Violence as a Means of Praxis in the Postanarchist Thought of Saul Newman

Incorporation of Divine Violence as the Basis of Revolutionary Struggle

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Feed my will to feel this moment
Urging me to cross the line
Reaching out to embrace the random
Reaching out to embrace whatever may come

Maynard James Keenan

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Abstract

Postanarchism is an attempt to revitalize and reintroduce anarchist theory as a radical option of politization through its merge with post-structuralism. This merge expands anarchist theory beyond its ontological limitations, at the same time, necessitates revisal of anarchist praxis. Saul Newman's post-anarchist theory attempts to tackle the questions of violence and action in an individuated manner to refrain from a paradoxically power-riddled anarchism. The postanarchist theorization of a non-violent violence by Newman utilizes Walter Benjamin's *divine violence* and George Sorel's *general proletarian strike* to synthesize a core ideal for the post-anarchist praxis for an end of justice, through what I call an 'attitude anarchism'. This research aims to investigate how Newman's attitude anarchism shapes the postanarchist praxis, and whether such conceptualization is coherent and/or possible within the concept of divine violence.

Keywords: Postanarchism, divine violence, non-violent violence, attitude anarchism

Resumen

El post-anarquismo es un intento de revitalizar y reintroducir la teoría anarquista como una opción radical de politización por medio de su fusión con el posestructuralismo. Esta fusión expande la teoría anarquista más allá de sus limitaciones ontológicas, y a la vez exige una revisión de la praxis anarquista. La teoría post-anarquista de Saul Newman intenta solucionar las cuestiones de la violencia y la acción en forma individualizada para evitar la paradoja de un anarquismo plagado de poder. La teorización post-anarquista de la violencia no-violenta realizada por Newman utiliza la *violencia divina* de Walter Benjamin y la *huelga general proletaria* de George Sorel para producir un ideal fundamental para que la praxis post-anarquista alcance un fin de la justicia, a través de lo que denomino "anarquismo de actitud". El objetivo de este trabajo es investigar cómo el anarquismo de actitud da forma a la praxis post-anarquista, y si tal conceptualización es coherentemente compatible con el concepto de violencia divina.

Palabras clave: Post-anarquismo, violencia divina, violencia no-violenta, anarquismo de actitud

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Introduction

Violence has always been a delicate subject in the societal context, seen as the main hurdle in front of the possibility of peaceful coexistence. Law as the great equalizer and the state as the enforcer of the ban on violence therefore enjoy a certain acclaim that places them at the root of civilization. The predicament that presents itself is that this condition is achieved through a monopolization of violence in state's hands and thereby necessitates the use of violence to impose non-violence. Whether the legal order has been established via a social consensus or through violent means themselves remains partly irrelevant at this stage; however, it is certainly important to note that the prohibition of violence places the state over the individuals it owes its existence to. As a hierarchically superior entity, the state guarantees through its violence, a life worth living. Since this absolute paternal[1] authority granted to the state is derived from its exclusive access to justified means of violence, this condition engenders a conservative characteristic. This would all be infinitely more justifiable if the state was an unworldly neutral entity that exists beyond the reach of all as a paragon of human equality; however, the state is merely an apparatus, which entails an inegalitarian principle

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[1] The paternalism adhered to the authority of the state here defines a twofold quality of both the hierarchical structuring of power relations and its anthropomorphosis as a patriarchal element in its legitimization. Although the latter is only hinted at for the time being, it will come to play an important part through the incorporation of Lacanian theory in Part Ⅰ, to be thoroughly addressed within the investigation of feminist praxis in Part Ⅲ.

inherent to it. Consequently, the use, the ban, and the problematization of violence carry qualities that are intertwined with class.

The securitization phenomenon that has been largely definitive in the post-9/11 era of emergency enabled the neoliberal state to intensify its conservative discourse, eventually leading to a stigmatization of dissent as the breeding ground of domestic terrorism (Newman, 2010, pp. 18–26; Watts, 2019, p. 123). This was followed by a militarization of law enforcement and legitimization of lethal force utilized in the name of public security (Albo & Fanelli, 2014, p. 19). Consequently, manifestations of public dissent came to be seen in a context of danger, which has especially pushed mass protests to police among themselves the compliance to nonviolent protest. It is growingly more commonplace to see a group of protestors turn 'violent' protestors amongst their ranks in to avoid creating justified grounds for the police to intervene, and independently from whether the police end up intervening or not, we see that peaceful protests reach a threshold of the potential attainable through peaceability until they spontaneously dissolve (Albo & Fanelli, 2014, p. 23). In other words, the preconception towards violence coupled with the rightful anxiety of being subjected to state's violence exact a paralyzing toll on social movements. I attribute a certain part in this to a lack of anti-statist radical theory that has a component of immediacy in its praxis. Arguably, classical anarchism carries these qualities, however, its appeal has largely dwindled out because of the scrutiny that violence is subject to.

In that thread, post-structuralist anarchism (postanarchism) becomes increasingly relevant since its premise is defined as the revitalization of anarchist theory by way of utilizing the post-structuralist tool of critique (Newman, 2011a, p. 47). It constitutes a relatively new field in political theory, the first use of the term is in the 1994 book *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, written by Todd May. Among the most prominent figures of postanarchist theory there is significant divergence in their theorization, the sources used, and the reciprocity of theories. However, it is only in Saul Newman's work that we see an effort to integrate the two political theories into one coherent body that is postanarchism (Evren, 2011, p. 10). This is a noteworthy exception because it allows for a unique radical theory to arise without conservative constrictions. Newman cites the main inspirations for his postanarchist theory as the works of Bakunin, Stirner, Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan; hence, by affinity, his theory is also fairly invested in dialectical considerations. Consequently, Newman's vision of nonviolence touches upon Benjamin's divine violence. Notwithstanding the brevity in which divine violence is discussed in postanarchist theory, Newman states that the transcendence violence brought about by Benjamin's divine violence is the ethical horizon of postanarchist politics (Newman, 2010, p. 131).

The concept of divine violence, although having prompted plenty of research, is mainly handled in a strictly literary sense. This is to say that despite being a concept whose anarchic tendency is underlined numerous times, this connection has never been furthered to the point of theorizing an anarchist praxis built around it. Unfortunately,

Newman does not go that length either; despite acknowledging the dialectics inherent to nonviolent violence, his discussion on divine violence remains particularly limited to dismissing revolutionary terror as emancipatory means. Having said that, it is imperative that we open a parenthesis here to also recognize the works of political philosophy that deal with the concept of divine violence. Žižek's *Robespierre or the "Divine Violence" of Terror* and Badiou's *The Century* both interpret divine violence as a redemptive vengeance, therefore as justified means to an end of justice, which trades in the concept's anarchist underlining for a Marxist utilization (Newman, 2010, pp. 130–131). There is also Derrida, who criticizes the concept for facilitating nihilistic tendencies regarding the use of violence, in his *Force of Law*. Instead, this dissertation follows in the footsteps of Agamben's *Homo Sacer*, Butler's *Critique, Coercion, and Sacred Life in Benjamin's "Critique of Violence"*, and Salzani's *Violence as Pure Praxis: Benjamin and Sorel on Strike, Myth and Ethics* toward perceiving the dialectical transcendence in divine violence as its revolutionary quality.

What constitutes the gap in the literature is that the abovementioned analyses do not lead to a devised methodology of its use in the context of contemporary political action. In that light, this dissertation aims to marry together postanarchist theory and the concept of divine violence to critique their compatibility and construct a postanarchist praxis to achieve the revolutionary nonviolent catharsis that divine violence entails. For the existing literature to guide rather than compel to conclusions, this research will analyze classical anarchism and post-structuralism separately to finally introduce Newman's

postanarchist theory[2], in Part Ⅰ ; Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* and Benjamin's *Critique on Violence* to be followed by the secondary literature on the latter, in Part Ⅱ ; assemble a postanarchist critique of contemporary politics, followed by a critique of Newman's postanarchist praxis, in Part Ⅲ. The research questions that this work seeks conclude throughout are listed as:

- How does non-violence fit in postanarchist thought?
- How can divine violence break the plight of violence's lawmaking character?
- What is 'attitude anarchism'?
- Does attitude anarchism prescribe political passivity? In that context, can 'attitude anarchism' lead to divine violence?
- Can divine violence satisfy a postanarchist justice?

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[2] This dissertation aims to build onto Newman's postanarchist theory rather than discuss alternative post-structuralist anarchist theorizations. Thus, Part Ⅰ is devoted specifically to the works Newman utilizes and his interpretations of those works to establish the postanarchist background.

PART I

FROM CLASSICAL ANARCHISM TO POSTANARCHISM

1. Classical anarchism

All radical political philosophy[3] inevitably arrives at some form of anarchism on the matters of the state, law, and property. These three notions appear in our societies as undoubted norms, no matter how dissimilar they may appear to be or function. The starting point of any anarchist thought stems from the disillusionment from the dogmatism that surrounds them in the affairs of the state, the church, and everything pertaining to their daily lives[4]. These human-made concepts that we take for granted without casting a shadow of doubt should not enjoy the sanctity of absoluteness, especially because they are artificial. Consequently, a certain degree of skepticism surely grows into a revolt against the arbitrariness of the rule that touches the innermost reservations of the human spirit. This revolt has thus far achieved some success here and there throughout the history, for varied periods of time, and none were truly like one the other if we look past a hasty generalization. Beyond these exceptions of anarchy realized -but also within-, there is a vast ocean of anarchism that remains solely in theory. What can be said in fairness is that

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[3] The anarchic tendence beyond anarchist theory is palpable as early as Daoism and Stoicism (Graham, 2005); moreover, I would also argue that even in the most conservative theory one can still collocate the anarchy *in absentia* that the theory constructs itself in relation to or opposed to.

[4] In Bakunin there is a certain straightforwardness that can be attributed to his oratory role; however, in Stirner and post-structuralists the interwovenness of hierarchical power into individual perceptions will take central place of investigation.

anarchism has an inherent utopian attribute that allows such differentiation on many accounts even to the point of a break in praxis, due to the speculative pull in imagining means and ends. Thus, to speak of a singular notion of 'anarchism' would do no justice to such a diversified political theory; therefore, I find it better to follow in the footsteps of Newman and speak of 'anarchisms' to avoid missing important nuances under umbrella terms.

Some categorizations however may prove useful in understanding the anarchist theory as a whole, how different anarchisms come to be, and arrive at what post-anarchist anarchism is. As an example, classical anarchists are usually grouped together because their reasoning is based on what we can call the ontological basis for anarchism, as the rejection of governance is based upon how they perceive the humankind and its essence (Koch, 1993, p. 328). People are innately rational, and they tend to seek societies to live among to socialize and better survive, therefore are ethical in order to continue their cohabitation. We see that Kropotkin (1902) explains this as an instinctual cooperation that is evident in history and throughout the animal kingdom, borrowing from Darwin's theory of evolution. In Bakunin it is possible to see more of a philosophical rationality surrounding the arguments for anarchism rather than Kropotkin's scientific approach to human behavior. Bakunin puts forth the idea of equal-liberty, which is a central notion in understanding the anarchism that goes into postanarchist theory (Newman, 2010, p. 34). The premise of *equal-liberty*, or *egaliberté* as Balibar (2002, p. 3) terms it, is that unlike the liberal claim, equality and liberty become nonsensical notions without the other. For there to be freedom, there

may not be an inequality of privilege or condition between persons; likewise, for there to be equality, there may not be a monopoly of power present. Therefore, equality and liberty are inseparable notions that flourish, and guaranteed through maximization instead of definition. Equal-liberty is assured through boundless and hence equal freedom for all. The limits of freedom expand so far as the others affirm it; and for that to be, they must affirm themselves as free and equal (Bakunin, 1971, pp. 237–238). As every human is its own separate entity, all are equal and free since natural laws do not discriminate and have no authority over one unless one recognizes it so.

The state of nature for anarchists is far different from a state of war like Hobbes suggests, or any social-contract theorists in that matter. Kropotkin (1902) attacks the liberal view towards the state of nature of Rousseau for idealizing the savage as the virtuous man, who, upon rational thought, eager to become a citizen for the sake of the whole; and Hobbes for claiming "the primitive beast" would somehow behave against the behavioral patterns of all animals alike, seeking war instead of survival. Bakunin points out the paradox of the social contract theory, calling it a "sleight of hand" that created the state (Newman, 2001, p. 43). For if everyone could freely and peacefully come together and rationally debate and decide to form a state to escape the state of war, what kind of a state of war would that be? Either it was not freely and rationally decided and therefore was forced upon; or the state of war was no different than peace itself. The argument of rationally establishing a fixed point of power and authority to rule over rational beings itself should account for the

reality of violent means. Authority for Bakunin (1916, Chapter 2) is the voluntary acknowledgement of the other's superiority over a matter. It is a temporary contract that defines the power dynamics in a relationship. The state, however, is an involuntary establishment of permanent authority over all matters. Liberty under the existence of a state is paradoxical as the state rules over the individual; therefore, can neither be free nor equal.

An authority such as the state's looming over on every area of life in an intrusive and corrective manner is not only repressive, but also corruptive. Through its discipline and punishment, it takes away the opportunities in life to think for one's self freely and suffer consequences of judgment. Instead, one is given a handful of clear-cut choices, between which the differences remain trivial and abstract, that reside within the boundaries of the law. Ethics and the freedom that allows to follow the individual virtues are replaced by exteriorly set notions of good and bad, which one relates through their proclaimed legality and fear of prosecution rather than personal experience and rationality (Bakunin, 1916, Chapter 2). The rationality is fed controlled enjoyment of momentary power cleverly masked by an illusion of freedom that in turn work in favor of legitimization of authority for the sake of sustainability and security. It must be reminded that even the equality concerning the exercise of political rights in democratic states, this sliver of freedom to select between pre-approved given choices, was earned through universal suffrage movements only within the last century. In order to continue its absoluteness, the state creates different levels of inequality, hierarchies upon hierarchies that in turn reproduce inequality to enjoy

a bigger portion of power, which means the conservation of the overall system (Newman, 2011a, p. 49). The state does not gain legitimacy only through securitization, but also through coaxing to have ceded people means to power in which the power relations are better hid, therefore seem to be fair and free. Democracy in presence of the state is continuously presented as the best option there is despite having shortcomings. This is a popular sentiment which carries the problem-proneness away from the state to the notion of democracy. Within the hierarchies built, where every freedom expanded presented to come at the expense of the other, the state will gladly surrender democracy for the sake of its own preservation and the masses will be sure to follow, even making the choice for it as long as it is *their choice* that won. However, in classical anarchist theory, post-structuralism, and therefore also in postanarchist theory there exists a common ground that in the presence of any sort of law based not on individual rationality but the will of a corrective, coercive and authoritative exterior, the dulled rationality produced by the inactivity of individual thought establishes the normativity of obedience, consent, and legitimization.

As the natural impulse in humankind works to dissolve the inequality caused by the state's existence, it requires enforcing to be permanent. It is the state's monopolized power to rule over all that separates it from other forms of institutions. For Kropotkin (Kropotkin, 1902), institutions within societies work to extend the natural condition of mutual aid; however with the societal transformations, especially exaggerated by the capitalist mode of production, modern institutions now work to blunt the traits that would naturally revert the society to

working together, freely, and equally. The social condition of competition is required to have a greater yield at a smaller risk for the ruling class instead of the natural condition of cooperation. This consequently lays down a divide between anarchist and Marxist theory on grounds that as the industrial proletariat is the most intertwined with capitalism, they also show the greatest degree of corruption by the bourgeois ethics, making them much more lenient to defend social domination and discipline through hierarchical forms of authority (Newman, 2011a, p. 51). One of the bases of the anarchist critique of Marxism is that the glorification of a singular group within the oppressed above others would have counterrevolutionary consequences as keeping alive the practice of domination through the revolution means that the practices of old are carried on. One of these consequences is the permanence of the state which Marxists claim it would consequently disappear as the dictatorship of the proletariat utilize it to reclaim its natural right to property. For anarchists, the break from dialectic or the revolutionary requisite is the destruction of the old as how one is conditioned to relate with the things of the old contributes to its transcending permanence. The state also wields noneconomic forms of oppression that precedes the capitalist economy and has dominion over both classes; class interests only dictate the severity of the domination, but not the reality of it. Therefore, the utilization of the state apparatus instead of primarily setting out to destroy it would have the same intoxicating effect that it had had on every ruling class throughout history, resulting in its conservation as a primary objective (Newman, 2010, p. 62). Thus, by whom the power is utilized becomes irrelevant

as the main problematic is the existence of a fixed pylon of power. Believing that those in authority are innately evil and those oppressed would act differently in that position ignores the principal of equality and only serves to conserve existing form of power dynamics.

1.1. Stirner: Anarchism beyond Hegelianism

With Max Stirner we move onto a different basis for anarchism, a more epistemological form of anarchism that materializes a critique for the ontological basis of classical anarchist theory (Koch, 1993, p. 330). As a student of Hegel, Stirner's work is heavily influenced by Hegelian dialectics. A small introduction to Hegel is therefore in order, to investigate Stirner's thought as Stirner goes beyond Hegelianism citing Hegelian thought as the reason for his break. Stirner's thought plays a vital role in a coherent understanding of postanarchism, as well as its parent theories. Newman's postanarchism is heavily influenced by Stirner -and rightfully so- for, as I will try to demonstrate, Stirner's thought facilitates the merge with post-structuralism, and paves the way for postanarchist theory's pertinency. It is worth underlining once again therefore, that Hegel and Stirner will only be discussed only to the extent that will allow us to introduce Newman's postanarchist theory in the following chapters, and in the context that they are utilized by Newman.

In *Science of Logic* (2010), Hegel describes the contradiction of pure Being as, in its beginning, it encounters Nothingness and fails to be

(2010, p. 59). However, the beginning and the point of failure are two separate points in between which exists a process. Having failed to realize itself, pure Being instead continues as pure Nothing through self-sublation (*Aufhebung*).[5] This motion of failure between the beginning and the failed beginning is what Hegel calls Becoming (*Werden*) (Hegel, 2010, p. 60). This is to say that Nothing is always acting as an operative all throughout both its own motion of pure Nothingness, and the motion of Being (Jones, 2021). Albeit a very simplistic summary of Hegelian dialectics, it is important to note that Becoming is ultimately a motion that is propelled by Nothing as the facilitator of negation. The role inherent to Nothing is therefore a role of enabling through failure (Žižek, 2013, p. 17), a becoming from being, aptly phrased as "creative Nothing" (Hegel, 2010, p. 60). Dialectics as the inherent antagonism in and of everything is thusly first and foremost a motion that disallows fixity due to its complex formative interaction with immediate contradictory negation. The word *motion* is consciously repeated, because it truly is seamless; every point of fixity that resolves from sublation immediately faces its negation for it to be resolved and approach a more absolute version of itself. There are, however, times that the failure does not conclude in a resolution and a forward motion. The "Unhappy Consciousness", as Hegel calls it, is a state of encountering the same failure and fail

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[5] A note that I too have found to be quite useful is that sublation is not solely negation, but at the same time involves its preservation. (Maybee, 2020) In that sense, Being does not disappear and Nothing appears as a separate entity; rather, it is due to its failure to be that Being exists *as* Nothing.

to transcend (Hegel, 1977, p. 126). This results from a stern belief of finality of the held form, thereby interpreting failure as "merely contradictory" to be unaffected by its transcendent effect (Ibid). To claim a finalized state of fixity is to deny the role of the creative Nothing, thereby denying oneself the same power of creation. As these processes make for an ontological fact according to Hegel, fixity that comes as a result of not being able to acknowledge its process owed to and in common with its other ultimately denies the subject the liberation of achieving its ownness within its universality (Jones, 2021). Stirner's thought stems from exactly this point; he sees the creative power as a facilitator of autonomy and freedom, utilizing it to analyze contradictions of essentialist constructions and going beyond, on his own terms.

In line with his familiarity with Hegelian thought, Stirner's main critique that underlines his body of thought is the abundance of fixity that is preconstructed and favored. He claims that the relation with knowledge has been reduced to a question of learning, which values construction through repetition more than progression through willful dissolutive reciprocity (Stirner, 2017, p. 88). The object learned is distanced through hierarchical instruction and its discipline, while the student is tested on their ability of repetition rather than going beyond instruction through interaction. Stirner's break from Hegelianism in the wake of Hegel comes from a related grievance that solidified Hegelian thought as an object one can only interact with in accordance with certain rulesets and limitations that put it out of reach from freely *possessing* and toying with it (Jones, 2021). Ironically enough, Hegelianism was denied the creative

Nothing that it had proclaimed to be always at work. For Stirner, that Hegelianism to be concluded by Hegel's interaction, and for Hegel's interaction to be the orthodoxy is to deny his unique self the transgression and his creative will (Jones, 2021). Stirner objects to being the possession of an object that he can possess, consume, and surpass.

Consequently, Stirner directs criticism towards the pedestal on which the human essence is placed. An imaginary of perfection in essence imparts not only an alien ideal but also an identity inferior in relation arrests the individual in fixity and Unhappy Consciousness triggered by the insuperability of contradictions exterior to the individual. The Hegelian acknowledgement of singularity between the imperfect *I* and perfect *not-I* would dissolve any authority; however, once again the Unhappy Consciousness cannot see this for the failure it is and becomes a possession of the latter (Hegel, 1977, pp. 126–127). In Stirner's objection against humanism we encounter the conceptualization of his egoism (Stirner, 2017, p. 51). Instead of inflated universalities of moralism and the faith in human essence, there lies a nothingness in the individual that can neither be defined or taken away, or as Stirner calls it, "the Unique" (Stirner, 2017, p. 377). The Unique embraces the innateness of contradiction and therefore is liberated by it; it wills creation and is empowered by its ability to achieve it. The individual must be open to be stripped of every definition and assumption forced unto him willingly or unconsciously and make peace with his unique intricacy with nothingness. From this point of lack he can start to build himself, to create himself outside the dominion of definitions and limitations.

Egoism is thus an emancipatory self-realization of ownness, achieved through the deconstruction of the alien qualities dominating one's self to the absolute; not only defining him in relation to the others, but also in relation to oneself (Stirner, 2017, p. 26). Stirner underlines the difference between ownness and freedom, since freedom reaches beyond the individual it attains an oppressive character because of the subjectivity of definition (Stirner, 2017, p. 187). The Unique and its ownness operate in the immediacies of here and now in rejection of the Unhappy Consciousness that can be brought upon by the idealized perfection of utopianism.

> What a great difference between freedom and ownness! ... 'Freedom lives only in the realm of dreams!' Ownness, on the contrary, is my whole being and existence, it is I myself. I am free from what I am rid of, owner of what I have in my power to control … To be free is something that I cannot truly *will*, because I cannot make it, I cannot create it: I can only wish it and—aspire toward it, for it remains an ideal, a spook. (Stirner, 2017, p. 188)

Accordingly, ontological anarchism self-defeats through creating its own rule by defining an abstract notion or subjective truths such as moralism as innately good. He claims that through these notions the individuality is consumed (Jones, 2021). To say, for example, that people are rational by definition would require us to have a clear understanding of what rational means. In that sense, being over-rational or not rational enough would, according to the original statement, imply a disqualification from personhood. To decide on a

definition of personhood means that there is a fixed point of power which has turned into an authority, hence a contradiction in and of anarchism (Newman, 2001, p. 61). Whereas Kropotkin cites a natural tendency within humans to social life; Stirner is interested in why we subject ourselves willingly to subordinance. His answer is that, unlike the anarchist theory suggests, the state rules through individuals rather than over them (Jones, 2021). The human essence is a fabrication enforced as a requisite for entering the society, which is in itself a conjugative essentialism. The introduction of the common denominator of being human becomes the legitimate reasoning behind subordinance of the individual. The individual is thus duty-bound to be subjectified to conform a definition of humanity originally alien to it. Its human quality becomes enforced by oneself and the society of 'men' before it is by the state (Koch, 1993, p. 27). The sanctity claimed over humanity is imposed over the individual via the false tie of society; it remains dominant and oppressive while it should aspire to be utile and voluntary. Society and the state are mere spaces that exist only as an idea that individuals are forced into, thereby expected to conform to then fail, and become possessed by it (Stirner, 2017, p. 229). For this reason, Stirner believes anarchism can only be an individualistic concept, as one can truly recognize the authority of the others only after acknowledging his own authority over himself through engaging in the most immediate contradictions.

