

ALLEGORICAL ANARCHY

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By

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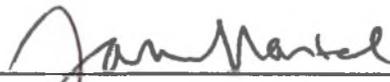
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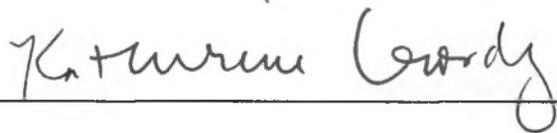
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ALLEGORICAL ANARCHY

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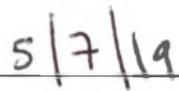
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In this work, I deploy allegory as a methodological tool within postanarchism which utilizes Max Stirner as a proto post-structuralist to reveal the power of place of the dialectic alongside the phantoms of liberal values therein. Through a deconstruction of political values, power is revealed as nonexistent in of itself, and thoroughly dependent upon voluntary servitude. In the deployment of voluntary inservitude, the subject finds herself at an uncontaminated, nonessentialist outside. Whereas postanarchist literature to date focuses on ontological anarchy at the outside, when Walter Benjamin's concept of allegory is put into constellatory communication with postanarchism, ontological anarchy is found to exist within the failure, the ruin, of power. Furthermore, whereas postanarchism finds insurrection preferable to revolution, I argue that the insurrectionist rupture created in allegory gives rise to revolutionary opportunity within the failure of the power of the dialectic. In sum, allegorical anarchy reveals the unseen anarchy of our daily lives within failed power, alongside operating as a potential revolutionary springboard when acknowledged and organized upon.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis



Chair, Thesis Committee



Date

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For Brower Alvin Dimond. My grandfather and best friend. This work is a work of the heart, a work of love in his memory. Walter Benjamin says that “the only way of knowing someone is to love them without hope.” My grandfather long ago, through deed and word, had taught me this important lesson before ever coming across Benjamin. My Grandfather was sensitive and loving, guided by his melancholic sense to never project hope and progress in anyone. He embodied an authentic, humble, and unconditional love removed from intention. It is from within this constellation of love that inspires and guides me. His love was, is, and will remain redemptive. I hold as a hope and duty to cultivate in remembrance this redemptive love alongside continuing its projection into the world. This is for you, Grandpa. I love you and miss you.



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Introduction

In what forms does radical politics manifest in the contemporary age? What does it look like, and how does it come about? Is revolution possible today, or even useful as a concept for radical politics? What sort of political imaginaries and subjectivities are possible within our historical moment?

With the collapse of the USSR, neoliberal capitalism has come to dominate the globe. Worse still, this neoliberalism is simultaneously supported by authoritarian state structures. It has been made evident that the classically liberal (i.e. libertarian) ideal of *laissez-faire* capitalism is nothing but pure bourgeois utopian fantasy. The sustainability of the 'free market' is ironically protected through consistent state intervention and coercion. Furthermore, the liberal-enlightenment narrative of the intrinsic marriage between representative democracy and capitalism has died; or has revealed to never have effectively existed in the first place. Chinese political economy represents the modern rendition of capitalism and its immediate ruin. After the great recession, most noticeably, capitalism has shown itself as a zombie, a living-corpse that doesn't even attempt to recite the individualist utopian tropes of the past. No longer does this capitalism try to hide its coercion and nihilism in idealistic phraseologies such as 'the American dream'. It deliberately operates as economic repression and exploitation in conjunction with state institutions, with the ruling classes seizing what they desire in broad day. In this way, current capitalism carries with it the worst elements of itself and 20th century authoritarian socialism; coercive incursion and unrelenting exploitation. Nonetheless, there is a fundamentally nihilistic mythic theology that permeates within the corpse of capitalism; all of us, including the capitalist class, still pay tribute to it, becoming the

objects of capital. This is what Walter Benjamin illuminates when claiming that capitalism is the monument of guilt.¹ All subjects (objects) of capitalism continually sacrifice themselves on the alter of capitalism in the futile endeavor to accrue capital for the sake of capital, acting as if capitalism were God itself. With our material and ideology reality embedded in this idolatry: incursion of market logic embedded into every facet of human life, alongside the Foucauldian panopticon of the state, it becomes apparent that it is imperative to develop an alternative and emancipatory politic in the face of such brutal nihilism. But, as Mark Fisher asked, *is there no alternative?*²

Walter Benjamin has been credited as saying that fascism emerges into the world from failed revolution. In the contemporary age, for the aforementioned reasons, the failed revolution is that of the experiment of neoliberal capitalism. In the current political moment, there are clear fascist elements emerging internationally. From the Golden Dawn in Greece, to Marine LePen and the National Front in France, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Netanyahu in Israel, Bolsanaro in Brazil, and the proliferation of fascist or fascist-sympathetic hate groups in the U.S., it becomes apparent that fascist sentiments have arisen out of the ruins of neoliberal capitalism; the ‘free market’ fetish has failed. Or, it has become obvious that it never had worked for anyone except the ruling classes in the first place.

The collapse of the USSR and the contemporary ruin of neoliberalism has served as an impasse for the political imaginary. For the left, the nihilism of the neoliberal guilt-

¹ Benjamin, Walter. 2004. 1 *Selected Writings*. eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W Jennings. First Harvard Press

² Fisher, Mark. 2009. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative*. Zero Books.

monument has obfuscated political possibility, instead more easily grasping an imagining of the apocalypse (some rooted in real possibility such as the degradation of the climate). Capitalistic nihilism then has colonized the political imaginary, making it difficult to conjure radical political alternatives that redeem life from catastrophe. Because of this, such prominent thinkers like Slavoj Žižek invert Marx's final thesis. Rather than the philosopher seeking to change the world, she must return back to thinking to again reinterpret it.

Žižek's demand to return to thinking, rather than preserving or bringing to return radical possibilities, is instead a product of cartesian dualism, and thusly a product of the regime of liberal thinking itself. It limits the potentiality of alternative subjectivity-making by reducing praxis to a linear progress that demands nuanced theory as an *a priori* rather than as emanating from political life itself. Instead of creating and embedding an either/or in the inversion of Marx's final thesis, I argue that the failure of the state and neoliberal capitalism reveals an ongoing anarchist practice at the level of daily life that can transform into moments of radical, even revolutionary possibility within the ruin of power. This daily-life anarchism is also known as *ontological anarchy*. Ontological anarchy is not something that comes about after a series of political actions, but is something that is always in our daily lives. However, I argue that is within moments of ruin that our daily life anarchisms becomes noticed as such. With the collapse of the USSR, alongside the nihilisms of capitalism, although the political imaginary on the left as been at an impasse pertaining to political imagining, but it is not stagnant either. Rather, it has begun gesturing toward anti-authoritarian, anarchic

alternatives. This shift from the Marxisms of the 20th century to anarchism is what is known as the ‘anarchist turn’.

The ‘Anarchist Turn’:

At a general level, the current ‘anarchist turn’ began with the collapse of the USSR and the solidification of capitalism at the global scale. With the left growingly weary of authority due to the authoritarian, and sometimes totalitarian makeup of the USSR, alongside its downfall, political action shifted *anarchistically*. Between this sensitivity toward public power (state) and private power (capitalism), many contemporary political movements do not view power in any form as anything remotely desirable. Such examples of this explicit anti-authoritarian social movements are: the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999, the autonomous seizure of Chiapas by the Zapatistas in retaliation against NAFTA, Occupy Wall Street, Gezi Park in Istanbul, and the recent events in Rojava. Put together, these specific political moments, amongst others, congeal what is called ‘new anarchism’.³

Despite its supposed ‘newness’, I argue that, rather than being actually new, these political moments have crystallized in instances of the failure of capitalism and state; revealing that anarchic resistance occurs daily in seemingly mundane ways, alongside instances of anarchy happening *regardless of intention*. These movements listed, rather than being a part of the umbrella of the distinct political category of ‘anarchism’ or ‘new anarchism’, are instead anarchic regardless of whatever original intention may have been purported from the outset of the political act. Rather than intentionally imposing

³ ‘New anarchism’ can be generally categorized as the modern expression of ‘traditional anarchism’: abolish the state, capitalism, and any involuntary or unnecessary hierarchical institution

themselves as explicitly anarchistic and ‘opting out of the state’, they become operatively anarchic due to the failure of power of state and capital. Furthermore, I argue that these anarchic expressions happen outside of intention, *even if the intention is complicit with the state and capitalism*. These moments are then, allegorically inflected; they become *allegorically anarchic*. Phrased differently, even in our complicity toward capitalism and state, due to the actual instances of failure of state and capitalism, (which will be shown to happen more than we initially think) our complicity betrays us, subverting complicity (or, reformism) into instances of allegorical anarchy. Simply put, the acknowledged failure of our particular moment in history reveals the anarchy of everyday life.⁴

Specifically, allegorical anarchy is a ruptured space of ruin of a place of power, such as capitalism or the state. In these allegorical ruptures, an insurrectionist space is carved into material reality. When this insurrectionist moment in space is acknowledged, it can be collectively deployed within failed power in the construction of myth and alternative political subjectivities. When insurrection (allegorically anarchic moments) is utilized in political movements and organization, revolutionary opportunities open up into the realm of possibility, blasting liberal hegemony out of the continuum of history.

Organization of the Paper:

This thesis develops a theory of the aforementioned concept, allegorical anarchy. Allegorical anarchy is not simply an appendage in the ‘progress of thought’ within the

⁴ It should be noted that there is a stigma to anarchy, and a false one at that. Anarchy does not indicate chaos or violence (these concepts emerge out of historical propaganda of the ruling classes, alongside false narratives of the liberal-enlightenment concept of human nature (which ironically reveals the very chaos and violence of liberal-enlightenment capitalism and governance). Anarchy, simply put, refers to autonomy without authority.

realm of anarchism. It is instead a specific way of being, acting, thinking, reading, and seeing anarchistically.

In the first chapter, I bring forth three key figures in anarchism and elucidate a general description of what one may call 'classical anarchism'. 'Classical anarchism', simply put, is the theoretical base of 'new anarchism'. In this realm of theory anarchism creates a dualism between the pure and uncontaminated subject and the external repression of state and capitalism. Within these anarchist narratives, I reveal their limitation and ultimate contamination within key components of liberalism. Because of this contamination, anarchism as a theory becomes severely damaged, unintentionally finding itself complicit with the very traditions that capitalism emerges from. Anarchism doesn't immediately become irrelevant, however. These instances of contamination are allegorical; they have an unintended reveal which redeems the clunky nature of the texts themselves. Nonetheless, the first chapter brings about tensions, limitations, and unintended revelations pertaining to the theoretical base of anarchism.

In the second chapter, I bring forth Max Stirner, who is used by Saul Newman to create a way of seeing called *postanarchism*. Postanarchism seeks to eliminate the metanarratives found in liberalism such as: the individual, progress, the state, and even revolution. For Newman, postanarchism starts with anarchy as the starting point, rather than a goal. The idea of progress and revolution are, for him, products of the dialectical power of place. Utilizing the poststructuralism of Foucault and reinterpreting Stirner as a proto-post-structuralist, Newman argues that power doesn't actually exist. Instead, it is a phantasm that is conjured within the subjects of power itself. Power is the cause and result of the subjectivity of the subjects which bring it into life in the first instance.

Because of this, revolution isn't even necessary, it is a product of the very paradigm of the power of place. Instead, anarchism is in the here and the now, at an uncontaminated outside of unreal power.

The third chapter deploys the Jewish mystic Marxism of Walter Benjamin. This unique way of seeing, I argue, is actually quite anarchistic. For Newman, Max Stirner's emphasis of the ego being the only thing-as-actual, with all else such as power being merely 'spooks', Benjamin claims that such an assertion is resultant of the deployment of bourgeois-liberal language itself. Stirner seeks to symbolically impose himself unto the material world. There is no uncontaminated outside of unreal power for 'pure' symbolic imposition that Stirner seeks. The concept of an uncontaminated outside is similar and operates similarly to the liberally-contaminated anarchist idea of power as merely external, it is just a matter of flipping what is external. Rather than finding an outside of repressive power in anarchism, or finding a subject outside the 'unrealness' of power, Benjamin claims that power is real, but isn't nearly as omnipotent as we think it is. In this way, Benjamin claims that fascism, rather than recently emerging, is kind of always there, but consistently fails in its attempt to assert itself. This 'fascism as the rule', so to speak, is allegorically revelatory pertaining to the continual failure of western liberal values. Being that fascism is the rule of liberalism, it (fascism) then too is both the result and embodiment of this failure. Within failed power is when anarchy becomes allegorically present, or acknowledgeable. When power fails, political activity becomes profaned to the level of daily life without formal relations of state, leaving it with an anarchic disposition.

In chapter four, allegorical anarchy as a concept is deployed and applied. I deploy the concept to anarchically conceptualize: the German mourning play⁵, *Bartleby the Scrivener*, Kurdish autonomy in Rojava, and anarchist political theory itself. After detailing these examples as allegorically anarchic, I argue that allegorical anarchy itself is not the instance of radical subjectivity-making, but is the space that, when realized, is where such creation becomes possible. In the act of creating alternative political subjectivities in these allegorical ruptures of space and time, revolutionary possibility emerges into the physical world as possible to redeem humanity from the state and capitalism.

From the outset it must be said that allegorical anarchy is not the only way to conduct alternative politics, but is simply one of many possible tools to deploy. Allegorical anarchy does not claim to be the answer, and does seek to colonize revolutionary possibility for itself. What I claim is that this tool is useful for it is a 'yes-saying' of sorts. Allegorical anarchy doesn't seek a pure-place in political theory, but effectively does the opposite; it exercises itself within failure and complicity, seeking to redeem them anarchically. It acknowledges the messiness, irony, confusion and multiplicity of existence, providing the possibility for autonomous alternative myth-creation and subjectivity-making within the messiness and uncertainty of everyday life.

⁵ Reconceptualizing Benjamin's allegorical analysis.

Chapter 1: Anarchistic Anarchism

Anarchism as Anarchistic:

Anarchism is constituted by a web of anti-authoritarian theory and practice that seeks the total emancipation of humanity from external encroachments of power that have ultimately suppressed the egalitarian nature inherent in (wo)man. Despite this seeming universality, anarchism operates in a polymorphous fashion. The multiplicities internal to anarchism are rooted influences in multiple ways of seeing, especially that of *liberalism and Marxism*. Within this heterodox assemblage, anarchism draws on the idea of a natural, free and autonomous individual from the liberal enlightenment, and the concept of class struggle and the methodology of historical materialism from Marxian analysis.

Rooted in anarchism's nexus is the antagonism between power and the subject. Power, for anarchism, is an external phenomenon that obfuscates the individual subject that is naturally altruistic state. In order to abrogate this repressive relationship, anarchism seeks a totalizing and international *social revolution* that simultaneously emancipates humankind from external powers while also endeavoring with the masses an educative process that reveals the altruistic nature of (wo)man. Due to these multiple influences and tendencies, rather than reducing anarchism to one specified and congealed definition of particulars, I will utilize Saul Newman's description of the anarchist tradition, or spirit:

Let us think of anarchism, then, as a diverse and heterodox assemblage of ideas, moral sensibilities, practices and historical movements and struggles animated by what I call an anti-authoritarian impulse – that is, a desire to

critically interrogate, refuse, transform and overthrow all relations of authority, particularly those centralized within the sovereign state.⁵

The strength of this anarchist assemblage, I argue, lies in its failure. As the nexus of liberalism and Marxism, anarchism doesn't succeed in the synthesis of the two ideas. Within the ruins of anarchist theory, though, lies its greatest asset -- *allegory* (detailed in chapters three and four). Resultantly, anarchism is doubly anarchic about itself. Not only does anarchism not have one concretized idea, leading itself to the proliferation of various theories under the banner of anarchism, but it simultaneously 'un-does' itself outside of its own intention. To illustrate this point, I will elucidate anarchistic takes on: state power, ignorance, science, natural law, and social revolution. After the 'anarchist take' of each category, I will provide the unintended 'anarchic' undoing with each categorical narrative.

This undoing is ultimately of a revelatory nature, for it simultaneously takes liberalism to its extreme and then negates it. By this it is meant that, by virtue of anarchic failure being rooted in the attempted radicalization of liberalism, it unveils the rotten core of it. Specifically, the concept of the individual, objective, and rational subject found in liberalism is fundamentally irredeemable, and counterintuitive for the practice of radical subjectification. Furthermore, in the emphasis of external power in all aforementioned categories, its very undoing forces a re-engagement with the concept of power, where it comes from, and how it functions.

⁵ Newman, Saul. 2016. *Postanarchism*. Polity Press, 1

Anarchist Perspectives --The State:

The most clearly defined *archist* institution for the anarchist is undoubtedly the state. All states ultimately embody the grossest violence against freedom and equality by operating as the overture of external power and corruption onto humanity at-large. For the anarchist, the state and coercion are synonymous, since both portray outside-power superimposed unto the masses. As Bakunin notes, “*state coercion*, in a word the *state*, for the state *means* coercion, domination by means of coercion, camouflaged if possible but unceremonious and overt if need be.”⁶ By virtue solely of its existence, the state exemplifies an external authority that by definition thwarts its subjects, and needs to be removed for humanity to flourish.

The state, since it is coercive by definition, is too naturally militaristic and imperialist. Because states exist amongst other states, all states find themselves in an international Hobbesian *state of nature*, meaning that since every moment is a moment of potential attack, all states must necessarily be large states for the purposes of expansion or survival. According to Bakunin:

The modern state, in its essence and objectives, is necessarily a military state, and a military state necessarily becomes an aggressive state. If it does not conquer others it will itself be conquered, for the simple reason that wherever force exists, it absolutely must be displayed or put into action... the modern state must without fail be huge and powerful; that is the indispensable condition for its preservation⁷

⁶ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1990. *Statism and Anarchy*. ed. Marshall Shatz. Cambridge University Press, 24

⁷ Ibid, 13

The state exists for the purposes of its own perpetuation. Not only does it exist merely for the sake of its own perpetuity, but it too, as a result of this raw survivalist mentality, it is necessarily violent as well. The reifying workings of state logic, and the violence it utilizes in conjunction with said reifying elements, the state resultantly and inevitably exists as an entity driven by *anxious imperialism*.

Not only is the state an illegitimate source of coercion that increases and proliferates its violence internally and abroad, but it serves to quell the development of humanity. Instead of the state utilizing its monopoly of violence for the purposes of cutting out a safe realm for its populous to flourish, it condemns society to a totalizing force – *for all laws are good laws because they are laws*. Citing both the origin and historical developmental of states alongside the experience of the communes of both Paris and Cartagena, Peter Kropotkin tells us that “progress is the most effective when it is not checked by State interference.”⁸ If the state is antithetical to the development of humanity, does the security that it purportedly provides have any remaining merit?

Contradictions in the Logic of State:

To combat and ultimately topple the state, Michael Bakunin sought to create a secret society that’s sole purpose was to fan the flame of social revolution. For Bakunin, this body must be secret so that it cannot be absorbed into the state, or adopt the logic of state in the form of the political party for instance. Informed by the anarchic heartbeat of the anti-authoritarian spirit, anarchists recognized the reactionary bureaucratic tendencies

⁸ Kropotkin, Peter. 1970. *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*. ed. Roger N Baldwin. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 51

within political parties, no matter how radical they may seem. The political party, for the anarchist, solely serves to mime and perpetuate that logic of the state, resulting in the *entrenchment of state power* after the revolution has been won, as opposed to liberation from it. According to Bakunin, the core tenets of the secret society, *The International Brotherhood*, are: abolish God, abolish church, abolish state, abolish hierarchy, abolish private property, replace God with Humanity, instill horizontal associations, and to be guided by “only one dogma, one law, one moral basis... *liberty*.”⁹ This secret society is simultaneously a negating and creating body. It is the intermediary body between the old society and the new; it is a political body of a prefigurative nature. Although prefigurative along anarchic principles, the organization, as a phenomenon of anarchist creation, ultimately serves as a subversion of anarchism whilst also elucidating the limits and contradictions of the liberal project. Specifically, in pursuance of total liberation, the secret society mimics logic of state by: instilling universal suffrage, instilling social contract logic, and instilling secret governing hierarchies.

One of the core tenets of this society is to remove all institutions of authority and inequality and to instill total *political* equality. Bakunin states in the *Principles and Organization of the International Brotherhood* that the secret society should seek the “abolition of class, rank, privilege and distinction in all its forms. Complete equality of political rights for all men and all women; universal suffrage.”¹⁰ Although the first sentence is clearly indicative of an anarchist sentiment, the latter, seeking universal suffrage, sounds like a *liberal political goal within the bounds of state*. This universal

⁹ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1974. *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 65

¹⁰ Ibid, 65

suffrage, for both the society and stateless societies after the revolution would carry direct democratic elections of both public officials and judges.¹¹ Therefore, it seems apparent that there still lurks alienating political functions, such as *representative government*, and thereby too maintaining remnants of *law*, the manifest language of the state.

Furthermore, in the pursuance to regulate mischievous renegades after the revolution, Bakunin utilizes social contract language to justify the removal of rights for those who act in a way detrimental to the community:

But society has the right and duty to refuse the social guarantee, legal recognition and political and civics rights to any association, as a collective body, which by virtue of its purpose, rules and statutes runs counter to the fundamental principles of the social constitution and whose membership stands in any other relationship but that of total equality and reciprocity.¹²

Although not wholly punitive in comparison to the state's prison system found in the state, the regulation of right is still indicative of a social contract logic that seeks to impose a liberal notion of freedom, as opposed to a *politics of liberation*. This liberal freedom, to draw on Marx, operates as an alienating imposition of self as an abstracted citizen. "In the state... where man counts as a species-being, he is an imaginary participant in an imaginary sovereignty, he is robbed of his real life and filled with an unreal universality."¹³ In other words, the subject is denied and abstracted through a secular religiosity that permeates through the discourse of *political emancipation*. The state becomes God, rather than the secular state removing God. For Bakunin, it is not just

¹¹ Ibid, 65

¹² Ibid, 70

¹³ Marx, Karl. 2000. *Karx Marx: Selected Writings*. 2nd ed. ed. David McLellan. Oxford University Press, 53

humanity, but the secret society as well that substitutes God, rather than truly eliminating this ecclesiastical spirit. Rather than the true individual expressing herself authentically and unimpeded as Emma Goldman foresaw, this individual is still a site of domination by a regulative political universality expressed by state logic, ultimately serving as an impediment toward total emancipation. That is, through the logic of state established within the secret society, even though the state as such is eliminated, *the logic and power of state are maintained outside of the formal institutions of state.*

Lastly, the imposition of a society that is secret is by definition an *exclusionary* one that has archaic consequences. For Bakunin, this society should not only be a “collective dictatorship” that “carr[ies] out a broadly based popular propaganda”, but it should “be composed of the strongest people, the cleverest, and, if possible, the most knowing, that is the wisest in experience.”¹⁴ This exclusionary body, then, uses blatant elitism to assist social revolution. Although not a literal equivalent, the secret society can clearly be paralleled with Lenin’s concept of the vanguard. There lurks then an unavoidable contradiction between authority and liberty, especially if the dogma of the organization is liberty itself. In essence, the dictatorial attributes alongside its vanguardist mentality, ultimately reveals the complexity of power – *that power is not solely external, is often hidden in secrecy, and even embedded in emancipatory narratives.*

The contradictions within the secret society not only subvert an attempt at anarchist creation, but it also *subverts the narratives of liberal justification.* That is, the secret society itself, as it is conjured within the historical framework of the dominance of

¹⁴ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1974. *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 194

liberal enlightenment subjectivities, is an expression of liberalism itself. Bakunin takes the logic of liberalism, and takes it to its absolute end through anarchism. However, rather than cracking the code of emancipation through the secret society, Bakunin shows that this secretive authoritarianism *is how the liberalism functions*. Furthermore, Bakunin unintentionally uncovers the ultimate incompatibility of liberalism and emancipation, for, through their convergence, *the logic of authority never leaves*. Due to the survival of liberal authority in the anarchic secret society, then, Bakunin negates his very own anarchic creation, and simultaneously reveals the contradiction and limitation of liberalism.

