscores the self-reflexive ways in which such New Woman sought to play a multiplicity

of public roles within an array of sometimes divergent public cultures. This heterogeneity of self proves to be of crucial relevance not only to the public appearances of New Women, but also to their feminist notions of female emancipation. Goldman and the other New Woman feminists discussed throughout this chapter consistently and emphatically insist, throughout both their writings and their public performances of self, that the liberated modern woman could achieve freedom and reclaim cultural power by refusing to be confined to any singular role and by enacting a plurality of feminine roles that defied and challenged traditional notions of a stable and unified female identity. The ways in which the New Women transgressed traditional gender expectations, especially in terms of sexuality, undoubtedly marked them as “dangerous” women, but it is also important to recognize that their heterogeneity of self and their self-situation within a multiplicity of modern cultures also contributed to public perceptions of them as dangerous, threatening female figures. By challenging all traditional social laws that attempted to limit women’s roles, and especially their roles within public cultures, Goldman and other New Woman feminists enacted dangerous violations of social laws that were barriers to women’s freedom, and their roles as dangerous female “others” is also crucial to any critical consideration of the cultural perceptions and implications of the New Women.

Goldman, however, went one step further than the other New Women feminists discussed in this chapter by defying not only social laws

of gender, but also codified American laws, and especially those pertaining to freedom of speech and self-expression, and due to her illegal acts of rebellion against oppressive laws, she repeatedly found herself cast in the roles of both the dangerous female and the criminal outlaw. Her iconic embodiment of such roles garnered widespread attention from the popular press, the modern public, and the American legal system not only on account of Goldman's own strategic self-publicization during her arrests and trials, but also because of the spectacular nature and public manifestations of the conflicts between the law and Goldman's radical politics. The next chapter turns to an analysis of the importance of the spectacle and cultures of performance to the legal battles waged not only between Goldman and American legal officials, but also between the law and radical politics, and considers the cultural effects and implications of the spectacularization of Goldman's numerous arrests and trials and other highly publicized confrontations between political radicals and the law.

Chapter Four: "Circuses," "spectacles," and "staged judicial farces":

The Spectacle and Trials of Emma Goldman and Political

Radicalism in Modern American Popular Culture

This chapter explores the complex relations between law, (radical) politics, and popular culture in modern America, and focuses upon the ways in which Emma Goldman and other political activists, legal officials, and the mainstream press used popular cultures of performance and the spectacle to publicize the antagonism between modern radical politics and the law. No one, perhaps, better understood the tenuous relationship between law, politics, and popular culture than modern American political radicals, including Goldman. From the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries, popular culture served as the stage upon which the unprecedented conflicts and all out-wars between political radicals and legal officials were performed through staged and theatrical spectacles. During public demonstrations, outdoor meetings, public lectures and parades, the dramatic confrontations between legal officials and striking factory workers, labour union leaders, socialists, suffragists, birth control activists, and anarchists demonstrated, in increasingly popular cultural venues, the ever-widening gulf between American law and its most outspoken political adversaries. Through spectacular acts of direct resistance, modern political radicals brought their politics from the margins to the center of mainstream America and compelled the attention of both

popular culture and legal officials. Though police frequently cited such actions as causes for arrests, they themselves turned to increasingly spectacular tactics in order to silence and repress political activists.

This chapter examines the role of the spectacle in popular, legal, and radical political cultures of modern America and considers how the highly publicized spectacular conflicts between political radicals and legal officials brought both legal and political issues into the domain of popular culture. As Susan A. Glenn argues, the “phenomenon of the spectacle” was at the heart of public and popular cultures of modern America, but it is important to note that it also became an integral part of political and legal cultures, dramatically presenting the conflicts between politics and the law. Political radicals used spectacular methods to protest the authority of the government and the law, while legal officials responded with their own spectacular methods of intervention and control. Examining the spectacular acts and techniques of resistance deployed by both political radicals and legal officials, as well as the popular cultural settings in which such acts took place, I argue that the spectacle ultimately served as the cultural stage upon which the unlikely trio of radical politics, the law, and popular modern culture were joined in an intimate, albeit antagonistic, relationship. I then consider the ways in which popular, political and legal cultures of the modern spectacle were appropriated and manipulated by Emma Goldman, who successfully turned her numerous arrests and trials into popular cultural spectacles that dramatically represented both the

collisions and the collusions between radical politics, the law, and popular culture.

Goldman consistently claims that anarchism, like “every new idea heralding the approach of a brighter dawn . . . has always been considered illegal, outside the law,” and that, in fact, such new ideas, whether they “pertain to political and social changes or to any other domain of human thought and expression . . . must refuse to move within the law” (1917: 61-2). Nevertheless, it is precisely “within the law” where Goldman’s anarchist politics in particular and radical politics in general, experienced their most popular cultural expression. Indeed, Goldman used the American legal system and the courtroom as popular cultural stages upon which to perform and promulgate her anarchist politics. The latter part of this chapter considers the theatrical spectacle of Goldman’s trials, and especially her 1917 trial for conspiracy to obstruct the draft, as quintessential spectacles that most effectively dramatized the conflicts as well as the intersections between politics, law, and popular culture, and analyzes what Alexander Berkman described as the “propaganda value” of her trials (qtd. in Falk, 2004: 161). Goldman’s defense speeches, essays, and public comments about her trials consistently use theatrical rhetoric to characterize the players and procedures of her trials, and encourage the modern public in general, and the modern popular press in particular, to view her trials and those of other American anarchists as “staged judicial farces” (Goldman, 1893: 188). Thus, I argue that she

successfully turned the American courtroom into a popular form of political theatre that captured the attention of the modern American public, and consider the cultural effects and implications of her political performances within legal and popular cultures.

The Popular Cultural Spectacle of Modern Politics

The spectacle has played an important historical role in various political movements throughout North American and Europe, and although the political spectacle may be most recognizable as a dominant popular cultural form in our contemporary society, it was also a primary feature of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cultures. Several scholars, including Murray Edelman, Margaret Finnegan, Susan Glenn, and Lisa Tickner, have characterized American politics at the turn of the century as theatrical “political spectacles” that functioned both as staged public protests against prevailing politics and policies, and as popular entertainment for the masses.¹ American political activists had always used popular literary cultures and public outdoor meetings to promulgate their politics to the general public, but beginning in the nineteenth century, American activists, and especially those involved in “radical” politics, including feminism, anarchism, socialism and syndicalism, increasingly turned to more theatricalized political spectacles. As Glenn notes, such spectacles included “elaborate parades, . . . processions, street

¹ For an insightful discussion of how American politics became spectacles staged for popular audiences during the twentieth century, see Edelman's *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.

burlesques and charivaris, and other festive enactments of political propaganda, not to mention open-air speeches" (126). The public and popular culture of the spectacle thus became a site of radical and theatrical political acts, enabling modern political radicals to perform a kind of popular "street theatre," which Susan Davis describes as a "tool for building, maintaining, and confronting power relations" (6). Indeed, the American public proved to be an enthusiastic audience for this political street theatre, demonstrating that the popular culture of the spectacle provided a fertile ground upon which political activists could engage with the masses of American society.

