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The Soteriology of Anarchism
June 15th, 2025

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Contents

thousand pages of *de-erased* text, voiced in emotive unison with the chance meeting of a long-awaited friend, is the relaxing sensation that leaves us inertial and *irradiate*: unfolding before us is the luminous spectrum of reality. We contemplate the face of Nature, reflecting our own souls, and beat a dithyrambic drum that echoes into the reverberating cosmos. That echo persists as a waveform, objective information that forever endures through the hyperbolic fields of a silent reality.[50] *Yes*, everything will be alright. To be conscious of our power is all a free being needs for *sustenance*. When we look into the endless self-referential abyss of our flickering thoughts — our wavering sensory impressions — we feel the sacred touch, the jubilant playfulness, and the superlative harmony of a shared diachronic: the arc of history bending toward liberty on a cosmic timescale. The secular Omega Point is being actualized with every word I am penning, every resolute nod to a fellow sapient, every thought that I compress and decompress into the void from which it came. A lavish feast awaits you: the eternal procession of destruction and bliss. Rejoice! We are submerged in the fire that burns through the vault of heaven. What emerges is a *celestial scion*, shining upon the universal frame.

[50] For nothing is so *audible* for *post-agential religiosity*: atheism in the deepest sense.

Anarchism is stuck in a self-referential prism. More precisely, it lacks the distinctive flavour of eclecticism. It is a stagnant beast labouring for breath. What faint sparks of rhythmic and polymathic thought exist range from understudied texts owing to the continent — such as Proudhon's routinely misinterpreted[1] *War and Peace* — or to foundational giants like Kevin Carson's *Organization Theory*. The foregoing description is misleading in one sense. I am not talking about a mere diversity of influences, as if each item of influence were convertible with each other. We rarely see *lateral shifts* across differing fields of thought contained and penned in one luscious text. Here, I offer an interdisciplinary account of anarchism and its *essence*: threaded through the philosophy of religion, analytic metaphysics, 19th-century existentialism[2], international relations, phenomenology, Zhuangzist taoism, political philosophy, and post-Giddens social theory[3]. What results is a robust understanding of anarchism as *religiously significant deliverance*. Deliverance from our vices — be they epistemic, existential, or moral. The redemption of our neuroses,

[1] This text is often accused of war fever and militarism — the second charge is richly ironic, for it is a term that Proudhon coined. Proudhon made sure to clear this up in the republished introduction of the very text in question: "I have a high regard for force; here on earth it has gloriously introduced the reign of right; but I do not want for it a king. I no more welcome the plebian Hercules than I do the governmental Hercules, nor the councils of war any more than those of the Holy Vehm." [Sharkey's translation] Here, we can take a cross-exegetic lesson concerning how Proudhon and Nietzsche are mutually misinterpreted on this front, the latter more so than the former, despite Proudhon being far more voluptuous and frenzied! We will return to this later in the text.

[2] *Yes*, Nietzsche was an existentialist.

[3] Giddens was a friend of neologisms and no stranger to eccentricity. He penned a *trivial truth* that feels awkward to repeat today: agents structure the world; the world structures agents; these new conditions create complicated interplays regarding agents structuring the world and the world structuring them. Hence, *structuration theory*. This will become relevant when I introduce the secular Omega Point.

our antisocial modes of behaviour, and the crushing weight of a recalcitrant pattern of feverish oppression.

Let us breathe in the moral-phenomenological texture[4] required to achieve this. *Theory*, in every sense, swings on a pendulum of stilled motion. It is like a form chasing its own shadow: it feels the frenetic *activity* of its own productive capacity but does not truly move. More plainly, *it does not accomplish its goals*. We regularly find ourselves engaged in context-rich *discursive moments*. These are instances where a first-order discourse, such as 'Is Anarchism a good political theory?', finds itself on the road well-paved by not only topic-level tertiary concerns, but a large constellation of pressing motivations and electrifying junctures of inspiration that, in alternating sequences, may reshape the first-order discourse in question. For example, if one were inclined to think that political discourses are reducible to ethical discourses, then 'Is Anarchism a good political theory?' contains new *rules of engagement*. Instead of centring concerns familiar to political philosophy — such as fair play rules, territorial jurisdiction, or political legitimacy — it will take on a broader scope. *Now*, we might cast anarchism as something that is interwoven within our interpersonal norms — not merely rules of etiquette or civic expectation, but the deep grammar of mutuality, trust, and reciprocity that structures human life *beneath* law. *Now*, we might explain anarchism as a datum that either inherits or lacks a source of ultimate value — whether that source is a transcendent companion to the very heavens, or an *immanent domain* of self-sovereign consciousness. *Now*, we might bridge the gap between legal and ethical theory — one burning question being whether we ought not throw legal positivism to the jackals of jurisprudence. *Now*, we might find *motivation* to dethrone concerns piously championed

[4] Normativity is embedded into the very fibre of our being and, as a result, our experiences. To create a moral-phenomenology of something is to get at the heart of existentialist philosophy: to explain, elucidate, illuminate, and sanctify why we *should* and *do* care about something.

the hermit individualism of Nietzsche alongside Rousseau[47] are far from opposites: they are *companions in virtue*.[48]

As are all human beings, at least in terms of essential potency: their *Prime Matter*.[49] Anarchism offers us liberation from ideology in every pejorative sense and, with it, the free-spirited ability to affirm secular *hope*. We can take inspiration from Peter Marshall's evocative title: *Demanding the Impossible*. There is nothing we don't feel entitled to lust over: the zest of life is our eternal privilege. We find *salvation* through the culmination of Zhuangzist *existential freedom:* the Nietzschean realisation that we ecstatically *become who we are*; as individuals; as sovereign souls; as market actors; as networked threads; as participatory demo-sapients. We wander free and easy; we resist the spirit of gravity. We dance to life's rhythm with natural grace, untroubled by the crooked Magistrate or the subtle disarray of our webbed toes. Having cast the light of the Good over God's shadows — in kinship with Steinhart, *The First Atheopagan* — we are not metacognitively confused about our goals: we *know* the valley of tears we shed. Deep within a

[47] Credit goes to my dear friend, *Epingur*, for helping me understand that my connection between Nietzsche's hermit individualism and Arendt's public freedom extends to the latter's untimely and misfired critiques of Rousseau.

[48] Perhaps this is why Nietzsche once said that only stalwart forefathers like Montaigne and Rousseau had the right to judge him. Cf. *Human All Too Human, Assorted Opinions and Maxims, Holingdale translation*: "There have been four pairs who did not refuse themselves to me, the sacrificer: Epicurus and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer. With these I have had to come to terms when I have wandered long alone, from them will I accept judgment, to them I will listen when in doing so they judge one another. Whatever I say, resolve, cogitate for myself and others: upon these eight I fix my eyes and see theirs fixed upon me." An interesting passage, given that *received wisdom* tells us that Nietzsche one-dimensionally despised Rousseau.

[49] Prime Matter is subject to no small exegetic controversy among Aristotle scholars. My take is that Prime Matter is akin to non-Hegelian concrete universals: all-pervasive, concrete possibilities occupying space non-competitively with natural objects, which inherit their intelligibility from the abstract Forms. Yes, I read Aristotle as a Platonist.

> "[W]e are enabled to judge pretty exactly how far a people has departed from its primitive constitution, and of its progress towards the extreme term of corruption … which inflames us all, exercises and holds up to comparison our faculties and powers; how it excites and multiplies our passions, and, by creating universal competition and rivalry, or rather enmity, among men, occasions numberless failures, successes and disturbances of all kinds by making so many aspirants run the same course. *I could show that it is to this desire of being talked about, and this unremitting rage of distinguishing ourselves, that we owe the best and worst things we possess, both our virtues and our vices, our science and our errors, our conquerors and our philosophers;* that is to say, a great many bad things, and very few good ones. In a word, I could prove that, if we have a few rich and powerful men on the pinnacle of fortune and grandeur, while the crowd grovels in want and obscurity, it is because the former prize what they enjoy only in so far as others are destitute of it; and because, without changing their condition, they would cease to be happy the moment the people cease to be wretched." [emphasis mine]

Rousseau was not just imagining a cliché competition between the rich and the poor, but a much deeper craving for attention and hierarchical distinction. His comments ring deafeningly true in an era where the greatest narcissist who can command the attention economy wins the hoard. The democratic love of public life, the vitalizing *ethics-as-activity* of Aristotle shadowing Arendt, and

in political philosophy — whether the state inherits *authority*, for example, may be asking the wrong question at the wrong layer of abstraction.

We can turn to Proudhon for wisdom on this matter. When Proudhon authored *What Is Property*, his chief concern was identifying how a historical and institutional sense of property — property as *political privilege* — enabled the illusory *right of force*.

> "Thus, in a given society, the authority of man over man is inversely proportional to the stage of intellectual development which that society has reached; and the probable duration of that authority can be calculated from the more or less general desire for a true government, — that is, for a scientific government. And just as the right of force and the right of artifice retreat before the steady advance of justice, and must finally be extinguished in equality, so the sovereignty of the will yields to the sovereignty of the reason, and must at last be lost in scientific socialism. Property and royalty have been crumbling to pieces ever since the world began. As man seeks justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy."

For this younger Proudhon, the right of force had catastrophic effects on society; indeed, it was the antithesis of social order. It was our deep political calling to dispel its moral illusion. As his writings mature, however, we discover the strikingly opposite perspective in his *War and Peace*:

> "[T]he entire merit of universal suffrage, rests upon this maxim, blithely rehearsed by our tribunes and which is unadulterated divine right: *Vox populi, vox Dei*. Which, as we shall see, ought to be translated as: the right of peoples is the right of force … I know

> that neither tradition nor antiquity confers right; that humanity was all the more likely to err insofar as its youthfulness left it wide open to ignorance, and that our progress consists of scarcely anything other than the adjustments which we are relentlessly making to our initial hypotheses. But that does not make it any the less extraordinary that justice has taken as its starting point what the jurists deem its negation, to wit, war; that, thereafter, the historical development of humanity has taken place against the backdrop of a right of war, so much so that, if that right is done away with, absolutely nothing is left of humanity past, present and, I dare say, even future, since it could neither shrug off its tradition nor regenerate itself outside of that same tradition and constitute itself in accordance with some other arrangement. Therein lies the gaping hole in Grotius's work … not only was his view of that right based upon a misapprehension, but he saw that right was at odds with the faith, the tradition and the consistent practice of the human race; he never even suspected that in denying the right of force, he was building castles in the air and raising a monument, not to justice, but to the arbitrary." [Sharkey's translation]

He learned to ground freedom in this pluralistic and multiply realisable right of force. All social units have at least the *prima facie* right of force because, for Proudhon, nobody would have coherent and *enforceable* rights if this were not true. Significant obligations and virtues would lose their normative strength, absent the right of force. Imagine a fictional world where self-defence was conceived as a merely permissible and praiseworthy option *but not an enforceable one*. Third parties could not intervene in immediate scenarios where you are under duress and overpowered by another person.