Bringing the other into this equation is therefore an egoistic decision, forgoing any ascribed assumptions of form but the pure immediacy that is allowed into the sphere of ownness; borrowing from the

absolute nothingness of the anarchy that defines the individual that will in turn work as a creative phase for the individual through the effects of this interaction of almost spontaneous nature. As such, there is the claim that the individual is shaped through the relations he is a part of, not only passively by the external other but also by one's self via the role presumed (Stirner, 2017, p. 61). One allows the other with no assumption or promise, to find their self in the other, and to consume and enjoy it. It is therefore also important to note that these interactions of possession within ownness are to be temporary, for otherwise they represent a fixity. If there is to be anything that cannot be separated from the individual via consumptive dissolution, the individual then becomes its possession, severing the ownness (Stirner, 2017, p. 128). In sum, the acceptance of any present notion having an influence over decisions and actions, or a readily decided idealization that the individual must conform to is freedom constrained. The individual creates and defines itself through the decisions and actions taken; and since there cannot be any fixed universal meaning adhered to these without claiming certainty where one can prove none. This egoism makes it possible to have absolute freedom over oneself while enabling a system of anarchist ethics at the level of the individual. Acknowledging self-authority, ownness and wholeness, and free from the authority of any definitive of the 'ought', the cost of a want is always deliberated and decided on one's own, and on one's own terms (Newman, 2010, p. 159). Afterall, it can be argued that a sincere ethics requires this sort of autonomy rather than a crude evaluation of action inside the fixed duality of the permitted and prohibited.

Stirner's anarchism constitutes an especially noteworthy basis for postanarchist theory, as it establishes a break from classical anarchism as a fixed rejection of the state towards a more undefined locus therefore a more pluralistic form of anarchism; focuses on the individual to stray from power dynamics necessitating subjective moral and ethical prescriptions that in turn have impacts on the absoluteness of freedom and individuality; opens the way for integrating post-structuralist theory on the bases of epistemological uncertainty and the definitive power that the social factors have on the individual. Leaving aside the humanist arguments idealizing rationality and individualism, and rather accepting the individual as a product of intricate relations of power opens new frontiers for anarchist theory. Solely focusing on the state would leave intact other loci of power that stand parallel to the state's repression yet will survive its downfall if not amplified. Any form of fixed relation of power stands in the way of achieving equal-liberty, which we have introduced previously in this chapter as *the* anarchist principle dictating purpose and function. If nothing of the old may remain in a revolution realized, the individual must also go through the creative destruction whilst the power dynamics that went into creating the dialectical creature are deconstructed. In that sense, post-structuralist theory's anarchistic tendencies can come together in a revival of anarchist theory with a broader understanding over the repressive elements of power, not to mention how the societal transformations come to induce the individual to assume subordination as a normative quality.

2. Post-structuralism

Post-structuralism and/or postmodernism, which will be used inter-changeably throughout this dissertation[6], can be described as a challenge to the epistemological and ontological foundations of that which we come to accept as modernity. As such, the prefix post- does not entail an effort to replace it, rather describes the critique that transcends modernity to illuminate the sum of narratives and assumptions forming and leading up to it. Poststructuralism is not a political theory, but an investigative tool that analyzes the foundations on which our reality has been built. It deals specifically with the narratives that claim universality, and by doing so commonly evading intricate analysis, such as science, knowledge, language, security, sexuality, etc. These items enjoy a truth status through their claims of universality and neutrality; yet more often than not, they achieve their degree of truth through referral to other disciplines that is foundational to what is defined as the rational thought (Lyotard, 1984, p. 31). Especially because of this axiomatic attribute, these unchecked instruments of power become basis of rationality for oppression normalized and canonized (May, 1989, p. 169). The main

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[6] Although post-structuralism and postmodernism may not be equated to one another completely, for the scope of this dissertation Lyotard's postmodernism and post-structuralism share a commonality of establishing a critique of unities and totalities of modernity (Newman, 2001, pp. 14–15). Thus, following Newman's theorization, postmodernism refers specifically to Lyotard's definition which integrates the post-structuralist foundations of questioning the modern.

effort of poststructuralism is therefore to overturn the truth status they bear by shedding light to the path of fallacies leading up to its reverence. Poststructuralism should not be understood as having an anti-science sentiment or an overall effort to falsify truths; but rather as a tool of analysis as to how power has an influence on what is readily accepted as *natural* consequences of *human progress* (Koch, 1993, p. 334).

Lyotard defines postmodernism as "incredulity towards meta-narratives" (Newman, 2010, p. 46). The complete, universal and singular nature of these narratives must provoke at least a degree of skepticism, considering that consensus is rather rare. He explains this phenomenon using Wittgenstein's language-games[7]. The comfort that blanket-terms offer can be interpreted as an illusion of consensus, through which a tacit consent is established at the level of the idea (Lyotard, 1984, p. 10). That there is consensus surrounding a signifier does not necessarily mean the same meaning is signified in everyone's minds. Instead, the more diverse meanings are created by a word, the better it can be utilized as a grand narrative. In that sense universal signifiers become objects of justification; for they can

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[7] Language-games is a manner of discourse in which authority can be constructed through language, utilizing the prescribed connotations adhered to signifiers for an altered signified. Lyotard demonstrates how the discursive authority can be modified or destroyed altogether simply with the use of synonyms or changes in the construction of the sentence. Thusly, the unspoken element of the importance signaled in the signified and even more so the consensus on it establishes a rule of the game, to be reproduced in future discourse. See (Lyotard, 1984, p. 9).

always refer to other universalities. For example, a language-game of capital punishment would be that it serves *the greater good*, protects *the order*, or reassures *safety*. The difference between the signified images does not have to be corrected in that sense, as they are legitimized two-fold through the narratives of *moralism*, *citizenry*, and *justice*. What any of these actually mean in practice does not at all have to have any similarities with what it is believed to be, what it could mean, or what it should mean. Because of the connotations that these narratives bear, one almost always wants to be of *good* morals, a *good* citizen, and a champion of justice without having a firm grasp on their definitions (Lyotard, 1984, p. 18). This sort of singularity among multiplicities is a decision made through power. Likewise, what it is thought to mean is another relation of power. In sum, power not only dictates which choice is made, but which are considered to be choices and what remains beyond these choices. Through the constraints that power force upon language, knowledge too therefore becomes an instrument of power. Not only having it but designating information as knowledge and the knowledge of what does not constitute knowledge become restricted through relations of power (Lyotard, 1984, p. 18). Grand narratives function not only to legitimize power by rationalizing it, but also through defining rationale in a way of not disturbing the lack of skepticism.

In challenging limits, poststructuralism is not only focused on the foundations meant solely as starting points but whole completeness attributed to the narratives. A decision made indicates a debate complete, leaving little -if any- room for mental deconstruction and understanding. The critique of Enlightenment in poststructuralist

thought stems from this exact point. *Sapere aude!* becomes an order on the assumption of individual rationality. By seeing rationality as a concluded process, the individual is subjectified within the very same completeness having skipped the processes of enlightenment (Newman, 2001, p. 100). The individual needs to dissect what goes into being rational and the self as the deciding factor of it. If this step of disassociation from the normativity of thought does not occur, humanism functions as yet another framework of citizenship; a system of policed inequalities and forced identities created through instructed consciences. In post-structuralism then, the danger that the Enlightenment poses is that by daring to think we tend to skip the most essential steps, presupposing a correlation between individuality of physical existence and authenticity of thought (Newman, 2010, p. 145). Without identifying the reason to why one tends to think in a certain and very specific manner, they neither dare nor think. They simply comply. Compliance in thinking creates an accord, which gains almost a methodological quality of reaffirmation. The results deduced by following the single normalized strand of thought are validated as knowledge; subjective truths become general truths. These general truths serve as the basis of all individual thought; therefore, they do not only serve to reproduce narratives but also construct a susceptible audience. Newman hence establishes the Stirnerite connection with post-structuralism over the stultifying effect of essentialism with the use of Foucault's criticism towards humanism for establishing a "pseudo-sovereignty" (Newman, 2001, p. 85). It creates limitations over freedom of the individual and legitimizes it under rationality:

"consciousness (sovereign in the context of judgement, but subjected to the necessities of truth), the individual (a titular control of personal rights subjected to the laws of nature and society), basic freedom (sovereign within, but accepting the demands of an outside world and 'aligned with destiny')." (Newman, 2001, p. 85). It masks its instrumentality of repressive power over the individual with an appearance of positive freedom. However, humanist ideal grants these freedoms to the 'man' it defines, rather than the individual.

For Foucault, this tendency towards keeping an appearance of completeness points at two parallel attributes of power: all-pervasiveness and precariousness (Newman, 2001, p. 143). By deconstructing the narrative and transcending the orthodoxy of thought it aspires, a point of resistance is established. For Foucault, resistance is the agonism of power; it does not relate to it as an exterior, but a direct reaction against it (Newman, 2001, p. 79). Resistance is restructuring the equilibrium of power to disrupt the inequity of domination, in this case through knowledge. The individual's ability to restructure the power dynamic to end up in the dominant position through transcending established 'knowledge/power networks' is only possible due to the incompleteness of knowledge (Oksala, 2005, p. 108). This should not be seen as an argument that knowledge is an exterior of power, especially in Foucault, but should vouch for its instrumentality within the precariousness of power, and its agonism resistance. Similar to the Hegelian master/slave dialectic, the dominant position of power owes that position to the existence of a relatively powerless secondary position. Thus, the seemingly powerless position not only

holds a certain power, but also the entirety of meaning adhered to the relationship is solely based on its presence as the inferior. Thus, almost paradoxically, the inferior subordinate position of power is actually capable of dissolving the relation it was subjected to be in, therefore possesses definitive power over the relationship. Their position of the subordinate does not cover their being in its entirety, but merely a small part of it. Whatever existed before it and continues to exist beyond it is threatened for this unequal duality of power to remain in effect. This goes on to say not all relations of subordination are based on consent; however, through Foucault we can see that coercion via physical violence or the threat of it has been replaced by *subjection* achieved via disciplinary power in modern societies (Oksala, 2005, p. 98). Much of Foucault's work is sociohistorical investigation as to how the individual is socially conditioned to behave; nevertheless, in *Discipline and Punish* he establishes that what we call the individual is itself a creation of disciplinary power, a subject.

> The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. 'A soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body. (Foucault, 1995, p. 30)

Consequently, the originary self becomes another foundation that is defined externally through power, and appears as a concept to which

absoluteness and completeness is attributed. The 'soul' of the guilty that we nourish in us may be an effect of disciplinary power, yet it also reproduces itself via self-infliction of discipline. This is why the self also should be antagonized and questioned as a base of adhered certainty, and a nonplace of power. Foucault's transgression of the self, on which he bases his concept of resistance, is reminiscent of Stirner's ownness, as Newman points out (Newman, 2001, pp. 89–90). Transgression is the endeavor to find the limit to the limiting quality of power over the individual. Thus, one should tear away at everything that he is, as these definitions are steeped in power, until he finds the excess. The excess is what one is not, the undefinable quality. By being untouched by power, the quality establishes the point in the individual that is outside the limits of power. At this point I would like to acknowledge the prevalent criticism towards poststructuralism that the conundrum of achieving an alternate self that would not be a sum of construed effects of power leads to an inadvertent nihilism (May, 1989, p. 167). Existence beyond the self that is a social construct defined through power and its dynamics, is a utopian ideal that is confronted by an ever-growing uncertainty of total emancipation. The ambiguity it implies for the authenticity and freedom of the individual indeed prompts questions of futility, precisely in the criticisms against Foucault. This is mainly because of his claims that resistance and freedom do not establish a place outside of power, therefore intertwined with it. Nevertheless, its possibility will be further discussed in the following sections on Newman, and Benjamin respectively. Instead, I believe it to be more helpful to continue with Lacan to understand how the self is

established in this section of the dissertation in order to have a tighter grasp on the (re)creation of the self before leading onto the discussion on transcendence.

2.1. The Ego, Role of the Other and the Lack in Lacan

In Lacan's psychoanalysis, infants from six months to eighteen months old go through a process of developmental psychology that he names the mirror stage (Lacan, 1953, pp. 14–15). In this stage, the infant is now mentally capable of recognizing its reflection in the mirror. Up till that point, the infant's ownness is solely comprised of the I (*je*) which is a subjective reflection of itself, imagined and exaggerated without limitation (Evans, 1996, p. 118). At that point, the I is merely a functional separation from the Other, as the infant is conscious of its unique existence but not about its appearance or perception. When the infant sees a version of itself in the mirror, the imagined I collapses into an image of the me (*moi*). Through this image of the other -with a lowercase o- (*objet [petit] a*, *autre*) it sees its perceived existence in a new light of subjectivity that converges on objectivity as the image, leaving aside the emotional stimuli, is also seen by the parent. The I is reflected and realized in an image of the me which serves as a foundational point for the ego. Lacan (Evans, 1996, p. 52) claims that the alienation from the self, built upon the I, and restructuring it in the imaginary other in the mirror is what forms the ego. Therefore, the me, or *moi*, is the ego as an alternate self embodied by an imaginary other. Moreover, the infant

is also noted to look back at its parent(s) to seek confirmation whether it is actually him in the mirror (Evans, 1996, p. 119). In that sense, the parent in the role of the Other -with an uppercase O- (*Autre*) is an agent of the symbolic order, whose imagined and actually communicated perceptions will determine the relationship between the I and the other (Evans, 1996, p. 136).

The big Other differs from the other, first and foremost, as it is not imaginary. Likewise, one does not identify with the Other to the point of assimilation; therefore, exists as a place within the symbolic order rather than only referring to persons (Evans, 1996, p. 136). Its place in the symbolic order gives meaning to interactions that require the existence of the other to have interactions, such as language and law[8]. The Other defines a particularity attributed to otherness, however, as these interactions take different forms for different others as subjects. The subject may embody the Other as a subject for the sake of these interactions as well; yet it is important to note this mode of interaction is vastly different than that of the ego once again, as in this sense embodiment does not convey identification (Evans, 1996, pp. 135–136). As the Other thereby is the symbolic, it is Lacan's claim that speech and language do not originate in the subject nor the ego, but

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[8] The paternalism of authority in Lacanian psychoanalysis is claimed through the equation of prohibitive authority, i.e. the law, with the Name-of-the-Father (Evans, 1996, p. 122). The subject identifies with the terrifying omnipotence of this patriarchal authority in a manner that affirms its position by effectively trying to imitate and replace the father figure, at the same time constituting a psychotic lack within due to prohibition (castration complex) (Evans, 1996, pp. 62–63).

in the Other. From the time of infancy when the mother is assigned as the Other, the infant's attempts at communication are assigned certain meanings and connotations. The signifiers are learned and the signified not; thus giving discourse a quality of unconscious, since the connection between is not readily communicated or consciously made. Yet, there comes an inevitable point in which the signifiers do not suffice the meaning tried to be conveyed, specifically the signifier to signify the subject. That constitutes a lack in the Other (Evans, 1996, p. 136). The lack calls for a new signifier which too will be insufficient, thereby needing another and so on, *ad infinitum*. Since what is lacking is the element without which the subject remains incomplete, it becomes defined by the lack. Consequently, desire exists firstly as a desire of being, of completion. Endlessly adding signifiers to the chain of signifiers is an object of this desire (Evans, 1996, pp. 98–99).

It was established that the ego, because it was born out of the specular image and coincides with it, belongs in the order of the imaginary. We have also covered that within the symbolic order, both the signifier and the signified originate in the Other, as a figure of authority and/or affirmation. Although imaginary, since the ego shares an absolute commonality with the specular image, it does not form an exception to this rule. As the specular image in the mirror is shared by the individual and the Other, the Other's perception of the image is reflected on the ego. The absurdity of an encounter with oneself as a stranger is revealed and introduced as one's own is why Lacan calls the ego a paranoiac structure (Evans, 1996, p. 52). The perception of the self is rooted to the ego; and it is projected onto the

Other. This is how the lack is perceived, and consequently the object of the desire is determined always through comparisons. The lack is thus comprised of the absence of a signifier that can wholly define the subject in the Other. As the specular image and the ego point to an exteriority from the subject for it too is an other, yet define the subject through the lack from an interior point. According to Lacan, this juxtaposition of interiority and exteriority which he calls *extimacy* (Evans, 1996, p. 59) points at an attribute of the ego that cannot be defined, explained or communicated to the Other. The inability of finding a representation outside of the self to define it means that it does not occupy space in the symbolic order but is an element of the Real. In line with the limits of language, the Real defines a certain ambiguity in the subject, specifically because it possesses an element -a traumatic element- that appears beyond the order of the symbolic, therefore cannot be expressed or recognized - hence the trauma-. This extimate relation that the subject has with oneself over its identity is its lack, its resistance to subjectification, and its desire of being.

3. Postanarchism

Postanarchism is a branch of political theory that marries together the similarities and the complementary logic that were enumerated in anarchism and post-structuralism. This effort of theorization as a revitalization of anarchist theory was mainly spearheaded by Todd May and Saul Newman[9]. Even though it can be said that both ultimately have concurring ideas that make the whole of postanarchist theory rather than having a divide between the two; the scope of this thesis is almost strictly focused on the postanarchist theory of Saul Newman, for it hopes to analyze and build upon Newman's citation of the Benjaminian concept of divine violence. This chapter of postanarchism will comprise of an analysis of Newman's work in hopes of bringing together the forementioned conceptualizations and Newman's specific references as we arrive at a more complete picture of postanarchist theory and its aspirations.

Newman points out that classical anarchism is a system striving for anti-politics, to which one can only reach through political means (Newman, 2012, p. 320). This paradoxical conundrum dissolves with the incorporation of post-structuralism into anarchism. Instead of posing a logical obstacle, it now seconds the no-place of power on which anarchism can build itself. Thusly, postanarchism can realize

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[9] This is of course a very limited comparison, made solely based on academic contribution.

its ideal of resistance shaped through anarchist non-foundations rather than predefined means of opposition. This outlook of postanarchism as constancy in challenging solidified and power-riddled propositions is attributed to Levinas's distinction of an-archy from anarchy in classical anarchist sense, and Schürmann's theory by Newman (2001, p. 130). Keeping in mind the Foucauldian transgression where one tries to find what is undefinable in him by not going through definitions to what he is rather what he is not; Newman finds in Ranciere how anarchist politics can take form in such manner, which is rather explicative of how his reading of Lacan fits into postanarchist theory.

The Ignorant Schoolmaster (Rancière, 1991) is a multifaceted lesson for postanarchist theory. Ranciere's political study of Jacotot shines a light to a systemic malfeasance that is rooted in dogmatic and conservative tradition that not only makes the whole of the education system but rather what learning essentially is. Although the Jacotot example is strictly on the topic of education, the example itself points to a multitude of sociological arrangements and mannerisms that are symptomatic of something that extends well beyond education. Therefore, it is truly a debt we owe to Ranciere for not letting Jacotot's findings be lost to humanity without having highlighted its essence, or completely hidden under several classificatory folds of trivial pedagogic methodology. Let us then dissect and analyze the core as a passage towards postanarchist theory.

We start with the assumption that there is an inequality of intelligence between persons, and this serves as the foundational element of a whole systemization of the learning experience that in turn reproduce and continue to play onto the assumption. This is done so with the establishment of the "explicative order" as Ranciere calls it (1991, p. 5), which builds upon the assumption and solidifies it by introducing the hierarchical order between the informed master and the student. The explicative order's function is to rearrange and redefine the learning experience heavily in favor of and strictly dependent on the introduced position of the explicator. The explicator has total control. Deciding the material, the objective of the experience, where it starts and stops, how it is structured, and ultimately the disciplinary power are all under the disposition of the explicator, owed once again to the primary assumption, while the student is utterly subjectified in its deprivileged position. Moreover, notes Ranciere (1991, p. 28), the student is not merely subjectified for the will of the explicator overshadows the will of the student; but also the otherwise freely available intelligence is limited by the intermediate intelligence of the explicator, which *stultifies* the student.

Ranciere, through Jacotot, shows the inaccuracy of the initial assumption, or rather reformulates it as an equality of ignorance. This essentially anarchist formula dictates that, backed by Jacotot's experiment, the student can indeed learn in absence of a knowledgeable instructor. All that is needed is a book and the will to learn. "Everything is in everything", repeats Ranciere (1991, p. 26). As a baby develops its native language through carefully listening to

its parents, street noises, television etc. and moves on to try to mimic it, then form basic sentences, and finally authentically express itself; this is because every bit of language is in every bit of it that has been heard. We do not employ masters to instruct babies how to speak, nor do we employ systematic didactic practices ourselves to teach them the entirety of a language with its rules, vocabulary, and peculiarities. The same applies to every form of intelligence as long as there is access to even the smallest sample of it, and the will to practice it. The function of the ignorant schoolmaster, in this case, is to simply check whether such intelligence can be deducted from the sampled source. As such, the hierarchical relationship of stultification is replaced by a relationship of emancipation. The student is emancipated, for the only barrier between them and the desired knowledge is their own will to learn it. Therefore, the student is emancipated from being dependent on the intelligence of a master, the caprices and limitations that are brought upon by the master, the system, and the hierarchical order that it presents itself in, and ultimately the fated ignorance owed to their material conditions (Rancière, 1991, p. 39).

Both post-structuralism and anarchism, therefore postanarchism too, suffer from a similar consequentiality that Jacotot uncovered (Newman, 2011a, p. 59). Essentially all dialectical constructs of hierarchical power rely on a supposition as their foundation that is hidden under ever-growing complexities that normalize and misdirect analysis, deconstruction, and opposition (Newman, 2011a, p. 59). In Jacotot's case this was education; yet, as we have seen in

previous chapters, there does not seem to be an exception to the rule. Following the Lacanian dialectic, it will be within this axiomatized political supposition that will be found its lack, its point of powerlessness encapsulated by the very source that it derives power.