"Watching the women's parade": The Spectacle of the Modern Women's Movement

At the turn of the twentieth century, mainstream American feminists and suffragists, who were looking for new and more daring ways to represent their politics to the public, increasingly turned to the culture of the spectacle as a site of political activism. As Glenn argues, "self-identified female radicals, and so-called platform women in the temperance, suffrage, populist and labour movements, whose mass meetings and demonstrations brazenly challenged gender norms, were a conspicuous part of the spectacle of late nineteenth-century political life" (129). Flouting all cultural laws prohibiting women from active participation in the public sphere, members of various women's groups across the country began publicly and dramatically to enact their demands for equal

rights. Parades, pageants, and public lectures had long been a staple of the suffragists' repertoire of publicity tactics, but in the years immediately preceding World War One, such political spectacles became increasingly flamboyant and melodramatic, and a front-page topic of cultural debate in the popular press. As Margaret Finnegan argues, public space, as appropriated by the feminists, became "a zone of commercial spectacle and commercial spectatorship," for the suffragists in particular "had given life to a new kind of street theater that . . . conflated political protest and commercial spectacle" (47, 71).

The outrageous acts of militant suffragists in England – most notably, the notorious antics of Emmeline and Christine Pankhurst, who spit upon policemen, smashed windows of government buildings, and led hunger strikes of women protestors – inspired their American sisters to develop equally daring and spectacular methods of political resistance.² American feminists and suffragists began to engage in door-to-door canvassing, spontaneous demonstrations in public parks, picketing at the White House, and nationwide car and train tours, where spontaneous lectures were presented at every stop along the interurban rail line (Scott and Scott 326). Such acts inevitably made the modern American public essential -- though perhaps unwilling -- spectators in the political drama unfolding; the daily press, however, ensured the complicity of popular culture through sensationalist coverage that enticed readers to witness the

² While Goldman admired the tactics deployed by militant English suffragists, she was strongly opposed to their support of World War One.

modern spectacle of female political agitators. Though it began as a marginalized political movement, clearly on the fringes of mainstream American society, by the second decade of the twentieth century, the suffrage campaign had successfully crossed the tenuous boundaries between radical and popular cultures, achieving such widespread popularity that a suffrage parade drew more spectators than the appearance of the president. On the day before his inauguration in March 1913, Woodrow Wilson arrived by train to Washington D.C. to an empty station. Surprised and disappointed by the lack of crowds, he was shocked to learn that no one had come to greet him because they were all “watching the women’s parade” (Scott and Scott 327).

Although the spectacular techniques of publicity deployed by the American mainstream feminists certainly helped to bring widespread popular attention to their political causes, they also made suffragists, and especially those who were the most outspoken, active and culturally visible, vulnerable to critical attacks from the general public launched upon the pages of the popular press in editorials and letters to the editor. While the feminists had long been used to being castigated in the press through articles, cartoons and satirical drawings, they were not at all prepared for the violent responses from crowds at their pageants and other street demonstrations. Margaret Finnegan offers the following description of the violent reactions American women experienced during their public acts of protest:

In 1908, suffragists addressing an outdoor crowd on Wall Street found themselves pelted with “apple-cores, wet sponges, coils of ticker tape, and bags of water dropped from upper windows.” In 1912, women in a New York parade were “jostled,” “crowded out of line,” subjected to “ribald jests and insults,” and “robbed by pickpockets, some of whom grabbed handbags right under the noses of” on-duty police officers. The worst instance of violence directed at suffragists occurred at the mammoth 1913 Washington, D.C. suffrage procession, at which approximately 300,000 onlookers watched more than 5000 suffragists march down Pennsylvania Avenue the day before Woodrow Wilson’s presidential inauguration. More than three hundred people – mostly women suffragists – were injured when thousands of spectators rioted. Male – and even some female – bystanders verbally abused, physically assaulted, and fondled parade marchers. Several men jumped on parade floats and tried to accost terrified women riders. (52-3)

Those who protested the public appearances and politics of the suffragists were thus critical of the spectacular nature of the suffragists’ demonstrations, parades and other performative displays, yet they ironically turned to equally spectacular methods of protest and political expression, and similar to the legal officials involved with striking workers,

resorted to spectacular acts of violence to silence (female) political agitators.

Labour Politics and the Culture of the Spectacle

Perhaps the best examples of the modern political spectacle involve the thousands of dramatic strikes led by factory workers and miners throughout the nation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Candace Falk notes that statistics demonstrate there were at least 37,000 strikes between 1881 and 1895, independent of those called for by a union, the sheer volume alone revealing the importance of the public strike to the propaganda strategies of labour activists (2002: 19). The strikes that occurred throughout these years and after the turn of the twentieth century (including those of striking steel factory workers in Homestead, Pennsylvania in the summer of 1892; the Pullman Railway Car strike in Illinois in 1894; women needle workers and female workers at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City in 1909; textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts and silk workers in Paterson, New Jersey in 1912; and miners in Ludlow, Colorado in 1913) gave public voice to the plight of workers, lending labour activists an unprecedented visibility in popular culture. The mainstream daily press consistently reported on the spectacle of striking workers, and the constant coverage devoted to the dramatic protests of the workers tempted the modern public to view the strikes not as political propaganda, but rather as popular entertainment.

Nevertheless, despite sometimes undermining the political messages of the strikes, the popular modern press and its sensationalist reporting on the strikes played a pivotal role in bringing radical labour politics from the margins to the center of American culture.

Labour Versus the Law: The Spectacle of Legal Responses to Strikes

While the theatrical spectacle of the strike certainly brought much needed public attention to the rights of workers, such public visibility also led to more concerted efforts to repress and silence striking workers, making them and labour union leaders the target of brutal and frequently violent attacks by police and other legal officials. The bloody results of the steelworkers' strike in Homestead, Pennsylvania during the summer of 1892 revealed the violent lengths to which legal and state officials were willing to go in order to silence those who actively demonstrated radical political opposition, and foreshadowed what Hippolyte Havel described as the legal and "judicial murder" of labour agitators that was to occur over the next two decades (13). On July 6, management of the steel factory, led by Henry Clay Frick, called in three hundred armed Pinkerton guards, whose arrival marked the beginning of twelve hours of gunfire between the guards and striking workers. Nine strikers and seven guards were killed, and both sides sustained numerous and serious injuries. The legal response to the 1894 Pullman Railway strike, however, proved to be even more violent and sensational. Workers at the Pullman Palace Car

Company had decided to strike after George Pullman, the wealthy owner of the company, severely reduced his workers' wages and "forced them to pay high rents for the dwellings he owned" (Zinn and Arnove 234). The workers appealed to the American Railway Union and its popular leader, Eugene Debs, to support them by refusing to handle any Pullman cars, which were on virtually all passenger trains, and the Union agreed. Its support of the Pullman workers soon resulted in devastating effects on the railway industry and those businesses that relied upon it, for the strike soon brought nearly all railway travel to a grinding halt. In response, the railroad owners sent in two thousand deputies to intervene, but the strike continued, until President Cleveland ordered 14,000 federal and state militia to stop the strike. The strike indeed came to an end, but a violent and bloody end that clearly signaled the law's spectacular methods of control and intervention. According to *The Chicago Times*, police and militia clubbed, stoned, or shot more than a thousand striking workers, and thirty-four individuals were killed, fifty-three critically wounded, and more than seven hundred arrested (Zinn, 2003: 280).