The continuity of this authoritative logic from the liberal state within anarchic organization makes evident the prevalence of ideology pertaining to political subjectivities. The secret society, amongst other things, rather than objectively operating outside of the parameters of the ideological apparatus of the liberal enlightenment, ultimately come to embody, express, and take those values to their logical extreme. Despite the liberal contamination within the concept of the secret society, Bakunin saw this communication between the masses and the secret society as an unauthoritative apparatus of historical materialism; an objectively educative process to allow for the masses to recognize that their very nature is antithetical to the state. This process was vital for Bakunin for it combatted the ignorance the state externally imposed on the subject.

Anarchist Perspectives -- Ignorance:

Governmental coercion instills ignorance into the populace, pacifying them with stupidity and patriotism. In her retort against those claiming that anarchism is an unachievable ideal, or chaos incarnate, Goldman scolds the critics who ignore “that the most violent element in society is ignorance; that its power and destruction is the very thing Anarchism is combating.”¹⁵ This ignorance, for Goldman, emanates from the fetish of quantity in politics. Political parties and interest groups are not interested in truth, but interested in manipulation and deception to accrue as many votes as possible to actuate power to achieve their vision, a vision that is irrelevant to the masses. This psychological pacification only further entrenches *external power* over the masses, alongside repressing human ambition. Emma continues, “without ambition of initiative, the compact mass hates nothing so much as innovation. It has always opposed, condemned, and hounded the innovator, the pioneer of truth.”¹⁶

The effect of ignorance isn't merely a happenstance result of representative government, but a necessary prerequisite for its sustainability. For Bakunin, ignorance is necessary for government and will always persist. “The people... are kept in ignorance by the systematic efforts of all the governments, who consider this ignorance... as one of the essential conditions of their own power.”¹⁷ Liberalism imposes an ignorance onto society, depriving the social body and the individuals therein of autonomous, free, and unique expression. Rather than being free, individuals are reduced to an animality. These

¹⁵ Goldman, Emma. 1969. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Dover Publications, 50

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 70

¹⁷ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1970. *God and the State*. Dover Publications, 16

sentiments echo that of Friedrich Nietzsche when he proclaims that “liberalism: in other words, herd-animalization.”¹⁸ Ignorance, then, is a result of *external state power* superimposed onto society, resulting in a pacifying herd-mentality amongst the masses. However, this ignorance is confronted by an unstoppable progressive urge embedded in the human spirit. Defending Leon Czolgosz, the man responsible for assassinating U.S. President McKinley, Goldman expresses great confidence in human ingenuity that can shatter state-imposed ignorance:

...all the governmental forces could not prevent the Diderots and the Voltaires from spreading emancipating ideas among the people, so all the existing governmental forces will not prevent the Reclus, the Darwins, the Spencers, the Ibsens, the Mirbeaus, from spreading the ideas of justice which will annihilate the prejudices that hold the mass in ignorance.¹⁹

For Goldman, despite the domination of the state into the social psyche, no amount of coercion can stop the inevitability of the human spirit in the pursuance of freedom. It is apparent through an anarchist analysis that one form of power and result of said power from the state, to perpetuate itself, is instilling the populous with majoritarian ignorance, actualized through the phenomenon of public opinion.

Ignorance, The Furthering of Contradiction:

Goldman’s emphatic refutation of the herd-mentality of the majority shows a keen awareness of the *ideological effect* of both government and capitalism. If one leaves a public majority entranced by the ideological ques of power in the position of decision making in a revolution, or in a decentralized anarchic society, it becomes very possible

¹⁸ Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1997. *Twilight of the Idols*. Hacket Publishing, 74

¹⁹ Goldman, Emma. 1969. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Dover Publications, 96

for those very powers to reappear, thusly being tightly infused within the new society, rather than ridding it of the old coercive powers. Majoritarian ignorance is the reason, then, for the vanguardist and secretive nature of the revolutionary society that Bakunin brought forth. Due to this entrenching nature of ideology, Emma proclaimed emphatically, “I repudiate the mass as a creative factor.”²⁰ The state is thus the harbinger of ignorance by virtue of creating the category of the mass under the state, and subjugating the mass to *bourgeois ideology* pacifying them to a reactionary ignorance in benefit of the state.

As power is external in the form of the institutions of state and capital, and ideology servicing these powers, the emancipation of the masses inevitably brings forth the shattering of majorities, and a symbiosis of individual and collective naturally comes in to replace the vacuum of the category of mass. Emma emphasizes this when elaborating on the true, anarchist freedom:

Anarchism proposes to rescue the self-respect and independence of the individual from all restraint and invasion of authority. Only in freedom can man grow to his full stature. Only in freedom can man grow to think and move, and give the very best in him. Only in freedom will he realize the true force of the social bonds which knit men together, and which are the true foundation of a normal social life.²¹

Thus, only through total and complete liberation does the entire category of the mass fade away. Also, with the elimination of the category of mass, so too does the pervasiveness of ideology, for it demands a unitary collective body to deposit its discourse. For Goldman,

²⁰ Ibid, 44

²¹ Ibid, 61

then, anarchism is the cure for both the creation of the category of the masses and the imposition of ideological hypnosis unto said category.

If the secret society is the intermediary between the old society and the new, crafting new revolutionary values predicated along the lines of cooperation and liberty, but also embodies the logic of the state simultaneously, there lurks a mixing between *holding onto the ideology of state* and *creating an anarchic ideology*. However, if the secret society is the prefigurative politic of which life will absorb after the revolution, it is made apparent that both power and ideology are able to act outside of the state. That is, power is not solely *external*. With power not being reduced to an external phenomenon superimposed onto a pure subject, then Emma's notion of ignorance will persist in the revolutionary moment and post-revolutionary society. Furthermore, if the society itself embodies the logical end of liberalism, will not the propaganda that it dispenses only reify this liberalism?

Emma Goldman, then, rather than constructing the pathway *outside* of ignorance, reveals to the reader the deep underpinnings of ideology functions. Further, Goldman too reveals the relationship between ideology and power, showcasing the necessity of the category of the mass to unitarily ingest necessary ques to continue the growth and domination of state and capital. However, when put into constellation with Bakunin's prefigurative and revolutionary secret society, Goldman unintentionally reveals the difficulty of ridding this ideological ignorance, and thus compounds upon the limitations of the liberal-tinged components of Bakunin's secret society. Nonetheless, Goldman brings acute awareness to the convergence of state and capital, and the ideological apparatus which said institutions cultivate and maintain to create and stifle the masses.

The suppression of humanity found in the external power of state and the apparatus of ignorance emanating from it, alongside the creation of the educative secret society in opposition to this oppressiveness, are, for Goldman and Bakunin, not political conjecture, opinion, pure philosophy, nor pure theory, but *scientific*.

Anarchist Perspectives -- Science:

Anarchism largely seeks to embody its principles as much as in theory as in practice. Therefore, anarchism is largely skeptical of including metaphysical or idealist principles into thought and action. Through the quick growth of the scientific method, Kropotkin specifically finds that philosophic tools, such as the dialectic, are outdated and unnecessary since humanity has revealed to itself the objective facts found through scientific analysis. Bakunin, on the other hand, saw a place for philosophic inquiry, but it must be put into a materialist analysis, or, scientific analysis, or else it merely becomes a metaphysical abstraction that looms as a power over humanity. This is why Bakunin asserts of German Idealism that it “proceeded not from life to thought, but from thought to life.”²² For both Bakunin and Kropotkin, however, philosophy, and the idealism that permeates it, exist as an appendage of religious thought. With science bursting into the realm of truth and knowledge, philosophy must come to terms with science, or it merely exists as a God-power looming over the head of society. Thus, with science killing the God-head of philosophy, Kropotkin asserts that “the ideal of the anarchist is thus a mere summing-up of what he considers to be the next phase of evolution. It is no longer a

²² Bakunin, Mikhail. 1990. *Statism and Anarchy*. ed. Marshall Shatz. Cambridge University Press, 133

matter of faith; it is a matter for scientific discussion.”²³ With science, the ability to extract and verify objective analyses found in nature, anarchism is no longer just an anti-authoritarian impulse, or merely stateless socialism, but a *scientific theory applied to humanity to construct an objective path toward freedom and equality*.

Anarchist science isn't just a science, it is a *moral science*. That is, in applying science to living communities across a variety of species, the scientist ascertains logic flows of decision making and large-scale trends of behavioral tendencies. In other words, for Kropotkin, one can extract a morality of a species through analyzing it scientifically. The morality in which Kropotkin finds across species, including humanity, is that of *mutual aid*²⁴. That is, in contradistinction to libertarian Social Darwinism, species operate under the principle of cooperation for the best of the species as opposed to the ‘survival of the fittest’ principle that libertarians fetishize to justify the inevitable antagonisms of egotism. Crediting Adam Smith, Kropotkin claims that Smith was the first to discover morality (which is rooted in sympathy) as a natural fact, as opposed to an ecclesiastical claim. Through this science, the main tenet of most living species, including humans, is to “treat others as you would like them to treat you under similar circumstances.”²⁵

This pursuit of science is a never-ending series of discovery, error, and growth. Bakunin states as much, comparing it to Christ. “It is evident that such a science, the sublime object of all the efforts of the human mind, will never be fully and absolutely

²³ Kropotkin, Peter. 1970. *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*. ed. Roger N Baldwin. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 47

²⁴ Kropotkin, Peter. 2006. *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

²⁵ Kropotkin, Peter. 1970. *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*. ed. Roger N Baldwin. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 97

realized. Our Christ, then, will remain eternally unfinished.”²⁶ Being that it is never complete, never satisfied, and always challenging itself, science as a process itself can be viewed in an anarchist fashion. It is a humble institution in constant pursuit of truth and aware of its own infinite and incomplete project. For this reason, science as such is not compatible with the state, but compatible with anarchism.

Not only is science a never-ending enterprise that humbles itself, rather than authoritatively asserting itself, but, for Bakunin, science is also limited in what it can provide to truth and life. Science itself is a thought, an inquiry. When it applies itself to inquire upon life, it doesn’t find life as such, but an idea of life. “Science comprehends the thought of the reality, not reality itself; the thought of life, not life. That is its limit, its only really insuperable limit, because it is founded on the very nature of thought, which is the only organ of science.”²⁷ Due to the perpetuity of scientific knowledge, alongside its limitation to the abstract, science is limited to a role of accruing knowledge and informing life, as opposed to governing over society. Thus, similarly to Bakunin invoking the necessity to kill God, if science was able to dominate and totalize over life, rather than infer abstract notions of truth to life, it too would be a necessity to destroy it.

Anarchism, as a science, is able to escape the bounds of faith to extract general truths regarding life. The objective inquiries of science too are found to unveil moralistic principles of a varied of species that share the core tenets of *mutual aid*. These facts found through the scientific method, by virtue of ontological and methodological limits, are constrained as perpetually unfinished abstractions. Therefore, science must remain a

²⁶ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1970. *God and the State*. Dover Publications, 35

²⁷ *Ibid*, 55

horizontal practice, rather than seeking to authoritatively implement its findings into society. This inquiry, however, illuminates to humanity the *natural laws* that govern life.

Contradictions -- Science as Christ:

The entire liberal enlightenment project, which serves as the methodological, epistemology, and ideological vehicle for the supremacy of science, is itself riddled with religiosity. Although espousing an objective secularism in its thoughts, look no further than John Locke to reveal the deeply religious and spiritual makeup of the foundations of liberalism. In his influential works *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke utilizes biblical inquiry as his main attack against Hobbes' Leviathan and as a defense for republican government, ultimately which would serve as the foundational document of political theory that James Madison and others would utilize in the establishment of the United States of America.²⁸ This scientific project then that Kropotkin and Bakunin extract from liberal tradition, rather than cutting off the head of God, transforms God into an ever-present figure of total truth hidden within science. Nietzsche proclaimed that "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. – And we – we still have to vanquish his shadow, too."²⁹ Playfully utilizing Plato's cave to reveal the conjuring of new Gods after the formal death of religiosity, Nietzsche's aphoristic burst brings forth the hidden God behind the anarchistic pursuit of a moral science.

Science, as opposed to religiosity, proclaims that its objective truth, rather than muddled with mysticism and idealism, is rather concretized in material reality. Being that

²⁸ Locke, John. 2013. *Two Treatises of Government*. ed. Peter Laslett. Cambridge University Press.

²⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1974. *The Gay Science*. Random House, 167

Bakunin reveals science as an unfinished Christ, and that Nietzsche brings forth the idea of God-heads lurking outside of pure religion itself, Nietzsche too brings down the idol of science. Directing talking to the ‘realists’, or, the ‘scientist’, Nietzsche asserts:

... Your sobriety still contains a secret and inextinguishable drunkenness... Every feeling and sensation contains a piece of this old love; and some fantasy, some prejudice, some unreason, some ignorance, some fear, and ever so much else has contributed to it and worked on it... There is no ‘reality’ for us – not for you either, my sober friends. We are not nearly as different as you think [artists], and perhaps our good will to transcend intoxication is as respectable as your faith that you are altogether incapable of intoxication.³⁰

Through both Bakunin’s assertion of science as an unfinished Christ, and Kropotkin’s claim of the natural order of the animal kingdom as predicated upon a notion eerily similar to the Christian notion of loving your neighbor, the anarchist endeavor, rather than crystallizing science to a pure objectivity, unintentionally reveals the logic of scientific understanding as a purely religious endeavor. Through utilizing science as a creative vehicle of a radical and natural subjectivity, anarchism instead negates this liberal scientific enterprise, revealing it as fundamentally immersed in Christianity. In other words, *anarchism strips science of its authoritative voice as it relates to objective truth.*

The scientific goal for anarchism, nonetheless, is to come to an analysis that finds an altruistic underpinning of nature generally, and humanity specifically. This undertaking then merges an altruistic understanding of nature with humanity to reveal humanity as a product of this altruistic nature. This moral science, the altruistic

³⁰ Ibid, 121

naturalization of (wo)man, is for anarchism the foundation in which the natural law of (wo)man is discovered.

Anarchist Perspectives -- Natural Law:

According to Bakunin, through the inquiries found in science, human-kind becomes increasingly aware of the natural laws which govern it. Natural laws operate differently from the state, or any external authority because they emanate from the true nature of humanity itself. As a result, they operate less as laws and more as fundamental attributes of humanity. Bakunin argues that they are an authority within human-kind:

What is authority? Is it the inevitable power of the natural laws which manifest themselves in the necessary concatenation and succession of phenomena in the physical and social worlds? Indeed, against these laws revolt is not only forbidden – it is even impossible. We may misunderstand them or not know them at all, but we cannot disobey them; because they constitute the basis and fundamental conditions of our existence; they envelop us, penetrate us, regulate all our movements, thoughts, and acts; even when we believe that we disobey them, we only show their omnipotence.³¹

Natural law, though never fully known by virtue of it being unveiled through the never-ending process of science, nonetheless exists as a fundamental attribute that governs human behavior, regardless of one's awareness of it or not. Not only are we bound to these attributes, but we are "slaves to these laws."³² To be a slave to these laws does not indicate a true slavery or true subjugation, however. For Bakunin, natural law is a

³¹ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1970. *God and the State*. Dover Publications, 28

³² Ibid, 28

corollary to historical development; a continual realization of internal elements that always existed, but not realized.

Bakunin further elaborates that the evolution of humanity has been the process of “human animality” evolving toward “thought, which evolves into “rebellion”.³³ In other words, from the “social and private”, to “science”, to “liberty”.³⁴ Through the development of science, humanity has removed the shroud of religious superstition, the vehicle driving and legitimizing state repression. No longer clouded by mythic authoritarianism, the process of science is a realization of the true nature of man as *antithetical* to the state. For Bakunin, this is why the state seeks to proliferate ignorance amongst the masses – *for the state, knowing science, realizes the true emancipatory nature of man, and must quell it for its own survival*. Thus, Bakunin laments that “the great misfortune is that a large number of natural laws, already established by science, remains unknown to the masses, thanks to the watchfulness of these tutelary governments.”³⁵ True, anarchist freedom, *is natural law*, the inclination toward freedom is embedded in *human nature itself* Emma Goldman expresses the anarchistic characteristics of natural law, “A natural law is that factor in man which asserts itself feely and spontaneously without any external force, in harmony with the requirements of nature.”³⁶

Science and life operate dialectically. That is, science being limited by its existence within the realm of thought, cannot inform life of life itself. Rather, it informs

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Goldman, Emma. 1969. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Dover Publications, 58

life of the thoughts of it. Specifically, science informs life of the ideas of natural law which govern it – *the inclination of rebellion*. Ingesting this knowledge, life serves as a source of scientific verification by acting upon this insight, actualizing it through spontaneous revolt, or full-revolution.

The medium of this dialectical exchange is an educative one. Being that the state imposes ignorance in all facets of society whenever possible, natural laws, even though always existing, cannot be seen by society through the state's domination over reality. The response against the domineering state to actuate this dialectical teleology is that of popular education. "...once they [natural laws] have been recognized by science, and then from science, by means of an extensive system of popular education and instruction, shall have passed into the consciousness of all, the question of liberty will be entirely solved."³⁷

It is through this educative medium that the new society is built "within the shell of the old."³⁸ That is, through the educative process of revealing the *essence* of natural law, those educative bodies undergo the process of prefigurative politics. This educative process then, in the dialectical unfolding between science, results in a new-found consciousness that merges the old world with the new, removing distinction. This is, for the anarchist, the political result of scientific reveal – *human nature is a teleological phenomenon that pushes through external coercion through the dialectical communication between science and life.*

³⁷ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1970. *God and the State*. Dover Publications, 30

³⁸ Graeber, David. 2004. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 7

Undoing Natural Law:

For Bakunin, science is the operative vehicle that creates the very opportunity for the unveiling, the recognizing, of natural law to humanity. Science is inevitably the anarchic vehicle of self-discovery, self-realization. However, as has been pointed out, science is also the extension of the liberal project, as opposed to being radically anarchist. Furthermore, this secular scientific project is anything but secular, something the anarchist inquiry unintentionally reveals. Nietzsche compounds this point on both the drunkenness of the realist, and the fact that new Gods, or, the shadow of God, continue forth after the death of God. In other words, science, rather than transcending God, inherits the torch bestowed from God. Natural law, then, rather than revealing an inevitable anarchic truth that humanity is a slave to it regardless of one's acknowledgement of it, natural law simply becomes an appendage of the realm of ecclesiastical liberalism.

Not only is natural law ultimately unveiled as a liberal falsehood, but the anarchist inquiry too reveals fundamental contradictions of natural law, forcing the concept outside the realm of legitimacy. Since, for the anarchistic inquiry, power is simultaneously an external phenomenon, and indicative of the very nature which opposes it. Rather, the subject becomes naturally ensorcelled by it. That is, *it is human nature to crave and usurp power*. This is why "you cannot give an individual any authority without corrupting him. He will abuse it."³⁹ Thus the popular maxim, 'power corrupts and

³⁹ Kropotkin, Peter. 1970. *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*. ed. Roger N Baldwin. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 227

absolute power corrupts absolutely.’ In result of this acknowledgement, the core tenets of the anarchist analysis of natural law and human nature are embellished with some contradictions. Bakunin takes this even further than institutions of power being the place of corruption, the center of contamination. For Bakunin, this tendency toward corruption exists as a kernel within humanity *before* entering the chasms of power. Saul Newman cites Bakunin claiming that “every man carries within himself the germs of the lust of power, and every germ, as we know, because of a basic law of life, necessarily must develop and grow.”⁴⁰ Being a “basic law of life”, Bakunin seems at odds with the foundations of natural law which he establishes in *God and the State*; that being the anarchic tendencies within natural law that we are always within the bounds of, regardless of our awareness of them or not. This natural law was to be unveiled through the process of science, which, in line with Kropotkin, is a process of revealing the pure subject as such.

Since human nature is both uncontaminated and contaminated simultaneously⁴¹, it negates itself as the scientific underbelly guaranteeing the teleological unfolding of time and the assurance of a future revolution to topple the state and bring forth stateless societies operating under the principles of mutual aid. Furthermore, if human nature negates itself, anarchism as a moral science gets swept from under its feet as well. Science, no longer attached to its objective analysis of (wo)man, *ceases to be an anarchist enterprise*. In result, Chomsky’s assertion that “Libertarian socialism [anarchism] is properly to be regarded as the inheritor of the liberal ideals of the

⁴⁰ Newman, Saul. 2001. *From Bakunin to Lacan*. Lexington Books, 49

⁴¹ By virtue of the anarchist imposition of the altruistic nature of humanity whilst also stating that hierarchical institutions reveal corruptive nature of humanity

Enlightenment” finds itself to be cancelled out, invalidated.⁴² Science, in result, loses the radical subjectivity that Bakunin asserts existed within it, making both science and the popular education coinciding it *contaminated by the state*. In other words, rather than acting outside of the state, science converges with the state, ultimately creating a relationship between *knowledge and power* that crystallizes itself into a ‘*truth*’ which in turn reifies and adds to this relationship of knowledge and power. Science, rather than an uncontaminated radical vehicle, participates in the ideological mechanisms of ‘truth-making’ that reify and legitimate liberal discourse and power. Briefly, this phenomenon manifests itself in the power and narratives of racist ‘sciences’, of which can be found in areas such as colonialism and eugenics.

Anarchism, then, in its classical rendition, is what Chomsky asserts – it is the protégé of liberal enlightenment ideals; and those ideals are the very thing which limit it. Instead of propelling the enlightenment process to bring the heavenly to the earthly in a Feurbachian, humanist sense, anarchism unintentionally reveals the limits of liberal enlightenment thought by bringing it to its logical end, a logical end that forcibly contradicts itself. This is not a refutation of anarchism as such, however. Instead, this illuminates the radical undoing of anarchism as a philosophy of anti-authoritarian *cross-contamination*. That is, in utilizing liberal methods and tools, anarchism liberates theory and practice from the authoritative claims of liberalism. In other words, whereas liberalism is the very thing which limits anarchist discourse, it too is the same mechanism that destroys liberalism, by virtue of taking it to its extreme and unveiling in the raw its own incoherence, contradictions, and ecclesiastical bases in its ‘objective sciences’. With

⁴² Chomsky, Noam. 1973. *For Reasons of State*. Pantheon Books.

the topping of science, and thus too of teleology, the *inevitability* of a *universal* revolution in pursuance of an anarchic world becomes problematic.

The Revolutionary Moment:

Winning the war against ignorance, or, successfully executing a popular education to reveal to the world the natural laws which govern it is a key catalyst to ensure revolution. An important element in this shift toward an anarchist consciousness, alongside popular education, is the destruction of property. The destruction of property serves a similar purpose as popular education. Within the educative realm, the anarchist-humanist principles of natural law become revealed as truth. As reality becomes increasingly anarchistic, the destruction of *archist* materials, property, assists in the development in the anarchistic form of seeing. Citing the importance of the destruction of property, Bakunin asserts that:

...in order to earn the right to take a humane attitude towards men, it will be necessary to be ruthless with positions and things; it will be necessary to destroy everything, and first and foremost property and its bedfellow, the State. This is the whole secret of revolution.⁴³

The destruction of property serves as an attack against the colonization of state and property onto daily life, onto consciousness. This destruction too serves as an important step in Bakunin's dialectical materialism. Science, informing the idea of life to life, is filtered and understood through the educative process. The destruction of property is the communication of life back into science; *it is science's verification.*

⁴³ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1974. *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 169

Informed by anti-authoritarian sensibilities, anarchism is largely skeptical of the political party, especially as it relates to revolution. The institution of the party services near exclusively as a body of theoretical works. On this subject Kropotkin charges the institution of the political party as having “done little, or it has done nothing against those who are its principal enemies; it has not attacked the institutions which it wants to demolish; its strength has been in theory, not in action...”⁴⁴ The party, for the anarchist, is an institution of a reactionary effect.

