The Red Ego

Essays on left-libertarianism, metaphysics, and political philosophy

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Preface

The term "libertarianism" has become heavily associated with the American conservative movement and the Koch brothers, who have co-opted the term to promote their anti-government, pro-capitalist agenda. This is without a doubt one of the biggest tragedies of left-leaning political theory and philosophy, as a dismissal of the term and associated work is a dismissal of a vast library of innovators and freedom fighters that are willing to take our dissatisfaction with the status quo to its logical conclusion: a radical reorganisation of society. It is important to remember that libertarianism has a rich and diverse history, one that stretches back to the socialist movement of the 19th century. Today, as we face a world in crisis, with the COVID-19 pandemic, Russian aggression in Europe, the rise of ethno-fascism in India and the dictatorship of China, and the decline of democracies worldwide, it is more important than ever to reclaim ideas that should belong to the masses and not to the few.

The principal duality of man is his endeavour to be free while he is trying to be good. A need for ethical guidance is paramount for every morally consciousness, and even more so when moral beings try to create a functioning society together. While one at the one hand wish for complete autonomy over one's own destiny, there is always the pressing awareness that every one of us influence the diversity of choices available for everyone. The autonomy we seek so with every living breath of our bodies must always couple with the painful realization that the world is intertwined, interlinked, and intercepted by forces well beyond our acceptance and preference. The global population did not sign a social contract that validated the adverse consequences of social media oligopolies, on the cartels of the mobile phone networks, or the widespread discrepancy worldwide on access to welfare, safety, clean water and education. For all its progress, the world remains an economically, politically, culturally and ideologically divided arena where only those with the resources are able to compete. If we wish to counter the rise of autocrats and defeat the evils inherent in the current global production system, we need to embrace ideals better suited to a political economy that is primarily ethical in its structure.

If you are anything like me, you are concerned with the development of global power structures. If you are like me, you will look at the world around you and feel urgency concerning the development of ethical political structures that can protect us from the adverse effects of globalism. If you are like me, you wish to see sound institutions that prevent oligarchies from eroding our society with deception. Lies told by Machiavellian leaders thrive in a global age steered by algorithms and codes, and at the centre of it is a flawed approach to free market economies that neglect the fundamental social need every human being face. There is a need for a renewed focus on political and economic philosophy in the contemporary discourse, and a need for empirically based, rational arguments for a global reform that incorporates the integral liberty of each human being with the socialist practices of redistributive welfare regimes. Libertarian socialism offers a possible framework for criticism of the current world order.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the deep flaws in the capitalist system, with the most vulnerable members of society withstanding the worst of the crisis. The rise of authoritarian

regimes around the world, from Russia to China, has also highlighted the need for a political philosophy that values individual freedom and democracy. At the same time, the decline of democracies around the world, from Hungary to Brazil, has shown that we cannot take democracy for granted, and that we need to fight to protect it. In this context, it is important to remember that the true democracy promised by libertarians, which is essentially what socialism and anarchism aims to achieve, has its roots in the socialist movement of the 19th century. The early libertarians were deeply critical of both capitalism and the state, seeing them as two sides of the same oppressive coin. They believed that individual freedom could only be achieved by abolishing both capitalism and the state, and replacing them with a system based on voluntary cooperation and mutual aid. This vision of a free and equal society was deeply influenced by the anarchist movement of the time, which rejected all forms of authority and hierarchy, and sought to create a society based on mutual aid and solidarity. The early libertarians were also influenced by the labour movement, which was fighting for workers' rights and better working conditions. However, over time, the term "libertarian" was co-opted by right-wing, conservative forces in the United States, who used it to promote their anti-government, pro-capitalist agenda. This has led to a situation where many people associate libertarianism with right-wing politics, and fail to recognize its historical roots in the socialist movement. To reclaim the term "libertarian" and its true meaning, we need to emphasize its historical roots in the socialist movement, and its commitment to individual freedom, democracy, and mutual aid. We need to show that libertarianism is not just about promoting the interests of the rich and powerful, but about creating a society that values individual freedom and equality for all.

At the same time, we need to recognize that the world has changed since the 19th century, and that new challenges require new solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, has shown that we need a strong, well-funded public health system combined with decentralised grassroot activism, and that individual freedom cannot be achieved without a collective effort to protect public health. Similarly, the rise of authoritarian regimes around the world has shown that we need to defend democracy and individual freedom against those who seek to undermine them when the hour is most dire. In this context, the reclaiming of libertarianism can provide a valuable perspective on the challenges we face, one that emphasizes individual freedom, democracy, and mutual aid, and that seeks to create a society that values these principles. By reclaiming the term "libertarian" from its right-wing, conservative associations, we can contribute to socialism as a political movement that is committed to these values, and that seeks to create a world that is free, equal, and just for all.

But why insist on this word, when one could use the term socialist or anarchist just as well? Simply put, it is because I refuse to let the octopus of capitalism coil its tentacles around that which it has no claim to. Libertarianism shall not and must not be associated with autocracy and hierarchical subjugation to giant enterprises. Because, after all, why do we need to criticize authority? Why do so many of us recoil at Hobbesian vision of the future, where despotic tyrants subjugate the masses and are legitimized because of the absence of physical war between the populace and others? Why is it that the pessimistic view of humans so easily dominates mass media and contemporary philosophical though? Why do we reject submission to authority? Is not authority sometimes a good thing? What if I go to the doctor, do I not wish for him to tell me what to think, and to respect his opinion on the matter, because he is an authority and expert on the field? Instead of answering this barrage of question one by one, I will opt for a two-part explanation of the concept to better streamline this section, and explain arguably the

most important aspect of libertarian socialism. I will attempt to answer two leading questions that enrapture essence of the issue. Firstly, what is the true nature of libertarianism? Secondly, what is political activity? This division is necessary. It is important to differentiate between the need for a pragmatic approach to reality and the ideal result we should strive towards through rigorous political and economic reform. Many utopians have a tendency to reject reformist and radicals' propositions due to preferences for Hobbesian views on the purpose of a centralized state.

The major tenet of all libertarians, and to a certain degree most schools of socialist thought, is that integral to each and all human beings' core there is a natural right to liberty and self-preservation. It is paramount importance to criticize the dictators and tyrants of the world, and reject the submission to men with iron hearts and iron souls. I believe that true libertarianism is a path towards socialism, environmentalism, and a society free from sexism, despotism, and racism. At its core, libertarianism values individual liberty and freedom from coercive forces. This includes not only the government, but also corporations and other institutions that seek to control and manipulate individuals for their own gain. In a truly libertarian society, individuals are free to make their own choices and pursue their own interests without fear of coercion or oppression. This freedom extends not only to personal choices, but also to economic choices. In a libertarian society, individuals are free to own property and engage in voluntary exchanges with others. However, this does not mean that the rich and powerful have free reign to exploit the poor and marginalized. True libertarianism recognizes that economic freedom can only be achieved through social and economic equality. Therefore, libertarians should be allowed to keep their integrity while supporting policies that promote social and economic justice, such as progressive taxation and strong labour protections. Libertarianism is inherently environmentalist. The destruction of the environment is a form of coercion, as it forces individuals to bear the costs of environmental degradation, even if they had no part in causing it. In a libertarian society, individuals are free to pursue their own economic interests, but they must do so in a way that does not harm others. This includes not only other individuals, but also the natural world that we all depend on for our survival. Similarly, libertarianism is a path towards a society free from sexism, despotism, and racism. These forms of oppression are all rooted in coercive power structures that deny individuals their freedom and autonomy. In a libertarian society, individuals are free to pursue their own interests and identities without fear of persecution or discrimination.

True libertarianism, a left wing, socialist libertarianism, is a path towards a post-moral, totally human and liberated future. This is because libertarianism rejects the idea that morality should be imposed upon individuals by external forces. Instead, individuals are free to create their own meaning and purpose in life, without being constrained by societal norms or religious dogma. This freedom allows individuals to fully realize their own potential and to live their lives on their own terms. Libertarianism is often misunderstood as a conservative, capitalist philosophy. With this book, I aim to recapture the term from the hands of greedy destroyers of the world, and contribute a little to the ever-growing intellectual tradition on the left.

Part One: The Ego in the World

Chapter 1: On the free person

Introduction

A common misconception in the general discourse surrounding politics and the nature of political activity is the presumption that political activity is fundamentally rooted in the historical nation state. Instead of opening discourse to alternative forms of political engagement, the discourse and its participants reproduce the continuous misunderstanding that liberty, freedom, and democracy can only exist within the confines of a party-driven or state-centric political organ. The discourse is controlled by most of the nation states most influential actors, or rather, those that hold the power to influence discourse. These participants include the media, politicians in elected offices, or those with significant capital and economic control. The discourse systematically, either consciously or through tradition, disenfranchises alternative forms of governance. They do so by position alternative political practices that take place outside the pre-established nation states judicial framework as immoral, against the commonly accepted practices that strengthens the nation states institutional legitimacy.

Through the continuous reproduction of a discourse in which the nature of politics and political activity is confined to a specific form of governance, those with significant power within such a system can effectively shape the meaning and definitions of certain concepts so that they serve the current systems institutional integrity. Examples of this would be to define political activity as, for instance, exclusively linked to party-politics, meaning that other forms of political activity that favours independent candidates might be described as "less" political than those that favours the party and the larger collectivist approach to representative politics. Going further, since most nation states operate on a basis of representative politics, usually through direct votes in more-or-less free elections, one can similarly contrast the representative systems as "more" political or "more" democratic than alternative forms of governance. Usually, they are contrasted with totalitarian or authoritarian regimes, but they can also effectively discredit direct democracies or forms of governance that puts an emphasis on grass-root activity, mutual aid, neighbourhood activism, autonomism, or other forms of radical federalism.

The consequence of this disenfranchisement of alternative forms of governance that are not predicated or based within the ramifications of the state is the stagnation of political and societal evolution. By consistently discrediting or excluding forms of governance that aren't necessarily hierarchical or rooted in nation statehood, one can ensure the stability of the existing regime, whilst at the same time contrasting those other forms of governance as disruptive, naïve, or infeasible. As such, those with power in a nation state has a practical, albeit dubious, moral reasoning for their desire to reject all forms of governance that restrict, reduce, or reinvents the relationship between politics and individuals, the state and the people, and democracy as it is presented to us and democracy proper. In our pursuit of a full understanding of what politics is, or rather, what politics could be, we must first star by redefining, or rather, rediscover what democracy is, and how political legitimacy is produced and secured by the current regimes of the world. Only then

can we fully comprehend the fundamental flaws and valid criticism raised against nation states and other centralized societies and ensure validity for those criticism that prefers alternative forms of governance based on the free and unrestricted acts of liberated individuals.

The issue with the current state of politics is the dominance of the state-centric approach, which restricts the possibilities for alternative forms of governance. This approach has created a stagnation in the evolution of politics and society. Those in power often discredit or exclude forms of governance that challenge the status quo, labeling them as disruptive or infeasible. In reality, these forms of governance offer a potential for liberation and freedom for all individuals. To understand the nature of politics, we must first redefine what democracy means and how political legitimacy is produced and secured by the current regimes of the world. This requires acknowledging that political activity and engagement are not exclusive to the party system and representatives. Rather, politics is something that involves all individuals, and we must recognize the potential for legitimate criticism from a broad range of ideologies and perspectives. One such ideology is libertarianism. However, in recent times, the term libertarianism has been co-opted by conservatives and the Koch Brothers, who use it to further their own agenda. This has led to a narrow and exclusive definition of the term, which does not represent the broader aims of libertarianism. The true nature of libertarianism is a broad movement aiming at the liberation of all individuals, not just those who hold certain political or economic beliefs. It is inherently left-wing, seeking to dismantle oppressive structures and promote individual freedom and autonomy. This includes not only those activities rooted in statehood but also those that position themselves outside the state-centric approach of the conventional discourse.

The purpose of this essay is defining the nature of libertarianism and political activity, so that one can understand it in a broader and more inclusive manner, while including those activities rooted in statehood, but also those that positions themselves outside the state-centric approach of the conventional discourse. I wish to illustrate that the legitimacy of the nation state and similar centralized societies predicate their rule on consistent legitimation and trust procurement from their governed subjects, and that by rediscovering the nature of democracy and politics as something not exclusive to the party system and representatives, one can challenge the fundamental issue of the nation state with increased validity. This essay is therefore an olive branch extended to a plethora of political ideologies and branches of criticism levelled against the nation state and statehood, be it to libertarians, black liberationist, anti-colonialists, feminists, anarchist, socialists, egoists, and even anarhco-capitalists and objectivists. Although many of these ideologies have significant disagreements, this essay aims at coalescing the major criticism raised against a discourse that views sanctioning and participation in the judicially protected status quo as the only legitimate form of political engagement.

i. Some essential definitions and clarifications

I do not pretend to have the literary nor philosophical skill to summarize the fundamental issues of political philosophy in such a short book. However, what I hope and believe possible to achieve is to formalize the nature of political activity, so that those critical to nation states, states, and centralized government can better formulate their criticism, and maybe, if willing, convince those in favour of such forms of government to critically re-evaluate their own convictions. Before we dwell into my argument, it is necessary and fruitful to establish some definitions, so

to both steel myself from the valid criticism that is certain to arise, and to establish conceptual borders, so that the discussion does not derail entirely.

Firstly, there is a need to crystalize the purpose of this essay. We must broaden our idea of what constitutes political behavior I wish to illustrate that nation states, states and centralized governments can, through their control of judiciaries, exclusive rights to enforce laws and monopolize violence, can effectively bar certain acts and forms of behaviour from being classified as political, thus denying a broad spectre of activity from being considered political at all. This is a significant problem, as I will detail below, and one that has inherent connection to the state's need to procure trust from their subjects.

Secondly, I wish to present the theory of perceived legitimacy, which states that a government only needs to be perceived as legitimate by its subjects to sustain its operation. This perception of legitimacy means that a government, state, or nation state can continue to practice its subjugation and control over a populace, regardless of whether the regime can be defined as properly democratically legitimate. This theory helps to explain the wide variety of governments, how autocratic governments as well as representative ones can secure stability over a longer period, and why political and societal progress is hampered by the need for stability for the ruling regimes.

Thirdly, I hope to coalesce a wide variety of libertarian thought in an almost apolitical analysis of its metaphysics, formulate a proper philosophical framework for further analysis, discuss the nature of states and arrive at a discourse on the path towards democracy proper. Currently, substantial time is devoted by libertarians to argue and challenge the ideas of other libertarians. At times, I do not think these sorts of discussion are particularly helpful nor interesting for the development of libertarianism as a *practical* political philosophy, nor does it help promote critical analysis of statehood in the public at large. By reducing the criticism of statehood to its bare minimum, to its essential core, the broad selection of libertarian thoughts can be united, and its argument can be extended in a proper, apolitical manner to interested others that might be inclined to consider libertarian thought, so long as it refrains from ideological rigidity.

For the purpose of this essay, I will use the term state, nation state, statehood, centralized government and current regime to refer to the wider notion of state that libertarian thought perceives as a challenge to the total liberation of the individual and humanity. Although imprecise and broadly generalizing, referring to these concepts interchangeably keeps the focus on the broader libertarian critique, without dwelling into the specific issues related to specific ideological varieties of libertarianism. As such, state is defined in this essay *as the ruling body that has sole judicial right to enforce laws and violence in a specific geographical area.*

Politics is defined here as the set of acts and systems developed by people to achieve a notion of how one ought to live together, or rather, *the total complex of relations between people living in society.* The primary concern of politics is to understand *how these complex relations between people leads to governance*, meaning the act or process of governing or overseeing the control and direction of something, such as a country or an organization. Apolitical means, in this case, are those *things which have no significant affiliation to a specific form of politics that aims to achieve governance.* When I then suggest that this essay is almost apolitical, it is because the critical analysis of the state's legitimacy and what political activity is does not suggest which form of politics is preferred as an alternative, nor what type of ideological conviction is best suited for the further development of society. Rather, this essay is both apolitical and political, depending on how one wish to apply these thoughts.

Finally, libertarian is defined as *a person who upholds the principles of individual liberty especially of thought and action*, an advocate of the doctrine of free will. Libertarianism is apolitical in the same sense as mentioned before. Being a libertarian does not directly determine a specific form of political action and ideology, but rather says something about what values are of importance to the person, and what issues motivate that person's actions. Whether you identify as an objectivist, egoist, anarchist or communalist, you are inclined to value ideas and concepts such as liberation, democracy, freedom of choice, individualism, and most importantly, an avid scepticism of statehood and centralized governments.

ii. What is political legitimacy? The two conflicting theoretical strains

Currently, there are two broad schools of thought in the field of political philosophy and political science that deals with the concept of legitimacy. In short, the two theories try to identify the measurements one should use when criticizing a state or governing body, and how one should evaluate its legitimacy. In broad strokes, the first theory states that the current standard by which one measures a state or centralized government's legitimacy is traditional liberal democracies in the first world. These forms of institutions are again measured against some ideals of how such a liberal democracy ought to look like, be it the traditional Lockean federalism or the contemporary European welfare states. Regardless of what form of liberal democracy is viewed as the model state, the field of political science and philosophy use the liberal, representative, parliamentary democratic state as the benchmark for which all other forms of government is measured against. The second theoretical strain states that there are certain affairs or decision-making processes that functions best without democratic input, and that criticizing them for being undemocratic is inherently nonsensical, since these processes were never intended and should never be under the control of democratic participation. The two theories put a different emphasis on whether a liberal democracy is necessary or even desirable for governance but agree on two core issues: the superiority of the state's right of enforcement and the exclusion of citizens from a significant amount of legislative decision-making.

a. The Institutionalists

The first strand of legitimacy theory tends to view the state's institutions as the primary model for all forms of government. One could call supporters of this strain the Institutionalists. If a state experiences problems of any sort, the institutionalists' first question usually becomes: can this decreasing consensus be attributed to poor institutional design? Certain decisions in the development of a hypothetical state can create widespread concern for the creation of a possible democratic deficit, and the institutionalists believe the problem to be best solved by creating better institutions to prevent a declining legitimacy for the governing bodies. The institutionalists raise five main concerns for the current development of states, which can often be attributed throughout history. Firstly, the continued integration of national and international institutions will lead to mightier nation states and organizations wielding far greater executive power than the nation-state. Institutionalists would argue that this is a problem that should be solved by strengthening the power of the state's institutions. Secondly, institutionalists believe that if the balance of power

between larger and smaller states' parliaments is too great, one should strengthen the power of elected officials in the smaller states. This imbalance favours the larger states, effectively causing an imbalance between the states' institutions and democratic control. Thirdly, institutionalists put emphasis on national policies, arguing that citizens have shown a preference for national political issues in favours of wider, global concerns. Fourthly, institutionalists believe that state institutions were originally designed to serve as representatives' bodies focusing on issues related to democratic input from citizens, and believe that the best course of action is to strengthen the current representative bodies rather than seeking to devalue its powers. Fifthly, the issues voted on in most states' representative bodies and the preferences of its citizens are rarely in sync, leading to the preferences of citizens rarely being translated into actual policies. The institutionalists argue that this is another indication of the lacking empowerment of the state's political parties and that more power to the elected representatives would increase the synchronization between the citizens and the elected officials. This theoretical strain favours policy reform proposals that encourage representative democracy, deliberation, liberalism and neo-liberalism, supranational organizations, and reform of the state's institutions and criticism of erosion of representative institutional power. Essentially, this theoretical strain defines the legitimacy of its institutions as granted by representative democratic participation in elections with more or less universal suffrage. Claims to ethical authority must include some levels of citizen engagement throughout democratic procedures if said authority is to be perceived as legitimate. As such, democratic legitimacy is granted to the state through the promise of selecting one's rulers through elections, and a promise that these rulers will work to strengthen their institutions and political power to synchronize their voting behaviour better with those of its electorate. However, some argue in favour of another perspective that rejects the need for democratic legitimacy entirely.

b. The Regulators

The other main strain of political thought is associated with what some consider adverse examples of centralization and statehood. Unlike the first strain, which offers some form of participation and transparency in the political decision-making process, the second strain rejects the need for democratic input for the state to function properly. Let's call the supporters of this strain the regulators. Regulators argue that the democratic theory criticism predicates itself on a misunderstanding of the regulatory function and purpose of certain political bodies. These scholars argue that the state should not be measured against the standards we apply to liberal national democracies because their ideal state is not a democratically diverse polity at all. Rather, regulators argue that the state is meant to be technocratic in design to serve the function of a transnational political body primarily concerned with the improvement and integration of markets, planning, and political stability. Therefore, the state should not be thought of as a system requiring democratic input to be legitimate but as a system conducting regulatory actions in areas not concerned with democratic legitimacy. For instance, regulators argue that globalization and centralization had decreased the problem-solving capacity of the process' traditional actors. However, instead of criticizing the non-democratic feature of the process, new actors and institutions are commended for their ability to create consensus on transnational issues and break deadlocks in the integration process. The argument can just as easily be extended to autocratic, dictatorial, or more totalitarian regimes. A body focusing on primarily technocratic issues, such

as one-party states or highly centralized governments, requires a technocratic design structure to function properly. These regulatory states generate legitimacy simply by existing, precisely because their functions require primarily non-democratic inputs. The regulatory state's features are like those of a liberal democracy. However, the areas where it has the most influence and developed its most efficient instruments of governance are non-majoritarian by default, such as social and economic regulation.

