Anarchist Surrealism &
Canadian Apocalyptic
Modernism: Allusive Political
Praxis in Elizabeth Smart’s By
Grand Central Station I Sat
Down And Wept

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This article gestures to the 1930s through 1950s international anarchist literary networks that ran from Paris to London and Athens, Cairo and Alexandria, Shanghai, Oxford and Cambridge, New York and San Francisco, and finally Big Sur and Vancouver. The distribution across these nodes was intense and sustained, but this project only hints at the historical recuperation in order to contextualize a more focused revision of critical approaches to

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the Canadian novelist Elizabeth Smart in her 1945 work *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*. In the first instance, a significant component of the New Modernist Studies has been dominated by Marxist reading paradigms and a sense of propriety from conservative perspectives refined through a liberal helping of the vaguely liberal. This is to say, the New Modernist Studies and the recent expansion of Late Modernist Studies within it orient toward a normative reading position that is progressive in the general sense but rarely radical in its readerly interventions. Anarchist studies remain stubbornly invisible all too often, despite very fine work from Allan Antliff, Jesse Cohn, and David Kadlec, while the political neutering of anarchism by relocating its interests in purely formal matters in David Weir’s Jamesonian study has taken on a normative value in literary readings. *Invisible* is also a doubly suggestive description of anarchism in the New Modernist Studies—an anti-authoritarian paradigm fails to comfortably fit the critical schema, so it becomes difficult for many scholars to recognize it even when it is near the surface or even explicit. Anarchism in effect becomes the blind spot, the scotoma, of the New Modernist Studies’ methodology—anarchism hides in the hole of the optic nerve when they try to see it, persistently present but insidiously invisible. Smart, as novelist, has been misread as a result, such that her avant-garde *By Grand Central Station* degenerates into a work critically understood as embodying emotional excess in form and content because its radical politics pale from view when her allusive references to the anarchist
networks of the 1930s and 40s are etiolated—this article aims to restore the red and black colours of her work and thereby a politicized reading.

The network I explore in *Personal Modernisms* began with an anarchist Post-Surrealism in Paris through the Villa Seurat group in its little magazines *Booster* and *Delta*, which proposed an organic sense of Surrealism using a conscious revision of automatism, hence returning focus to the ego between the hedonistic unconscious and the totalitarian superego. This was a non-communist Surrealism with an anti-authoritarian aim expressed through anarchism by Henry Miller in his “Open Letter to Surrealists Everywhere.” This spread to the Art & Freedom group in Cairo in their “LONG LIVE DEGENERATE ART” manifesto as a reaction to the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition in Munich, and both spread to London in the New Apocalypse movement, cum New Romanticism, cum “Personalist Literature” in the journals *Bolero, Kingdom Come*, and *Transformation*. This meant Henry Miller, Lawrence Durrell, Herbert Read, Alex Comfort (the anarchist who wrote *Joy of Sex*), George Woodcock, the fantasy novelist Henry Treece, the Egyptian anarchist writers Albert Cossery and George Henein, and many others all began programs of mutual publication support. The London group was, entirely by chance, largely recruited together to serve in Cairo during the war rather than in Europe, where good fortune led to their meeting several Villa Seurat authors who had already fled as refugees from Greece. For a brief moment, Henry Miller ferried
their works to New York and San Francisco for further publications supported by the San Francisco Renaissance writers George Leite, Kenneth Rexroth, and Robert Duncan, as well as the Libertarian Reading Circle, Circle Editions, and Jean Varda’s anarchist commune in Big Sur, whose big tent had already housed many of them in Paris prior to his relocation to America. Amidst this richness of distribution, the Chinese anarchists in the London group publishing in Oxford relocated to Shanghai and there published several of these same authors again in T’ien Hsia Monthly before the Chinese Communist Revolution. And New York. And Woodstock. And even coastal British Columbia… Smart would go on to first write By Grand Central Station in Pender Harbour, British Columbia, but this migratory background to her novel is only a part of a large network for circulating literary materials, and her points of contact among the various nodes are more extensive than is recognized.