Not only is the political party largely inactive, it too colonizes movements and struggles, *claiming credit for its existence after entering it merely after the fact*. Although not an anarchist herself, Rosa Luxemburg, in support of the trade union struggle in Russia, was highly critical of the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the political party in relation to revolutionary pursuits. Citing the Russian wave of trade union confrontations with capitalists, Rosa Luxemburg finds no party planning that served as a catalyst for the wave of militant trade unionism:

But even here [the mass strike] there was no predetermined plan, no organized action, because the appeals of the parties could scarcely keep pace with the spontaneous risings of the masses; the leaders had scarcely time to formulate the watchwords of the onrushing crowd of the proletariat.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Kropotkin, Peter. 1970. *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*. ed. Roger N Baldwin. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 42

⁴⁵ Luxemburg, Rosa, and Kevin B Anderson. 2004. *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*. ed. Peter Hudis. Monthly Review Press, 180

Luxemburg, although critical of the anarchists, finds herself in agreement with the anarchists nonetheless on the issue of the political party. The spontaneous existence of the mass strike itself is an indication of an *already revolutionary moment*.⁴⁶

As an alternative to the party model, Bakunin brings forth the concept of the secret society. The purpose of this society is to both distribute propaganda amongst the masses and to organization within the masses. This organization and propaganda have an implied educative function for that Bakunin advocates that the “strongest people, the cleverest and, if possible, the most knowing, that is wisest in experience”⁴⁷ as the bedrock of the society. Therefore, when propaganda and organization converge, the society ultimately serves as a radical educative body to become better acquainted with the anarchic tendencies of natural law.

The secret society cannot initiate revolution itself; it is no revolutionary catalyst. Staying within the parameters of science, revolution is an unpredictable rupturing when collective awareness of natural law reaches a critical mass. Just as how the party cannot ‘prepare’ and ‘cause’ a revolution, neither can the secret society. Revolutions, rather:

...come about of themselves, produced by the force of things, the tide of events and facts. They ferment for a long time in the depths of the instinctive consciousness of the popular masses – then they explode, often triggered by trivial causes.⁴⁸

The role of the secret society then is largely an educative one. With science and life corresponding in a teleologically revolutionary dialectic, the secret society assists this

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1974. *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 194

⁴⁸ Ibid, 172

process by “sowing ideas corresponding to the instincts [natural law] of the masses...”⁴⁹ In other words, the secret society assists in the dialectical communication between science and life. Importantly, as science is for Bakunin a humbling institution, the society is *secret* so as to prevent an external superimposition onto the masses. Rather, all the secret society is to do, since revolution is of a spontaneous character, is to assist in the dialectic linkage between science and life until the straw breaks the camel’s back.

Since states exist as are by definition coercive and aggressive, and live amongst other states, states exist within the parameters of a *Hobbesian state of nature*. That is, every moment is a possible moment of attack, so states must necessarily prepare themselves for either expansion or attack. Similarly, to how capitalism operates, states seek to *universalize themselves in the world*. In light of this totalization, for the anarchist, revolution must mirror this totalizing attribute. That is, the only successful revolution is a singular and universal, or, international revolution. “...no national revolution could succeed without spreading out to all other nations immediately.”⁵⁰ If a revolution is merely national, it would either have to seize the state, or the established anarchist realm would be quelled by outside forces (states and capital elsewhere) since they [state and capital] have universalized themselves upon the world. Due to this universalization, social revolution, too, must operate at once, universally.

Social Revolution as the Return of Christ:

Firstly, it has been shown that the secret society carries with it liberal statist logic, including universal suffrage, representative government, and regulative parameters of a

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1974. *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 173

social contract. Secondly, embedded in Goldman's analysis of ignorance unintentionally reveals the power of ideology, or, that power is not merely external. Rather, power flows and operates within and outside of institutions of power, creating and reifying itself in many hidden places. Due to this flowing of power, alongside the contradictions of human nature being fundamentally good, and scientifically Christ-like, and with human nature craving power as a core attribute, the concept of human nature and its relationship to external power falls apart. Moreover, anarchism too reveals science as being as appendage of religiosity instead of being a vehicle of objective truth.

Anarchism, through its diverse attributes as a philosophy of *cross-contamination*, utilizes the tools of liberalism to *unintentionally dismantle the essentialisms* used within it. That is, it has, through its own contradictions, negated the teleological truisms of the human subject which serve as a catalyst toward total, universal revolution and too the total emancipation of humanity, ridding it of the state. With human nature thus negated, science too loses its emancipatory potential, instead rather being susceptible to state encroachment toward the reification of state power through transmuting truth-narratives through the merging of said institutions. Science becomes a tool to be seized that hierarchical institutions such as the state seek to deploy to ideologically reify the legitimacy of power to the populous. Simply put, science becomes another layer of ideological power. Revolution then loses its universal and inevitable character. Essentialism then no longer serves as the main thread of anarchist thought, and dies within liberal thought as well. In result, anarchism's general description reverts back to the original elucidation put forth by Saul Newman; that being an *anti-authoritarian impulse*.

Anarchism is a philosophy governed by the methodology and epistemology of the liberal enlightenment. The focus of analysis falls largely on the individuated subject that is free, rational, and autonomous. With this as the basis, anarchism takes liberalism to its extreme by claiming that the state (alongside the church and capitalism) is an external encroachment of power upon this subject, and that science verifies the removal of authority as the best pathway toward the teleological development of humanity. As has been shown, anarchism unintentionally subverts its own authority, alongside dismissing liberalism through its own utilization of it. Science and natural law lose its objective verification, revolution is no longer teleologically determined, and power is no longer merely an external encroachment. Anarchism, at least by virtue of the main tenets of its ‘classically western’ rendition through Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Goldman, operates ‘anarchistically’ as it relates to liberalism. However, its illumination at this point lies in its failures. If it is to be found that human development is not objective nor guaranteed, how is anarchism to conceptualize revolution? If power is no longer external, how does anarchism come to comprehend it?

In the next chapter, I align Saul Newman’s notion of postanarchism into constellatory alignment with the ‘classical anarchism’ just elucidated. Postanarchism seeks to redeem anarchism by removing it of the liberal metanarratives which contaminate it.

Chapter 2: Max Stirner, Quintessential Postanarchist

A Summarization:

In the previous chapter, anarchism was brought forth as a philosophy of *cross-contamination*. Opposed to having a firmly established method throughout all anarchic literature, or of all literature being derived from a particular thinker, anarchism exists rather in a polymorphous fashion. In result, anarchism bears infinite fruit as it relates to its analyses and practices. By virtue of this multiplicity, through the principle of *cross-contamination*, anarchism extracts many of its ideas from other philosophic traditions that both enhance and contradict the *anti-authoritarian impulse* that serves as the beating heart of the anarchic tradition. Therefore, as opposed to anarchism being exclusively its own way of seeing, it too plunges head first into other philosophic realms, ultimately revealing the logical end, limitation, and contradiction of said school. For example, as it has been teased out in the first chapter, outside the bounds of intention, the anarchism of Kropotkin, Bakunin, and Goldman, instead of crystallizing *anarchic creation*, instead break down and unveil the rotten core of liberalism by virtue of taking it to its logical end in anarchism. Science, natural law, and the secret society, as opposed to being revolutionary catalysts or enhancers to a revolutionary moment, rather, reveal the inability of liberalism as a whole to realize the humanitarian development promised within it, thus negating liberalism and humanism as an emancipatory project. Instead of creating the new society within the shell of the old, anarchism acts not just as a philosophy as such, but also as a *subversive* philosophy that infiltrates other realms of thought, revealing before the world the *archist masks* that lurk behind emancipatory, revolutionary, humanist rhetoric. Through the constellation established through

Kropotkin, Bakunin, and Goldman, anarchism, intertwined with the essentialisms of liberalism, *unintentionally* reveals the very limits and points of contradiction within the liberal-enlightenment project. Whereas anarchism negated these essentialist characteristics in an unintentional way, postanarchism seeks an intentional removal of essentialism, and brings forth an *ontologically* anarchic way of seeing and perceiving after the toppling of essentialist metanarratives. Within the vacuum of which these metanarratives once stood, instead of simply replacing them with other universalities, postanarchism seeks Stirnerian singularities, being a realm of individualist micro-ethics, operating indifferently to both state and morality-at-large.

An Outline:

Whereas the purpose of the first chapter was to establish (not a totality of authoritative establishment of all of anarchism) a descriptive outline of anarchism bringing forth both the problem of universalist narratives and the subsequently and unintentionally subversive qualities of anarchism relating to those very narratives, this chapter will elucidate core elements of postanarchism. Being a convergence between post-structuralism and anarchism, postanarchism carries within it the ‘anti-authoritarian impulse’ whilst being keenly aware of the post-structuralist proposition that power is both positive and multiple. As opposed to power being purely an external phenomenon, power is instead nefarious, merging with knowledge to bring forth ideas of ‘truth’ that function at all levels of life, which in turn reifies that very power/knowledge convergence. Not only that, but this convergence happens within political subjects, so this power is an unreal conjuring rather than power as actual. For Saul Newman in particular,

postanarchism both starts and ends with Max Stirner.⁵¹ Therefore, this chapter will largely be dedicated to Max Stirner, and Newman's use of Stirner as the bringer of a distinctly postanarchist way of seeing and acting in the world.

Firstly, Max Stirner in the postanarchist constellation is an operative proto-post structuralist, polemically destroying all essentialisms that comes in his path – anthropomorphizing himself, to caricature Alfredo Bonnano's words, as an 'elephant in a china shop'.⁵² The proto-post structuralism of Stirner and the eviscerating qualities therein leaves to ruin everything, leaving only the *ego*, the individual, to remain. This *ego* has historically, for Stirner, been repressed through the metanarratives of liberal thought that have colonized desire, resulting in the individual *craving their own repression*. Through the destruction of these essentialist impositions, one is now able to actuate the *ego, to will themselves free*.

Secondly, the cerebral space created to affirm the ego leads to the possibility of *ontological anarchy*. Implied in Stirner's critique lurks an anarchic sentiment. For Stirner, the *ego* is antithetical to the authority of state. Through the removal of essentialism, anarchism is no longer an ecclesiastical pursuit at the end of history. Rather, the affirmation of the *ego* in each moment, recognizing the superfluous-ness of the state whilst doing so, becomes the primary personal and political task, resulting in an

⁵¹ In Saul Newman's development of postanarchism, he begins with Stirner's critique of the essentialisms and metanarratives embedded in the liberal project. Newman too deploys Stirner as the end of the postanarchist project. That is, rather than ascertaining social revolution to bring forth anarchist society and the end of history, Newman extracts Stirner's concept of insurrection that utilizes anarchy as the starting point of any political act, rather than a goal. Stirner is thus at the beginning and end of the postanarchist development of thought and practice.

⁵² Martel, James, and Jimmy Casas Klausen, eds. 2011. *How Not to Be Governed: Readings and Interpretations From a Critical Anarchist Left*. Lexington Books, 108

ontologically anarchic subjectivity. Anarchy becomes the starting point, the prerequisite to any act, rather than a goal to achieve at some point in history.

Thirdly, this shift in subjectivity and the transference of anarchy from the end to the beginning demands a removal of the concept of revolution, for the very concept is indicative of the logic of essentialized anarchism brought forth in the previous chapter. Instead, Saul Newman deploys Stirner's notion of insurrection. For Stirner, revolution was an extension of the logic of state, residue of the metanarrative. Rather, Stirner deploys the concept of the *Union of Egoists* as temporary voluntarist bodies predicated on mutual consumption and enjoyment. These unions, for Newman, are indicative of this insurrectionist state of mind, informed through the subjectivity of ontological anarchy.

Lastly, Stirner has shown himself, through Newman's interventions, as being both a proto-structuralist and thoroughly anti-authoritarian. Therefore, it can be said that Stirner is informed by anarchic tendencies without the liberal essentialist narratives – making him a *postanarchist*. Stirner's celebration of the *ego*, however, ultimately gives space for a *pure place within the subject*. Within the post-structuralist analysis of power, one's subjectivity is always already created for them. In result, *there is no escape from power*. Through Stirner's concept of the ego, however, alongside Lacan's lack that Newman deploys within his postanarchist constellation, Newman ultimately finds the possibility of the subject entering a nonessentialist space *outside of power*, creating the possibility of the Stirnerian insurrection. Through this pure outside, the individual is an empty vacuum of multiple and varying wills that the individual, or *ego*, utilizes to their end to embody *ownness*, becoming the *creative nothing*. This practice ultimately embodies the ability toward an ontology anarchy that points toward insurrection.

Through this intersection of a Stirnerian egoism alongside Lacanian lack creates an *outside* of power. Although this outside is resultant of the ultimate inability of the state of properly colonize the desire of its subject, this concept of outside reveals a mirror image of liberalism of sorts. The very concept of an outside, in this sense, is an inverted image of the same dynamic as the anarchists in the previous chapter and the *externalization* of power. Through an act of ridding, by virtue of indifference, the psychological machinations of power are negated within the subject. Because of this, the deployment of Stirner and Lacan show an inverted nihilistic mirror of the liberal project. It is not that this notion of insurrection is wrong, un-useful, or incompatible with a radical subjectivity. On the contrary, it is still fruitful and necessary for an analysis of radical alternatives. However, through the failure of the state, it can be said instead of power being unable to reach its subjects, creating an outside, power is instead always contaminating the subject, *but in this act power itself fails*. This means that, rather than insurrection existing solely as a nonessentialist outside, insurrection too happens allegorically, *inside power*. This concept of allegory will be deployed and developed in later chapters. However, the key difference between the current postanarchist project and my proposition is that, *regardless* of the intention of the subject, or the state, similarly to anarchism in the first chapter, *narratives and power ultimately subvert themselves, creating a radical, ontological anarchy inside*. Nonetheless, however, for Newman, postanarchism both begins and ends with Stirner. That is, through Stirner one finds: proto-post structuralism through the destruction of liberal development, ontological anarchy extracted through the radical ego, and the actualization of this subjectivity through the Stirnerian insurrection.

Stirner and the Three Liberalisms:

Stirner's evisceration of the liberal project is a three-fold endeavor, attacking: political liberalism, social liberalism, and humane liberalism. Political liberalism, for Stirner, embodies the negative-rights orientation of Republican government, such as the freedom of speech and of press, and of all citizens being equal under the law. Where political liberalism is oriented toward the concept of negative rights and the state which bestows those rights to the citizenry, social liberalism is the monopolization of property by the state for the pursuit of equality and labor being the point of value of the citizen. Whereas political liberalism subjects the citizenry to the regulatory body of the state through the implementation of negative right, monopolizing the concept of right, social liberalism subjects the citizenry to universal property ownership, instilling an equality through the lack of ownership, alongside denying the individual as such, praising instead merely the labor she is able to execute. Humane liberalism is the birthing of the concept of humanism. That is, where political liberalism gives equality through political right through the state, and social liberalism economic equality through monopoly of state, humane liberalism finishes Stirner's tripartite renunciation of the individual through the ridding of individual uniqueness for a common humanity – *we are all Man*. The development of liberalism, then, for Stirner, is not the actualization of natural law, but the utilization of power to *subjectify the ego*.

Political liberalism is the creation of the political subject, a subject that is viewed an equal in the eyes of the state through *equal rights*. Namely, all citizens under the state are granted an equality under the law through the eyes of the state by virtue of their birth and existence within the state. For Stirner, this both negates the individual as such, and

produces a subject of the state, that of the citizen. This subject-construction constrains the individual, as opposed to liberating them. Stirner asserts that this “political liberty” is “the individual’s subjection in the state and to the state’s law”.⁵³ Moreover, the birthed category of citizen only frees the state, as opposed to its subjects:

Political Liberty means that the polis, the state, is free; freedom of religion that religion is free, as freedom of conscience signifies that conscience is free; not, therefore, that I am free from the state, from religion, from conscience, or that I am rid of them. It does not mean my liberty, but the liberty of a power that rules and subjugates me; it means that one of my despots, like state, religion, conscience, is free. State, religion, conscience, these despots, make me a slave, and their liberty is my slavery.⁵⁴

For Stirner then, subjectification is doubly subjecting. Firstly, through political liberalism, the individual is re-categorized as citizen the within bounds of state. Thusly, the individual is superimposed unto an identifier, a signifier, that has nothing to do with her, it is an imposition. Secondly, by virtue of the pervasiveness of the intermingling of knowledge and power, this superimposition is ultimately reified at the level of the subconscious of the subject. That is, the subject identifies themselves through this category, resulting in the imposition no longer being mere imposition, it becomes crystallized as a perceived truth. Where political liberalism universalizes the state through negative rights and equality under the law, social liberalism universalizes property within the bounds of the monopoly of state, leaving all *equally property-less*, valuing of its citizens their capacity to labor.

Where political liberalism provides equality in the name of law, a law fundamentally negative in character, social liberalism, or, state socialism, brings forth

⁵³ Stirner, Max. 1995. *The Ego and Its Own*. ed. David Leopold. Cambridge University Press, 97

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 97

equality as it relates to property. That is, equality is found through the state's monopolization of property. Therefore, all are found economically equal through *no one* having any property, except for the state. Through this economic emphasis then, the subject-construction for the individual is merely that of the laborer. That is, for Stirner, the individual is again suppressed with another layer of subjecthood being superimposed onto it. Through political liberalism, the citizen; through social liberalism, the laborer. In both instances, the individual is denied. Stirner thus laments that "neither command nor property is left to the individual; the state took the former, society the latter".⁵⁵ The laborer, moreover, is a category of non-ownership. In result, this laborer is firstly alienated from their own ego; and secondly, *still alienated from their labor*. That is, through the division of labor inherited through capitalism, not only does this laborer not 'own' anything, but she too is reduced to perpetual fatigue, since the division of labor reduces labor as such to labor power. Stirner emphasizes this residual numbness inherited through capitalism. "...[H]e remains half-trained, does not become a master: his labour cannot satisfy him, it can only fatigue him".⁵⁶ Therefore, rather than being a liberated individual, they are reduced to a laboring citizen. The state then is both the "supreme ruler" and "supreme proprietor" that exerts itself over the individual for the purposes of equality. Through centering labor as a primary attribute of the category of man as such, communism only allows the affirmation of the individual on "the Sunday side."⁵⁷ For all of the days of laboring, all individuals are universally subjected to being the category of laborer. It is only, through the remnants of the living corpse of Christianity, that, come

⁵⁵ Ibid, 106

⁵⁶ Ibid, 108

⁵⁷ Ibid, 110

Sunday, the day of rest, the laborer is no longer the laborer, but themselves. Stirner proclaims, “as the communists first declare free activity to be man’s essence, they, like all work-day dispositions, need a Sunday; like all material endeavors, they need a God, an uplifting edification alongside their witless labor.”⁵⁸

Whereas the correlative for political liberalism is both Hobbes’ Leviathan⁵⁹ and Rousseau’s General Will⁶⁰, and the correlative for social liberalism is Marx’s dictatorship of the proletariat, or Marxism-Leninism that arrives after Stirner’s death, the correlative for humane liberalism can be the intended anarchisms of the likes of Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Goldman elucidated in the previous chapter. Humane liberalism, lastly, is the shift Bakunin made in the secret society, proclaiming to “replac[e] the worship of God by respect and love for humanity...”⁶¹ This category of human, for Stirner, rather than serving as an emancipative force, is a societally regulated phenomenon to bring forth for the state a functional category of ‘Man’. Stirner states that “as the individual neither is man nor has anything human, he shall not exist at all: he shall, as an egoist with his egoistic belongings, be annihilated by criticism to make room for man, ‘man just discovered’”.⁶² Therefore, in political liberalism, the individual is subject to the state/law. In social liberalism, the individual is the subject of labor. In humane liberalism, the individual is subject to humanity. The state, labor, and humanity, own the individual, as opposed to this tripartite coalescing to bestow freedom to the individual, for there is no individual. The individual is the play-thing. Only the state, labor, and humanity have

⁵⁸ Ibid, 110

⁵⁹ Hobbes, Thomas. 1996. *Leviathan*. ed. Richard Tuck. Cambridge University Press.

⁶⁰ Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 1997. *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*. ed. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge University Press.

⁶¹ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1974. *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*. Random House Trade Paperbacks, 64

⁶² Stirner, Max. 1995. *The Ego and Its Own*. ed. David Leopold. Cambridge University Press, 118

been liberated; the individual, subjected. Stirner thus states that “liberalism simply brought other concepts on the carpet; human instead of divine, political instead of ecclesiastical, ‘scientific’ instead of doctrinal, or, more generally, real concepts and eternal laws instead of ‘crude dogmas’ and precepts.”⁶³

In bringing forth these sneakily authoritarian equalitarian attributes, Stirner reveals the essentialist nature within the development of the liberal project and the *subjecting power* that lurks behind seemingly emancipatory pursuits in liberal discourse. It is for this reason that Saul Newman refers to Stirner as being a proto-post structuralist⁶⁴. That is, utilizing the post structuralist precept that power is positive and multiple; it informs knowledge, crystallizing both into a mold of *pre-made subjectivity*, thus the concept of *ideas being instilled through liberalism as a subjecting, or, subjectifying power*. In the stripping of essentialist narrative, Saul Newman states in describing the development of subjectification found throughout Foucault’s work, as opposed to human nature being truly actualized, “human subjectivity [is]”, instead, “an effect of power. Power... is productive rather than repressive: it does not repress human subjectivity, as political theorists have hitherto argued – rather, it produces it.”⁶⁵ The pervasiveness of power and the colonization of truth have inevitably led, for Stirner implicitly and Newman explicitly, a *voluntary servitude* that perpetuates the reification of the convergence of power and knowledge.

⁶³ Ibid, 88

⁶⁴ Newman, Saul. 2003. “Stirner and Foucault: Toward a Post-Kantian Freedom.” *Postmodern Culture* 13(2). <http://pmc.iath.virginia.edu/issue.103/13.2newman.html>.

⁶⁵ Newman, Saul. 2001. *From Bakunin to Lacan*. Lexington Books, 83

On Servitude:

At this point, Max Stirner has been brought forth as the ‘post’ portion of postanarchism. That is, Stirner can be read as a proto-post structuralist instead of purely a Young Hegelian. By virtue of attacking the various renditions of liberalism (republicanism, socialism, communism/anarchism), Stirner laid to bare the power dynamics that operate outside of institutions of power. In other words, power is positive and multiple, rather than repressive. Through the creative forces of power, essentialist ideals infuse themselves into the chasms of power, leading to subjectivities already being created for the subject, denying the individual authentic expression. Stirner states, “sacred, eternal is the truth; it is the Sacred, the Eternal. But you, who let yourself be filled and led by this sacred thing, are yourself hallowed.”⁶⁶

In turn, built within the prefigured subjectivities of the subject, it ultimately serves the purposes of *servitude*. It is not that servitude is a natural and preordained phenomenon, but, productive power inevitably entails within itself reifying elements to perpetuate itself. It is for this reason, the seemingly perpetual reification of submission, that Newman poses that “the greatest obstacle to radical politics today – as indeed at any time – is not the formidable nature of Power but, rather, our obedience to it.”⁶⁷

Engaging with the 16th century French thinker Etienne de la Boetie, Newman explores the notion of voluntary servitude as being fundamentally interwoven with desire. This desire, as opposed to the narratives of natural law, is not encoded in human DNA; servile desire is not a *natural phenomenon*. Even though it is not natural, inquiring within

⁶⁶ Stirner, Max. 1995. *The Ego and Its Own*. ed. David Leopold. Cambridge University Press, 37

⁶⁷ Newman, Saul. 2016. *Postanarchism*. Polity Press, 91

the discourse of Boetie, Newman claims that “all forms of power were essentially sustained, indeed created, by voluntary submission.”⁶⁸ Servitude, historically then, has in terms of operation, a universal function. The entire world “seems to reveal a desire not for freedom but for authority, for a new Master.”⁶⁹ This phenomenon, this craving for a new master, as opposed to being natural, even though it exists seemingly in a universal nature, is an expressive result emanating from the relationship of subjectification. This subjectification takes on a fundamentally psychological character where desire becomes reflective of fascisms within us all, within the subject, the subject as subjectified. In the preface of *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault aptly describes this in the ultimate praise for Deleuze and Guattari’s work. This voluntary servitude reveals “the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.”⁷⁰ However, being that this fascist characteristic of desire is not natural, it is rather *a colonization of desire*.