Those who support the regulatory approach do not completely dismiss the idea of a democratic deficit and recognize that this has been a persistent concern. Rather than focusing on criticizing the institutions themselves, this perspective shifts attention towards issues of convergence, congruence, and the importance of perceiving legitimacy as having faith in authority. The problem with the regulatory state is not inherent illegitimacy due to the failure of its institutional design to meet the standards set by traditional democracies. Rather, the lack of legitimacy stems from inadequate representation and education of citizens regarding the purpose and functions of the regulatory state. This lack of comprehension can be found in various states, and regulators contend that if citizens do not understand the benefits and rights provided by the system, they may become distrustful of its development and turn to alternative options.

iii. A possible synthesis: the theory of perceived legitimacy

Now we have summarized the two main strains of how legitimacy is understood in the field of politics. One the one hand, we have a definition of legitimacy as voter participation in elections of representatives. On the other, we have faith in authority and the technocratic skill of regulators. But what seems to be the central issue at hand here? For the libertarian, one can identify the core of the discourse to be that state's, regardless of form or function, need to procure legitimacy in one form or another to maintain their rule and secure the continued existence of their regime. The synthesis of these two theoretical strains reveals that there seems to be a steadily prevailing consensus that the state is suffering from, first and foremost, *a perceived legitimacy deficit.* This conclusion is drawn from the preceding explanation of the two theoretical strains, where one observes that there is, regardless of reason, a disconnect between the citizens of the state and those that govern.

I coin this as *the theory of perceived legitimacy*, by which it is meant that *a polity succeeds in justifying its power structures as long as they are perceived to be legitimate*, regardless of whether or not they are truthful towards their citizens or whether or not the polity's institutional structure can be deemed *ethical*; *as long as a polity is perceived to be legitimate, actors in the polity will act accordingly regardless of whether or not the polity is legitimate.* By identifying the overarching problem in the theoretical framework of most non-libertarian political trends, identified as a problem of perceived legitimacy, this essay can draw upon literature from both theories, and may therefore be applied as a convergence to the two, without excluding either contribution from either theory.

Following the review of literature concerned with how one should best operationalize legitimacy as a combination of the two theoretical strains, I think its best to *empirically conceptualize and measure perceived legitimacy as trust.* Trust differs from support for political activities, as trust reflects more so endorsement of a system and that the actions and balances of power within said system are proportional and ethically defensible. One can trust a system without supporting the

specific political decisions and policies. If one trusts a system, one consents to that system even when its output conflict with one's own wishes and desires. For instance, would one trusting a parliamentary democracy be less willing to act against it when a political majority promotes an ideology than one support is in power, because one trust that they will be held accountable by the checks and balances within the polity. Trust is therefore thought to lead to stability, support, and willingness to follow rules. Legitimacy is measured by means of public trust in the nation state's governance and understood as the best practical representation of the perception citizens has on how the state procures trust through institutional claims to legitimacy. Public trust can be measured in polls, surveys and interviews about the degree to which the legitimacy procurement of the polity is successful or not.

iv. Theory of Perceived Legitimacy & insights for the libertarian

For the libertarian critique, this conclusion offers the following insight. Firstly, all libertarians agree that the central core issue is that the state requires perceived legitimacy to function. This means that most actions perpetrated by the state and its adherents either consciously or subconsciously seeks to procure perceived legitimacy from its subjects. As such, one can equate the state's action to procure perceived legitimacy with that of a business seeking profit above anything else. The implications of this are plenty. A state's actions can therefore be highly immoral, corrupt, deceitful, and unfaithful to the preferences of its subjects, if it secures a high enough perceived legitimacy from its subjects to prevent the state's collapse. Like a theoretical situation where a business' only concern is to maximize profit, a state can be inclined to do everything within its power to procure a perceived legitimacy from its public. Secondly, the libertarian perspective is that the state does not have any legitimacy by default. The state, because of its dependence on perceived legitimacy to exists, is a temporal, fragile and at best stagnated body that prolongs its collapse for as long as possible. The state seeks legitimacy to sustain its existence, meaning that a state that is perceived to be illegitimate in the eyes of its populace will have to, either wilfully or by force, forfeit its exclusive right to enforce rules and laws. By virtue of being a temporary social construct, the state can therefore neither make universal claims to a territory, to the right of monopolizing violence, to judicial supremacy, nor to the superiority of its moral standards. The third, and most radical libertarian insight, is that if one individual does not perceive the state to be legitimate, the very foundation of the state's existence can be called, rightly so, into question. Since the state is dependent on perceived legitimacy to exists, there must be a certain amount of legitimacy required for it to survive, and a certain amount of perceived illegitimacy by the public that is needed for a collapse to take place. For every individual that perceives the legitimacy of the state to be questionable, there is an increased risk for the state's collapse.

However, the current state of political philosophy and political science is plagued by significant shortcomings. Legitimacy research has failed to counter the normative issues and the difficulties associated with operationalization of legitimacy as an empirical unit. There are two major shortcomings in the current attempts to *empirically measure legitimacy*: the first is the limitation of research by focusing exclusively on a specific form of legitimacy in a specific context, such as the legitimacy of liberal, Western democratic polities with a Rule of Law. The second shortcoming is that other studies only measure regime support as opposed to the actual legitimacy of the

regime, equating two concepts that aren't the same. Furthermore, one also needs to understand how legitimacy can be influenced in developing policy proposals to improve upon it.

These problems are not necessary to dwell on for the time being, at least for the remainder of this essay. This essay seeks to coalesce the central critique libertarians raise against the state, not offer specific policy solutions nor claim the superiority of one form of alternative to another. However, they are important issues that should be addressed going forward and must be so if we are to further develop the field of political philosophy and science for the future.

v. Political activity per the state

Now that we've established that any state is dependent on procuring a perception of legitimacy from its public, we can turn to one of the other central focuses of this essay: how a state determines what is political to procure legitimacy from its subjects. The tendency in modern discourse about politics is to restrict the understanding of what politics are and their borders to engagement and participation within the clearly defined and judicially sanctioned borders of a state's apparatus. This can be anything from voting in an election to peacefully protesting decisions made by the elected representatives. Rarely, but not fully excluded, does it also include the direct voting of the populace in referendums, or the recalling of elected officials due to massive public uproar. For the most part, the everyday acts deemed to be political are left primarily to either those who have signed up as a member of a political party, a legally recognized NGO or similar organization with an explicit policy focus, or those conversations and debates that discuss the aforementioned things. These conversations can be about policy, the behaviour of an elected politician, the opinions one might have about a certain political party or political group, and the opinions one might have about others' conversations about similar things. In short, what is political, per the established norms of the state and its conventional public discourse, *are those acts that are judicially sanctioned and tolerated by the state.* Note that none of the examples I've given have included two of the most political contentious issues in history: economics, and violence. And there are good reasons for it.

Defining the frames of what is deemed political or not is important for all ideologies and philosophies that deal with the ethics of social behaviour. If we can clearly separate certain acts and certain behaviours from the political sphere, we can better define those acts and behaviours are sanctioned as legitimate political acts, and which acts aren't. Naturally, these frames vary depending on one whom one might talk to, or in which context they're debated, as we shall see later. When we contrast the public discourse supported by the state, with an alternative discourse favoured by other, alternative forms of governance that questions this restrictive understanding of what politics is and ought to be, we find that the state has an active interest in restricting politics to those acts that support the functioning and continued legitimacy procurement of the state. The state has an incentive to define these borders as clearly as possible, as it makes the process of determining and identifying behaviour that falls outside these perimeters as disruptive and problematic. The reason such behaviour might be disruptive, and problematic is mainly due to the form such alternative forms of activity take. Some of them can be clearly identified and argued to be illegitimate and non-political if they take the form of acts defined as judicially illegal. If the acts are illegal by the state's definition of what legality is, the state can legitimize its desire to prevent and stop such behaviour by merit of its own judicial system. Since the judicial system

is the only allowed standard for measuring the validity of behaviour, the state can effectively secure a monopoly on the right to define what constitutes as political behaviour or not. Political behaviour is, according to the state, only those acts that engage with, participates in, or secures the ongoing existence of the state. This, in turn, ensures that acts defined as legitimate by the state continuous to legitimize the state, since the alternative is to contradict the entirety of a state's judicial system.

Continued participation in the state's pre-established institutions, and behaviour within the framework supporting these institutions, are used to procure legitimacy for the state from the public. The reason for this is that the active engagement with a system, as opposed to active rebellion and revolution against it, is taken as proof of that system's legitimacy by those that favor it. For instance, if you don't vote in an election, and a new party wins that actively seeks to reduce your access to citizenship rights, the supporters of the state and its legitimacy would simply ask why you didn't vote for a better party that would not have implanted the policies that are now persecuting you. The same goes for most other acts that the state determines to be legitimate forms of political behaviour.

vi. Political activity proper

However, as mentioned earlier, this is a very narrow definition of political activity, and one that does not account for a libertarian, or apolitical perspective. As defined earlier in this text, what a libertarian refers to as political is the totality of the complex interactions between humans and people in a society. As such, very few acts can be said to be fully apolitical, as most behaviour is so fiercely regulated, taxed, controlled, recorded, made to data and statistics, commercialized, and swallowed by the state's reach. Take for instance the active choice of not buying a product A if you believe its producer to represent certain values that you disagree with, and instead opt for product B, which you perceive this product to be associated with values or choices that are more important to you. This choice is wholly political, because it is a statement about the kind of world and kind of values a person believes to be of the utmost importance to them, and as such they choose to steer their behaviour and influence away from those adverse values, they perceive to be perpetrated by the producer of product A. The simple choice of choosing to buy product B instead of product A has suddenly turned into a political choice.

Some would probably argue here that there are exceptions, such as the unconscious decision to buy cheaper products due to personal income. However, not making a choice is not apolitical, but rather a choice to avoid engaging with larger structures for whatever reason that individual have. This choice is also political, because it is either a form of surrendering to the superstructures of one's existence, or an active ignorance that one prefers to the active choice of engaging with the superstructures to try to change them for the better. Those that surrender might do so for very good reasons, reasons that are quite understandable. Life is brutal, short, confusing, and unforgiving for most humans, and will continue to be so for the rest of the foreseeable future. The load on one's shoulders can be unbearable, and it is therefore somewhat rational for people to prefer to avoid engagement with the world around them. However, let us not pretend that this is not also a political choice. It is the same as not voting in an election. It is an active choice to be inactive and passive. By surrendering to the superstructures upheld and supported by the state, a person risks legitimizes the state with their passivity.

For libertarians, political activity proper is almost the totality of one's actions in a society. This, therefore, include the realm of economics and the realm of violence. By choosing to invest money or conducting trade in manners not always sanctioned by the state, one can actively make political choice whilst participating in markets. Examples of this can be supporting businesses the state refuses to acknowledge, such as serving blacks in white only restaurants in Apartheid South Africa. Or, using violence as a political tool, such as resisting arrest, challenging the state's monopoly of violence, or using violence to secure the destruction of illegitimate invasions or illegitimate regimes. The US revolution against the British Empire is often heralded as an example of democratic integrity and bravery but was undeniably an example of political violence against a state that no longer successfully procured legitimacy from its subjects. Almost everything is political because politics is the art of how we strive to live together.

vii. Democracy versus democracy proper

Finally, we arrive at the conclusion of what democracy proper can be understood to mean from the libertarian perspective. While trying to remain as apolitical as possible in this critique, and simply present the natural flow of the libertarian critique without presenting a definitive solution to many of the issues facing contemporary states, there's a need for me to underline a few concrete thoughts, so to prevent confusion among readers. Firstly, although I, the author, identifies as a libertarian, I'm not fond of ideological boxes, nor of pretending that every single aspect of every single political ideology that I don't personally subscribe to is without merit. It would be an outrageous lie to suggest that everything about modern society is evil, and that everything perpetrated and done in the name of the state has been a morally defunct action conducted by devils and monsters. Certainly, I would not pretend to be so ignorant as to suggest such a thing. Life is, undoubtable, improving for the vast majority of humans in a plethora of ways, and most of these changes have come about due to the workings of modern states. Some of these areas of improvement, I would even argue, should be considered apolitical, because they are goods almost every comprehensible political ideology would celebrate. We live longer. More of us are educated. Child mortality is sinking. More people have access to clean drinking water. More people have access to the internet, literacy is improving, and there's a steady decrease in open war among nations. These are benefits that are apolitical, however, the means as to how one achieved these ends are, of course, as political as could be. I just wish to stress that the following contrast of democracy and democracy proper is a libertarian argument, not a specific policy proposal for how we should aim to secure all these benefits without the state. I don't think any serious libertarian, nor human, polymath or otherwise, could claim to know the answer to. My job as a political philosopher is to identify the nature of our various political systems, and to present comprehensive, understandable explanations for the metaphysics of politics.

The libertarian is not so much concerned with the current regime, as with that a future regime should aim to be. Rather, the libertarian idea of political activity is predicated on what values should drive political activity, and how governance should be facilitated. This is, in of itself, an apolitical statement, because it still does not say what form these actions should take. However, the greater metaphysics of libertarian political thought that stretches above all forms of libertarianism, will be presented here.

viii. Statehood democracy

Taking the insights provided earlier in this essay, we can clearly see that there are as many different interpretations of what democracy means as there are different forms of states. Both the institutionalists and the regulators have different opinions of what democracy is and ought to be, but there are some major overlapping agreements that makes it possible for us to identify how democracy is understood and promoted in most states.

Firstly, all states agree that democracy is determined and legally framed by the judicial monopoly of the state. Democracy outside of the state's legally established borders will be discredited, or at worse persecuted actively, by the state if it is perceived to threaten the functioning and perceived legitimacy of the centralized government.

Secondly, democracy is understood, broad and large, to be some form of governance that takes the preferences of its citizens as the steering force behind policy development. Regardless of how democracy is practiced, this is the argument that even the most dictatorial of regimes favours. For example, the current Communist regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Chine claim to be fully democratic, by their standards. Here, the ambiguous and metaphysical will of the people, like in the most liberated Western democracy Switzerland, is the steering force behind the policy development of these nations. The key difference, of course, is the degree to which people themselves can vote directly on policy proposals, and the degree to which regulators make the decision for them, on their behalf. For the Swiss federal system, the people are, to a much greater degree than almost any other modern industrial nation, allow citizens to express the will of the people directly in referendums, whereas in the Chinese's case the commissars, regulators and technocrats acts from a perspective where they're able to better understand the will of the people than if the Chinese people were given the right to vote freely on policies.

Thirdly, active participation by citizens in the judicially established framework of statehood democracy is understood to be purest form of legitimacy procurement for the state. This is true for any state: following the laws and participating in the clearly established institutional procedures is an expression of recognition for the power and authority that backs them up. For instance, by voting in an election, the state can claim that you've signed a social contract that allows you to accept the outcome of the election, thus surrendering yourself to the enforcement monopoly of the state and its representatives. Participation in a system as an expression of that systems legitimacy is true in both authoritarian and non-authoritarian regimes. Even in a hypothetical libertarian society would participation in governmental practice be seen as expression of an individual's consent to be governed, and that they perceive the system to be somewhat legitimate. However, there's a key element not yet discussed in this essay, which is the central value for all libertarians, and the final point to be addressed.

ix. Democracy proper

As this chapter's end draws near, it is fruitful to summarize the previous discussion and what insight we have discovered. Firstly, I have illustrated that nation states, states and centralized governments can, through their control of judiciaries, exclusive rights to enforce laws and monopolize violence, can effectively bar certain acts and forms of behaviour from being classified as political, thus denying a broad spectre of activity from being considered political at all. Secondly,

I presented the theory of perceived legitimacy, which states that a government only needs to be perceived as legitimate by its subjects to sustain its operation. This perception of legitimacy means that a government, state, or nation state can continue to practice its subjugation and control over a populace, regardless of whether the regime can be defined as properly democratically legitimate. This theory helps to explain the wide variety of governments need to procure trust in their rule from their subjects, how autocratic governments as well as representative ones can secure stability over a longer period, and why political and societal progress is hampered by the need for stability for the ruling regimes. This brings us to the third and final point of the essay, namely, to coalesce the libertarian thought into *a precise libertarian critique*.

a. Citizen empowerment and the libertarian citizen

Regardless of what strain of libertarianism one adheres to, there is one common trend that runs through them all, and that can be used to criticize all state's attempts at procuring legitimacy from its citizens. Libertarian proponents argue that the only means of increasing the legitimacy of a system of governance is increased deliberation and citizen empowerment. Citizenship empowerment will be defined here by extending the realm of political citizenship beyond the borders of the judicial frames, as per the aforementioned critique of state's restrictions of political plurality. Judicial, as well as economic, violent, non-formal and informal settings by a civil society pertain as much to the actual individual citizen as do specific legal rights. Firstly, one should define the concept of a citizen within libertarian thought. Citizenship as understood in the nation state has developed and changed vastly over the years and remains an ambiguous and even contentious abstraction of member states' definition of citizenship. Therefore, this essay bases its theoretical framework on one type of citizenship: *the libertarian citizenship*.