3.1. From Bakunin to Lacan

From Bakunin to Lacan gives an insight to Newman's postanarchist theory by explaining the Lacanian philosophy that it adheres to. It provides a concurring post-structuralist opinion on the dialectic of law and violence central to Benjamin's *Critique of Violence* and is therefore valuable for this research to understand the paradoxical conundrum of power from the standpoint of post-structuralists. Newman, on a quest to define a point outside of power to base resistance on, utilizes the Lacanian concept of the lack and, accordingly, claims that such a point does not necessarily have to be outside of power but what is missing from it. Lacan calls this the "excluded interior" (Newman, 2001, p. 142). The excluded interior is the assumption, as was discussed above, that gains an axiomatic attribute through the inertia of practice rather than a logically sound basis. Newman entertains several notions regarding the lack of power:

> Žižek argues that everyone knows that the power of bureaucracy is not absolute, yet we behave as though it is and this is what perpetuates its power. So one might say, then, that

rather than power being ubiquitous and absolute, while claiming that it is not—as Foucault argues—power is actually limited and lacking, yet claims to be ubiquitous and absolute. For Foucault, in other words, the all-pervasiveness of power is masked by a lack; whereas for Lacan, the lack in power would be masked by its all-pervasiveness. (Newman, 2001, p. 143)

Having conceded to the Lacanian analysis, Newman then turns to another Lacanian concept of *jouissance* to identify the lack within power. The concept gives an analogous explanation of a lack in law where excess pleasure comes out as the reaction to the law limiting pleasure. The excluded interior of the law is exactly the dialectic between law and violence. Law can only exist because it is imperfect; and it is only through this imperfection can it hope to function (Newman, 2001, p. 145). The criminality that the law defines creates an excess of criminality and gives a meaningful existence to law. This fundamental malfunctioning of the law is the structural lack of power (Newman, 2001, p. 145). I believe that this is also an argument for historical materialism, since the more focused the power becomes the closer we get to a reaction that seeks to topple it. However, this is a double-edged sword. The stronger the resistance gets, so does the intensity of power; which is notably reminiscent of Foucault's critique of authentic resistance (Foucault & Gordon, 1980, pp. 256–257) for its inherent legitimization of the state's use of disciplinary power.

For Stirner, moreover, power—embodied in the state—is based on this fundamental lack: it is founded upon the abstraction of the individual's own authority and power. In itself the state is nothing: it is based entirely upon the individual's obedience to it—to its signifier. The state is merely a hypostatized self, an ego. Like Lacan's subject who futilely seeks his own representation in the Symbolic Order— a representation which always eludes him—Stirner's individual recognizes the state, and through this recognition actually reproduces the state as an oppressive force over him. In seeking and obeying the state, the individual is merely seeking an abstracted version of himself: he is, in a sense, chasing after his own tail. The state, then, for Stirner, is an illusion, a fantasy-construction. This is not to say that it does not actually exist, but it only comes into existence when the individual starts seeking it and abdicates his authority to it. (Newman, 2001, p. 145)

Stirner's Feuerbachian analysis of the state is worth noting for it sheds light upon the relationship one forms with the state (Newman, 2010, p. 159). The state is not only anthropomorphized as a paternal figure with intrinsic authoritative hierarchy, but also idealized via an ascription of elements that one seeks within and wishes for their own self. For its prejudicial constancy of hierarchic supremacy, the individual almost unknowingly -and rather pathologically- attributes this idealized imagery to the state, which accounts to the reproduction of consent and legitimacy for grounds of subservience (Newman,

2010, p. 159). The initial proposition of inferiority of being remains strikingly unquestioned, accepted and retroactively rationalized through a psychology of inferiority that fervently seeks to correct it through a complete devotion to the superior position. This codification of guilt that bolsters this vicious cycle can only be disrupted through an individual effort of transgression, as was discussed by both Stirner and Foucault, respectively.

Transgression describes the manner of which the individual may be emancipated; however, as per the equal-liberty principle, the individual cannot be neither free nor equal whilst others are not. This especially rings true as definitive, formative, disciplinary power structures stand unscathed. As a partial emancipation at the level of the individual does not amount to nor is it concomitant to a revolutionary social change, a larger-scale process also needs defining. Postanarchism restates the anarchist separation from Marxism, specifically on the point of seizing and restructuring state power. Moreover, stemming from the post-structuralist integration, Newman sees class antagonism in Marxism as too definitive a conceptualization which fundamentally speaks in the individual's stead on their oppression for the sake of a greater scope of analysis. Thusly, Newman's postanarchism aims at a more comprehensive and pluralistic view by expanding the symbolization of power beyond the state for anarchism, and beyond a discursive understanding of power for post-structuralism. Reinforcing the reasoning for anarchist basis with Lacanian theory, Newman declares that even an all-embracing symbolization of power is insufficient because there will always be

an excess of meaning that evades in defining the Real (Newman, 2001, p. 146). The Real, in that sense, is the impossibility of sensibly defining a plurality of subjects without paradoxically disregarding their individualities; hence postanarchism's individual basis. This is not to claim, however, that such plurality cannot be achieved, or that postanarchism is disinterested in achieving it. This problematization hints at the temporal quality of transgression which will eventually lead us to the connection with Benjamin's divine violence. An anarchist basis of nondefinitive individuality and exhaustive organic social organization implies and necessitates synchronicity.

> Marxism was an attempt to overcome the trauma of class antagonism and to transcend the logic of classical liberal economism that insisted on an isolation of the political sphere from the economic sphere, of the state from society. In other words, it sought to overcome the antagonism in society, which alienated the individual, and to reconcile society with itself. Anarchism was a rejection of the Marxist logic of economic determinism that, anarchists claimed, only produced a further alienation and antagonism between the individual and political power. Both theoretical interventions ultimately failed due to the logic of the Real: they tried to overcome the fundamental antagonism in society, which could not be overcome because this was the very condition of society. (Newman, 2001, p. 148)

Habermas has tried to do precisely this: to repress this antagonism, the lack that is irrepressible. He tries to construct, or at least describe the circumstances that make possible, a speech situation free from constraint. However, one could argue, using this Lacanian logic, that this very attempt to exclude constraint and power from rational communication is itself the return of constraint and power. The Real of power has returned as the very conditions set up to exclude it, thus disrupting the identity of rational communication itself. Rational communication, which is supposedly free from power and constraint, is found, according to this Lacanian-inspired analysis, to be very much embroiled in power and constraint. (Newman, 2001, p. 150)

The problem of the Real mentioned in the two excerpts above point at a mainly post-structuralist aversion towards *empty signifiers* that result in reductionist and homogenizing manner of arriving at assumptive conclusions (Newman, 2001, p. 163). To speak in singularized pluralities such as society, public, people is to assume such unions exist while they most certainly do not. A systemic dissolution cannot be realized disregarding the antagonistic structure and a pretensive outlook of camaraderie. Instead, it breeds incredulity towards otherwise radically promising philosophies whenever inconsistencies are observed between the singular particular reality and the theory's supposed description. This indoctrinates political passivism more than anything because the individual grows estranged to their competence and surrender to await a prophesized

savior who best fits the description. An equal society, the working class with a historical burden of assuring its arrival; an imagery that cannot coincide with the experience of the real only puts the individual in the backseat. Stirner's use of Unhappy Consciousness and his critique of essentialism points to this exact divide in self-consciousness, where the immediate identity becomes fixedly subservient to an idealized imaginary superior that stands uncontradictory and thereby unattainable (Stirner, 2017, p. 55). This problem is also a central idea in Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* with special emphasis on its function and propagation, thus will be further discussed there.

3.2. Postanarchism and (non)violence

The postanarchist stance on violence is a clear break from that of anarchism. Violence in classical anarchism is seen as a natural right, a part of the human essence; therefore, quite impactful on its stance on a plethora of central topics such as ethics, praxis, and freedom (Maximoff, 1953, p. 376). The post-structuralist integration comes with a certain skepticism towards essentialist arguments, which inevitably prescribes a confrontation with the conceptualization of violence. It is of course not an outright rejection of all violence, but simply as means that locomotes praxis for it enables a power siphon that effortlessly end up as a mechanism of abuse. Having said that, there is no contention on Newman's part that disavows the inherent violence that disrupts and agitates the order towards its downfall in a radical fashion (Newman, 2010, p. 131).

Newman's theorization of violence is fundamentally a rejection of Žižek and Badiou's arguments on revolutionary violence, especially their stance on Jacobin terror. Newman rejects the "humanity OR terror" thesis (Žižek, 2007) and that violence is a signifier of the revolutionary struggle (Newman, 2010, p. 130). He claims that revolutionary violence will only consolidate the state power and its legitimacy for the use of it against the revolutionaries. Should such revolution succeed, it is inevitable that it would use an even more excessive violence towards restoring order. That is to say that the state's forceful monopoly over violence is not broken, but simply kept to be utilized by a different group's interests. To conserve the instrumentality of the state apparatus is to breathe life into it assuring its longevity, and to deny people a revolution in its most radical sense.

> Non-violence, or a non-violent violence, similar perhaps to Walter Benjamin's notion of 'divine violence', should be its ethical horizon. The reason for this is that violence is an authoritarian, sovereign relationship, something that violates the autonomy of the other. For this reason, violence should not be considered as necessarily a sign of political authenticity. The real problem, however, is not violence itself, but the use of violence by the state, or rather the statification of violence – this is when violence becomes Terror in the true sense of the word. The violence that is wielded by a revolutionary elite to consolidate power – as was the case in

all the forms of Terror venerated by Žižek and Badiou, from the Jacobins to Lenin and Mao – has nothing redemptive about it; it cannot serve as a tool of liberation, and only ends up consolidating the most counterrevolutionary element of all, the state itself. (Newman, 2010, p. 131)

Newman claims that Žižek's likening of the Jacobin terror to Benjamin's divine violence is a misreading of Benjamin (Newman, 2012, p. 321). In line with a Stirnerite foundation, postanarchist reading of the Lacanian lack, and the clearly emphasized desire for non-violent violence Newman's theory delves into philosophy of law and makes its connection with Benjamin. Newman's reading of divine violence is that it represents an anarchist break from violence, especially that of mythic violence where its application calls for and prepare grounds for a continuity of violence (Newman, 2012, p. 326). It depletes the cyclical consequentiality of legal violence and its counterpart of revolutionary terror, through its transformative effect of end-making against the history of ends-appropriation to violent means. By iterating the Sorelian differentiation between violence and force, Newman also affirms Stirner's view on revolution and insurrection (Newman, 2010, p. 132). Postanarchist theory does not see a salvation through a change in rulership, rather wants to see an end to it; thus the "politics of anti-politics" and its utopianism. The *either-or* of politics meets with a "Neither!", that is in sum what Newman strives to achieve through his theorization of postanarchism.

The form of political action in postanarchism differs from classical anarchism in its emphasis on "localised, differentiated, partial, fragmented forms of resistance taking place within and against the order of power, on a field of multiple struggles, strategies and localised tactics- an ongoing antagonism without the promise of a final victory or universal emancipation" (Newman, 2012, p. 325) Therefore the postanarchist praxis is based on an individual search of anarchistic possibilities and tendencies that organically materialize against foci of oppressive power. There is not an abrupt or total rejection of instruments that are intertwined with such power; instead, the form of emancipatory endeavor is the finding and creation of pockets of resistance. In order to do so, one must familiarize themselves well with those instruments while having a pragmatic sense of the potentialities its employment may generate (Newman, 2012, p. 326). The postanarchist practice seeks to transform the legal order through alternative action and civil disobedience.

All that being said, what really kindled my interest towards this dissertation was Newman's use of the word "horizon" on the topic of divine violence. For me, by doing so Newman draws a roadmap for postanarchist praxis and places divine violence at the end, as an eventuality. Having underlined numerous times a "Here is the rose, dance here" immediacy for postanarchism, the question then becomes whether self-emancipatory practice can precede divine violence. The question comes with a multitude of contradictions that are to be investigated in terms of causality, temporality, and

possibility. In order to appreciate fairly the depth of these contradictions, I will be investigating the concept of divine violence, starting from its origin in Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* to arrive at Benjamin's *Critique of Violence*, in an attempt to approach Newman's postanarchism from a Benjaminian standpoint instead, to verify the coherence of the proposed conjuncture.

PART II

THEORY OF (DIVINE) VIOLENCE

To begin to understand Benjamin's concept of divine violence, we must look into the point of origination of this idea. *Critique of Violence* is, in its essence, a thought-piece on how Benjamin interprets and builds upon Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*. As I have already established the background of postanarchist theory, the following analyses will be interpreted accordingly and strictly from a postanarchist viewpoint.

4. Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*

Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* is an analysis on class warfare in France in the early 20th century with its relation to the French law and bourgeois ethics. Sorel provides a true[10] Marxist dissection of the interaction of base and superstructure using the political, social, and economic circumstances that the French proletariat has been subjected to almost akin a case study. Sorel is an avid defender of developing the self-governance capabilities of the proletariat through strategic organization, namely unions, is also something he critiques Marxist revisionism for ignoring in Marx (Toscano, 2021, p. 196).

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[10]Sorel strongly opposed the economic determinism of orthodox Marxism; and championed a reinterpretation that sees socialism not as an inevitable end of capitalism, rather as an ideal to escape/mend the moral decomposition capitalism caused. Therefore, the word true is used as a reference to his interpretation of Marxism with respect to closeness to Marx himself, not as a judgment of validity.

There is a certain skepticism coupled with certitude in Sorel's *Reflections*, both are directly attributed to the Marxist dialectical materialism, the former stands as the result of the latter that finally amounts to a stern incredulity towards conceptualizations that are enmeshed with the bourgeoisie. I will be attempting a postanarchist reading of *Reflections* in hopes to find in it a non-essentialist anarchism -owing to said incredulity- and an emancipation that is purely an-archic, specifically focusing on the class divide he puts the proletariat in the center of and his stance on inter-class violence.

Sorel starts his line of inquiry by looking at what the French legislation for the promotion of public peace aims to do after the insurrection of 1848. He sees the creation of the concept of promoting public peace as an artificial attempt by the bourgeoisie to make sure that the proletariat is less likely to be roused against them (Sorel, 1999, p. 49). This forms a point of departure in Sorel's eyes, because the bourgeoisie clearly functions in a manner that is vastly different to their aristocratic predecessors; yet, the proletariat continues to imagine them as such and strategize accordingly, surprisingly to a considerable amount of success[11]. Truth is, the bourgeoisie is not a

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[11] Sorel's problematization of the halt in revolutionary progress is attributed to the bourgeois fear of awakening the proletarian revolt, and the parliamentary socialists' success in utilizing it for political gains. It is a zero-sum game for only the worker, for both the bourgeoisie and the parliamentary socialists achieve their aims through the overall control over revolutionary ardor. In that sense, I believe it would be a misreading of Sorel to claim that the bourgeoisie has surrendered completely to socialist politics; instead, the bourgeoisie should be seen to having

group detached from people to be taken by surprise when an angry mob rushes their palace; no, in fact the bourgeoisie is as immersed a class in conserving their dominancy to keep alive and actively reproduce this illusion, while making sure that the only angry mob to ever materialize would be by its blessing (Sorel, 1999, p. 52). The primary manner of redefining class warfare is through the dispersion of legality and an imagery of peaceful unified existence. Parliamentarism actuates this function quite effectively by recognizing people's involvement in governance through representation. Sorel has a distaste for what he calls parliamentary socialists for they obstruct and soften the class struggle through pacification (Sorel, 1999, pp. 17–18). The Kautsky-Bernstein debate on the reformation of socialist politics have been very topical at the time Sorel wrote *Reflections*. His stance is highly critical of any reformism that conforms with bourgeois ethics which is ultimately the suppression of the proletarian outrage for dignity (Sorel, 1999, p. 213). Parliamentary socialists go on to represent more of a bourgeois transformation of socialism back to the people rather than representative of the people's will (Sorel, 1999, p. 48). This marks two characteristics of the manner that class warfare lives on as: first is that the access to society as *equals* is done so on bourgeois terms

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accomplished their persistence in exchange for an insignificant amount of their material accumulation, simultaneously redefining inter-class relations in the form of haggling rather than violent struggle. It is reminiscent of la Boetie's account of the tyrant Cyrus' quelling the Lydian rebellion successfully by supplying them with pastimes rather than using force (de la Boetie, 1975, p. 64).

which conveys a defeatism for socialists, and secondly, an apostrophized class warfare has to trade in its principles to enjoy a greater appeal over the constituency, thereby the number of the seats it occupies in the parliament becomes its *raison d'être*.

> Today, parliamentary socialists no longer believe in insurrection; if they still sometimes speak of it, it is to give themselves an air of importance; they teach that the ballot-box has replaced the gun, but the means of acquiring power might have changed without there being a change of mental attitude. Electoral literature seems inspired by the purist demagogic doctrines: socialism appeals to all the discontented without troubling itself about the place they occupy in the world of production; in a society as complex as ours and as subject to economic upheavals, there are an enormous number of discontented people in all classes; – that is why socialists are often found in places where one would least expect to find them. (Sorel, 1999, p. 49)

Through the expansion that the parliamentary socialists oversee towards a more inclusive socialist discourse as the educators of the proletariat, class struggle gives way to the interpretation of an equal partnership in production (Sorel, 1999, p. 52). Class warfare becomes a bourgeois peace in such a manner, to be further solidified by the discourses of national unity and domestic harmony in the face of the turbulent international atmosphere. To voice dissent about this partnership that everyone is an equal part of is therefore

illegitimatized for the uncalled divisiveness it drives into the heart of national unity (Sorel, 1999, p. 111). Parliamentary socialists, Sorel claims, are the propagators of the invented public peace. Public peace creates an illusion of equality among people, and from this illusion stems the idea of social duty. Social duty is inherently a bourgeois concept of a mercantilist entitlement masked as reason (Sorel, 1999, p. 55). Similarly to mediation processes, the ruling class decides on which demands are fair and just. While this may work with daily private decision-making, it is moved to a completely different realm when politicized through different understandings of social duty. It replaces the similarity of the immediate reality that one finds himself in, with the role of a jury trying to settle the differences between two equals.

> For our great high priests of duty, the contract to work is not a form of sale; nothing is so simple as a sale; nobody troubles himself to find out whether the grocer or the customer is right when they agree on the price of cheese; the customer goes where he can buy at the best price and the grocer is obliged to change his prices when his customers leave him. But when a strike takes place it is quite another thing: all the well-intentioned people, the men of progress and the friends of the Republic, begin to discuss the question of which of the two parties is in the right: to be in the right is to have fulfilled one's whole social duty. (Sorel, 1999, pp. 55–56)

Feeding from the caudal relationship of law and violence; Sorel reminds us why this conceptualization of social duty had occurred in the first place. It was out of fear that the bourgeoisie had to legislate the promotion of public peace; and it should be fear again that abolishes the imitation of social solidarity between the classes (Sorel, 1999, pp. 61–62). The proletariat has to conform with the conservation of the higher ideal of public peace in their demands as a part of their social duty, whereas the employer has a social duty to extinguish the proletarian ardor before it grows. The state apparatus intervenes thusly against the good of the proletariat be it on the side of the workers or the employer. Sorel believes that this illusion of equality in the public sphere should be shattered by severing of the ties between the classes and realization of antagonistic nature of class warfare (Sorel, 1999, pp. 75–76). The conceptualization of the possibility that the proletariat can indeed work against the proletariat itself is the first manner of stunting class consciousness.

> A social policy based upon bourgeois cowardice, which consists in always surrendering before the threat of violence, cannot fail to engender the idea that the bourgeoisie is condemned to death and that its disappearance is only a matter of time. Every conflict which gives rise to violence thus becomes a vanguard fight, and no one can foresee what will come out of such skirmishes; the great battle never materializes, but each time that they come to blows the strikers hope that it is the beginning of the great Napoleonic battle (the one that will crush the vanquished definitively); in

this way, the practice of strikes engenders the notion of the catastrophic revolution. (Sorel, 1999, pp. 62–63)

The second way that the bourgeoisie extinguishes the revolutionary ardor of the proletariat is through its corrupting effect over organizational efficacy. Sorel pinpoints the blame on the syndicalist organization with its ever-growing specialization and bureaucratization. Alienation lives through its exacerbating effect on the proletariat with a multiplicity of unions[12], and even privatization of the unions, that in turn particularize the problem and the struggle against, as a catalyzer of loss of class-consciousness. Consequently, the illusionary gains of the proletariat are hardly anything more than the judiciary trading material concessions for the continuation of the bourgeois peace. These so-called victories for the worker class necessitate a better working relationship with the bourgeoisie, which brings forward two changes: that the bourgeoisie is not the monstrous enemy that the socialists make them to be, and consequently that the hardline socialist union leaders are replaced with professionals who can bring home more victories instead of antagonizing stalemates. Therefore, the union leaders have come to be indistinguishable from the bourgeois they are supposed to butt heads with, enjoying their time in grandeur and a sense of self-importance (Sorel, 1999, p. 54). The proletarian defeatism engendered by the bourgeois teachings is

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[12] This is not to claim that Sorel supports centralization of the unions; on the contrary, he lists this as a want of politicians to boost discipline and easily commandeer the strikes to last exactly for the duration they deem profitable.

masked as the actual functionality of the hollowness romanticized as socialism. The false consciousness of equality and unity works to dissolve any hope of liberation that the proletariat has. The self-proclaimed educators of socialism, namely, the parliamentary socialists, union leaders, and the sociologists all derive their function of intermediaries from exploiting the proletarian ardor to become representatives of the class, only to betray and extinguish it the moment their agendas are guaranteed by the bourgeoisie.

> Socialists should therefore abandon the search (initiated by the utopians) for a means of inducing the enlightened bourgeoisie to prepare the transition to a better system of legislation; their sole function consists in explaining to the proletariat the greatness of the revolutionary role which it is called upon to play. By ceaseless criticism the proletariat must be brought to perfect its organizations; it must be shown how to develop the embryonic forms of its organizations of resistance, so that it may build institutions that have no parallel in the history of the bourgeoisie and form ideas that depend solely upon the position of producer in large-scale industry, borrowing nothing from bourgeois thought. The aim must be to acquire habits of liberty with which the bourgeoisie are no longer acquainted. This doctrine will obviously be inapplicable if the bourgeoisie and the proletariat do not oppose each other with all the severity they possess and all the forces at their disposal; the more the bourgeoisie is ardently capitalist, the more the proletariat will

be full of warlike spirit and confident of its revolutionary strength, the more the success of the movement will be certain. (Sorel, 1999, pp. 74–75)

According to Sorel, because of its place in relations of production the proletariat is bound to revolt and resort to violence (Sorel, 1999, p. 78). As we have seen, the bourgeoisie does everything in its power to avoid that from happening, including curbing the capitalist progression. Sorel marks this as the origin of defeatism consequent to the lag in Marx's analysis on the inevitability of the fall of capitalism. Moreover, Sorel interprets the advocation of non-violence as a bourgeois idea born out of fear, just like public peace. He therefore is not hesitant in defending the use of violence. There is an important distinction made between the use of force that the ruling class employs for the protection of the state and its laws and the revolutionary violence of the working class. He uses the term "force" for the former and "violence" for the latter. Force is used for the imposition of a certain order against the majority; while violence seeks to destroy that order (Sorel, 1999, pp. 165–166). It is by force that the system of exploitation has been established, and it is by force its laws legislated and enforced. Consequently, it is by force that the proletariat is disarmed of violence. The determination of the social values is thus corrupted by the ruling class; and violence should not be disregarded because the imposed moral tendencies prescribe it. Sorel defines revolutionary violence as having historical significance in its "*brutal and clear expression of class struggle*" (Sorel, 1999, p. 77). The difference between violence and force is ever more apparent

for the French Revolution and especially in its aftermath of '93, respectively. The Terror, with its total control over the state apparatus made its more immediate changes in the field of law. The analysis by de Tocqueville sheds light to the change from the individualist liberalism towards a conception that sacrifices the individual for the state, by the use of law, in order to utilize colonialist methods of profit maximization (Sorel, 1999, pp. 99–100). Consequently, force is an instrumental means whereas the intensity of violence is not from its permanency but from that it had occurred. Any revolutionary that is interested in emancipation from the state rather than control it, deduces Sorel, should therefore embrace antimilitarism and anti-patriotism.