The horrendous events that unfolded in the wake of both the Homestead and Pullman strikes received widespread coverage in daily newspapers and such popular magazines as *McClures* and the *Illustrated American*, and made the conflicts between striking workers and legal and government officials into a popular cultural spectacle. Over the course of the following two decades, the most popular newspapers, magazines and

journals across the nation regularly featured articles, cartoons and editorials related to the literal and often violent battles occurring between radical labour activists and the law. The events that occurred in Ludlow, Colorado in 1914 unequivocally demonstrated that state-sanctioned violence was directed not only against labour activists and striking workers, but also their wives and children. During the miners' strike, which lasted throughout the harsh winter of 1913-1914, workers' families had established a tent colony after being evicted from company housing. John D. Rockefeller called in the National Guardsmen, which first shot at and then set fire to the tents (Marsh 30). Twenty-two people, including workers, women, and at least twelve children, died from suffocation, gunshot wounds, and beatings (Stansell 115).

Spectacular Cultural Responses to the War between Labour Activists and the Law

The bloodshed that occurred as a direct result of such spectacular acts of legal intervention received extensive coverage in both the mainstream and radical press, and brought the conflicts between the workers and the law to the forefront of the popular cultural conscience. The cultural significance of such battles, however, was also achieved in part through the spectacular acts of protest that took place throughout the nation and across a wide range of political groups in response to the state-sanctioned massacres at Ludlow and other sites of labour strikes.

Anarchists in particular reacted with theatrical demonstrations that demanded popular attention. A large group of individuals associated with the anarchist Modern Ferrer School, led by novelist Upton Sinclair, stood in a silent yet dramatic vigil on the doorsteps of Rockefeller's mansion. Dressed in black and wearing black armbands, they then proceeded to march past Rockefeller's Standard Oil offices in a parade of silent mourners (Stansell 115-6). Marie Ganz, a young, Jewish, and anarchist immigrant, also enacted a theatrical protest when she led a large crowd into Rockefeller's office. Brandishing a pistol, Ganz announced that she had come to kill Rockefeller. Her public utterance of death threats earned her a sixty-day prison sentence, but it also earned her and other radicals participating in such spectacular acts of resistance a prominent and highly visible position within modern popular culture.

Perhaps the most culturally, if not financially, successful public and spectacular response to the plight of striking workers occurred in Madison Square Gardens in New York City in the summer of 1913. Organized by a range of publicly prominent individuals, including journalist and writer John Reed, Greenwich Village salon hostess and art patron Mabel Dodge, artist John Sloan, writer and intellectual Walter Lippman, and leader of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Bill Haywood, a dramatic pageant was staged to publicize and bring popular cultural attention to the silk workers' strike in Paterson, New Jersey. Reed and Dodge were primarily responsible for writing the script and rehearsing the workers who would be

performing, while Sloan painted a stunning ninety-foot backdrop that vividly portrayed the Paterson silk mills (Wetzsteon 38). On the evening of June 7, 1913, fifteen hundred strikers “marched through the Village, up Fifth Avenue, and into Madison Square Gardens,” while the letters IWW “blazed ten feet high in red electric lights on all four sides of the Garden Tower” (Wetzsteon 38). But such a spectacular entry was just the beginning of what would prove to be one of the most theatrical events staged in response to modern labour strikes. The fifteen thousand spectators who had attended the pageant found themselves moved to tears by the dramatic depiction, over the course of several hours, of the violent confrontations between legal officials and the striking workers in Paterson. By the end of the play, after witnessing the enactment of a slain worker’s funeral, “his coffin carried through the crowd as each striker placed on it a red carnation,” the spectators had become participants and performers, and the audience joined the striking actors in singing the “Internationale,” the anthem of international socialism, as the grand finale to the show (Wetzsteon 38-9).

The fifteen thousand spectators who had attended the pageant made clear the popular cultural interest in the Paterson strike; the mainstream daily press, however, solidified the popular cultural success of the pageant through detailed reviews of and commentary on the production, which further extended the publicity values of the pageant for the striking workers. Several of the New York City daily papers praised the

poetic and artistic elements of the pageant, while others focused on the political significance and implications of the spectacular show. The day after the pageant, an article in the *New York Times* opened with the following sentence: "It is doubtful if Madison Square Gardens, even at the close of the bitterest of political campaigns, ever held a larger audience than that which packed that great auditorium last night to witness the first production of 'Big Bill' Haywood's 'Paterson Strike Pageant,' a spectacular production in which . . . Paterson strikers of many nationalities and ages played the leading as well as of the minor parts." ("Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors," 2). From the very first sentence of the article, the pageant is repeatedly referred to as a theatrical spectacle, and the words "spectacle" and "spectacular" appear several times throughout the article.

The article focuses not only upon the spectacular nature of the pageant itself, but also upon the spectacle of the audience members and their ultimate participation in the pageant, offering the following description of the spectators:

[I]t was an audience every man, woman, and child in which seemed to be enthusiastic for the Haywood organization and all that it stands for. . . . [E]very seat on the main floor, in the balcony, and in the galleries was occupied, while perhaps a thousand persons were standing in the rear of the Garden. Every box was occupied, many of them by fashionably dressed men and women, while down in front sat Sheriff

Harburger, who said he was present to see to it that no man or woman said or did anything that could . . . be termed a desecration of the American flag. (2)

The “fashionably dressed men and women” who comprised the audience included doctors, lawyers, police and other legal officials, immigrant men and women, middle-class housewives, writers, artists and intellectuals who may have attended solely to be amused and entertained by a night out at the “theatre”; nevertheless, as the above sentences reveal, the pageant also succeeded as political propaganda by eliciting sympathy for the workers and their families. Moreover, the popular cultural success of the pageant is also evident through the ways in which it brought together individuals of different class, ethnic and professional backgrounds. Although the pageant was a financial failure for its organizers and patrons, and particularly for Mabel Dodge, it undoubtedly succeeded as a popular cultural spectacle that functioned to bring widespread publicity not only to striking workers in Paterson, but also to the politics of the radical labour movement and the spectacular violence used by legal and government officials to suppress labour activism and public protests.

The Spectacle of Anarchist Acts of “Propaganda by the Deed”: Anarchism Versus the Law

Anarchists, including Emma Goldman, were also watching and drawing inspiration from the literal and metaphoric parades and pageants

performed by American labour activists. Direct action had always been a primary tactic of anarchist propaganda, but was associated almost exclusively with the wave of terrorist acts of violence and assassination attempts that swept over Europe in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Although the anarchist tactic of propaganda by the deed was not an inherently violent method of propaganda, it certainly allowed for violent acts against powerful individuals who exerted oppressive authority over others. Foundational modern anarchists, including Michael Bakunin, Johann Most, Peter Kropotkin and Rudolf Rocker, consistently advocated the use of direct action to bring about an anarchist revolution, and the definitions of direct action found throughout their writings make clear that acts of direct resistance are the most effective and important form of political propaganda. In his "Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis" (1870), Bakunin argued that anarchists "must spread our principles, not with words *but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda*" (195-196, italics in original). In *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (1938), Rudolf Rocker provides a more comprehensive definition of direct action: "[Direct action] is every method of immediate warfare by the workers against their economic and political oppressors. Among these the outstanding are: the strike, in all its gradations from the simple wage struggle to the general strike; the boycott; sabotage in all its countless forms; anti-militarist propaganda, and in particularly critical cases, armed resistance of the people for the

protection of *life and liberty*" (66; italics in original). Rocker's definition, and especially his use of the words "warfare" and "armed resistance," clearly suggests that violent tactics may indeed fall under the rubric of "propaganda by the deed," but only in the most "critical cases." American anarchists, including Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre and Alexander Berkman, echoed such calls for propaganda by the deed, not only in their writings, but also through their actions, which often led to their dramatic confrontations with American law.