Regulators and institutionalists would argue that citizenship are the included values and norms, as well as legal and political annotations of judicial citizenship of already existing national variation. Although ambiguous for many, such as refugees and stateless individuals, the official definition stems from the recognition of the nation state as its own legal entity in relation to a geographical area. The judicial system established a legal relation between the state, representatives, and citizens, clearly defining the rights, duties and responsibilities of each. Seeing as this essay is primarily concerned with the relationship between citizens and the state, specific national citizenship, subject to the contextual limits and criteria of the respective nation states will not be discussed or explored. In contrast, the libertarian conception of the citizen is that every human is, inherently, only temporarily restricted by laws and judicial barriers, and that the final, and only real moral standard for determining what constitutes political activity or not, is the liberated and voluntary engagement between free individuals. As such, to a libertarian, a citizen is anyone who happens to live in a certain place and wish to participate in the governance of the community and themselves. This understanding of citizenship is rooted in the libertarian notion that people have the right to decide their own life and should have the right to directly influence the of enforcement of policies that affect themselves. As such, the libertarian citizen is not bound by laws or judicial monopoly, but rather by the voluntary agreements and contracts they establish between themselves and other liberated individuals in a geographical location. An important similarity between the nation state's citizen and the libertarian citizen is the notion, although not always practiced by the nation state, that the laws decided by people in one geo-

graphical location aren't legitimate for another governing body with monopoly of enforcement in another geographical location.

b. Citizen empowerment

For a libertarian citizenship to be realized, one needs to arrive at a point where a governance body, or rather a libertarian government of sorts, have managed to ensure a level of citizen empowerment that prevents the monopoly of violence, judicial exclusion, economic autocracy and centralized power that identifies the vast majority of states. In order to avoid abstract notions of empowerment, the definition utilized in this thesis is borrowed from David Levi-Faur and Frans van Waarden's book Democratic Empowerment in the EU, which surprisingly enough severs as an excellent basis for libertarian praxis and policy development. Citizen empowerment is here understood as a subdivision of democratic empowerment, a concept that covers the political participation, democratic development and citizenship. In particular, citizen empowerment refers to *any act that seeks to provide new opportunities of citizen participation in a policy-making procedure.* This definition is practical, because it acknowledges that not just legally sanctioned acts can be helpful for increasing the amount of citizen participation in the long term. As such, democratic empowerment is measured by the degree of expansion of citizen rights to participate in a policy making process. For a libertarian, empowerment is of key importance to determining the quality of a democratic system's institutional design, and the degree to which citizens are adequately emancipated. Since most libertarians are unable to create new formal avenues for participation within the rigid judiciary of the state, like the creation of direct democratic processes or reshape the institutional balance of power between the state and its citizen, libertarians are inclined to empower citizens in an alternative manner. Remember, almost all acts are political, even if the current regime tries to stigmatize them if they're perceived to be threating. It is not for me to say what is the ideal praxis for libertarians to achieve long term success, although I can have my own reservations towards certain means to achieve certain ends. The important point is that a libertarian views citizen empowerment as the primary means to achieve a fully free society.

c. Consent and democracy proper

The notion of legitimacy discussed in this essay has a basis in the conceptualization as legitimacy being conferred by citizens and / or eligible voters granting consent to representatives to govern them, which is a down-up approach with an emphasis on citizens, and not a top-down view that positions the state's institutions as the most important actors. I also assume consent only to be possible if the person is adequately informed on the choice they're making. An approach that focus on the conditions of a libertarian governance body must start by recognizing that most libertarians are unable to implement democratic reform directly and have to rely on their own projects in order to stimulate political engagement. In short, citizens are unable to actively create the change they wish to see due to the rigidity of the state's judicial and enforcement monopoly. Furthermore, citizen consent does not have to be granted exclusively through referendums and elections but could also be secured by reaching consensus through a deliberative process including the relevant actors, such as empowering or informing citizens. Thus, the focus for libertarians, in my own opinion, should be on how to increase inclusion of citizens in the

agenda setting and decisions making process; consent, in particular, is viewed as an extension of democracy and therefore as an extension of the democratic legitimacy of a political system.

Following the arguments put forth in this essay, the coalesced libertarian critique of the state is that democracy is not possible within the borders of the state's monopoly on enforcement, simply because citizens are not empowered enough to grant consent to the governing bodies of the state for them to enforce their rules and laws. As such, democracy proper is not possible in a current society. Democracy is understood, and reformulated to serve the purpose of a wide variety of governing systems, but none of them fully achieves a *system* of democracy proper. *Democracy proper is here then understood to be a democratic system where free individuals have universal right of participation in the agenda setting and policy development of a specific geographical location.* The geographical constraint is necessary to ensure that democratic decision-making only concerns those that are directly affected by them, and that its practical plausible for people to participate in the various forums, meetings, assemblies, and extra-parliamentary procedures that might take form in such a system.

x. The road forward.

I do not claim for a second that I know which form of praxis is best suited to realize the libertarian agenda, nor do I pretend to know what an actual libertarian society might look like. Many might be confused by the usage of libertarianism in the same sentences as governance and government, but this is largely due to, I fear, a public misconception of what libertarianism is and what it strives to achieve. Most libertarians are just as concerned, if not more, with the security and wellbeing of citizens as most statists are. It just so happens that they perceive the liberation of the individual to be the highest virtue, and therefore they just so happen to be in constant conflict with all hierarchical structure that claims exclusive rights on their behalf. It should also be stated that although I wished to avoid comparative analysis of the various libertarian strains of thought in this essay, I do acknowledge the need for such discussions and arguments for the various ideas to prosper. I just find that such arguments are better suited for other texts, not one such as this that seeks to establish the general principles of libertarian metaphysics.

However, I do, as any other individual, have my own convictions and beliefs, that greatly shape my philosophy and how I perceive the road forward for the libertarian movement. A suggestion I have that I personally believe to be of utmost benefit to the libertarian philosophy, is that education and enlightenment of as many people as possible. Education and academic training are some of the primary drivers for creating a more liberated society. Increased compliance with a regime follows from enhanced participation by the public, particularly in situations where network governance is utilized as a means to create binding resolutions for its members and relevant actors. Due to the multi-level governance structure of most states, there are multiple points during the decision making and agenda setting process that citizens could potentially participate, like through referendums but also through promotion of a proper democratic culture. By educating and training individuals in various skills that would empower them, the balance of power between the state and citizens will shift, and hopefully lead to situations where democracy proper can develop, and libertarian freedom can have a chance to prosper.

Chapter 2: On the definition of libertarianism, or the essence of libertarian metaphysics.

i. Introduction

Few concepts seem to have such a clear split in definitions between the different sides of the Atlantic Ocean as does the term libertarian. For the contemporary political spokespersons and journalists, the term is almost exclusively used to refer to laissez-faire capitalism and varieties of republicanism and, although rarely, anarchist capitalism. If one turns to the European scholarly traditions, the term almost exclusively refer to the rich tradition of anti-authoritarian socialism, embodied by worker controlled industry, anarchism, anti-statists and reformulation of the relationship between markets and individuals as one based upon power over the means of production, wage slavery, syndicalism and radical unionism. Further still is the term convoluted by fringe or mainly theoretical incarnations of libertarian values, stemming from either one or both traditions on opposite sides of the ocean. Individualist anarchist, egoists, objectivists, the Libertarian party, the Tea Party, libertarian conservatives, libertarian communists, and a multitude of other varieties that all claim to be part of the same tradition. Some of these ideologies claim to be at the opposite side of a political spectrum, whereas others open for the possibility of co-existence of multiple forms of libertarianism at the same time. Others view it as a purely anti-statist ideology, whereas others still view it as to be an expression of a limited but not fully absent government. Some claim that libertarianism is an exclusively socialist tradition, and others view it as an exclusively capitalist tradition. Some libertarians are progressive, others are conservative. Yet, they all claim to belong to a tradition that is fully individualistic and focused on the liberation of a human's freedom.

Defining libertarianism is important for philosophical reasons, not just for the sake of maintaining a coherent discourse. One thing is being the victim of presumptions when you describe yourself as a libertarian, another thing is the application of libertarianism as a viable concept in political philosophy and research. While it is good that a term has many interpretations, it can also lead to pitfalls that limit its application as a functional term in philosophical discourse, political science, and activism for certain values and ideas. Policy development can stagnate, political and social development crumble, and the very term risk being washed out to the point where it no longer offers any substance. I acknowledge that libertarianism faces the same challenges as most other metaphysical terms and systems, namely the problem of language and containing the full meaning of a collective understanding of a concept to a few set frames. Cultural developments, societal changes, and the evolution of language as a system of communications necessarily leads to confusion. However, there remains a need for concrete, or at least somewhat rigid, definitions if research of such terms is to continue. Scientific and philosophical inquiry of the nature of lib-

ertarian politics can only push forward if it has a foundation of terms and axioms that allow for continued expansion of knowledge. In short, there is a need for a consistent analysis of what libertarianism is, and into what its nature and core are.

While some perceive it to be fundamentally impossible to reunite the various libertarian traditions due to their significant ideological inequalities, the contentiousness of some of their core beliefs, and the historical usage of the term, I argue here that this is precisely why libertarianism as a broader movement and as a term requires a reformulation that accommodates the wide plurality of its use, and allows for each tradition to further build upon universal libertarian axioms that they can in turn reinforce with the specificities of their respective ideology. In this sense, this essay is an apolitical attempt at defining libertarianism, viewing it rather as a metaphysical statement about existence and human beings' relations to it, instead of an ethical or political system. These dimensions of libertarianism are, as I shall demonstrate in this essay, issues left to decide by the various incarnations of libertarianism, and not for the metaphysics themselves to decide. Therefore, I will argue for a metaphysical definition of libertarianism, or rather of *the libertarian personage*, rather than for a specific political ideology or ethical system. Although it is true that the ethics and political philosophy derives from libertarian metaphysics, they cannot claim an exclusive right to the libertarian term, nor what the correct way of how the unique ego's perception and subsequent expression of the term is.

ii. History of the term, etymology and two main currents

This essay is not a historical recollection of the term "libertarian," nor is it an attempt to use secondary sources and pre-established notions of libertarianism as legitimation for one definition or the other. Rather, it is an inquiry into the core nature of libertarianism and what one can say about its metaphysics. However, a short historical revision is necessary to understand the development of the term and how it evolved to encompass such a wide variety of ideologies. This is necessary to illustrate the diversity of expressions of libertarianism, and for us to locate a common thread that runs through this wide spectrum. Secondly, we need to refer to historical developments, since libertarian is understood to be a *concept*, meaning an expression of an idea through language seeking to embody and relate a certain or several abstract thoughts, and a certain or several meanings. Concepts are necessary for human beings to effectively express their wills to other humans, who then through perception of the new information presented through the concept, can more effectively condensed, and further develop information into knowledge, which can then be dispensed back again to other humans through a series of causal relationships of information and knowledge exchanges. Since the word "libertarianism", therefore, must refer to a specific set of ideas or abstract thoughts, condensed into a concept, we must treat it as an expression of multiple unique egos' wills, not as a singular entity. Rather, concepts such as "libertarianism" are expressions of our coalesced or singular comprehension of a certain set of ideas or abstract thoughts.

Living entities themselves cannot be concepts, although they can express themselves in a manner that either relates to or embodies certain concepts. For instance, a person can act out or express what they believe to be libertarianism through their acts, but they cannot *become libertarianism*, meaning transcending from the existence of a human being to an abstract, wholly immaterial collection of ideas and notions. Human beings are restricted in their existence in that

they can only ever be human beings, and not something immaterial. Since libertarianism then is a concept, it is dependent on social activity to mean something, and on the understanding of a social group or singular persons of the ideas and notions the concept was intended to express. The concept itself has no agency, since it lacks the ability to perceive and process information, and capacity to express its will through acts. This is an ability restricted to living entities, not extended to abstract concepts. Thus, for us to define which ideas and which notions libertarianism was intended to express, we must take heed of its historical usage.

The term libertarian had its genesis in a metaphysical discourse of political philosophy. In 1789, William Belsham coined the term to refer to those who championed and safeguarded liberty, particularly in domains relating to social, economic, and political concerns. Anti-authoritarianism has been the most unifying tenet of libertarianism throughout history. This stems from the group to which the term was first applied, namely the anarchist and anti-statist socialists of the early 19th century. Joseph Dèjacque, for instance, promoted anarchism in the mid-19th century, which entailed radical, leftist political philosophies that emphasized interpersonal political and economic activities and a rejection of the highly authoritarian and centralized governments of that time. The term was useful for anarchists to distinguish themselves from authoritarian socialists such as communists, social democrats, and later, Juche, Stalinists, and varieties of Marxist-Leninists. However, as the late 19th century drew near, anarchism and libertarianism became associated with high levels of violence, destruction of public property, and disorder. The use of black blocs by anarchists in their praxis, for instance, drew widespread societal condemnation. Thus, libertarianism was first associated with a disruptive and socially unattractive political movement that confirmed the need for a centralized authority to restrict individual humans' ability to traverse existence. Despite this unfortunate association with the term, a curious shift occurred in the mid-to-late 20th century when a group of American Conservatives appropriated the term "libertarian" as a fitting description of the burgeoning capitalist free-market movement and associated ideologies. Although many conservatives viewed the term as still bearing too many connotations to anarchism and the New Left of the 1960s, this did not deter many American advocates of limited government and laissez-faire capitalism from embracing it. In the US, libertarianism no longer referred to anti-statist socialism, but to radical liberalism that championed limited government, classic liberalism, low taxes, and liberalization of markets.

A *libertarian person*, then, *is someone who's identified or self-identifies as a member of either of these two main strains of libertarian thought.* However, some might embrace less conventional definitions and ideologies, such as those of the egoist movement, the anarcho-capitalists of the Murray Rothbard tradition, or even supporters of primitivisms, who all, in their own way, claim adherence to or relationship to the libertarian concept. Taking all these definitions and traditions together, we can see that the original formulation by Belsham offers a high degree of applicability, as it encapsulates both traditions and most of their offspring. Libertarianism as a *historical concept* can be understood to broadly refer to those who *advocate for the highest degree of freedom of will possible in any situation a human being might be in.*

iii. Relationship between metaphysics of libertarianism and historical libertarianism

There is a difference between the concept of libertarianism and metaphysics of libertarianism. Whereas the historical concept of libertarianism is rooted in historical development and expressions of will through language, the metaphysics of libertarianism is a statement about how the libertarian person views the world. I wish to clarify the difference between what I mean with *the metaphysics of libertarianism* and *the historical concept of libertarianism*. The metaphysics of libertarianism views every human being to be a *perceiver of reality*, and perceives reality from the perspective of an *I, a unique ego, a perceiver*, that through the process of perceiving gets information that in turn is turned into knowledge. The primary knowledge of the world is derived from *empiricism* and the comprehension of *reality as a set of casual relationships*, which can be influenced, created, or perceived through acts and engagement between humans and the physical reality. We also understand each unique ego's acts with reality as an expression of that individual ego's will, and that all human beings have a similar capacity for expressing their will. We also understand libertarian thought to be *pragmatically incompatible with determinism*, because we are limited in our understanding of all causal relationships, and must, therefore, act as if we have multiple different choices of how we ought to express our will.

Firstly, the metaphysics of libertarianism, as expressed in my previous essays, explores the *conditions of the existence* of what has historically come to be known as a libertarian person. The question that develops is whether the notion of a libertarian, or rather the first abstract ideas that became the concept of a libertarian, developed first, or that the metaphysical existence of a libertarian idea already existed, it just had to be reformulated into a language expression. For most libertarians, this question is somewhat irrelevant. While I acknowledge that language expressions are fundamentally unable to fully encapsulate all information that concerns causal relations ships bound up in it, I can still use the abovementioned historical definition of what conceptual libertarianism is to *give name to a specific metaphysically system that starts and end with the existence of a unique ego*, an I, and therefore giving a name to metaphysics that concerns expression of unique ego's will. Whereas the metaphysics of libertarianism make no value judgements about whether the expression of individual wills is a good, or something to be advocated, the historical concept of libertarianism position advocacy of will expression as the highest possible good in an ethical and political system.

Secondly, the metaphysics of libertarianism already establishes a system of metaphysical comprehension that does not require a previous understanding of the term "libertarian" to be applicable to describe humans and their existence. Rather, the libertarian person, or the person that seeks to express these metaphysical conditions as either virtues or foundational principles upon which identity, expression of will and acts might be built, can be proved to exist without said person necessarily needing to have any previous understanding of the concept libertarian. Either the metaphysical system can be applied to describe the conditions for human's expression of will, or one can use to describe axioms which some base value judgments and political acts upon. Examples of the former is the application of the system to describe our notion of what constitutes a human being and assumptions we make about the conditions for our behavior. As such, one can use the system to describe authoritarian people, who view their will to be of a different value than others, and those use their acts to repress the freedom of action other unique

ego's might have had otherwise. Although this authoritarian person is exhibiting traits that are strictly anti-authoritarian per the historical definition above, he nonetheless can be analyzed per the system of metaphysics provided in these essays. Examples of a former type of person are those that would describe themselves as a libertarian, or whom we can retroactively define as embodying ideas or values which are now commonly associated with various interpretations of libertarianism. Examples of this can be champions of direct democracy, champions of freed markets, property rights, or trans-national citizenship that expands the possible physical limits of how a unique ego might traverse existence and act out their will.

iv. Explaining historical libertarianism's many incarnations

The benefit of using the metaphysics of libertarianism to describe historical libertarianism is that one can now explain why there is such a plethora of incarnations of the libertarian person. Since each person's expression of will is dependent on the physical location of the unique ego, its capacity for perception, its capacity to act and traverse physical reality, its relationship to other egos and its current knowledge of causal relationships, we can say that a libertarian incarnation is always context determined. By this it is meant that although a person defines themselves either by the language expression "libertarian" or some other term that embodies the *advocacy for the highest degree of freedom of will possible in any situation a human being might be in*, the goals and praxis applied by the libertarian person will necessarily vary due to the contextual constraints applied to the person. Since full knowledge of causal relationships is impossible, a libertarian person can never know for certain whether a given set of acts are sure to realize their will, nor if their acts will lead to a set of causal relationships between bodies and living entities that will be regarded as desirable as they unfold. As such, a libertarian identity is historically flexible and incompatible with a specific set of libertarian policies, since policies are, among other things, usually dependent on a temporally existing judicial system in a temporarily existing political system. Furthermore, even though the libertarian pursues the highest degree of freedom of will, meaning the fullest possible selection of choices of how to express their will, the libertarian might not know whether or not their will is being fully expressed, since complete knowledge of causal relationships, even those in their own unique ego, is never fully knowable to a person. Since human beings are restricted by our flawed cognition, senses and other constraints that hinder us from even fully understanding all internal causal relationships, we might risk pursuing ends we do not fully comprehend through means we do not fully understand. All of this raises serious implications for the libertarian person, about how to act and how to understand their desire for freedom of will. But can we make the case that despite this necessary contextual dependency, that there are some universal libertarian value judgements that, although not policy or necessarily specific, can be said to exist?

v. The three universal value judgements of libertarians

Whilst the metaphysics of libertarianism is concerned only with the necessary conditions for a libertarian's existence, there exist three universal value judgments that libertarians must consider when seeking to express their will through action, or so it is my current perception. These judgments are subject to change as I continue to engage with other unique egos and gain further

insights. Nevertheless, they serve as guiding principles for the development of libertarian ethics. Firstly, it is imperative that a libertarian acknowledges that they hold no metaphysical superiority or greater worth than any other individual. As there exists no inherent value beyond the value judgments applied to existence through the expression of a unique ego's will, the first value judgment a libertarian makes is that the principles underpinning their existence must necessarily apply to all other people, regardless of their agreement or lack thereof. Secondly, freedom of thought is deemed essential for a libertarian's ability to traverse existence and improve their capacity for perception. Consequently, the value of freedom of thought is assigned to libertarians, as it is integral to their pursuit of broadening their possible selection of will expression. Lastly, the libertarian values themselves. Since a libertarian can only control their own actions and rely on their own will, they place a great value on their own entity and thus act to fulfill their unique ego's will.

It is imperative that a true libertarian adheres to certain value judgements that are necessary for the development of libertarian ethics. These value judgements serve as guiding principles that allow the libertarian to traverse existence and express their unique ego's will without impeding on the freedom of others. As such, a libertarian must hold three universal value judgements in the highest regard. Firstly, a libertarian must recognize that they are not inherently superior or worth more than any other person. This fundamental value judgement is rooted in the metaphysical understanding that there is no intrinsic value to existence, and that the principles by which the libertarian's existence is made possible must necessarily be applicable to all other people, regardless of their personal beliefs or values. By acknowledging this, the libertarian ensures that they do not act in a manner that imposes their own values or beliefs on others, as that would be an infringement on their freedom. Instead, the libertarian strives to create a society that respects the freedom of all individuals, allowing each person to live their life according to their own values and beliefs. Secondly, the libertarian values freedom of thought as an essential aspect of their ability to traverse existence and improve their capacity for perception. Freedom of thought allows the libertarian to explore new ideas, challenge their beliefs, and ultimately develop a more nuanced understanding of the world around them. Without this freedom, the libertarian would be limited in their ability to express their unique ego's will, and their capacity for perception would be stunted. Therefore, the libertarian places great value on protecting the freedom of thought of all individuals, recognizing that this is necessary for the growth and development of society. Finally, the libertarian values themselves as an entity, recognizing that they can only control their own acts and rely on their own will. This value judgement is rooted in the understanding that the unique ego is the only entity capable of expressing its own will, and that the libertarian must therefore act to fulfill their own unique ego's will. This does not mean that the libertarian is selfish or individualistic, but rather that they recognize their own agency and the importance of expressing their own will. By valuing themselves as an entity, the libertarian is able to act in a manner that is consistent with their own values and beliefs, and is better equipped to navigate the complexities of existence.