From the established narrative of the thirties, when we think of war-time writing, the dominant notions are Late Modernism, the ascendancy of the Auden generation, the “shrinking” of the British High Moderns, and bohemian anticipations of the Beats and Angry Young Men. Reading over the shoulders of the Auden generation of authors, whose histories have become normative even while the cast of participants broadens to include women and men beyond the Oxbridge networks, we find anarchism incomprehensible in a paradigm of Marxist class struggle and an end to political activity as individuals. This is to
say, there were no war poets, the avant-garde eroded, realism grew in proportion to the investment in progressive politics—anarchism exited stage left after Spain, and the individual steadily diminished as the unit of worth in a creative paradigm more oriented toward surface and class consciousness. But this is the scotoma. To the Auden generation of critics, anarchism was nonsensical, and hence its role vanished from their histories, and as a consequence the politics of anarchist authors paled and made little sense to a readership coached in attending to notions of bourgeois freedom and social determinism rather than self-possession and responsibility.

Between the Auden generation and the Angry Young Men and Beats, what I call in Personal Modernisms the Personalist group was overshadowed by the war in which they served in either military or pacifist roles. They were overshadowed by their predecessors who attained positions of editorial authority, and they were overshadowed by their progenitors who assumed the mantle of the 1960s avant-garde without voicing loudly their own readerly influences, as each successive generation is wont to do. Crucially, the Personalists were disregarded because of their anarchist politics. They were of a generation too young to remain radical and rebellious after the exhaustions of the war years. Their broad networks of mutual aid rather than clearly defined schools or movements were not a Singular Modernism with a totalizing vision, aesthetic, or mode of understanding, and while this lent them flexibility the absence of manifestos and clearly defined
objectives made them ostensibly diffuse or even unrelated to each other in the absence of clearly stated affiliations. In this sense, it was a movement remarkably in tune with the redevelopment of anarchism in the 1960s, even though it proved difficult for young allies to recognize this older but familiar face. Most particularly, modern readings of the misogyny of Henry Miller’s obscene novels, as established in the mainstream critical tradition by Kate Millet’s 1970 *Sexual Politics*, seem to find it ever increasingly difficult to notice Miller’s anarchist revision to Surrealism and his pacifism, and thereby his support for the young Canadian cult novelist Elizabeth Smart during the early stages of her career in the 1930s and 40s. Before her love affair with George Barker, which is taken as the *roman à clef* for her writings and thereby stripping them of their own voice without a masculine contextualization, Smart was publishing her poetry in Miller’s Parisian periodicals and experimenting in the artists commune organized by Miller’s friend Jean Varda.

Where *Personal Modernisms* recuperates this network in detail and theorizes its praxis and poetics, this chapter more narrowly foregrounds what others have typically cast as background: Smart’s important role in this generation and its politics from 1934 to 1949 and the recontextualization of her work from this series of affiliations, crossing from Paris to California to New York to London, and finally rural Pender Harbour on the Pacific Coast. The leap from Modernism to Kitchen Sink Realism and experimental bohemianism has led to the widespread be-
lief in a pre- and post-war generational gap. This assumption neglects the intermediary group of writers because, out of context, their work looses its coherence. With its ideological invisibility for the progressive readers, as outlined above, its allusions and metonyms are as a consequence unintelligible in the dominant interpretive paradigms. This group’s vital meetings were not in the centre of empire as occurred with the Modernists and Auden Generation—it was very much abroad and bound to the cultural lives of other nations and literary cultures, and hence Smart’s participation appears secondary to the ferocious release of libidinal energy in her novel. Moreover, this group’s rejection of the authoritarian elements of both fascist and Marxist movements gives a superficially passive impression; despite the ferocity of Smart’s emotional excess in *By Grand Central Station*, the euphemism of quietism for anarchism leads the de-contextualized reader to understand her as a passive object of the male subject’s actions throughout. Returning Smart to a position of agency, a position from which her work never departs, entails by necessity overturning the strong readings that elide her politics. This means refuting Fredric Jameson’s persistent refusal to engage with anarchism, and much of the critical contrasts reflect issues of selfhood, identity, and bourgeois freedom or individualism over which thirties writers disagreed. Just as George Orwell elides Miller’s anarchism in his influential book-cum-essay *Inside the Whale* by referring to it as “quietism” and “defeatism” (by virtue of being pacifist), so too does Smart’s critique of armed conflict and the in-
Industrialized production of war deflate under patriarchal readings that cast her as the languishing and ravenous sexualized female. Attention to allusion restores the agency of Smart’s political critique in the novel and her gendered sense of female fecundity in conflict with a war effort embodying the domination-seeking elements of patriarchy—this also sets Smart into a series of relations distinct from those granted her in the established criticism, ranging from Birgitta Frojdendahl’s contention that “the reader realizes that the speaker and the protagonist [in By Grand Central Station] lack personalities, since the main theme is passion per se” (n.p.) to Denise Heaps’ contention in relation to jouissance that Smart was “gifted with a rhapsodic, sensual, and at times hyperbolic and overwrought poetic prose style, a style capable of ecstatic ascents and sober descents” (n.p.). Robert McGill pushes this even further and most recently by arguing Smart’s novel is “predominantly a poetic rendering of her inner life, which is characterized by her desire for her lover and her agony when he eventually abandons her” (McGill 68). Rather than Smart as an allusive antiauthoritarian, the critical literature points to Smart as a passive and erotic ecstatic.