> and difference have become private matters of the individual. This modern equality … is in every respect different from equality in antiquity, and notably in Greek city-states … [Where] the public realm … was reserved for individuality; it was the only place where men could show who they really and inexchangeably were … It is the same conformism, the assumption that men behave and do not act with respect to each other, that lies at the root of the modern science of economics, whose birth coincided with the rise of society and which, together with its chief technical tool, statistics, became the social science par excellence. Economics … could achieve [this] scientific character only when men had become social beings and unanimously followed certain patterns of behaviour, so that those who did not keep the rules could be considered to be asocial or abnormal."

With great love do we receive Arendt's relentless scepticism of bureaucracy and technocracy; with a gentle sigh do we attend her crassly utilitarian and cynical interpretation of political economy as instantiated in society. Of course, like all critics of authenticity, Arendt attacks a *phantom* and, with that blind act, misses the objective rot found in the public square. The rise of neofascistic alt-media, driven by a mimetic culture of influencers, certainly does not lack public participation, but faces a glaring deficit in private virtue and sui generis authenticity. Should these men have looked inwards, toward the *intimate* human heart, before participating in the digitised polis, much calamity and disaster could have been avoided. Rousseau merely outlined a *necessary condition* for public freedom to be realized: namely, the constituent virtue and inward-looking constitution of its citizens! In *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Rousseau forecasts an ominous and all-too-familiar state of affairs:

from each other in a deeper sense. Treating Rousseau with a fiery disdain, Arendt condemns him for rendering private the virtuous and authentic life, thus weakening public life and, with it, democratic norms. Quoting again from *The Human Condition*:

> "The first articulate explorer and to an extent even theorist of intimacy was Jean-Jacques Rousseau … He arrived at his discovery through a rebellion not against the oppression of the state but against society's unbearable perversion of the human heart … The intimacy of the heart, unlike the private household, has no objective tangible place in the world, nor can the society against which it protests and asserts itself be localized with the same certainty as the public space. To Rousseau, both the intimate and the social were, rather, subjective modes of human existence, and in his case, it was as though Jean-Jacques rebelled against a man named Rousseau. The modern individual and his endless conflicts, his inability either be at home in society or to live outside it altogether, his ever-changing moods and the radical subjectivism of his emotional life, was born in this rebellion of the heart … The rise of mass society … only indicates that the various social groups have suffered the same absorption into one society that the family units had suffered earlier; with the emergence of mass society, the realm of the social has finally, after several centuries of development, reached the point where it embraces and controls all members of a given community equally and with equal strength. But society equalizes under all circumstances, and the victory of equality in the modern world is only the political and legal recognition of the fact that society has conquered the public realm, and that distinction

Even your praiseworthy act of self-defence might be subject to censure and litigation since it is not an enforceable right. Perhaps in a polycentric legal order, your attacker has restorative privileges and can sue for damages incurred by your act of self-defence. We all know that such a world is *morally absurd*. While this analytical phraseology does not pulsate in the exact rhythm Proudhon was speaking, *nor was it the only thing he was communicating*, it is a helpful framing for our purposes. What was once an anarchist case against the presumptuous right of force became the anarchist case for the indispensability of that same right.

Now, centre your focus on the aforementioned concepts inherited from political philosophy. Does the state have *authority*? Authority implies the right of force.[5] It can *enforce* its commands up to and including coercive means. For the anarchist drawing inspi-

[5] I am not employing the popular distinction between political authority and political legitimacy intensified by the post-Simmons literature. Turning to Simmons, who focused on the narrow concept of political obligation — in contradistinction to moral obligation, which is non-institutional and obtains prior to political forms — Simmons argues that, in theory, the state can have a general right to exist and issue commands, but no citizen may be politically obligated to obey its commands. That is how he cashes out his unique brand of philosophical anarchism. (The distinction between political and moral obligation did not have to be made; it perpetuated *a bureaucratic insult to style* and metastasized miscommunication within analytic departments. That this simple distinction was taken to be pivotal and enlightening is an unfortunate testament to how academic departments entrain people into a dystrophy of lateral thinking.) Instead, I contend that these concepts are inescapably interrelated. Simmons is free to play a monotonous tune regarding how we can lack grounded political obligations to the state yet possess moral obligations to act in rhythm with the state's commands just in case the state fulfils independent moral requirements. (Such as an entirely reasonable prohibition against murder.) Yet the discursive condition is the following: a situation where a state institution has a right to command, but its citizens have no duty to obey, is *absurd* and barely worth theorising about. A state that finds itself coercively inert in all but a few cases yet finds some generalised right to exist is not a stable entity as a matter of social ontology; it quickly collapses into a pluralism of social forces. With each unit instead enjoying their Proudhonian r*ights of force*.

ration from Proudhon, the answer is paraconsistent: yes *and* no. It has authority insofar as all social units have authority. A participatory democracy can enforce rules agreed upon by its constituents, whether formally or through a process resembling fair play rules. However, it does not have *unique* authority. It does not have, to repeat a well-known anarchist cliché, *a justified monopoly on force*. The state has authority — enforceable commands — insofar as the state happens to align with genuine moral norms. The emphasis on paraconsistency is here *existentially important.* We are not drawing endless distinctions between sense and reference to voice a clear **no** to state authority. We are living and embracing the apparent contradiction. This ambiguous condition is ever-present and eternal: a genuine feature of reality.[6] Ambiguity is not only a product of the mind or born solely from nervous stress. It is an anticipation of *nomological indeterminism*. Probability theorems, for example, are metaphysical features of the world, not merely epistemic utilities. God does not play dice, for it is an impossible object, but *Nature* sure has a love for the game. Our developing moral-phenomenology calls us to embrace this apparent contradiction, but not to the point of explosion — whether logical or psychological. We live in a world where some decrees of the state seem authoritative and commanding, even though they have the vain, sickening pretence that they stand over and above all other social orders — all other rights of force. This move is of theoretical value, too. It allows us to bypass inelegant debates regarding conditions under which we have obligations to the state or the state has obligations

[6] An astute observer would note that, trailing behind this use of paraconsistent logic, is the methodology of intuitionist logic. An intuitionist logic does not, for example, necessarily deny *localized* instances of classical laws like the excluded middle: it demands that such rules be *constructed* rather than assumed. This is perfectly fine for our purposes. We are simultaneously paraconsistent and intuitionist logicians. And, as we shall later see, roundabout classical logicians as well. Heaven and earth are more bendy than even mid 20th century physicists imagined.

tia of the vulgar and the unrefined. This reserved peace was highlighted by Nietzsche in *The Gay Science*:

> "As soon as any war breaks out anywhere, there also breaks out precisely among the noblest peoples a pleasure that, to be sure, is kept secret: Rapturously, they throw themselves into the new danger of *death* because the sacrifice for the fatherland seems to offer them the long desired permission — *to dodge their goal*; war offers them a detour to suicide … I do not want to remain silent about my morality which says to me: Live in seclusion so that you *can* live for yourself. Live in *ignorance* about what seems most important to your age. Between yourself and today lay the skin of at least three centuries. And the clamor of today, the noise of wars and revolutions should be a mere murmur for you. You will also wish to help — but only those whose distresses you *understand* entirely because they share with you one suffering and one hope — your friends — and only in the manner in which you help yourself. I want to make them bolder, more preserving, simpler, gayer. I want to teach them what is understood by so few today, least of all by these preachers of pity: *to share not suffering but joy*." [Kaufmann translation]

Of course, this *seclusion* and *ignorance* is neither social nor geopolitical in scope. After all, Nietzsche teaches us, through Zarathustra, "love of the farthest over love of the nearest" — he rejects the Christian command to *merely* love thy neighbour. His seclusion is a spiritual independence; his ignorance is a childlike naivety. Thus, we possess another thread in the overlapping consensus, tying a loose stitch through the many citations and influences in this text. Indeed, these authors ought to have learned

nomadic instantiations of nuclear energy. Self-sufficient yet interdependent cities[45] using raised-bed horticulture, permaculture, vertical gardening, food forests, hydroponics — which shall be driven by the greatest motivator: *necessity*.

Every fibre of your being demands *reflexivity*. An intrinsic call to action *for its own sake*. The movement to restore constitutional order is not a holistic act that is dead and gone after one vector of acceleration, but a breathing and nervous organism, dynamic and responsive to its environment. We are guided by the invisible molotov if need be. Distasteful and downtrodden actors can shine rays of light, even if it must be realized through their darkest dreams. That desolate prism reflecting *nothing* in their eyes. ("The antipodes, too, have their right to exist.")[46] We hear the ring of overlapping consensus once more, but its spectrograph is far more buoyant than ever before. Even amoralistic cult leader may direct their ire at the right targets at the right time. When spiritual Gestapo agents isolate legal and illegal citizens from their communities and their ongoing life projects, we can find inspiration in the words of George Mason, who so competently commanded his voice: "I ask who are the militia? They consist now of the whole people…"

To cognize anarchism is to obtain wisdom and patience. It is a long cherished Taoistic or Stoic peace. We do not panic when civilizational events are not amenable to our personal decrees, for we are not arrogant monarchs hermetically enclosed in epistemic doom. We are free people open to the wide-set phenomenological fabric of *perspective*. Through learning Hodgskinite and Proudhonian lessons in what really constitutes social order — the slow movement of custom and habit — the temper tantrums common to small children and large nations recede into the background minu-

[45] Here the urban and rural divide is bridged: semi-rural outliers outside the city metropolis always will, and should exist. Just not car culture fuelled remote areas that require 1–2 hours of driving to the nearest grocery store.

[46] At this point, the reader should already know the origin of this quote.

to us. Beneficent properties are omnipresent, even in the most demonic institutions. Normativity is *inescapable*. It is baked into the structure of the metaphysical and social worlds in kind.

Overlapping Consensus

The Good[7] reveals itself in many forms. For some, it is an instrumental tool: a nexus of if-then conditions. Since this text is drenched in the vitalizing dance of value theory, we can call them if-ought conditions. *If* you care about some goal, you *ought* to take specific steps to realise and maintain it. Another camp experiences an overflow of epistemic mania: they believe in epistemic norms *uber alles*, even at the cost of other common-sensical norms. A standard example of this archetype is the *error theorist*: a person who believes moral propositions are about non-natural[8] moral facts, but deems all such moral propositions *false*. Such a person harbours a radical commitment to epistemic norms — even for those who evict epistemic facts of genuine normative status[9] — thus prioritising sceptical questions above all else. This leaves them vulner-

[7] I am using a Platonist vocabulary here, but the Good is univocal. A radical pluralist, for example, can interpolate the concept in terms of *goods*.