Alexander Berkman's failed assassination attempt on Henry Clay Frick, following the state-sanctioned violence against striking steel workers in Homestead in 1892, was one of the first and most notorious instances of an American anarchist using direct, and in this case, violent action against the oppressive ruling class. His act, however, was not unanimously supported by all American anarchists. Most surprising was Johann Most's critical response to Berkman's act. Prior to Berkman's act, Most had consistently advocated propaganda by the deed, especially throughout *Die Freiheit (Freedom)*, the radical weekly journal that Most began editing in London in January, 1879. The journal consistently celebrated violent acts committed by political radicals, including the assassination of Russian Czar Alexander II, and its unabashed praise for violent crimes resulted in Most's imprisonment by British officials in 1881. Upon his release from prison, Most came to New York, where he continued to serve as editor of *Die Freiheit*, and became involved in

American and immigrant anarchist communities that supported violent means of rebellion and insurrection. Most explicitly called on anarchists to use violent acts as a catalyst for a social revolution in his pamphlet "The Science of Revolutionary Warfare" (1885), which offers detailed instructions for those who wished to engage in violent acts of propaganda. Nevertheless, just seven years later, Most would repudiate Berkman's assassination attempt, and indeed all assassination attempts, as ineffective political propaganda.³ His article "Attentats – Reflexionen," published in *Die Freiheit* on August 27, 1892, was the first of many that provides an extremely critical analysis of Berkman's crime, and presents the following arguments: "in a country where we are so poorly represented and so little understood as in America, we simply cannot afford the luxury of assassination. Where on every main square in the country one has barely a few active forces, there it is more than frivolous, there it is *suicidal*, to hand them over to the clutches of the overpowering enemy provoked through the *attentat*, without drawing even one person into the movement" (1). Most's new claims for the inefficacy of violence as a political and propaganda tactic clearly stand in direct opposition to nearly all of his previous writings that unambiguously endorsed violent methods of propaganda, and while they may appear to be political statements, they

³ Most's repudiation of violence as a means of propaganda by the deed and his criticism of Berkman's failed assassination attempt in his article "Attentats-Reflexionen" ("Reflections on Propaganda by the Deed") prompted Goldman to write a reply to his article in *Anarchist* that branded Most as a "traitor and coward" and "demand[ed] an explanation" (1931: 105). When Most failed to respond after two weeks, Goldman attended one of Most's lectures, and having "resolved to challenge him publicly for his insinuations," stood on the stage next to Most and lashed his face with a horsewhip in yet another highly performative act of protest (1931: 105).

actually served Most's personal interest, particularly his ongoing personal conflicts with Berkman that were threatening to divide the entire American anarchist community. Indeed, following the assassination of President McKinley in 1901, Most was imprisoned for his article "Murder by Murder," published in *Die Freiheit*, which encouraged all anarchists to embrace violent tactics and unequivocally praised assassinations of members of the American ruling class. Thus, with the exception of his criticism of Berkman's act, which was clearly rooted in deeply personal motivations, Most consistently preached violent acts of propaganda by the deed, and was highly influential in the development of such political tactics within modern American anarchist cultures.

Legal Wars Against American Anarchists

The rhetorical advocacy of direct action by some of the best-known modern American anarchists, including Most, Berkman, Goldman and de Cleyre, and indeed, the notorious violent acts committed by anarchists like Berkman, provoked a cultural hysteria that made American anarchists the target of sensationalist misrepresentations by the popular press, such that they became "the target of a virtual reign of terror, hunted down, arrested, grilled, and sometimes tortured by police" (Wexler 34-5). The notorious trials of the "Haymarket eight" anarchists in Chicago in 1886 marked the beginning of a long and brutal campaign against anarchists, but not until the assassination of President McKinley in 1901 by Leon Czolgosz, a self-

proclaimed anarchist who had attended Goldman's lectures in the days immediately preceding his crime, did legal officials declare official war against anarchism by enacting several anti-anarchism and anti-anarchist immigration legislation at both state and federal levels. Although the man who had killed President McKinley was an American citizen, both legal officials and the modern press focused upon Czolgosz's anarchist ideologies, linking them to the politics of immigrants by consistently noting that Czolgosz's parents were Polish immigrants. Following McKinley's assassination, politicians "immediately conjured up threatening images of foreign anarchists," despite the clear fact that Czolgosz was not an immigrant (Falk, 2004: 7).

Such cultural hysteria eventually led to the enactment of anti-anarchist and anti-anarchist immigration legislation that forever changed the course of anarchism in America. In 1902, New York became the first state to pass anti-anarchist laws with the enactment of the New York Criminal Anarchy Act, which "made it a felony to express 'by word of mouth or writing' the 'doctrine that organized government should be overthrown by force or violence . . . or by any unlawful means'" (Falk, 2004: 16).⁴ Similar laws were enacted at the federal level in 1903, but these laws held particular implications for immigrants. The Federal Immigration Act of 1903 "officially barred entry to alien anarchists – mandating that all immigrants swear upon arrival that their political persuasion was not anarchism" (Falk, 2004: 17). Although such laws

⁴ *Criminal Anarchy Law*, section 468a, passed on April 13 1902.

clearly infringed upon individual rights to freedom of expression that were entrenched within the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, state and legal officials showed little concern for the threat to free speech posed by such anti-anarchist laws, and instead focused upon ridding the nation of all political “undesirables” whose radicalism threatened to change the very fabric of American culture and society. In his December 1903 State of the Union address, President Roosevelt deemed anarchism and its proponents to be “criminal . . . seditious and treasonable,” thus solidifying social perceptions of anarchists as bomb-wielding terrorists intent on destroying American society through criminal and violent means (qtd. in Falk, 2004: 18). Roosevelt’s statements, and indeed, the anti-anarchist laws themselves, functioned as spectacular misrepresentations of anarchism as a political ideology, and engendered a modern culture of fear surrounding political “others” that is surprisingly akin to the contemporary cultural atmosphere in America, following the horrific events of September 11, 2001 and the Bush administration’s subsequent and spectacular depictions of the threat of terrorism.

The Spectacular Case of British Anarchist John Turner

One of the first and most publicized cases involving the newly enacted legislation that barred admission to foreign anarchists was the arrest of John Turner, a British anarchist who had previously conducted anarchist lectures tours throughout the United States without facing legal

persecution, but who faced certain arrest upon coming to America after the passing of the anti-anarchist laws. Turner had written to his friend and comrade Emma Goldman in 1903 announcing his intentions to conduct another lecture tour in America, which would focus on the relationship between anarchism and trade unionism, and Goldman arranged his tour. On October 23, 1903, Turner was arrested by immigration officials and charged after giving a lecture on trade unionism and the general strike, and a deportation order was issued at a formal hearing the next day, where he was “interrogated without a lawyer – on the grounds that his was an administrative rather than a judicial hearing. His arrest had been based on a warrant that had been issued even before he spoke” (Falk, 2004: 22). For several days, Turner was confined to a cell on Ellis Island, where he was not allowed visits from his attorney, and was subjected to brutal treatment from both prison guards and those who arrested him.