The various positions of the authors involved are by no means stable, but they found solidarity in an antiauthoritarian vision. They range from the “Anarchist Knight” Herbert Read and the mystical Robert Duncan to the violent libidinal energies of the proletarian Kenneth Patchen or the pornographer Henry Miller, and there are also the
complexities of agents of empire, such as Lawrence Durrell, and licentious subjects of empire, such as Albert Cossery. Even amidst the liberally progressive groups, an antiauthoritarian vision teamed with anarchic energies before the post-war stagnation and exhaustion made several poets politely mask their politics, as was the case with university professors like J.F. Hendry (who left anarchist London groups to teach poetry at Laurentian University) and G.S. Fraser (who set aside his most active work after a nervous breakdown and suicide attempt in Japan to become a lecturer at the University of Leicester), all set in contrast to the unschooled George Barker and Dylan Thomas. Even the anarchism of *The Joy of Sex* appears in this network through Alex Comfort’s poetry, novels, and anarchist theory. Despite their differences, a common core of mutual support and personal vision—a deep solidarity—unifies these authors, whether they embraced or secreted away the loaded term “anarchism,” remained faithful to it, resolved it to an inoffensive antiauthoritarianism, or turned to mainstream views in middle age or in the hot conflicts of the Cold War. Returning Smart’s *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* to this network of relations troubles the apolitical approaches to her work that have privileged the intensity of her romantic excess and called out for her valuation as a desiring female subject, but that all too readily permit popularized (and inaccurate) depictions of a hysterical woman’s pre-feminist paroxysm of self-abasement to masculine desire in drippingly baroque prose. My central contention is that this is a wildly impoverished reading of an anarchist nov-
el with complex formal and social preoccupations.