> If we are revolted by the cruelty, by the brutality of past times, …, it must not be forgotten that uprightness, sincerity, a lively sentiment of justice, pious respect before holiness of morals, characterized the ancient peoples; whilst today we see predominant lies, duplicity, treachery, the spirit of deception, the contempt for property, disdain for instinctive probity and legitimate customs, the value of which are no longer understood. (Sorel, 1999, p. 190)

The proletarian violence is expressed as the act of the strike (Sorel, 1999, p. 279). This sole remaining act of disobedient revolt was permitted by the bourgeoisie because of its factual inevitability, but also because of the abovementioned control mechanisms put in place that controls the rhetoric on the limits of the strike. For this very

reason, Sorel makes a differentiation between the *political general strike* and the *proletarian general strike* (Sorel, 1999, p. 165). The former is the bourgeois conceptualization of the proletarian violence or, more aptly stated, the proletarian *force*. It plays on the imagery of previous revolutions, uncontrollable mobs storming palaces and seizing control, in full awareness that the bourgeoisie has been preparing for exactly that since the very first moment of their dominion (Sorel, 1999, p. 171). It is utilized as a political instrument that threatens the use of violence, almost out of mere necessity of ritualism, but in fact is a force that solidifies the state's force, far from threatening it (Sorel, 1999, pp. 148–149). The politicians then rush to the opportunity to negotiate the terms for the continuation of work. Any blood shed, any damage given, and any violence is met by the state's force, furthering the legitimization of the public peace discourse concomitantly legitimizing the decrease in the concession extorted by the politician. The proletarian general strike on the other hand, despite also originating from a workers' riot, has no intention whatsoever to return to the conditions that the proletariat is subjected to and has just freed itself from. It is violence without bloodshed, without alien moralities and nobilities to conform to, and without exploitation. In its manifestation it does away with theory, guidance and advice that clouds the proletarian reality of the class warfare, asserting freedom from the suffering for a greater good (Sorel, 1999, p. 129). The proletarian general strike does not only understand and acknowledge the class warfare but ends it on proletarian terms. It is to appear when the insuperable weight of class warfare is aggravated to the point of revelation in its bare reality, followed by the

emergence of an explosive rebellious will towards emancipation. It liberates the proletarian from everything but their pride in freedom which is not to be negotiated or surrendered (Sorel, 1999, p. 159). With the proletariat leaving the relationship of fateful dependency, it is the bourgeoisie that remains face to face with a grim self-afflicted helplessness as fate. Thusly, nothing can truly be as violent an act of nonviolence as the proletarian general strike in its dedicated annihilation of the forceful rule over men.

5. Walter Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*

Benjamin's *Critique of Violence* brings together Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* with Schmitt's philosophy of law (Benjamin, 2021, p. 118). It provides an understanding of the relation between violence and law and goes further to define different types of violence in accordance with that relationship. Benjamin's choice of *Gewalt* in defining violence is similar to the distinction Sorel makes between *force* and *violence*, in the sense that *Gewalt*, like the former Sorelian term, is intrinsically bound to an authoritarian relation (Khatib, 2016, p. 43). As violence in itself cannot constitute a rational end, its critique should be based on its use within the economy of means and ends. Benjamin points out that the permissibility concerning violence is not shaped around violence; but the use of it (Benjamin, 1996, p. 236). The two schools of thought in legal philosophy, namely, natural law and positive law, will thus be the subject of the critique of violence. For the former, violence is a fact of nature that can be used to attain naturally just ends, which then retroactively legitimizes violent means. This stems from the conclusion that violence is a delegated right taken away for-and/or-by the state to be used in their stead. On the other hand, positive law attempts to "guarantee" a just end through a legality of means (Benjamin, 1996, p. 237). The permissibility of violence in positive law is decided by an interrogation of its historicity pertaining to the ends pursued. Natural ends lack this element of legitimation, contrary to legal ends. This point of distinction serves as the basis of the functioning of the legal

system, establishing control and limitation on the individual use of violent means.

> […] the law's interest in a monopoly of violence vis-a-vis individuals is not explained by the intention of preserving legal ends but, rather, by that of preserving the law itself; that violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens it not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law. (Benjamin, 1996, p. 239)

Perhaps it is better here that we initially introduce the concept of *mythic violence* before furthering the critique, to define more clearly the law's attributes in connection with the violence it employs. Benjamin (1996, p. 248) provides us with the story of Niobe for this purpose, where she tempts fate by overstepping the boundary between humans and gods in her boastful arrogance. Her action is met with a violence that lays her family dead and leaves her transformed into a weeping stone. It is important to note that violence exceeds two very significant limits here: it goes beyond Niobe by extending to her family, and secondly, it again goes beyond Niobe in establishing a law for which Niobe's petrified state is the signifier. Thus, violence posits law as a consolidating act of power. Violence is not merely the origin of the law but also its sustenance; Niobe weeps on, for the violence is relived and repeated in her every moment onwards made apparent in her state of existence. We shall unfold lawmaking violence, law-preserving violence, and the context

of fate and guilt as the three main components of Benjamin's critique of mythic violence.

5.1. Lawmaking violence

The intent behind the monopolization of violence can be more wholly appreciated bearing in mind the lawmaking quality of violence. Benjamin (1996, pp. 239–240) argues that the right to strike, originally designated as a manner of estrangement from the employer's violence towards the workers, can be met with state violence despite being a nonviolent non-action in itself. In the Sorelian political strike, violence is introduced when this estrangement is used as a leverage to modify the working conditions, which is a natural end pursued by an extortive violence. The contradiction appears when the right to strike is used in the context of a revolutionary -proletarian- general strike which constitutes in its non-violence, an existential threat to the sovereignty of the legal system that the latter deems violent. The political general strike, as we have seen in Sorel, preserves the state power as the working class changes masters (Salzani, 2008, p. 22), whereas the proletarian general strike annuls the legal system's foundations in its nonviolent dialectical break. For this reason, the violence of the former is tolerated by the state while the latter is met with reactionary violence (Benjamin, 1996, p. 240). The question is, why does the state initially concede such right to violence it prohibits for all others?

Let us start bearing in mind that the proletarian general strike constitutes a non-violent non-action because it is, by definition, an omission. If we are to accept that violence is a capacity its use has been transferred to the state without the possibility of ever removing that capacity from within, then all private interaction is based on the assumption and the knowledge that such capacity of violence exists but will not be deployed. Hence, as an unsigned accord, non-violence can exist in the relations of private persons (Benjamin, 1996, pp. 244–245). This 'technique' of interaction as Benjamin calls it, is one's actively decided mannerism of civility to exclude any violence to reach whatever desired end.

> Nonviolent agreement is possible wherever a civilized outlook allows the use of unalloyed means of agreement. Legal and illegal means of every kind that are all the same violent may be confronted with nonviolent ones as unalloyed means. Courtesy, sympathy, peaceableness, trust, and whatever else might here be mentioned, are their subjective preconditions. Their objective manifestation, however, is determined by the law (the enormous scope of which cannot be discussed here) that unalloyed means are never those of direct, but always those of indirect solutions. They therefore never apply directly to the resolution of conflict between man and man, but only to matters concerning objects. (Benjamin, 1996, p. 244)

The state, by allowing non-violence as pure means towards individual natural ends, would be acknowledging a possibility of concordance outside of the legal system. Nonviolent means escape punishment for they belong originally in language, in the form of lying (Menke, 2015, p. 24). Benjamin (1996, p. 245) notes that lying was penalized in the form of fraud because of the reactive violence it may invoke in the defrauded. Therefore, the concession of the right to strike is to establish the sphere of the strike as a separate entity from the legal sphere of the state, grounded in the fear that the state would be the victim of the violent conflict otherwise.

> It grants this right because it forestalls violent actions the state is afraid to oppose. Did not workers previously resort at once to sabotage and set fire to factories? To induce men to reconcile their interests peacefully without involving the legal system, there is, in the end, apart from all virtues, one effective motive that often enough puts into the most reluctant hands pure instead of violent means; it is the fear of mutual disadvantages that threaten to arise from violent confrontation, whatever the outcome might be. (Benjamin, 1996, p. 245)

A similar sovereignty of violence that the right to strike constitutes can be found in the mythic sphere as its impurely violent counterpart, in the form of military violence. The use of military force is predatory violence, seeking natural ends in the event that they are conflicted by legal ends (Benjamin, 1996, p. 240). However, the lawmaking

character of the military violence is ushered by a necessary peace ceremony that declares the war over, and that the new status quo is marked, constituted and guaranteed by the law of the victor (Benjamin, 1996, p. 240). The consequentiality that the consolidation of power to posit law is the rational basis of the state's ban over individual uses of violence. The state itself is, however, is directly bound up in the lawmaking character of violence as its origin. Its sustenance is realized by the complementary characteristic of mythic violence as means to legal ends, which is law-preserving violence.

5.2. Law-preserving violence

With a certain incorporation of Schmitt's legal philosophy into our reading of *Critique of Violence*, we can also add that violence exists originally outside of the law and therefore challenges it, calling for its expansion. However, law cannot fully absorb violence as it depends on violence for the enforcement of the law, and concordantly to explore and fill the territories that stayed unknown to the law. Violence creates a law that necessitates a succession of violence to reaffirm and strengthen that law. That law's sole existence proves a hierarchy of power. Power is all-pervasive, and all power seek legitimation. Through preserving, recognition is sought; and through making, occupation of the new legal horizon. The superposition of violence existing within and outside the law is the driving force of the law in order to enforce, integrate and fill the legal void. What ends that are pursued by the use of violence stays irrelevant to the law; rather, it is more intrigued by its exemption. The twofold function of

lawmaking violence assures the continuation of a need for violence which is exacted by a means of violence. Thereby, violence also bears a law-preserving quality. For the law seeks to reaffirm itself as much as it does to expand on itself. Therefore, violence as a means to justice within the framework of positive law, has a conservative quality to it. Monopolization of violence means that the end of justice reached will be singular as well. What is just, in that matter, becomes what is legal.

> For the function of violence in lawmaking is twofold, in the sense that lawmaking pursues as its end, with violence as the means, what is to be established as law, but at the moment of instatement does not dismiss violence; rather, at this very moment of lawmaking, it specifically establishes as law not an end unalloyed by violence, but one necessarily and intimately bound to it, under the title of power. Lawmaking is power making, and, to that extent, an immediate manifestation of violence. Justice is the principle of all divine end making, power the principle of all mythical lawmaking. (Benjamin, 1996, p. 248)

Benjamin uses the example of the police in illuminating the terms of lawmaking and law-preserving violence, explaining how the police is at the same time an amalgamation of both and neither of them (Benjamin, 1996, pp. 242–243). The enforcement of law necessitates this juxtaposition. It needs to work at the limits of the sphere of law in order to witness, identify, and process the illegality. For this, it

needs to be harsh and intrusive. As an instrument of the law, and/or its embodiment, the distinction between lawmaking and law-preserving disappears and the police seeks an end whatever the means might be; for it is the law, it defines and executes its own legality (Menke, 2015, p. 21). In a sense, the police pursuing legal ends does so in the state's stead, pursuing its natural ends predatorily. In its chaotic, formless, and limitless embodiment of legal violence, the police stand proof that law-preserving violence does not exist as a deterrent but as an embodiment of the violence's connection to fate at its origin. The unascertainable position grants the police ubiquity, and function, sovereignty. Reaffirmation of the law is not simply enforcing its rule but doing so with the same intensity of violence in its making. The powerful claim that the law holds on life, transforming it to a detail open to the possibility of being erased or altered without consequence is the sign of violence imposed by fate.

5.3. Fate

Let us remember Niobe again. She was robbed of her family as a result of an act of arrogance she committed against the gods and was left to serve as the boundary between the realms of god and men in her petrified state, still weeping from sorrow. Fate, as the third constitutive element of mythic violence, can be aptly described as life bound by guilt in its preconditioning not so far to constitute a threat but a totality of existence hierarchically prone to a subjection of power-making. As such, it is not Niobe's fate that befalls her but fate independent of a subject, fate itself that triumphs over Niobe's

challenge (Ahmadi, 2015, p. 58). The ambiguity of fate is palpable in every part of the myth, from the initial convention of humans and gods alike to her being spared while her children are massacred, and ultimately her guilt overflowing to the point of petrification for her to serve as the boundary between the gods and men. The lawmaking function of violence is evident because the means of violence meets Niobe but continues beyond her to an end where her existence signals the law's affirmation. The law-preserving violence also resonates in Niobe's transformation, for her life is now arrested in the very moment of the exactment of violence for which she is eternally encapsulated in guilt. Niobe's existence loses all its former Niobe-like qualities and by fate continues only as *guilty*. Therefore, Niobe only serves an instrumental purpose for the mythic violence by which fate is eventually revealed to her, in the aftermath (Ahmadi, 2015, p. 63). In the myth, the only one attributing any guilt is Niobe herself despite it is through her act that the law is originally posited; therefore, Niobe did not incur punishment but retribution upon herself facilitated by a "deliberate ambiguity" of fate (Benjamin, 1996, p. 249).

As mythic violence shares all its qualities with legal violence, fate is no exception. The subject of the law is life itself; the means of violence touches it while legal ends define it. In that sense, fate becomes the subjective outlook on life, which is otherwise separated from the *living*, apart from the context of biological life (Salzani, 2015, p. 112). Law's violent means spill blood and legal ends assign guilt to life in the order of fate; therefore, mythic violence rules over

mere life (bloßen Leben) as the reduced state of living, whose sacrifice is essential to mythic power-making (Benjamin, 1996, p. 250). Fate is thereby the totalized limitation through assignation to mere life and guilt, the foundational paradigm of inescapability in the mythic order. In the legal order, fate does not describe the duality of humans and gods; rather, it is a hierarchy of power that enjoys the inviolability of fixity. However, the mythic finds its true opposition in the divine, in the form of law-destroying, bloodless, expiatory power (Benjamin, 1996, pp. 249–250).

5.4. Divine violence

Divine violence, in Benjamin's terms, is the rejection of existence confounded to "mere life". It is an anarchic concept that frees violence from its boundaries of justified means by end-making. It is end-making in the sense that the pure violence in itself is not utilized in achieving an end that gives meaning to it; rather, divine violence appears as both means and an end. All violence brings forth law; however, as divine violence is law-destroying violence as an end in and of itself, the vicious cycle of law-preserving and lawmaking is broken and rendered redundant. Benjamin explains this with reference to the ten commandments; a set of rules with no judgment or explanation tied to it other than the autonomous reasoning towards existence and being.

> The proposition that existence stands higher than a just existence is false and ignominious, if existence is to mean

nothing other than mere life—and it has this meaning in the argument referred to. It contains a mighty truth, however, if existence, or, better, life (words whose ambiguity is readily dispelled, analogously to that of freedom, when they are referred to two distinct spheres), means the irreducible, total condition that is "man"; if the proposition is intended to mean that the nonexistence of man is something more terrible than the (admittedly subordinate) not-yet attained condition of the just man. (Benjamin, 1996, p. 251)

Divine violence is the imagined break from the systematic succession of mythical violence. Divine violence constitutes two separate realities within it. That of freedom, from whatever violence they have borne and all that entails; but also, that of destruction from having borne that violence. It is indifference at a level of violence, a violence to sever any and all interaction, the denial to the very base on that the initial law is established (Benjamin, 1996, pp. 251–252). It is exemption through self-alienation[13]. Self-alienation to the point of rejection of mere life; but manifestation of a totality of existence with mere life and all that entails, and everything else contributing to their existence. Divine violence necessitates what exists within an individual more than the fact of being alive. The laws apply to us

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[13] The term self-alienation here is used here to convey a meaning similar to that of Foucauldian transgression, with certain emphasis on the incompatibility of existence with the reduction that mere life entails, therefore almost an extreme emotion of revolting disgust in the face of absurdity.

simply because we exist, in a biological sense; but is that all there is to being? Divine violence is the assertion of what exists in human existence apart from mere life. Through the rejection of existence solely at the level of mere life there is also an acceptance -or even an enlightenment- of one's totality of existence. An important thing that this self-discovery entails is the realization of unique existence that goes beyond description and enforcement of that description through violence. Therefore, by asserting existence superior to mere life, the self that one comes to know up to that moment disappears. That self is alienated through an emancipatory outburst. Mere life is the living's surrender to fate, divine violence is the forgiveness that expiates the guilt of life (Martel, 2012, p. 111). There is more to existence; but the legality of means and ends exists outside of the complexities of it. Its alienation is so profoundly innate that it does not serve any end to any means. Mere life given for the sake of living. For this to happen, there is a need of destruction. It exacts its subjective end of justice through pure violent means towards itself originally and to its immediate environment defining it. It is the backlash for the mythical violence subjected to, a burst for justice where the singular justice is a part of total justice solely through existing. It is sovereign; because the self exists both within the legal sphere as mere life and outside of it as the sovereign decider of his own fate, within the concept of divine violence.

It would be fair to assert that the concept of divine violence, although having reached a maturity to be given a name and theoretically introduced in *Critique of Violence*, would not constitute a total

separation from the remainder of Benjamin's work. Therefore, through a more wholistic look at Benjamin's work, we can find indications towards furthering our understanding of divine violence. From Benjamin's *On the Concept of History*, we can derive what divine violence is a break *from*, and the messianism that surrounds this break. History is a total of barbarism defined by the class struggle from which the ruling class always leaves victor. The immediacy of the present is too ephemeral for we are forced into the future, just like the Angelus Novus, by the winds of progress (Benjamin, 1974, pt. IX). We cannot truly see the past for what it is, it provides reasons and answers to the state that we find ourselves in; we are instead continuously ushered into a new present with promises of future. The consequence is the continuity of history *ad infinitum* as "homogenized" and "empty" as mere temporality; yet, the whole of history materializes in the present in a historical consciousness of the past, connecting the two is what enables a revolutionary rupture in history (Benjamin, 1974, pt. XIV). Benjamin (1974, pt. XV) contends that a different understanding of history was established after the French Revolution by the introduction of the calendar which relays a sense of repetition and a connection with the past[14]; this

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[14] Terry Eagleton's incorporation of Lacanian analysis into Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* is especially noteworthy here, in that he claims that within a historicism based on repetition the *aura* remains as a reminder and an awakener of the past inside the present moment (Eagleton, 1981, pp. 33, 35-36–37). Thus, it is when the gaze into the past is returned that the

understanding's coming into fruition is apparent in the bullet holes on the Parisian clocktowers, indicating a rupture in history rather than an advancement to the future. The standstill of history (*Jetztzeit*) is messianic because it ushers in a new epoch that is free from the conditions that have come to define history -and all its subjects- up to that point, in the messiah's coming as "the Redeemer" and "the vanquisher of the Anti-Christ" (Benjamin, 1974, pt. VI, XVII).

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messianic standstill happens, breaking the imaginary continuum of history and compulsive repetition (Eagleton, 1981, p. 58).

6. Secondary literature concerning divine violence & postanarchism

The secondary literature on divine violence consists of a wide array of views stemming from Benjamin's concept of divine violence. For its cryptic nature of both the concept and the writing style of Benjamin, the concept of divine violence has been imagined in quite distinct ways from scholar to scholar. The following readings have been selected to enhance the use of the concept to better understand the postanarchist meaning adhered to it. Through some, I intend to enhance the idea of divine violence by borrowing concepts that creates newer topics of more profound discussion for the postanarchist praxis. Some of the readings, however; will be used to distinguish between different reflections on the concept to clarify the concept's use within the scope of this dissertation. Therefore; this part of the dissertation will be utilized to find reflections that will serve to build up to a postanarchist reading of divine violence, and not claim a new way of imagining it.

6.1. Žižek on non-violence and violence

Slavoj Žižek, in his 2008 book *Violence*, analyzes divine violence from a Lacanian perspective mainly in response to Sloterdijk's Judeo-Christian conceptualization of rage. He draws the distinction between the Christian and the Jewish connotations of justice sought;

a distinction highly relevant in Benjamin's divinity attributed to justice. Christianity, as he points out (Žižek, 2008, p. 191), counsels mercy and forgiveness in the face of injustice; that a crime should be forgiven but not be forgotten. For at the end of days a reciprocity for all actions -good or bad- will be handed down by God himself. In Judaism, however; we find *ius talionis* –an eye for an eye-. Only after thorough and just punishment one can find himself forgiven and expiated. There is no transferring a right to exact justice through revenge to a superego that some one day will do it in his stead. It must also be noted here that the expectance for a superior being to enact justice contradicts with the postanarchist positioning towards power. Žižek also points out the role of the forgiver necessitates a superior position compared to the criminal, which too is problematically hierarchical (Žižek, 2008, p. 190). The saying "Justice delayed is justice denied." fits better in a system of law that excludes mercy in achieving justice. When we take into consideration Benjamin's exemplification of the ten commandments and their exclusion of a set punishment adhered to them, we are also given that forgiveness must be earned through expiation. This shows that the divinity attributed to divine justice is not by whom the punishment, and therefore, the justice is executed, but to how it is executed. In that sense, enforcement of divine rules should also be done with/through/by the divinity borne through suffering. Benjamin's messianic writing therefore includes the angry and vengeful God of the Old Testament instead of the loving and forgiving Christian God not by faith, but through necessity. For that reason, Žižek underlines that divine violence is unidentifiable objectively (Žižek, 2008, p. 200). Divine

violence can only be interpreted by those who are engaged in it. The sovereign decision to break the commandment, the reduction to mere life and its annihilation can only be done subjectively. Accordingly, within a revolutionary proletarian strike we observe the overlap between the personal and the general. It signifies that such threshold has been crossed simultaneously (or consequently) for the whole proletariat individually and as a reality pertaining to the whole. Žižek points out the Kantian characteristic of this process of going over the threshold set by the commandment (Žižek, 2008, p. 195). The act is realized upon sovereign decision-making of the individual, to which he commits for achieving an ideal of justice by taking into account the guilt which it will bring. His interpretation of Lacan on this point is especially noteworthy; bringing the Kantian ethical act from its paralyzing paradox of the possibility of a pathological essence within the desire triggering the act (Žižek, 2008, pp. 195–196). He claims that according to Lacan, the uncompromised realization of the desired can very well be overlapping with the duty, and in that sense, what is pathological remains to be that very same barrier of paradoxical purity that is put as an obstruction for not realizing freedom.