Chapter 3: Further more on the metaphysics of libertarianism

i. Introduction

Although many political philosophies and ideologies make a claim to being the champion of liberty and freedom, few goes to such lengths to achieve these ends as the broad spectrum of libertarianism. Defining freedom as both a positive and a negative, such as the freedom to express oneself as well as the freedom from censorship, libertarianism exemplifies for many the total and absolute pursuit of liberty in its purest form. Although this romantic description might sound appealing to some, it still seems too many to be a naïve and impractical political philosophy, unsuited for the contemporary world. Mainly, the concern seems to be with libertarianism conception of human nature, natural rights, interpersonal relationships, and problems perceived to arise in a fully liberated society without a centralized government to prevent a Hobbesian war of all against all. All these concerns coalesce in an impression of libertarianism as altogether impractical, and even for some as philosophically simplistic with an overtly naïve impression of politics. These impression stem from a misconception of what constitutes political activity, and what the primary concern of political philosophy is. Firstly, many views political activity as something inherently rooted within the judicial framework of a state or judiciary, thus excluding behavior that does not legally abide by the predetermined rules of what constitutes legal behavior. Secondly, political philosophy is often used synonymously as philosophy of how states govern, rather than its proper definition, namely the philosophy of governance. Governance does not presuppose a specific form of government, but rather details the organization of human behavior in social, economic, and political life.

As such, there seems to be a need for a proper investigation of the essence of libertarianism, its broader themes, and to what degree the fundamental metaphysics of libertarianism can be formulated so to accommodate its wide variety of interpretations.

ii. Axioms of libertarian metaphysics.

The way I conceptualize libertarianism might seem controversial to some but appears to me as the simplest and natural conclusion to the overarching philosophy. Firstly, although I acknowledge that there are some vast differences between its various incarnations, such as those between anarchist communists and anarchist capitalists, or between the Spanish syndicalist and the US Libertarian party, all of these tendencies, be they primarily theoretical concepts or real-world examples of state-less governance, based on the same axioms of metaphysics.

a. The Unique and Existence

Libertarian metaphysics starts with the acknowledgement that there exists, in one form or another, such a thing as consciousness. I know that there is a consciousness perceiving something, for it is the only truth that seems unfalsifiable. Regardless of if my reality is being shrouded in falsehood by a Cartesian demon, or if my sensory experience is all but an illusion by a gnostic Demiurge, I can state that there is such a thing as a perceiver, that which I define as the *I, the Unique, the ego,* or *consciousness* and something to be perceived, that which I define as *existence*, or *reality*. One can state that there is such a thing as a consciousness perceiving existence. Perception here is understood as the process by which information is taken in by my consciousness, either through sense or through other forms of engagement with reality. I define existence as synonymous reality for practical language purposes, as it expresses not notion that my unique is perceiving the totality of reality in its truest essence, but rather what we in our day-to-day life define as reality and existence. Regardless of whether there exists just one consciousness, my own unique, or if every other person has an equally unique ego, I must relate to what I could understand as reality if I chose to continue living. Whether or not all my sensory experience is flawed or whether I am the only consciousness, which is a highly unlikely and philosophically impoverished statement, I must engage with reality, and as such, other everything within it. I also perceive my ego to be formed by my perception, meaning that my understanding, or knowledge, is changed based upon my perception of reality. The content of my knowledge changes, and I perceive this to be the same for every other person.

Based on experience and engagement with reality, I understand that there exist other entities I encounter that inhabit a similar capacity for perception, in varying degree depending on what entity I encounter. I also perceive that I can position myself differently in reality based upon what I understand to be *will*, the conscious and deliberate force that lies behind any act through which the entity decides to engage with reality. I also perceive that all other perceiving entities do the same. As such, I can assume, based upon engagement with reality and the entities in it, that some of these entities share a large enough similarity and that I can assume, based upon the similarity of the properties of my Unique and the perception I have of them, that all other entities with the ability to perceive, the living beings, all have their own Unique. Furthermore, I assume that the entities with the highest capacity of perception know are those defined as humans, and as such, I can assume that all metaphysical statements I can make about existence, my perception of it, and my engagement with it, can be applied equally to those other human beings as well. In short, if we assume that one can make statements concerning the conditions of one human's ability to perceive reality, or rather, if I can make statements about the conditions for my own Unique, then I must apply the same statements to other people as well. This is not an ethical statement, but a statement about the conditions for metaphysical libertarianism: every single human being is having a Unique, an ego, a consciousness that perceives reality.

b. Will

If we acknowledge that there is such a thing as multiple egos, or rather, multiple human beings with an assumed equal capacity of perception of reality, we then also assume that there is a possibly indefinite multitude of variations in how humans perceive and conceptualize reality in

their own unique ego. This is because I perceive my acts to be different from other human beings, and upon engagement with reality, I perceive this to the cause of the variety of perceptions being made. Since I assume that humans can only perceive reality for themselves, as an ego, and we perceive human beings to be positioned differently in existence, we can assume that every single human being has a unique perception of reality, and the experience of their ego is fully individual. As such, one can state that every human has a fully individual consciousness that is, by definition, unique. Since all egos are unique, and their positions in reality are unique as well, we must conclude that every unique ego's perception of reality is different from everyone else's. The consequence of this variety is that every unique ego has a unique knowledge of reality.

The driver for this change in individual knowledge happens through the unique ego's ability to engage and act on the knowledge previously gained from its perception of reality. This act, understood here as an *expression of the unique ego's will*, allows human beings to engage and traverse reality, expand their knowledge, and express their learnings from their perception to other human beings. We can say that we assume all human beings to have *agent causation*, the ability to intervene and engage with what we understand as reality. Based on the previous assumptions, we can also assume that every single human being has, by definition, an *individual capacity for expressing the will of their unique ego*, and that this expression of will is more or less equally available for all human beings. Therefore, all human beings have an ability to perceive, engage with, and traverse reality, which is in turn processed and possibly manifested by the unique ego of each human through their will.

I also perceive the will to take a multitude of different variations based upon the variety of the multitude of unique ego's. I perceive that this expression of will is based upon something that defines the unique of each ego, but defining what the fundamental Unique is, is by definition impossible. Rather than trying to define the expression of the unique ego's will as either a quest for desire, needs, utility and so forth, I perceive the most accommodating definition of the unique ego's nature and its subsequent expression of will to be a matter of autonomy. The expression of the unique ego's will is predicated on how that individual ego expresses its *autonomy in reality*. Autonomy is here understood as the *process of acting* by the human, as an expression of their unique ego's will. This autonomy is understood to be the total sum of acts throughout the life of a human being, and its decisions of how to best express the will of its unique ego. This can take up a number of forms, which in turn can be conceptualized in a number of ways, however, in any given situation, there is a limit to how many possible acts of expressing the ego's will, due to restrictions imposed by physical reality and an ego's inability to be omniscient, and present at multiple places at the same time.

c. Causation

We perceive there to be a causational relationship between the unique ego's ability to process information through perception, and the subsequent expression of the ego through acts and will based on the previously obtained information. We can assume then that all humans have a capacity for learning, meaning expanding their knowledge through perception to better understand the causal relationships between entities. As such, empiricism quickly becomes one of the preferred means of interpersonal knowledge exchange, because it accommodates the principle of causality, and thus appeals to the conditions of the unique ego's perception of reality. Further-

more, empiricism deals with what we can, as equal perceiving entities, rationally explain to one another by appealing to the fundamental law of logic within libertarian metaphysics.

I can observe that there is a causal relationship between what I perceive and what I come to know as knowledge. Learning is then for me the process by which I learn the causal relationships in reality, and the total knowledge I have of what I perceive. What I also perceive is that there is a causal relationship between my will and the acts that I do. If my unique ego wills something, for instance, and expression or need for sustenance to sustain my physical body, I can act to solve these needs by expressing my will through engagement with the physical world. I also know that there is a causal relationship between this expression of my will and its engagement with other humans' expression of will. For instance, when I act towards another human being in some form or another, there is a causal relationship between that act and the corresponding response, be it based only on that engagement, or the sum total of information both of us have accumulated through our existence. As such, I know that other humans can act towards me based upon their will and try to engage physically with me and my body, depending on the context of our engagement. We can then assume that every human being has the capacity of causing causal relationships by expressing their will in reality, and that their capacity to do this is equally distributed. We can also assume that our capacity of understanding causal relationships are based on our previous experiences with them, our capacity of reason to formulate hypothetical causal relationship, and our capacity of exchanging information between ourselves as human beings.

I can perceive that there is no such thing as an omniscient human being that has full perception, namely the knowledge of every single causal relationship of past and present. As a result of this, I perceive human beings' knowledge of reality to be limited to their capacity of perception, and that this capacity can theoretical expand indefinitely. As such, there is no conceivable limit to how much information might be gathered by any one person. Furthermore, I perceive our sensory perceptions, our cognition, our memory, and our actions to at time be at odds or contradictor to our unique ego's expression of will. I also perceive our understanding of causal relationships to never be complete, in the sense that we continuously learn more about the causal relationships' mechanisms and their properties. The consequence of this is that at times our knowledge can be flawed, lacking or simply not actually representative of the nature of the causal relationships. Since I perceive this to be the case for every human being, and that no human being has complete knowledge of all information, I assume that people act on their understanding of causal relationships as best as they can, in order to express the will of their unique egos. More importantly, for my own purpose, since I do not have this omniscient ability, I must express my will as a result of *anticipated causal relationships*, meaning that I must act in a way that leads to a *possibly preferred outcome*. By this it is meant that I can only express my will insofar as I can deduce a likely outcome of my acts, since I do not know the full result of my actions.

d. Pragmatic incompatibilism

Since I perceive myself to be a movable entity, I understand that I'm restricted by my inability to perceive reality from more than one point of view and from more than my own ego at any given time, and that I'm able to express my will in multiple ways in that point in reality which I'm currently present. I can, for instance, relocate my body to another place, or cooperate with other entities to achieve expression of my will that would otherwise be cumbersome or outright

impossible if I was left entirely to my own. Examples of these expressions of will can be my pursuit of food, water, expressions of desire, economic and political activity, and the totality of social and interpersonal acts. The consequence of this perception is that I assume there's a limit to how many acts I might possibly do in any given situation, and that the limit is determined by my ability to perceive reality, express my will, navigate physical space, restrictions on my body, my physical and mental skills, and engagement with other entities around me.

My understanding of reality is therefore not as a predetermined set of action, but as a possibly indefinite number of events that can change based upon what course of actions I chose. As such, as must act as my will is entirely free, in the sense that I cannot act as if everything is predetermined, since I do not know and can never know what causal relationships determine what, and to which degree my will is being restricted by causal relationships of which I have no knowledge. Because of this uncertainty and lack of knowledge, libertarian metaphysics is *pragmatically incompatible* with determinism and necessitarianism. By this I mean that whether or not every single thing that happens in reality is predetermined, or the result of an unmovable first mover, is *irrelevant* to the unique ego's individual expression of will. Since we know that we do not know everything, we can only act as if our unique ego is free to choose from all those hypothetical scenarios, we assume to take place based upon our acts. We can assume that our will can, in any situation, choose between a variety of different actions to create a possible indefinite set of hypothetical causal relationships. Since I perceive my actions and my engagement with reality to be the result of my unique ego's will to express itself, I can assume that all other people have the same capacity, and varying degree of uncertainty about the consequences of those actions.

iii. Conclusion

The metaphysics of libertarianism views every human being to be a perceiver of reality, and perceives reality from the perspective of an I, a unique ego, a perceiver, that through the process of perceiving gets information that in turn is turned into knowledge. The primary knowledge of the world is derived from empiricism and the comprehension of reality as a set of casual relationships, which can be influenced, created, or precent through acts and engagement by humans with the physical reality. We also understand each unique ego's acts with reality as an expression of that individual ego's will, and that all human beings have a similar capacity for expressing their will. We also understand libertarian thought to be pragmatically incompatible with determinism, because we are limited in our understanding of all causal relationships, and must, therefore, act as if we have multiple different choices of how we ought to express our will.

Chapter 4: On the metaphysics of the unique ego

i. Introduction

The metaphysics of libertarianism view every human being to be a perceiver of reality, and perceives reality from the perspective of an I, a unique ego, a perceiver. What separates this approach to metaphysical truths from collectivist approaches to similar axioms, is the emphasis on the individual, and the observation that only those statements that take the existence of a consciousness or a singular, individual entity with the ability to perceive as its starting point can be agreed upon as an obvious truth of existence without resorting to abstract truths and claims. The existence of the unique ego is the first and total truth of existence, and all former assumptions, science and philosophy should take it as its starting point. The degree to which the existence of the unique ego determines ethical policies, scientific methods and so forth is yet up for debate, and will likely never be fully comprehended, since total knowledge of all causal relationship in the universe is likely to be indefinite, and as such cannot, by definition, be understood as a singular totality. However, the primary causal relationship is that between the ability to perceive and being a living entity. The first and obvious relationship, being that between the living being and that of the ability to perceive, determines the living entities' abilities to navigate and traverse existence, and their capacity for gaining knowledge. And the driver for this capacity, and the singularity of the living being's existence and its ability to perceive, is the unique ego, the I, that shapes and drives the living being forward.

Defining the unique ego, as I shall show down below, will be problematic. The very nature of the unique ego is so total, so overwhelming, that it, as Stiner once expressed, exists on the very border of what can be expressed through language. However, there still remains a necessity for defining the unique ego. The unique ego is not a dictionary term and is composed of two separate words that refer to a variety of different things and invite a similar variety of presumptions among my readers. But the usage of these terms are essential to further the apolitical and analytical study of metaphysics of libertarianism. Without an applicable definition of what the individual self should and must be conceptualized as, we will run the risk of devolving the philosophical inquiry of libertarianism to a battle of ideological convictions, rather than a proper analysis of the conditions for libertarian thought. Subsequent political and ethical interpretations are, as they should, privileges of each unique ego's perception. However, if the libertarian movement and philosophy is to evolve beyond its current split between abstract notions of "left" and "right", it must redefine and rediscover its commonly shared core axioms. Despite its plurality of interpretations and political offshoots, libertarianism as a whole rejects the existence of anything but individuals, and the libertarian person rejects everything that prevents said individuals from reaching the highest possible level of freedom of manifesting their will as acts. An analytical and applicable definition of the self will help reach this goal.

The purpose of this essay, then, becomes the coalescence of various libertarian definitions of the individual in a new, crystalized definition of the unique ego that starts from a few select axioms, and then further develops new axioms in an apolitical manner. By defining the individual and ego outside the realm of ideological presumptions, it can be applied and used by a wider variety of libertarians and even critics in their analysis of the philosophy. This essay is not historical or etymological, save for a few necessary points of reference. I have chosen consciously to avoid as many references as possible or adherences to previous works, so to best solidify the apolitical and universal application of the definitions presented. This essay will first explore what the unique ego is, where it is located, and the choice of words for describing it. Then, the essay will detail how we are to understand the existence of other unique egos beyond our own, and what the implications of this are for the axioms we have previously established. Then, finally, the essay will challenge some of the most commonly used counterarguments and criticism of the existence of the I, whereupon I will demonstrate their lacking validity, and present a series of counterarguments for the defenders of the metaphysics of libertarianism.

ii. The location of the unique ego, and choice of the term

Any philosophy, be it political or otherwise, need to demonstrate the existence of axioms which cannot be reduced or assumed to be anything other than truthful. The necessity of such axioms are especially paramount to the political philosophies, as they not only seek to describe what the world is, but also how it ought to be. I argue that libertarianism is more of an analytical philosophy than a necessarily political one, although the libertarian person is a highly political individual. The separation of libertarianism and the libertarian is necessary for two reasons. The first is that my metaphysical system is precisely just that, a system of philosophy which seeks to demonstrate infallible facts of existence without reliance on anything other than the process of philosophy. Secondly, the libertarian necessarily must have a value system and a system of ethics as guiding principles for how they are best to manifest their will through acts. Since the libertarian is defined as a person who view the pursuit of the highest degree of freedom of acts as expression of will, they must have a conception of, among other things, what freedom is, what increases its degree, and what acts will lead to the libertarians conceptualized end. Since the human being can never possess full knowledge of the consequences of their acts, such an end will always be purely conceptual, and not fully understood knowledge. Libertarianism as a metaphysical system then offers instead a selection of axioms that allows for the existence of the libertarian person's pursuit of freedom, and attempts, as far as possible, not to make value statements that are applicable to all humans and living entities.

a. The undeniable existence of existence and consciousness

So what are is the primary axioms for libertarianism as a metaphysical system? Firstly, the libertarian states that there is such a thing as existence. Existence is here meant in the broadest possible term. Regardless of what I understand to be existence and reality is being shrouded in falsehood by a Cartesian demon, or if my sensory experience is all but an illusion by a gnostic Demiurge, I can state that there is a thing, or a collection of things, which I term to be reality. I understand this selection of things to be *traversable*, meaning that there is some force that allows

for things, living or otherwise, to *pass through or give of the appearance that they are shifting place*, being formed, change shape, and transfix themselves according to one another. I also understand that there is such a thing as a *consciousness*, a process of detailing and describing the movement and placement of these entities, to itself. By this it is meant that consciousness, and its process of cognition, exists, and that is first and primary function is to register and then attempt to describe the movements of entities through what I perceive to be existence. I then understand there to be such a thing as sequences, meaning that there is a system to the positioning of entities which cannot be fully replicated, only further developed, and that the consciousness register these movements of entities not all at the same time, but as groupings of movements that follow one another. This is what I come to understand as time, meaning the sequencing of entities positioning themselves in various, non-simultaneous groups. I assume that my consciousness is not able to fully detail the sequencing of movements to me, since I experience cases where I forget sequences. The consciousness can register that it has forgotten things, and as such assume that it has a *limited*, although not wholly incapable, capacity for registering movements of entities of pervious sequences. The consciousness' capacity for registering movements of entities is understood to be best described as limited, because it cannot always comprehend the full and total sequence of movements. I have then come to acknowledge that there is, in one form or another, such a thing as *consciousness* and that it *exists* in some form of *reality*. Consciousness is here used as an expression of that which has the capacity to understand that it exists, and other things existing outside of it. I know that there is a consciousness perceiving something, for it is the only truth that seems unfalsifiable, and cannot be reduced or denied.

b. The location of the unique ego

Consciousness is in one place at any given time. I understand that the consciousness is being *experienced by something*, that that this something is transfixed to a location. Consciousness is also understood to be singular, in that it cannot predict, only assume the position of other entities, and can even be unable to predict its own position completely. Although the consciousness has greater knowledge of its own position than others, it's still unable to perfectly anticipate how its own movements and the movements of other entities will influence its own positioning. Consciousness' description of the position of the entities to itself only helps the consciousness understand its *predicted relationship to reality and other entities*, not the actual, full comprehension of all relationships between this consciousness and other entities, nor knowledge of how all entities will place themselves. The consciousness understands other entities to have a similar capacity of prediction for the movements of other entities and bodies. As such, one can assume that *consciousness is in several entities*. Consciousness is therefore located in *not just one perceiver, but in many perceivers.* What separates the other perceivers from the consciousness that I assume to be my own, is that I can only make statements from the fixed location of what I assume to be one, singular consciousness, located within one, singular entity where I assume to be my own. The position of my consciousness, that the sum of my entity's capacity for conceptualizing its consciousness, meaning the thing which allows for the consciousness to perceive itself, is that which I define as the *I, the Unique, the ego.* Consciousness is then placed within *something*, and that something is the *unique ego*. And that which I, the unique ego, perceives I define as *existence*, or *reality*. I can therefore state that *my consciousness is perceiving existence*. Perception here is un-

derstood as the process by which information is taken in by my consciousness, either through sense or through other forms of engagement with reality.

c. Defining the unique ego

Now that we have established the existence of a consciousness within something, we can define that something as the personal unique ego. The, what is the unique ego, which is located in the living entity I understand as myself, and which have both consciousness and the ability to perceive reality? Firstly, we must reaffirm that full knowledge of reality is impossible, and as such, we must also conclude that full knowledge of the unique ego is impossible as well. But what makes it unique? Since it is impossible for me to affirm that I am the same as every other entity or body, I can assume that all bodies and all entities are able to position themselves to one another and be distinguished from one another due to their uniqueness. Furthermore, since I can never fully know that it is that makes me into me, I must conclude that the unique ego, the self, can never fully be expressed with language. Language is a system of retelling information about the movement of entities and bodies, and their causal relationship, but since it is being used and formulated as expression of not just one individual but several living entities desire to express their will, it will necessarily be flawed in relying full knowledge of such relationships and movements. Therefore, the self, being wholly experience by the unique ego, is not only impossible for other living entities to experience, since individual consciousness and perception can only exist in one location at once, but also fully impossible for the unique ego to express to others through language. The unique ego is therefore, as the earlier egoists put it, at the "end-point of language," being a wholly indescribable phenomenon that can be said to exists within human beings but can never be fully articulated. But describing something as indescribable does not provide us with an applicable, analytical definition that can help develop the philosophy of libertarianism further.