*By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* is a cult classic of Canadian literature with a significant popular following, but its ties to Smart’s milieu are remarkably unexplored *despite* the extensive trend toward biographical readings. While many critics have recognized that the book’s poetic diction and rich allusive structure are ripe for critiques of emotional excess, contextualization of her work and the restoration of its allusive gestures reveal this as a *deliberate* post-surrealist experiment and not reductively as an emotional paroxysm. From the opening sentence’s syntactic reach to *express* excess and the feverish collapse of possibilities on the closing page, the novel’s semblance of *jouissance* is never merely frenzied—it is anarchically allusive, dense with associations, and thereby shows conscious craft, which is the defining trait of the anarchist post-Surrealism theorized by Henry Miller, in tandem with the “organicism” of the London-based New Apocalypse movement that responded under Herbert Read’s influence to Miller’s “An Open Letter to Surrealists Everywhere” following on the 1936 London International Surrealist Exhibition. The moment when Miller and Herbert Read debated these ideas in their letters is the same as Smart’s time in Paris and then Cassis with Miller’s friend Jean Varda. Unsurprisingly, Smart evidences the consciously revised automatism of the Villa Seurat, New Apocalypse, and Art & Freedom movement everywhere in the novel, both in the semblance of orgiastic excess and in the chaos of images that are given order.
through anarchic allusions. Biographically, Smart met her lover in the novel, George Barker, through her correspondence with Lawrence Durrell. Moreover, we know Smart had ongoing contact with Henry Miller and an intense sexual relationship with Miller’s post-Surrealist friend, Varda. Miller and Smart later lived in Varda’s Big Sur anarchist commune in California, which is the setting for the opening of *By Grand Central Station* when Barker fled Japan. This makes it remarkable that the contextual sense of Smart’s novella in the English Surrealist movement, which is based on its specific revisions to Surrealism through the New Apocalypse, has gone entirely unnoticed. Tellingly, in an otherwise excellent biography that does not include the word “anarchism,” Rosemary Sullivan gestures with wordplay to the politics in Smart’s life during this moment when her first sexual encounter occurred with Varda: “She had found the rhetoric of metaphor to contain her vision, surrealistic and sustaining. What is remarkable is the way she weaves the banal—‘the cloistral pickings of the nose’—and the apocalyptic” (Sullivan 114). The surprise is that the surrealistic and apocalyptic were not explicitly joined given Smart’s affiliations at this point in her life.

As a first point of entry, much is made by critics of the titular allusion in Smart’s work to Psalm 137:1: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.” This first allusion makes plain the novel’s work as an act of recuperation and memory, but noting this remains easily limited through an emphasis on
loss, lack, and mourning. Although Smart’s narrative mourns a lost lover and completed love affair, this is not biographically true in a strict sense—as an artistic work unburdened from a strictly biographical reading of her relationship with the British poet George Barker. *By Grand Central Station* is not a remembrance of a specific lover, and its title does not gesture to lost love as one might read the Song of Solomon but rather to a lost time in the Psalm, a lost period, and a lost community. Simply noticing this reshapes our attention and emphasis for the subsequent reading beyond the title. Smart rebuilds a lost era, a lost home. In the Psalm we see a recollection of Zion by the Jews after their expulsion by the invading Babylonians followed by the articulation of the nature of the song: “For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentors mirth, saying ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion.’” (Psalm 137:3). Smart’s novel is such a song after war, but rather than mourning her loss of George Barker as a lover, we should read singing as a political response to exile after war and the suffering of the people in times of war. Apart from the inference of meaning from this allusion, the title also marks the importance of allusion itself, as a formal communicative mechanism, to the reader.

And allusion is very much the matter. Smart’s allusion to William Blake’s poem “The Question Answered” makes sudden sense of her otherwise confusing comments on state authorities. Blake offers his vision in his notebooks later collected as *Gnomic Verses*:

> What is it men in women do require?
The lineaments of Gratified Desire. What is it women do in men require? The lineaments of Gratified Desire. (Blake 153)

The conflict between “desire” and “require” paired in rhyme as well as the gendered division that permits only contours or lineaments of desire itself to be communicated without the reality, shifts from the satisfaction of desires or the demands of requirements to the performance for each other of the contours of consummation or semblances of satisfaction. Smart, in a fulfillment of Blake’s concerns over a troubling word such as “require” turns to the wartime agent of state hegemony as her protagonist and lover cross the American south: “[the police officer] was livid with hate of our lineaments of gratified desire” and again state power with “Witches were burnt at the stake, all over New England, just for love, just for wearing the lineaments of gratified desire” (Smart, By Grand 50, 97). This allusion, however, is not complete with Blake. Lawrence Durrell, who introduced Smart to her lover Barker and edited her contributions to the Villa Seurat journal Delta,\(^2\) uses the same allusion in The Alex-