Colonizing, or, usurping desire is a necessary prerequisite for the maintenance of power, a necessary attribute in the power/knowledge crystallization. This colonization does not exist in passivity however. Being that power is productive rather than repressive, there lurks within the notion of servitude a pluralistic quality, not too dis-similar to a social contract of sorts. Submissiveness, then, is a kind-of sadistic voluntary exchange for Newman and Boetie. If it is a trade-off in a Hobbesian sense, then it can be said that the ruler, or, Sovereign, only has power insofar as the subject seeks to continue to

⁶⁸ Ibid, 92

⁶⁹ Ibid, 93

⁷⁰ Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 2009. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Penguin Books, xiii

arrangement, honor the contract. Therefore, the Sovereign in of itself has no *real* power, being that as we've revealed, power isn't merely externally existent in institutions, but operates in a positive and multiple fashion. In result for Newman, channeling Boetie, he states that "if... we have created the tyrant in our act of submission to him, this means that they tyrant has no real power."⁷¹ Channeling James Martel, albeit in a different fashion, *the Leviathan can be subverted*.⁷²

This antagonism between the subject and state through the creation of a submissive subjecthood, for Stirner, is the result of hierarchy. "Hierarchy", for Stirner, "is dominion of thoughts, dominion of mind!"⁷³ This dominion, rather than domineering, is a reciprocal relationship, for, as has been brought forth by Boetie via Newman, submission operates as an exchange for the semblance of power on behalf of the ruler, *as opposed to power as real*. Therefore, through the renunciation of the contract of subservience, an immediate space for autonomy is revealed under the state. Newman elaborates that through this acknowledgement by the lack of real power on behalf of the ruler, a radical underbelly of the commonwealth is revealed. Mainly, "an ontological freedom" is found "which forms the underside of all systems of power and which wants only to be discovered."⁷⁴

Through the awareness of the real un-power of the state, alongside the desire to rid oneself of submissive desire of state, there exists the possibility for radical action to reveal an 'ontological freedom'. That is, immediate freedom outside the grasps of the

⁷¹ Newman, Saul. 2016. *Postanarchism*. Polity Press, 103

⁷² Martel, James. 2007. *Subverting the Leviathan*. Columbia University Press.

⁷³ Stirner, Max. 1995. *The Ego and Its Own*. ed. David Leopold. Cambridge University Press, 68

⁷⁴ Newman, Saul. 2016. *Postanarchism*. Polity Press, 96

state, for, by virtue of denouncing your submission, the illusion (for it was always illusion) of power fades away. Therefore, we return to Stirner's radical alternative subjectivity that seeks to rid all essentialism away from the *ego*, to create the necessary creative space for the *ego* to enact the possibility of autonomy. For Stirner, the *ego* is a series of multiple wills that actuate themselves in affirmative acts of acquiring *property* to achieve *ownness*. Of this ontological freedom, still channeling Boetie, but Stirner too, Newman states that "releasing ourselves from this condition [servitude] is a matter of the will, volition, of 'willing to be free'."⁷⁵ The state has stolen will from the *ego*, and the *ego* is taking it back.

Voluntary servitude, then, is not a natural phenomenon. Rather, it is a colonization of desire, and a necessary colonization, for, being that the state has no *real* power behind it, it is necessary for it to create a desire-machine dependent upon the state. This usurpation of desire is, for Deleuze and Guattari, reflective of the fascisms of everyday life. However, just as there lurks a fascist desire, there lurks a radical underbelly outside the reach of state, being that the state in effect has no power as such. Resultant of this fact is the ability, from desiring away from fascist desire, to enter a space of 'ontological freedom'. One enters this space, under the nose of the state, through a willing to be free. However, will is not just a mere act, a will is something that is honed, cultivated, worked upon. Summarizing the ontological freedom, Newman elaborates:

Freedom – or ownness – as a release from our voluntary servitude is a discipline, and art – something that is learnt, that one learns from others and teaches oneself, something that is fashioned, worked on, patiently elaborated, practiced at the level of the self in its relations with others. It is a work on our limits, both external and, perhaps more importantly,

⁷⁵ Ibid, 104

internal. The important point, however, is that freedom is our ever-present possibility and, indeed, our ontological condition, our point of departure. The realization and affirmation of this ontological freedom, coupled with its ethical responsibilities, might be seen as the central motif of postanarchist political theory.⁷⁶

The external elements Newman puts forth are institutions such as the state.

Similarly, to the anarchists in the previous chapter, there is a total repudiation of external power that superimposes onto the pure subject. The internal element, referring back to Deleuze, is that of, or things based upon, desire. The external and the internal, through the realization of power as multiple, don't exist in silos, but, rather, communicate and inform each other. Although characterized as an anarchist intertwined in liberal precepts, Emma Goldman too can be read both more in a more sophisticated and deep fashion. Discussing the notion of emancipation as it relates to women and the suffrage movement in the U.S., Goldman states that “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...”⁷⁷ Through lamenting to the limited scope of the suffrage movement, Goldman illuminates the importance of the crafting of an ontological freedom in order to prevent statist or economic cooptation. Ultimately, Goldman mirrors this disciplined art of fashioning will. Newman and Goldman both recognize ontological freedom *as a starting point*, as opposed to being an end-goal. This concept is to be evolved as *ontological anarchy*, and Stirner's concept of *ego* is integral toward its development.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 112

⁷⁷ Goldman, Emma. 1969. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Dover Publications, 22

Ontological Anarchy:

Firstly, for both Newman and Stirner, there is a clear difference between that of *freedom* and that of *ownness*. The former is still burdened by the history of the universalistic metanarratives that intervene upon the subject. That being, freedom is typically the guidelines, or guiding posts of allowable action bestowed from the state. In a post-structuralist sense, it is this freedom that functions as a *governmentality*. That is, the notion and parameters of freedom are governing and regulatory apparatuses, as opposed to freedom as such. Through the utilization of concepts of natural law, alongside the imposition of law as such, the state is simultaneously crafting the subject for the subject whilst giving the subject certain ‘freedoms’ of action. In this sense, the state is both the painter and paintbrush, the individual only the canvass, without any say in what is painted upon it.

Ownness, on the other hand, is by definition anarchic. For Stirner, “‘freedom lives only in the realm of dreams!’ Ownness, on the contrary, is my whole being and existence, it is I myself. I am free from what I am rid of, owner of what I have in my power or what I control.”⁷⁸ Ownness, then, once rid of the metanarratives of liberalism, is the affirmation of the ego, infinitely creating, always becoming own. This, for Newman, is the subjectivity of ontological anarchy. Furthermore, for Newman, “...the emphasis is on anarchy as one’s starting point, one’s point of departure for political action, rather than being the culmination or the final reward for one’s endeavors.”⁷⁹ In result, ontological anarchism is not necessarily revolutionary as such, but rather, *insurrectionist*.

⁷⁸ Stirner, Max. 1995. *The Ego and Its Own*. ed. David Leopold. Cambridge University Press, 143

⁷⁹ Newman, Saul. 2016. *Postanarchism*. Polity Press, 15

For Stirner, revolution was ultimately a logic of state. That is, the purpose of revolution, rather than to destroy or negate power as such, simply seeks to alter, edit, and maneuver power, ultimately keeping intact the authoritative apparatus of state.

Insurrection, on the other hand, is corollary with Newman's principle of ontological anarchy, elucidating an ultimate indifference to the state. Through the unveiling of essentialisms, the nonpower of state is revealed, ultimately showing the stark limitations of state to ultimately carry out its prerogatives. Therefore, as elaborated above, the state necessarily needs to colonize the desire to subject to seemingly *interpellate* them into the very logic of state which purports its dominance. Through insurrection, a space is carved for radical unsubjects, *the ego*, and to create voluntary associations, *union of egoists*, predicated upon the mutual flourishing of *ownness*. Insurrection, then, is interested not in altering power, but altering the self, externalizing oneself in nothing. Stirner elaborates:

Revolution and insurrection must not be looked upon as synonymous. The former consists in an overturning of conditions, of the established condition or status, the state or society, and is accordingly a political or social act; the latter as indeed for its unavoidable consequence a transformation of circumstances, yet does not start from it but from men's discontent with themselves, is not an armed rising, but a rising of individuals, a getting up, without regard to the arrangements that spring from it. The revolution aimed at new arrangements; insurrection leads us no longer to let ourselves be arranged, but to arrange ourselves, and sets no glittering hopes on 'institutions.'⁸⁰

The culminating moment of the always-insurrection, so to speak, is *postanarchism*. That is, insurrection, informed through the subjectivity of ontological anarchy, is a limitless horizon, always anarchic, and forging ahead, too, an ethical horizon of everyday anarchic

⁸⁰ Stirner, Max. 1995. *The Ego and Its Own*. ed. David Leopold. Cambridge University Press, 280

practice, rid of essentialist metanarratives that deny ourselves the affirmation of self and daily life for the pursuance of a grand ideal at the end of history. ‘Voluntary inservitude’ leads to the crushing of essentialist idols. The crushing of these idols leads to the affirmation of the ego as ‘creative nothing’. The ego, ascertaining ownness as a creative nothing, is contradictory to the notion of state, thusly bringing forth with it (the ego) a newfound subjectivity of ontological anarchy. This ontological anarchy, coalescing with other egos in temporary unions, creates an ethical horizon of perpetual insurrection, with anarchy as the starting point of daily life, rather than a revolutionary ideal. Describing this insurrection, Newman states that “the insurrection... works against institutions – but not simply in the sense of seeking to get rid of all institutions, as this would lead simply to different kinds of institutions – but rather in the sense of asserting one’s power over institutions, and indeed, one’s autonomy from them.”⁸¹

Post Structural Tensions:

This notion of ownness and insurrection seem to veer from post-structuralist analysis. That being, whereas Stirner and Newman seem to reveal an escape outside the grasps of power, revealing the ultimate nonpower of state, there simultaneously exists the all-power so to speak, of the knowledge/power convergence toward the idea of truth. For Foucault, there is no outside of this power, of which Stirner’s ego seems to be able to allude from. On the interplay between power and revolt, Foucault states that “the history of *raison d’Etat*, the history of governmental ratio, and the history of counter-conducts

⁸¹ Newman, Saul. 2016. “What Is an Insurrection? Destituent Power and Ontological Anarchy in Agamben and Stirner.” *Political Studies Association* 65(2).
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0032321716654498>.

opposed to it, are inseparable from each other.”⁸² As opposed to insurrection operating outside the bounds of power, or, operating indifferently to them, Foucault asserts that power is inescapable, that all acts against power are just that, acts against power. In result, for Foucault, counter-conduct, or, insurrection, *is in fact dependent upon power in the first place for it to exist, to function*. In an interesting way, then, Foucault finds himself back within the dialectical power of place.

This ever-pervasive notion of power, in the Foucauldian sense, could too be seen ideologically, just as how Stirner can be viewed ideologically. By this it is meant that ideology creates a specific conjuring of a subjectivity as it relates to the knowledge/power dynamic. This crystallized truth is then reified through institutions of state, which creates a feedback loop of verification. Then, with the subject already crafted, the subject too internalizes this ideological narrative, and participates in it. Kate Gordy elaborates upon this notion of Foucault being read ideologically:

Ideology may be a far more Foucauldian term than Foucault and his followers acknowledge. Far from presuming the truth, an ideology can be understood as a kind of episteme, in that it is self-contained and historically contingent. Ideologies are related to material conditions in that they make them intelligible, but are not wholly determined by them. Like discourses, they produce subjectivities, which then interact with these same ideologies... [I]deologies could be said to actualize or concretize the abstract category of the subject who then perpetuates that ideology via a variety of social practices.⁸³

This notion of ideology, though, is neither all-encompassing, nor nothing at all. For Gordy, the three main spheres of Cuban socialist ideology (political, social, theoretical) is a practical interplay of theory and practice in a seemingly pluralistic fashion (ideological

⁸² Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population*. ed. Arnold I Davidson. Picador, 357

⁸³ Gordy, Katherine A. 2015. *Living Ideology in Cuba: Socialism in Principle and Practice*. University of Michigan Press, 14

exchange in the social body and formal institutions). Ideology, rather than being a Foucaultian totality of impenetrability, or a Stirnerian spook, it is an imperfect practice. It is a practice of real power conjured through power imagined, but nonetheless with *the propensity toward the possibility of failure*.

Nonetheless, through this perceived totality of both ideology and power, or, with the ideological pervasiveness embedded in the Foucauldian knowledge/power dynamic, one's ability to find an internal place of pure negation, such as the *ego*, is put into question. Specifically, the ability of "...the insurrection [as] a form of self-transformation and the assertion of one's indifference to power" is put into question.⁸⁴ To address this schism, Newman deploys Lacan's notion of lack.

The Lacanian Intervention:

Whereas through Foucault, the subject is preconfigured and determined by a totality of signifiers, Lacan posits that these signifiers can in fact, fail. That is, viewing Foucault ideologically, Althusserian interpellation, instead of succeeding 'nine times out of ten', instead, fails. Due to this, the subject is constituted as a 'lack'. Newman states that "if the subject is not wholly determined and interpellated, there is a 'space' opened for a politics and an identity – albeit an unstable one – of resistance."⁸⁵ This constitutive lack, then, this separation between signifier and signified creates for Newman the possibility of a place of pure negation within the *ego* that lends itself toward postanarchic insurrection. Newman again states that these "...discursive structures are themselves unstable, and often fragmented and incomplete. So, although the subject is conditioned

⁸⁴ Newman, Saul. 2016. *Postanarchism*. Polity Press,, 115

⁸⁵ Newman, Saul. 2001. *From Bakunin to Lacan*. Lexington Books, 142

by language as an external structure, he or she is not determined by it in an absolute sense and, therefore, has a large degree of autonomy and free agency.”⁸⁶

Furthermore, the Lacanian intervention of lack in the discourse of postanarchism serves as the intermediary between desire and ontological anarchy. That is, as has been said previously, if that is ultimately the place of a non-power, then the state must rely on the colonization of desire of the subject in order for the subject to hail the state as legitimate, giving the state a *semblance of power*. However, by virtue of, through Lacan, *desire itself representing the lack embedded in desire itself*, the state is not only unable to obtain power as such, *but too fails to hail its own subjects*. This is how Newman ultimately negotiates between the all-power of Foucault and the non-power of Stirner, that of the Lacanian concept of lack. Desire as lack is the intermediary which gives forth the very possibility of a postanarchism, an ontological anarchy that operates indifferently to the state, for it doesn't recognize it as *real*.

Outside and Inside:

Through the critique of essentialism brought forth through Stirner, we were able to see Newman deploy Stirner as a proto-post structuralist of sorts. Through this deconstruction of universalist narratives, a radical rupture occurs for the possibility of the Stirnerian ego to activate itself, the kernel of autonomy. However, the history of state has perpetually relied upon, and seemingly succeeded in the conjuring of a servitude, and a voluntary one at that, of its subjects. Therefore, in order for this ego to become materially real in the world, this servitude must be quelled. For Newman, the process of realizing

⁸⁶ Newman, Saul. 2011. *The Politics of Postanarchism*. Edinburgh University Press, 141

one's ego, becoming one who one is, there lurks the possibility of a voluntary inservitude. This inservitude is a disciplined course of taking over one's desires, or, *recognizing one's desire as a lack*, revealing the inability of the state to both obtain real power and colonize desire. Rupturing the lord-bondsman dialectic, an ontologically anarchic way of seeing activates within the egoistic subject. This ontologically anarchy then deploys the Stirnerian concept of insurrection, for the very deployment of revolution as such is naught but the extension of the logic of state. The anarchic-egoist subject, then, operates in a nonessentialist outside – that being, autonomous spaces that are indifferent to the state, bringing forth a shrugging of the shoulders felt around the world.

The shrugging of the shoulders, the nonessentialist outside of power, or, the external place of singularities, represent not a failure of interpellation as such, but rather as always-lacking. Lack and failure are not the same, and it is important to distinguish between the two. The former, as elucidated above, claims that state power, or, the hailing of the state, has never worked in the first place, and relies upon a perverse social contract of sorts to give forth the semblance of something real. Failure, on the other hand, showcases interpellation as real and as functioning, but reveals, instead of a nothingness of power, *power's radical and real subverting of itself*. That is, power becomes subject to allegory. It can be said, then, that Lacan's lack represents a radical *outside*, and allegory represents a radical *inside*. Furthermore, Stirner's deconstruction of man and the deployment of a multiple ego too represents an outside. That is, Stirner seeks to find a pure outside, so as to purge the subject of the narratives that have been embedded within her. In result, the individual becomes a nihilistic vacuum, existing in an empty outside. This operates then, in a strange way, as an inverted nihilistic mirror of liberalism. It is not

that the deployment of lack to ascertain a nonessentialist outside is not useful or wrong. On the contrary, it is vital and important to a radical alternative of life. However, by virtue of the tensions within postanarchism as it relates to power as ever-present, and power as never-real, *it becomes of the utmost importance to find an ontologically anarchic rupture inside the state's intentions as well.* It is for this reason that I seek to deploy the Benjaminian concept of *allegory* to *subvert* the intention of state, finding within it, *inside*, spaces of ontological anarchy, that operate *regardless of intention.*

Chapter 3: On Walter Benjamin: Toward the Allegorical

In the first chapter, the concept of anarchism was elucidated as a philosophy of cross-contamination. This cross-contamination inevitably leaves anarchism susceptible to the baggage of the liberal enlightenment. That is, anarchism is riddled with essentialisms. From natural law to the universal character of revolution, anarchism has superimposed universal notions, or, metanarratives, onto the subject. This superimposition is a *mystifying* element, praising the concept that looms over the subject, rather than the subject itself. Also, in the first chapter, anarchism, outside of its own intention, simultaneously delegitimized these ‘archist’ essentialist impositions as it laid them brick by brick. This unintentional *profaning* element of anarchism is fundamentally *allegorical* – revealing the ‘awes’ of power as failing and reduced to the level of the everyday.

Benjamin deploys allegory as a methodological tool that ruptures and undermines from within authoritative ‘truths’, operating as a limitedly redeeming entity. This allegorical impulse, which is an anti-authoritarian impulse, alters our relationship with time, and allows us to truly blast these ‘little fascisms’ out of the realm of history, creating autonomous radical ruptures of ‘anarchist sovereignty’ within these moments of rupture. This radical tool of allegory, I argue, is not only compatible with the postanarchist project introduced in chapter two, but it too creates *radical possibilities from the inside of power*, since postanarchist literature has to this point only revealed an ontological anarchism at the outside. Ontological anarchy, when in the hands of the allegorical, serves as a catalyst toward nonessentialist anarchic creation at the inside, for only something that is already a failure can serve as a positive without itself becoming dogmatic or truthful. In other words, allegory brings the historical materialist to the only

place in which redemptive creation becomes possible – *in* the ruin. In order to full immerse oneself in the concept of allegory, a detailed account of Benjamin's account of language and epistemology (which builds out from the conception of language) must be undertaken.

On Language:

For Benjamin, language itself ultimately becomes the object of allegory, for through the fall of humanity, language loses the breath of God, and thus loses its connection with truth. The language of (wo)man, then, becomes purely a human word, limited to the realm of human knowledge. Due to this separation between language and truth, then, the human imposition of name onto phenomena is a symbolic power that replaces the object itself, since the human-word confuses itself as truth. Whereas the language of man views itself as an objective fact-finder, Benjamin's account of language asserts that this scientific theory of language is naught but a false idol that claims its domination over objects – which is an act of judgement. Allegory is the destroying of the symbolic, it smashes away instances of judgement, and superimposes nothing onto phenomena, rupturing within language spaces of autonomy for objects to be named, not truly as such, but non-dogmatically. Allegory, within language, is the catalyst for nonessentialist creation in the inside of this judging language, from the inside of power. In order to ascertain a proper understanding of the development and deployment of language, it is necessary to provide a detailed account of Benjamin's analysis of language pre and post-fall.

For Benjamin, language carries within it a linguistic entity. These linguistic entities express mental entities as long as they are communicable. Mental entities are

more or less expressions of ‘meanings’ that exist in all material matter. These mental entities, however, exist differently from language. Language, thus, communicates itself, its linguistic being, of which their corresponding mental entity is included insofar as the mental entity is communicable, since mental entities are separable from language itself. Benjamin emphasizes this point, “Language therefore communicates the particular linguistic being of things, but their mental being only insofar as this is directly included in their linguistic being, insofar as it is capable of being communicated.”⁸⁷ Being that humanity has the ability to speak, the particular linguistic being of (wo)man is that of speech.

Because of the fact that woman *speaks*, woman communicates her mental being through name. Since linguistic entities carry their corresponding mental entities insofar as they are communicable, the linguistic being of woman is to name things. Since nature communicates itself to (wo)man through their own linguistic being, (wo)man communicates him/her/self by naming nature that calls forth itself through its linguistic entity and corresponding expressible mental entity:

To whom does the lamp communicate itself? The mountain? The fox? – But here is the answer: to man. This is not anthropomorphism. The truth of this answer is shown in human knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] and perhaps also in art. Furthermore, if the lamp and the mountain and the fox did not communicate themselves to man, how should he be able to name them? And he names them; *he* communicates himself by naming *them*.⁸⁸

The act of naming, then, is communicative with nature, rather than discovering and investigating nature. This penetration *through* nature is the bourgeois conception of

⁸⁷ Benjamin, Walter. 2004. 1 *Selected Writings*. eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W Jennings. First Harvard Press, 63

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 64

language. This notion of language allows humanity to put itself on a pedestal, praising their own arrogance over a self-valorizing conception of language, mistaking this as discovering the truths of the world. It is this haughtiness which allows for the very Lockean conception of mixing labor with soil, or viewing nature merely as the means of our own pleasure, investigation, and domination.⁸⁹ “[I]t [bourgeois language, expressing mental entities *by name, revealing ‘fact’*] holds that the means of communication is the word, its object factual, and its addressee a human being.”⁹⁰

Counter to this bourgeois conception operating in a mythic cycle of self-reification, Benjamin offers that “*in the name, the mental being of man communicates itself to God.*”⁹¹ Through Adam, God gave the power of name, and thus through the act of naming, man completes God’s creation. Through the sanction of God then, the process of naming brings forth the conclusion that language is complete and total, signed off by God through name. When naming removes all semblance of the inexpressible, the concept of revelation reveals itself. That is, revelation for Benjamin can be defined as achieving total expression in language, Adam had completed the task of naming:

...the concept of revelation, if it takes the inviolability of the word as the only and sufficient condition and characteristic of the divinity of the mental being that is expressed in it. The highest mental region of religion is (in the concept of revelation) at the same time the only one that does not know the inexpressible. For it is addressed in the name and expresses itself as revelation.⁹²

⁸⁹ For more on patriarchal dynamics of the investion into nature, read Carolyn Merchant’s *The Death of Nature*

⁹⁰ Ibid, 65

⁹¹ Ibid, 65

⁹² Ibid, 67

But even through here, name does not capture all, for the word itself is God's linguistic being. Human language, and the act of naming, is put in communication toward God's linguistic being, *rather than being God's linguistic being*. Therefore, human language exists in a boundless and unlimited nature. Benjamin states that "[t]he name is no closer to the word than knowledge to creation. The infinity of all human language always remains limited and analytic in nature, in comparison to the absolutely unlimited and creative infinity of the divine word."⁹³ By virtue of this infinity, the task of translation becomes necessary.