Žižek interprets divine violence as an expression of pure drive that expiates through striking the bare life, the linking element of the law (Žižek, 2008, p. 198). The law can only regulate the bare life, but not its excess. Therefore, this excess defines an "undeadness" for the drive goes beyond the singular mortality that is bound to legality and becomes a sign. This sign is solely a signifier of injustice, a "sign of

God's own impotence" (Žižek, 2008, p. 201); whereas mythical violence is the expression of godly omnipotence laid as law. Throughout his chapter on divine violence, Žižek puts emphasis on the absence of a deeper meaning for this very reason. Citing Job's predicament and his resistance to adhere meaning to what befalls him, Žižek claims that the effort of defining the divinity in violence takes away from the experience that is divine violence in its contradiction, its effect, its sign, and its transformation (Žižek, 2008, p. 200). Therefore, adhering a meaning to divine violence blurs the lines between it and mythical violence, for it reintroduces divine violence to the means-ends consequentiality. Its divinity then can also be said to be connected to its untethered, unforeseeable, and unfamiliar nature. These said elements are vital to its law destroying attribute. Žižek (2008, p. 202) gives the example of people from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro looting and burning supermarkets in the rich part of the city in 1983 as divine violence. I too believe that this particular example sheds a light in constructing an imagination of what divine violence looks like. There is no deeper reason apparent, it does not even leave room for its interpretation for the act itself defines its own end. Thousands of people suffering from systematic poverty raining down on supermarkets indeed signifies an injustice. As mere life that they have been reduced to, they are consigned to hunger and poverty; yet, the "undead" inside of them made a conscious choice to what is just in their position, therefore saw no injustice in breaking the law to feed themselves (Žižek, 2008, p. 198). The myth provides a crime and a criminal for there to be an end of justice via prosecution; the divine, acting outside of these

conceptions, provides food. The two extremes of what defines "man", "being" and "existence" can be easily distinguished from this example. When Benjamin quotes Anatole France's satirical "*Poor and rich are equally forbidden to spend the night under the bridges.*" (Benjamin, 1996, p. 249), we see here the same dichotomy. Consequently, *mutatis mutandis*, "*Poor and rich are equally forbidden to pillage and burn supermarkets.*" can be shown to satisfy equality under the eyes of the law while pushing socio-economic status outside of being. Within the totality of existence, however; we see the inequality of this "equality". The law, in this case, criminalizes a means of justice-seeking of the economically oppressed in favor of an idealized sense of order, which is a unilateral suppression of manifesting existence superior to mere life.

6.2. Butler on divine violence and anarchism

Judith Butler's reading of *Critique of Violence* focuses on Benjamin's use of fate, and how divine is situated as its contrast. For Benjamin, fate describes a full-stop in the transient rhythm of life, the existence becomes suspended in eternal suffering (J. Butler, 2006, p. 202). Fate instates the law, and by creating the law it guarantees its repetition of the original violence founding the law. By doing so, it preserves the law and creates a coercion for the law through accountability at the same time. Fate makes law as an unreasonable and seemingly random execution of punishment. The suffering it brings and forces to be enveloped in does not allow guilt to be

processed. However, guilt stems from the punitive response to the action, but not the remorse that is felt by the action. Niobe's punishment carries all these connotations in its many folds (J. Butler, 2006, p. 208): She tempts fate, and for this act Artemis and Apollo claim the lives of her children. As such, mythical violence instates law. It is noteworthy that her children are the initial recipient of legal violence, for an act that she committed. Therefore, the guilt shifts from that has arose for her act to the end result of her children's death. She feels guilt and sorrow for she believes that her act caused their death; while by definition of fate, this was beyond her control. In that sense, she feels the sorrow created by punishment, therefore legal violence, and is held accountable for an act that is not her doing. What does Leto feel for ordering Artemis and Apollo to destroy Niobe's family? Nothing. Niobe is coerced to undertake that guilt for she believes she caused it. Her petrification is the law-preserving of mythical violence. It is the guarantee that anyone who dares to defy fate will suffer the same end. To her, the repetition is eternal. In every moment of her existence she relives her sorrow, unchanging. She becomes an object of guilt, forced to suffer all through her life without relief. Butler names this reduction to mere life a soul-murder (J. Butler, 2006, p. 210); and rightly so, because Niobe's existence is reduced to a projection of her punishment, a solid lump of guilt. In that sense, Niobe lives on not as Niobe, but as a by-product of the law that merely happens to be alive. It is important to underline once again that this guilt is the one ascribed by her punishment but not the guilt of her own act. The guilt induced by the reduction of life to mere life is a "natural kind of guilt", Butler discovers in Benjamin's

Goethe's Elective Affinities (J. Butler, 2006, p. 210): *''with the disappearance of supernatural life in man, his natural life turns into guilt, even without his committing an act contrary to ethics. For now it is in league with mere life, which manifests itself in man as guilt''*. Mythical violence becomes a soul-murder because soul is what is supernatural in life.

Butler places coercion to the legitimized law in relation to its created accountability. Law is first instated through violence without justification, only then it can be justified through its enforcement. The enforcement creates subjects to the law; accountable to the law, forcefully consenting to the punishment it entails. The sureness of the punishment, an existence arrested in guilt and sorrow, creates coercion. The arbitrariness of the law thus becomes projected as a reasonable question of causality. The word becomes law, and it seeks unquestioned obedience to its authority. The function of divine violence is that it frees the subject from the bounds of accountability. For Benjamin, this accountability undermines the totality of existence by treating life as mere life; and creates coercion simply through the fear of accountability to legal violence. Butler (2006, p. 203) defines brilliantly the necessity of divine violence to destroy the legal framework as "*…, doing the right thing according to established law is precisely what must be suspended in order to dissolve a body of established law that is unjust*." Divine violence does so by attacking the violent conditions that materialize themselves in man as guilt, and freeing the subject from its coercion. It is expiatory because it frees the subject from the guilt that reduces

life to living by destroying law's coercive force, hence giving back an identity that stands superior to a simple existence defined by its accountability to law. We can therefore better understand Benjamin when he writes "*Mythical violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake; divine violence is pure power over all life for the sake of the living.*" (Benjamin, 1996, p. 250) Divine violence destroys the subject of law, Butler deduces, for him to realize his existence outside of his encapsulation within guilt, and the accountability that shapes him. This "separation of legal status from the living being" (J. Butler, 2006, p. 211) is exactly why divine violence is bloodless and expiatory. I find her imagination of Niobe's expiation very helpful in understanding divine violence:

> We can imagine only that the rock would dissolve into water, and that her guilt would give way to endless tears. It would no longer be a question of what she did to deserve such a punishment, but of what system of punishment imposes such a violence upon her. We can imagine her rising up again to question the brutality of the law, and we can imagine her shedding the guilt of her arrogance in an angry refusal of the violent authority wielded against her and an endless grief for the loss of those lives. (J. Butler, 2006, p. 218)

Where divine violence replaces mythical violence; positive law should also be countered by a form of responsibility to deal with the ethical demands that provoke law-making violence. As discussed above, fate paralyzes life through adhering guilt of the consequential

violence to the subject, and produces forceful coercion to its means of justification for its end-goal of justice; leaving the law satisfied while subjects are confined to suffering. There needs to be a surrogate notion by which the ethical demand provoking legal violence needs to be understood, evaluated and resolved without compelling myth. This notion according to Benjamin is the commandment. The role of the commandment can be understood as a guideline, or an open-ended, general advice on ethics. It is not law, for it does not require strict obedience to the commandment, nor is enforced. One of the key aspects that Butler (2006, p. 214) underlines is the underlying thread of transience in *Critique of Violence*, based on his *Theologico-Political Fragment*. Transience appears as a notion to describe the temporality of life. For Benjamin, transience is eternal; everything within the rhythm of transience is bound to suffer its downfall (J. Butler, 2006, p. 215). To understand and accept transience is to acknowledge the suffering that is brought about by the human condition, and to appreciate the outlining rule of rhythm. This rhythm is disrupted when law imprisons its subject within the moment of the suffering. Suffering may be the essence of mere life, what is consistent in it; however, by introducing guilt over misfortune it does not only break the rhythm of transience of suffering but also its resolution, happiness. Happiness is the messianic twin of suffering, the divine rhythm, brought about by acknowledging transience as eternal (J. Butler, 2006, p. 216). Therefore, happiness is accepting existence as suffering. This realization that suffering does not need fault nor punishment for it is endless, frees the subject of law's coercion because it destroys the basis on which the law is formed (J.

Butler, 2006, p. 219). The law arrests the subject in midst of suffering, in a rock-like state, not allowing suffering to run its course in transient eternity. On the other hand, the commandment flows with the transience. It holds no judgment over the suffering caused by contravening the commandment or the suffering that pushes man to consider it. It accepts suffering and its eternality. It is directed to a happy existence; transient and emancipated. Indeed, then, "*One must imagine Sisyphus happy*."

6.3. Derrida on divine violence and force of law

Derrida's analysis of divine violence is significantly different than that of Žižek and Butler, in the sense that Derrida is clear on his opposing stance towards the notion of divine violence. Nevertheless, I believe an analysis of his stance and its basis would prove helpful before the discussion on the post-anarchist use of divine violence starts, considering his deconstructive post-structuralism. Derrida's analysis begins with the search for the foundation of law. As the title *Force of Law* suggests, Derrida investigates the relationship between justice and force. His first argument is that the term "enforceability" shows us that force is inherent in law. No law can exist without a reasonable possibility of enforcement, and no enforcement can be made without the use of force. This force can be any manner of coercing obedience, be it symbolic, physical or social. He borrows from Pascal's Pensées on Montaigne's notion of "mystical foundation of authority" to demonstrate this. According to Pascal, the

mystical foundation of authority is based on the relationship between justice and force. He dictates (1) use of force separate from the notion of justice is wrong, (2) justice cannot be achieved without its enforceability, (3) what is just must be strong, or, what is strong must be just, (4) since what is just cannot be strengthened, the strong was deemed just (Derrida, 1992, p. 11). The distinction between justice and law is made fairly apparent within this train of thought. Montaigne's conclusion follows that laws are not obeyed because they are just, but because of the authority born from the sanctioned force it prescribes (Derrida, 1992, p. 12). Derrida (1992, p. 16) claims that this dichotomy between law and justice exists because of the aporia innate to justice. Justice owes its intensity to its improbable nature. Law, however, is a calculable and affectable entity. One can guarantee rather easily that a law is accounted for; whereas regardless of the effort going into attaining it, justness can never be guaranteed to be achieved. Derrida's deconstruction focuses on the dichotomy between law and justice; mainly on the point of their interdependence. The first aporia in this deconstruction pertains to the paradox of autonomy. The axiom that for an act to be evaluated just the decision must be made in freedom, requires a higher order of rule to be considered; however, the existence of such notion also defeats the argument of freedom (Derrida, 1992, pp. 22–23). Therefore, a decision can be just through a juxtaposition in relation to the rule; the rule must be suspended to be reinvented and reaffirmed. Nevertheless, the calculability in retaining the rule means that actions can only be evaluated in terms of legality but not justness. The second aporia wrestles with a similar problem, that of

undecidability. Undecidability pertains to the moment that the solution remains unknown and the rule suspended. This moment signifies the existence of freedom in the process of decision-making; because the lack of the undecidable moment is evidence of calculation. The aporia is introduced when a decision is made, inventing a rule or reaffirming one, thus introducing it as a calculable entity (Derrida, 1992, pp. 24–25). It is for that reason Derrida sees justice as an *avenir* concept which belongs in the realm of idea. Justice, following these aporia, is a *"gift without exchange, without circulation, without recognition or gratitude, without economic circularity, without calculation and without rules, without reason and without rationality"* (Derrida, 1992, p. 25); and this described "madness", as Derrida calls it, is precisely why justice is irreducible from its ideal form. This unattainability of the ideal of justice is its third aporia.

One of the main threads in *Force of Law* is the interconnectedness in respect to causality between violence and law. Derrida concedes that the right to strike, specifically because it is innate to the law, makes possible a critique of violence (Derrida, 1992, p. 34). It should be noted here that, unlike Sorel and Benjamin, Derrida does not distinguish between the general political strike and the general proletarian strike as separate interpretations of the same right to violence; but sees the latter as a consequential revolutionary moment brought about by the unwillingness of the state in legitimizing the law-making violence of the former (Derrida, 1992, p. 35). Manipulating the law to become a new law and destroying the law do not constitute a difference since all violence founds law. Hence, he

reiterates that violence, no matter its revolutionary character, always will found a new law in its application (Derrida, 1992, p. 36). In founding of a new state, there appears a revolutionary moment whose law-making violence, in the suspension of the existing law, will call for a retroactive legitimization of its violence. In the moment of law's foundation, law's character is elusive to its maker because of the retroactive legitimization through law's conservation and the interpretive character it gains by the power to name. The same contradiction appears in war. The suspension of law brought by a right to violence innate to law serves to conserve the suspended law through violence in war, and the totality of violence during this suspension is legitimized by the law-making violence behind the ceremony of peacemaking (Derrida, 1992, p. 39). At the time of its exertion, violence is accompanied by an unknown justness of means which will be decided upon the emergence of a victor. Consequently, a critique of violence that is based on the means of achieving legal ends is impossible, because the newfound law does not recognize its predecessor (Derrida, 1992, pp. 40–41). One must, therefore, reject violence wholly or accept the unknowable character of the violent means in law's preservation.

The inseparability of violence's law-making and law-preserving character is highlighted in the functioning of the police (Derrida, 1992, p. 43). There is a certain ambiguity pertaining to policing, for in enforcing (and, to enforce) they also make laws, that in return necessitate their enforcing. In this chain of causality, one cannot distinguish between these characteristics of violence. This is especially true in democracies, since the democratic essence of

coercion means that the police is represented in each person anywhere the order of law is upheld; and it is upheld through this exact threat of the figureless, ghostlike omnipresence of police and the endlessness of violence available to it (Derrida, 1992, p. 44). This attribute is more damaging in democracies than in absolute monarchies; because the former bases itself on the separation of legislative and executive powers, whereas they can be embodied in the same apparatus in the latter. Therefore, in democracies the police operate both inside and outside of the law in spite of the claim, while in monarchies there is no discrepancy between the claim and the reality of policing. According to Derrida (1992, p. 46), this shows that Benjamin supposes pure origins that decay throughout history; in this case, parliamentarism as the decayed version of absolute monarchy. So, Derrida claims what Benjamin calls revolutionary actually constitutes a reactionary notion (1992, p. 46). Therefore, Benjamin by critiquing parliamentarism for the substitution of its powers to the police but in turn remain unable to control it, either sees democracy as a decayed conceptualization of law and its violence, and/or sees democracy as an ideal that stands *avenir* through the implementation of its decayed version, parliamentarism. As such, parliamentarism is estranged, or even in denial to the law-making violence it embodies by utilizing politics of compromise, through which the coercive power of their adversaries is legitimized in fear of a worse outcome. However, Benjamin clearly sees nonviolence as a possibility in private relations that accommodate the culture of the heart, trust, courtesy, and a will to set violence aside (Derrida, 1992, p. 49). The locomotor that assures nonviolence is the option of lying.

As we have seen, this conceptualization plays an important role in the materialization of the general proletarian strike, in which the guaranteed right to strike is used against the intent that it was granted – to destroy the law instead of modification. In that sense, the proposed action is inseparably similar to the point that it criticizes as the decadence or conformity of parliamentarism (Derrida, 1992, p. 50).

On the aporia of undecidability of law which constitutes the eternity of suffering that paves the way for the divine in Benjamin, Derrida constructs an analogy over the mediatory function of language in relation to the end of truth. For Benjamin, the use of language as means of communication brought forth "babbling" (Derrida, 1992, p. 51). This babbling resulted in the questioning of good and evil; and the tree of knowledge, therefore, served as judgment for questioning rather than the source of such knowledge. Thus, in questioning and the quest of definition, which is an appropriation of the divine, man founded the origin of the myth (Derrida, 1992, p. 51). What this points at is that the order of the divine is alien to the realm of means. Consequently, the universalization of the legality of means stands irrelevant to an end of justice as God is the decider of the legitimacy of means and the justice of ends. The explosion in anger with no pertinence to the mythical realm of means and ends thus becomes a divine end as a signifier and a manifestation of the sign rather than a mediatory use (Derrida, 1992, p. 51). Myth uses violent means to establish superiority to establish law; the divine manifests itself in the violence that judges law. Derrida concludes that divine violence suggests that there cannot be justice without opening the self to all

risks in good conscience to the undecidable and unforeseeable realm of the divine (Derrida, 1992, p. 52). This exposition of the self is interpreted as the sacrifice that divine violence accepts –a life in the name of the living-, as a life possessing a possibility of justness through the decidability given to it by the commandment rather than the undecidability inherent to law stands higher than life in a biological sense. Yet, rather curiously, Derrida fails to take into account the argument that follows it in Benjamin: self in terms of mere life stands inferior to the possibility of a just existence; however, if the definition of self includes the total condition that makes up the "man" (Benjamin, 1996, p. 251), Derrida's argument does not bear truth. In that sense, the sacredness of life cannot be attributed to a biological factuality, which Derrida accepts (1992, p. 53); nevertheless, Benjamin sees the end-seeking of justness as a mythical concept which cannot be superior to *Dasein*. This plays an important part in the conclusion that Derrida arrives on *Critique of Violence*, as Derrida sees this text through its anti-parliamentary, anti-state, anti-juridical threads -quite ironically by a Derridean definition of police- and the immeasurability of the divine justice plays an encouraging role in the rise of Nazism and the horrors of the holocaust, especially the final solution. I see this accusation as a terrible mistake in understanding Benjamin; as Derrida too acknowledges in *Force of Law* (Derrida, 1992, p. 41) Benjamin views "formless freedom" that sees everything in its power to be attainable and just as childish anarchism, which too would be quite a stretch in the least in defining the systematical destruction brought through Nazism, emphasis on the systematical. What can be aligned more

with the mythical than the arbitrariness of violence through law that has reduced millions of people and their uniqueness, their souls, their singularity of existence into adjectives, into numbers in a multitude of numbers, into mere/sacred life? To see the systematic extermination of the holocaust as a result of solitary wrestling with the commandment is to ignore how it was made possible, *in a state, through the state,* -not to mention- *in the presence of other states* would be missing the point of the concept entirely. One must remember that mythical violence arises from a position of power, while divine violence from the ultimate feeling of powerlessness. However, *Force of Law*, opens many doors of argumentation on theoretical conceptualizations of justice and law with regards to their functioning; therefore, appears canon in postanarchist theory of Saul Newman.

6.4. Agamben on sacred life - sovereign power and divine violence

While investigating Agamben's reading of Benjamin and his staple contribution to the literature of the biopolitical fragmentation between sacred life and sovereign power, I will be visiting his 1970 essay *On the Limits of Violence* and, of course, his *Homo Sacer*. The former is dedicated expressly to Sorel's proletarian general strike and Benjamin's divine violence, whereas the latter expands on Benjamin's observation in *Critique of Violence* on the relationship

between violence and the sacredness of life -without going further into detail but simply pointing at it- and establishes a fundamental connection between the two. Therefore, I believe we should follow the chronological order between Agamben's two works, utilizing the first to understand Agamben's reading of divine violence and the second to see what he builds on it.

The first claim of *On the Limits of Violence* is about the limit on identifying violence, specifically more so the justness of violence. Agamben (2015, pp. 232–233) asserts that this limit can be traced to two of our society's inventions: first is propaganda, by which the traditionally nonviolent means of language and its persuasive use is transformed into an exclusively violent means; the second is the theory of violence, which assumes a linear historicity and associates all violence serving a radical end with justness simply for its purposeful delivering of a prophesized overdue progression. These seek for a justification of violence that exists apart from violence or a product of it; whereas what needs identification is violence that exists outside of the cycle of means and ends, and "*carries the right to exist within itself*" (Agamben, 2015, p. 234). Conceptualization of a violence that exists separated from its seemingly intrinsic quality per experience to impose law and enforce it, however, cannot be divorced from its revolutionary quality that is to usher in a radically new history. Agamben finds an analogous practice to this temporal quality of revolutionary violence in primitive rituals in the form of sacred violence. The ritual was an attempt to transcend the limitations of their humanity to be able to engage fully with the order of the sacred and restart time through the shedding of blood, "*reaffirming*

the violence at the origin of their history" (Agamben, 2015, p. 235). The implication is that the people performing the ritual are experiencing the extreme hardships that necessitate the ritual to be performed not solely because the event was fated, but it was also brought about by their existence. Therefore, the ritual aims at severing the link of causality not through attempting to stop what had already proven to be unavoidable, instead through destroying the quality of their form which the event is destined to destroy. In other words, sacred violence and revolutionary violence differ from mythical violence as it is best illustrated in the contradiction of *nonviolent violence*: self-negation. Agamben explains this masterfully:

> Revolutionary violence is not a violence of means, aimed at the just end of negating the existing system. Rather, *it is a violence that negates the self as it negates the other; it awakens a consciousness of the death of the self, even as it visits death on the other.* (Agamben, 2015, p. 236)

In the light of this conclusion, Agamben revisits the primary claim of language as nonviolent means. The opposition between violence and language which enables the latter to be an alternative to the former is rendered impossible with the definition that is adhered to revolutionary violence. Self-negation cannot be explained or even

uttered[15] because the foundations of language belong to and refer to the realities that are now negated, therefore are without familiar context (Agamben, 2015, p. 237). It is perhaps the inability to refer with language that does away with the anchor that keeps the revolutionary subject tethered.

Agamben's *On the Limits of Violence*, as demonstrated, gives unparalleled insight to the revolutionary quality of divine violence, why Benjamin himself keeps from attempting further explanation on it and actively advises against identification, and why divine violence is an intrinsically anarchic concept. However, revolutionary violence is only one part of the puzzle. If we are to establish and investigate it as praxis, we need to identify a subject that brings about such revolutionary violence, specifically the conditions that forge such subject that is brought to the point of self-sacrifice to be emancipated. *Homo Sacer* does exactly that; by identifying the origin of the sacredness of life and its progress through time, the human condition in the modern state and its intricate function with regards to violence and its legitimation are unveiled.

Central to *Homo Sacer* is Foucault's concept of *biopolitics*. The Aristotelian divide between natural/bare life (*zoē*) and political life (*bios*) already defines a fragmentation within human life itself that is not cannot escape but call hierarchical or even moral qualitative

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[15] Agamben (2015, p. 237) uses the word "arrheton" in his explanation of language's inability of transcendence. Arrheton is a term that refers to the unspeakable in the context of ancient Greek mystical experiences.

assessments. *Biopolitics*, simply put, is the politization of bare life which is also the outlier for modernity (Agamben, 1998, p. 10). The inclusion of bare life in the city -as the place of politics- as its topic means that bare life is also excluded from the city, as the political life that is the rightful member of the city is that is not bare life but stands beyond (Agamben, 1998, pp. 11–12). Therefore, there is an apparent power dynamic -sovereignty- in defining bare life and its political excess. Agamben's original claim over Foucault is that the characteristic of modern politics is not bare life's politicization, but that bare life and political life become indistinguishable from one another (Agamben, 1998, p. 12).

> Everything happens as if, along with the disciplinary process by which State power makes man as a living being into its own specific object, another process is set in motion that in large measure corresponds to the birth of modern democracy, in which man as a living being presents himself no longer as an *object* but as the *subject* of political power. These processes – which in many ways oppose and (at least apparently) bitterly conflict with each other – nevertheless converge insofar as both concern the bare life of the citizen, the new biopolitical body of humanity. (Agamben, 1998, p. 13)

Bare life's exclusionary inclusion defines the exception. The exception is the exclusion from the rule, yet, because of its now exclusionary connection to the rule -owing its exclusion to the rule- is itself a rule, therefore is included (Agamben, 1998, p. 18).

Sovereign exception is the power to define what is inside and outside of the rule, moreover, where inside ends and outside begins, and vice-versa. What makes the juridical order possible, claims Agamben (1998, p. 18), is therefore its ability to form a relation with the nonjuridical, and owes its existence to this interactable duality. In regard to violence's relation with law, then, is that the exception blurs the line between the two, owing to sovereign power. However, as Agamben underlines (1998, pp. 41–42), this ambiguity pertains to whether violence posits the law or enforces it, but not whether it deposes it -such is the quality of divine violence-. Therefore, verifying once again Derrida's misreading that coincides divine violence with the Final Solution is groundless.