Secondly, the unique ego, although wholly indescribable by language, is the first thing that can be said to be capable of having property, or rather, that which something else belongs to entirely. Ownership here is conceptualized not as property rights, but as a metaphysical notion of ownership that views it to be *the total and legitimate claim to control over something by something else.* If one does not have total control over something, meaning being the only unique ego that can manifests its will upon the owned thing through acts. The unique ego owns itself fully, being only subject to itself. Its relationships with other bodies and entities are conditionally granted, whereas the unique ego's relationship to itself is universal and permanent for the duration of its existence. As such, for practical purposes, we can begin to define the framework around the unique ego that allows for analytics. Since the unique ego is capable of self-ownership, it is then capable of self-governance, or rather, autonomy of the self. Since governance implies the means to steer the positioning of bodies and entities, as well as their movements, then governance of the self is the primary form of governance, being subject to no other bodies or movements for its operation. Furthermore, since the unique ego owns itself, therein lies the implication that it cannot own another unique ego, since the unique ego cannot make any ownership claims over it. The unique ego cannot be defined solely by its relationships to the external movement of bodies and entities. However, as an analytical concept, we must resort to d*efining the unique ego as that which owns itself, meaning, for analytical purposes, from where a human being's capacity for ownership and autonomy stems.*

Within a capitalist system, the right to property is often held as a central and essential element of society. However, this right is frequently overlooked, and few individuals consider the philosophical and metaphysical underpinnings that support it. It is frequently presumed that the right to property is a natural and inherent right, bestowed upon people by their rational nature. This presumption is flawed, as there is no inherent basis for the right to property in the metaphysical essence of humanity. The notion of ownership is connected to the concept of control. Without a metaphysical foundation for ownership, it is problematic to justify an individual having total and legitimate control over something that is not a part of themselves. As we previously discussed, the unique ego can only claim ownership over itself, not anything else, to which only conditionally granted property can be practiced. Therefore, the idea that a person can possess full and legitimate control over a piece of property is in of itself problematic. Furthermore, capitalist property rights promote inequality and exploitation of labor. Private property enables the wealthy to own the means of production and extract value from the labor of others, creating a system of exploitation and oppression. This contradicts the fundamental principles of self-ownership and autonomy since those without property are compelled to sell their labor to survive, rather than having the freedom to pursue their own objectives and aspirations. In contrast, socialism maintains personal property rights rather than private property rights. Personal property pertains to items that are necessary for an individual's survival and well-being, such as housing, clothing, and food. In a socialist system, these items are owned by individuals instead of being controlled by the state or wealthy elites. This enables people to have the necessary means to pursue their own goals and desires without being beholden to those who control the means of production.

iii. Criticisms

I acknowledge that this definition and analysis of the unique ego suffers from many deficiencies, some of which are more critical than others. In these last few paragraphs, I will attempt to address the most pressing issues with the previous analysis and present a possible counterargument. Although this essay is no where near comprehensive enough to provide a substantial philosophical analysis of the metaphysics of the self, it serves as a primary introduction to libertarianism not as a policy focused political framework, but as a metaphysical system.

a. Can there be a consciousness that is only aware of its own existence?

It is, of course, theoretically possible to conceptualize a consciousness that only has the perceptive power to understand the reality of its own existence and lack the capacity to understand the existence of anything else outside of it. However, as I come to understand through the application of my own senses and ability of perception, is such an entity's existence highly unlikely. Since perception is equally introspective as it is concerned with the rest of the world, it is highly unlikely to conceptualize the process of perception as excluding even the smallest form of realization that there is a limit to the consciousness physical existence. An example of this would be the idea that a consciousness is not aware of its physical body's limits, of the passage of time, of the need for nutrition, for the need of water, for the need of hunger, thirst, or anything else that requires engagement with the external world for sustain the endurance of its existence. Be it the

recognition of moisture, sunlight, warm or cold, all these forms of perception would make the consciousness at least somewhat aware of the external world.

b. Are there unique egos in other living entities?

Since the definition of a unique ego in human beings is the primary focus of this essay, I reject lengthier discussions about the existence of unique egos in living entities which I understand to bear so little similarity to those of the humankind that any comparison is fully conceptual, analytical, and at least impractical for the purpose of developing libertarianism as a metaphysical system for the conditions of the existence of the libertarian person. Examples of this are those cases where we can perceive the consciousness of a being to be almost impossible to register, such as in entities know as plants or smaller living things, which still inhabit the capacity for perception, yet lacks a similar form of realizing their will to us humans that any such comparison makes either little to no sense, or should be reserved for researchers, scholars and philosophers who are explicitly concerned with this largely mysterious and unknown frontier of cognition sciences. Please note that I do not consider these thoughts or such research to be unimportant or in any way a worthless endeavour, rather, that they are issues which are better dealt with by philosophers specifically concerned with them, not by political philosophers such as myself.

c. Is the unique ego the same as consciousness?

I define the position from which *I perceive* to be the location of the entity within which consciousness exists, and the position of that consciousness to be within my unique ego. The unique ego is distinct from the consciousness, as I perceive it to be but one of many parts of a greater whole that in summary ends up being what I understand to be me, the self, the indescribable unique of my individual. Consciousness is, by definition, unable to understand the full knowledge of existence, and is at times not reliable to determine the position of entities and bodies. An example of this is sleep. When a living being sleeps, it is unable to fully register all movements around it. However, the unique ego, the I, does not stop existing because my living body requires sleep. Rather, consciousness various capacity for registering the movement of entities bodies in various situations is not responsible for the continuous existence of the unique ego, since consciousness is located within it, and is not the totality of the *I*. I am more than just consciousness. I am also my position. My capacity for perception is at times fully detached from my consciousness ability to register movements. An example of this is the perception that certain bodies and entities can influence the consciousness to a point where it is left unable to register any movements and positions. I know that my physical consumption of certain bodies will cause my consciousness' capacity for registering movements to change drastically, and even at times give impressions that I later come to realize were false. As such, the location of the consciousness does not change, only its capacity for registering the movements of bodies. Furthermore, consciousness and the ability of perception are not mutual. A living being is assumed to be able to perceive itself and the world around it without being conscious. Consciousness assumes a mode of *retelling the movement of bodies to something*, and perception of reality can happen without any such retelling taking place.[1]

[1] There will be further, in-depth explanations of what perception is in later essays.

Chapter 5: On the metaphysics of existence

i. Introduction

When asked to define myself, I tend to reject most concepts and categorizations. Although this is done out of principle, I do sympathize or at least understand the need for categories, and for labelling people accordingly so to prevent a constant state of bewilderment and awe whenever one encounters something in the physical world. If we did not have categories, we would be left aimless and continuously overburdened by an everlasting state of perplexity in the face of complete confusion and inability to separate the movements of one body from another. Simply but, without categories, we fail to learn and will be left helpless in our pursuit for liberty. We need to be able to discern the movement of bodies if we are to traverse between them. As such, I am obliged to label myself by some terms and concepts that makes it easier for me to traverse a massive world I have come to know as existence. Sometimes I label myself as a libertarian, other times as an anarchist, a federalist, an egoist, or a mix of them all. Other times I define myself as a man, as a heteronormative, cis-gendered person, or as a European. Other times again I reject labels all together, if I feel I need to demonstrate for other people that I do not belong to any state, idea, or philosophy beyond those which I voluntarily choose to identify with for a period. For let us not forget, I am unique just as you, and my very essence, the self, the I, the unique ego, can never be closed off within the confines of language.

However, while that is all very well, there is a need for proper terms, or at least terms which can be applied in the pursuit of philosophical insight. As such, even though I myself am free to reject the entire exercise and pursue the will of my unique ego without considering analysis of existence worthwhile, those of us who wish to realize our will through philosophy realize that language, although flawed, is necessary for conducting studies. It is possible to recognize that while defining something accurately is not the same thig as defining something correctly. By this it is meant that a correct definition would be the purest, most accurate, and truthful definition of something. This is all but a theoretical possibility since our capacity for complete knowledge of all movements of bodies and the causal relationship between bodies and entities is impossible to achieve. However, we can employ *accurate definitions*. An accurate definition is one that, as far as we as flawed entities are capable of comprehending, describes something as accurately as we are currently capable of doing. An example of this would be the study of physics, which allows us currently to build space faring rockets and complex neural networks in computers, but is yet nowhere near a full understanding of the causal relationship between the movement of bodies A and B. We can never, with our current capacity for knowledge and perception, achieve full comprehension and knowledge of such a relationship. Nevertheless, even though that might be true, we are still capable of discerning enough of the nature of casual relationships to create massive constructs and advanced technologies that mimic our own capacity for perception and information processing. Practically speaking, we can them see that although language is not enough for describing something truthfully or completely, it is enough for the creation of accurate

and applicable definitions that allow for continuous development of knowledge and insights into the movement of bodies and entities.

This essay discusses my theory of how existence is to be understood and defined accurately for the purpose of continued analysis and development of my metaphysics and libertarian philosophy. While existence, as I shall show below, is fundamentally incomprehensible and escapes language, it can still be conceptualized as a phenomenon, similar to that of the unique ego, a thing that is and can be related to, regardless of our lacking knowledge of its nature and functions. Existence is, therefore, shown to be not a figment of the unique ego's capacity for manifesting thoughts, but as something external, which fuels the unique ego's capacity for perception and comprehension for causal relationships. While some, such as the immaterialists and extreme sceptics reject that existence is, I position that such an idea, although somewhat sound, is simply uninteresting and of no practical use. A proper metaphysics for the conditions of individualism proper must abandon the notion that all other bodies and entities are the product of its own mind and embrace a metaphysics that accommodates the necessity for comprehension and learning for the development and pursuit of the unique ego's will.

ii. Why existence must be practical

Before I define existence, I will face a contentious issue among libertarians, namely the validity of stopping to define existence as something simply incomprehensible. Although some libertarians, well within their rights, can choose to completely ignore and reject everything I every say and write, it does not diminish my arguments, nor does it change the basic axioms necessary for the validity of their personhood. Some libertarians, or people that belong to a school of philosophy that deals with continuous deconstruction and critical theory, might find themselves obliged to reject any and all claims of so-called objectivity of any definition of existence. The argument goes as follows: if the unique ego is free from everything and escapes language definition, any definition invented or formulated by another external source must be rejected because it superimposes itself upon the complete liberty of the unique ego. In short, if I say something about your existence, you can reject that claim by default, saying that such a claim can only be meaningful to me, but never to you. This is because you, as a unique ego, is the only one who can define existence for you.

a. The abyss of non-language

While this is of course true, it says very little about what axioms we need to accept for such a statement to be true for every unique ego. And by study those axioms that allows for such radical individualism, we can approach a proper, analytical definition of existence that steers us away from the *abyss of non-language*. The abyss of non-language is the situation where we no longer can describe or formulate anything and will forever be trapped in a constant confusion of incomprehensibility, where our capacity for perception only allows for perceiving, but never allows for categorization, comprehension, knowledge or any form of descriptive analysis of the movement of bodies. It is a hell that must be avoided if analysis and knowledge is to exist. The claim seems to be, for those that are immaterialists and hyper critical of any form of objectivity, that if we accept the existence of the unique ego, as formulated in earlier essays, we can reject

any and all external definition and language framework if it does not suit the will of the unique ego. This is true. However, the next part of the radical subjectivists claim is not so much.

Radical subjectivist might claim that if the unique ego can reject all language frameworks and external definitions, and we can never have full knowledge of the movements of bodies and entities, there is no such thing as objectivity. Since we can never say anything or define anything with language that correctly describes the movement of bodies or casual relationships, we can never have objectivity or universal truths. Since the end of all knowledge is impossible to reach, we are theoretically faced with a situation where one can never say anything for sure, and all claims and descriptions of existence will be, by default, subjective and dependent on the perceive and person who makes a statement. Existence is, within this framework, not reduced but elevated to the abyss of non-language, a place where one can never hope to understand or define anything, never to have an accurate description, never to use language to communicate the perception of the unique ego, and forever be trapped in a darkness of confusion and bewilderment. This is, of course, the full liberty of a unique ego to pursue, and if they arrive at this abyss by their own volition, that is their prerogative. However, this must, and can only be understood as within analysis, as a subjective choice on the part of a unique ego, and not representative for the pragmatic and applicable pursuit of a definition of existence that can be used in the study of metaphysics and philosophy. While I do acknowledge the possible existence of the abyss of non-language, I do not think it is a destination worth pursuing, nor a place for human beings to be. I am, as I chose to label myself for the purpose of this text, a pragmatic.

b. The pragmatic metaphysics of existence

Pragmatism, broadly understood, is the philosophy of immediate needs. While I value and appreciate the study of theories and hypotheticals, the only philosophy that interests me is that which can be translated to how my unique ego can realize its will through acts. This is because, insofar as I comprehend my being and nature, I can only realize my will through acts if I understand, categorize, learn and memorize causal relationships and the movement of bodies and entities. All other forms of philosophy, those that are concerned with pure theory or the limits of language, are of course extremely valuable and of a high value to the field itself. However, as for the purpose of my metaphysics, the metaphysics of the I, the individual, the me, I can only be concerned with those philosophical assumptions that deal with how my will can be realized. This is simply because, as a unique ego, that is the only way I can understand a little more of my own nature, and how I can, for all intents and purposes, learn how many possible ways I can interact and traverse between the various entities and bodies I encounter. I fear the abyss of non-language, because it is a place where the unique ego merges with everything else, or might be consumed by everything else, leaving no understanding of the I or the individual, leaving only a totality of incomprehensibility. I know for certain that my will refuses this end. For what reasons I might not know fully, but I do understand that it is my unique ego's desire to pursue my will through acts and to learn as much as possible about the causal relationships between bodies and entities, and to avoid the darkness of confusion that awaits those that reject categorization altogether.

Although this admittance might make it seem that my definition of existence is subjective, I reject this statement completely. My definition of existence is necessary for anyone who does not

pursue the abyss of non-language, for anyone who desires to learn and to expand their knowledge, in short, for those that wish to practice philosophy and conduct analysis. Existence, then, must be defined with a pragmatic intent, since it needs to accommodate the immediate needs of a unique ego, and be applicable to acts done by it to realize its will. Therefore, we can now arrive at a functional and practically applicable definition of existence that accommodates the need for definitions for the purpose of analysis, while also accommodating the vastness of subjective experience for each unique individual. Existence must, as far as is possible, be non-historical and applicable in all contexts of analysis if it is to be a functional metaphysics. I believe that this definition is precisely so.

Existence is very much not just a theoretical concept that is purely subjected to the will of the unique ego, but rather *that which the unique ego must relate to.*

This definition of existence is practically applicable because it keeps the focus on the truest axiom, namely on the existence of the unique ego, but also includes the external nature of existence as something of permanence which the unique ego must consider, regardless of whether or not it seeks to realize its will through acts. While the radical subjectivist view existence as a product of the unique ego's will, a pragmatic definition views existence to be that which is external to the unique ego, while also including the unique ego itself in the definition. The unique ego must relate to itself and that which is external to it, and existence is therefore not a product of the unique ego's mind, but a something which the unique ego must relate to.

iii. The unique ego's position and validity of three assumptions

Now that we have a functional definition of existence, we can tackle some more claims and criticism raised against and by radical subjectivist. Some might be disappointed by the definition I have provided; others again might feel that it is still to subjectivist. To this I say that further reduction of what existence is will only lead us closer to the abyss of non-language, and further specific criteria of what constitute as existence, such as for instance that existence is only that which we call physical, will deny the capacity of the unique ego to define and categorize the aspects of existence according to their will. I wanted to present a definition of existence that accommodates the pragmatic nature of libertarian philosophical analysis, meaning an analysis of the ego as something with an empirical and applicable nature. There are as many definitions of existence as there are stars in the sky, and I am sure that there are multiple fallacies and problems with my argument that I will certainly face repercussions for in the future. However, as a starting point for what conditions is necessary for the existence of the libertarian person, we must have a definition of existence that is simultaneously a reaffirmation of the unique ego's primary position as the point of perception, and an affirmation that there is an external set of things which the unique ego must relate to during its, well, existence. Existence, being the noun, and existing, being the verb, reflect the duality of this definition. To exist means to relate, to engage or to reject engagement, to traverse or to stand still, but first and foremost to relate one's unique ego to itself and that which is external to it.