Translation is guaranteed as a teleological project of perfection, for God granted it as such. "For God created things; the creative word in them is the germ of the cognizing name, just as God, too, finally named each thing after it was created."⁹⁴ This task of translation, then, is a continual communication between the linguistic being of nature to humanity, and humanity returning to nature name, which operates as redeeming. This redemptive quality of name onto nature is woman's linguistic being which communicates itself to God. As stated earlier, when language becomes fully expressed, that is, for Benjamin, revelation. However, being that the word is God's linguistic being, and name is the human linguistic entity that attempts to correspond to it, but always falls short for it isn't God's linguistic being. This notion of translation, then, is ultimately related to the Fall of humanity.

The apple from the Tree of Knowledge was supposed to bring forth ideas of good and evil. However, God had already 'signed off' on things being good for he stated as

⁹³ Ibid, 68

⁹⁴ Ibid, 70

much on the seventh day. Therefore, the notions of good and evil operate outside of language, and outside of name. For God created, and Adam named, and God saw it as good. Language and name, then, were cognized as *good*. The apple then is a step outside of language, into the nameless abyss:

Knowledge of good and evil abandons name; it is a knowledge from the outside, the uncreated imitation of the creative word. Name steps outside itself in this knowledge: the Fall marks the birth of the *human word*, in which name no longer lives intact and which has stepped out of name-language, the language of knowledge, from what we may call its own immanent magic, in order to become expressly, as it were externally, magic.⁹⁵

Humanity, through the concept of good and evil, had fallen. In the fall, the name became: substituted for mere signs, substituted by judgement, substituted by abstraction. The convergence of judgement and abstraction for Benjamin, lead to the ultimate origins of law. “The Tree of Knowledge stood in the garden of God not in order to dispense information on good and evil, but as an emblem of judgement over the questioner. This immense irony marks the mythic origin of law.”⁹⁶

This fall of language into ‘prattle’ and the abstract gives rise to the possibility of allegorical intervention. That is, through the fall of language, things are *over-named*, for nature no longer maintains a correspondence between their name and their silent unvoiced name (word) that God gave them. Thus, as opposed to being named as such, nature is *over-named*. This act of over-naming is the space for allegorical intervention, for name lacks an authentic authority, the bourgeois deployment of operating through

⁹⁵ Ibid, 71

⁹⁶ Ibid, 72

language and to fetishize the name itself as ‘fact unveiled’ reveals the ultimate emptiness of name, and colonization of phenomena. Allegory opens up phenomena from the symbolic imposition of bourgeois language, and provides an anti-authoritarian space of creation. In the ruins of failed name is the domain in which positive creation becomes possible without dogmatism or ‘truthfulness’. The removal of objective truth in language and the simultaneously opening up of language through the failure of over-naming is the linguistic bed that makes way for Benjamin’s fragmentary epistemology.

On Epistemology:

As a result of Benjamin’s insight into the fall of language, Benjamin’s epistemology, is an utterly fragmented one. This fragmentation is by definition then thoroughly *unsystematic*. Just as how language expresses itself, and has lost its magic through the fall, Benjamin’s epistemological framework attempts to navigate phenomena as it relates to the prattle of language. The bourgeois view of language, when extended toward epistemology, navigates itself *through* language to find facts through *positivism*. Positivism takes the ‘fact’ colonized onto objects, operating *through* language, and creates *authoritative laws* that stem from its self-perception of rational objectivity. The fragmented epistemology of Benjamin operates *allegorically*, whereas positivism acts ‘objectively’. The former is an intervention, a disruption, the latter is deductive. The former redeems, the latter extracts. The former acknowledges the fall of language, the latter acts as if God.

For Benjamin, the concept of the system, or, a self-sustaining network of logical progressions that extracts truth, is the extension of the bourgeois notion of language. Just as how bourgeois language operates through language to extract ‘fact’, systems of

philosophy mirror this dynamic. In the Epistemo-Critical Prologue in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin denounces this systemization:

Inasmuch as it is determined by this concept of system, philosophy is in danger of accommodating itself to a syncretism which weaves a spider's web between separate kinds of knowledge in an attempt to ensnare truth as if it were something which came flying in from outside.⁹⁷

Systemic thought, then, is philosophically presumptive. Ironically, in its assumptive character, it lacks a deductive base at its starting point. Secondly, through this insular totality, and despite lacking a deductive point of departure, it confuses its forcible deductive logical end as truth. By virtue of this intra-self-reification, the hollow universalism within the philosophic assumption, systems confuse their own limitations as deduction, and deduction as truth. This bourgeois mistake is to treat philosophy “as a guide to the acquisition of knowledge”⁹⁸ just as how bourgeois language operates through language to acquire ‘fact’.

In order for philosophy to “remain true to the law of its own form, as the representation of truth”⁹⁹, method must digress *in language*, rather than acquire fact *through* it. To digress is to be unsystematic, and to be indirect. A digressive method, then, is *fragmentary*. Method, for Benjamin, then operates similarly to a mosaic. Imagine a mosaic, a particular image created from a plethora of previously unrelated pieces of glass, tile, or stone. The bourgeois method assumes it still lives in the house of God. It sees the world as whole and as its product, waiting for the fact of God to be extracted from it. This fact of God, however, has fallen. Therefore, the house of God has shattered into an

⁹⁷ Benjamin, Walter. 1998. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Verso, 28

⁹⁸ Ibid, 28

⁹⁹ Ibid, 28

infinite of particles. Rather than piece together the house of God as was before, since this seems to be a Sisyphean impossibility, one should instead methodologically digress, to take these fragments to create an *illuminating* mosaic of sorts, to analyze a ‘round about-ness’ of phenomena. Benjamin elaborates that “the value of fragments of thought is all the greater the less direct their relationship to the underlying idea, and the brilliance of the representation depends as much on this value as the brilliance of the mosaic does on the quality of the glass paste.”¹⁰⁰ Method for Benjamin is to digress. Digression is unsystematic. To be unsystematic is to be fragmentary. Fragmentation as an illuminating limit, as ‘round about’ phenomena.

Fragmentation for Benjamin is particularly illuminating then for this ‘round about-ness’ carries within itself elements of *allegory*. This allegorical component of the indirectness of fragments and the idea ultimately decouples the notion of truth and knowledge. Allegorical fragmentation, then, acknowledges the separation and relative incommensurability post-fall pertaining to the mental being of fragments and ideas. To think that fragments and ideas objectively correspond through the human-word is to communicate the bourgeois error of language and method – *positivism* – for it systematizes phenomena *through* the idea. Allegorical fragmentation, then, redeems phenomena from a false imposition of truth. Allegorism is therefore neither negative nor positive but fragmented so that the positive itself contains the negative, and the negative itself contains the positive. In other words, in the act of fragmentary redemption by and in

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 29

the intervention of allegory, a rupture within power occurs that creates the space for positive creation that is limited, finite, temporary, and undogmatic.

This fragmentary conjuring toward mosaic-making should not be confused with the idea occupying the phenomena itself, which is found within the bourgeois method. Ideas are neither the phenomena itself nor the concept. Rather, the idea, having a sort of consciousness, *is expressive*. This expression serves a constellatory function as it relates to phenomena, for “ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars.”¹⁰¹ Ideas, then, are the particular arrangement or organization which phenomena find themselves in, situated within a particular *constellation*. Ideas, then, are dependent upon phenomena. Furthermore, the expression of ideas is too limited by phenomena. Benjamin states that “they [ideas] remain obscure so long as phenomena do not declare faith to them and gather round them.”¹⁰² Phenomena, then, have an agency of sorts, or at least aren’t predetermined and/or controlled by ideas.

Benjamin’s epistemology expands the theory of language, and applies it to method. That is, where language as fallen, truth has been put in a box by God, locked the key, threw it away, and turned her head. In a world removed from revelation, removed from redemption as such, allegory is a ‘little messianic power’ that limitedly redeems phenomena. This redemption is found within the notion of the fragmentary constellation. Instead of ‘fact’ colonizing phenomena, phenomena utilize their agency to group around ideas, to create *signposts* that point elsewhere, redeeming the phenomena from the imposition of meaning, and opening them up to interpretation. The epistemological base

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 34

¹⁰² Ibid, 35

of allegory is found in this fragmentary constellation, in mosaic making, and it transfers the phenomena from a totalizing truth to a spectrum of interpretive extremes. Benjamin's epistemology, informed by his theological account of language, runs counter to that of Stirner's deployment of the Hegelian dialectic whilst still operating within the nonessentialist anti-authoritarianism of postanarchism. That is, whereas Stirner symbolically seizes language as the ego's property, Benjamin's allegory opens up the untruth of language, revealing a space for undogmatic anarchic creation. The former is symbolic, a product of bourgeois language, the latter is allegorical – ontological anarchy inside the ruin of power.

Stirner, Postanarchism, and Language:

Although it could be stated, through a postanarchist lens, that the initial divinity of language found in Benjamin is saturated with essentialist elements, the severing of ties between nature, humanity, and God that occur in the Fall indicate an extremely nonessentialist account of language. That is, through acknowledging the bourgeois falsities in the notion of the process through language revealing fact as such, alongside removing humanity's relationship with the linguistic entities of both nature and God, removing the power of name in (wo)man's linguistic entity, we are left with a fundamentally empty language, and language that *lacks an 'in-of-itself'*.

Due to the existence of language as prattle, then, the colonization of language for one's egoist interest and desire fall short, for it still maintains the same bourgeois structures, with the shift from *fact as such* to *the fact of my ego*. Language, in the case of Stirner, still carries a means to a particular end, a colonization of language, but it gets

relegated to the level of ego, as oppose to fact as such. Stirner's seizing of bourgeois language is thus an inverse image of the colonizing character of liberal language.

In Wolfi Landstreicher's translation of Stirner's *The Unique and Its Property*, he lays out in the introduction the deep joy, humor, and play embedded in Stirner's book that are lost, or, underrepresented in previous translations. For Landstreicher, similarly to Nietzsche, Stirner was an anti-philosopher philosopher, or, of the sentiment of an anti-philosophic nature. Attacking the Young Hegelians, Stirner combined their philosophic language whilst infusing with it his own usurpation of language as a toy, as a play thing. Landstreicher states that "this wordplay does a lot to show the playful, joking, mocking nature of Stirner's writing."¹⁰³ Stirner, then, still operates *through* language to discover the *untruths* of language. However, through the process of deconstructing *through* language, Stirner reveals to the reader a radical *ego*. In his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze states of Stirner that he is "the dialectician who reveals nihilism as the truth of the dialectic."¹⁰⁴ Stirner, then, reveals the nihilist underbelly of bourgeois language, but is unable 'redeem' phenomena mired in it. That is, through the joyous wordplay of obtaining language as *his property*, Stirner is able to reveal the falsity of the bourgeois conception of language, but doesn't *allegorize* corresponding phenomena. Rather, whilst acknowledging the nihilistic superimposition of language onto phenomena, Stirner ultimately seeks refuge in a *pure outside* through the concept of ego, ultimately still within the grasps of bourgeois language, but still inversely so, since Stirner is still able to reveal the nihilisms of this conception of language.

¹⁰³ Stirner, Max. *The Unique and Its Property*. Ardent Press.

¹⁰⁴ Deleuze, Gilles. 1962. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Columbia University Press, 161

For Benjamin, regardless, language is stuck within the chasms of the mythic. Whereas the task with Stirner is to take language as your Own, the task for Benjamin is a limited redemptive rupture within the ‘mythicness’ of the human-word. That is, for Benjamin, even if bourgeois language is claimed as your own, it is still an authoritative body that asserts its falseness onto other things. For Benjamin, instead of claiming bourgeois language as your own, as a means to your desire, the task of the philosopher is to *relieve objects from over-naming* in the act of allegory. The former seeks to take language *outside* of its own purposes and re-appropriate it as an egoistic ownness, whereas the latter seeks to reveal and remove failed authority *within* language. The first is an external egoism, the second as *allegory within the inside*. Benjamin’s conception of language, however, is not antithetical to postanarchism. Rather, it reveals more possibility within postanarchism through this *allegorical inside* (which is talked about further later on in this chapter, and detailed in the next chapter).

Benjamin’s account of allegory, within the constellation of postanarchism, unveils a radical and nonessentialist way of seeing within the chasms of power. Allegorism illuminates upon the failure of power, whereas Stirner’s ego itself is a non-allegorical account, ultimately being an authoritative stand-in by virtue of deploying language as one’s tool – operating through it to obtain the fact of ego. It is for this very reason that Stirner, through the attempted destruction of the dialectic through the dialectic, has only for himself the ego. That is, even though Stirner reveals the limitations, phantasms, and powers of place of the dialectic, he is constrained by operating through language, having for himself after his deconstruction nothing but the abstract base of liberal thought – *the individual*. Therefore, Stirner’s intent is thoroughly non-allegorical, seeking a

nonessentialist and uncontaminated outside through the ego, but instead finds himself mired deeper into the chasms of bourgeois language than those he sought to criticize, leaving himself open to allegorization. That is, when Stirner comes into contact with the allegorical, the concept of the ego serves as a signpost toward the failure liberal thought and its individualistic conceptions. In other words, Stirner deploys scientific language in an attempt to demystify, and reveals the concept of the individual as the ultimate mystifying construction of liberal thought.

Although bringing forth an epistemological account that is inverse to that of Stirner, Benjamin's fragmentary framework still functions within the postanarchist constellatory network, including Agamben's account of the *whatever singularity*. Despite the fact that Agamben does not explicitly utilize knowledge as Stirner does, he still seeks a nonessentialist outside through the notion of the 'whatever singularity'. Agamben, then, finds himself situated within Stirner and Benjamin, not quite cherishing egoistic notions, but not acting allegorical either. Due to Agamben and Stirner's unallegorical accounts, it is in Benjamin's notion of allegory that both become more radical – revealing Stirner's ego as an allegorical signpost for liberalism's failures and Agamben's 'whatever singularity' as an always existing phenomenon within the failures of power.

Language and the Whatever Singularity:

The *whatever singularity*, brought forth by Giorgio Agamben serves as a radical political pathway that operates elusively from sovereignty. Agamben's analysis of sovereignty is an appendage of Benjamin's of which will be elucidated further in this chapter. This analysis, briefly, views sovereignty as *always in the state of exception*,

meaning that the state is always in, or perceives itself in, a state of emergency¹⁰⁵. The state of emergency then, is the state's normal state of affairs. For Agamben, this means that humanity is in result perpetually classified as *homo sacer*, which stems from Roman law, meaning generally someone whom has all rights removed from them and effectively separated from society¹⁰⁶. *Homo sacer* is, then, a status of total condemnation, total judgement, and of an essentially unliving being. This authoritarian, even fascist logic of sovereignty ultimately, for Agamben, creates of society nothing but *a large camp*. That is, the notion of society and the notion of the (concentration) camp begin to conflate, confuse, and merge until there is no longer a difference. Society is the camp, and the camp, society.

The *whatever singularity* is thus the tool for Agamben to escape this rising fascism. In general, the ethical guideline, or, the ruling principle of this singularity is that *all things have value*, or, more aptly put, things simply matter because they exist. This is a perspective of human rights, and rights of things in general, that are totally at odds with the totalitarian *judgement* of sovereignty. This concept is quite similar to that as Stirner, and can be properly situated within the postanarchist realm. Banu Bargu, on this similarity states that Stirner's "unique ones, whose multiple, dynamic, and transitory qualities refuse being reduced to one overarching and static generalization, however universal and encompassing."¹⁰⁷ By virtue of the *whatever singularity* embracing a radical ethics, a radical vision of human rights through viewing things as always

¹⁰⁵ Agamben, Giorgio. 1990. *The Coming Community*. University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁰⁶ Agamben, Giorgio. 1995. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press.

¹⁰⁷ Martel, James, and Jimmy Casas Klausen, eds. 2011. *How Not to Be Governed: Readings and Interpretations From a Critical Anarchist Left*. Lexington Books, 108

matter, and thusly not being an authority of judgement, these things too are incommensurable, such as Stirner's 'Unique'. Furthermore, Saul Newman makes a similar comparison, defining this whatever singularity as "an open, undefined subject indifferent to any representable identity, and reducible neither to particularities nor generalities."¹⁰⁸

However, both Stirner's ego and Agamben's 'whatever singularity' within the postanarchist project need allegory as a corrective to further their radical potential. The former is stuck within the liberal logic of individualism, and the latter gives too much credit to power, echoing the Foucauldian trap of power as totalizing all space and time, leaving no real room for radical recourse. The conundrum, for Agamben, then, is just how power is totalizing, he simultaneously seeks an uncontaminated outside through the 'whatever singularity'. A similar issue arose in chapter two in postanarchism itself, where Saul Newman sought to resolve it by Lacan's account of lack, leaving a space open of an outside through power only being able to be exercised through one's voluntary servitude toward it. Despite these limitations, in the deployment of allegory Agamben's 'whatever singularity' becomes a radical inside, showcasing not the all-power or non-power of state, but the failed-power of state.

It is for this reason that Walter Benjamin's conception of language and fragmented epistemology is, then, ultimately compatible with the postanarchist project because rather than seeking to dominant phenomena through symbol, Benjamin's

¹⁰⁸ Newman, Saul. 2016. "What Is an Insurrection? Destituent Power and Ontological Anarchy in Agamben and Stirner." *Political Studies Association* 65(2). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0032321716654498>.

constellatory epistemology provides a limited redemption in the allegorical intervention, relieving phenomena of the superimposition of ‘factual meaning’, of judgement. The practice of naming in the constellatory network of mosaic building, then, operates as an active positive creation providing autonomous space for phenomena to be inexpressible within the realm of ruin, thus elusive from dogmatism and ‘truth’. Through this lens, Agamben’s ‘whatever singularity’ can be viewed as a radical allegorical inside, operating as a signpost toward the failure of the Leviathan of state – *the failure of fascisms big and small*.

For Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari’s work *Anti-Oedipus* revealed and combatted the ‘little everyday fascisms in us all’. For Agamben, these ‘little fascisms’ are both products and results of a totalizing systemic base in language and method. Opposed to the totality of positivism, Benjamin’s account of epistemological gives autonomy and importance to phenomena. That is, phenomena matter for *they are phenomena*, just as how things, for Agamben, simply matter. For Agamben, then, just as how this positivist imposition has within itself the possibilities of *homo sacer*, the existence of the ‘whatever singularity’ serves as an allegorical signpost toward the failure of the ‘state of exception’. In the *over-naming* of positivism, and its totalizing system rooted in prattle, the ‘whatever singularity’ reveals to the failure of society/camp’s subjection of totalized sovereignty and its imposition of judgement. Agamben’s account of the ‘whatever singularity’, although brought forth as an example of an ontology anarchy from the outside, is too a radical rupture *within* the failure of state, creating a space of positive creation without dogmatism or truth as such. Agamben’s ‘whatever singularity’ reveals the

methodological tool of allegory as an intervention of the inside of power, revealing it as failing.

Allegory, then, is a nonessentialist anarchic phenomenon that operates outside the bounds of intention of the subject, serving to demystify and profane power that is effectively hailed in discourse. Although already deployed in Stirner and Agamben above, Benjamin specifically teases out the profaning power of allegory.

An Introduction to the Allegorical:

Allegory, being the (non)methodological tool of Benjamin, is both expressive and fragmentary. Allegory is a general constellatory signification that is resultant of phenomena grouping themselves around an idea. The symbol, which is contrary to allegory, is the extension of bourgeois language. That is, whereas allegory is a signpost that points away from its related phenomena, symbol dominates it, takes its place. Allegory, then, “signifies merely a general concept, or an idea which is different from itself”, whereas the symbol “is the very incarnation and embodiment of the idea... a process of substitution takes place.”¹⁰⁹ With symbol being the extension of the bourgeois conception of language, allegory is the methodological extension stemming from the acknowledgement of judgement and prattle.

With allegory’s awareness of empty language, it can be said that allegory is a power of demystification, a power of *profaning*. In the most direct of ways, this profaning power is *a power of death*. Symbol elevates, allegory profanes, brings to the level of the earthly. The former is a false totality, the latter a *fragmentary ruin*. “Whereas

¹⁰⁹ Benjamin, Walter. 1998. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Verso, 164-5

in the symbol the destruction is idealized and the transfigured face of nature is fleetingly revealed in the light of redemption, in allegory the observer is confronted with the *facies hippocratica* of history as petrified, primordial landscape.”¹¹⁰ Allegory, then, is a process of *demystification*. It is an intervention to separate the *intention* of the symbol which has colonized and mystified the related phenomena. Allegory profanes phenomena to the level of the earthly, to the level of ruin, relieving and destroying symbolic imposition.

Benjamin brings forth an example of this profaning through Sigmund von Birken. The poetics of Birken “give, ‘as examples of birth, marriage, and funeral poems, of eulogies and victory congratulations, songs on the birth and death of Christ, on his spiritual marriage with the soul, on his glory and his victory’.”¹¹¹ The poetics of Birken thus profane the *image* of Christ to the level of the finite, the level of error, the level of the everyday. This image of Christ leaves him *allegorically open*, no longer dominated by the *dominant symbol* of the heavenly, omnipotent Christ – *Christ as Profane*:

The mystical instant [Nu] becomes the ‘now’ [Jetzt] of contemporary actuality; the symbolic becomes distorted into the allegorical. The eternal is separated from the events of the story of salvation, and what is left is a living image open to all kinds of revision by the interpretive artist... It is an unsurpassably spectacular gesture to place even Christ in the realm of the provisional, the everyday, the unreliable.¹¹²

This shift from symbol to allegory occurs *outside of the bounds of intention*. Allegory is thusly a radical act of *demystifying what is above – power*. It steals power away from its totalization of both object and *time*.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 166

¹¹¹ Ibid, 183

¹¹² Ibid, 183

Allegory and Time:

Allegory is not a specific or universal thing as such. If it were, it would exist under the auspices of bourgeois language. Rather, allegory takes on certain characters and dynamics, predicated upon the conditions in which it is situated. Nonetheless, allegory at a general level, serves as a radical rupturing, an opening up of symbolic superimposition of phenomena. Allegory intervenes in the mystical instant of the symbol to open it up to 'now-time'. That is, the symbol imposes itself onto the object, remains static and unchanged, sitting in a fated and linear time. The symbol is, thus, corollary to the 'little fascisms of everyday life'. Allegory, on the other hand, wrestles symbol away from the object, quelling these little fascisms.

The mystical instant, for Benjamin, is known as *homogenous empty time*. This empty time is the vacuum in which the universal and eternally 'same' object (from the imposition of symbol) finds itself situated in. This notion of empty time has borne within it the idea of *progress*. This notion of progress, firstly, is unhistorical as such. History, rather, is in "danger of becoming a tool of the ruling classes" that is at risk of becoming ideologically ensorcelled as 'the way it really was'.¹¹³ The idea of progress, then, existing in empty time, does not view itself historically, it *doesn't glance into the past*. By virtue of not glancing toward the past, the notion of progress is at risk of being utilized to *reify* the ruling classes who have sought to lay claim to history.

Secondly, progress informs itself through the extracting tendency of bourgeois language. Progress emphasizes economic development, and the promises therein. Due to

¹¹³ Benjamin, Walter. 2006. 4 *Selected Writings*. eds. Michael W Jennings and Howard Eiland. First Harvard Press, 391

the promise of the future, the notion of progress doesn't glance into the past, and denies the present. What one is left with is the *metanarrative* of a promising and emancipatory future, a symbolic elevation. One passively and patiently then awaits the return of Christ. There is no room for politics. Progress, being unhistorical, economistic, and unpolitical, is the epitome of the 'little fascisms of everyday life' that serves as the kernel for actual fascism. Benjamin in thesis eleven in his essay *On the Concept of History* claims that "it [economism] recognizes only the progress in mastering nature, not retrogression of society; it already displays the technocratic features that later emerge in fascism."¹¹⁴

Thirdly, the passive narrative of an emancipatory future only defangs revolutionary fervor, for it is up to the future working class to redeem. This pacification of the oppressed classes in turn focuses the image of progress as enslavement as opposed to liberation. "This indoctrination made the working class forget both its hatred and its spirit of sacrifice, for both are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than by the ideal of liberated grandchildren."¹¹⁵

Whereas symbol and its corresponding unhistorical attributes lay forth the possibility of a fascist politic that ultimately pacifies the oppressed classes, allegory is a radical rupturing of a redemptive quality. Through the process of *profaning* and *opening up* phenomena, allegory situates itself within the 'now-time' of history. What allegory does to symbol is what now-time does to homogenous empty time. That is, now-time blows up the linear time of the mystical instant to smithereens. In thesis fourteen Benjamin states that "history is the subject of a construction whose site is not

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 393

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 394

homogenous, empty time, but time filled full by now-time. Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with now-time, a past which he blasted out of the continuum of history.”¹¹⁶ This acknowledgement, blasting, and seizing of time and history is not simply done as such. Rather, it is the task of the historical materialist to see to it this engagement with history, *to reveal allegorical rupturing of the past*. Allegory, then, works against space and time, ruining both.