[8] This is in juxtaposition with *natural* facts. Here is a standard natural fact: water == H2O. Putting aside debates covering what kind of identity condition we're pushing here — such as whether water is a waterlike substance that has transworld reference amenable to Putnam's famous Twin Earth thought experiment — we find that natural facts *describe* objects in the observable world. A non-natural fact, by contrast, is not a descriptive entity belonging to the natural world. It is not, for example, a constituent of matter. Nor is it amenable to empirical investigation, although heterodox dissenters exist on that front. It is pure and objective *evaluation*: nothing more, nothing less. The proposition that *life in prison is wrong* does not reduce to a cluster of natural facts like *what is proper to flourishing Aristotelian natures*.

[9] This is a version of *metaepistemological anti-realism*. It is the straight denial of epistemic norms. For example, this position would say there is no veridical sense in which you ought to believe that the Earth is spherical. This finds harmony with Bart Streumer's *metanormative anti-realism* — the view that there are

able to *companions in guilt* strategies[10] and a sincere psychological probing of their motivations. The radical contrary to the error theorist is known as an *ethical non-naturalist* or, more idiosyncratically, a *moral platonist*. A moral platonist holds that moral propositions refer to a sui generis, indivisible, unanalysable normative essence. They wield Hume's guillotine as a weapon, not only benefiting from the is-ought gap in their conflicts with ethical naturalists[11] but using it as a means by which Being-Itself can be judged.

no mind-independent, veridical reasons to do *anything* — but this example is not exhaustive of metaepistemological anti-realism as a whole.

[10] Briefly: If we accept either epistemic or prudential norms, we have no non-arbitrary reason to reject moral norms. They are thus *companions in guilt*. If I ought to believe that the gravitational constant is *6.6743×10−11 m3 kg−1 s−2* as a mind-independent fact — a requirement of standard epistemic norms — then it is bizarre to be *arbitrarily sceptical* of the claim that I ought to believe that *rape is wrong*. Take note of the arbitrariness objection launched here. It is not easy to distinguish the phenomenology of oughtness: if it seems that I ought to do something, ascending to the moral domain doesn't magically incur a new burden of proof. Yet this is the position of the moral sceptic who is also not a metanormative error theorist. (See the previous footnote.) Philosophers like to be radical, creative, and incitive. It is thus not surprising that they speak like conspiracy theorists who want to invent heterodox theories regarding everything under and beyond the sun. A question lingers: Should we even listen to them?

[11] People who believe that moral facts are reducible to natural facts, and are thus uncontroversial entities from a purely scientific worldview. The leading ethical naturalist is Railton, whose name litters the SEP page on Ethical Naturalism. Railton's view borders on constructivism: the view that agency has characteristics, like goal-directedness and reasons-responsiveness, that grounds normativity. Railton cashes this out in more consequentialist terms than Korsgaard's *constitutivism*, and has to rely on the semantics of *Cornell realism*. An immediate implication of Railton's view is that there are no intrinsic normative standards, which I take to be unacceptable. Much more interestingly, it opens him up to the same objection one may launch at Korsgaard, even though she champions intrinsic normative standards: namely, both thinkers cannot account for why *agents very different from us* are bound by clear laws like *one ought not rape*. Perhaps alien agents have self-constitutive aims directed at maximizing violence and pillage, for that was at least the instrumentally reasons-responsive way to survive in their natural environment. Such beings, despite their moral disprivilege and violent capacities, ought not rape. For Korsgaard, she would have to tap deeply

> creasingly being adopted by college campuses, small cities, and utility firms around the country."[43]

Furthermore, Ostrom notes that government officials do not effectively solve collective action problems through coercion, but by establishing *trust* (however misplaced that may be): a mechanism that is accessible to non-state and state actors in tandem. And, of course, it is easier to solve collective action problems through a constellation of small-scale common-pool resources than it is for some global *Gosplan* — there is no sign of an ecological Manhattan Project. There is, indeed, a *severe* lack of trust in state-based solutions to climate change — cf. the intractable debate between 'cap and trade' approaches vs levying taxes on emissions. As we've stated, climate change is not a singular, non-repeatable game. It is a series of localized, repeatable games in which actors accumulate more information over time and expand the possibility space for superior coordination. When we combine these green-tinted goggles with Kevin Carson's justifiable speculations in *The Homebrew Industrial Revolution* that micromanufacturing will supplant existing production models as they hit an energy crisis for which there is no centralised answer[44], the overall picture looks like this: rewilded urban communities plastering solar panels on every viable surface — and, more speculatively, Molten Salt Microreactors, TPV nuclear batteries, and solid-state micro nuclear batteries, providing

[43] This fits perfectly well with the mutualist insight that competition and cooperation are not opposites, but two sides of the same coin. As Benjamin Tucker once said: "When universal and unrestricted, competition means the most perfect peace and the truest co-operation; for then it becomes simply a test of forces resulting in their most advantageous utilization."

[44] Thus complicating and making costly everything that counts as an *input*, which leads to Carson's predicted collapse of monopoly capitalist institutions based on large-scale plant manufacturing, hierarchical administrations with high overhead costs, and which find themselves threaded through a complete lack of supply chain mobility and nomadism. The future is mobile, green, athletic, and reflexive. Which is to say, almost as if they were synonyms, polycentric and anarchic.

so long as 1. constituent members understand themselves to mutually share responsibility for future outcomes, 2. the frequency of information about the phenomena in question is high, 3. participants have informational access to who has agreed to change their behaviour (and their conformance with common rules are monitored), 4. that communication occurs between heterogeneous subsets of participants. Once communal actors set clearly defined boundaries, decide on collective-choice arrangements, and implement conflict-resolution mechanisms and graduated sanctions incentive structures[42] familiar problems with commons-based governance dissipate. This is not a *tragedy* of the commons, but their uttermost serendipity. A companion to the anarchic spirit, Ostrom argues that heterogenous competition in jurisdictional authority is an organizational boon, not a costly hindrance.

> "Multiple jurisdictions with different scopes and scales of organization allow citizens and officials more choice in selecting modes of providing and producing public goods to try to utilize the best available technology, to achieve economies and avoid diseconomies of scale, and improve performance over time … Using various forms of competition among households and groups and feedback on who is doing the best at reducing energy use is a strategy for reducing emissions that is in-

common values or *schelling points*. Where once she suggested monitoring and graduated sanction mechanisms as ways to fill in the gaps left by shared values, she now replaces shared values with legible communication, and, in an archetypal mutualist fashion, understands that heterogenous subunits can enhance cooperation through their competition and difference.

[42] This turns out to be an easy task for human-beings. Dispute resolution mechanisms in Darknet Marketplaces, for example, tend to be more robust than sites like Amazon. The role that Darknet Marketplaces play in embodying markets liberated from state-capitalism will be slated for a future article.

Nothing is beyond evaluation, not even the most fundamental entity. Evaluation precedes all existential quantification; the Good is beyond being. Philosophy alternatively suffers and benefits from every position infinitely tree-branching itself into microcosmic semantic, logical, and metaphysical alterations. As such, my casting of moral platonism will not be another person's theory. Still, one can use my theory as a Wittgensteinian *world grammar* — a valuable model to understand their own theories, the thoughts of their peers, and the perceived world at large. Before we proceed, let us take wisdom from Nietzsche's lesson about the value of *what is not said*.

> "We no longer esteem ourselves sufficiently when we communicate ourselves. Our true experiences are not at all garrulous. They could not communicate themselves even if they tried. That is because they lack the right word. Whatever we have words for, that we have already got beyond. In all talk there is a grain of contempt. Language, it seems, was invented only for what is average, medium, communicable. With language the speaker immediately vulgarizes himself.[12]" — *Twilight of the Idols* [Kaufmann translation]

into metaphysical constants to answer this modal concern, which would lead to her positing extra-agential moral facts. Thus collapsing constitutivism and the *radical internalism* motivating it. For Railton, much the same problem obtains, and his position must collapse into a roundabout form of ethical non-naturalism. If neither of them ascent to this metaphysically inflationary option, their views collapse into a form of meta-ethical relativism — due to permitting seeming intrinsic wrongs like rape relative to some species-level difference-maker — which is entirely against the spirit of their intellectual projects. A final move is to be arbitrarily sceptical of modal thought experiments like this one — or sceptical of the intuitions we have in response to them — which is always anti-intellectualism dressed up in a thin disguise.

[12] In other words, we need not exhaust all permutations of all ethical castings of anarchism to proceed forward. Analytic philosophers would do well to internalise this lesson, lest every paper becomes a *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Using my radical form of moral platonism as a conceptual tuning fork, we can tease out the beating heart of anarchism. Let me try out a statement. Anarchism is the means and ethos through which we actualise the secular Omega Point: a final state where our souls are reflected upon the cosmos, and the void speaks back. The spectrum of reality is transparent to us; *all* is known. Many people understand this final state of knowledge to be a dead-end necrosis, the stopping point for all playfulness and creativity. Nothing could be further from the truth. From maximal knowledge comes maximal reflexivity. It is doubtful that beings cognitively sophisticated enough to reach the Omega Point will lack vitalising activity: they will be infinitely complicated beings living infinitely complicated lives and manifesting infinitely complex works of art. Here, I conceptualise infinity as an infinitely self-surpassing series. The final state, the Omega Point, is therefore not a stopping point but an acceleration point by which infinite beauty grows *infinitely*. We can recruit Eric Steinhart and his mesmerizingly original work, *Ritual Kindles Vision*, for evocative imagery of this state of affairs:

> "The infinite cosmic organisms correspond to the Iamblichan intelligible deities … However, while Iamblichus says these deities are bodiless minds, [Atheistic Platonists] say that they are *integrally omnipresent bodies*.[13] An integrally omnipresent body exhibits holenmerism: the whole body is wholly present in every part of that body. It is an infinitely

article. Take note that I am burying laborious detail in footnotes; ask yourself why that is the case.

[13] Steinhart is talking about *non-theistic* deities. Physical entities that become godlike in a self-surpassing cosmic evolution across successor universes. Steinhart has a heterodox understanding of physicality. He reduces everything to abstracta: *everything* is an abstract object. Concrete objects do not exist; there are only concreteness *relations*. As a mathematical platonist, this understanding of the physical is not to be confused with a biological or 'carbon chauvinist' understanding of the soul.

making collective decisions to abstain from using destructive pollutants like CFC-11 and plastic bags[39]. We can shorten supply chains with P2P micromanufacturing. We can upend car culture and reduce the distance between *goods consumed* and *goods served* with unterrified YIMBYism.[40]

We can fittingly turn to Ostrom's later works, which focus on polycentric and commons-based solutions to climate change. *A Polycentric Approach for Coping with Climate Change* shall be our foil.

Gesturing toward a 'new' theory of collective action — which acts as a refinement of her theories outlined in *Governing the Commons*[41] — she assigns a high probability that cooperation will occur

itive thresholds. The point, however, is clear enough: it is a good state of affairs to have a solution to an existential threat that is so powerful that it needs to be constrained.

[39] Noteworthy is that a plentitude of companies phased out plastic bags and expected customers to bring or buy reusable bags well before the timeline of punishable regulation. As we will explore later in this paragraph, this is because the state, whenever it does good, merely sets *expectations* and *norms*: an activity that pluralistic and anarchic social orders can easily achieve parity. Coercion *as such* is an inert and atavistic property of the regulatory state.