We need to address some of the more complex and problematic assumptions made by some libertarian philosophers and more often by their critics When one considers the concept of existence within a libertarian framework, certain assumptions rapidly evolve from the basic axioms of libertarian political thought. Firstly, that existence is subservient to the libertarian person, as

the primary mover, the end and all means is the individual themselves. Existence is but a means to an end for the libertarian will, and can never be thought of as something commonly shared or collectively owned. Secondly, that existence as a phenomenon can only be experience by the individual, from the position of the individual. As such, existence is only real insofar as it is perceived by a unique ego and seizes to exists the moment the unique ego seizes to perceive it. Thirdly, that existence is only interesting insofar as the libertarian person defines it to be so. The moment existence no longer gives the libertarian person any more utility and becomes boring, it seizes, for all intents and purposes, to exist. These are all complex and at times rather impractical conclusions, and could quickly be accused of being immaterialist, even to the point of Berkeley's philosophy. However, since we have already established that I am not concerned with philosophy of a purely theoretical nature, but of philosophy of a pragmatic nature, we need to reformulate the concept of existence within the metaphysics of libertarianism so that it can be employed in a pragmatic, practical manner for further analysis of libertarian thought and the future of political philosophy.

a. Existence is subservient to the libertarian person

Only one aspect of existence is subservient to the libertarian person, and that is the libertarian person themselves. All external bodies, be they living or otherwise, can only be made subservient to the libertarian person through acts, ideally voluntarily agreed upon with other free, unique egos. A claim that the libertarian person has exclusive property rights, which is essentially what this claim was, over the entirety of existence, rejects the supremacy of each unique ego, and the definition of the unique ego as something that owns itself.

b. Existence is only real insofar as it is perceived by a unique ego and seizes to exists the moment the unique ego seizes to perceive it

The radical subjectivist tradition of immaterialism makes this claim, and it should be safe to say that its validity is only theoretical. It is a statement that is deeply rooted in assumptions for which there exists little to no claim, and can only be regarded, from the perspective of the pragmatic libertarian, as an interesting thought, but not something that holds validity. The only counter argument necessary is to point out that I disagree with the immaterialists' position, and that according to their own axioms, being that everything is a figment of their imagination, I can claim that everything they say is a figment of mine. We quickly arrive at a standstill and have gained and learned nothing of value that will help us better understand the movement of bodies and our capacity for perception. In short, it is an uninteresting idea that serves little purpose for the development of the metaphysics of libertarianism.

c. Existence is only interesting insofar as the libertarian person defines it to be so

This claim seems to be the truest, insofar as we assume that it is stated by a libertarian person and not on their behalf. While I might find existence quite fascinating, I can never assume or claim that the degree of interest or meaning derived from my perception and engagement with it is representative of the experience other unique ego's might have.

iv. Libertarianism as a rejection of solipsism

Taking these three positions and comparing them with the established necessity of a metaphysics that is practically oriented for it to be considered libertarian, one can conclude that the third option, c), is the most appropriate for the this books purpose. As stressed, other approaches to existence can have a contextual benefit that surpasses the one I chose for my purpose, however, they would likely be of a theoretical and more abstract function rather than as a foundation for the establishment of an as encompassing philosophical analysis of the metaphysics of libertarianism. The problem with point a) is that it could easily fall into a strain of capitalism or other forms of totalitarian systems of concentrated power amongst the few lucky and ordained, making it detrimental to a discourse on libertarianism as a unique strain of political theory and philosophy, and reduces it to merely a subsection of authoritarian or state-oriented schools of thought where the idea of freedom is secondary to the forces of the capitalist market or control of the state. The libertarian rejects this idea. What defines the metaphysics of libertarianism is the dual relationship between the ego and existence, not as an isolated ego devoid of relationships beyond the one it has with itself. Prior to the start of the pragmatic movement, philosophers, particularly in America and France, spent more than a decade arguing for the social nature of consciousness—of the "private," "individual" consciousness—in terms of both its origin and function. The conclusion of this explanation seems to be that an individual's consciousness should not be seen as a characteristic of his or her "organ- ism" or "mind" alone, but rather as coming from and being a part of a "social situation." It appears that this idea is widely held by most, libertarian or not. In addition, it would appear that this acceptance supported the notion that solipsism was no longer relevant. Everyone seemed prepared to begin with the social interactions we have with our neighbours on a daily basis and to see individual awareness as an integral part of that environment. We have shifted the focus from metaphysics away from the often, for lack of a better word, boring intellectual exercise that is solipsistic analysis, over to that which assist us on a daily basis, namely the pragmatic approach to metaphysics as something relevant to our engagement with the bodies of existence. As this book studies the social process in greater detail, it appears that philosophy can discuss consciousness, ideas, needs, and purposes—even "my" or "your" thoughts, needs, and purposes—without running the risk of solipsistic interpretations.

The libertarian analysis proper needs to be rooted in a practical approach to reality where it is viewed from the perspective of a conscious, active and self-governing ego, a choice that clearly separates perspectives of existence from those less radical and less concerned with the supremacy of the individual. Existence, in the eyes of the libertarian, rapidly develops as a series of interconnected bodies to be engaged with if the libertarian so choses, rather than putting the libertarian into a state-oriented or capital oriented sets of social, economic and political systems where the

individual is forever subservient to the greater forces beyond direct and democratic control. That is not to say that the libertarian rejects the existence of these sets of social systems, but rather that they view these sets as having a definite degree of permanence and longevity compared the indefinite longevity of the ego's supremacy and autonomy. The ego, as an entity, will forever be defined by itself, define itself, and define itself in relation to the world on its own premises, whereas the social systems around it will forever be in change, changing itself, be changed by others, and crucially, be changed as a result of a possibly infinite amount of acts driven forth by egos. The ego remains, almost paradoxically, a constant in an otherwise chaotic and molding set of social systems, being the driver, actor, agenda setter and focal point of the hurricane that is existence. This is not the same as solipsism, as the libertarian not only recognizes their own ego's autonomy, but also that of others. What defines the ego of one is necessary for the definition of the ego for another. The rejection of solipsism then becomes a necessity for a libertarian metaphysics to be defined as distinctively different from other individualist approaches to the field.

While solipsism can be recognized as an interesting epistemological position, libertarians take issues with the assumption that all knowledge of anything outside one's own mind is unsure, and especially with the assumption that the the external world and other egos cannot be known and might not exist outside the barriers of one's own ego. Chiefly, as a pragmatic metaphysics, libertarianism take great issue with the fact that solipsism cannot be disproven, so it cannot be said to be classified as a *falsifiable hypothesis*. The libertarian is interested in the falsifiable hypotheses, as they are the process by which the unique ego moulds and shapes information into property for its own behalf. Any libertarian assumes, firstly, that there is such a thing as a process by which information is changed within the ego and then turned into abstractions we refer to, commonly, as either learning, knowledge, skills or opinions, to name some. The second assumption is that this process then has steps or follows a system by which the information is process and then conceptualised into abstractions, as discussed in previous chapter. This process, then, recognises that there is both an external reality of sorts from which the information is gathered, and secondly that there is a place, here defined as the ego, where this information is process. The contents of the process or the specific rationalisations that justify the conclusions drawn in the abstractions are, for now, not important. What is important is that this process proves pragmatically beneficial for the ego and the individual. Learning is, as far as I am concerned, an objective event that takes places for every single living entity. Even non-living entities, such as machines and software, can be programmed to improve, enhance, and become better at their tasks then they were before. This process of processing information to create abstractions is an empirical fact for any libertarian, and is what separates them from the solipsists. Even in a situation where a libertarian has, theoretically, lived isolated from any other human their entire life; they would still be distinguishable from the solipsist by virtue of the libertarian presupposition of that *existence is an external thing* in relation to the internal ego. Through the ego's constant engagement with reality, one may perceive "the success of sciences," meaning that any solipsist can see the results of this definition of reality. Industrial progression, the arts, language, love, cinema, hamburgers and rocket ships bringing our species to an interplanetary existence: a process that falsifies abstractions and constantly improves brings all of these wonders forth. Solipsism is a notion that cannot be refuted is not scientific. However, one important test is to take into account the inference drawn from experience that the outwardly observable reality does not initially appear to be immediately *manipulable* solely by mental energies. By the physical body, one can indi-

rectly influence the world, but it appears to be difficult to do so through pure thought. This point is important, as *the libertarian is a wholly practical person*, one that wishes to engage with the bodies of reality physically in some way. Even libertarian that spend the majority of their time thinking and writing, so-called abstract activities, engage with reality physically. They touch the keyboards; they hold the quills, engage in debates or at the very least eat enough to sustain their lives for a bit longer so that they can continue to wrestle with abstractions internally for a little while longer. Either way, one finds a person, an ego, a unique, that strives to position itself in a relationship with the existence external to it, and the internal process of information crunching.

Let it be noted that is not uncommon for solipsism to be, in my opinion unfairly, viewed as a staple part of libertarian metaphysics. While I will not go too into detail about the validity of this critique here, seeing as it often relates to criticisms of libertarianism in relation to specific issues of ethics, there is something to be said for the relationship between the radical individualism of libertarianism and a philosophical idea such as solipsism. Particularly, the issue seems to be with a metaphysics that positions the ego at the centre, which bears, superficially, resemblance to the main tenet of solipsism. Nevertheless, this resemblance is, and will remain, superficial. The libertarian does not reject existence, does not view it as an extension of the mind, and crucially does not reduce the egos of others to merely fragmented dreams of a fantastical imagination. Prematurely, as it appears today, criticism of libertarianism had assumed that the ghost of solipsism haunts the philosophy, the general explanation given for why libertarianism is wrong, silly or even evil. The notion can be summarised as viewing the libertarian's pragmatic approach to reality as being a manifestation of hedonistic egoism, a radical individualism that subjugates existence to its will without concern for the imagined needs of others. Truly, for the solipsist the needs or will of other egos are nothing but fickle apparitions, dust and smoke conjured by an isolated entity. And although this "subcutaneous" idea of consciousness has its counterpart in the pragmatic, similarly "subcutaneous," view of the nervous system, which sees it as nothing more than the "coordinator" of the rest of the organism's operations, there is a significant difference. Whereas the libertarian and the pragmatic person recognise, without a doubt, that the environment plays a crucial role in how the organism must adapt itself, whatever that may entail, the solipsist believe that an organism's activity consists solely of a "fight for existence" with other species of lesser value since they are not as real as the isolated mind. When I try to apply these abstract concepts to the specific activity of a doctor, lawyer, or architect, it becomes apparent that they are inadequate. While the cure for toothache, for a quarrel, or for a house is my problem, it is also and no less and at the same time the problem of the other stakeholders. Conversely, their effort to conform me is as real and valid as it is to for me to conform them to my will. Their thinking is a function of their organism just as much as mine is my own. Their effort is part of the adjustment process that we both need to go through. When the pragmatist talks about attention and thought arising in response to a need for adjustment, this need cannot just be understood as the need of one isolated person or mind. The adjustment always takes place in *relation* to a social situation. If one now fully accepts this idea of the social origin and function of consciousness and holds fast to it, it should not be difficult to understand why for the libertarian the question of the possibility of ideas and hypotheses of a private consciousness as isolated and devoid of dependence on other egos would not arise. From this perspective, it is presumed that ideas do not always lead to successful outcomes for a mind, which the solipsist believes cannot occur. For a solipsist, existence is the best of all possible worlds, and seeing, as it is only the imagined isolated ego that truly exists, there is no need for improvement or engagement with

anything beyond what occurs as desirable for the isolated mind. In short, if there is only one brain in a vat, then there is no need for morals, ethics, concerns or change. If you are unhappy with this world, you should not be, because it is all merely an illusion. There is then no need for politics. However, for a libertarian, politics is the defining social system of human coexistence.

Part Two: Politics

Chapter 6: On the metaphysics of politics

1. The diffusion of ideology and the eldritch horror of conservative protest rap

I recently attended a dinner party with my wife and some friends. Throughout the evening, we discussed recent music we had seen and quickly dived into the often confusing and strange landscape that is contemporary conservative music from the United States. In particular, we discussed two musicians, or rather, how confusing it is for any one person to define or understand what previously established expression or terms, such as conservative or centrist, means in a contemporary setting. One of the artists claims to be a conservative and republican, and another position himself as a centrist. The first, a rapper turned to rock and country singer Kid Rock, and the second, a rapper with a growing following called Tom MacDonald. Both are white, both write music criticising the established political discourse in the USA, and both use similar terms to describe their views. They both claim to reject the mainstream media, they reject social media, they claim to speak on behalf of a disenfranchised group, and they both have a significant appeal among right-leaning or conservative people. The topics they discuss are often class related, positioning the peripheral working class in opposition to coastal political and economic elites, often criticising a few individuals in particular like Mark Zuckerberg or Dr Fauci. Their lyrics, filled with claims to freedom and liberty, remained statist with a strong adherence to the nationalism of the USA, the inherent infallibility of their constitution, and rejection of what they perceive to be rampant social activism, often titled "woke-ness", that undermines the USA's virtues or promotes racism against whites.

This chapter will, surprisingly maybe, deal with an abomination of ideology that elegantly illustrates with its absurdity and surreal interpretation of the world the perfect transfiguration of ideas by unique egos, unconstrained and untethered by notions of clarity. For starters, we can look at the development of Kid Rock's music. The rapper later turned pop-rocker and country singer, transformed his image to encompass a Southern or Mid-West cultural belonging, growing from lyrics dealing with the peripheral American experience to now be explicitly pro-Trump. Whereas Tom Macdonald's music is pro-white, in the sense that he is not explicitly a white supremacist but rather expresses the view that many white citizens of the USA feel alienated and as if their experiences are either worthless or at worst harmful to the political discourse, Kid Rock appeals to the same group by appropriating a rock-n-roll aesthetic draped in nationalism and Tea Party republicanism. In recent years Kid Rock's lyricism has become more political, showing the strange and at times confusing blend of influences of right-wing ideology with a counter-cultural image. Consider his single "We the People", released in 2022. The song is 4-minutes, and during its course, Rock expresses anti-vaxxer and conspiracy theorists' sentiments surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic ("But Covid's near, it's coming to town" and rejection of safety measure "Climb aboard this love boat/And rock that bitch up and down the coast"), and

criticism of resources surrounding health problems ("'Wear your mask, take your pills'/ Now a whole generation's mentally ill.") The song taps into a right-wing critique of social media platforms, criticises President Joe Biden, and repeats the expression "Let's go Brandon" 13 times, a slang term that translates to "Fuck Joe Biden". For many right-wingers, the pandemic response fuelled their scepticism of state overreach, as shown by his lyrics "But Covid's near, it's coming to town/We gotta act quick, shut our borders down," and support of Donald Trump: "Joe Biden does, the media embraces/Big Don does it and they call him racist." At the same time, Kid Rock invites the listeners to "love and unity," says he does not "see colour" and appeals to the notion that "We all bleed red, brother." However, he is violently aggressive towards those that disagree as he invites the listener to "suck on Deez. Deez nuts, that's what's up."

Tom McDonald appropriates the trap sub-culture associated initially with the Atlanta rap scene draped in symbols of nationalism and claim to intellectual freedom presented as a modern version of the freethinking movement. MacDonald is probably the most famous artist of his emerging genre: right-wing protest rap. On YouTube, songs with titles such as "Snowflakes" (by MacDonald), "Rittenhouse" (by Tyson James, "politically incorrect Christian"), and "Patriot" (by Topher, featuring "Marine Rapper") are regular. One of MacDonald's latest projects is a collaborative album with "Hick Hop" rapper Adam Calhoun, released in February. Calhoun is from Illinois and has a style that is laconic and rough, similar to MacDonald's on Fox News. In his 2018 track "Racism," he juxtaposes stereotypes of different types of white and black Americans and uses the N-word with impunity. MacDonald has carved out a successful niche in the music industry that many people didn't believe existed. By juxtaposing talking points heard commonly spoken by right-wing pundits like Tucker Carlson into a trap and hip-hop context, Macdonald's most popular songs are a mix of right-wing or radical centrist complaints about various topics, all sped up and played to a beat brewed in the discontent of alienated black communities. Examples include #MeToo, body positivity, abortion, gay pride, and white privilege.

Both of their respective subcultures were initially rejections of previous conservative dogmas and restrictions of freedom of the body, expression and thought, but are for both of these artists now mediums of artistic expression well suited for defending said conservative norms, such as Christianity, constitutionalism, rejections of abortions, criticism of the civil rights movement, radical centrism, nationalism, and certain forms of transphobia or rejection of queer theory and gender expressionism. Both of these artists express views that are, in short, an ideological soup that is almost impossible to swallow without several degrees in political theory. But it is also extremely fascinating, and a perfect illustration of how ideology and the ego reject stability and continue to develop ideas and turn them into their property, wrestling them from the hands of those that claim sole right of definition. Regardless of how silly, racist, ignorant or absurd one legitimately might find Kid Rock and Tom Macdonald (which, for the record, I do), their approach to ideology is, if anything, part of the libertarian perspective on the nature on politics: continuous modification.

2. Defining politics within the metaphysics of libertarianism.

But what is it that makes the previous section important to this chapter? To me, the complexity of the symbols donned by the artists exemplifies the ways in which politics influences every single element of our lives. Be it through the arts, rejection of a specific system, refusal to partic-

ipate in a zeitgeist, skipping school, going to the gym, eating vegetarian dishes or masturbation: everything falls under the category of political activity for the libertarian. This is because, chiefly, the libertarian does not believe in the notion that we live in the best of all possible worlds, nor do they believe that political actions can only exist as an extension of a formalised movement, institution or group. A libertarian believe, above all, in a unique, unidentifiable ego, an individual that exists outside the ramification of contextual and historical contingencies. Taken in this light, the world of politics is everything and nothing all at the same time. In the first part of this book, I defined politics as the set of acts and systems developed by people to achieve a notion of how one ought to live together, or rather, *the total complex of relations between people living in society*. Taking this perspective, we already see the definition of politics flowing from the concept of the ego and its relationship to existence. Firstly, as discussed in the section on solipsism, one finds that libertarians reject any notion of themselves or the world, which subjugates other egos to an external ego, will. In short, there can be no concept of an ego which does not acknowledge the independent or the autonomy of other egos, seeing as the justification for the ego's autonomy also justifies that of the external egos. Secondly, we find that there will develop naturally sets of social systems, meaning the game played by two or more egos when they try to coordinate their acts. This game, here used as a term referring to ways by which individuals engage in complex systems of social coordination that adheres to certain rules and aims at achieving certain things, is continuously updated and modified based upon the wills of the egos involved. Thirdly, we recognise that since these social systems and games are by extension of the ego's nature as something inherently changing, a continuous form and never static, we find that the social systems and games develop and mould as well. Fourthly, this means that there must be a set of rules that allows egos to coordinate and play these games together. These rules of the game must be possible for the participants to understand and learn, or at least follow with a certain degree of consent. Fifthly, we find that these rules have the capacity to exist for extended periods of time, allowing social systems and games to span decades, even beyond the lives of the original participants. There might be some rules that disappear over time as other rules take their place, changing the games and social systems gradually, but still keeping the main aim of the game going, which is to sustain and allow for the continued coordination of egos. This coordination, or the game which creates and is in turn changed by itself and the social systems by which it adheres to, is what we can understand as politics within the libertarian metaphysics. This perspective on politics is necessarily complicated and all-encompassing. It does not restrict itself to state-oriented or institutionalised systems of coordination, such as parliamentary, state capitalism, republicanism and so forth. Nor does it restrict itself to conscious acts that the ego defines as political. By this, it is meant that any action taken by a will that manifest in a social system or coordination game is by this perspective political. In short, every facet of human interaction with the external world, insofar as the action requires the ego to take into account the wills of other ego's, is a political act. The primary concern of a study, then, into the metaphysics of politics is to understand *how these complex social systems between people lead to coordination, or governance*, meaning the act or process of governing or overseeing the control and direction of a collected set of individual wills, such as a country, a group of friends, economic relationships, religion, a couple, a family or an organization. Immediately then a problem appears, which is what then is left of acts or facets of the individuals life that is not political. What is apolitical in a world where the totality of an ego's interaction with other egos is political? From the perspective of the libertarian, apolitical are those *things which have no significant affiliation to a specific form of*

politics that aims to achieve governance. When I then suggest that this essay is almost apolitical, it is because the critical analysis of the libertarian metaphysics *does not suggest which form of politics is preferred as an alternative*, nor what type of ideological conviction is best suited for the further development of society. Rather, this essay is both apolitical and political, depending on how one wish to apply these thoughts.