The Historical Materialist, Discovering Allegory:

The reveal of allegorical rupture is what Benjamin describes as a ‘weak messianic power’. The allegoric reveal and its limited redemptive value allow for a connectedness to ensue between past revolutions and current ones. That is, through the historical materialist revealing radical allegorical ruptures of the past, creates a historical continuum (now-time) between past revolutions and current ones, thusly having the latter redeem, or continue, the former.

Since the historical materialist does not concern herself with the economism of progress, she does not delegate to the future. Rather, she doesn’t privilege time, such as the idea of the ‘revolutionary moment’. Acknowledging the weak messianic power that interconnects past struggle with the current, she recognizes that *all time* is (potentially) revolutionary. In other words, there is nothing about time *itself* that indicates any *particular* or *objective* revolutionary moment (the likes of which anarchism and orthodox Marxism state). For the historical materialist, for Benjamin, when a particular constellation has congealed, situated in now-time, which the present is at a stand-still and

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 395

engages with the past, a redemptive revolutionary moment truly becomes possible.

Benjamin states in thesis seventeen:

Where thinking suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tensions, it gives that constellation a shock, by which thinking is crystallized as a monad. The historical materialist approaches a historical object only where it confronts him as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a messianic arrest of happening, or... a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific life out of the era, a specific work out of the lifework. As a result of this method, the lifework is both preserved and sublated *in* the work, the era *in* the lifework, and the entire course of history *in* the era.¹¹⁷

When an allegorical constellation has congealed, the weak messianic power of redemption is revealed as always having been there. This power is initiated through the profaning of power, the removal of symbol. This act of profaning blasts the allegorized phenomena outside the linear history of the mystical instant, of empty time, redeeming it not as such, but from the imposition of the symbol. In the now-time of history, then, phenomena (of which we are a part of) enters an autonomous space made available through the rupture of a failing power. This space ripped in time is immensely political.

Allegory is a radical, redemptive, and anarchic act that subverts the symbolic, that subverts judgement. Allegory is rooted in an epistemological framework of constellatory fragments, of which bases itself in a theory of language that no longer as a relationship to truth. Judgement is the symbolic function, is resultant of the operation of going through language to reveal fact. Being that this fact is not true, it relies on judgement, on force, on

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 396

law to continually assert its symbolic imposition, since it no longer exists in immanence, in immediacy.

On Law:

Channeling back towards Agamben and the notion of the ‘state of exception’, Benjamin claims that this ‘exception’, or, ‘state of emergency’ is not the exception, but the rule. To combat this fascism, the notion of progress must be quelled, and the conception of time that it is situated in. This exception, then, exists in the mystical instant. Benjamin asserts in thesis eight:

The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that bring about a real state of emergency, and this will improve our position in the struggle against fascism. One reason fascism has a chance is that, in the name of progress, its opponents treat it as a historical norm. – The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are ‘still’ possible in the twentieth century is *not* philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge – unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable.¹¹⁸

Since the state lives in the mystical instant, it must always overname itself. Since it ‘overnames’ itself, it has within itself an anxiety of sorts because there is no *spirit of the laws*. That is, laws are not self-evident. It is for this reason that the state must claim a monopoly over violence, for if violence was not exclusive to the state, laws would no exist as such. In the famous essay *Critique of Violence*, Benjamin lays forth this assessment of the fragility of law, “...the law’s interest in a monopoly of violence... is explained not by the intention of preserving the law itself; that violence, when not in the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 392

hands of the law, threatens it not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law.”¹¹⁹ Violence, then, is a law-preserving. It seeks not to enforce the laws as such, but merely to preserve it.

Violence also has a *law-making* function. The irony within the concept of peace brings light to this fact. Peace itself, means the absence of war. To denote an era of piece is to transition away from a state of war. Therefore, an agreed upon state of existence was enacted; *a law created*. Military violence, then, is a *law-making* function.

Whether lawmaking or law-preserving, the violence of state seeks to ultimately affirm *itself, its laws*. The history of the institution of the death penalty lays bare this phenomenon. In legal systems of the past, citizens were put to death for essentially anything. The death penalty in these circumstances is not to punish, but to secure, create, and reify law itself. Benjamin states that “its purpose is not to punish the infringement of law but to establish new law. For in the exercise of violence over life and death, more than in any other legal act, the law reaffirms itself.”¹²⁰

In the contemporary realm, the most prominent example is that of police. That is, police both embody the law-preserving and law-creating function of violence. In other words, police act *as sovereign, as the state itself*. Since police embody both functions simultaneously, they are exempt from the necessary prerequisites of both, making police particularly treacherous. By this it is meant, for law-creating violence, military violence must provide a victory in peace agreement; and the refusal to create new laws on behalf

¹¹⁹ Benjamin, Walter. 2004. 1 *Selected Writings*. eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W Jennings. First Harvard Press, 239

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 242

of law-preserving violence. Police need not prove victory nor a refusal to create new laws. Rather, they are sovereign, bodies of unlimited and unrestrained violence. The police are simultaneously: the legislator, military commander, and judge, without restraint. Because of this, “the police intervene ‘for security reasons’ in countless cases where no clear legal situation exists, when they are not merely, without the slightest relation to legal ends, accompanying the citizen as a brutal encumbrance through a life regulated by ordinances, or simply supervising him.”¹²¹ It is this violence, that of the police, that Agamben refers to the blending of the camp and society to a point of indistinction.

This law is *mythic violence*. Existing in empty time, its continual violence rests on an ultimate *anxiety* rather than a ‘real’ power. Being that the state needs violence as both law preserving and law making, it ultimately reveals its cards and acknowledges that there exists no *spirit of the laws*, meaning that there lurks no eminent, immediate truth behind the law. Rather, the state relies on a constant state of exception to perpetuate itself for it has no authentic legitimacy. State power, then, is *allegorized as hallow and false*.

In response to this violence, Benjamin channels Sorel in championing the notion of a general strike over a political strike. The former is still law making, whereas the latter is *law destroying*. For Benjamin, “the proletarian general strike sets itself the sole task of destroying state power.”¹²² This, for Benjamin, is *pure means*, and is *anarchistic*. Pure means is similar to an ontological anarchy, for it sees no legitimacy or ‘realness’ in the state nor in capital. Rather, it is an ethics, a way of seeing, that acts as if the state isn’t

¹²¹ Ibid, 243

¹²² Ibid, 246

there. In a sense, pure means can be viewed as the shrug felt around the world. Pure means, then, is an *ontological anarchy that operates inside chasms of power after it has been allegorized*. It is not that that power goes away, as a nonpower, but it exists, as a failing power.

Pure Means:

Pure means then is not something that comes about individualistic intention. Rather, through the allegorical reveal of the failure of state, pure means becomes the political subjectivity of allegorical affect. That is, when allegory attacks the state, the violence of state is seen as a mechanism of survival for the state. Furthermore, the state is seen anxious and aware of its own fragility through the law-preserving and law-making violence of the police, serving as a fascist institution of *sovereignty in existential crisis*. Once allegorized, the medium of action shifts toward the revolutionary general strike, being that the state, if it ever had legitimacy, loses it through allegory. This general strike is an act of pure means, which can be viewed as an *ontology anarchy from the inside*. Through pure means, there is an *indifference to power*. This revolutionary, or, insurrectionist moment is the crystallization of the allegorized constellation of state into a monad, where time shifts from the mystical instant to now-time. This shift in time is the shift from 'progressive teleological revolution' to that of the 'insurrection'. Furthermore, this crystallization demarcates that of *divine violence*.

Whereas mythic violence is law creating, divine violence is law destroying. Existing in the fall, there is no return to the Garden, so there lurks no essentialist claims of paradise nor utopia. Rather, divine violence is the seal, the affirmative, of the expiating act of allegory. "These are defined, therefore, not by miracles directly performed by God

but by the expiating moment in them that strikes without bloodshed, and, finally, by the absence of all lawmaking.”¹²³

Pure means, then, is an anarchic politic, an ontological anarchy, that’s space was made *inside power* by allegory. In examining the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’, Benjamin navigates a postanarchist ethics. By this it is meant that Benjamin is contemplating a nonstatist, nonessentialist ethics that has no function of judgement. Therefore, once an act has been completed, judgement can no longer be had upon it. “But just as it may not be fear of punishment that enforces obedience, the injunction becomes inapplicable, incommensurable, once the deed is accomplished. No judgement of the deed can be derived from the commandment.”¹²⁴ The commandments, then, exist as gestures. They are to be negotiated and wrestled with through a postanarchist ethics, and sometimes must even “take on themselves the responsibility of ignoring it.”¹²⁵

Divine violence, though, in the present, the moment in which it occurs, is not viewable or knowable. Rather, it is up to the historical materialist to investigate allegorical ruptures in history to connect current struggles with the past, in order to redeem them. “For only mythic violence, not divine, will be recognizable as such with certainty, unless it be in incomparable effects, because the expiatory power of violence is invisible to men.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Ibid, 250

¹²⁴ Ibid, 250

¹²⁵ Ibid, 250

¹²⁶ Ibid 252

Allegory as a Postanarchist Inside:

Whereas Agamben's whatever-singularity and Newman's deployment of Stirner gesture toward an uncontaminated and nonessentialist outside in which ontological anarchy serves as the starting point of politics and subjectivity, Benjamin's concept of allegory reveals the possibilities of a nonessentialist ontological anarchy *inside the failures of power*. Although flirting with essentialisms, the theology of Walter Benjamin forces the subject into a radically secular way of being and seeing. This is not the notion of secular in the Feurbachian sense where God is merely transferred into humanity. Rather, through the fall, all notions of truth had fallen with humanity, and language therefore loses its truth in expression. Therefore, an epistemological guidepost was brought forth examining the constellatory makeup of phenomena through the absence of truth. This epistemology, when in connection with Agamben's 'whatever singularity', with the starting point of all things mattering, *all things having expression*, reveals the 'whatever singularity' as an always-existing space within the ruptures of failed power. This constellatory account, opposite to bourgeois fact-finding, quells the 'little fascisms of everyday life' brought forth in bourgeois symbolic imposition.

By virtue of truth not being existent in the world, bodies of authority become susceptible to allegory. That is, authority without truth is an authority which always has the potential to fail, it lacks immanence, it lacks an 'in of itself'. Authority is the symbol, and the subversion of authority is allegory. Allegory is a phenomenon that operates outside the bound of intention, and is profaning. It opens phenomena up to alteration, to interpretation. In other words, allegory is a signpost toward things outside itself, it redeems phenomena from the imposition of total meaning through the symbol.

Furthermore, it provides a shift in time from the mystical instant (the symbol always having to assert itself constantly) to now-time, which obliterates linear empty time, and provides the present as time at a standstill. Applied politically, allegory profanes power to the level of the earthly, which negates any notion of law. The state of exception is proven to be fragile and empty just like the time it situates itself in. Power being profaned, it fails, and within its corpse a form of ontological anarchy reigns, *outside of intention*.

Chapter 4: Allegorical Anarchy

In the previous chapter, the ontological, methodological, and epistemological accounts of Walter Benjamin were put into communication within the realm of postanarchist thought. Whereas the latter seeks an uncontaminated outside, rooted in lack, amidst the nonexistence of power fueled by the concept of voluntary inservitude, I argue that Benjamin's account of allegory provides ruptured spaces of possibility pertaining to an alternative subjectivity that is rooted in an ontological anarchy that always exists within the ruins of power, but is not always noticed nor seen. Allegory itself is not undogmatic anarchic creation, but is the result of Benjaminian 'divine violence'¹²⁷ that creates spaces for radical possibilities within failed power. That is, there is no outside to be found in Benjamin, nor allegory, nor is there any necessity for an outside anyway¹²⁸. Instead, we exist within the 'inside of power'. These powers, although quite real, are not nearly as omnipresent nor consistent as we think. On the contrary, they fail quite often, and are seemingly always on the verge of failure. The power to be found in the allegorical reveal is that it removes the perceived allure and strength of power; it profanes power to the level of failure and ruin. In the act of allegory, power's failure to capture its subjects leaves a springboard of possibility pertaining to the acknowledgement and creation of an alternative, anarchic, subjectivity.

¹²⁷ Divine Violence is counter to mythic violence. The former is law-destroying, the latter the assertion of law. Divine violence can only be acknowledged historically, but is political activity that is a form of non-power that creates the potentiality of autonomous space

¹²⁸ The concept of an 'outside' itself operates as a product of both the objective rationality of liberal thought, its root in bourgeois language, and the Stirnerian rhetorical domination of language that sees the successful culmination of the 'ego' in its reclamation of self and thusly the acknowledgement of the 'spooks' of power, failing to take into account its material realness (And failure) despite its 'spookiness'. All of which find itself rooted in the language of domination, bourgeois language, of which Benjamin steers away from, or instead reveals this pursuance of language itself as failure.

This chapter firstly expands upon Benjamin's account of allegory as profaning power in the examples that he provides in German trauerspiels. In this elucidation of Benjamin's evidence of allegory, I argue that although Benjamin himself does not discuss allegory in terms of a form of anarchic deconstruction, he nonetheless uses allegory anarchically by virtue of its profaning capabilities. Specifically, the unintended and clunky appearance and performance of the Prince (the embodiment of state) unveil the 'everydayness' of the Prince, the failure of the Prince, thus unintentionally subverting power itself and its own narrative, alongside revealing the ontologically anarchic underbelly that always exists underneath this ontological failure of state.

After having established allegory rooted in Benjamin's own examples, I deploy my anarchic interpretation of allegory within the realm of the literary. In Herman Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, the seemingly passive embodiment and phraseology ('I would prefer not to') of the character Bartleby deserves allegorical contemplation for his perceived passivity is anything but. It is instead a radical declaration of an alternative, anti-authoritarian subjectivity within the belly of both law and capitalism. This assertive passivity, so to speak, operates as a rendition of allegorical anarchy for its ability to subversion of power, forcefully bringing forth its limits and failures. Specifically, the (Foucaultian) subjecthood that is already created in power for the subject is immediately put into question and contention in the (non)actions of Bartleby, blurring the distinctions between subject and object. I argue that Bartleby ultimately engages in Benjaminian pure means in his seeming 'objectness' that leaves an open ruptured space for the possibilities of an anarchic subjecthood in the vacuous chasm of failed power ripped open by allegory. By this it is meant that, applying the principle of pure means established in the previous

chapter, Bartleby's insistence operates outside what Newman calls the 'dialectical power of place'. Bartleby seeks not to interject anything other than his subjectness, a subjecthood counter-intuitive to the structures and customs of law and labor. This interjection is not an insistence upon power, but a removal of it. Benjamin's account of allegory in the trauerspiel is a direct attack against the state of exception 'as always' of the principality exalted in baroque trauerspiel, whereas Bartleby's allegorical expression is an attack on the capitalistic subject, a capitalist subjectivity. Both of which, however, profane power to the level of ruin. Allegory operates as a built-in fail safe for the allowance of failure in the attempt of transcendence and perfection.

Allegorical anarchy does not only pertain to the subversion of reactionary and oppressive instances of power, (such as the state, capitalism etc.) but also operates inside anarchism. Within seemingly anarchic discourses, remnants of authority and even colonial imposition finds its way into the realm of anarchism outside the bounds of intention. Such examples can be found in anarchistic analyses of the Kurdish YPG/YPJ in Rojava. Allegorical anarchy, then, operates as an anarchic check on anarchism itself. In moments of imposition, allegorical anarchy enters into the fold operating as a subversion mechanism within anarchism itself, reminding us that anarchism must first and foremost always operate horizontally and openly, seeking to learn from movements rather than to dominate the narrative of the moment in pursuance of 'understanding'. Moreover, allegorical allegory, I argue, thusly manifests as a de-colonial check on anarchistic impositions of nonwestern political movements. Here, it is important to emphasize that allegory, or, allegorical anarchy, is never to propose a solution, or itself as a solution, nor the moment of anarchic creation itself; that would merely mimic the domineering

behavior it subverts. In this instance, allegorical anarchy is the revealer of problems within anarchic discourse, rupturing space and time to open up to learn from movements (emphasis on nonwestern ones), rather than to ‘understand it’ through the domination of language onto its historico-material expressions¹²⁹.

Not only does allegorical anarchy exist at the level of the narrative of anarchism onto the events in the Kurdish autonomous cantons, but it too exists within the narrative of the movement itself. There is a clear distinction between the imposition of anarchism and allegorically anarchic inflection within the narrative. The former is domineering, and the latter an unintended by-product. Here I argue that by virtue of the immiseration of the Syrian state, marginalized political subjectivities have no formal institutions to conspire with; resulting in a political space that is literally and figuratively ruin. Within the space of this ruin gives rise to the potentiality of an unintended anarchy inflected allegorically; life begins to be reconstructed without a state, becoming anarchic *ipso facto*.

Lastly, I will re-engage anarchism as such discussed in the first chapter, and redeem that body of thought and action as an allegorical philosophy that reveals the dangers of the very humanism it espouses whilst also demanding autonomy from it. In other words, once sifted through the filter of postanarchism and allegory, I analyze the creative and affirmative possibilities within its very ruins, showing that although we must

¹²⁹ Learning and understanding are of distinctively different characteristics. The latter confuses itself as still maintaining truth (breath of God), thusly perpetuating the mythicness of Bourgeois language explained in the previous chapter. Learning is a horizontal experience that recognizes that we cannot escape this mythicness necessarily, but provides the autonomous space of a movement to create its own mosaic, rather than try to edit or ‘understand’ the movement through a western lens, thus imposing a sort of linguistic and epistemological colonialism on a movement.

operate beyond the framework of liberal rationality, the ‘classical canon’ of anarchist thinkers mustn’t be disposed nor forgotten, but redeemed. Altogether, the convergence of postanarchism and Benjaminian allegory, crystallized through the aforementioned examples, bring forth a useful and nonessentialist concept of a truly anarchic anarchism – that of *allegorical anarchy* – actions outside the realm of intention that profane power to the level of ruin; opening up space and time to realize ontologically anarchic daily life in the allegorical safe-guard of the failure of transcendence and perfection; finding in the profaned and earthly realm a space for anarchistic cultivation of subjectivities and imaginaries, opening up life in insurrection and toward revolutionary possibility.

Trauerspiel:

The trauerspiel signifies a switch pertaining to its relationship to history. That is, historical time, in congruence with the birth of the liberal enlightenment, shifts from Christian eschatology to Machiavellian realism. This shift too correlates with the prominence of Protestantism through the reformation. That is, the protestant separation between the ‘earthly’ and the divine is itself indicative of this shift. For Benjamin, the trauerspiel captures this shift twofold. Firstly, it captures this shift by its emphasis and focus on the prince, the principality, sovereignty as such. The subject of the trauerspiel is the Prince, the sovereign. Secondly, being in an empty Protestant world, the trauerspiel is a mourning play, it laments earthly triviality. For Benjamin, when the prince is under the auspices of melancholy, allegorical intervention strikes within the trauerspiel, revealing the prince, and power as such, as a place of failure, a place of ruin.

In the absence of an eschatology, it is power struggle that replaces destiny. In the trauerspiel, “The sovereign is the representative of history. He holds the course of history

in his hand like a scepter.”¹³⁰ However, the concept at hand in the trauerspiel is not that of the sovereign as such, but with the deployment of, as what Foucault calls, the art of government. The sovereign’s main functions within this art is to both preserve and extend the principality. Similarly, Benjamin states that “the ruler is designated from the outset as the holder of dictatorial power if war, revolt, or other catastrophes should lead to a state of emergency.”¹³¹ This concept of sovereignty, then, shifts the prince as such into an image of a tyrant. So, in the first instance, this shift toward the image of the tyrant indicates, as stated in the previous chapter, that the state of exception, rather than being the exception, serves as the rule of the state. “Not even the most dreadful corruption of the person of the prince – and that is the baroque aspect of the whole business – can really disturb this norm of sovereignty.”¹³² Therefore, the Tyrant is an all-powerful encapsulation of the state itself.

The intriguing aspect about the trauerspiel is the irony between the power of place, the tyrant, and the actualization of power in it. Within the trauerspiel, the Prince, or, Tyrant, seems thoroughly inept as it relates to formally declaring the state of emergency and following through the dictatorial war powers that come from it. This is the site of allegorical intervention in the trauerspiel. That is, where power is limitless, where one singular body is effectively the state, without bound, power ultimately fails, it is of earthly emptiness. “The prince, who is responsible for making the decision to proclaim the state of emergency, reveals, at the first opportunity, that he is almost

¹³⁰ Benjamin, Walter. 1998. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Verso, 65

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 65

¹³² *Ibid*, 70

incapable of making a decision.”¹³³ Both the prince, and the power absorbed in the title of prince fail, and are profaned.

The haphazardness of the Prince is rooted in melancholy. “The indecisiveness of the prince, in particular, is nothing other than saturnine acedia. Saturn causes people to be ‘apathetic, indecisive, slow’. The fall of the tyrant is caused by indolence of the heart.”¹³⁴ The power of allegory, then, is the power of melancholy. In other words, melancholy is the catalyst of allegorical possibility, for it opens up phenomena under its gaze to be reinterpreted, rearranged, profaned, and ridded of authoritarian imposition. In this particular case of 17th century trauerspiel, allegory reveals the state of exception of the prince as indecisive and weak, resulting in the totality of principality being a profaned, melancholic, human body with no other-worldly, or stately, powers. When put in connection with the postanarchist project, this allegorical phenomenon reveals that spaces of ontological anarchy exist within the ruins of failed power, and that power always, or at least quite often, fails.

Within the saturnine, unfaithfulness too becomes a prominent quality of the courtier (advisor) to the prince. This betrayal of the prince on behalf of the courtier is rooted in the literal materiality of the objects of rule, of the prince. The loyalty to literal crown, cloak, and scepter of the Prince leads to the very subversion of him:

It is rather that their action reveals an unscrupulousness, which is in part a consciously Machiavellian gesture, but is also a dismal and melancholy submission to a supposedly unfathomable order of baleful constellations, which assumes an almost material character. Crown, royal purple, scepter are indeed ultimately properties, in the sense of the drama of fate, and they are endowed with a fate, to which the courtier, as the augur of this fate, is

¹³³ Ibid, 71

¹³⁴ Ibid, 156

the first to submit. His unfaithfulness to man is matched by a loyalty to these things to the point of being absorbed in contemplative devotion to them.¹³⁵

This is the moment of allegorical intervention in the trauerspiel. Under the aura of the literal materiality of Princedom, alongside the saturnine repercussions in the very failure of the Prince, leads to the profaning and betrayal of state power. It is not that this failure is unique to the Prince, but to be brought forth in a way so intentionally direct in the trauerspiel that this failure becomes evident, becomes allegorical. Allegory operates as a revealer of ruin in specificity, but a specificity that is always there, but not always seen. Allegory, in the specific instance, makes it seen. In the act of allegory, rather than the Prince, or power, being exalted, it is that of the literal material symbolism of power that reigns, whereas power as actual is profaned. Thusly, the symbolic imposition of power is transformed into an allegorical rupture; the material objects consumed in Princedom are limitedly redeemed. It is in this example, the failure of the symbolic imposition of power that gives rise to allegorical possibilities, that serves as the model for allegorically anarchic redemption of earthly life.