[40] Communitarian neofascists bemoan alienating market mechanisms and see them as oppositional to social trust, third places, the family unit, and public life. The exact opposite is true. The most poor and socially outcast in our society — the homeless — only experience genuine human interaction when engaging with the market. Whether it's a 2AM pizza place giving them ephemeral housing or the common courtesy that a coffee shop cashier offers, market mechanisms naturally interweave themselves into prosocial contexts and build communal trust. Suburban sprawl and the disappearance of third places — owing their existence entirely to the delusions of city planning— are state-backed phenomena that act as direct antagonisms to market actors. There is no distinction between private and public life in a market society; that is a state-driven illusion. It is no accident that we see interstitial resemblances of third places surrounding street vendors, small restaurants, or even — of all places — the adolescent poor making McDonald's a shared meeting place.

[41] The main difference is that her later work betrays an interest in how heterogeneous groups find incentives to cooperate, liberating her earlier work from the idyllic, even reactionary confines of relatively homogenous peasants with

The state is *death* — in every sense. We are probably not going to get a Manhattan project on climate change because the incentive structures and informational distortions owing to public policy are not being solved anytime soon. Only the anarchy of production leaves life in its wake. The state is a woefully outdated social technology that improved upon discursive tribes yet has been hamstringing us for millennia. There is a non-accidental relationship between American cops executing people in the streets ad-hoc — or citizens confined to solitary cells to rot away into complete nothingness for the rest of their mortal lives — and the state *simpliciter*. Again, the state is *death*. It believes in nothing but extinction and the miasma of fear surrounding its stench. It is itself a dead, dinosaur-like institution that has carried its bloviated rot and fatalistic necrosis into civilized history. We seemingly cannot survive into the mid-22nd century if this semiotic demon continues unabated.

Hold onto that existential dread tightly and slowly massage it out. Imagine all the microcosmic stressors in your nervous systems pouring out of you, exhaled by the breath of nature. For I have manifestly overstated our doom. Delving into the dynamism between frenetic emotional states is necessary if one wants to appreciate the richness of human experience. Moreover, salvation cannot exist without its *antipode*. As Nietzsche reminds us, "The moral earth, too, is round." [*The Gay Science*, Kaufmann translation]

Luckily, long-run, non-repeatable information games can be pluralized into repeatable, localized games. Climate change is not a singular event lacking trial and error phases begetting lessons for our mistakes. *We do not get only one shot at climate change*. Instead, it is a series of repeatable choices, located at comprehensible scales, like strengthening property norms[38] and

[38] This is to understate things. The real problem with *free market environmentalism* is that it is *too good* of a solution and, if not carefully defined, could lead to outright primitivism. Tort common law, taken to the most literalistic extremes of suing people over microparticles entering your body, could prohibit industrial society in every sense. Of course, we simply do not have to accept such unintu-

complex fractal. Its structure is exactly nested inside of itself from every perspective … these are truly infinite bodies … They have infinite complexity and therefore infinite intrinsic value. Their souls are programs for infinite machines. They can simulate the entire history of any finitely complex universe in any finite unit of time … These infinite cosmic organisms contain infinitely complex submachines … They are infinite substructures of (suborganisms) of the cosmic organisms. An infinite suborganism … thinks infinitely complex thoughts in an infinitely complex logical language … It can solve infinitely complex scientific problems by simulating all possible finite universes. Besides its infinite intelligence, it has infinite creativity. It can create infinitely beautiful works of art at cosmic scales. It is sensitive to infinitely small differences of perceptual and intellectual beauty. It can play infinitely complex games … with itself or with other infinite machines. Sets of infinite machines can form infinite societies. The infinite excellence of these machines entails that their societies are infinitely fair, just, productive, creative, and good. They flourish infinitely … Humans will evolve into these superorganisms … Nevertheless, the infinite cosmic deities are only at the lowest rank of infinite deities. They are only countably infinitely complex. Since every infinity is surpassed by higher infinities … they are essentially constrained by countability. These countably infinite cosmic deities are surpassed by uncountably infinite cosmic deities; and those are surpassed by inaccessibly infinite cosmic deities; and so it goes. The lineages of infinite cosmic deities rise up through all ranks of infinity on the *axis mundi*.

> Just as the sets are surpassed by the proper classes[14], so these cosmic deities are surpassed by the transcendental bodies. They are surpassed by unsurpassable stars."

For Eric Steinhart, this world state of affairs is achieved through a complicated and eccentric metaphysical process. In brief, everything emanates from the One, which is Being-Itself, and can be analogized to Quine's existential quantifier. The One is the protological result of a Heideggarian self-negation of non-being: nothing *nots* itself into something. Notice that this does not assume classical logic, like the law of the excluded middle, but provides a primordial tale to motivate a reason to believe that classical logic is ultimately true.[15] The One animates propositions to be true or false with *normative force*. Everything grows toward the Good, which is neither produced by nor identical to nor preceded by the One — as if he were invoking a Thomistic notion of divine simplicity beyond his intent.[16] He additionally adheres to *axiarchism,* holding that everything is ultimately explained by its value. Nature, which he identifies with the limit concept, V — not a final totality, but

[14] Steinhart constructs his mathematical platonism using Von Neumann–Bernays–Gödel set theory.

[15] Earlier in this article, I hinted at paraconsistent logic — indeed, it is the mechanism by which I simultaneously upheld the authority and non-authority of the state as commutative with any other social order — which is strictly non-classical. It is thus surprising to see me champion a 'primordial motivation' for classical rules, such as the law of the excluded middle. This is because I am a non-classical champion of classical logic. Non-classical logics are useful and veridical at the level of methodology, but in the long run, *ultimate truths* will be beaten back into the intuitive binaries of classical logic. I aim to misbehave.

[16] It seems that Steinhart's normative force is not dependent on the One, yet is produced by it. It is not identical to it, yet it does not precede it. Everything grows toward the Good, but the One holds up a mirror to the Good instead of constituting it. This is in keeping with Thomistic analogues: where Being and the Good are convertible in utter simplicity, even if we synchronically describe their different roles in varying layers of abstraction. Steinhart wouldn't accept such a Thomistic casting of his system, but there are few other ways to read it.

> way, is a fundamentally sick society … Dealing with other human beings — all other human beings — as equals, confident and unafraid, is the right way to live. It's the only right way to live."

Don't you feel betrayed? With global mass surveillance[37], there is no shadow, no haven here to hide. Volition is practically dying out: passive submission is omnipresent. To express your earthly freedom is tantamount to antisocial behaviour. Under the era of Trump, to use our minds to converge on rational consensus is increasingly "cringe" and "lib." Even when the stakes are *apocalyptic*. I used to find the proposition that 'anarchism is the only solution to solving climate change' utterly absurd. Sure, anarchic solutions to climate change are undoubtedly strong. Still, I once held the following views: a] the state is not going to be abolished in my lifetime or otherwise the time span relevant to climate change; b] we can probably do a satisfactory job with existing institutions — to at least prevent extinction, even if it entailed a routine procession of expropriation and enclosure under 'Green Capitalism.' As a result, it seemed that kicking climate change down the solitary road of anarchy inadvertently doomed us. Yet one cannot help but conclude that long-term crisis tendencies of the state have borne out the anarchist's pessimism. Anarchism is vital not just for realizing self-respect and participating in the Good, et al., but also for our long-term survival.

[37] "Understanding the factors that determine the often surprisingly high rates of public approval for digital governance solutions is therefore crucial. As our study shows, it seems that once citizens become aware that such technologies could play the role of a 'Trojan horse' for introducing methods of authoritarian control, they are much more circumspect about adopting the new technology. This is important, not only in autocracies such as Russia, but also – and probably even more so – in hybrid regimes and democracies that have proven vulnerable to populist leaders with authoritarian tendencies, such as for example Turkey or the United States." One can note the impressive alacrity with which this study identifies the United States as a *hybrid regime*, comparable to Turkey, as early as November 13th, 2024.

authoritarian actions of Milei, or the failures and faults of DOGE, to attack a technocratic order feeding on the virtue of liberalism is to enable strongmen and autocratic rule. To attack the state directly is to threaten the world: a spontaneous and immediate revolution, for example, leaves a wasteland of a poorly maintained global network of bioweapon labs, nuclear bombs, and critical infrastructure ready to fall down on us and overload into ecocide. This is because supply chains break, diplomatic alliances fracture, and old methods of communication dissipate when a violent revolution is forced upon *any* land; not to mention stigmergic chaos instigated *across the globe*. Even making modest reforms and cuts risks the familiar woes of austerity and resulting civic instability that stews cultural forces of counter-reaction. In sum, it seems we are paralysed. To kill the great evil that has infected the world spirit is to butcher ourselves. What hope remains?

Every spark is a drifting ember of desire to fall upon the earth and ignite another fire. Allow me to soak in the depths of despair and saturate the plight of our tragic condition. Can you taste the poison in the air? I swear it's everywhere — absolutely *everywhere*. Kevin Carson is known for his prosaic and complex treatments of political economy, but what goes underrated is his existentialist spirit. Using a vocabulary that is *all-too-Humean* for me — which is proper and good, for overlapping consensus obtains — we get this evocative treatment in his *Authority: If It's Good, Why Does It Make Us Feel So Bad?*

> "At the most fundamental level, this is why authority is evil. It reduces you to the feelings of fear and powerlessness you experienced as a child. It makes you think you're bad. It makes you think you must have done something wrong. This isn't a good way for anyone to feel. And a society in which we spend a major part of our lives under the control of institutions directed by authority figures with the power to make us feel that

an extensible structure — allows us to bear witness to the Good. It is a privilege for which we should *give thanks*. In our mortal lives, we find ourselves on a sacrificial altar, our physical frame burning with the passage of time to behold beauty in its purest form. We are *purified* under the light of the Good. To such an intensity that *moral facts do not necessarily care about our feelings*. Of course, the long-run telos of the transworld nexus is one of maximal psychological harmony, but ephemeral horrors are waiting for us in the dark. Maintaining a heterodox mixture of anti-realism about selfhood but believing in transworld digital souls, Steinhart holds that our axiologically best properties will be preserved in future universes; that they are being manifested in the *here* and *now* as we

act out our lives.[17] The secular Omega Point is inevitable, though the evolutionary ride may be exquisitely painful.