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\(^{2}\) Smart’s poems “Comforter, Where, Where is Your Comforting” first appeared in Delta and the New Apocalypse literary journal Seven also included her “Three Poems” in a 1940 issue comprised of materials bequeathed to it after Delta’s closure with the outbreak of the Second World War. Both sets of poems are excluded from The Collected Poems of Elizabeth Smart, which is symptomatic of the critical scotoma related to her ties to the Villa Seurat generally, post-Surrealism specifically, and the New Apocalypse’s understanding of organicism in particular.
andria Quartet (110) as a reference to his own and his protagonist’s initials, L.G.D. Durrell began this trick with initials in 1935 in his novel *Pied Piper of Lovers* and *The Black Book* in 1938. The stock of both was lost during the war before 1945 when Smart published *By Grand Central Station* through Editions Poetry London, edited by their mutual friend James Meary Tambimuttu who published nearly everyone else in the same group of post-surrealist antiauthoritarian authors, but Smart refers at least to the latter.

While it may seem like an interpretive stretch to link Smart’s allusion to Blake to Durrell’s allusion to the same and further to anarchism, it becomes more plausible if we accept the reminder that Durrell introduced her to the lover whose lineaments she wears, and that she was reading Durrell’s own novel of post-Surrealist stylistic excess, *The Black Book*, in late 1939 while corresponding with Durrell to discuss her poetry. The importance of this link to the Villa Seurat is cemented by another shared allusion. Durrell’s first novel repeatedly alludes to the obscure Middle English poem “Quia Amore Langueo” (titled in bastardized Latin), and his protagonist Walsh sings a song setting of the work in a dramatic scene that provides the crisis of the middle section of the novel (*Pied* 203-205). Smart uses the same phrase, writing near the end of her book “I am without words. I am without thoughts. But quia amore langueo. I am dying for love. This is the language of love” (Smart, *By Grand* 109). This, nonetheless, is only a part of the allusion, and not an indication of hys-
terical excess of emotions. The careful phrase and its deployment as allusion is tied to another repeated image in Smart’s novel: the apple plucked from the same Middle English poem. For Smart’s narrator, writing of her injurious love and the vaginal wound her affair has left in her (in a direct parallel to the wounded Christ in the poem “Quia Amore Langueo,” queering the relationship to a feminized and passive savior), she writes “the apples (which ben ripe in my gardayne) fall only toward that” (89). The apples “which ben ripe in my gardayne” are a direct quotation from the poem. The same parallel to Christ recurs with the same allusion in the final scenes of the novel no fewer than four times: “My love is crucified on a floating cross…. My love has a bandage like a bowel of pain… But it is not the wound that chokes him” (107). This then flows through another repetition of the title of the poem “Quia Amore Langueo” (109) and thence to the organic image of the apples of her garden: “His hand of sympathy goes out to me, soft as a dove, his cheek like early apples…. With resurrection in his eyeballs” (110) and finally on the closing page of the work “Go into your garden, for your apples are ripe” (112). All are direct allusions to the poem she discovered through Durrell and his first novel *Pied Piper of Lovers*, a poem Barker then recited at her funeral in 1986. The point bears emphasis: despite the excess of the imagery, the womb-like wound carried by the speaker, and the erotic pleasure in the blood, this is not an emotional paroxysm of *jouissance* but rather a strategic deployment of allusion to, firstly,
create a poetic image with greater depth and, secondly, to tie Smart to the antiauthoritarian network of authors through which she travelled across Europe and North America during the war years. Privileging this double function of allusion is a necessary precursor to recuperating the occluded politics of her novel.

Such linkages by allusion to Durrell may seem merely convenient, but this becomes yet-more dense. Henry Miller’s golden shit scene in *Tropic of Cancer* (97) is also linked by allusion (Smart, *By Grand 75*), Miller’s style appears as an echo in Smart (81), Durrell’s magma of history and the enormous Now in *The Black Book* (Durrell, *Black 176, 244*) appears in allusion (Smart, *By Grand 79, 65*), and Smart quite plainly quotes from Dylan Thomas’ short story collection *The Burning Baby*, an excerpt from which he published in Durrell and Miller’s anarchist periodical *Delta*, a journal that deeply affected the New Apocalypse and in which she published her poetry (Smart, *By Grand 109*). With this excess of allusion, not an excess of hysterical desire, the invisibility of anarchism is first noticeably operating—rather than signaling careful structure, the richness may become chaotic to a reader without the frame of reference.