The connection between bare life and violence is attributed to the sacredness of life. *Homo sacer* (sacred man) is a figure in Roman law who is banned from being sacrificed, yet whose killing does not constitute homicide (Agamben, 1998, p. 47). Therefore, the sacred man is a subject of exclusionary inclusion. The sovereign ban excludes the sacred man from both divine and human law, yet the sacred man is included in both for its exclusion (Agamben, 1998, p. 53). In that case the sovereign power is wielded by all others, for they are able to kill the sacred man without impunity and without celebrating a sacrifice. This concludes that the sovereign is also the subject of double exception from both divine and human law. The sacred man and the sovereign are situated at opposite ends of the same spectrum then; "*the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially homines sacri, and homo sacer is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns.*" (Agamben, 1998, p. 53).

What this translates to in the order of bare and political life is realized to an exaggeration in the rites of *funus imaginarium* and *apotheosis*, in which a wax colossus in the image of the deceased -or more aptly, whom the death is owed- is constructed. While the sovereign's colossus signifies what is excess to the sovereign than the bare life wielding it, therefore is continued through it, the survivor's colossus is offered to death in his stead as he is declared *homo sacer* (Agamben, 1998, p. 61). Accordingly, Agamben (1998, pp. 61–62) contends that, for all death comes as a revelation of what is excess. This point is especially vital in connection to the self-negatory aspect of revolutionary violence that was discussed.

Moreover, bare life's politicization and the sovereign exception is extended to be the very foundation of violence with the conceptualization of the citizen as the imaginary[16]. In the Hobbesian state of exception, as Agamben points to (1998, p. 64), the relationship of sacredness and the sovereign extends to each and every citizen, which is then transformed into the sacredness of men and the sovereignty of the state. In other words, the citizen enjoys rights that originate from the bare life within; however, the citizen also constitutes a political life that is in an exclusionary inclusion

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[16] The citizen can also said to be an imaginal being because of the subjection that is prevalently caused by a Lacanian lack in the image of the citizen and self-perception, and the difference in between the two (Bottici, 2014, p. 96). The inclusionary exclusion defined in the biopolitical fracture therefore constitutes the individual as a citizen *lacking*; the effort to reconcile the pure image of the citizen and actuality of sacredness is the definitive lack of the individual.

with its bare life. National sovereignty allows such impossibility of distinguishing between the bare life that bears rights and the political that decides and allows the use of such rights as a constitutive part of the nation; therefore, the state of exception is extended to the whole of the people, awaiting the sovereign's decision on the threshold between the two (Agamben, 1998, p. 76). The biopolitics of the sovereign power dictates the limits of whom the nation is comprised, and by doing so, what life worth living is through the indistinguishability between these conceptualizations and their negatives. This indistinguishability lies at the heart of biopolitics where national wellbeing equates to the fight against the enemy, exacerbated in its most extreme historical example of the Third Reich (Agamben, 1998, p. 85).

> The camp is the space of this absolute impossibility of deciding between fact and law, rule and application, exception and rule, which nevertheless incessantly decides between them. What confronts the guard or the camp official is not an extrajuridical fact (an individual biologically belonging to the Jewish race) to which he must apply the discrimination of the National Socialist rule. On the contrary, every gesture, every event in the camp, from the most ordinary to the most exceptional, enacts the decision on bare life by which the German biopolitical body is made actual. The separation of the Jewish body is the immediate production of the specifically German body, just as its production is the application of the rule. (Agamben, 1998, p. 98)

The potency in Agamben's work is the analysis of biopolitical power through careful dissection of its elements and function, and his ability to identify at several points of history at varying effects what is essentially treated as the unique event of the Third Reich. This also includes the claim that sovereign exception survived the fall of the Nazi rule and was incorporated into the functioning of the modern state (Agamben, 1998, pp. 98–99). This incorporation is pertaining the "*dislocating localization*" (Agamben, 1998, p. 99) of the camp, which is to say that the space in which the exception is permanent continues to exist, in increasing numbers, in essence as the camp but changed in appearance and form. Agamben concludes *Homo Sacer* with a resolution that reassures the Benjaminian position: the contradiction of the bare life and the political life can only be resolved in their coincidence achievable only through abolition (Agamben, 1998, p. 100). Sovereign power that owes its existence to the contradiction will be rendered obsolete and dissolve in the presence of "*a form of life that is wholly exhausted in bare life and a bios that is only its own zoē.*" (Agamben, 1998, p. 105).

PART III

POSTANARCHIST PRAXIS

With the theoretical background now covered on both the ends we try to incorporate as the objective of this work, we shall now move on to imagining a postanarchist praxis that is fundamentally connected with divine violence. Before discussing Newman's perspective on postanarchist political action however, I would like to present feminism's radical struggle as a case study of a praxis within an anarchist framework. As will be discussed, through a postanarchist lens the feminist example grants a fine insight into emancipatory endeavor intertwined with a dialectical consciousness and post-structuralist concepts that were introduced in Part Ⅰ. Moreover, the aspect of negotiation, pragmatic compromise, and the reaction that it creates on the fixed places of power will be explored. The contemporary context of political action is invaluable for our later theorization, for we can take into consideration both the impact and the repercussion of their tangible applications.

7. The Feminist Example: Basing praxis on a post-structuralist motif

In imagining a postanarchist praxis, I find feminist struggle to be a great leading example. Specifically, by emancipating womanhood from the clasp of linguistic determinism of the patriarchal narratives, feminism provides us with a pristine precedent of anarchist post-structuralism in practice. In the defiance of the standards and expectations set by men, which are to be religiously followed, we see a juxtaposition of womanhood in feminism. Male-driven perception

of womanhood is destroyed while the endeavor is simultaneously reconstructed around the possession of the words and their meanings. The distinction between women functions as a prescribed patriarchal definition and women are constrained in the forceful realization and reproduction of this imagery. The rejection of the idealized women as a delicate and emotional being, assigned the secondary role of assistance and nurturing is foremost a rejection of the narrative of what is deemed natural. Whether women may be delicate, emotional or carry within an instinctual motherliness is unimportant when these qualities define a normative womanhood that marginalize and exclude women. The 'natural' inclinations and attributes of women form an imaginary totality to which the women are alien yet are obligated to conform to. Thus, through a Benjaminian spectacle, patriarchy possesses the same mythical character that the law does: it presents itself with an arbitrary violence and stunts through the stigmatization of the mark of guilt. In the 'natural' order of things, then, those who carry the mark of womanhood are doomed to a life of subservience, objectification, and atonement for their entire existence is summed up in the homogeneity of a word. Via this patriarchal definition the uniqueness of a woman's existence is curbed in favor of an imaginary of what a woman ought to be, which thus estranges women from both their individuality and the place they occupy in the plurality of womanhood. In this sense, women are classified as natural phenomena as is seen in the anthropomorphism of "Mother Nature" (Federici, 2004, p. 203). The symbolism of motherhood in this context defines a set of relationships adhered to nature, which in turn apply to womanhood as well. Nature, as a

mother, signifies a point of origin. An origin to which men are of secondary nature. It defines a distinctness as different entities, at the same time, signals a departure to be accomplished as a result of maturation, and self-realization. Thus, the nurturing mother presents itself as a challenge to be surpassed. Moreover, the Mother, although a nurturer, is a figure of authority. Maturity, then, is the moment when nurture can be had by individual means therefore the authority dissolves since the dependence out of necessity no longer persists. This also represents a change in the power dynamics. The challenge of dichotomy, once conquered, is turned upside down; nature becomes a source of aesthetic fulfillment, something to be cared for, enjoyed, possessed, and ruled over (Federici, 2004, p. 18). So is the patriarchal relationship between men and women. What a backyard or a public park represents in relation to the whole of nature through its re-creation as a sterile, manageable, groomed, and tended environment that comprises the same elements is also represented in the relationship between men and their mothers, and women. An aesthetically pleasing, delicate object that is to be possessed, cared for, and exerted power upon, which in an essence that await realization shares both the reproductive and nurturing qualities of the mother. *The Mother* cannot be conquered totally, nor the nature; thus, there appears a *need* to recreate and dominate a modifiable representation. This is the patriarchal mythical violence that defines women as a product of fate and solidifies all of life in a finitude of two possibilities with little difference in-between: servitude as womanhood and servitude as motherhood (Federici, 2004, p. 15).

As was discussed in the conceptualization of divine violence, what lies in excess outside of the mere life seeks realization. In the case of feminism, what laid beside the repressive qualities that makes up a woman in the eyes of the patriarchal society started to eat away at the mold of womanhood. How could this mold sum up her totality of existence if what fits in the mold was a sliver of what overflowed? I would argue that this negative construction of womanhood, where what lies beyond what is defined as 'woman' gives a more accurate depiction to whom it is prescribed, creates the anarchist basis for what it means to be a woman (Bottici, 2021, p. 219). Through this basis, womanhood gains an undefinable meaning of to be a woman. Womanhood becomes the sum of whichever qualities that different individuals relate to it themselves, rather than a homogenized narrative of the imaginary[17]. Thusly, the commonality is not rooted in a uniformity of existence, instead on the illegitimate authority of the patriarchy that forces said uniformity. Therefore, womanhood no longer defines an association through shared fate, but towards a universal non-place of womanhood that takes base from an individual experience of reality that seeks emancipation/realization. Without any of the moral and/or corrective prerequisites that gatekeep womanhood against women, it becomes infinitely more inclusive and emancipatory. Moreover, the formlessness of the definition not only

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[17] Utilizing Balibar's reading of Spinoza, Bottici argues for a pluralistic unity of being that is inseparable from the larger sum of what the individual is perceived to be situated in opposition, terming this interdependency *transindividualism* (Bottici, 2021, p. 222).

-almost ironically- is a better fit than any exclusionary to-the-point definition; but also empowers women to own up to the derogatory terms and change their connotations to reinstate them as pylons of further empowerment. After all, if those terms pertain to womanhood, it is in women as the signified that the term finds meaning. In women's embracement and utilization of the imagery of witches, for example, as a sign of remembrance and demystification of historicism as authoritative violence we see empowerment. Through the redefinition of the same imagery, which was used as an instrument of persecution (Federici, 2004, p. 170), women converge on the anarchy within the nature; a reclamation of a right to be indeterminable, and so, an emancipatory assertion of mystical foreignness, as witches among men. What is persecuted is precisely the indomitable character of the witch that poses a threat rooted in her distinction (Federici, 2004, p. 100). Consequently, it is shown that there is a persisting injustice that women suffer from that regardless of how different the forms it may take, stays the same in essence. That is to define and design and conceptualize womanhood in women's stead, and explicitly against women (Federici, 2004, p. 31). Through this, women's empowerment precisely points at the unchanging fact of the patriarchal character of exclusion within how society is arranged, and the inertness of the remainder of society when faced with injustice unmasked (Bottici, 2021, pp. 227–228).

What I am most interested in what this example demonstrates is the change created in the other party when both the interacted and the interaction go through radical changes. When women surpass the womanhood of subservience that leaves men in an obsolete position

of dominance while the interaction is no longer one of domination. The redefinition is political, and thus creates an array of political responses and positioning. In a sense, the alarm of purposelessness chimes differently for different people. In the two extremes of the response, as is true with everything political, we see a conservative response and an embracive response. What is intriguing is that both of these responses come from a redefined masculinity that resulted from the feminist endeavor. Since, as we have already discussed, feminism brought an undefinable quality to womanhood, the response is characterized over the perception of masculinity instead. For those who follow the same path as feminists, masculinity is also seen as a repressive codification in which the self is corrected by jettisoning parts that make it whole. Thus, they can also be emancipated by shedding this normative mold. It can very well be argued that the feminist struggle paved the way for the LGBTQ+ by dethroning masculine normativity from its definitive power over gender.

On the other hand, the conservative approach to redefined masculinity has taken almost a radical turn. When the dialectically antagonistic relationship between the sexes was broken in favor of equality, those who depend on the dialectic assumed that the dialectic stands with the roles reversed hence the redefinition. However, due to the non-place women occupy for their anarchic emancipation from the dialectic, the power structure necessitates a new dominant to the faux subservient position of masculinity. This reliance to outside influence and recognition towards one's own gender equates to a perceived distance between one's own gender and an ideal form of

masculinity as a consequence of romanticized relation with the past. In short, the conservative approach rebuilt the dialectic within masculinity; placing itself as the inferior and the incomplete or distorted version subtracted from an ideal image of superior masculinity. The idealization of an imaginary superior form of masculine is especially problematic because of the qualities attributed to the image of the 'alpha male' (Halberstam, 2002, p. 347). As the name suggests, the alpha position is one of domination achieved through a display of violence. Unlike the animal kingdom for which the term had been coined, this ritualistic test of power does not at all imply an intra-sex struggle for leadership, instead a forceful coercion. The difference in this case is an account of the perished individualism within a highly definitive group identity. As such, for the change in the conservative's mind did not constitute a need for individual emancipation from a blanket identity; on the contrary, the individual exists primarily as a member of a well-defined group while what lays excess to it is trivialized. Therefore, interestingly enough, while for the feminist struggle womanhood pertains to both woman as a singular individual and women as an identity shared by a group, for men it amounts to an either-or situation between the individual form of being and the masculine identity (Halberstam, 2002, p. 353). This bifurcation in response to the event begs the question: Is radical change only possible in the presence of an inescapable predicament of the oppressed?

As an important point of departure, inescapability demands a special emphasis whilst trying to answer such a question. This term has to be understood in its most absolute sense; describing the choicelessness

that one finds themselves in, consequentially resulting in the situation appear as fate attributing to one's helplessness against it. To the same end effect, nevertheless, the existence of one or more non-choices can be apparent. Non-choices are closely related to the Foucauldian theory regarding power and social discipline, with respect to the descriptive quality of power over perceptions of resistance. The illusion of free choice surrounding consent and obedience, or their rejection all serve to conserve a totality to which both obedience and resistance are inherent, codified, determined, and anticipated. This is why Sorel sees sociologists as a threat to the proletariat (1999, p. 129), for their claim to an objective wisdom to be shared with the proletariat while that wisdom is a by-product of the capitalist system. Consequently, Sorel advocates that class warfare should be made apparent to its fullest extent rather than seeking to remedy its brutality through diplomatic negotiations and bettering of the workers' conditions which ultimately preserve the system by obscuring its inevitability and inescapability (1999, p. 85). Only through the realization of inescapability an escape can be created that transcends the boundaries one is taught to exist. Likewise, we see Benjamin use the imagery of Parisian clocktowers riddled with bullet holes to convey that revolution does not aim to progress but tear open reality anew into which we are ushered (Benjamin, 1974, pt. XV). Hence, a revolution can never be foreseen nor directed, for we belong to a reality that will be made obsolete with the revolution. Our pre-revolution character, instinct, wisdom, experience are all defined within the limitations that not only capitalism but the whole of history which bore it has set out for us, that await to be transformed by the

revolution. In its alien quality, its unpredictability and transformation we must understand the divinity that is adhered to revolutionary violence, and its creative destruction. Only after this process of becoming one can begin to truly understand revolution, a new way of being in a new era of being, emancipated and enhanced, for the chains that bind no longer belong in here or now. The anarchic quality that makes impossible to communicate the vagueness that the idea of revolution is [non]defined through renders it individualistic for the particularity of oppression, emancipation, and transformation. The critique against post-structuralism for its nihilistic tendencies (Newman, 2010, p. 142) can be surpassed through this description of revolution; the paralyzing unknown of authenticity is therefore given an out: the unknown of the completely emancipated. In hindsight, Foucault's support for the Iranian Revolution compromised his theory by disregarding the element of inescapability and indeterminability. Without the reorganization of the self through nondefinition, one can overthrow a master only for it to be replaced by another, both literally and figuratively. Therefore, inescapability facilitates the breaking of the bonds between the self and the self that is created as a subject of governance. Calling modernism into question in a societal framework where continue to exist alternative pillars of authority to fall back onto will always result in a reactionary revival. For revolution is not an attack solely on the present to realize a different future, but rather the whole of temporality to which we are predestined. Foucauldian post-structuralism fails by disregarding history instead of transforming it, thereby contributing to its continuous flow. The messianism assures that the revolution cannot

be a revival of the past, a restructuring of the present or a progression to the future. It breaks the constants of how we relate to things that belong and include all of these three temporalities. This is why revolution is end-making. It is an opaque event into the unknown where one cannot anticipate or have expectations based on the known-present due to the complete detachment of the destination.

To inquire further on the temporal quality of revolution, it is best to reflect further on the concept of utopia as Benjamin describes it. Contrary to the prevalent inclination of placing utopia in the future, the Benjaminian conceptualization is set up rather differently. In *On the Concept of History* he utilizes the imagery of Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus* as the angel of history (Benjamin, 1974, pt. IX). The angel transcends through the time as we see and experience it, "*Where we see a chain of events, he sees a single catastrophe.*" (Benjamin, 1974, pt. IX) The angel fills its wings and tries to escape the horror that it witnesses. This, we call progress. Historical progression for the humankind has subtle differences than that of the angel of history. The present is a non-place, a transitory phase between the past and the future. The present is analogous to the waiting room at the emergency room at the hospital in that sense. The immediacy of the trauma has passed, yet its consequences are very much alive and closely felt; however, the overall feeling is one of endurance in anticipation of any sort of remedy, hopefully soon. Benjamin points out that structuring of the present as such makes it possible for the recent past to be absorbed and ignored completely because of the comparative terror that the further past represents, and the relief that time offers with a future that this all will have come to an end

(Abensour, 2017, p. 69). Therefore, present does not end, nor can it end; because the catastrophe pulses in every instant of its existence, creating terrible pasts to run from for as long as it continues. Every passing moment creates its consecutive defined by an endeavor to escape it while it too is a part of the catastrophe. However, the messianic drive is exacted by the intensity of historical suffering and not the effort to avoid it (Eagleton, 1981, p. 146). For this very reason, Benjamin claims that utopia should focus on the recent past that ushered the emergency of the present (Benjamin, 1974, pt. XVII). Only by clearly identifying the causality between the past and the immediate situation one finds oneself in can they break the chain of catastrophe and finally create the future. Future begins when the endlessness of the present is brought to a halt (Benjamin, 1974, pt. XVII). Ultimately, utopia is less about getting to an imagined future than ending historical progression so that the present does not become yet another past to escape from. It is nevertheless an escape, but not towards a future that one cannot arrive rather to a present without anything to escape from. Revolution as divine end-making is rooted in this temporal dialectic. The role of Benjamin's historical materialist rummaging through the past to spark the messianic moment -interestingly enough- coincides with Žižek's Hegelian reading of Lacan:

> One does not accomplish the end by attaining it, but by proving that one has already attained it, even when the way to its realization is hidden from view. While advancing, one was not yet there, but all of a sudden, one has been there all along - 'too soon' changes suddenly into 'too late' without

detecting the exact moment of their transformation. The whole affair thus has the structure of the missed encounter: along the way, the truth, which we have not yet attained, pushes us forward like a phantom, promising that it awaits us at the end of the road; but all of a sudden we perceive that we were always already in the truth. The paradoxical surplus which slips away, which reveals itself as 'impossible' in this missed encounter of the 'opportune moment', is of course objet a: the pure semblance which pushes us toward the truth, right up to the moment when it suddenly appears behind us and that we have already arrived ahead of it, a chimerical being that does not have its 'proper time', only ever persisting in the interval between 'too soon' and 'too late'. (Žižek, 2005a)

The postanarchist examination of the feminist struggle and Benjaminian theory both point toward the same temporal point to base the endeavor. This brings out an interesting point of discussion in Newman's postanarchist theory, especially on the subject of praxis and how divine violence is situated. Newman's portrayal of anarchism as an attitude and practice that needs to be sought after and intensified at every chance one gets, that which I refer to as attitude anarchism, seems to be in line with Benjamin's messianism. Both place praxis in the present as opportunities of emancipation that seek to break from the historical continuity by creating corrective/alternative outcomes of past events. As such, these practices, even if they do not end up in revolutions themselves, contribute towards the inevitability of the rupture by adding into history the experience, the hope, and the struggle for its realization in

the future. Žižek's analysis of the debate between Rosa Luxemburg and Bernstein on the premature seizure of power is quite relevant here: "*If we wait for the 'opportune moment', we will never attain it, because this 'opportune moment' - that which never occurs without fulfilling the subjective conditions for the 'maturity' of the revolutionary subject - can only occur through a series of 'premature' attempts.*" (Žižek, 2005b, pp. 52–53) Benjamin's reasoning behind not placing the utopia in the future is precisely this, to save it from the unattainable quality of the imaginary -or the divination- (Eagleton, 1981, p. 146). For once it takes root in the imaginary, the reality of the opportune moment will miss even the most careful observer, no matter how closely alike it finally appears to the imaginary, because of the same anxiety that initially postponed it into the future. In order to overcome this anxiety, and to be able to recognize the point of rupture one must not only be acclimatized to it but also be shaped throughout the process of its nascence (Eagleton, 1981, p. 48,51). Therefore, the praxis must base itself on the present to be able to attain its purpose in the future. For this reason, we can claim there is both a singularity and a duality to this process. It is singular, especially if we classify it as a singular process of becoming, something that takes root in the present to mature and take its final form in the future. Nevertheless, as discussed, the duality adhered to the means-ends imagery puts divine end-making into a future that is always situated out of reach while diminishing the process in the present to the confines of passivity that amounts to waiting for an *avenir*, which in turn breaks the becoming inherent to the praxis. Benjamin may be advising caution towards defining

divine violence in the concluding remarks of his *Critique of Violence* for this very reason; for the becoming not to be disturbed by the temporal separation of its present and future forms, but rather seen as parts of the same event that one can only truly appreciate as a whole in retrospect.

7.1. The Marxist Protest

The main contention in the Marxist theory against post-structuralism and therefore the postanarchist theory is aimed at the indeterminable authenticity of resistance which has a paralyzing effect on praxis, and the increasing inclination towards identity politics taking precedence over class conscience. Let us start with the latter, as the former can also be handled as its consequence. If we follow the same thread of the anarchistic base of self-identification that as Stirner and Foucault point to, then we can argue that positing identity at the base of the praxis does not necessarily end in emancipation but an alternative subjection that ultimately defeats the purpose. This is essentially why emancipatory praxis is equated with revolution rather than a rights movement; because as long as the system is preserved, the oppression stays within, taking other forms and ever reproducing with little obstruction caused by linguistics and semantics, if any. It is somewhat apparent a thread right about here that, as was suggested following a Sorelian thread, attacks that are not destructive but at best disruptive are, in turn, embraced by the bourgeoisie as a defensive position that can be established. This position resembles closely the

position that the employer takes while negotiating the concessions for the workers to call off the strike and resume work. The entrenchment that is posed as the absolute maximum that the capitalist can concede should be more aptly seen as what they are willing to concede, which coincides with the bare minimum. In that sense, the struggle of identity politics is rooted in the politicization of the faux position that the bourgeoisie sets, that ultimately serves as a distraction from an accurate identification of the causality that lies at the base of the problem. Ideally, it should be the less advantageous party that decides at which point they have achieved enough; rather, as class conscience is overshadowed by individuation, the inequality that is the defining base in this relationship is blurred and mishandled as if it is a democratic process. Rights movements, and particularly those established around identity politics, lose a vital amount of their emancipatory potential by simply agreeing to negotiate their cases, and doing so on terms set by their adversaries. Consequentially, the further the resistance is met from the desired condition, the more focused becomes the endeavor on that point of resistance. With that, identity politics end up exhausting the built-up tension; for a change in nomenclature does not at all disrupt the system, as the worker stays the worker in essence with no regard to who the individual might be and continues to be shaped by their unchanged material conditions.