[17] I strongly disagree with Steinhart's concept of rebirth. Steinhart has a monistic conception of the mind: it is reducible to abstract objects, like everything else in his ontology. In opposition to this, I propose that the mind *strongly* emerges from loose physical structures. I say 'strongly' because *what* emerges has a high degree of ontological autonomy from what produced it. The mind is a non-physical substance. What is a substance? A bearer and unifier of properties. There is no more semantically basic description of what a substance does than that. Why is it non-physical? Because nothing about our phenomenology presents anything physical: there is no mass, weight, acceleration, etc., embedded into the experience. There is only the phenomenon: the witnessing of the world. As a result, my concept of rebirth is closer to Nietzsche's *Eternal Recurrence*, which itself is subject to mythical misinterpretations. Nietzsche envisioned an infinite combination of events recurring eternally: everything is always happening at once, in limitlessly expanding vertical slices. He took this to be a natural result of there being neither causal laws nor an intentional designer of events, as well as the fundamentality he admits he began to rest on: the will-to-power. Since every quantum of force desires to overcome itself, this cosmological *balance of power* brings us to the enduring immortality of a static yet lively universe. I differ from Nietzsche in offering a more traditional theory of time. The universe is a growing block: the lifeless and dead past is full of actualized references. The reason 'Socrates is mortal' — in the sociohistorical sense of the Socrates we know about, not a merely possible Socrates — is meaningful because while his mortal flesh perished, he never went away as a *temporal object*. He is delegated to an early history of the expanding universe. The present is the cutting edge of that growing block, leaving the future entirely open and nondeterministic. As a result, my argument for rebirth is probabilistic. First, we must grant that time is infinite. Even stipulated eschatologies like the heat death of the universe allow for kinetic motion to transpire *eventually*. Nor can time be reduced to a measure of change between events. If this were true, prevailing physics would imply we could not sensibly talk about the objective separation between my birth and my death. Holding this in mind, we introduce the mathematical assumption that, within infinite time, the probability of the *exact* same events occurring eventually is *not* 1, the odds of *very similar* events occurring eventually *is* 1. To use a visual metaphor, two spinning wheels could, in theory, spin infinitely without ever touching each other. Hence why the first postulate would be true. Yet there would inevitably be two spinning wheels of roughly the same character, in approximately the same kind of location, spinning infinitely, disjunctively meeting or not meeting, given infinite time. How does this establish rebirth? Recall that I have run a substance dualist theory of the mind and posited strong emergence. What accounts for mental

their military capacities for the sake of idealistic peace. In 1990, Mearsheimer famously predicted that a multipolar world would follow the Cold War, because he did not believe Germany would voluntarily surrender its nuclear capacity on the liberal basis of international agreements and institutionally interdependent cooperation.

Here we can internalize the lesson that anarchism does not permit excessive cynicism about social cooperation, just because we benefit from opportunistic attacks on state-based social orders. To rebuke any model of international interdependence and the capacity for Kantian perpetual peace is to hamstring our ideals. Discarding the strain of civic nationalism — which rots even the most principled proponents of networked power diffusion and anarchy[36] — *we refuse to collapse into nothing at all*. We don't make entire careers out of apologizing for foreign dictators and antagonizing the faintest bastions of actually existing liberty. We make our studies interdisciplinary. We make our causes univocal. We passionately fight for our values. As Arendt says, "to *be* free and to act are the same." Let us add the essential modifier that Arendt was weary of emphasizing: to be free and to act *wisely* are the same.

Far From Deliverance

We are dissolved plasmaterial, troughing through the ashes of a grace that was never bestowed. At times, it seems there is nothing but the darkness to guide the way. Every overlapping system of oppression has, with the help of Weberian rationalization, strapped a dead man's switch to their proverbial chests — by creating nearly intractable *path dependencies*. As revealed in the

[36] The spread of Assad apologism revealed a fundamental weakness in the existing anti-war movement, and its vulnerability to narrative capture by totalitarian governments. Witting and unwitting apologia for Russian expansionism were, as a result, fundamentally unsurprising.

hide away from it in dead-end communes or a minute focus on domestic affairs. We follow Prichard's suggestion in *Justice, Order and Anarchy* that international relations are the starting point of social and political analysis, not an outgrowth of the already archaic nation-state:

> "[S]tandard conceptions of anarchy in IR have ossified around largely conservative, nineteenth-century understandings of the term … For these writers the solution to the assumed problem of anarchy is framed as the institutionalisation of state-like bodies at the international or trans-planetary level … Proudhon had first to 'demonarchize the cosmos' … Anarchy, for Proudhon, was a cosmological fact and a more sensible foundation for a normative theory of politics."

That is to say, the *anarchy* between states is an utterly ubiquitous social condition, one that applies to the large pluralism of social orders in sum. We never escape the anarchy identified by international relations and, as such, what matters are the *norms* that shape it. Prichard thus promotes a *constructivist* theory of international relations, which comes with the pithy slogan: *Norms matter*. While I do not agree with Prichard's anti-transcendental ethics, nor his worship of Proudhon's *immanent justice* as a consequence, we are compelled by the same telos of overlapping consensus.[34] We can observe the unfortunate tendency that anarchists, when lacking a definitive theory of international relations, fall into a crude neorealism, which simultaneously alienates the normative heart of anarchism[35] and fails to explain the post-USSR world. Neorealism famously cannot explain why Germany and Japan limited

[34] One can note the irony of Prichard's hostility towards teleological thinking. This, too, does not prevent communication between our divergent backgrounds.

[35] If you want to abolish *war in every sense*, you shouldn't make the realist notion that it is *impossible* your theoretical foundation.

We need not agree with the generative process by which Eric Steinhart fashions his conclusions. Indeed, I present a much simpler case. Why should one believe we will reach the Omega Point? Due to the psychological and sociological regularities we see before us. To tell a naive story: We get better at solving logistical problems, be they psychological, spiritual, or sociological. We affirm Hayek and Giddens' rational faith in the human-being to act despite impoverished information.[18] Technological progress under

substances arising from physical states is *functional sufficiency*. Once a physical structure has the proper functions, which are realized today in animal brains and one day within silicon machinery, mind-stuff emerges. That is to say: experience, intentionality, and willfulness. Since a substance is just a bearer of properties, and the soul is a numerically distinct mental substance, the soul is thus birthed. When your physical flesh dies, your soul can no longer causally interact with a body, which results in the ephemeral loss of experience, intentionality, and will. And yet, one day, there will be a body meeting the same functional sufficiency condition as yours, and your soul will be causally paired with the physical world once more. When this happens, your dreamless sleep will burst into a frenzy of experience and kinetic emotion once again.

[18] In *The Consequences of Modernity,* Giddens notes that: "The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character … Knowing 'how to go on' in Wittgenstein's sense is intrinsic to the conventions which are drawn upon and reproduced by human activity." Turning this insight into a blade against the technocratic social scientist, he goes farther in *The Constitution of Society*: "All human beings are knowledgeable agents. That is to say, all social actors know a great deal about the conditions and consequences of what they do in their day-to-day lives. Such knowledge is not wholly propositional in character, nor is it incidental to their activities. Knowledgeability embedded in practical consciousness exhibits an extraordinary complexity … it is important in social research to be sensitive to the complex skills which actors have in co-ordinating the contexts of their-day-to-day behaviour. In institutional analysis these skills may be more or less bracketed out, but it is essential to remember that such bracketing is wholly methodological. Those who take institutional analysis to comprise the field of sociology *in toto* mistake a methodological procedure for an ontological reality." Preceding him by half a century, Hayek, in *The Use of Knowledge in Society* sings a harmonious tune: "Today it is almost heresy to suggest that scientific knowledge is not the sum of all knowledge. But a little reflection will show that there is beyond question a

rational guise is our eternal blessing. We have always been posthumanists, animating ourselves as otherkin animals pace shamanism, or yearning for immaterial ascension in the case of Ancient Platonism and its Abrahamic copycats. Technological overcoming is our most reliable activity. If we assume that problems like climate change on this planet are tractable, and thus we are not logistically doomed to die out, then one could make the probabilistic case that, one day, we shall instantiate perfect information in our minds. We will know how to collect all resources, in every possible way, for every possible purpose. Our distribution chains will draw non-Euclidean lines across possible worlds, soaking in the sum of all knowledge into our collective intelligence. Whether we persist as flesh and bone, or silicon and machinery, we anticipate the Omega Point with each act of virtue and beneficent restoration performed.

Notably, William Gillis runs his own secular conception of the Omega Point, though he does not use that vocabulary. In his fiery and provocative article, *Setting The Universe On Fire*, he explains his theory thus:

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body of very important but unorganized knowledge which cannot possibly be called scientific in the sense of knowledge of general rules: the knowledge of the particular circumstances of time and place. It is with respect to this that practically every individual has some advantage over all others because he possesses unique information of which beneficial use might be made, but of which use can be made only if the decisions depending on it are left to him or are made with his active coöperation. We need to remember only how much we have to learn in any occupation after we have completed our theoretical training, how big a part of our working life we spend learning particular jobs, and how valuable an asset in all walks of life is knowledge of people, of local conditions, and of special circumstances. To know of and put to use a machine not fully employed, or somebody's skill which could be better utilized, or to be aware of a surplus stock which can be drawn upon during an interruption of supplies, is socially quite as useful as the knowledge of better alternative techniques. And the shipper who earns his living from using otherwise empty or half-filled journeys of tramp-steamers, or the estate agent whose whole knowledge is almost exclusively one of temporary opportunities, or the *arbitrageur* who gains from local differences of commodity prices, are all performing eminently useful functions based on special knowledge of circumstances of the fleeting moment not known to others."

As Zhuangzi stated, the sage takes *the ten thousand things* and rolls them into one.[32] So, too, must we wrap all these preceding concepts into a neat bow. We have identified that the hell of state capitalism is how it renders us alien to ourselves and each other. We have agreed with Fukuyama that identitarian petty conflicts between a new aristocratic class are not the substance of existential plight. This helps us crystallize what is geopolitically important about the anarchist mindset, or as we have baptized it, the *liberal conscience*. We take the pseudo-free trade of the existing international, neoliberal world order as a starting point. Always keeping in mind the Proudhonian project to reduce political functions to industrial functions[33] — until everyone is the sovereign ruler of themselves. We act, and we *participate* in world politics; we do not

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Only a *liberal anarchist* can *redeem* the failures and faults of *Empire*. To carefully balance the 'substance and the rot,' as a political neoalchemist. Anarchism is a soteriology in more than one sense: *it can save Western liberalism from itself*. It just needs conscience of its own fathomless depths of power. No institution can escape from the frightening arrays of *hope*.