As Candace Falk asserts, both the case itself and the excessive and perhaps unlawful manner in which Turner was treated by American legal officials “tapped into a particularly potent cultural embarrassment, especially by exposing an unwarranted use of force in the arrest of an Englishman. Turner described the brutish manner in which he – who came from a country where police rarely carried guns – was taken into custody. . . . At first he was herded into ‘a patrol wagon filled with armed attendants.’ Later, at Ellis Island, he was ‘taken down to the basement of the immigration station and locked in the center one of three cages . . . like

those for wild animals in a zoological garden, with open bars back as well as front, a cement floor and a pair of rungs . . . strong enough to hold an elephant, guarded night and day” (Falk, 2004: 19). The excessive treatment of Turner enraged not only anarchists, trade unionists, and other political radicals who supported his political beliefs, but also liberals, who were shocked at the brutal enforcement of laws that clearly violated free speech rights and Turner’s right to a public trial. A variety of liberal and radical groups raised money and public awareness of Turner’s case and his appeal to the Supreme Court. Thus, the Turner case marks one of the first instances in which radicals and liberals, the working classes and the bourgeoisie, and immigrants and native Americans joined together in protest against the oppressive authority of the state. Not surprisingly, Goldman would come to play a pivotal role in the cross-cultural appeal of Turner’s case, its widespread publicity, and the ways in which the case successfully functioned as a popular cultural method of radical political propaganda.

One of the most influential groups that defended Turner was the Free Speech League, which was the stepping-stone for the creation of the American Civil Liberties Union. Co-founded in 1902 by Goldman and other anarchists, socialist and liberals, the Free Speech League was formed in order to protest increased government repression of free speech, and especially the laws – including the 1876 Comstock Act, which prohibited obscenity in literature and mail, and the newly enacted anti-anarchist laws

– that violated the First Amendment of the American Constitution. On behalf of John Turner, the League and its most influential members, including Goldman, who was forced to use the alias “E.G. Smith” because of the cultural hysteria surrounding anarchists, arranged mass meetings and lectures that promoted his case and his right to free speech, and Goldman herself solicited more than \$16,000 in funds for his defense. From the moment of Turner’s arrest, Goldman was certain that his case would draw attention to the repressive and oppressive authority of the American state, and would serve as popular propaganda not only for anarchism, but also for freedom of speech. In a letter to Abe Isaak, an anarchist and editor of *Free Society*, Goldman writes that she “intended to write a full report” of the mass meeting that was held the day before at Cooper Union by the Free Speech League to protest the arrest of and deportation order issued for Turner, “but the daily press has brought such beautiful and good reports, that I deem it useless to repeat what it has already said” (1903: 124). Indeed, before Turner’s appeal trial had even started, Goldman was cognizant of the benefits of the widespread publicity his case was receiving, and viewed it as supremely important to anarchists who wanted to reach broader audiences. Not all anarchists agreed with Goldman, however, and some of the most prominent European anarchists (including, most notably, Peter Kropotkin) were “puzzled by the attention of American anarchists to the Turner case,” arguing that Turner’s case was essentially a fight for freedom of speech

(Falk, 2004: 23). Kropotkin thus “urged Goldman to leave such naïve protests to the liberals” (Falk, 2004: 23).

Nevertheless, Goldman refused to follow Kropotkin’s advice and actively sought out liberals and other “bourgeois” individuals and political groups to protest on Turner’s behalf. Her appeals to certain liberal thinkers, who, while sometimes leftist in their political ideologies, were nonetheless far removed from the general concerns of anarchists, shocked Kropotkin and many other European anarchists, but Goldman clearly believed that all kinds of political groups should be used to bring attention both to Turner’s case and to the repressive political atmosphere itself. The mass meeting held at Cooper Union brought out not only anarchists, socialists, labour groups and other political radicals, but also business men, well-respected liberals, and, most surprisingly, government officials, including Robert Baker, a New York congressman, and John DeWitt Warner, an ex-congressman and Democrat from New York. Although Goldman had always stressed the uselessness of government, she now revealed her belief that the support of such officials for Turner’s case would be a great political asset. In her letter to Isaak, Goldman writes: “Is that not in itself a wonderful result to have representatives of Government intelligently discuss Anarchism and denounce the Anti Anarchist law as despotic and barbarous? . . . Yes – I am convinced that the right step was taken by appealing to the Supreme Court, and that no

matter what that body will decide, John Turner's detention on Ellis Island must inevitably [sic] result in great revival of our movement" (1903: 125).

Goldman's statements celebrating the involvement of middle-class liberals and government officials certainly appear to be inconsistent with her anarchist rejection of government, but they also demonstrate that she was more concerned with the mass publicity given to Turner's case on account of such individuals, who no doubt appealed to the modern American public in ways that Goldman and other notorious anarchists could not. Indeed, as Goldman writes in her autobiography:

[W]e still had an appeal to the Federal Supreme Court in reserve. Most of our comrades opposed such a step as inconsistent with our ideas, a waste of money that could achieve no results. While I had no illusions about what the Supreme Court was likely to do, I felt that the fight for Turner would be splendid propaganda by bringing the absurd law to the attention of the intelligent public. Last but not least it would serve to awaken many Americans to the fact that the liberties granted in the United States, among which the right of asylum was the most important, had become nothing but empty phrases to be used as fire-crackers on the Fourth of July. (1931: 347)

Goldman was correct in assuming the Supreme Court would deny Turner's appeal and reinstate his deportation order, but as she astutely

argued, the case performed several cultural and political functions. Turner's case, and more importantly, Goldman's involvement with publicizing it, successfully brought together individuals with a range of divergent political ideologies to protest the authority of restrictive laws, and helped to change the negative and inaccurate stereotypes about anarchists that had been perpetuated by the American government and the mainstream media. Indeed, Turner's case and the "chorus of protest" it elicited was "proof enough that [Goldman's] instincts about its significance as a propaganda exercise would resonate well beyond her circle of anarchists" (Falk, 2004: 23). Certainly Goldman's used Turner's case to appeal to a range of different groups, individuals, and cultures, but she also strategically situated his trial within the culture of the popular spectacle to propagandize anarchism within a broad range of cultural realms. Moreover, her cross-cultural efforts to publicize his case drew popular attention not only to anarchism in general, but also to the conflicts between anarchism and American laws, and marked Goldman's determination to critically engage with law and the American legal system.