A clear distinction must be made again, however, between post-structuralism and identity politics; despite the trend to associate the two by a relation of causality, it would be a more clear-cut approach to identify the latter as a distortion of the former through the bourgeois teachings of societal interactions, as we continue to follow

the Sorelian thread. The focus on identification as a process of individualization is a result of the permeation for the permanence of the order of things. In that sense, emancipation from repression is not achieved; rather, hidden under a couple of more layers of power structures. The most recent, and maybe the most absurd example to this statement is the CIA's 2021 *woke* recruitment video (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021), in which we see an LGBTQ+ individual explain how welcome and at home they feel, working for the agency. This, to me, illuminates perfectly how well adapted the ruling class is to the discourse; so much so that they become the advertisers of it. It shows that people of any background, gender, sexual orientation is not only tolerated but in fact accepted as a peer, as long as they are willing to destabilize foreign countries, waterboard prisoners, so on and so forth. Herein lies apparent the conservativism of the change that bourgeoisie allows for anyone to enjoy even a single crumb of a dignified life, that the institutions must remain overall untouched. Identity politics henceforth become integrated in the system of hierarchical power structures rather than disrupt them. That one of *us* comes to hold a seat of power does not and should not suffice, as doing so would be an affirmation of an inherent goodness attributed to a specific sexual orientation, and an overall illusion about the individual's affect over the social. It is important to also underline the effect that the position of the negotiator is not one void of power either. While approximating to the position where the negotiations begin, exactly because of how close the position is to the ruling class, the endeavor goes through conscious or unconscious changes. To be acceptable, to be negotiation-worthy, to be taken seriously

necessitates conforming to a certain reconstruction, the same kind that for an LGBTQ+ to end up working for the CIA. This reconstruction is to be embedded in the essence of the superstructure. In that sense, Derrida's fearful critique comes to life as this emancipatory endeavor begins to mimic authoritarian tendencies as we see an increasingly ruthless form of policing both within itself and towards its counterparts. Where a definition is shed, it instead frees up the space for a new definition to be made and with that a power dynamic to be established and enforced. Thusly, a new layer is introduced to the hierarchy, further obscuring the main duality of class warfare and its dynamics. This is exactly what bourgeois-distorted emancipatory endeavor looks like: it redirects and drowns the built-up revolutionary energy and tension by actively promoting a praxis that follows its ethics and teachings to end up with a new ecosystem of power that creates its own oppressors and oppressed, all of which works to conserve the system at a larger scale by reproducing it at several levels removed, therefore achieving alienation towards the largest common denominator with the immediacy created by smaller yet more specific denominators.

While the argumentation above verifies that a vacuum of power will sooner or later revert to the establishment of a hierarchical dynamic; herein lies the gist of Newman's theorization of the dialectic, especially that which had led us to Stirner. The caveat of such reading of politics is the axiomatic assumption that within the duality of the oppressor and the oppressed, the latter *is* the revolutionary subject. The fixedness that *is* defines, however, is only an acknowledgment of an ethos rather than a present factuality (Newman, 2011b, p. 203).

Thus, there is a perpetual motion of becoming between the states of the oppressed and the revolutionary subject; and as such motion defines a degree of change in the forms of being, any and all fixed positions claim a premature and mistaken finality. Identity politics falls prey to this by focusing solely on the immediacy of present, removing it from its context between the past and the future. In doing so, even with the certitude it claims, it defines a fixed place of power which is open to subversions of meaning and ultimately the creation of grand narratives. This non-consensual establishment of authority, -one might even call it a monopoly- over emancipation attracts attention from the bourgeoisie because the hierarchical structure means that there is a conservative element and therefore can be augmented to drown wide-scale frustrations in the lower segments of the struggle itself. The process of individuation described in postanarchism bypasses this firstly through the Foucauldian non-identification to reverse the effects of subjection, and secondly through the organic attribute of the social that is inherited from anarchism. Consequently, the individual is not pressured into the confines of one or more labels and, more importantly, a designated structure of representation in which they are expected to be a part of and therefore give authority to simply because of the reality of their existence. A resistance that is based on the individual circumvents the social pressure of the *ought-to* that a mass is subjected to, for it elevates to the social level not through contract but an organic concomitance and parity of wills exercised. Contrarily, plurality can only be achieved in a resistance with the social as its base through concessions to ensure a larger dividend that the mass can support.

Defining a minimum on freedoms seldom end up achieving more than that, a setback caused by the baseless idea of equal negotiators, even though it is always the same side that demands and the same one on the opposite side calculating what can be permitted.

It can be argued that the possibility for an individual to go through a radical enlightenment via self-reflection is merely another assumption of finality, for one cannot ever truly restructure oneself without considering the material conditions surrounding and affecting them. There is a certain truth to this argument. Nevertheless, without succumbing to the nihilistic downward spiral that this problem of authenticity this leads to, this anxiety can very well be surpassed by being actively exposed to experiences of resistance and allowing oneself to be shaped by them. It can therefore be said that it defies finality via a complete surrender to change. The paralyzing anxiety that surrounds the revolutionary subject, attitude and circumstance is thus negated by a will to transcend it. This thread, once before introduced through Luxemburg above, is in line with Benjamin's reading of temporality and even so with the temporality of utopia. It does not wish upon a future that defies time by not getting any closer as an infinity of present flows by; rather, it situates itself on the present shaped by the past, specifically to be able to finally advance into the future out of the present's grasp (Eagleton, 1981, p. 51). This is how I interpret Newman's postanarchism as it moves past Foucault to reimagine praxis in a more anarchistic sense, making use of the anarchist break from Marxism through a reading of Benjamin. The attempt at continuous resistance in Newman's postanarchist

theory as praxis is a multifaceted conceptualization of an attitude, that which I refer to as "attitude anarchism".

8. Attitude anarchism

It is somewhat common in anarchist literature that the phrase "anarchist attitude" can be found. It is often used to define an anarchistic outlook on things, sort of like a roadmap, that describes how an anarchist would/should behave in response to a predicament within the confines of that respective theory. In Newman's postanarchism, however, attitude plays a primary function that makes up a major part of the postanarchist praxis rather than a guiding element (Newman, 2010, pp. 176–177). The attitude's primary function is highly resemblant of the Stirner's the Unique in the sense that it welcomes interactions, forgoing any idealized expectation or fixity, to affect and be affected by them. As resistance is located in pure immediacies of here and now, and at the level of the individual, the anarchist attitude becomes a way to ease into resistance and gradually grow it through an alternative way of interaction. This points to a significant difference between the uses of the word attitude in postanarchism and anarchism. Hence, there presents itself a need for a term to describe the distinction. Since the attitude in postanarchism bears an action that facilitates anarchism, the reversal of what is defined by the anarchist attitude, I believe "attitude anarchism" suits this definition quite well. It conveys that it is the attitude that paves the way for anarchistic opportunities that can flourish from the situation, rather than a set system of interaction.

Attitude anarchism seeks to expand opportunities of resistance in terms of multitude and significance. It is a system that promotes the

individual to be aware of the power they hold over various decisions made in everyday situations, potentially inducing a halt in the system through negative action or inaction. The parallelism with Benjamin's reading of philosophy of law is certain; Newman advises that an anarchist should be highly competent in law to be able to operate and find within junctures leading to alternative results that were not foreseen by the regular functioning of the law (Newman, 2012, p. 326). In this light, attitude anarchism provides ample grounds for non-violence. It is non-violent; firstly, because it stays within the confines of the legality that the law defines however unorthodox the law may have been interpreted. Secondly, because this said disruption can even be achieved through a non-action. Similar to the discussion on the topic of the strike, a failure to fulfil the respective end of a contract cannot anymore be prosecuted. Willful disobedience can hardly be distinguished from incompetence, specifically so at the level of individual. Echoing Benjamin (1996, p. 245) once again, the Roman legal principle of *ius civile vigilantibus scriptum est* or the self-awareness against deceit continues to be an unavoidable reality of private affairs between persons. In the vagueness of a situation created in a clearly legal situation attitude anarchism achieves just that: to solve non-violently a private predicament between persons through deceit by taking advantage of the other party's lack of vigilance. A scholar's decision to provide free access to what is legally their intellectual property, a scientist's choice to submit a pharmaceutical for public use, a citizen's failure to comply with and assist law enforcement against disadvantaged groups are some examples of attitude anarchism at work. They are

disruptive because they go against the assumptions and the general experience of what they individually represent and are, to achieve an alternative that is unexpected yet perfectly legal. Attitude anarchism provides this distortion in the uniform flow of the system by creating anomalous divergent paths and expanding them through the effect that it has on others. A paradigm-shift is realized through an act born out of individual ethical contention that ripples through the social.

Whether attitude anarchism is violent, as in whether it provokes violence in reaction by the sheer amount of disruption it promises, is open for debate. Setting divine violence aside for now, it can very well be argued that none of the examples listed above define any sort of disruption for they start and end up within the legal sphere. However, I would argue that it is the scale of the act that defines the disruption it causes. A single person's defiance to the normativity of the law and its practice may not seem to challenge the legal order in a significant manner; however, even in an event like the proletarian general strike where we imagine the whole of the proletariat in the most extreme case of defiance, we are also talking about millions of individuals that exercise their legal right in a way that was not "so-intended". The proletariat is not a homogenous solid mass of uniform identity that only exists as a social entity; it also exists as the sum of a material reality that each person relates to in a different manner -no matter how considerable the differences may be- as an element of unification. If the predicament implies a necessity of certain multitude, it can also be regarded to be concerned with the temporal alignment of individual actions. This is to say that; attitude anarchism provides the individual with a reason for action without having to

consider the sea of possibilities regarding others' reaction. Instead, it promotes individual action through an individual consideration of morality. Thusly it guarantees that the individual's end of the bargain is always held regardless of the extent that it ends up reaching.

The secondary position of the social as an effect of the individual is a point of departure from both Sorel's proletarian general strike and Benjamin's divine violence. This inevitably leads to a deferral of divine violence as Newman too recognizes and allocates at the horizon of the postanarchist praxis. The poststructuralist concern that remains palpable in postanarchism dictates that a plurality of subjective truths and experiences may only organically lead to a spontaneous elevation to resistance in the social order. Consequently, the postanarchist view of divine violence is that it is an end-point that perpetual exercises of attitude anarchism will eventually lead to and become. This proves a controversial point for several reasons. Let us discuss firstly what an avenir temporality means for divine violence. The main reasoning behind attitude anarchism is to create pockets of resistance and a probability of individual transformation that takes place in the present; rather than an imaginary utopian future where conditions matured beyond question and revolution becomes on its own accord an inevitable material reality that defines a rupture. By nature of its scale alone, I admit that theorizing a total detachment of the two classes within the immediacy of the present would be self-defeating beyond reason. Therefore, it is logical that it stays on the horizon. However, while defining not only a related but a causative action that takes place in the present that will bring about that event on the horizon, does attitude anarchism really fare well? On this

topic, it is challenging to argue that Newman tries to reimagine divine violence on an individual scale that is capable of being achieved with a certain immediacy. Despite having some similarities that follow soundly the theory behind divine violence, attitude anarchism also has distinct differences that in turn create an irreconcilable gap between the two.

Initially, the function of attitude anarchism has to be understood in comparison to divine violence. I argue that attitude anarchism does not bear the law-destroying quality that defines divine violence. Although it follows Benjamin's thread in his explanation of why and how the strike as essentially as a right to violence was incorporated into the sphere of law, and how it came to be interpreted as almost a ritualistic tool of negotiation; attitude anarchism does not seek to utilize this as a point of departure from the authority of law. Instead, it actively seeks out to remain within the sphere of law. Newman (2012, p. 326) even promotes a particular "pragmatism" in approaching the law, e.g., human rights laws, which is self-defeating to say the least, to claim that some laws actually do function in favor and thereby are exempted from the inherent contradiction of its form of existence and enforcement. Attitude anarchism hopes to expand and apply the same reasoning behind Sorel and Benjamin's focus on the strike's uniqueness within the law as a concession of a right to violence as an end to law's violence. However, the unique attribute of the right to strike is its ability to serve as a point of propulsion outside the boundaries of the law. Because of this, attitude anarchism falls short of ever achieving an end-making character in its action. An action born out of a marginal interpretation of the law does not

define a break from the sphere of law. Thusly, we return to one of the initial problems, which is the Foucauldian question on the authenticity of resistance. An unintended use of the law defines a designated resistance, which does not disrupt the legal order, but rather works to reproduce legitimacy for it by either the act itself functioning as the enforcement, or by creating a need for the uniformed to enforce it.

Moreover, attitude anarchism in practice does not account for the divide between the bare life and that remains excess in being. Although having recognized the importance of the escape from subjection and establishing an anarchistic base of being within the theory; postanarchist practice remains neutral in dealing with the excess. By advocating an alternative manner of dealing with the law, yet not surpassing it, it is unclear how postanarchism can achieve secession. On the contrary, adding a moral nuance to operating under the governance of law could arguably strengthen the tie between persons and the authority of law instead of weakening it. Therefore, by introducing a certain level of conformity in dealing with the law and potentially challenging the anarchist approach towards law's authority, attitude anarchism develops a function that would indefinitely defer an end of divine violence. Divine violence seeks a threshold moment that a normally reducing action would instead create a reaction of total reclamation of everything that makes the being, therefore setting it free. In the creation of relative freedoms, the intensity of the yoke is alleviated and the more bearable we make it to be or seem as, the longer its reign we ensure it to be. A postanarchist praxis should strive to show and expand to the largest

masses possible the inequality and cruelty of the totality that people have come to accept as the sole possibility of life. The anarchist attitude should not be based on survivalism but a complete faith in emancipation as an assertion of will. I would conclude that attitude anarchism falls short in providing that.

If divine violence is to be placed on the horizon and attitude anarchism as it stands cannot effectively form a bridge between the praxis of the present and an end of divine violence, can an alternative praxis be constructed following the same theoretical pathway? I will argue that it is indeed possible to do so, and try to construe a logically and theoretically sound alternative to Newman's postanarchist praxis.

9. An Alternative (to) Attitude Anarchism

One handicap of poststructuralism is its conceptualization of subjectivity. Although subjectivity is an almost undeniable reality of being, it does not have to be the only defining concept that is impossible to work around. As it stands, it has itself become a fate-like locus that obstructs further inquiry as to what it is, a grand-narrative erected by those set out to demolish them. In some sense, subjectivity signals inequality. The inequality is that of experience or of the power that results after the experience comes to an end, and quite often both. Subjectivity of truth stems from the singularity of the experience; that which I go through and therefore understand is different from that which the other goes through and therefore understands. If I emerge from this experience worse-off, the power dynamic that I have with the other tips towards the other's benefit. This is because the other related to this experience merely on the level of perception, whereas I was directly affected by it. This kind of inequality creates an irreconcilable difference in the subjective truths. It is also important to underline that material conditions play an important role in the likelihood of the positivity/negativity of the experience and how one is situated in relation to the experience: as the beneficiary, the victim, or the observer. Therefore, the inequality in experience is determined by and reproduces other inequalities.

A main pillar of subjectivity is individualization. The uniqueness attributed to the individual feeds into an impenetrable conceptualization of subjectivity. Uniqueness carries a certain

amount of ambiguity that in turn relate to subjectivity that no experience can be experienced and affect individuals in a manner that allows to be communicated, least of all reconciled in a way that allows a non-reductive analysis. There is an increasingly common understanding that the human existence is built firstly upon the individual, and that the social remains almost an optional feature that individuality has to be traded in for. Every aspect of existence is specific for each individual, and there is an incommunicable gap of uniqueness of experience between every person. The prevalence of the belief that subjectivity is an inherently divisive and insuperable condition should raise some alarms in a postanarchist mind. Propagation of the atomized individual and its unique unrelatable condition by neoliberal politics should also mark a point of hesitation and trigger an instinctive disbelief. Unlike the other grand narratives that call for consolidation on the basis of selflessness, this one atomizes the social on the basis of inevitable disparity. In short, cohesion under certain terminology is promoted whereas for the others it is deemed factually impossible. The Marxist protest against poststructuralist politics was more or less situated as an all-out rejection of this statement. Contrarily, if we are to achieve mass consolidation on a non-hierarchical and non-imaginal basis, I would argue that subjectivity remains to be resolved.

If we accept that there is a unique quality to subjectivity of truth, and that we cannot achieve consensus in the absolute sense that transcends subjectivity because of the singularity of individual

existence, perhaps this is an impasse that constitutes its passe.[18] Examples to cases where individual subjectivity gives way to a plural rearrangement that makes possible to congregate around a singular experience in an analogous manner are rather plentiful. This occurs in social bodies where the individual feels a certain degree of association that allows a relation of *us*ness. "A family tragedy", for example, often defines how the members of the family unit relate to a negatively perceived event, rather than the number of family members that experienced the event first-hand. The *us* that facilitates a unity of how its members relate to the experience does not override the individual, yet determines the individual reaction to the experience. Although the plurality that is owed to the family in this scenario is specifically organic and arbitrary, there exists another condition that a similar kind of kinship can be formed in which the experience can be transcended. This other kind of push towards plurality is association through shared experience. Experiencing a thing in the same manner, that is to say everyone involved are similarly and relatively equally affected, can have a binding effect on the individuals on the grounds of a commonality of a fate-like event. Depending on the intensity of the event and how defining a moment that it produces, it serves as a base of mutuality that precedes

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[18] The perceived impossibility of resolving subjective truths should also be analysed in connection with the imperfect tool of language. Language as an incomplete, alien, predetermined, faulty, limited structure that exists as the main facilitator of communication and socialization feeds into the perception of uniqueness and insuperability adhered to singular conditions.

individuality. This Benjaminian function of fate is the basis of the class divide due to its inherent duality. Proletariat more accurately describes an association through the sameness of the fate-like consequence more than a conscious and voluntary congregation. However, with a certain specificity of conditions introduced to the system, i.e. with the post-Fordist system of production, the perceived sameness is weakened except outside the circle of people that work similar or the same jobs, that share a common space, that occupy the same place in the hierarchy. Unions fail to constitute a unifying factor any longer; although they are organized in a more specific fashion - according to industries and sectors-, in many cases a white-collar worker and a blue-collar worker even within the same industry are far too diverged and estranged to share a sense of fellowship towards one another. At the root of both their and the other's condition, overcomplicated and parted by an ocean of titles, jargon, routes of specialization, mannerisms, clothing, wants, different paygrades and material conditions, beyond all this clouding they both essentially share the exact same relationship with and occupy the same place against their common counterpart. Can a culture of disconnection be re-constructed to favor unity through shared experiences?

The two aforementioned phenomena that supersede individuality for plurality can be made to manifest concomitantly to bridge together the innate estrangement between the I and the other. The way to do so is through an expansion of the individual experience to the order of the social. The power of the general strike comes from its ability to achieve exactly this, in its expansion of the singularity of an event to the point that it affects the whole of society. I argue that a

postanarchist praxis, having established a focal point on the dialectical of the individual and the social, should strive to amplify the events that are meant for the atomized individual to be felt by a greater number of people. Thereby, the event can constitute a reality that is organically plural and associative rather than the secondariness of the subjective imaginary that a removed audience might possess. The usual process depends on the role of the spectator that is intertwined with the latter, which leaves the immediate subject of the event to become a victim and organizes around the collective response of the audience. Such detachment between the primary subject and the protest takes away the possibility of an emancipatory reaction and suppresses the anger of the mass in ritualistic and imaginary bases for dissent. In that sense, the feeling of community is established on an ad-hoc basis around the act of protest, as a seemingly involuntary affirmation -yet still an affirmation- of law's violence. Public outburst after the law's function only amounts to newer opportunities for the law to be enforced; the initial victim has already been rendered invisible by allowing the law to function, and claims consecutive victims through the same enforcing violence in singling out and claiming more victims in the protest that follows, all in the name of protecting the social order. It ultimately attains this purpose, owing to the fact that the sentiment that violence creates in those who witness it is transformative. So is the function of invisibility of the victim and atomized existence of the individual; far removed from the primary violence that encapsulates its victim within fate, we are only to see for ourselves its secondary violence in its enforcement.

A fairly recent and, from my point of view, a fairly well-pronounced example that goes against the grain that the previous paragraph problematizes was the resistance to forceful evictions in Spain during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The group La Plataforma de Afectadas por la Hipoteca (The Platform of Mortgage Victims; hereinafter referred to as PAH) organized in order to stand guard in front of the houses that were to be evicted by the use of police force, and in a number of these resistances ended up preventing the evictions from taking place (Marín, 2020). As the name suggests, PAH is comprised of individuals that have experienced similar or the same treatment at one point of their lives. I imagine that those preceded PAH's foundation found themselves in dire need of any solidarity shown from their communities, yet found themselves as sole victims in the end. This points to the shared experience as a binding factor in forming a community; but PAH's method of resistance also shows an active will to prevent it for the others too, therefore, a principle (França, 2021, pp. 66–67). Their will to defy the law's enforcement, and more so their success in achieving it constitute the aforementioned transformative change. They created an environment that truly reflects the terror caused by the law's violence for all to see, and not to be ignored as easily if the victim had been alone in their despair. For anyone that was peeking from their windows there was a spectacle of solidarity for them to witness in all bareness: a member of their community -someone who lives in a similar apartment, in similar conditions, who walks the same streets every day, who breathes the same air- was being denied habitation by force, in a time of ceaseless curfew caused by a global health crisis,

and there were others making a fuss about it. Others that probably did not share a street with that person, who did not have a real probability of coming face to face with them. Those who witnessed this event did not witness an individual problem, they witnessed a social problem. Their resistance sits as a palpable contrast to the mundane violence of the law, as a once unimagined alternative that is realized before their eyes. It gives the opportunity to see the inhumanity of the normal that we have grown accustomed to by the shining example of a humane action.

In a way, simply by being there and resisting in solidarity, those who witnessed it were inevitably made to imagine a scenario in which PAH was not present, thereby reversing the order of the imaginary. Hence, the utopian element adhered to solidarity is realized whereas the normalcy that is the law's violence gains a dystopian quality. Within this contrast we find the excess, the jouissance: persisting in upholding a principle of solidarity in total defiance of the promised mythical violence, thereby exposing its true function beyond the narrative. Praxis as such also constitutes a more direct commonality with Benjamin, as his theory of undoing the duality of truth and *doxa* is based on the latter's estrangement (Khatib, 2018, p. 143). Consequently, I believe that this example shines a light to how to reverse the assigned positions of the reality of the event and the role of the imaginary through resistance very well. Therefore, postanarchist praxis can exist in direct harmony with an end of divine violence by actively expanding upon the fate-like consequence that envelop the individual, to be shared first-hand by a multitude of people. By doing so, the experience is pluralized leaving no room for

the imaginary to set in through speculations of criminality summoning law's violence for the remainders' security, all to be deemed redundant and replaced by a unitary connection through the absolute terror of mythical violence. There is no shortage of law's violent function for the sake of violence in ways that push people into undignified and inhumane conditions and keep them there in individual solitude. The barrier of communicating an idea, a feeling, the terror without losing any of its effect in translation can only be made possible through expanding the experience to a point that otherwise bystanders are gravitated and pulled towards it. Thereby it leaves no room for contemplation, accusation, doubt or consolation; it happens to everyone with all its intensity and might, with such violence that it forces to tap into the excess. Then, a postanarchist praxis should work to render null the distinction between the terror of persecution and the conformism of the not-yet-persecuted, in such way that allows for both individual and social coexistence spontaneously without one in a position to suppress the other. In accordance with its principle of equal-liberty, postanarchist praxis should make felt the reality that social peace is broken, even if it is broken for a single individual. Only by working towards it that postanarchist praxis can expect divine violence as a revolutionary rupture.