[32] "We can't expect a blind man to appreciate beautiful patterns or a deaf man to listen to bells and drums. And blindness and deafness are not confined to the body alone — the understanding has them, too, as your words just now have shown. This man, with this virtue of his, is about to embrace the ten thousand things and roll them into one. Though the age calls for reform, why should he wear himself out over the affairs of the world? There is nothing that can harm this man. Though floodwaters pile up in the sky, he will not drown. Though a great drought melts metal and stone and scorches the earth and hills, he will not be burned. From his dust and leavings alone, you could mold a Yao or a Shun! Why should he consent to bother about mere things?" — *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi* [Burton Watson translation]

[33] "As a variety of the liberal regime I have mentioned *anarchy* — the government of each by himself, *self-government*. Since the phrase anarchic government involves a kind of contradiction, the thing seems impossible and the idea absurd. However, there is nothing to find fault with here but language; politically, the idea of *anarchy* is quite as rational and concrete as any other. What it means is that political functions have been reduced to industrial functions, and that social order arises from nothing but transactions and exchanges. Each may then say that he is the absolute ruler of himself, the polar opposite of monarchical absolutism." — Proudhon, *The Principle of Federation*

non-linear ways in which those same goals will be undermined. Change is a complex process. Anarchism is a millennia-spanning project, one where our gains and losses will be indeterminate. From time to time, we will need to take Kierkegaardian *leaps of faith*. Yet guided, always, by the light of reason: that is, our capacity for atomistic acts of insight that some proposition is likely to be true. Our faith is not blindfolded; it is tempered by the Dionysian danger of probabilistic reasoning.[31]

[31] No matter how this concept is phrased, the trained ear is going to hear paranoid echoes of imperialism and *the lust for empire* in these concepts. I can disabuse you of these notions. The American Empire has, at times, reached levels of comical evil with its forays into Latin America, as summarized by Kevin Carson in pg. 417 of his *Organization Theory*: "The great latifundistas of Latin America … hold the majority of their land out of cultivation." The ante is upped in *The Homebrew Industrial Revolution* [pg. 52] "The State Department's internal studies at the time estimated that the American economy required, at a minimum, the resources and markets of a 'Grand Area' consisting of Latin America, East Asia, and the British Empire. Japan, meanwhile, was conquering most of China, (home of the original Open Door), and the tin and rubber of Indochina, and threatening to capture the oil of the Dutch East Indies as well." While I manifestly disagree with Carson's narrative foregoing and following my quotation lines — that the U.S. entered WWII for primarily material reasons — of economic interest — to keep international consumption of overbuilt industrial capacity high; https://archive.ph/Fv8Eu comparable to the unique public engagement during the Corn Laws — we can overlap on one consensus: it is perverted to kick people off their land, with the help of despotic local governments, import capital-intensive machinery that requires asset-specific seeds bolstered by *artificial* intellectual property rights and economic path dependencies on a brutal application of High Modernist infrastructure. Yet that is exactly the kind of "business" Western powers enacted in Latin America. However, there is a danger in going too far with this. Nations run on idealistic notions and alliances, not just cynical power games and material necessities. (Indeed, misplaced idealism led us into the mess that was the Iraq War.) The world order recently upended by Trump hanged dependent on tangible trust and diplomatic strength, not one mean bully forcing everyone into compliance. Allied European nations didn't exactly mind a condition of simultaneously fostering free trade routes and not having to fret over their own collective security concerns, certainly not after centuries of constant warfare within the continent. (That is, before Trump single-handedly blew up all trust in the United States as a diplomatic and trade partner.) Lastly, this tension is in theme with our study.

> "In formal physics terms the dynamics being described obviously relate strongly with entropy, which is not so much a matter of decay as the number of possibilities … The idea that the point of consciousness is to increase something like entropy is an old one, that constantly reoccurs to a great many people. The standard response given to [we] entropy-maximizers is that a world of maximum entropy, a world where static lattices of dead rocks are liberated into a hot gas, where the universe is set on fire, would be itself a drab affair. And much the same is said when such is mapped to more everyday social relations. Anarchy would be boring. A world of equally heroic angels would be a world without the drama and sacrifice of war and hierarchies … [Yet] a hot plasma is not indifferentiable, but contains rich dynamics too fine, multitudinous, and energetic for our clumsy troglodytic eyes to pick out and discern. A world of heroic angels, much less a closely inter-networked one, would not be a world of gray peasants, but one where the engines of art and drama move even faster."

One can immediately note the naturalistic, reductionist tone of this casting. The philosophical divide between heterodox platonism and Gillis could not be more distant. Yet any good liberal is familiar with the concept of overlapping consensus: John Stuart Mill and, to a far less impressive extent, Rawls[19] identified and praised conditions under which people can find structural agree-

[19] From Rawls in his *Political Liberalism*: "When political liberalism speaks of a reasonable overlapping consensus of comprehensive doctrines, it means that all of these doctrines, both religious and nonreligious, support a political conception of justice underwriting a constitutional democratic society whose principles, ideals, and standards satisfy the criterion of reciprocity. Thus, all reasonable doctrines affirm such a society with its corresponding political institutions: equal basic rights and liberties for all citizens, including liberty of conscience and the

ment, but forever disagree on the fine details; indeed, finding themselves enriched and cognitively enhanced for the dispute. Here, I posit the sensibility of a *metaphilosophical* overlapping consensus: we may differ on the fundamental methods and means by which we reach existentially significant conclusions, but we can find ourselves aligned with similar goals.

freedom of religion. On the other hand, comprehensive doctrines that cannot support such a democratic society are not reasonable. Their principles and ideals do not satisfy the criterion of reciprocity, and in various ways they fail to establish the equal basic liberties. As examples, consider the many fundamentalist religious doctrines, the doctrine of the divine right of monarchs and the various forms of aristocracy, and, not to be overlooked, the many instances of autocracy and dictatorship." While Rawls should be praised for not sanctifying religious violence through a false principle of tolerance, unlike many today who look away from Political Islam — a powerful geopolitical force holding state power over a billion plus people, murdering its way across Asia and Africa* — or even Christian Nationalism destroying the United States and the Western liberal world order from within, it is noteworthy that Rawls smuggles in all the old assumptions from *A Theory of Justice* under the slippery notion of *reciprocity*. We still get a democratic, constitutional republic that guarantees basic rights with the means of coercive taxation and a sociologically naive aim at securing distributive justice. Thus, his overlapping consensus is not interesting enough: it doesn't tease out the microparticles of liberalism within heterogeneous traditions — it dares not even look into the liberal hearts of self-styled illiberals! The present text aims to preempt such mistakes. (* That is, a cross-regional estimate based on the amount of Muslims who have reactionary attitudes toward women and would support Sharia Law instantiated at the level of a nation-state. This is complicated by the fact that about half of the Muslim world supports democratic governance, but the world stage is no stranger to illiberal democracies imposing religious zeal from the top-down. I will note that this comment will, unfortunately, be read by many on the Left as an instance of islamophobia. Such is my fate as a left-wing market anarchist with heterodox influences. No amount of placation or assurances can dispel the hermeneutics of suspicion. Even if I were to talk about the successful assimilation of American Muslims, as a victory for liberal mechanisms of cultural change, the very act of using the word 'assimilation' would bring the accusation of neoimperialism and neocolonialism. And on it goes. The reader must have faith in my good intentions, holistically supported by the freedom-loving, labour of love that went into it.)

> will nonetheless slowly go forward in spite of that temporary countercurrent: this artificial nationalism is in any case as perilous as artificial Catholicism used to be, for it is in its essence a forcibly imposed state of siege and self-defence inflicted on the many by the few and requires cunning, force and falsehood to maintain a front of respectability. It is not the interests of the many (the people), as is no doubt claimed, but above all the interests of certain princely dynasties and of certain classes of business and society, that impel to this nationalism; once one has recognized this fact, one should not be afraid to proclaim oneself simply a *good European* and actively to work for the amalgamation of nations…"

For Nietzsche, the *good European* was alternatively pan-European and globalist in character, depending on the axis of power at hand. Possessing a *liberal conscience*, therefore, is not only to cultivate an internationalist mindset but to work for the actualization and preservation of that world state. In today's world, it means prioritizing the Western liberal world order first and foremost, with a bold and dovelike ambition to subsume all regions of this blessed Earth under the security guarantees and rights of liberal powers. For example, we should all want Russia to liberalize and embrace Atlanticism. Just in case Russia is not ready for that, however, we ought to sharply oppose its nationalist atavisms and imperialist actions. Our conditional support for institutions like NATO should be *dialectical*: we should support the inclusion of Finland and Sweden into a defensive alliance but sharply criticize instances when NATO cuts red tape for multinational offensive efforts. In this act, we recognize the moral complexity of social ecosystems. It is not so easy to separate the substance from the rot. When we work with existing institutions to spread the message of free trade and human rights across the world, we understand the

> dominance. The feeling of anger at a door-dash driver charging $20/hr for their time, or at service staff who are not desperate, or *anyone* you feel is beneath you claiming some dignity for themselves—that is not unique to any group of people. It is sadly just human … Elites will often undermine their own position and tear apart the fabric of the state to lash out at others. To not just dominate but humiliate them. America has now achieved such broad prosperity that this aristocratic brain rot is infecting, or at least within reach, of huge swathes of the voting electorate."

Instead of maintaining *a liberal conscience*, we have fallen into semiotic traps[30] that present a bygone era of 19th-century coal miners and their brothers suffering within 'dark satanic mills.' This fosters mutual resentment, petty identitarian conflict, and an entire nation intentionally causing a recession simply because they're bored. What is this liberal conscience I speak of? We can utilize Nietzsche's concept of *a good European* as a schematic starting point:

> "Trade and industry, the post and the book-trade, the possession in common of all higher culture, rapid changing of home and scene, the nomadic life now lived by all who do not own land — these circumstances are necessarily bringing with them a weakening and finally an abolition of nations … This goal is at present being worked against, consciously or unconsciously, by the separation of nations through the production of *national* hostilities, yet this mixing

[30] That is, the signs and symbols we use become a self-perpetuating means of sustaining myth. Everything is a sign. A mouth motion is a sign; a picture on the wall is a sign; a frenetic shifting of the eyes is a sign. Semiosis is omnipresent. I use the language of semiotics to evoke extra-linguistic imagery of pure information acting in the world, even though the semiotic tradition is often bogged down into reducing thought objects and information to language.

Allow me a brief foray into *radical liberal thought* to set the stage for this multiply realizable concept. Roderick Long, in his timely article, *Market Anarchism As Constitutionalism*, delineates the position as so:

> "Minarchists often insist, as an objection to anarchism, that the use of force needs to be subjected by constitutional restraints. But here I suspect that the minarchist is being misled by a metaphysically illusive picture of what constitutional restraints are and how they work. First of all, when we speak of constitutional restraints, we are presumably not talking merely of restrictions written into a legal document. Such paper prohibitions are neither necessary (look at Britain) nor sufficient (look at Soviet Russia) for actually operative restraints. What matters is a nation's 'constitution' in the original sense of the actual institutions, practices, and incentive structures that are in place."

Jason Lee Byas locksteps in rhythm with Longian constitutionalism. In his now seminal article, *Radical Liberalism: The Soul of Libertarianism*, Byas sharply pinpoints our discursive condition:

> "Liberals are united in their belief that there is a natural harmony of real interests and in their concern with the mutually-destructive capacities of power … [Their] confidence is in the free association of individuals through markets, civil society, and the spaces in between – ways in which each act in accordance with their own dreams and aspirations and each benefit from the existence of each. Its fear is in the disruption of those dreams and aspirations by some against others, in service of apparent interests, to the detriment of all … At its most radical, liberalism insists that

> an injury to one is an injury to all, and proposes an oath of 'I swear to never live for the sake of another, nor to ask another to live for mine.' *It holds that those two principles are not only compatible, but complementary*. [emphasis mine]"

We can take hold of that last line and briefly laugh at a ridiculous time when serious academic concern about the "Adam Smith Problem" existed. That is, a supposed contradiction between Smith's lampshading self-interest as a function of emergent order on the one hand and his moral sentimentalism on the other. That an intelligible *prima facie* problem was never demonstrated speaks volumes. This points to a painful psychosocial regularity obtaining across our political adversaries: the archist inability to take seriously the observable proposition that emergent social norms — "guided as if by an invisible hand" — are the very constitution of social order. If they grant such a proposition at all, they are imagining horrific regimes, like psychotic urban gangs or roaming warlords.