While allusion is very much the formal matter at the heart of Smart’s *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*, it only informs the reader of Smart’s own readings, and the meaning of an allusion may be ambiguous. The interpretive matter is that allusion operates as a formal technique through which she codes her social interven-
tion and critique of industry versus organicism and atomic apocalypse versus sexual reproduction. The important shift is that this social critique and its allusive framework bring her work into a new politically charged context and make it intelligible through the same anarchist paradigm as this wide network to which she gestures so frequently. By taking Miller’s anarchist post-Surrealism with conscious manipulation of the creative materials culled from the unconscious, and conceptualizing it in tandem with the New Apocalypse’s emphasis on the organic, the politics of Smart’s various comparisons and allusions then stand out strongly. Miller argues that “The age we live in is the age which suits us: its is we who make it, not God, not Capitalism, not this or that, call it by any name you like. The evil is in us…. No system of government, no belief will provide us with that liberty and justice which men whistle for with the death-rattle” (Miller, “An Open” 154–55), and in addition to this Henry Treece and Stefan Schimanski present the New Apocalypse’s concept of Personalism:

our Personalist belief rejects all politics which do not grow, organically, from living….; where lust for power and security have separated man from man, have disembodied the spirit, have disrupted the community and have made freedom the perquisite of the leisured few.

Similarly, it rejects those fascist systems which control the defects of society by curtailing the liberty of the individual, which subordinate the destinies of men
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to the whims of a Leader…, which denies them from their Selves…. Personalism rejects all forms of government which ignore spiritual values, which do not see in man an autonomously creative unit whose supreme vocation is the understanding and healing of the Self. (Treece and Schimanski 13)

With these concepts foregrounded as among Smart’s points of reference and as collaborators in her network of poetic collaborators, her work in the novel takes on a greater resonance that eclipses the tendency to find in her only a female emotional hysteria, and she finds in the ungoverned America:

The determination of early statesmen who were mild but individual… No great neon face has been superimposed over their minor but memorable history. Nor has the blood of the early settlers, spilt in feud and heroism, yet been bottled by a Coca-Cola firm and sold as ten-cent tradition. (57)

The blurring of the state and commercialism is clear, but the addition of an anarchist or anti-authoritarian perspective broadens the rationale for combining the state and commercialism and twinned evils. Both are anti-individual and hegemonic, and the blending anticipates the kind of fury of excess found later in Robert Duncan’s anti-war Passages—Duncan, notably, was participating in the same anarchist reading circle that Smart visited in Berkeley after meeting Kenneth Rexroth (Hamalian 135), and Duncan also supported the anarchist commune in which Henry Miller lived in Big Sur, where Jean Varda from
Paris hosted both Smart and Miller as well as Barker after his arrival. The kinship between Smart and the San Francisco Renaissance made visible in this pairing of the state and consumerism is early but vital.

Smart also takes up the contest between the individual and the nation by writing “There have been men who have been more remembered than nations” (64) only to set her dismissal of “my dear country” (64) in contrast to an extended emphasis on the personal and individual on the facing page in a string of first person pronouns culminating in another parallel to Durrell’s *The Black Book* through the “now” (65). These anti-state gestures (67-69) recur in a juxtaposition of the abasement of bloodied corpses of soldiers against the productive blood of her giving birth. Her fecundity is surely feminist, yet it is also more—it is a refutation of state authority begun in organicism at the opening of the novel and culminating in the reproduction at its end. It is also certainly not the apolitical hysterical paroxysm to which Smart is too often tied.

This then brings the politics of Smart’s novel to the fore and reinvigorates our capacity for readings that move beyond biographical essentialisms and romantic excess. The industrial modernity of the state and its war-machine is set as the opposite of the individual expressing an organic and antiauthoritarian Personalism formally expressed through the concept of an anarchist post-Surrealism first developed in the Villa Seurat but disseminated rapidly around the globe. This is Smart’s grand contrast in *By Grand Central Station*, and it is precisely the same
conflict articulated in the anarchist works of the New Apocalypse authors who had themselves developed out of Miller’s anarchist post-Surrealism and then followed by others in Egypt, London, California, and Shanghai.