10. Postanarchist Ethics

Before we set out to examine and discuss postanarchist ethics, I think it worthwhile to establish first the disjunction from existing forms of morality to emphasize the need for a postanarchist ethics. First is the morality derived from law. The assumptive logic that surrounds the law in its totality that reduces morality to legal legitimacy is overall deficient due to several reasons. One primary reason is the universal claim of law. In its equal application to a society that is definitively unequal in its conditions, the law serves to exacerbate and legitimize these inequalities. Resonating the Anatole France quote *"Poor and rich are equally forbidden to spend the night under the bridges."*, the law has no interest in the correction of the divide that exists in the society over which it rules; therefore, it gains a vital instrumentality of its preservation through its equal application, overweighing punishingly more over the poor and consequently as a petty disturbance over the rich. Material conditions define even the ease of access to legal justice, which is in itself immoral due to its clash with its claim of equal application. More so on the topic of access, the legal system is designed around a guarantee of alienation both in its intricacy and its consequential division of labor as a profession. Law's transformation from an entity that defines freedoms and obligations to a paid service nullifies the need to familiarize with it. Therefore, any morality that one may derive from law comes inevitably with the implication of an outside authority; a resemblance of such authority may be granted also in anarchistic settings owing to the expertise in a vast field, whereas morality does not constitute such

grounds for authoritative dynamics. An ideal of ethics should not be dependent solely on instruction, rather accommodate some leeway to be adapted to the specificity of each conundrum.

A similar disparity is also true for the field of ethics. Designated as science its path of progress is heavily dependent on funding opportunities, therefore directly linked with the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois sciences -through dedicated subfields- prolifically reinforce the problematization of individual ineptitude and/or consequent mishandling of matters that in turn serves to disregard it as an indicator of a much larger, systemic problem. Reminiscent of Sorel's critique towards sociologists, such an approach implies a need of a hierarchically higher position of a lecturer/knower/guide, who, in the process of acquiring knowledge had been estranged to their disciples. As a result, the field of ethics too become a subject of wild specialization and intricacy that serve to alienate and bar entry to the commons. Mathematized discussions on far-fetched simulations and contingencies that exist out of the public realm has instrumentalized ethics as a complex negotiator and legitimizer of capitalist interests against possible claims of public good and/or use. Born into and emboldened by its function within the capitalist system, ethics is tasked with turning a blind eye to the everyday repercussions of its failure and opening up new horizons of exploitation under the assertion of verifiable and provable logic. As such, since one can legitimize any conceivable thing through this means, it stands as an impure means for a pure end, rendering it an immoral base for morality. Another argument worth repeating is that the absolutism that ethics of morality enjoys declassifies it from

access, interaction, and verification as was numerously claimed by Stirner, Foucault, Derrida, and Newman throughout this dissertation.

Another contender that needs addressing is the option of not having a moral compass. This stems from the misinterpretation that anarchism equates to hellish chaos. This form of "*childish anarchism*" as Benjamin rightfully calls it (1996, p. 241), assumes an element of disorder innate to anarchism, whereas anarchism only specifically objects that order should be founded upon violent coercion. That there is a principle to social interaction, whatever it may be, shows a will and acceptance of co-existence -and possibly cooperation-, which is an objectively undeniable fact of life. To imply that one can continue to exist as a beacon of sheer terror, not able to accept even one's own authority over oneself defines a paradoxical existence. What is there to be free of/from if there is no foundation or limit that one can call and claim as their own within their selves? What would such form of anarchism hope to achieve? It is important to underline, however, the difference between the state of unboundedness that is used to describe divine violence and the sort of frenzied state that is mentioned here. The difference, as was discussed in reference to Derrida's critique, is that the former occurs as a reactive violence which is in itself an end owing to its cathartic quality; whereas the latter is violence as means to an idealized end. Where the former seeks an end to the violence suffered, the latter seeks the continuity of violence only at different hands. Therefore, this conceptualization of anarchism, due to its lack of a radically transformative element nor a consequent ideal that it strives for

through its practice, cannot be considered as a coherent alternative to anarchist ethics.

There remains just one hurdle before we arrive at postanarchist ethics and that is the striking tension of irreconcilability within the phrase "anarchist ethics". How can one define an ought to, a rule or any guidance without constructing an arche that stands over the individual? The reason to enumerate what anarchist ethics is not before moving onto this paragraph was exactly to answer this question. Morality derived from law estranges the individual from the experience, its lesson, and its burden via a threat of violence; thereby resulting in a transfer of authority and a vast amount of trust about parts of life that the individual is coerced to waive having their own experience. A similar effect is brought out by the field of ethics, yet this time through its claim of veracity. Appropriating universal good to the individual reality and immediacy of the experience, however mathematically sound it may be, separates the individual from the *rhythm*, while introducing an alien element of calculated means and ends which takes away the control over oneself. Nevertheless, not having any moral bearing is neither constructive nor sustainable. Impulsive unconsent is just as unmeditated as relinquished consent, and they both leave no room for the individual to have authority over their self. Therefore, anarchist ethics should not pass (pre)judgment on the act nor define a concurrent result -be it award or punishment-.

Although having previously discussed under the domain of the commandment as Benjamin refers to as such, the commandment does

not point to the ten commandments of the Old Testament. Instead, the commandment borrows the form that it is addressed, in a way that highlights the point of consequentiality but does not actively prohibit passage. As such, the individual understands that they will be cast some sort of judgment upon crossing, and only if they can make peace with bearing the full responsibility of the action they shall go further on. It should be vague enough to not condition the individual towards an (in)action, yet at the same time clearly paint the threshold about to be crossed. In other words, a moral compass should not work to build hygienic relationships between the action that is the topic of the commandments, as the divide between the imaginary and experience take form of authoritative junctions that build up to become narratives. Rather, it should encourage the individual to test the commandment, challenge and change it accordingly to achieve better-fitting results. In no way is the commandment a point of absolute guidance, for it would establish a fixity that would in turn break the individual away from his rhythmic motion through life thereby constructing authority. Commandment changes, as does the individual utilizing it; for two events in time may be similar but not same if one surrenders to metamorphosis through its creative Nothing. Thusly, one would contemplate decisions and actions in accordance with the benefit and the repercussions that would directly result from the interaction and directly affect the individual; rather than a shadowing total authority that sanctions such interactions from even occurring through the indirect, seemingly random threat of mythical violence. The postanarchist derives law from experiencing the act, to the fullest extent of its benefits and repercussions in order

to guide them through another time they might need to wrestle such ambiguity. Therefore, any form of universality adhered to morality keeps from the individual reality of experience and the uniqueness of the circumstances. Which is not to say one should disregard all of humanity's experience; nevertheless, one should not feel obligated to follow them, for these "anarchist laws" do not exist as pylons of authority over one's conscience, but as the enablers of the individual's authority over oneself.

In conclusion, a conceptualization of postanarchist ethics that incorporates Benjamin's invitation towards the commandment is not at all far from Newman's theory. Since the latter follows Stirner's and Levinas's footsteps towards a system of ethics that too ceaselessly challenges itself and sees this disruptive inclination as an assurance of sincerity and authority over one's own self, it achieves exactly that. As this approach has an anarchistic basis it accounts for the constancy that exists in change itself, therefore, it transcends questions of temporality be it before or after the revolution. To remove assumptive fixities from predefining relations and to truly experience the other in an absolute sense of freedom as equals to nurture and enhance the equal-liberty of one another is its ethical horizon and its immediate aim.

Conclusion

The subject of this research is an attempt to visualize an anarchist praxis based on the concept of divine violence. It has been shown throughout the dissertation that divine violence is inherently an anarchistic concept as per the literature on Walter Benjamin and the discussion that this specific research has concluded. Therefore, our aim has been to investigate an anarchist praxis that incorporates the concept of divine violence, critique their compatibility, and accordingly offer an alternative manner of realizing said integration. This dissertation is organized in an order that reflects my journey as the researcher to be able to communicate clearly a more generalized version of the theory first, then focuses on more specific authors and theories in line with the general scope of the research, to ultimately introduce the break which facilitates the connection with the following theory.

In Part Ⅰ, I have tried to establish a baseline concept of classical anarchism and post-structuralism to finally arrive at postanarchism, and more specifically Saul Newman's postanarchist theory, which cites divine violence as its inspiration in constructing postanarchist praxis. Chapter 1 introduces the classical anarchist theory through Bakunin and Kropotkin. Through the critique of the social contract theory, the human essence that constitutes the core of classical anarchism is elaborated. The anarchist principle of equal liberty is introduced as a core concept of autonomy that leads to the anti-statist plea. The break from Marxism in achieving a stateless society is

situated in the anarchist stance against the dictatorship of the proletariat, which breathes life into the legitimation of state power instead of deposing of it. The transformative break in classical anarchism is achieved through the reading of Stirner. Through Stirner we integrated the dialectical approach, and in it, the creation through negation and overcoming fixity. This leads to a rejection of essentialism and the Feuerbachian humanism in Stirner, for they establish an idealness far-removed and alien to the being which in turn encapsulates and predetermines the individual in its non-attainability. Instead, the individual is encouraged to embrace its creative nothingness as a constitutive element of their unique being and let go of the fixities that come to define the individual as a practice of autonomous power. All interaction thereby boils down to an unrestricted relationship towards encountering the contradiction within and consequently emancipating the self from it. Therefore, through Stirner we arrive at an anarchist theory that is not bound by essentialist claims but instead is consciously seeking these tethers of fixity as emancipatory practice. By doing so, we have also established a point where anarchism and post-structuralism overlap.

In Chapter 2, post-structuralism is introduced via its examination of power's discursive element. Lyotard's *grand narrative* as an empty signifier, in which the individual is directed towards a certain connotation within understanding and codifies the link between discourse and conservative ethics, establishes the connection between the Stirnerite rejection of essentialism, and post-structuralism. This is furthered by Foucault in claiming that these social connotations are constitutive of the individual subject in the

form of an internal agonism. The term *subjection* describes the repression of the self in itself through the reproduction of discursive power and its disciplinary enforcement. We also see a critique of humanism, this time from a post-structuralist standpoint, that once again touches on the fixity of the subject. Consequently, Foucault criticizes that the grand narratives such as freedom, individuality, and consciousness achieves finality *as is* in the individual without necessitating further contemplation over these concepts. The all-pervasiveness of power is thus masked behind an illusion of a rational freed-self, unable to recognize their own role in fortifying and reproducing power dynamics that in turn repress the individual. This point is also vital in understanding the criticism against post-structuralism as nihilistic because it amounts to a paralyzing anxiety on the authenticity of resistance against domination. The anxiety can be overcome, however, through *transgression*. Transgression works similarly to self-negation, in that the individual commits to their self-realization, resolving contradictions of identity through a process of non-definition. All definitive qualities adhered to the individual are shed, leaving behind an unalienable and undefinable residue which is the fundamental self. At this point, we introduced Lacan as our guide to the psychoanalytic origin and the behavior of the self. There, we see that the self is oriented around an inherent duality between a selfness and an inner otherness. With the process of self-perception that occurs in the *mirror stage*, the selfness coincides with the mirror image in the imaginary. The individual relates to their self through the discourse of the Other, as it is the mirror image how the individual is perceived by others. However, similarly to the non-definition

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mentioned in Foucault, this creates a divide between the self and its image as an uncommunicable difference, its constitutional *lack*. The lack is a dialectical concept because it is native to the self, yet is exterior because it cannot be realized even in language. As such, the lack is the undefinable quality that truly defines the self.

In Chapter 3, we revisit the two previous theories as they appear in post-structuralist anarchism. The introductory placement of Ranciere's analysis of the Jacotot method was decided, for it embodies very well the connecting point of the essence of post-structuralism and anarchism while pointing at an inadequacy of its consequentiality in politics. Ranciere touches upon the inegalitarian narrative that has secured its place as an axiomatic fact, and its place as the foundational truth over which the society is built. That it serves as the foundation necessitates its constant reproduction as truth, which also comes to define the individual in its belief and interaction with instruments that are intrinsically connected with it. Nevertheless, this inegalitarian assumption has a lack which can be utilized through an anarchistic ordering that allows negation. In other words, the inegalitarian assumption constitutes an egalitarian basis in its reversal. This summarizes the postanarchist theory of Newman because all of its principles are somewhat met in the analysis: dissolution of hierarchical power structures through the utilization of its inner contradiction of lack in a nonviolent manner, and realization of an egalitarian conclusion where the individual is emancipated from their oppressive condition. Newman's postanarchist theory echoes its forerunners in its criticism of the state by claiming that the reduced

individual meets in the state the idealized version of themselves which then materializes as consent towards subservience. However, as transgression is not compatible with equal-liberty principle that derives freedom from others' being in equal conditions also, and yet since postanarchism can only exist on the level of the individual because of the uncommunicable quality of the emancipated self, there appears a contradiction for postanarchist political action. Accordingly, Newman's political action is centered around civil disobedience and individual interaction with the legal system in order to find and/or create possibilities of emancipatory outcomes. Hence, nonviolence becomes both a logical conclusion and a necessity for postanarchist praxis. Newman's postanarchism refers to Benjamin's divine violence as the ethical horizon of nonviolence and Sorelian distinction between *force* and *violence* while arguing against a notion of revolutionary violence as necessary terror.

Moving on to the other part of the whole in our quest to incorporate divine violence into postanarchism, Chapter 4 deals with Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* to provide the background to Benjamin's conceptualization of divine violence in Chapter 5. In Sorel, we have seen that politics, specifically parliamentary socialism has evolved to an intermediary between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and consequently that the class struggle has been transformed from a historical factuality to an instrument intertwined with the bourgeois conceptualization of public peace. Following Marx, Sorel believes that the proletarian revolution can only be realized if the class struggle appears as a total inescapable reality; nevertheless, the bourgeoisie will go to any length to avoid this, including putting a

restrain on capitalism's progress. Consequently, public peace and social duty play an important role in creating a narrative of equality and a sense of unity to counteract the reality of class struggle. Not only do these concepts form a barrier of subjectivity in front of the proletarian action, but also limits it to a mercantilist bourgeois civility in the form of negotiation. In that sense, proletarian *violence* begins to resemble state *force* as it moves away from the emancipatory quality of the former towards the coercive of the latter. This also constitutes the main difference between the political general strike and the proletarian general strike; the political is used as a tool of initiating negotiations with a leverage to superficially modify working conditions, whereas the proletarian general strike strives to do away with the exploitation rather than try to amend it. The political general strike is characterized as the proletariat changing its masters, while the proletarian general strike is the dialectical break as non-violent separation of the proletariat from their condition defined by exploitation.

Benjamin builds upon the Sorelian premise with a thorough analysis of violence. The analysis starts with the duality between natural law and positive law, and their respective evaluation of means and ends. The legal system is built on the assumption that justified means can lead to just ends. In that context, the legal sphere is founded on the monopolization of violence by the state. We also establish that mythic violence as legal means reduces the living to its most basic element that is mere life. It can then be concluded that monopolization of violence and reduction to mere life constitute the element of fate in mythic violence. Agamben's work visited in

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Chapter 6 assesses this differentiative exclusion as the enabling principle of power. Accordingly, the myth of Niobe shows that fate calls upon violence that goes beyond Niobe to posit law and enforce it through Niobe as she is separated from life by her guilt. In Butler's terms, she is separated from the rhythm of life in her petrified state, doomed to exist only as an embodiment of guilt in a fixed state, accepted as fate. Lawmaking violence is what takes Niobe's family away; law-preserving violence fixes Niobe's life in that moment of violence, forcing her to always relive it. Benjamin also entertains the possibility of non-violent resolution of conflict, which he associates with language. There are two domains in which this is realized, diplomacy and the strike; however, the former in its origins and its ends is bound by violence, and the latter is violent because of its extortionary aim. The Sorelian distinction between the political and proletarian general strike comes to life here as non-violent means as ends in itself. In this light, Benjamin introduces divine violence as the antithesis to mythic violence. Divine violence frees from the guilt of mere life in a bloodless, expiatory, transient explosion of non-violence as divine endmaking. Therefore, it breaks the cycle of law-preserving violence and lawmaking violence by taking violence out of its mythic context, destroying fate, and returning life to its rhythm. We have also concluded that its appears as a sign of a messianic moment that constitutes a rupture in all of history, propelled by the point which the past is exacted in the immediacy of the present.

Having established the basis of Newman's postanarchism and Benjamin's divine violence by retracing and analyzing both theories, Part Ⅲ marks my attempt at applying this amalgamation to

contemporary politics and putting Newman's political action to test in comparison. Chapter 7 is a study of feminist use of the anarchist basis in their emancipatory praxis as an example of transgression's use in political action. We have argued that voiding a limiting definition can gain an emancipatory quality through an exclusionary inclusion; in other words, that a non-definition is ever more inclusive than the vaguest definition, for there will always be a part that remains outside of the limit laid by the definition. Although the anarchistic restructuring distorts the patriarchal dialectic, this alone does not constitute a complete break from it. Instead, in Lacanian terms, it curiously deepens the trauma of the lack in its counterpart, as if it tempted fate, and brings forth an impulse of violence. This is explained by an inadequacy of transgression where still exist undemolished foundational pillars to fall back onto and be recreated in a reactionary form. Therefore, a revolutionary endmaking had not occurred. Accordingly, we have concluded that an anarchist basis of non-definition and a historicity that is intensified at the immediacy of the present are vitally important to be accentuated in postanarchist praxis. Furthermore, through the Marxist contention against post-structuralism we have devised that revolutionary theory cannot afford to be anything but radical in its stance, for any attempt at pragmatic gains establishes a conservative bond with the system that goes on to become more and more definitive effect on praxis. Rights movements and identity politics have been given as examples to the conformist, hierarchical and exclusionary authoritative transformations that end up constituting fixities that the corruptive effect of the bourgeoisie

dictates, meanwhile it absorbs and imitates their discourse to strengthen its hold.

Chapter 8 is a critique of the praxis Newman envisions for his postanarchist theory. As we have demonstrated in Chapter 3, the emphasis on individuality, the broader conceptualization of violence and the general suspicion around the possibility of authentic resistance brought about by post-structuralism characterizes a certain inertia in postanarchist praxis. This inertia means that there is a lack of tangible radical political action until the postanarchist identifies a possibility of emancipatory outcome. I have chosen to term this as *attitude anarchism*, for it represents the manner and the domain in which anarchism is practiced except for opportunities of civil disobedience. Considering that civil disobedience is a non-action, the exception nevertheless falls in the category of attitude anarchism. Furthermore, I conclude that if we are to understand divine violence as the revolutionary unfolding of a new epoch, in its individualism, postanarchist praxis can only strive to bring forth divine violence rather than exact it with immediacy. Consequently, my critique of attitude anarchism becomes questioning whether attitude anarchism possesses the potential to invoke such transcendence in people. I argue that as attitude anarchism entails a pragmatic interaction with institutions of power, it cannot attain the radical element of revolutionary change, in accordance with our analysis in Chapter 7. However, Chapter 9 holds my attempt at imagining an alternative postanarchist praxis that may facilitate an end of divine violence, utilizing the same theoretical pathways. In order to do so, I argue that the divide caused by the imperfect tool of language that brings about

the incommunicability of subjective experience should be abridged. In shared experiences that the subjects are affected equally, in the sense of intensity and outcome, there appears a consensus that overrides the need to be translated to the realm of language. Therefore, I argue that a postanarchist praxis should disrupt the otherness and the imaginary quality attributed to victimhood by transforming the normalized excessive violence of the law from being an isolated act of fate towards an experience shared by masses. Only then the mythic quality of law can be exposed for the arbitrary terror over mere life it really is, bringing about the realization that can call upon divine violence.

Lastly, in Chapter 10 I discuss postanarchist ethics that our praxis adheres to. Following Sorel and Benjamin, respectively, I claim that postanarchist ethics should not accept guidance from law, the field of ethics, nor should reject ethical compass. I contend that Benjamin's position on the commandment's uniqueness is essential for postanarchism. The commandment, by its comparative open-endedness leaves room for the individual to freely interact with the commandment and the action it refers to without coercing fixity. The individual remains perfectly capable of changing the commandment, their action, and their self after the fact, for they have committed to challenging it at all costs.

Having gone over the dissertation, let us now reintroduce and answer our research questions:

- How does non-violence fit in postanarchist thought?

As violence indicates an abuse of power over an individual whose equality and freedom directly reflects on everyone else's, postanarchism arrives at non-violence as its logical conclusion. In line with Sorel's and Benjamin's conviction that revolutionary violence differs from violence as means to power on the account of the former's nonviolent quality, Newman's postanarchist theory does not exclude nonviolent violence. As such, revolutionary violence is neither automatically justified through essentialist presumptions nor prohibited in a sense that would void its anarchism; the individual is free to engage with it at their own peril.

- How can divine violence break the plight of violence's lawmaking character?

We have seen both in Benjamin and Agamben that the origin of history is associated with violence. In essence, divine violence constitutes a non-violent origin for the epoch that it consummates as it comes as an end to violence. Consequently, as it frees from the rule of fate, rendering all further violence redundant and unjust. This makes for one of the ultimate obstructions in imagining divine violence and its afterward; however, it is important to be reminded that such is the nature of revolution and the adhered utopianism, its indeterminable quality.

- What is 'attitude anarchism'?

Attitude anarchism is a term I use to define the postanarchist praxis in Saul Newman's theory. I argue that Newman's theory runs into a

limitation in defining political action due to its investment in the individual, and its devotion to finding resistance opportunities within the law. Therefore, I claim that Newman's postanarchism is confined to a realization potential only in the medium of the attitude. This is because the legal sphere is very well defined both inside and outside, as is the working principle of the law, leaving the only anarchically manipulable dimension inside the individual.

- Does attitude anarchism prescribe political passivity? In that context, can 'attitude anarchism' lead to divine violence?

One would be at fault in arguing that attitude anarchism is politically passive because I believe that it is actively involved in interacting with the law in the search of its lack, from which it can realize its emancipatory potential. However, it is my contention that this manner of interacting with the law and scraping calculated pragmatist gains should be subjected to the same criticism that political general strike was given throughout this dissertation. I would argue that both are attempts at superficially modifying conditions that in turn work in favor of the state's ends.

- Can divine violence satisfy a postanarchist justice?

If we bring together the reason that the anarchist ideal of equal-liberty cannot be achieved as the coercive establishment of the state's rule over people and the post-structuralist problematization of the self as a product of societal power dynamics, then divine violence in its transcendency and law-destroying quality will satisfy a postanarchist justice. It would be fair to claim that only divine violence can satisfy

a postanarchist justice because of the extensive and complex togetherness of the theories that postanarchism comprises. Divine violence is an-archic in the most absolute sense.

All in all, in this dissertation I have established an understanding of post-structuralist anarchism and its parent theories, investigated the concept of divine violence as opposed to legal violence, compared and contrasted extensively Newman's postanarchism with the postanarchist theory I have arrived at, and constructed a theory of praxis that is compatible with an end of divine violence. In conclusion, I firmly believe that like Benjamin's historical materialist, one should be committed to the search that would finally realize divine violence, as cryptic and unimaginable it may seem, it stands as a historical burden over all of humanity past, present and future.

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