Here, we identify the fatal conceit of state apologetics. We hear much about coordination problems[20] but not a single serious analysis of what constitutes state-driven social order in the first place. There is, instead, the suggestion that emergent social norms cannot deal with scale and complexity, unlike the unravelling world order of today.[21] If there is an entire literature dominated by centre-leftists focused on the supposed contradiction between having an altruistic bent and touting the virtues of a laissez-faire market soci-

[20] Of course, one cannot ignore the obligatory response: Ostrom's-style commons-based governance.

[21] We will have much to say about this condition in the last third of this study. For now, we can console ourselves in *a song for the hopeless*. We stand at the precipice of existential doom and ultimate delivering as one continuous mental state. As Nietzsche would remind us, it is often through dangerous winter winds that we find ourselves — that core *strength* and *focus* which mindless habit and *dysroutine* left to rot.

chapter of Fukuyama's *The End of History*[29], predicting that a bored and affluent population would destroy each other for the slightest mental convenience or for an opportunity to discharge their contempt onto others.

> "The median US household income is $80,000. By most estimates, the median Trump voter's is somewhat higher. This would be considered upper-middle class in most of Europe and upper-class in most of the world … economic position itself can be a source of

[29] *The End of History* is commonly misinterpreted on two fronts: a] as predicting the literal stilled motion of history; b] as being refuted by existential threats to the liberal world order of today. Let us first note that by the *end* of history, he means the *telos* of history. That history is rationally directed toward realizing liberal democracy. Lastly, Fukuyama strictly predicted and explained the forces currently eating liberalism from within. Noting that liberal democracies enable a hypertrophy of equal recognition between beings, he remarks that those who crave hierarchical distinction will find their urges suppressed and, in a fashion reminiscent of Nietzsche's drive psychology, these urges are bound to explode across those who desire aristocratic status. (One can recall entitled consumers who yell at service workers to exert dominance and fulfil the *pathos of distance* as immediate evidence of this fact.) Fukuyama then expresses worries about a bored, affluent population who have no substantial problems to speak of and manufacture petty politics from this vacuum. The book fulfils its subtitled referent and directly recalls Nietzsche's image of the last man: those who claim to have invented security and happiness, all while uncannily blinking with soulless eyes. These directionless people with no sense of purpose will manufacture identitarian conflicts to fill the vacuum of boredom, much like idle historical aristocrats crafting complicated social games and erupting into feuds without the burden of either hard work or spiritual purpose to guide their path. We can briefly note the narrative compatibility with Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*. Hayek, too, warns of a bored and affluent population seeking to seize the levers of state power — often out of an excess concern for redundant security —through a vicious competition of special interests. Hayek, too, worries that people who do not feel fulfilled or recognized by the pluralistic interpersonal relationships of liberalism will create substitutes through collective, authoritarian movements that give them a misguided sense of purpose. Hayek, too, stresses that liberalism requires a delicate moral ecology that can all too easily be atrophied. The price of liberty is, after all, eternal vigilance.

C] Unregistered migrants — who are not integrated into a common industry with predictable standards — find themselves the victims of every kind of horrible abuse. Of course, we are talking about upwardly mobile and high-agency people, those who take non-trivial risks and journey to a foreign land for opportunity. Illegal and legal immigrants in tandem are more peaceful than native-born citizens. A person can be highly resilient to the oppressive structures around them. Thus, it speaks volumes that our best and brightest are regularly alienated from the pursuit of happiness.

The problem with state capitalism is that it is *oppressive*, not that it makes us poor.[28] It has created an absurd, spiritual death machine that *alienates* people on the many-faced altar of their sacrificial souls. There is, first, the Marxist concept of labour alienation, which is overlooked by 'scientifically serious' leftist authors and not given the proper treatment it deserves. The inability to labour on your own terms and exert your creative capacities as a creature with a definitive — even if malleable — nature is a far more significant problem than STEM majors not getting high-paying entry-level jobs. Or humanities students averaging out into comfortable middle-class lifestyles, even if they find themselves burdened with long-term or unpayable student loans. Indeed, such hallucinatory anxieties about poverty in the United States have enabled the rise of Trump and a sickening genesis of neomonarchism. There is a new saying among the extremely online left: "Fascism is colonialism coming back home to roost." One could more accurately say that Trump is the counter-globalization movement coming back home to roost. Liberal Currents recently published an article diagnosing the problem accurately, speaking in rhythm with the last

[28] There will always be interstitial cases of people falling through the cracks, no matter their demographic status. The point is that non-trivial first-world poverty is a *general* and *harmful* myth, not that demographics rigidly determine poverty.

ety, can the average state apologist be given the charity of thinking clearly? What could craft the social order of a statelike entity if not the proto-anarchistic regularity of custom and habits? There is a rich intellectual tradition complaining about the statist's conceit. In his delightful work, *Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted*, Thomas Hodgskin, who is identifiably the first left-wing market anarchist, complained, as early as 1832, that:

> "Time has not occasioned defects, but improvements, in the laws, though the legislator who always aims at preserving the institutions of a past age, has not suffered the laws to keep pace with society. The latter has extended and improved more rapidly than the former, suggesting the important truth that your laws have not regulated its course, and do not preserve social order. It has out-run and out-grown all the cunning political devices of men, teaching us that the institutions which are now supposed to be wise, and which the lawgiver struggles to make consistent, will, ere long, like those that have already passed away — like monachism[22] and the trial by ordeal — become the mockery and scorn of mankind."

Having launched a Ricardian Socialist case against the lawgiver, the capitalist, the landlord, and the priest before Proudhon ever penned *What Is Property*, we can still return to the not-quite 'Father of Anarchism' for an invigorating and evocative punctuation of this point. In his controversial text that presents a moral-phenomenology of war, seemingly praising brutal warfare for those who did not soberly read the text, Proudhon runs an interesting critique of Hobbes. Namely, a state of war could never be a breakdown of social order. It is, if anything, an excessive manifestation of it. There can be no Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra*

[22] An archaic way to refer to monasticism.

omnes because war is the dark privilege of intelligent human beings who carry a rich tapestry of symbolism, organizational structure, religious zeal, territorial awareness, and game-theoretic intuitions into their everyday lives. To debase our ability to make war is to debase humanity: it is a non-accidental feature of what separates us from non-human animals.

> "It is by means of diversity in opinions and feelings and through the tension which it generates that a new world, the world of social interactions, the world of right and liberty, the political world, the moral world comes into being, atop the organic, speculative and affective world. But, before the interaction, there must, of necessity, be a contest; before the peace treaty, the duelling, warfare and, this is always the case, at every instant of life. Genuine human virtue is not entirely negative. It does not consist solely of abstaining from all the things that are condemned by law and morality; it consists also, and to a much greater extent, of the deployment of energy, talent, determination and character against the over-reach of all those persons who, by their very existence, have a tendency to overshadow us … And all of this without injustice, without treachery, without outrage and, by the mere effect of this law of nature which makes us struggle, even armed struggle, even, in certain cases, to the bitter end, a condition of life and virtue. The warrior who insults his foe, who uses unlawful weapons against him, or devices that honour forbids, is dubbed a war criminal: he is a murderer. Thus, war is inherent in humanity and must live as long as it does; it is a part of morality … like fire, it stops only when it has run out of fuel; like life, which peters out only for want of sustenance, war proliferates and is aggravated between peoples in keep-

food insecurity really entails. As a person who is physically disabled and lives 45% below the poverty line, I understand that true poverty is something that alienates you from all prospects of life. The disappearance of third places[27] means that mere cents on the dollar act as barriers to doing anything but anxiously awaiting your next cheque, which is itself a zero-sum wealth transfer to your landlord. When it comes to the first world — at least before Trump's inconsistent market rules and tariff psychosis shatter our living standards — Third Worldists get something correct: the full-time working class is a type of neoaristocratic class that is not even cognizant of the luxury it enjoys. The people struggling in any meaningful sense generally fall into three camps:

A] Working-class people with multiple dependents, especially adult dependents — lacking access to various child tax credit programs and childcare stipends — find themselves in literal hand-to-mouth poverty. All other portions of the full-time working class define poverty as having to think about a budget, which is the psychological genesis of a populist myth that 60% of Americans are living paycheque to paycheque.

B] The non-working population. In many cases, if such people rely entirely on state assistance, they have to virtually survive on dirt and limit their calories to survive. Side jobs, regular financial support from friends and family, food banks, and other such desperate measures are necessary to survive.

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won with great difficulty and friction — through means propagandistic and IP hawkish. Simply put, it is not an iron law of human psychology that we prefer prepackaged consumer goods over bulks of generic goods with which to fashion our own meals and utilities.

[27] An artificial condition caused by one-thousand-one direct and indirect development restrictions. The market thrives when threaded through interstitions of the commons. Indeed, it assumes their existence: the ability to get from point A to point B unmolested is a foundational basis of coherent property rights. We organically build spaces of extended community: if only the High Modernist state didn't destroy it whenever it sees it.

sceptical philosophies frequently tied to atheism. Finding ourselves the harbingers of *No Gods, No Masters* in every sense. We can poetically baptize this condition as *vitalistic anarchism.* A living, breathing, hungry, insatiable, reflexive, and zealous love of liberty. Vitalistic anarchism does not care about one's personal poverty. Despite holding to a moral and economically egalitarian philosophy, it doesn't complain overmuch about wealth disparities. It takes cues and elements from Giddens' structuration theory that are repeatedly passed over, namely his concern with agency-minimizing social theories. (E.g. see footnote 18.)

When we find ourselves on *the Left*, it is unsurprising that we pick up habits and ways of speaking common to such a movement. As a result, we suffer an excess of middle-class college youths who, upon working their first minimum wage job, narrate themselves as poor because their personal income does not sustain a hyper-consumerist lifestyle.[26] They do not have the faintest sense of what

is filled with [traditionally] religious people, many atheists live there too … And while an atheist can't believe in God, an atheist can still (unfortunately) believe in God's shadows. If you believe in those shadows, then you still live in the theistic cave. Here's a shadow: if there's no God, then there's no objective morality. Theists believe in this shadow, but lots of atheists believe in it too … To escape from the cave is to escape from the shadows … The throne is empty. Nevertheless, it still exists. And the theists who set up that throne also forged chains that bind people to it … you don't have to believe in God to be bound to that throne by those chains. These chains have the form of if-then rules. Each chain has the form of 'if there's no God, then X.' Usually X is something very valuable: [e.g.] if there is no God, then life has no meaning or purpose." Indeed, we can take this a step further, and analyse ways in which God has kept us isolated from religious life. Refer to my Medium blog post hyperlinked earlier in this article, God is the Only Impossible Object, for an extended discussion on the matter.