This shifted interpretative paradigm can in turn make a great deal of sense from Smart’s otherwise inexplicable 1945 avoidance of directly mentioning war and politics through an unpoltical stance that extols the organic, fecund, and reproductive. Not discussing the war that had engulfed the world is precisely the point—the praxis is to privilege the personal while barring the belicose. These are the interstices of state power between which she outlines a life lived in the personal and productive: “a lot of statesmen will emerge twirling their moustaches, and see the birth-blood, and know that they have been foiled” (Smart, *By Grand* 66; emphasis mine). The state’s defeat by organic reproduction reflects very closely the “organic form” of the New Apocalypse. Smart follows this in an anti-capitalist vein by setting her reproductive seed as salvation, which also disallows patriarchal interpretations of her fecundity as receptive and passive rather than active and productive, for “I shall still have a pocketful of rye, whose currency no Foreign Exchange can control, nor value be diminished by transplantation” (Smart, *By Grand* 67). Organic reproduction becomes, for Smart, the embodiment and dissemination of an antiauthoritarian politics lived in the gaps between state powers and capital, and as a consequence her final cry of loss in the novel’s closing is not a failure to mourn the departure of
her lover but an expression of terror as a new age of warfare emerges that sets organic fecundity against mechanization and an atomic sterility.

The conclusion of the novel and its titular allusion now come to life as an anti-industrial organic focus on the individual in an Apocalyptic embodied vein: “By Grand Central Station I sat down and wept: / I will not be placated by the mechanical motions of existence…. [My weeping] lit up Grand Central Station like a Judgment Day” (103; emphasis original). The unborn child is the Christ of this Apocalypse coming to wash away the urban world of industrialized war such that “I am going to have a child, so all my dreams are of water,” an image that surrounds the watered city:

When Lexington Avenue dissolved in my tears, and the houses and the neon lights and the nebulae fell jumbled into the flood, that child was the naked newborn babe striding the blast…. The grief trumpets its triumph (Smart, By Grand 104).

This unmistakably apocalyptic frame from the seven blasting trumpets of Revelations then returns to the allusions seen in “Quia Amore Langeuo” and an anarcho-pacifist vision of the Second World War. From this war, and through this allusion, and through the allusive bonds to the anarchist network of authors distributing their poetic materials globally, Smart’s narrator awakes, and in this context, her love story is allegorical. For the war, her lover “sees the huge bird of catastrophe fly by. Both its
wings are lined with the daily paper. Five million other voices are shrieking too…. All martyrdoms are in vain. He is drowning in the blood of too much sacrifice. / Lay aside the weapons, love, for all battles are lost” (111). The final organic call comes from Smart’s pinching of Durrell’s allusion when she repeats “Go into your garden, for your apples are ripe” (112), a phrase that ends this natural argument in the text before its final tragedy and recalls her own use of the apple as a figure for endless fecundity through generations in a fallen world (89, 110). Her child, the apple, is to be born, and in this knowledge of reproduction is all hope, and against it is all power seeking dominion. This cues the reader for the postwar world of inescapable modernity in the atomic age of annihilation that ends the novel:

   Odours of disinfectant wipe out love and tears. With rush and thunder the early workers overrun the world they have inherited, tramping out the stains of the wailing, bleeding past…. I myself prefer Boulder Dam to Chartres Cathedral. I prefer dogs to children. I prefer corncobs to the genitals of the male. Everything’s hotsy-totsy, dandy, everything’s OK. It’s in the bag. It can’t miss. (Smart, By Grand 112)

This dystopic vision is Smart’s ending to the novel and the destruction of the anarchic organicism of the New Apocalypse. Without placing Smart in the context of her 1945 novel, published by Tamibmuttu under the Editions Poetry London imprint that bound this wildly international group of authors together, we could not reach such a
reading. And a reading of the politics of Smart’s Canadian novel is long overdue.

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