Emma Goldman versus American Law

Long before the assassination of President McKinley and the subsequent enactment of anti-anarchist legislation, Goldman, at just twenty-two years of age, was well on her way to becoming an iconic, albeit notorious celebrity within modern legal cultures, following her sensational

and theatrical disruption of a May Day meeting held in honour of the Chicago martyrs. After allegedly encouraging unemployed workers to “take bread” by force if necessary, Goldman was charged with and later convicted of incitement to riot, marking the beginning of a long series of dramatic confrontations with the law that attracted considerable attention from popular America. Throughout her twenty-year reign as America’s most notorious “anarchist queen,” Goldman faced numerous arrests and a wide variety of charges, ranging from incitement to riot, unlawful assembly, public dissemination of birth control information, and conspiracy to obstruct the draft. She first attracted the attention of legal officials in 1892, on account of her assumed involvement in Alexander Berkman’s attempted assassination of Henry Clay Frick following the violent events in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Despite admitting in her autobiography some forty years later that she did indeed play a role in the planning of Berkman’s crime, Goldman escaped prosecution. She could not escape, however, the glare of the public spotlight, and was the subject of countless sensationalist articles by the mainstream press. Building upon rapidly growing cultural fears of political “others,” daily newspapers across the country dubbed her “the Queen of the Anarchists,” and made Goldman’s name “synonymous with everything vile and criminal” (Wexler 99). The depiction of Goldman as dangerous and threatening to the American nation was only further enhanced after McKinley’s assassination, when she “was demonized and targeted as the designated muse of an assassin”

(Falk, 2004: 9). Although the modern popular press certainly “demonized” Goldman through its representation of her as a dangerous criminal, Goldman herself deliberately encouraged such interpretations by strategically and publicly performing the role of the radical outlaw upon both legal and popular cultural stages in order to promulgate her radical political ideas to the masses of modern American society.⁵ Indeed, through her outrageous, spectacular, and frequently illegal acts of political radicalism, Goldman actively courted the attention of the mainstream press, but perhaps more importantly for the purposes of this chapter, she also deliberately attracted the attention of American legal officials through her spectacular illegal acts and behaviour during her legal trials.

The popular fascination with Goldman certainly helped to bring anarchism to a broader mainstream audience; however, it also brought anarchism in general and Goldman in particular to the consciousness of American legal officials, who made themselves a constant presence at her lectures. Police officers, detectives, Federal Marshals and Secret Service Agents went to dramatic lengths to silence the woman whom J. Edgar Hoover declared to be one of “the most dangerous anarchists in America.” As Alice Wexler notes, legal officials “intimidated hall owners where Goldman’s lectures were to be held, declared lecture halls unsafe just minutes before the lecture was to take place, locked audiences out of the hall and speakers in, and at times resorted to outright physical violence,

⁵ Although the publicity given to Goldman following McKinley’s assassination no doubt brought welcome attention to her political ideas, it also elicited violent responses from the general public, whose threatening letters terrified Goldman.

swinging clubs and sticks against the unarmed audience members” (176). Goldman writes extensively on the legal, and sometimes illegal, efforts undertaken by American legal officials to prevent her from publicly speaking, focusing especially on the violence and brutality practiced by police officers to censor her and other anarchists. The popular press also reported on such violent attempts to suppress Goldman’s speeches, and the *Chicago Daily Journal* reported that the Captain of the Chicago police force was so determined to prevent the “Queen of the Reds” from delivering a lecture on anarchism in March 1908 that he, “with fifty men at his back struck Miss Goldman in the face before he dragged her from Workingmen’s hall” (“Reds’ Leader Flays Police,” 1). For Goldman, however, such police brutality only served to heighten the spectacular and popular appeal of her confrontations with the American legal system, and effectively functioned to bring widespread publicity to her politics, and especially to her critical assessment of particular aspects of American law and the legal system. In an essay published in *Mother Earth*, Goldman writes about the “truly ‘American chivalry and hospitality’” shown to her by the Chicago police and their spectacular attempts to prevent her from securing a location at which to deliver a speech:

Who said the age of chivalry is gone? No, indeed, not so long as the Chicago police and captains are in existence. The police evidently thought that it is time Emma Goldman be heard by a large number of people, instead of a mere

halfful. That is why they gave me an opportunity to have my undelivered lecture printed in a Chicago daily, having a circulation of more than 50,000, also another article in a morning paper of large circulation. Don't you think they deserve thanks? As to the amount of good their action has done in other cities, that could not be fully estimated. . . . Just think of how much other speakers would pay to get such splendid advertising, and all without any efforts on my part, at that. (April 1908: 71)

Thus, Goldman clearly viewed, and encouraged her readers to view the spectacular methods deployed by legal officials to silence her as an effective means of political propaganda, but her numerous arrests and legal trials proved to be even more effective in bringing popular attention to her anarchist politics.

Arrests, legal trials, and prison stints were common among anarchists, for resistance against the authority of oppressive laws had always been a defining tenet of anarchism. Goldman writes extensively on the conflicts between radical politics and the law, and emphatically declares that anarchism "stands for direct action, the open defiance of, and resistance to, all laws and restrictions, economic, social, and moral. But defiance and resistance are illegal" (1910: 65). Thus, it is no surprise that her direct resistance to oppressive American laws, particularly laws concerning free speech, frequently manifested itself through illegal acts

that resulted in several arrests. Goldman considered such arrests, however, as beneficial to the popular promulgation of her radical politics. Moreover, Goldman publicized her numerous arrests and trials into a popular form of political theatre in which to perform her radical ideologies pertaining to birth control and freedom of speech, and successfully reaped the benefits of what Berkman described as the “propaganda value” of her highly publicized confrontations with the law.

Goldman’s 1916 trial for delivering a lecture on birth control in New York on February 11, 1916, was one such trial that she deliberately used as a “political forum” for promulgating her anarchist ideologies related to women’s sexual freedom and reproductive rights. Despite the arrest of birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger, her husband William Sanger, and other birth control advocates in the months immediately preceding her arrest, Goldman continued to deliver lectures on birth control across the nation, fully aware that her actions would invite attention from legal officials. She was repeatedly arrested and charged with various offences related to such lectures throughout 1915-1916, but such arrests usually resulted in fines or convictions that were overturned on appeal. During her February 1916 lecture in New York City, however, police arrested Goldman and charged under the Comstock Law, enacted in 1873, which prohibited the distribution of birth control information and contraceptive devices. From the moment of her arrest, Goldman decided to advertise her trial publicly and situate it within popular cultures of the spectacle in

order to disseminate her political ideas. As Alice Wexler contends, Goldman “geared up for a massive publicity campaign to attract attention to her case,” and in the weeks immediately preceding her trials, she organized meetings, banquets, and masquerade balls in popular hotels and theatres that were attended by hundreds of publicly prominent individuals, including writers, artists, anarchists, physicians, liberals, and free-speech advocates (212). Goldman’s active publicization of her arrest and the political issues involved, and particularly her decision to use popular cultural forms of entertainment, including masquerades and entertaining banquets, to draw attention to the political issues involved in her case undoubtedly contributed to the huge crowds that came to the courthouse to witness her trials.⁶ The *New York Times* reported that over five hundred people flocked to Goldman’s 1916 trial “as if it were a play, with Emma Goldman in the leading role” (qtd. in Wexler 213). Though she was convicted and sentenced to 15 days in the workhouse, Goldman viewed her trial as a theatrical and spectacular form of active resistance, and declared that the cause of birth control advocates “was advanced by at least ten years through the publicity given to it by our arrests and trials” (qtd. Wexler 215).

⁶From her earliest arrests, Goldman used masquerades, balls and concerts to draw public attention to her legal trials and the politics involved. In December 1893, a benefit concert and ball was held in New York City for Goldman and others imprisoned for speaking to the unemployed and charged with incitement to riot. On April 19 1916 a benefit banquet was held for Goldman at the Hotel Brevoort in New York City and was attended by notable artists, writers, and doctors, including Robert Henri, George Bellows, Robert Minor, and Rose Pastor Stokes.