Baroque allegory is thus a distinctively anti-authoritarian phenomenon that stripped the aura of authority from the principality proper. Within the act of taking away such an aura reveals a postanarchist inside within the ruins of power. Allegory, or, allegorical anarchy does not solely exist within the realm of the trauerspiel, but it too operates inside literature (and real movements, too!). One such instance can be found in the continual refusal of one by the name of Bartleby.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 156

Bartleby:

Bartleby, in the aforementioned short story, is a simple subject, so much so that he arguably inverts the subject-object distinction. Being hired as a Scrivener, Bartleby practically lives in the office. He never eats, never leaves, and doesn't talk much. Whenever his boss asks him to do a task or some such, his simple retort is always, "I'd prefer not to." Bartleby's co-workers, when continually witnessing this behavior, furthers this subject-object inversion. That is, through witnessing the object-like behavior of Bartleby, they begin to question the objects that control their lives, such as their careers. The allegorical reveal in Bartleby is that Bartleby, being the only object, is in fact the only real subject in the story. His coworkers, on the other hand, being 'true', or, conventional subjects, find themselves to be the actual objects, whereby the objects in their lives are the subjects that rule over them.

One such allegorical moment in the text is found when Bartleby was fired by the narrator. Bartleby the object, consistently preferred not to, including preferring not to leave the premises, and not preferring to scribe any longer. After his firing, it was as if Bartleby never moved, such as an object. In the act of preference, however, elucidates a distinct declaration of subjecthood, taking into account nothing but subjective preference, operating under no governing agent. It is as if a rock had chosen to defy the laws of physics. The narrator, who is a clear subject, found himself to *assume* that Bartleby would have in fact, left; of which an assumption, especially in contrast to preference, is of a clear passive nature. The narrator states that "the great point was, not whether I had assumed that he would quit me, but whether he would prefer to do so. He was more a

man of preferences than assumptions.”¹³⁶ It is thus in the realm of preferences that Bartleby operates as if he himself is the narrator; or at least in control of the narrative in his perceived passivity.

Whereas Bartleby simplistically takes into account nothing but preference, the narrator is clearly dependent upon the law, upon symbolic language and certain norms, such as the protocol of firing. The allegorical reveal lies in the fact that those who hold themselves as true subjects are those deprived in totality of agency. Ideologically interpellated, the narrator, alongside Bartleby’s co-workers, are entranced within the established norms of supposed ‘subjecthood’. Bartleby’s passive preference and object-like behavior lends him to be the only character in the novel *without passivity*. Bartleby allegorically uncovers that normal subjecthood is naught but ‘objectness’ dressed in the interpellative powers of ideology; naught but a micro-expression of a governmentality; a subjecthood already created. In other words, the active nature of the other characters in the short story reveal their performance of an assumed subjectivity. It is only in the act of refusal, of the shedding of ‘normal’ performativity, ‘preferring not to’, that one can truly be a subject. In this case, then, it is the removal of subjecthood in acting object-like that allows Bartleby to operate as the allegorical ruin of ‘normal’ subjecthood.

Due to this (non)passive (dis)obedience, Bartleby is, for Agamben, a figure firmly against the notion of sovereignty.¹³⁷¹³⁸ Bartleby’s pure indifference to power is a case of destituent power. Destituent power, for Agamben, is antithetical to that of constituent

¹³⁶ Melville, Herman. 1969. *Great Short Works of Herman Melville*. ed. Warner Berthoff. University of Chicago, 61

¹³⁷ Agamben, Giorgio. 1990. *The Coming Community*. University of Minnesota Press.

¹³⁸ Agamben, Giorgio. 1995. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press.

power. Constituent power is a form of power that reifies governmental bureaus and agencies, thus continually reaffirming the state of exception, the merging of camp and society. Destituent power, on the other hand, is power that disentangles itself from apparatuses of formal power such as government. Destituent power is a force of ungovernability predicated upon a communal sentiment of the current state of affairs being overcome.¹³⁹ Bartleby, for Agamben, is “the extreme figure of the Nothing from which all creation derives; and at the same time, he constitutes the most implacable vindication of this Nothing as pure, absolute potentiality.”¹⁴⁰ Bartleby’s ‘passive’¹⁴¹ indifference, is for Agamben, a radical creative nothing, almost in the sense of Stirner.

Saul Newman notices this similarity, As stated in chapter two, Stirner acknowledges the constituent powers of liberalism, constraining the notion of freedom to a particular form of governability. Contrasting this ideology of governmentality, Newman brings forth Stirner’s concept of ‘ownness’ as being similar to Agamben’s destituent power. Ownness ultimately resembles “Bartleby’s serene self-possession, even when finally confined in prison, Stirner’s figure of the slave – although deprived of freedom – still retains his sense of ownness.”¹⁴² In this way, Agamben’s deployment of Bartleby is an instance of ontological anarchy, meaning that Bartleby’s indifference creates an autonomous space untouched by power.

¹³⁹ Agamben, Giorgio. 2014. “What Is Destituent Power?” *Society and Space* 32(1). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1068/d3201tra>.

¹⁴⁰ Agamben, Giorgio. 2000. *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Stanford University Press.

¹⁴¹ It is within the perspective of ‘archism’ that Bartleby is passive. Anarchically speaking, Bartleby is the only one who isn’t passive. He is the one who declares for himself the space for his own body and subjectivity.

¹⁴² Newman, Saul. 2016. “What Is an Insurrection? Destituent Power and Ontological Anarchy in Agamben and Stirner.” *Political Studies Association* 65(2). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0032321716654498>, 12

Although similar, Newman delineates Agamben's insistence upon the inoperability of Bartleby as truly radical. Rather, Newman contends that Bartleby holds within this form of resistance a kernel of destiny that serves as an ultimate function of passivity in the political realm. For Newman, Stirner's concept of ownness is opposite of passive, it is active. Stirner has no concept of messianic time, and thus is truly open to "action, contingency and becoming."¹⁴³ Ultimately, for Newman, passivity leads to the denial of self, whereas Stirner's 'ownness' leads to an ultimate affirmation of self.

Whereas both examples are useful deployments of Bartleby as a figure of ontological anarchism, the former fails to utilize allegory, and the latter both lacks allegory and a concept of time that defines the subject. As described in chapters two and three, Newman's deployment of Stirner for the postanarchist project lacks a historical foundation and thus no concept of time. Stirner's ego is a free-floating phenomenon that is outside of both time and power. It is here where James Martel's deployment of Bartleby as an example of misinterpellation is useful.

In *The Misinterpellated Subject*, James Martel provides an allegorical account of interpellation. That is, rather than interpellation succeeding 'nine times out of ten' pertaining to the internalization of ideological apparatuses, these instances quite often fail; allegorically revealing power as a ruin. Bartleby's 'I would prefer not to', alongside other calls, "welcome multiplicity, complexity, anarchism, and resistance."¹⁴⁴ In other words, Bartleby muddies the interpellative relationship between power and subject, creating an allegorical rupture of autonomy and action in power's very failure. This

¹⁴³ Ibid, 13

¹⁴⁴ Martel, James. 2017. *The Misinterpellated Subject*. Duke University Press, 27

(non)call of a (non)agenda on the part of Bartleby reveals the confusion of the call in the first place. Simply, Bartleby's murmuring without intention serves as an ontologically anarchic reveal.

Whereas Newman laments upon the limitedness of Bartleby through his seeming passivity, I argue that it is the most vital part of allegorical reveal. As previously stated, the hyper-intentionality of Stirner reveals the bourgeois symbolic imposition of language and force that acts as a stand-in for truth. Rather than the state as such, the ego serves as a mini-state, so to speak. Furthermore, it is this passivity that operates as the melancholic element so vital to allegorical reveal. Passivity is the most important for a character like Bartleby because it is truly anarchic in that it is rid of any notion of intent, of authority.

Nonetheless, Bartleby is an important example of ontological anarchy. Within the realm of the allegorical, Bartleby's indifference reveals the failure of power, and the subsequent failure of liberal individuality through his co-worker's reactions to his object-like behavior, 'preferring not to'. It is not that Bartleby exists outside of power. Rather, his passivity confronts it, forcing it to reveal its own ruin.

Allegory is not exclusive to 17th century trauerspiels nor 19th century literature. Similar to anarchism, allegory is polymorphous, expressing itself in a variety of different ways, of which I've only discussed a few. After traversing within the realm of theater and literature, I seek to transport allegory, or, allegorical anarchy, as an application of democratic confederalism in Rojava. Specifically, I seek to deploy allegory to reveal hidden colonialisms within anarchist discourses on these movements, whilst too revealing the revelatory traits of these movements that are still anarchically inclined without

superimposing unto them into a universal narrative of anarchic teleology that deprives democratic confederalism of their unique expressions.

Allegory: A De-Colonial Check:

In anarchist circles, the new exciting social movement to embody anarchism is to be found in the YPG/YPJ in Rojava. Although there are clear and distinct radical characteristics, alongside exercising predominantly and relatively horizontal decision making, the movement (outside of Ocalan) does not self-describe as being explicitly anarchist, nor identify as operating under the political philosophy of anarchism. Despite these obvious similarities, the categorization of these movements by western anarchists as being a part of the pantheon of anarchism as such results in the ‘othering’, fetishizing, and mystification of Rojava, inevitably leading to a colonialist imposition rather than radical ruptures of revolutionary creation. This imposition has allegorical characteristics, however, and allegorical anarchy is a tool that can be deployed to redeem these movements from western imposition by ‘anarchizing’ anarchism. This is not to say that all anarchism is colonial or neo-colonial. Rather, the deployment of allegory as a self-check within anarchist thought is an important tool to ensure the fulfillment of a truly autonomous discourse, and to provide the space necessary to learn from unique radical expressions that emerge in particular spaces and moments, rather than to ‘authentically understand’ them and compartmentalize them implicitly or explicitly into a universalized narrative of radical politics and revolutions.

There is an additional layer of allegorical intervention *inside* the narratives of Rojava as well. Not only is anarchism-proper allegorized as a sometimes-intervening phenomenon that lessens a movement’s contingent and specific significance in favor of a

high-level generalization of universal international anarchism, but due to the very contingent material situations of Rojava gives rise to the opportunity of an allegorical anarchy emanates within the narratives themselves.¹⁴⁵ These narratives, I argue, become allegorically anarchic not because the movement itself is a product of a universal anarchism, but because the interpellative relationship between marginalized people and state are materially eroded to a point of nonexistence that political organizing and revolutionary action have no recourse to become compromised, so to speak.¹⁴⁶

Rojava:

The autonomous Kurdish space of Rojava has been a new rallying cry for anarchists around the globe. Specifically, David Graeber has compared the movement in Rojava to the anarchists in the Spanish civil war. Again, it is not to say that there aren't similarities. Abdullah Ocalan, a key leader and founding member of the PKK, in 2005, formally announced the 'Declaration of Democratic Confederalism', seeking to implement a rendition of Murray Bookchin's libertarian municipalism.¹⁴⁷ Despite these at-a-glance-similarities, to seek to understand the movement through western impositions of a universal, or, 'new', anarchism, serves to mystify the movement in the dominant pursuit of understanding rather than to learn from its own particular expressions and narratives. Again, the allegorical reveal in the instance of Rojava is to create a rupture for the ground-up narrative-making within Rojava to elucidate what the movement is and

¹⁴⁵ Again, I stress the difference because imposing anarchism onto a movement, and finding anarchic elements within the self-expressions of a movement. The former is tinged with colonial power dynamics, whereas the latter analyzes the textual, rhetorical, and on-the-ground materiality of the movement itself, finding elements of allegorical authority-profaning that acts indifferently to intention.

¹⁴⁶ Allegorical anarchy is outside of intention, but not necessary always intended nor unintended, but does not regard it. Allegorical anarchy comes out of the material and affective dimensions of particular contexts.

¹⁴⁷ Enzinna, Wes. 2015. "A Dream of a Secular Utopia in Hell."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/29/magazine/a-dream-of-utopia-in-hell.html> (February 3, 2019).

isn't, alongside opening it up to ideological creation and alteration as conditions necessitate.

Not only do I argue that the imposition of 'new anarchism' allegorically reveals hidden colonialisms within 'anarchism-proper's' discourse, but that there too is allegorically anarchic redemption within the narratives of the movement itself. In the ruin of the failed-state of Syria, I argue that in the absence of an interpellative state, when there is no option to capitulate, or 'sell-out', daily life doesn't necessarily change, but the failure and absence of interpellation allows the space for a reimagining of social and political life that is of an allegorical anarchic disposition.

Although there is a clear influence from the 20th century anarchist Murray Bookchin pertaining to the thoughts of Abdullah Ocalan, there too exists influences of historico-cultural and mythological creation. In the book *Revolution and Rojava*, Knapp, Flach, and Ayboga state that Ocalan too draws "on communalist traditions of primitive society, Ocalan oriented himself toward 'natural society,' which he thought existed some ten thousand years ago."¹⁴⁸ So, rather than the anarchism of Bookchin being primary and tantamount in an analysis of Rojava, it instead is just another star in the constellatory alignment of radical Kurdish political creation.

In the discourse to *understand* the exact political character in Rojava as an explicit instance of anarchism, or, 'new anarchism', manifests itself in allegory in the historical and familial lament of David Graeber. In his essay *Why is the World Ignoring the Revolutionary Kurds in Syria*, Graeber immediately discusses the Spanish civil war,

¹⁴⁸ Knapp, Michael, Anja Flach, and Ercan Ayboga. 2016. *Revolution in Rojava*. Pluto Press, 39

and his emotional and familial connection to it. His very first sentence states that “In 1937, my father volunteered to fight in the International Brigades in defense of the Spanish Republic. A would-be fascist coup had been temporarily halted by a workers’ uprising, spearheaded by anarchists and socialists...”¹⁴⁹ He continues by elucidating seeming similarities between Rojava and the Spanish civil war such as having “[direct] democratic management, industries under workers control, and the radical empowerment of women.”¹⁵⁰ The allegorical moment crystallizes when Graeber continues that:

I never thought I would, in my own lifetime, see the same thing happen again. Obviously, no historical event ever really happens twice. There are a thousand differences between what happened in Spain in 1936 and what is happening in Rojava, the three largely Kurdish provinces of northern Syria today. But some of the similarities are so striking, and so distressing, that I feel it’s incumbent on me, as someone who grew up in a family whose politics were in many ways defined by the Spanish revolution, to say: we cannot let it end the same way again.¹⁵¹

Graeber, in the attempt to rescue himself and the left from the gaze of left melancholia, so to speak, relating to his familial lineage attached to the Spanish civil war, allegorizes anarchism. Graeber seeks to pin down an understanding of Rojava as a ‘new anarchism’ that is the inheritor of anarchism’s history, whether it be found in the Spanish civil war or in the I.W.W. Before even discussing Rojava as such, Graeber necessitates the entire conversation to bring forth a personalized relationship to the civil war, in the context of a ‘new anarchism’, of which is linearly viewed as the growth point of western anarchism proper in an international context. Therefore, seeking to understand Rojava operates as symbolic imposition and the deployment of bourgeois language in the pursuance of truth.

¹⁴⁹ Dirik, Dilar. 2016. *To Dare Imagining: Rojava Revolution*. Autonomedia, 21

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 21

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 21

As such, it discretely becomes a colonial tool of western imposition onto unique expressions of radical moments and opportunity. The melancholia of Graeber is the failure of the symbolic imposition, unintentionally opening itself to allegory.

What allegory does, in this instance, is to remove the burden of western metanarratives from specific movements that cannot be simply categorized through monolithic silos of theory and linear history. Furthermore, in the removal of this symbolic imposition, a ruptured space is cultivated for these movements to be the authors of their own history and practice. Furthermore, in the space created by the intervention of allegory to remove the western imposition of understanding, Kate Gordy's model of ideological spheres helps to bring forth a general understanding of the nuance of political identity and ideological creation that is continually undertaken in these movements. Assessing Cuba specifically, Gordy identifies different spheres of political thought: "political doctrine (official sphere), political theory (academic sphere), and daily practice (popular sphere)."¹⁵² Although it is still possible to come to fetishized findings through Gordy's methodological tools in the pursuance of a totalized understanding (such as misreading spheres as a form of liberal pluralism), the framework of spheres helps to mitigate such impositions, opening up each movement to its own uniqueness, ideologies, narratives, and alterations.

This new, or, contemporary anarchism elucidated by Graeber becomes allegorically affected by virtue of the melancholy that permeates within the desire for Rojava to become the universal embodiment of anarchism and the linear inheritor of the

¹⁵² Gordy, Katherine A. 2015. *Living Ideology in Cuba: Socialism in Principle and Practice*. University of Michigan Press, 2

anarchist history of the Spanish Civil War. This narrative carries within it tinges of colonialism that ultimately deprives Rojava of contingent and unique expression, opting instead of a universal, globalist anarchism-proper.

My purpose is not to discredit Graeber and his analysis of Rojava. He provides plenty of fruitful insight into the inner-workings of daily process on the ground in Rojava. However, at the level of political narrative, we must all, including myself, acknowledge that none of us are immune from ‘archist’ moments of imposition. As I brought up in the third chapter in the deployment of Benjamin’s theory of language, language itself is mythic, and thus too seeks to conspire in ‘archism’. It is our responsibility as diligent readers to bring these unintended allegorical moments to light in order to remove the awe of power, providing us with the opportunity to wrestle with language ourselves.

At this point, I have only discussed allegory at the level of narrative on Rojava. However, the narratives within the YPJ/YPG itself, alongside its on-the-ground practice is allegorically inflicted as well.¹⁵³ The YPJ/YPG are, in general, composed largely of ethnic Kurds who have been historically marginalized and disenfranchised by neighboring states such as: Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. With the onset of the Syrian Civil War, formal politics has disintegrated to the point where there is no proper recourse. It is too arguable that the Kurds never really had political recourse in the first instance. Nonetheless, with the Syrian state in literal shambles, the interpellative relationship

¹⁵³ It is important that the ‘theory + practice = praxis’ narrative is useful, but ultimately an abstract concept take doesn’t take into account fragmentary multiplicities within the process to where one element of the equation can subvert or even betray another part.

between state and people, and more generally between the concept of state and people, is to the point where it is (interpellation/power) literal and figurative ruin. Due to these specific material conditions, in light of no actual recourse pertaining to bourgeois politics, the logic of political action and possibilities pertaining to the Kurdish people gives rise to the possibility of *divine violence*, or, a law-destroying violence that opens up life to justice, or, using the ruin of law for life making that liberates humanity from *homo sacer*.¹⁵⁴ This act of divine violence becomes operative pure means of which is similar to Stirner's concept of insurrection. Once acknowledged, this insurrectionary life derived from divine violence creates the space for the possibility and cultivation of a potentially *revolutionary* and ontologically anarchic subjectivity.

Again, this is to be distinguished from the 'new anarchism' that seeks to treat Rojava as an instance of a new adaptation of a universal tradition. Ocalan might have decreed from his prison cell to establish a form of ecological anarchism inspired by Murray Bookchin, but the complexity of theory and practice, or, between the call and the deployment of the call on-the-ground is tantamount. Related to the separation between the call (of Ocalan) and daily life, I argue that the deployment of Kurdish myth (both by Ocalan and the adaptations on the ground) ultimately operate as allegorically anarchic properties. By this I mean that within the failure of state, at both the level of Ocalan and daily life on the ground, myth becomes a place of allegory and subsequent anarchic creation at the level of collective subjectivities. These cultural structures of myth-making

¹⁵⁴ Divine Violence can only be found historically. In the moment of the act, it is unknowable as divine violence. In this way, like allegory, divine violence is indifferent toward the intention of the act that it intervenes in

operate as a truth-regime that affirms autonomous life, counter-intuitive toward the *homo sacer* of state logic.

For Ocalan, as stated earlier, primitive society was a communally-tinged version of Rousseau's state of nature. In these primitive societies, there was clear gender equality and an egalitarian order that had no language or concept of stateliness. In Rousseau's state of nature, however, once humanity developed tools, the delineation of property began. Ocalan's primitive society, in contrast, the state was an external force rooted in corruption, fraud, and greed. Knapp, Flach, and Ayboga describe Ocalan's mythological theory of transition from primitive socialism to state-patriarchy by stating that:

the decline of society... began with the fall of woman. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* presents male identity as a tool of hegemony. Masculinity becomes an ideology, a ruling ideology such that Gilgamesh sees women not as human beings but as objects that men can use for pleasure. At the same time, the epic separates the individual from a nature-based tribal society.¹⁵⁵

Contemporary stateliness operates as a monument to patriarchy that is separated from nature. The state is urban, patriarchal, and derived from force and corruption.

Primitive society, or at least the sentiments of primitive society, never fully go away for Ocalan. There instead becomes dueling camps of "democratic civilization [emanating from the sentiments of primitive socialism] and... statist civilization."¹⁵⁶ It is therefore this antagonism that Ocalan sets forward to establish his Democratic Confederalism; state logic by definition is oppressive and patriarchal, and democratic civilization is the affirmative and natural counter. In order for humanity to be properly

¹⁵⁵ Knapp, Michael, Anja Flach, and Ercan Ayboga. 2016. *Revolution in Rojava*. Pluto Press, 40

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 41

restored to its natural communal state in its modern rendition, it is necessary to return to stateless gender equality. It is the anarchic version of the Baha'i approach of male and female each being a wing of a bird; it may only soar if both are equal.

At the level of theory, pertaining to Ocalan, it is quite clear that the anarchistic attributes of Murray Bookchin are allegorized in Ocalan's account of the myth of primitive socialism. At the level of daily life, elements of allegorical anarchy can be found in Kurdish theater both before and after Ocalan's release of *Democratic Confederalism*. Specifically, in Turkey historically, I argue that the operative elusiveness of the physical spaces of Kurdish theater alongside its expression itself is an unintended, if not fully accidental (allegorical) anarchy. Secondly, within this tradition, and its expansion in the autonomous cantons and the declarations of Ocalan, Kurdish theater works with and builds upon Ocalan's account of myth within an already anarchic expression of culture in theater before Ocalan.

On the outset, I must be clear that the term 'Kurdish theater' is quite problematic. Firstly, to focus on Kurdish theater specifically runs the risk of a colonial relationship, categorizing it as an 'other' comparatively to western theater. This dynamic is of distinct possibility of theater in Turkey created by Kurdish peoples because there are instances of deploying Kurdish renditions of western plays, such as *Hamlet*. The nature of deploying adaptations of other plays lends itself to the second point which is that theater conducted by Kurds in Turkey, and even in Rojava are inflected regionally; the former being quite

Turkish, and the latter being quite Syrian.¹⁵⁷¹⁵⁸ Nonetheless, theater deployed by those in the Kurdish community, by virtue of the failure of the interpellation of Turkish national identity unto Kurds, alongside the marginalizing and violent effects of the Turkish RSA (Repressive State Apparatus), has obtained an allegorically anarchic character in its material space (despite nationalist overtones in some instances) and has maintained it in the established autonomous Kurdish regions, primarily Rojava.

Firstly, within the realm of this theater its expressions have transformed into a very raw and human level, combatting *homo sacer* in a form of solidarity built upon a universal experience of it (*homo sacer*). Before this transformation, it was quite commonplace for formal party politics to blatantly interject in the theatric narrative. It seems unclear whether this shift from party narrative to anti-authoritarian solidarity is intended or itself an allegorical inflection, but that would be a trajectory for another investigation. On the power of this profaning of theater from authoritative party narrative to collective experience and melancholy, Yusuf Unay, an actor within this theater states:

Theatre allows you to connect with the audience by looking into their eyes, making you feel their breath drawn. That's why, when you try to convey social messages through theatre, you put the aesthetic obligations in danger... However, when you look into someone's eyes in the audience and say, 'Look, there is someone sitting next to you. His village was burnt down too, and he had to migrate to somewhere else like you,' it means more to me emotionally than any political message... In the past, Kurdish dramatists made the mistake of becoming the spokesman of a political

¹⁵⁷ Versteraeete, Pieter. 2018. "'Acting' under Turkey's State of Emergency: A Conversation with Kurdish Artists about Theatre, the Dengbêj Tradition, and the First Kurdish Hamlet ." *Performance Matters* 4(3): 49–75.