3. Politics as a praxis

Politics, for the libertarian, belongs to the extensive set of social systems called moral praxis, or acts that are inspired by a certain will and, therefore, a certain ethical framework. For many, the term praxis finds a wonderfully effective definition when it is viewed in relation to politics from the Aristotelian perspective. Aristotle believed that the science of ethics manifested itself in the real world as politics, then becoming an individual's act "in view of an end". For the sake of this essay's length, I will stick with Aristotle's definition of praxis for now, although it must be noted that the topic is clearly the most important for the libertarian as it deals with the concrete steps one must take to realise new social systems based on values discovered through libertarian philosophical inquiry. For the purpose of this essay, we will assume, like Aristotle, that praxis is one of three distinguishable modes (theoria, poiesis, and praxis) of an ego's act, or the manifestation of the ego's will as an act. When one reads the first two chapters of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle notes that the aim of praxis is not the acquaintance of virtue but rather acting in an ethical manner, meaning that the aim is simply practicing virtue because it is the right thing to do. Although many libertarians have tendency to reject such moral principles as they perceive them to be restrictive for a broader moral pluralism, I find that the reasoning behind Aristotle's perspective makes it an effective addition to the study of libertarian metaphysics. Firstly, we have already established the autonomy of the ego, meaning in the same breath that we have established that there are certain forms of existential perspectives or social systems that by default needs to be rejected or amended to suit the indomitable supremacy of the individual's right to liberty. Secondly, when we reject these systems, we acknowledge the existence of a certain ethical and moral benchmark that is of a second-degree moral nature, meaning that it is objective insofar as we accept the premise of the ego's inherent autonomy, such as the need to respect other egos or aversion to any coordination game or social system that undermines egos for the benefit of one individual. The libertarian should therefore consider embracing the Aristotelean perspective, as it positions politics as a practical matter, where the ego combines its capacity for turning abstractions into its property with the physical acts of coordination other egos towards goals. Through the process of taking in information and turning it into abstract property, the ego thus lies the groundwork for recognising that any social system or coordination game should allow and facilitate the same possibility for every ego. We find this notion expressed in later European writing, such as when Kant, inspired by Aristotle's definition, wrote in *Theory and Practice*, that "not every doing [eine Hantierung] is called practice [Praxis], but only that effecting of an end which is thought as the observance of certain principles of procedure represented in their generality" (TP 8:275). For the libertarian, we view praxis as an extension of political thinking, meaning that there is an intrinsically connection between the ego's activity and the way its will is manifested as an act in a social system or coordination game. An example is how I am choosing the specific aspect of Kant's account of politics to define my own concept

of the metaphysics of politics, while at the same time abiding by certain rules of the coordination game, such as referencing the originator of the ideas that I appropriate, the source of my inspiration and wilful rejection of taking the totality of Kant and Aristotle's writing into account in the development of my own definitions. For the libertarian, this is the essence of political thinking: we view it as the ego's nature to reform and shape abstractions to the point where they belong to us, new abstract properties designed in our ego and expressed through acts of the will. When we conduct critical examination of political thinking, we consciously chose to avoid or adhere to certain elements of previous established social systems, but reserve the right to be ignorant, misinterpret and fail in our reasoning. This is because we are not so arrogant as to suggest that we have reached the end, or that the line of reasoning we present is perfect. Not at all. Rather, we invite critique because we believe that it is in those moment of praxis that we further extend the frontier of our coordination games, and explore the borders of what our social systems can and should be. Take, for instance, the line of reasoning launched by Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason. Kant examines the progressive realization of freedom, and argues that it becomes concrete on the stage of the history of the human race 'as a whole,' a development that is treated in Idea of Universal History, Perpetual Peace, and Conflict of the Faculties (cf. infra Part Three). This statement is the same as made earlier in this essay, that for the libertarian, the study of politics is the study of human contingency, the study of a world possible, a study of a future beyond the current normative zeitgeist. Through the metaphysics of libertarianism, we can then conclude that there are intelligible and empirical grounds to claim political causality which must be thoroughly expounded in order to understand the next depths of the metaphysics of politics.

Recent developments in social and political philosophy have highlighted the need for clarification of the practical meaning of concepts such as freedom, conservatism, centrism, equality of citizens, socialism, communism, respect, and dignity of man as embodying the normativity of politics. As illustrated by the previous section, there is ideological and linguistic chaos in the contemporary political scene, at least in some parts of it. Even though modern political theory and research reserve the right to be more precise, it means little if the public discourse has turned into an ideological quagmire. The source and nature of these terms normativity have continually remained the subject of discussions, and it has only been strengthened by the increasing interconnectedness of global political movements, social media, diffusion of public discourse in common spaces, radicalisation, and the steadfast supply of subcultures and closed spaces. In short, due to an overwhelming flood of inputs, these terms are no longer isolated but developing in a stew of opinions that prevent them in certain contexts from being utilised properly. A significant body of scholars has argued that those concepts originated from, and remain entirely necessarily determined by, historical contingencies, a form of political determinism. Other scholars have contended that these metaphysical concepts disclose tendencies that are embedded in the essence of the ego, namely the spirit of freedom of thought. Viewed in this light, the ego is, regardless of limits imposed by context, continuously engaged in deconstructing alien determinations. Terms that appeal to a common understanding are viewed as a form of tyranny, linguistic and ideological oppression, effectively a social practised form of political coercion, against which the ego rebels. This is the essence of libertarian metaphysics and its definition of what the essential nature of politics is: a series of historical contingencies subject to the will of the unique ego in collaboration with other unique egos.

When one then talks about the metaphysics of politics, one is talking about how historical contingencies are influenced, the overall problem of causality between the act of ego and how it

impacts bodies in existence, and specifically the conflict arising between libertarianism and pragmatic determinism. The antinomy of viewing political discourse as static and embedded in the supremacy of a single or a handful of entities that can decide what terms and expression should mean or the libertarian approach which embraces the chaos not just part but the definite nature of politics is what brings forth the need for practical philosophy. It is here that we can identify by applying the libertarian critique to the discourse the fundamental conflict in political philosophy: politics as a form of moral lawgiving based on the innate right to freedom, and, on the other hand, the viewpoint of political lawgiving based on different forms of external coercion. The normative context of moral claims for autonomy (i.e., freedom as the self-determination of individual citizens) is thus antinomically opposed to the empirical laws of causality governing politics in its ongoing performance based on coercion by national, supranational, and global political institutions. By applying the libertarian critique to politics, we quickly find that it is, by nature, a developing social system of egos coordinating their will, rather than a static, stable and centrally controlled system. A careful examination of the contradiction between an assumption that norms and terms need to be stable or that one cannot experiment with political association outside pre-established boxes reveals a deeper philosophical problem that has, so far, been ignored by libertarians, resulting in staunch sectarianism that might make sense when talking about policy proposal or governance designs based on libertarian principles, but make little sense when trying to bridge the gap in defining overarching tendencies in libertarian metaphysics. This book and my project then become almost ironic; libertarianism celebrates the confusion of ideology as a principle of political praxis and development, but at the same time people such as I feel the need to describe the metaphysics of libertarianism and try to build bridges between unlikely associates. My defence here is twofold. Firstly, there is something beneficial in general for me and my ego to write lengthy on the topic. It helps to clear my mind, make my research more focused, and assists me in defining ideas, turning abstractions into a property in my ego. Secondly, although the principle of diffusion and further development of political language is essential to libertarian metaphysics, there remains the necessity for pragmatic and practical tools for sustaining the free association of egos. An obvious example is the ability to read English and understand sentences. If all words were to be diffused in the same way Kid Rock and Tom Macdonald diffuse conservatism and nationalism, one would have a very hard time completing even the most basic forms of collaboration. Imagine making dinner with people who neither accept nor even understand what you mean when you ask them to find a spatula. Such chaos is only theoretically interesting but remains for all practical purposes well outside the realm of what is desirable for the pragmatic libertarian, and is why part of the diffusion process must entails the crystallisation of meaning. Occasionally, we need to regroup, reform and reconstruct the pieces after we have taken the term apart. If we do not do this, there is no point, viewed from a libertarian perspective, in reducing terms, social systems and even conceptions of reality to mere fabrications and meaningless terms. If deconstruction does not include both the “de” and “construction”, we have achieved nothing but destruction without any benefit. Politics must therefore include some form of development, some form of desire to push the wills of the people to collaborate and force participation in sets of social systems. The focus on interest-based coercive power in political law-making has led to the neglect of the spirit of freedom and the requirements of the metaphysical principles of morality in politics. This needs to be addressed in a more in-depth way. A philosopher must contribute to answering the pressing question: How can the will of the ego, as an end in itself, be acted out in an inherently free and peaceful manner, and be preserved in the contemporary landscape of

transnational, dynamic and globalised contexts? How the ego's is will secured in opposition to external powers?

Chapter 7: The theory of perceived legitimacy and political praxis

Now that we have established political activity as a praxis, an extension of a mass of egos, and the collective interaction of wills in a coordination game, we can then, finally, try to discern some general principles for how libertarianism evaluates the degree to which a coordination game is legitimate. The central question here is that we established in the previous chapter that these coordination games follow certain rules and that the individual ego aims to participate in or create social systems that facilitate coordination games that take into account the supremacy of the individual ego over itself. However, one would be blind to recognise that the majority of coordination games played by egos today are nothing of the sort. For many, politics is synonymous with state power. It is used in the same breath as one discusses central banking, military juntas, police brutality, centralisation, custom duties, passports, land monopoly and the complete control of the individual from even before their birth to after their death by a massive system of regulation. Politics, although defined as a social system of coordination, cannot be taken as meaning just those systems that the libertarian would choose to participate in if they could choose freely, but must also include those systems in which the ego is forced to participate in through coercion. An obvious example of this is taxation. Even though a libertarian would reject the state's claim that the individual owes them funding for their military or prison system, the individual in question might find it rational to pay the taxes, despite viewing the institutional reasoning of the state to be flawed and even unethical. Arguments for paying your taxes might be fear of prosecution by the state, fear of violence legitimised by the police, or even that one supports the idea of taxes in general, but not through the state. The central point here is that the majority of coordination games we play are often played within or directly through the monopoly of violence that is the state. As such, we are unable, quite often, to practice politics without in some form or another accepting the totality of statist intrusion on our lives, or at the very least doing our praxis with a fear of repercussions from the state. By having such a looming entity hanging over the libertarian, one needs an effective tool to discern the degree to which coordination games can be said to be legitimate, a steering principle for deciding whether or not one wishes to continue participation in such a game or if one is willing to reject it in favour of finding another game that is more in line with the ego's individualism and claim to self-government.

i. **The state as an agenda setter**

To frame this analysis and limit a very broad topic to one essay, we must first establish the limits of our discussion. Firstly, this chapter is interested in defining *what constitutes political praxis' legitimacy as a practical phenomenon.* While ethics is essential to the libertarian, as moral principles define their relations to other egos, this chapter is not so much concerned with defining ideal structures or defining specific acts that can be considered legitimate for the libertarian. Examples of such discussions relate to deliberative versus consensus democratic voting, ballots or raised hands, federalisation versus confederation, direct action versus structural change and so

forth. This issue is, for now, better left for discussion with those that conduct analytical analysis or practical experiments with praxis more often than I do. This chapter is then an attempt to define a praxis' legitimacy *practically*, as a guiding principle, a tool for the discussion of metaphysics and a tool used to decide whether one should improve upon a specific coordination game to better ensure its legitimacy. In short, the practical dimension of legitimate actions must be included in order to translate the abstract nature of metaphysics to the specific and contextual situations in which libertarianism is a goal and aim for a set of egos and their coordination game. If we do not have, at least to some degree, a standard by which we measure a coordination games' praxis, we run the risk of imposing non-libertarian sets of actions, undermining the supremacy of the union of egos, or even creating a coordination game based upon authoritarian principles rather than those of ideal liberty and freedom. A standard of legitimacy is not the same as a standard of morals or ethics, but rather a guiding principle that makes inquiry and development of coordination games possible within a libertarian framework.

If one seeks to understand the legitimacy of a social system / coordination game, one, traditionally, first discern the legitimacy of the body responsible for the collective's agenda setting. Agenda setting is understood usually from the perspective of *agenda setting theory* as developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw, referring to the degree to which a body, institution or actor has the ability or influence to decry importance on select issues on behalf of the general public. Issue salience and the awareness of certain issues are moulded to accommodate a preconceived ideal hierarchy of importance within a polity. An example of this would be the decision of a union of egos to prioritize the construction of shelters or increase commodity production, or even simpler, which restaurant one should go to in a situation where a group of people consist of vegetarians, vegans, omnivores, Muslims, Hindus and Jews. Agenda setting is then, firstly, dependent on a set of priorities that must be taken into consideration, and then based upon the material bodies and objects with which the union must engage, such as variety of restaurants available or the distance between them. We can observe in these examples two different versions of agenda setting: one can be an individual's control of their own body, extended through participating in coordination games where the accumulated will of a group rationally prioritize and consent to a certain set of restrictions that limit their collective decision. However, agenda setting also encompasses centralised authority in the form of states or monopolies of violence. An agenda setter can be any individual will, but our first step towards a practical analysis of what a legitimate praxis is must take into account that the majority of today's social systems are deeply embedded in hierarchical coordination games grounded in a centralized authority's sovereign right to utilise violence as a means of coordination. Taking this as our starting point, we can better target our critique and aim our criticism at specific elements of today's system, rather than spending our time conducting hypotheticals in theory. *The libertarian critique must remain practical.* Secondly, and likely more important, even if one had a purely anarchistic society, there would still be a need for agenda setting and coordination through a commune, a secretary, or even a democratic forum. The agenda setter focus is therefore also effective for analysis of purer libertarian social systems and allows us to focus on the core of political praxis, namely that it is the coordination of several unique wills that is the aim, and as such, that which define politics is its ability to create an agenda for a larger collection of wills.

ii. Legitimacy of the state as an agenda setter

The historical development of the state led its central government to end up with the special privilege of having control over its ruled population's agenda setting. Despite having some directly elected officials in most societies that claim to be democratic, the state is chiefly a depoliticized institution that relies on insight and expertise from members of interest groups, the economic and financial sector, the military, the police, academic institutions and members of governments, as opposed to direct democratic input. The justification for this design has been the notion that there is widespread public support for statist control in areas deemed unfit for direct democratic control, which legitimizes elite actors to act on the behalf of citizens in areas argued to require heightened expertise and competencies. One often describe this zeitgeist in political science literature as the "permissive consensus" among citizens to allow technocratic decisions to be taken on their behalf. Through expert groups and depoliticized policy engineering, the state has earned a reputation as a "purposeful opportunist" in its pursuit of objectives and the fairly flexible activities through which it realizes its aims and has throughout the years established itself as the public's "preferred" actor to solve certain issues declared to require expert governance, facilitated by its heightened credibility granted by reliance on specialists, civil servants and technocratic committees.

Please note that when I refer to the state as an entity, it is because this is how it presents itself to us in a practical sense. Although there are attempts in popular discourse to present the state as synonymous with the people, for all practical purposes it seems redundant and even silly to suggest that this is so. Simply take the case of a speeding ticket. Likely, you did not have an active say in the development of the highway, what materials were used, what speed limit should be imposed, and certainly not in receiving the ticket. Let us then say, you try to argue your case, but the police officer who pulled you over calmly explains that there is nothing to argue over, as his right is derived from an ironclad legal framework that can also persecute you with violence if you do not cooperate. Let us then say your refuse to pay the ticket, for whatever reason. The police office now charges you with obstruction of justice or something similar and drags you off to court, where a group of experts in a depoliticised manner calmly explains to you that they are allowed to decide whether or not you should be deprived of your freedom since they are backed by a monopoly on violence and a history of the law that you did not write and are strangely unfamiliar with. Eventually, you are thrown in jail, where you can be forced to serve time in a closed institution until you bend, break, and admit yourself to the will of the monstrosity that is the state. The state is not one single thing, granted, but it is most certainly an entity, a spectre, a spirit that embodies all these social systems, a coordination game so larger and so grand that it is almost impossible to escape. This is why, for this essay, we will refer to the state as "a thing" rather than an unidentifiable abstraction. For rest assured, the state is the grandest and most invasive coordination game, a game that you are forced to play under the threat of subjugation, alienation, hurt, pain, economic sanctions and violence. Many are aware of this, especially now following the recent global pandemic. People have seen how easy it is for the state to deprive people of freedom. Although some measures were necessary, which they would have been in any anarchistic and libertarian commune, such as providing vaccination and information about the virus' nature, the issue lies not with whether or not the state did the right thing, but with the gargantuan control the state exercised over our lives for close to three years. The pandemic demonstrated that the state is capable, when it deems it necessary, to overrule the people in

favour of an abstract greater good. The point is that the state can close down society if they want to. However, there has been a clear change in the public discourse. For many, the notion of public support for the state has moved away from a permissive consensus to understanding public support as being plagued by constraining dissensus.

iii. Parliamentary democracies and their legitimacy

Fascism and totalitarian states are eldritch beasts of their own, and an entire book should be dedicated to analysing them properly from the perspective of this essay's metaphysics. Sufficient for this part, thought, is to say that they are categorically dismissed, and unfavourable to the representative parliamentary, liberal democracies. Does this mean one sanctions the parliamentary systems? Certainly not, but it does recognise the clear benefits of living in a nation state where there is vastly improved civil societies, transparency and accountability, per the Rawls' veil of ignorance. Seeing as the libertarian's primary goal is not to convince, exclusively, the comically evil fascist, but rather the larger public of people who adhere to the representative democratic tradition, I dedicate this section to an exploration of the parliamentary system as an agenda setter to see if we can arrive at a definition of political legitimacy.

To begin, let us define the type of democracy we are commenting on. Parliamentary democracies are polities in which the public vote periodically on a set of representatives, either from parties, a party or as independents, to represent the electorate's interest in a forum, called a parliament. This forum, at least in typical parliamentary democracies, usually has the sole right of proposing legislations, and decide the formation of the government and control of various ministries and departments. Accumulated, the vast responsibility and power of the Parliament make them, effectively, a representative democracy's agenda setter. The argument for the representative democracy's privileged positions draws upon the understanding of the parliament as representing the "will of the people" and as having widespread public support, and if said support for this design falters, the legitimacy of the parliament will naturally be called into question. This criticism can be that the parliament's supremacy and sole right to create legislative policies devalues the other institutions' power, but mostly, the self-governance of the people. For instance, a parliament is supposed to act as the direct representation of a citizenry, standing in opposition to the judicial and executive branches of liberal democracy. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the world's parliaments are not as representative as they could be due to the absence of effective means of recalling representatives, deliberation between representatives and voters, the formation of political elites, career politicians, kingmaker parties and so forth.

Therefore, parliamentary democracies are far from perfect, but a step in the right direction for a libertarian. However, if we continue to list the reasons why these representative systems are dissatisfactory, we might end up with a longer list than this essay. For example, despite the arguments for the creation of a more direct line between electorates or the creation of more direct-democratic second chambers in the parliaments to balance the powers between in the state and the people better, like including representation of regions, cities, NGOs and other associations, the *practicality* of such propositions seems limited, especially seeing as the expansion of parliaments' powers remains uncertain. If history has taught us anything, it is that the accumulation of power among a select few individuals with enormous influence seldom leads to the de-escalation of power without an internal threat, such as a civil disobedience, direct action, or a revolution.

The accountability and legitimacy of parliaments are also subject to suffering if the people *feel* as if there is no democratic cohesion or equal representation across their polity, opening up the floodgates to populism.

iv. First school of thought: the democratic deficit theory

The first question we then ask is this: can decreasing consensus and scepticism towards parliamentary systems be attributed to poor institutional design? Certainly, decisions in the representative state's development has generated widespread concern for the creation of a possible *democratic deficit*. By removing direct democratic control over communal decision-making and individual control over their bodies in favour of centralised policy creation in a parliament, we argue that erosion of individual sovereignty lead to a declining legitimacy of a parliamentary polity's bodies and democratic elements. Firstly, the continued integration of national and international institutions has led to the modern parliament being a far greater executive power than the previous regional powers and city-states. A parliament has in the contemporary world a vast selection of legal tools at their disposal that influence social, political, and civil rights, to such a degree that it has determined the course of individual's available choices more than democratic decisions made by the citizens of the member states. Secondly, this aforementioned development has shifted the balance of power between the people and its parliaments. For instance, one of the most widely used measures of the parliament to deal effectively with a crisis is to undermine the autonomy of individuals, as shown by the pandemic response where exceptional circumstances further embeds the supremacy of the centralized authority. This imbalance favours the state's power, causing an imbalance between people and their so-called representatives in terms of democratic control. Even though the average citizen has seen its democratic control over processes increased throughout the centuries, the agenda-setting ability of the parliament stands paramount without direct democratic control by the citizenry. This means that individuals, largely, are weaker than the parliament. Thirdly, recent studies have demonstrated that citizens show preference for regional political issues in favour of larger concerns. The respective constituencies choose their representatives based on what they wish to see change where they live, leading to low trust in the national parliament since it naturally cannot deal with all local issues equally. Fourthly, the parliament's institutions were originally designed to serve as technocratic bodies focusing on an issue related to trade and the integrated market, a structural tradition that has yet to be fully democratized. Fifthly, the issues voted on by representatives in parliament and the preferences of citizens are rarely translated into actual policies, another indication of the lacking empowerment of citizens.