From her earliest arrests and trials in the mid 1890s, Goldman used her legal battles as a popular platform from which to draw attention to her political ideologies. After her release from prison in 1894 for her conviction of incitement to riot, she was welcomed at a popular theatre in New York City by a crowd of over three thousand supporters from all walks of life, including doctors, lawyers, professors, and priests. For the next twenty-three years, until her deportation in 1919, Goldman engaged in massive publicity campaigns to bring to the forefront of the popular cultural consciousness not only her trials, but also the political issues involved in her trials. Her arrests and trial in 1916 and especially her 1917 for conspiracy to obstruct the draft enabled Goldman to capitalize on the public's fascination with the popular spectacle of her legal dramas. Clearly the mainstream press's consistent coverage of her trials and its dramatic depictions of them certainly contributed to the spectacularization of this particular trial and her other legal trials, but as she reveals in her autobiographies, she was orchestrating the show from the moment of her arrest. When U.S. Marshals entered her residence in 1917 to arrest her for her anti-war activities, Goldman effortlessly stepped into her theatrical cultural role as a criminal outlaw, and, as reported by the *New York Times*, changed into a royal purple gown so that she would be properly attired for what she described as the "reception awaiting her" at the police station (1931: 611).

Goldman's self-representation as a theatrical character starring in a legal drama about political radicalism was only further enhanced after her arrest, and especially through her published writings and speeches about her trial, which are replete with theatrical metaphors and rhetoric. Indeed, in her autobiographies and, most surprisingly, in her defense speech during her 1917 trial for her anti-conscription activities, Goldman unambiguously characterizes her own particular legal trials and the trials of all political radicals in America as theatrical "farces" and staged spectacles that are less concerned with achieving justice than with offering spectacular and sensationalist representations of radical politics to modern popular culture. She thus decided, along with her co-defendant Alexander Berkman, to use her defense speech not to present a legal justification for her anti-war stance, but rather to offer a theatrical and spectacular promulgation of her anarchist ideas that commanded the attention of the popular press and its readers. As she explains in her autobiography,

We did not believe in the law and its machinery, and we knew that we could expect no justice. We would therefore completely ignore what was to us mere farce; we would refuse to participate in the court proceedings. Should this method prove impractical, we would plead our own case, not in order to defend ourselves, but to give public utterance to our ideas. . . . Our trial would have meaning only if we could

turn the court-room into a forum for the presentation of the ideas we had been fighting for throughout all our conscious years. (613-614)

Goldman undoubtedly succeeded in “turn[ing] the court-room into a forum,” and more specifically, a popular cultural forum for the presentation of her radical political ideologies. One of the most effective means by which she achieved this goal was through her use of theatrical rhetorical and metaphorical devices throughout her defense speech to the jury.

From the beginning of her speech, Goldman focuses upon the spectacular behaviour practiced by legal officials during her arrest and subsequent trial. Throughout the speech, she repeatedly and directly compares police officers, U.S. Marshals, and District Attorneys to popular performers, entertainers, and circus managers, and such comparisons, alongside the melodramatic diction used to describe the actions of such legal officials, deliberately represent her arrest as a melodramatic spectacle:

The methods employed by [US Marshals and District Attorney] Marshal McCarthy and his hosts of heroic warriors were sensational enough to satisfy the famous circus men, Barnum & Bailey. A dozen or more heroes dashing up two flights of stairs, prepared to stake their lives for their country, only to discover the two dangerous disturbers and trouble-makers, Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, in their

separate offices, quietly at work at their desks, wielding not a sword, nor a gun or a bomb, but merely their pens! Verily, it required courage to catch such big fish. But the farce-comedy had to be properly staged if the Marshal and the District Attorney were to earn immortality. Hence, the sensationalist arrest . . . (1917: 56)

By beginning her defense speech with such a dramatic and farcical description of her arrest, Goldman strategically draws attention to the sensationalist and spectacular methods deployed by the U.S. Marshal and the District Attorney to arrest her, depicting her own arrest not as an official legal procedure, but as an entertaining spectacle , thereby locating it within popular cultural contexts of modern performance. Her direct reference to circuses and her use of the term “farce-comedy” deliberately present her arrest as an entertaining performance staged by legal officials who performatively cast themselves in heroic roles. By strategically comparing her arrests to popular forms of cultural entertainment and characterizing legal officials as performers starring in a political form of popular drama, Goldman thus effectively displaces her conflicts with the law from “official,” elitist, and institutionalized legal discourses and contexts, relocating it within modern cultures of (political) performance and the political spectacle. She thereby demonstrates how the antagonism between political radicals and the American legal system played out

before the eyes of American public upon popular cultural stages of performance.

Goldman continues to describe the events following her arrest with theatrical rhetoric, presenting the entire legal process as a dramatic and staged production:

The stage having been appropriately set for the three-act comedy, and the first act successfully played by carrying off the villains in a madly dashing automobile – which broke every traffic regulation and barely escaped crushing every one in its way – the second act proved even more ludicrous. Fifty thousand dollars bail was demanded, and real estate refused when offered by a man whose property is rated at three hundred thousand dollars, . . . thus breaking every right guaranteed even to the most heinous criminal. . . . Finally the third act, played by the Government in this court during the last week. The pity of it is that the prosecution knows so little of dramatic construction, else it would have equipped itself with better dramatic material to sustain the continuity of the play. As it was, the third act fell flat, utterly, and presents the question, Why such a tempest in a teapot? (1917: 57).

Goldman's repeated references to the "acts" of her experiences with the legal system clearly encourage the jury to view her trial not as an official

judicial process, but rather as a “play,” a “three-act comedy” staged for the amusement of popular American culture. The amusement value of her trial was also made evident through the hundreds of individuals from all class, ethnic, and political backgrounds who stood outside the courthouse during her trial, hoping for a glimpse of the leading actress of the legal drama occurring inside the courthouse. The *New York Times* presented daily accounts of Goldman’s trial and the popular attention it was receiving, offered the following report on the first day of her trial: “The courtroom was packed at both the morning and afternoon sessions, while fully 500 followers, each wearing a red rose, were turned away by United States Deputy Marshals” (“Reds Are Defiant, Can Get No Delay”).

Throughout her autobiography, written more than a decade after her 1917 trial and subsequent deportation, Goldman continues to characterize her trial as a theatrical production, noting that the presiding judge and the Assistant U.S. District Attorney “were in their appointed places. Surrounding them were the lesser stars in the play about to be staged” (1931: 615). Once again, she uses theatrical rhetoric to demonstrate her views that her trial was but a mere farce, a “Punch and Judy show”:

On our return to court Monday July 9, we found the stage set for the last act of the tragicomedy that had already last a week. Judge Mayer, Federal Attorney Content, and a large company of performers in the badly constructed plot were

already on the stage. The house was filled with invited official guests and claquers to lead the applause. Scores of pressmen were present to review the show. (1931: 620).