¹⁵⁸ Omrani, Zanyar. "An Introduction to Cinema in Rojava." *The Kurdish Project*. <https://thekurdishproject.org/introduction-cinema-rojava/> (April 22, 2019).

party... Theatre may be weak regarding the mass influence, but it has a great power to change things.¹⁵⁹

At this general level, an unforeseen anarchic tendency is built within this breadth of theater in the act of transitioning away from party politics, and politics in general. The theatrical experience is profaned directly toward the audience, engaging in a communal moment of embrace and historical memory, which in turn transforms an intended non-politics into a collective political moment. The theatric performance does not control the politics by virtue of its intended non-politics, but engages horizontally with the audience to participate together in the cultivation of an collectively improvised anarchic subjectivity that is rooted in the allegorical relationship between theater and crowd, between non-political intent and political consequence.

Secondly, the actual material space of which theater operated in Turkey by virtue of the *dengbêj* (musical storytellers) would travel across Kurdish communities to perform *dengbêjlik* (traditional storytelling) in quite intimate settings, including homes. Verstraete articulates this dynamic:

... *dengbêjlik* ... is separate from Kurdish drama. It is nonetheless theatrical since it depended on highly trained musical storytellers or *dengbêj* ... who travelled from village to village, recounting stories and singing songs... It is historically understood that these travelling artists had an important social role as they performed in people's houses, illuminating pre-eminent members of the community while rearranging their kilam (i.e., musical story) at each destination. Their stories often contained information about other villages they visited or important historical events that over time became ingrained in the Kurdish collective memory. As the *dengbêj* trade was passed on from master to apprentice over centuries, a rich tradition of oral literature (folktales, stories, and *çirok* or fairy tales) was established and preserved until the twentieth and

¹⁵⁹ Verstraete, Pieter. 2018. "Acting' under Turkey's State of Emergency: A Conversation with Kurdish Artists about Theatre, the *Dengbêj* Tradition, and the First Kurdish Hamlet ." *Performance Matters* 4(3): 49–75., 61

now twenty-first century (Kaya 2012). Today, this oral tradition is reinvented and understood as a discursive sphere for freedom that makes up the “staple” of the Kurdish society and culture (Kurpiewska-Korbut 2016, 99–100). The *dengbêj* are also often regarded as “the first practitioners of Kurdish narrative theatre” (Baş 2015, 318). Related narrative forms like “*çîrokbêj*” and “*vebêj*” also represent a vast resource for Kurdish theatre (318).¹⁶⁰

Although not distinctly drama, by virtue of the performative nature of the *dengbêjlik*, it may be considered nonetheless an operate component of the umbrella of the complexities of theater of Kurdish peoples. Whether immersed within the politics of the PKK, or in the current era of the autonomous cantons, the *dengbêjlik* is a rooted tradition that deploys, cultivates, and maintains both collective historical memory and myth. Regardless of whatever the original context the *dengbêjlik* operated in historically, in its contemporary rendition its deployment as a “discursive sphere for freedom” is allegorically anarchic. In the (unintended) anarchic adaptations of historical memory and myth in the *dengbêjlik*, it becomes evident that the horizontally enacted theater and *dengbêjlik* have merged together as a distinctively radical subjectivity born in allegorical anarchy. Allegorical anarchy is not the moment of this creation, but is the impetus of its possibilities.

Despite the fact that the allegorical anarchic constellatory alignment of *dengbêjlik* and theater in Kurdish culture and society are operative both before and after the proclamations of Ocalan does not downplay the importance of political organizing rooted in Ocalan’s works and ideas; but that there too lurks an already-existing anarchic tendency within the cultural discourse of Kurdish peoples as well. In the autonomous cantons, locals have established the ‘Kurdish Theater Festival’ of which they dropped the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 63

word ‘Kurdish’ to promote and honor the diversity of the region.¹⁶¹ This festival, amongst other cultural festivities in the cantons, are from-the-ground cultural structures that further participate in the creation of radical subjectivities rooted in the horizontal merging of *dengbêjlik* and theater in the pursuance of cultivating a distinctively Kurdish theater that is tinged with allegorical anarchy.

Despite the creation of alternative subjectivities within allegorically anarchic inflections within the deployment of Kurdish historical memory doesn’t mean that political and social organization within these autonomous cantons are wholly utopian nor deterministic. There are still, like any other movement, issues of contradiction and encroachment that must be addressed. However, at the level of Ocalan, and the level of the ground, you see an allegorical space of myth-making that participates and informs an ontologically anarchic subjectivity in which myth and history are utilized to emancipate humanity from *homo sacer*. The utility in this deployment of myth on-the-ground is to be found in its allegorical character. Rather than everyone sitting together reading Ocalan’s *Democratic Confederalism* and becoming knowing-anarchists together, Ocalan operates as a general catalyst, of which those on the ground take myth for their own making within the ruin of state. In this practical deployment in the specific material situation in Rojava, the lack of an intended anarchism-proper on the ground prevents revolutionary action into ossifying and solidifying into an increasingly ‘archist’ sensibilities. Simply put, in the specific context and contingency that the YPJ/YPG find themselves in, not being

¹⁶¹ “Syrian Kurds Hold Theatre Festival in Rojava amid War.” 2017. *Kurdistan 24*.
<http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/culture/3cfd84f7-b2fb-4370-a8b0-67cfadbb58f/Syrian-Kurds-hold-theatre-festival-in-Rojava-amid-war> (March 5, 2019).

formally engaged with anarchism-proper helps to expand their very revolutionary possibilities pertaining to anarchic subjectivities.

In result, allegory is both an anarchically operative phenomenon, alongside operating in a regulative fashion within the discourses of anarchism itself; it is *allegorical anarchy*. Between the second chapter that focused on a post-anarchism rooted in Stirner that departs from the ‘classic anarchists’, alongside the third chapter that focuses on Benjamin’s radical theology, there has been a significant departure in this argument from the said ‘classic anarchists’ put into constellation in the first chapter. They have not been forgotten. Rather, where the first chapter brought up the ultimate incompatibility of the liberal tradition with the radically anti-authoritarian disposition of anarchism; when this ‘anarchism proper’ is sifted through the filter of the post-structuralist critique of Newman and Stirner, the usefulness and utility of this seemingly liberal-contaminated anarchism is rescued in allegory.

Allegorizing Anarchism:

In the first chapter I briefly elucidated a generalized description of so-called ‘classical anarchism’, analyzing the main breadths and contradictions of the core concepts of: power, ignorance, science, and natural law. I argued that this anarchism carried within it the rotten teleological core of the liberal enlightenment, and a fetishized theory of power that was merely external. The core element preserved in this elucidation and deconstruction was that of Newman’s notion of the ‘anti-authoritarian impulse’. However, it could be argued that Max Stirner himself, the key element in Newman’s postanarchism carries this same impulse, alongside dismantling the dogma of liberal

metanarratives. If this is the case, then anarchists such as Goldman, Bakunin, and Kropotkin could be disregarded and thrown into the garbage bin of history.

Instead of merely discarding them, I find that there is something valuable after anarchism as such is filtered through the nonessentialist lens of postanarchism. Once filtered, I argue what remains is a rich history that in the pursuance of a free society drenched with liberalism's bourgeois language, the likes of Goldman, Bakunin, and Kropotkin (amidst a plethora of others) were embodying a very radical and illiberal anarchism in their day to day lives. The irony here is that this ontological anarchy was largely unseen and unacknowledged by virtue of the focus on the teleological revolution itself. It is within this unknowingness that makes their ontological anarchy allegorical for it nonetheless emerges despite the imposition of liberal bourgeois language, revealing that bourgeois language can only colonize life when in connection with power, rather than actually being of, emanating from, life.

In the pursuance of the allegorical redemption of anarchism, I will use Kathy Ferguson's concept of *anarchist spaces*, or, *counterpublics*. For Ferguson, "Anarchist counterpublics take shape out of an energetic triable of relations among political ideologies, social imaginaries, and embodied practices."¹⁶² This triangulation is a process of an allegorical unravel. Firstly, within the space of the social imaginary is the realm of the creation of myth. This initial myth congeals the revolutionary struggle and the melancholy therein. Secondly, bodily practice is the physical transformation mobilized by myth. In this stage lies the first allegorical thrust for where the intention is the striving

¹⁶² Ferguson, Kathy E. 2011. *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets*. Rowman and Littlefield, 69

toward revolution, it becomes apparent that in the striving for anarchism, anarchism itself is already in practice. Thirdly, the space of ideologies is essentially the texts themselves. The texts, especially in the case of Emma Goldman, are just as much reflective of life experience as political theory, forcing the reading to constellate the theory to life-experience. Once congealed, the revolutionary pursuit of the text reaffirms life as already gesturing toward the ontologically anarchic, profaning revolutionary fervor to daily life.

Channeling Michael Warner, Ferguson describes the initial level of the social imaginary, or, the general framework of myth-making. Since they are broad, they carry “an implicitly or explicitly imagined universal category” that “promises some sort of harmony or resolution.”¹⁶³ For the likes of Goldman, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, the general category, or public, was *the masses*. This category of public operates similar to the Marxian notion of the proletariat, but is more inclusive to nonurban workers and the lumpen-proletariat more generally, whereas Marx distinctively foresaw the industrial division of labor of the proletariat as structurally beneficial in developing a class consciousness. This general level of the mass, for anarchism, is the canvass of which human emancipatory possibilities is painted onto.

The second level of public, the ‘embodied practices’, are the actually physical spaces and bodily movements of the likes of Goldman, Bakunin, and Kropotkin. Bodily movement and material spaces is the first moment toward the allegorical for they became spaces of anarchism themselves, rather than instances of propaganda or revolutionary organizing. Quoting Margaret Kohn, Ferguson states that these spaces tended to be

¹⁶³ Ibid, 72

“political sites outside of the state where the disenfranchised generated power.”¹⁶⁴

However, at one layer of the allegorical it is rather within the failure of state that these spaces often occur. Ferguson, in listing various examples of these spaces of embodied practice refers to Emma Goldman’s public speeches and lectures alongside “networks of taverns, salons, clubs, parks, and other sites where informal recreational encounters created spaces for people to assemble and implicitly recognize on another as anarchists.”¹⁶⁵ She goes on to include that “another topical public could be found in prison, which became a kind of public space for the anarchists to read, write, and organize.”¹⁶⁶ Most notably, the inclusion of the prison as an instance of anarchic located space and body reinforces the interpellative failure of state. Where, for Foucault, the prisoner and the mad participate in interpellation and engage with the state as if it was a confessional, seeking to return to or arrive at a state of ‘normalcy’.

Whether it be Emma’s speeches and lectures, the rifle club, various unions, or multiple beer halls, the physical spaces where anarchists gathered were themselves ontologically anarchic. On these multiple anarchic spaces that ebbed and flowed, Ferguson states that “These sites acted as a kind of supplement to the rest of the city – they were the anarchist extension, fragile yet durable chains of places and people claiming/making a place for anarchism.”¹⁶⁷ In the pursuance of an anarchist future, these physical meeting spaces were themselves the anarchism that they were striving for.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 71

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 73

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 73

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 83

Kropotkin's speeches in North America operated similarly. Travelling to Toronto, Boston, and New York, Kropotkin gave a variety of lectures of his theories of mutual aid. In the attempt to be scientific, these spaces allegorically transformed where the anarchic myth-structure became scientifically assumptive. Everyone in the room, if only for the duration of the lecture, were all effectively participating in anarchism. Kropotkin too gave distinctly political talks for groups such as the League for Political Education.¹⁶⁸ By virtue of discussing anarchism in a space dedicated to it, there becomes an impermanent temporality of an allegorically-tinged ontological anarchy.

Thirdly, there lies the counterpublic space of the texts themselves. These texts are largely allegorical, made evident in the accidental revelations discussed in chapter one. However, these texts, rather than actually coming toward a sense of truth as such, point back toward an already anarchic life. Counterpublic texts refer to the texts themselves, and the network of readers that participate and engage them. Whether it be Kropotkin's *Freedom* papers in London, Emma's *Mother Earth*, or even Bakunin's letter to Czar Nicholas I, these textual networks both provided spaces to discuss anarchism and to also be instances of allegorical anarchy (unintended ontological anarchy).

Bakunin's letter to the Czar was requested by the Czar for it was supposed to operate as Bakunin's confessional of his wrong doings such "as a spiritual son writes to his spiritual father."¹⁶⁹ This instance is doubly anarchic for Bakunin unabashedly proclaimed his "passion for destruction" to the Czar from the solitary confinement of his

¹⁶⁸ Kropotkin, Peter. 1970. *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*. ed. Roger N Baldwin. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 26

¹⁶⁹ Bakunin, Mikhail. 1990. *Statism and Anarchy*. ed. Marshall Shatz. Cambridge University Press, xix

prison cell imposed by the laws of the Czar, and then subsequently escaped.¹⁷⁰ The solitary confinement took a toll on Bakunin's health, but was allegorically operative for it only further emboldened him. "Even after five years of solitude and physical deterioration, he declared that prison... had made them 'more fiery, more decisive, and more unconditional'."¹⁷¹ Here, a direct line of interpellation between Czar and Bakunin is unsuccessful, and where the power of Czar was profaned, allegorical anarchy reigned.

In Kropotkin's texts, his scientific analyses, as documented in chapter one, are tinged with such Christian undertones that a self-professed atheism seems obviously contradictory. Nonetheless, the textual and life networks and relations profane these religious undertones back to the earthly in the literal embodiment of Kropotkin:

Kropotkin is referred to by scores of people who knew him in all walks of life as 'the noblest man' they ever knew. Oscar Wilde called him one of the two really happy men he had ever met. Romain Rolland said Kropotkin lived what Tolstoi only advocated.¹⁷²

Kropotkin's life was the embodiment of the Christian anarchism that was advocated by Tolstoi, which is of an immense irony, but a profaning irony as well. Anarchism wasn't Christian nor scientific, but by virtue of being embodied in Kropotkin, is something always there, something that emanates in our mundane, daily, typical selves.

These textual collaborations are texts that speak to life. Life intercepts and conspires against the liberal baggage of 'classical anarchism' and allegorically reveals the ontological anarchy in the realm of physical spaces that helps to give rise to the

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, xxi

¹⁷¹ Ibid, xxi

¹⁷² Kropotkin, Peter. 1970. *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*. ed. Roger N Baldwin. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 7

possibilities of anarchistic ideas in the first place. They operate within and in connection to the social imaginary and physical spaces, giving rise to a complex and multiple nexus of an allegorically revealed ontological anarchy; *allegorical anarchy*.

What is to be preserved, held onto, and learned from are the allegorically revelatory stories of the people in history (not just Bakunin, Goldman, and Kropotkin) that sought to revolutionarily transform society, and the world. Kathy Ferguson brilliantly states that “Anarchism is often dismissed with the airy declaration that it is great in theory, but would never work in practice”, but rather, “anarchist writings are sometimes underdeveloped, but anarchist activities are often remarkably successful.”¹⁷³ In other words, the theory is clunky and embedded with the rotten core of liberalism, but the texts, in connection with the social imaginary and physical spaces of activity make evident their allegorical utility in their life-stories having instances of ontological anarchy. In sum, then, it is not merely the ‘anti-authoritarian impulse’ of the ‘classic anarchists’ that are worthy of utility and preservation, but serve as a component of the constellatory web of myth-creation that stem from the ruptures of allegorical anarchy. Organizing toward teleological revolution becomes profaned to ontologically anarchic story-telling.

So, miming the famous words of Lenin, ‘*what is to be done*’? At this point, there lies a clear tension pertaining to the politics of allegorical anarchy. Do we revert back to Stirner’s concept of insurrection, or is there an opportunity for revolution despite the liberal-poison that lurks in the social revolution of ‘classical anarchist’ thought?

¹⁷³ Ferguson, Kathy E. 2011. *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets*. Rowman and Littlefield, 67

Insurrection or Revolution:

Despite this tension between the two concepts of insurrection and revolution, I argue that they are not only compatible, but the former, when allegorically inflected, gives rise to revolutionary opportunity within the ruins of the dialectical power of place. Where postanarchism perceives power as unreal, and merely as an appearance of being real resultant in voluntary servitude, allegorical anarchy asserts that power is real, but that, as I have shown, it often fails. In the allegorical moment of profaning power, the moment of allegorical anarchy is similar to insurrection, except for the fact that it operates without regard to intention, rather than directly through intention like the deployment of bourgeois language. When allegorical anarchy is crystallized into an historical snapshot, a fragmentary image, that insurrectionist moment can be deployed for revolutionary means pertaining to political organizing, cultivating radical subjectivities, and myth-creation.

In chapter one, I make evident the revolutionary pursuits of the anarchism espoused by Goldman, Bakunin, and Kropotkin. Rooted in liberal enlightenment logic, power is an external phenomenon that acts to repress the inherently logical and good-willed individual. For Chomsky, anarchism was the proper inheritor of the enlightenment for a reason; it takes the rational individual to its logical end. In the scientific analysis of Kropotkin, alongside the educative program of Bakunin that rids the repressive ignorance superimposed by the state whilst revealing the natural inclination of rebellion, the social revolution was teleologically assured. As Saul Newman notes through Max Stirner, these claims are inherently essentialist, alongside holding within it the phantoms of liberal thought.

Furthermore, in Newman's postanarchism, the concept of revolution is situated within the 'dialectical power of place'. Or, converging Stirner with Foucault, the logic of revolution maintains within itself the desire for regulative control and subject-making onto the subject. The act of revolution is never an emancipative one, but merely seeks to institute another regime of governmentality and biopolitics. It continues the knowledge/power dynamic embedded in concepts of truth.

For Newman through Stirner, in chapter two, he brings forth the concept of insurrection. Counter to the idea of revolution, the insurrection is both an anti-authoritarian ethics and ontologically anarchic. It reveals that power doesn't exist, but merely performs an existence in the act of voluntary servitude. It is only through the willingness of the populous to be subject to rule that it becomes ruled. Collective action against the state, for Newman, is to assume anarchy as the starting point of any action, rather than the goal. In this way, collective action finds an uncontaminated space outside of the state. Postanarchism operates as a critique against the necessity of revolution, and advocates for an immediate, ontological anarchy in the act of insurrection.

For Walter Benjamin, the moment of revolution is still possible, and it is the historical materialist which finds its possibility. In his essay *On the Concept of History*, he states that the historical materialist is "endowed with a weak messianic power, a power on which the past has a claim."¹⁷⁴ This "weak messianic power" is the power to

¹⁷⁴ Benjamin, Walter. 2006. 4 *Selected Writings*. eds. Michael W Jennings and Howard Eiland. First Harvard Press, 390

redeem the dead, to redeem to past, for the images of the past are contended with along the lines of class. Benjamin states in his sixth thesis:

The danger threatens both the content of the tradition and those who inherit it. For both, it is one and the same thing: the danger of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. Every age must strive anew to wrest tradition away from the conformism that is working to overpower it.¹⁷⁵

Without historical materialism, there can be no acknowledgement of divine violence. For, as cited in Chapter three, Benjamin claims that divine violence can only be viewed historically; it cannot be acknowledged in the moment of occurrence. And, divine violence, or, law-breaking violence, brings forth the opportunity of allegory.

An allegorical deployment of history breaks through universal history and empty time. It redeems the past in its insurrectionist fragmentary image, giving rise to revolutionary possibility. This revolutionary possibility is synonymous with redemption:

The soothsayers who queried time and learned what it had in store certainly did not experience it as either homogenous or empty. Whoever keeps this in mind will perhaps get an idea of how past times were experienced in remembrance – namely, in just this way. We know that the Jews were prohibited from inquiring into the future: the Torah and the prayers instructed them in remembrance. This disenchanted the future, which holds sway over all those who turn to soothsayers for enlightenment. This does not imply, however, that for the Jews the future became homogenous, empty time. For every second was the small gateway in time through which the Messiah might enter.¹⁷⁶

In the pursuit for redemption, time refuses to be homogenous or empty; and it is the task of the historical materialist to conjure these fragmentary insurrectionist images of history,

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 391

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 397

for they are allegorical, rupturing the mythic imposition of quantitative continuity of time fueled by bourgeois impositions of language. In the ruins revealed in allegory, revolution becomes possible. Homogenous empty time is progressive and anxious, always moving and counting. Messianic time, suspended in allegorical rupture, is a freeze frame, it puts everything to a screeching halt. It is for this reason that Benjamin articulates revolution as a form of ceasing:

Marx says that revolutions are the locomotive of world history. But perhaps it is quite otherwise. Perhaps revolutions are an attempt by the passengers on this train – namely, the human race – to activate the emergency brake.¹⁷⁷

There is, therefore, no reason to impose an either/or distinction onto insurrection and revolution. When insurrection is allegorically inflected, being allegorical anarchy, it is the rupture in the homogenous time continuum that freeze-frames history in a monad that gives rise to the possibility of revolutionary creation within the illuminated ruin. Allegorical anarchy, in result, is the conceptual tool that bridges insurrection and revolution together.

Allegorical Anarchy:

Allegorical anarchy serves as a bridge between insurrection and revolution specifically, and postanarchism and Walter Benjamin more generally. Whereas postanarchism properly critiques anarchism for its complicity in liberal metanarratives and creates a space of an insurrectionist subjectivity, allegorical anarchy rescues anarchism in

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 402

the continuum of history, redeeming its story-telling for revolutionary possibility from within insurrection.

For Stirner and postanarchism, there is no hope. Hope is merely an appendage to progress, which operate as phantom ideas that take power over us, transforming us into passive objects of power. For allegory and the historical materialist, however, there is a revolutionary hope, although an inverted one. Speaking to Goethe's novel *The Elective Affinities*, Benjamin proclaims that "Only for the sake of the Hopeless ones have we been given hope."¹⁷⁸ Whereas Stirner has no hope, instead only having the ego and its property, Benjamin reserves a space for hope rooted in a hopelessness. The idea of hope is intertwined with that of progress. It easily becomes a passive and unthinking force that acts as an ad-hoc justifier for any atrocity, for by definition of its actuality it becomes 'necessary' in the pursuance of progress. Similar to the concept of revolution, rather than eliminating it in its entirety, Benjamin leaves a negative-space for it, so to speak. Revolutionary potentiality happens as a result of allegorical rupture, which is indifferent to intention. Hope here operates in a similar way. Hope is similar to the "small gateway of time through which the messiah might enter." Hope is reserved for those hopeless toward the future, whilst allegorically redeeming the past. It is a hope that no one owns. To hope is to be enmeshed within liberal teleology. The lack of historical redemption is ahistoric nihilism (Stirner). To create constellatory relationships of allegorically anarchic ruptures of history allows revolutionary opportunity to tangentially relate to the temporal

¹⁷⁸ Benjamin, Walter. 2004. 1 *Selected Writings*. eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W Jennings. First Harvard Press, 356

space and history of hope reserved for the hopeless. This is the utility of allegorical anarchic contemplation.

In the profaned world of the postlapsarian subject, allegorical anarchy is a useful tool to redeem the past. This profaned redemption, within ruin, operates as a springboard of revolutionary potentiality and radical subjectivity-making that is undogmatic and open-ended. Allegory itself is a tool of the profaned world for it is a subjective tool of knowledge. Therefore, it too can be identified as a satanic tool. Despite its godlessness and satanic disposition doesn't mean it cannot be used for messianic purposes, utilizing Satan's tools against himself. Just as how hope is reserved for the hopeless, if the Messiah enters, she arrives by godless tools.

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