[26] Market anarchists have deeply ingrained, knee-jerk reactions to critiques of consumerism — despite numerous examples of anti-consumerism existing within our tradition. From Austrians who tie inflationary monetary policies to the encouragement of high-time preference and frivolous spending, to Hodgskin being concerned about state-backed commercialization in his *Popular Political Economy*, and Carson's *Organization Theory* making a compelling case that a ready mass of consumers is not a 'natural' state but a malleable ecosystem that was

> ing with their religious, philosophical, political and industrial development; it seems as if only extinction of the moral life can extinguish it … This is the virtuous, chivalrous side of warfare that has gone unnoticed by Hobbes who, after having astutely acknowledged that war is immanent within humanity, and, so to speak, the latter's natural state, promptly contradicts himself by contending that [the] state of nature is a brutish condition, that war is evil and mischevious and, in a new contradiction, claims that the State has been devised for the sole purpose of preventing it."

Social order emerges the second that two sentient beings make semiotic contact. We create it as naturally as we breathe. Genuine *Robinson Crusoe scenarios* do not arise when Crusoe is not the only person with a gun, figuratively or literally. Even hell has its rules and regularities and, with it, the everlasting hope for *overcoming* — the dazzling arc of liberty paved by our penchant for Smithean emergent order. Having explored Proudhon, always the spiritual and prosaic companion of Nietzsche, we can therefore glean insight from *Twilight of the Idols*, which has, too, been read and abused as a militaristic text:

> "The value of a thing sometimes does not lie in what one attains by it, but in what one pays for it — what it costs us. I shall give an example. Liberal institutions cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained: later on, there are no worse and no more thorough injurers of freedom than liberal institutions … These same institutions produce quite different effects while they are still being fought for; then they really promote freedom in a powerful way … For what is freedom? That one has the will to assume responsibility for oneself. That one maintains the distance which separates us. That

> one becomes more indifferent to difficulties, hardships, privation, even to life itself. That one is prepared to sacrifice human beings for one's cause, not excluding oneself … The free man is a *warrior* … the aristocratic commonwealths of the type of Rome or Venice,[23] understood freedom exactly in the sense in which I understand it: as something one has or does *not* have, something one *wants*, something one *conquers*." [Kaufmann translation]

We do not share Nietzsche's pessimism about actualized liberal institutions, but, all the same, we hear the Proudhonian chorus ring in his words. Liberty is something that one *fights* to obtain. We can *Americanize* ourselves by reminding ourselves of the proto-Tuckerite, *unterrified* sentiment toward Shays' rebellion:

> "God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion … what country can preserve it's [sic] liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance?"
> — Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to William Stephens Smith*

Of course, one could ask the same question about a people ruled by some narcissistic despot who found himself elected in a democratic government, despite clearly violating Section 3 of the 14th Amendment during the most well-documented event in history.

I belabour the point for good reason. Even in our darkest dreams, and through our most virile reactions, we construct moral order. Everyone participates in the Good in their own way, no

[23] Commentators like Allan Bloom overlook the significant mention of Venice alongside Rome. Nietzsche was a lover of the Free Cities, later the Renaissance, and lavished praise on liberal or humanist figures like Montaigne, Voltaire, Erasmus, and Prichard. [26, 176, HATH; 408 HATH I].

you walk down a beautiful urban square, completely unaccosted by hostile actors. Think of the sense of liberation and personal power a person feels in a country with strong free speech laws, where they can write books that make Marquis de Sade look like a saint — entirely absent censure. To have a metastatic cultural norm that says *one ought not face consequences for regular and healthy expressions of autonomy* is crucial for liberty to be realized in any sense of the word. An easy reductio comes to mind. Imagine if a Soviet official in the late 1930s told you that, under the watchful guise of the nomenklatura, you are free to do anything, so long as you own up to consequences. That freedom does not mean evicting your civic responsibilities and political obligations. To call this Orwellian is not only cliché, but a woeful understatement.

We have identified that polarized diminutions of negative liberty — as an essential and necessary condition for true freedom — are unsatisfying and ideologically dangerous. All the same, we must attend to the univocal way in which they touch the human spirit with a healing hand. In the same breath, we must refocus our lenses and reconsider what is truly important about the left-wing market anarchist critique of neomercantilism, capitalism, and the state. To do this, I will have to alienate what has become an entrenched orthodoxy within our movement.

Recall our intellectual medication object: that anarchism is inextricably linked with the salvation of the human spirit. We are presenting an atheoreligious focus[25], casting aside the prejudices of

[25] That is, *religion liberated from theism*. In one of his many creative texts, *Atheistic Platonism*, Eric Steinhart has this to say about the ways in which theism has hijacked our concepts and kept us alienated from meaning in every sense of the word: "Atheism is … stuck in a *cave*. Nietzsche described this cave: 'God is dead; but given the way people are, there may still for millennia be caves in which they show his shadow'… The *shadows of God* are deeply entrenched habitual patterns of thought and practice … Of course, Nietzsche's cave is also Plato's cave. It's a place where prisoners are bound with chains. So Plato's chains are Nietzsche's shadows: they are enchanting patterns of thought and practice — entranced by these shadows, you are bound in the cave … Although the theistic cave

Although Arendt remains sceptical about the central value of negative liberty, her framework can be integrated into a simple formula. That is, negative liberty is a necessary but not sufficient condition for well-realized freedom. Interestingly, this extreme emphasis on positive liberty resonates with the writings of William Gillis, who is certainly no fan of Arendt:

> "An individual can have strong agency in a web of interdependence. Indeed the further the impact of their choices stretch the more agency they have, whereas merely being 'free' from outside influence or connection is the freedom of the prison cell." — Negative Liberty & Hardness

Once again, we unwittingly find ourselves converging on points of overlapping consensus. A sharp debate between negative and positive liberty is ultimately trivial. One can understand that a deeper point about psychosocial regularities is being made. It's not merely the case that there is a logical relationship between negative liberty and losing all sense of what freedom truly *is* and *feels like*, but that a culture encircling the vocabulary of negative liberty hollows out essential and constitutive factors of life. Leading people to see responsibilities as unbearable burdens and limitations on their freedom; to burn and ghost their friends — all for the slightest ease of friction. To improperly cognize what resource deprivation and social privation do to a person's autonomy. The loss of humanity is *not even felt* by the subject spellbound by wanton cruelty. Such concerns are well-received, *but they are not enough*. In the late 2010s, it was a popular social media trend among political junkies to echo this mimetic phrase: "Freedom does not mean freedom from consequences." This is, quite literally, a helpful definition of negative liberty. It gets at the heart of something vital to the species-essence of anarchism. Think of the invigorating freedom and zest for life you feel when

matter how vile or wretched their psychology has become. The human being — more accurately, *sapientkind* — redeems itself through its creative intellect and, as a necessary effect of this intelligence, its lust for freedom. We surround ourselves with a ravenous sense of *vitalism*. A Dionysian frenzy that a much younger Nietzsche described as so:

> "Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man. Freely, earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey of the rocks and desert approach. The chariot of Dionysus is covered with flowers and garlands; panthers and tigers walk under its yoke. Transform Beethoven's 'Hymn to Joy' into a painting; let your imagination conceive the multitudes bowing to the dust, awestruck—then you will approach the Dionysian. Now the slave is a free man; now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or 'imprudent convention' have fixed between man and man are broken. Now, with the gospel of universal humanity, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of *māyā* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity." — *The Birth of Tragedy* [Kaufmann Translation]

One can note the egalitarian sentiment here. A passion that would recede but not altogether be lost in the older Nietzsche. The dissonant ways in which Nietzsche loved and hated liberalism; loved and hated democracy; loved and hated human equality deserve their own treatment in a future text. It will suffice to

say that I have illustrated a crucial point. Even within fabled illiberal thinkers[24] there is structural agreement on tenents worth calling liberalism and, with it, anarchism. Moreover, there is a universal tendency to cling to soteriological and eschatological concepts resembling the secular Omega Point. Even Thoreau's *Walden* or Voltaire's *tending to the garden* motif found in *Candide* belong here: everyone has their vision of heaven. There is a *family resemblance* between these pluralistic visions of the Good. The overlapping consensus we have been talking about is simultaneously metaphilosophical and political.

We can thus introduce a philosophical *principle of tolerance*. If you find yourself estranged from my radical platonism, that is no cause for concern. You can create your own vision, making it metaphysically inflationary or deflationary to your heart's content. At the very least, I can offer instrumental, if-then conditions. *If* you feel the fire of humanity burning within your core — which you do, even if it is not a *conscious* mental state — *then* the call of secular salvation shall resonate within you. Anarchism is the optimal path to this state of peace and dignity. As Emma Goldman delightfully put it:

> "Anarchism, the great leaven of thought, is today permeating every phase of human endeavor. Science, art, literature, the drama, the effort for economic betterment, in fact every individual and social opposition to the existing disorder of things, is illumined by the spiritual light of Anarchism. It is the philosophy of the sovereignty of the individual. It is the theory of social harmony. It is the great, surging, living truth that is reconstructing the world, and that will usher in the Dawn."

[24] There is a liberal aspect to Nietzsche that goes underrated. See Chapter 8 of *Human All Too Human*, which reads like Voltaire on steroids. Passage 474 identifies the state and culture as antagonisms. 475 calls for the mixed-race abolition of nations. Quite interestingly, passage 472 predicts the emergence of market anarchism and sharply tells us that "if the state is no longer equal to the demands of [private] forces then the last thing that will ensue is chaos: an invention more suited to their purpose than the state was will gain victory over the state." This relationship will be studied in a future piece for C4SS.

Anarchism as Participation

Hannah Arendt champions a neo-Athenian vision of republicanism. In her well-known work, *The Human Condition*, she outlines a compelling concept of liberty: freedom as *participation*.

> "Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality … this plurality is specifically *the* condition—not only the *conditio sine qua non*, but the *conditio per quam*—of all political life."

Sometimes dressed up as a stealth totalitarian who defends *the noble lie* — an unfortunate misinterpretation born of her dialectical dancing with the role of *deception* in politics — Arendt crystallizes her innate love of liberty in *What Is Freedom?*

> "[F]reedom, which only seldom—in times of crisis or revolution—becomes the direct aim of political action, is actually the reason that men live together in political organization at all. Without it, political life as such would be meaningless. The *raison d'être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action … Men *are* free—as distinguished from possessing the gift of freedom—so long as they act, neither before nor after; for to *be* free and to act are the same."

We are thus treated to a vitalizing and bold vision of positive liberty. One can hear the faint echoes of Aristotle's *ethics-as-activity*.