Goldman's deliberate representation of her trial as a theatrical play served not only to emphasize what she believed to be the "staged" nature of her trial, but also to draw attention to the ways in which members of the modern press and public likewise viewed her trial not as an official legal proceeding, but rather as a spectacular form of popular entertainment. The spectacular nature of her trial was only further enhanced by the events occurring outside of the courthouse. As reported by several New York mainstream newspapers and by Goldman herself, on the street below the courtroom, "a recruiting station had been erected, and patriotic harangues mingled with the music of a military band. Each time the national anthem was struck up, everybody in court was commanded rise, the soldiers present standing at attention" (Goldman, 1931: 619). Indeed, the spectacle of Goldman's trial for her anti-conscription and anti-war activities and writings was only further enhanced through the pro-war, patriotic spectacles playing out in the streets outside of the courthouse, which functioned as public dramatizations of the legal battles between pro-war and anti-war politics that were at the heart of Goldman's trial.

Goldman's spectacularization of her trials, and the theatrical rhetoric she uses to characterize both the players and procedures of her trial clearly worked to bring popular attention to the legal battles between

modern anarchists and American law. Equally important, however, are some of the other effects and implications of Goldman's strategic deployment of the culture of the spectacle. Goldman invoked the culture of the spectacle and modern theatrical practices not only to propagandize her radical politics, but also to satirize, lampoon, and ultimately undermine the very authority upon which the legal system is structured. Thus, her deployment of the spectacle throughout her trials functioned simultaneously to legitimate her politics, by representing anarchists not as dangerous threats, but rather as cast members starring in modern political theatre, and to travesty and challenge the mechanisms of legal trials and the authority of American laws.

Conclusion

Like so many other foundational anarchist thinkers, including Bakunin, Most, Kropotkin and Rocker, Goldman repeatedly found herself publicly cast in the role of the radical political outlaw, and it is thus unsurprising that the writings of all of these anarchists contain numerous references to the chasms between radical politics and the law. Nonetheless, concepts of the law played important and critical roles within anarchist discourses and ideas, and contrary to misconceptions associating anarchism with absolute lawlessness that abound in both popular and scholarly interpretations of anarchism, a close examination of the writings of anarchists related to the law and legal issues reveals that

anarchist thinkers, including Goldman, included positive concepts and representations of law in their visions of a liberated society. Central to their critical writings on law is what Robert F. Barsky describes as “the crucially important distinction between legitimate and illegitimate laws,” or what Goldman describes as “natural laws” and “human laws” (Barsky 168; Goldman, 1910: 58). Recognizing this distinction and its importance within anarchist thought is necessary not only to account for the apparent inconsistencies with Goldman’s writings on the law, but also to better understand the cultural and political implications of her highly publicized confrontations with the law and her spectacular representations of them.

Although her numerous arrests and trials suggest that Goldman and her anarchism stood for absolute “defiance of the law,” an examination of the particular legal charges brought against her demonstrate that Goldman challenged only particular laws – “illegitimate” laws that she viewed as oppressive through their restriction of basic human rights to freedom. Most, if not all of the legal charges that Goldman faced revolved around issues of freedom of speech, which was entrenched as a fundamental human right guaranteed to all American citizens in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Thus, her legal trials reveal that she was not opposed to all American laws, but only those laws that infringed upon basic human rights laws codified within foundational American legal documents. Indeed, Goldman and other modern anarchists sought to resist not sources of “legitimate” or “natural”

law, but instead “illegitimate” laws, such that their objective, “surprisingly perhaps, [wa]s to challenge authority by supporting legitimate laws, those which incline in the direction of the oppressed against their oppressors” (Barsky 172).

Goldman overtly demonstrated her support of “legitimate laws” through her consistent references, in both her speeches and writings, to foundational American legal documents, including the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, and her endorsement of “legitimate” American laws is perhaps most obvious in her “New Declaration of Independence” (1909). Written at the request of an unnamed mainstream newspaper, which “subsequently refused to publish it,” Goldman’s essay quotes verbatim particular phrases and sentences from the original Declaration of Independence, and effectively locates her “radical” anarchist ideals and demands for justice, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” within an institutionalized American legal discourse (1909: 451). Such contextualization thus grounded her anarchist ideas in familiar, respected and mainstream legal cultures of American society, and clearly sought to locate anarchism outside of strictly “radical” political discourses and cultures. Similar effects were also achieved through Goldman’s frequent references to American Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, philosopher Thomas Paine, writers Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and other well-known and respected

Americans who participated in the “American struggle for liberty” (1910: 76).

Goldman unequivocally situated her anarchist ideas within American legal discourses and her anarchist acts of “propaganda by the deed” within American legal cultures, for she consciously engaged in public acts that were sure to be considered “illegal.” Her strategic positioning of herself and her anarchist politics within modern legal cultures enabled Goldman to draw widespread popular attention to the political and legal issues involved in her defiant acts against the law, thus dismantling socially constructed boundaries between mainstream legal cultures and cultures of political radicalism. As this chapter demonstrates, however, Goldman also performed such cultural transgressions through her representation of her arrests and trials as spectacles staged by the American judicial system and legal officials for the entertainment of popular culture. Thus, Goldman’s writings on the law and her legal trials illuminate the ways in which the borders between modern legal, popular, and (radical) political cultures were beginning to shift and collapse. Perhaps more importantly, they reveal that the modern culture of the spectacle was the crucial site of both the intersections and the conflicts between radical politics and American law.

Conclusion

Propaganda by the deed has a rich historical tradition within anarchism, and clearly played an important role in Goldman's political ideologies and practices. Unlike many of her anarchist comrades, however, Goldman personalized even this facet of anarchism, by propagandizing her self as an individual personality, and ultimately, as the quintessential representation of an anarchic subjectivity. Unrestricted by any authoritative or defining singular subject position, Goldman strategically positioned herself and her politics within a vast range of socio-political cultural milieus and in doing so, enacted the anarchist politics of subjectivity underlying her political theories, as well as avant-garde and popular cultural ideas and practices of modern self-construction. Her strategies of self-representation, and particularly her performative and highly publicized displays of self worked not only to disseminate Goldman's radical political ideas to the masses, but also enabled her to create for herself publicly a subjectivity that constantly negotiated the borders between politics and art, the avant-garde and the popular, the individual and the social, and finally, between the personal and the political. Transgressing all socially constructed boundaries, Goldman immersed her political ideologies and herself within a multiplicity of modern cultures, and her cross-cultural work – and indeed, her iconic roles within so many cultures – not only illuminates the critical

intersections between modern cultures of political radicalism, the avant-garde, and the popular, but also the ways in which self-spectacularization became a defining feature of such cultures.

Violating all class, gender, and ethnic boundaries of cultural identity, Goldman manipulated the modern culture of the spectacle and practices of performance to enact her anarchist politics and to embody her conviction that personality is propaganda. Her cross-cultural self-(im)positionings also reveal the modernist and feminist politics of subjectivity underlying her various self-representations. Goldman's cross-cultural hybridity defied traditional notions of a stable and unified subjectivity, such that her heterogeneous and dynamic personality can also be viewed as a quintessential representation of modern subjectivity and specifically of an emancipated modern female subjectivity. Modern feminist, avant-garde and popular ideologies and practices of the self undeniably played essential roles in Goldman's political ideas and the ways in she personified such ideas, and arguably allowed her to achieve success in publicizing her belief that it "is more important to do propaganda with one's personality than with politics." Indeed, and as this project has demonstrated, Goldman's self-stylized representations functioned as successful political propaganda, and all of the various cultures of modernity in which she situated both herself and her politics ultimately prove to be of critical relevance to any study of Goldman's

iconic personality, her political ideas, and the crucial intersections between.

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