This perspective of the parliament is fundamentally institutional: one takes the presupposition that these institutions are the problem and that the solution is exchanging them with better institutions. Libertarians are instinctively interested in this perspective, as the majority of libertarian critique of the state concerns the centralisation and distance of the executive decision-making from the people. There is also something to be said for the notion of praxis, meaning that engaging with a liberal democratic entity like the modern parliamentary state is favourable to that of the totalitarian state of, for instance, China, Russia, Syria or North Korea. By taking the institutional criticism perspective, one can firstly discern the problem as being *institutionally constructed and therefore possible to change*. Secondly, such as is the case with the representative

democracy, one can mobilise across nations and states to a much larger degree than one can in any other part of the world, meaning that the creation of the representative democracy is already an enormous stride in the right direction. Although some libertarians favour direct action, which is their right, there is also a significant number of us who are increasingly recognising that one does not exclude the other. Voting, for instance, is a relatively easy thing to do, and although liberal representative democracy is not ideal in comparison to the libertarian ideal of direct democracy, it is far preferable to totalitarian regimes or systems that are even more corrupt. Thirdly, if the institutional design allows for freedom of expression and the exchange of ideas in a beneficial manner, one can also change the institutions from within or sway the public by discourse. Although slow and at times a naive approach, there is no denying that there has been historical progress since the middle ages. The institutional criticism perspective favours policy reform proposals that encourage direct democracy, deliberation, and reform of institutions and criticism of representative democracy. Essentially, the conception of the parliamentary representative model as institutionally flawed can be summarised as a belief that legitimacy of an agenda setter is granted should ideally be granted by *direct* democratic participation. Claims to legitimate agenda setting must include the highest possible levels of citizen engagement throughout democratic procedures if said authority is to be perceived as legitimate. However, some argue in favour of another perspective that rejects the need for democratic legitimacy entirely.

v. Second school of thought: the regulatory state theory

Why include such a perspective? Well, because it is fruitful and helps the libertarian in explaining a crucial element of their perspective, namely why so few are willing to change what many consider a flawed social system. Furthermore, we are not concerned in this book with anything short of the metaphysical aspect of libertarianism. This requires a definition of legitimacy that also explains adherence to systems that undermine egos and unions of wills. When defining the nature of fascist, totalitarian and authoritarian regimes or elements in less evil systems, we often refer to these regimes and elements as being regulatory, meaning that they are put in place to control and shepherd the citizenry according to the will of the state. We trace our inspiration of this regulatory state theory to the theories of Giandomenico Majone, and here we argue that the previous anarchist and libertarian democratic theory criticism predicates itself on a misunderstanding of the regulatory function and purpose of the state and the parliament, altogether. We argue that the state & parliament should not be measured against the standards we apply to anarchist democracies, as libertarian societies are not traditional polities, and fail to view the state from its own perspective. Rather, the state & parliament are meant to be technocratic in design to serve the function of a geographical political body primarily concerned with the improvement and integration of the state with a market, and should therefore not be thought of as a system requiring democratic input to be legitimate, but as a system conducting regulatory actions in areas not concerned with democratic legitimacy. We argue, for instance, that constant integration of a state with the capitalist market economy and globalization had decreased the problem-solving capacity of the process' traditional actors. Instead of understanding the state and parliament's ability to create consensus in the transnational market coordination and break deadlocks in the integration processes, libertarians devoid themselves of proper political philosophical inquiry by categorically dismissing the processes. This is a tragic error, as it excludes our

ability to define, analysis and importantly measure various elements of the whole as legitimate without sanctioning the totality of the regime. An example of such elemental approaches could be the recognition that most Western democracies forbid slavery, which most libertarians would strongly support. However, this does not mean a sanctioning of the totality of the system. The regulatory approach helps us define the state and parliament as a body focusing on primarily technocratic issues, and thus it requires a technocratic design structure to function properly, or rather, as intended. The state & parliament generates legitimacy precisely because their functions require primarily nondemocratic inputs. The representative parliament's features are similar to those of a direct democracy; however, the areas where it has the most influence and developed its most efficient instruments of governance are non-majoritarian by default, such as social and economic regulation without possible inputs by citizens.

When considering the regulatory approach as the basis for defining the function of a parliament and state, it is important to recognize the longstanding perception of a democratic deficit. However, this does not mean that institutional flaws should be accepted as a given. Instead of focusing solely on institutional criticism, the perspective shifts to examining issues such as convergence, congruence, and the perception of legitimacy as a matter of faith in authority. The problem with representative democracy is not that it is inherently illegitimate due to a failure to conform to the standards of libertarian and anarchistic democratic societies. Rather, it stems from a lack of legitimacy resulting from inadequate representation and education of citizens about the role and purpose of the regulatory state. A contemporary example of the lacking comprehension of the EU's governance regime amongst ordinary citizens can be found in the United Kingdom. The day after the UK voted in the Brexit referendum, the number one thing searched for on Google was "what is the EU?'. If citizens are not able to understand the benefits and their rights in a system, they will be inclined to be distrustful of said system's development which might manifest a preference for other alternatives.

vi. A possible synthesis: the theory of perceived legitimacy

Let us then take a step back and reconsider these two perspectives. On the one hand, we can view the state and parliament as categorically flawed, and therefore dismiss their consideration as legitimate entirely. On the other hand, we take the top-down view of the regulatory state theory supporter, and view the problem as lying entirely with the populace. This perspective dismisses categorically the claims of the anarchist, and help us explain the overarching unity all statist share. Nevertheless, our aim here is to find a conceptualisation of legitimacy of political praxis that can be utilised within the metaphysics of libertarianism. This is why we here propose a synthesis of these two perspectives: the core issue at hand seems to be a steadily prevailing consensus that the state is suffering from, first and foremost, *a perceived legitimacy deficit*. This conclusion is drawn from the preceding literature review where one observes that there is, regardless of reason, a disconnect between the citizens of the state and those that govern. I coin this as the *theory of perceived legitimacy*, which it is meant that *a polity succeeds in justifying its power structures as long as they are perceived to be legitimate*, regardless of whether or not they are truthful towards their citizens or whether or not the polity's institutional structure can be deemed ethical; *as long as a polity is perceived to be legitimate, actors in the polity will act accordingly regardless of whether or not the polity is legitimate.* By identifying the overarching problem as perceived legitimacy, we

can draw upon literature from both theories, and may therefore apply the term legitimacy as a convergence to the two, without excluding either contribution from either theory. But why is this necessary for libertarian metaphysics?

We need to do this in order to explain not just the divergences between various statists, but also to bring us closer to this essay's goal: explaining the divergences within libertarianism from a metaphysical perspective. By defining legitimacy of a praxis as that which is perceived to be legitimate, we succeed in our goal of finding a term that can encapsulate the vast selection of libertarian ideologies, their praxis, divergences of opinion, and, crucially, a definition that both explains the motivation of the state while simultaneously allowing for a radical individual approach where the final judge of whether or not a certain set of actions are legitimate is the ego.

Nevertheless, it would be absurd to claim that this is all there is to be said for legitimacy. Legitimacy is more than just a guiding principle, as has been formulated here. Legitimacy is also a question of ethics and morality, and that literature is plagued by significant shortcomings. Let it also be stressed that legitimate does not equal ethical or libertarian. Legitimacy, in this essay, refers to the sustainability and support granted to a coordination game, praxis or even individual, and says nothing of the ethical virtue and moral standing of the thing in question. The ethical dimension is reserved for a different chapter.

Legitimacy research has failed to counter the normative issues and the difficulties associated with the operationalization of legitimacy as an empirical unit. There are two major shortcomings in the current attempts to empirically measure legitimacy: the first is the limitation of research by focusing exclusively on a specific form of legitimacy in a specific context, such as the legitimacy of liberal, Western democratic polities with a rule of law. The second shortcoming is that other studies only measure *regime support* as opposed to the *actual ethical virtue of the regime*, equating two concepts that are not the same. Furthermore, one also needs to understand how legitimacy can be *influenced* in developing policy proposals to improve upon it, meaning the appeal of populism, false information, lies and deceit.

Chapter 8: The state viewed through the theory of perceived legitimacy

Before we move on to the next part of this essay, I wish to dwell on libertarianism and its definition of the state, politics as a primarily parliamentary and institutional venture, and on democracy as a specific set of institutional procedures. Although not explicitly philosophical, we must also allow ourselves to drift into the fields of sociology and political sciences in our pursuit of deeper philosophical understanding. Mainly, I believe, this comes as a necessity as the institutions are the immaterial social constructions we embed in material constructions such as ministry buildings, the president's car, a king's crown, a police officer's badge and their gun. These things are the living and breathing consequences of the current status quo, the impermanent presenting itself as permanent through deceit and performative social games and coordination. The skill applied by those in power depends on a certain notion of what something is and what something cannot be, such as defining political actions and the individual as fundamentally constrained by judicial, economic and violent frameworks. I also find that many libertarians disagree on what defines a state and what constitute legitimate power structures, and it is most clearly apparent in the split between the European and North American libertarian strains. While Europeans remain convinced that libertarianism is the domain of socialist offshoots, the North American popular belief sees the term in widespread use among proponents of capitalism and limited state intervention. Note the distinction: one supports the state as long as it is limited; the other champions total liberation of the individual in a stateless society. I wish to dedicate one chapter here first to a consideration of the state as an entity, starting from the metaphysical axioms established in the first part of this essay, then slowly crystallising the definition of the state as an all-encompassing coordination game. I believe this to be a fruitful endeavour, as it demonstrates the practical application of the axioms, and demonstrates that libertarianism can exist in a multitude of fashions, due to the conclusive insight that the fundamental difference between the European and North American strains is a conception of justice.

i. The state as an entity

In a previous chapter, I mentioned that the state is an entity, which to some might seem confusing, as the world is composed primarily of objects, either with or without agency. The state cannot be a single object, as there is no single object one can point to and claim that it is the state. The state is, in our instinctual observation, not located in a single point in space, and must therefore be thought of as a thing with properties that allow it to be recognised or at least thought of as present without being restricted by the same laws that govern the movement of bodies and objects. It seems we need to take a step back and first consider the difference between entities and things. Existence is a thing, or a collection of things, synonymous for me with reality, the world or other all-encompassing terms used to describe the total amount of things. An entity would

then also have to be a thing, and follow the same criteria for their definition as they do. Since things are by definition traversable, an entity also has to be, or at least be in a position where it can appear as movable or changeable. However, I define entities as definitive things, or concepts, with which we can define them as separate, parts of or / and elemental aspects of reality. An example of such entities are those things, which we understand to be in possession of a *consciousness*[1]. We can take it a step further, and define all living things as entities, meaning things that by their design and nature possess a form of cognition.[2] Taking the definition of entities, then, as being capable of understanding sequences by utilising cognition and consciousness, we can include a broad selection of things, such as plants, fish, humans and other animals. However, the definition opens up for a few consideration that seems to indicate a hierarchical structure of sorts, or at least a grading system, where the degree to which an entity is capable of detailing, registering and describing the movement of things around them. There is, clearly, a difference between a thing that can register only 5 movements of things at the same time, and another that can register 5^2 things. The outcome of these differences are hereto unknown to us, but we can make assumptions that the knowledge of more of these movements would likely lead to a theoretical exponentially larger number of possible actions to pursue for an individual's will. However, our definition could also be applied to coordination systems, which is an important acknowledgement and a crucial point of entrance to the larger discourse on the difference between the individual and larger coordination games composed of unions of egos.

Entities are not just living beings, but also larger collections of accumulated wills. The crucial difference is that although a human being is an entity, it is also so much more than ordinary entities due to its possession of a unique ego, which is absent in a coordination game. Coordination games are, without a doubt, in possession of a form of consciousness, as they are purposefully designed to detail and describe the movement and placement of these entities, to itself, meaning its participants. Furthermore, coordination games strive towards a form of cognition, in that their design is to register and attempt to describe the movements of entities. This means that they are actively in the process of engaging with things they encounter, and possess the ability to reflect and explain these movements to their participants. Both cognition and consciousness, although in a different form from what we have as individuals. Whereas an individual is able to isolate themselves from coordination games and position themselves as a part of a larger system rather than a whole, a coordination game itself lack this individualism and therefore the criteria for being thought of as something entirely human is flawed. However, this definition does allow us to see similarities between the workings of coordination games and the actions taken on behalf of a unique ego's will. For instance, coordination games have agency derived from their participants, in that they are designed with a purpose and therefore only exists insofar as the players of the coordination game feel as if their agency is being acted out through their participation in the game. Here we can see a similarity between immaterial entities like coordination games and their material participants: the game will seize to exist, or be transformed, based on the presence of a will that drive it forward.

Now, the material condition is an important point. Coordination games are not material entities, but entities that exist immaterially in the actions taken by two or more individuals. One

[1] *Consciousness*: a process of detailing and describing the movement and placement of these entities, to itself.

[2] Cognition: the ability to register and then attempt to describe the movements of entities through what the entity perceive to be existence.

could argue that individuals themselves could play their own coordination game, but then one could just as well argue that these individual coordination games are synonymous with the actions of the will, as they fulfil the same purpose. It is also better to reserve the term for the collaborative workings of individuals, as this is where political action takes place. For it is first and foremost when more egos coordinate their wills that we see the impact an immaterial entity has on the actions taken by its participants. Moreover, this impact can be grand. Political praxis, as mentioned, is a coordination game, as it is the total complex of relations between people living in society, a coordination game which functions to ensure governance. From there we now see an entity we call society, a larger coordination game often restricted by geographical, material and cultural boundaries more or less agreed upon by people affected by its immaterial influence. Societies require politics as a simultaneous game, two games played at the same time, to a point where they are almost interchangeable and overlapping the other. Political action is the game by which its players try to govern the society game, whereas the society game is trying to coordinate people's overall wills. This distinction is crucial. One of these games try actively to seize control over the other, namely the game of politics, and because of this, the two games interact and integrate, on and off, continuously and likely will forever. This is what is meant by the notion that politics refers to the total set of actions taken by people living in a society, seeing as it is in the interest of all individuals, either acting as a group or on their own, to seize control over parts or a whole of the society game in order to fulfil their wills. As such, politics and society is a dual-game played at the same time, where participation in or declination to play one or the other will always manifest as an active choice in one or both of the games. An example would be a rejection of certain parts of society's commonly agreed-upon boundaries, which then becomes a political action in that it steers the coordination towards one's own interest at the cost of disagreeing with the rules of the society game, making it political. Likewise, an attempt to reject political action by refusing to take into consideration the consequences of one's own inaction in the governance of a society could lead to a certain group of people superimposing themselves without resistance on others, which then will affect the overall sets of actions available to oneself and others in the society game. Inaction in one game always leads to action in the other.

An attempt to steer this often confusing and complex dual-game is the creation of an entity that superimposes itself on both games from the top, presenting itself as a third game, a game that supposedly is not a derivative of the two main games, but rather a hypothetical third route that stabilises the relationship between the two games. This entity is, of course, the state. The state is, in many ways, the greatest victory of the political game over the society game. Self-contained and self-referential, the state tricked the players of both the political and the society game to think that it offered a stabilising element in a world divided by disagreements and strife. The state offered this: a game where one resigns a significant portion of the players' possible actions to an immaterial entity, which reserves itself to only be playable by a select few participants, often those that already have amassed a central positon both in the political and the society game. These can be players of social, economic, violent or resourceful statues, that then pool their resources to sustain and protect an entity that then gradually started to superimpose itself on a steadily increasing aspect of human behaviour. The process seems to be motivated by different beliefs, in that I do not suggest that all participants in the state game are cynical or wilfully authoritarian. This would be absurd, and is something that will be detailed further in the next section. What is suggested, though, is that their participation, regardless of motivation, all seek to legitimise the continued existence of a coordination game that limits the actions taken by players of the society

and political game, meaning that it is a way of repurposing the political game to be separated into two sub-categories, both of which still relate to the state game as their primary affecter. The two categories are those that either accept that the political game henceforth must be played as subservient to the state game, and those that view this as a flawed praxis that can be changed. These two groups vary in since, but usually the first is the largest due to the sheer scope of influence the state game has. The state as an entity is clearly political, despite its attempts to present itself as a more permanent, overarching framework within which the two other games are to be played. It seeks complete governance, not just over the two games, but over its players' ability to conceptualise the limits of these games and what can be achieved if they were to play freely. The state is a coordination game whose goal is a total subversion of all players of both the political and the society game to its own, totally immersive superstructure. Any collective of wills that is currently participating in a state game is currently living in an imbalanced society where one of the two dual-games is in a supreme position, a collective where they are able to direct and command imagined boundaries of the society game and the political game. Many people that play the political game do not even realise that they have accepted boundaries that are fictional; believing that the state is an eternal structure that exists independent of what they think is political action. An example of this is thinking that civil disobedience is not as political as participating in the state's institutions or party politics, a conviction that only makes sense in a situation where one accepts the state's claim of supremacy as all-encompassing and final.

The state is, in some ways, the ultimate coordination game. It reformulates the relationship between the society game and the political game to a degree where one cannot imagine, for the most part, a situation where individuals try to coordinate their wills without the overarching immaterial entity of the state. For let us be clear: there is no single material object called the state. The state is not located in a building, in a book or a person, but is a conglomeration of immaterial practices and beliefs that add up to a set of social beliefs in how one should conduct oneself properly. It is fundamentally immaterial, because the state is a game like any other game, one with rules, players, and importantly, victors and losers. The state is a meme that has been repeated successfully, reiterated so much that its players and subservient cannot escape its grasp. Even attempts to fully distance oneself from it is registered as move within the game, and doing so could even inspire persecution, argued to be rightfully so, by other players of the game. The immaterial aspect of the state as a coordination game allows us to rethink our relationship with it, and view it as a social construct that some argue to be necessary. Do not get me wrong: it would be ludicrous to suggest that a state is incapable of doing good or increasing the standard of living for its players and subjects, the same way it would be ludicrous to suggest that some state games are not more vile and horrific than others.

ii. The State and the legitimacy of coordination games

Let us now then move on to applying this theory on legitimacy of political praxis to the coordination game called the state, or state game. Since the theory of perceived legitimacy tells us that a coordination game is only legitimate insofar as it is perceived to be so by its players, we can already conclude that the state, in all its functions, is widely debated as to whether or not is perceived to be trustworthy. Certainly, there are disagreements at a more fundamental level, such as between a libertarian and a statist, but there is also widespread disagreements within the

statist circles as to what a state's function is and how one is to best pursue it. This is apparent if one look at the plurality of persons that participate in a, let us say parliamentary representative system. This plurality of opinions indicate a few things. Firstly, it indicates that although the state is capable of superimposing itself on the society and politics game, it is not capable of unifying public support and containing it forever. There are few state games that survived for long in their original form, and most of them go through significant changes and modification, like an immaterial version of the Ship of Theseus. After enough configurations, the state has changed immensely and is only similar to its origin in that it is trying to superimpose itself on the dual-game. However, this unifying identifier tells us very little about the various games of the past.

The second thing one might assume is that by its very nature, the state game requires a certain degree of disagreements that can be left to the players of the other political games. Since the domain of the overarching societal governance is left to the functioning of the state, there must be some other areas left to the individual to be played. Varying in degree, these other political games are meant to give the participants in the dual-game and the state game the impression that the state game is a permanent necessity, without which the other games could not exist. Therefore, the state game requires a certain degree of leeway with its subjects, a certain amount of freedom through which they can act and which they may ascribe as the benefit of having a state game. One must have collection of political and societal games to be played for the state to be functional, otherwise the participants might feel as if there is no reason for the state game to be played, seeing as they have to sacrifice a number of possible actions in order to gain a stable, overarching superstructure. So, within this superstructure, the state must allow for some form of freely agreed-upon games to take places, as a "reward" for offering other actions to the state.

Thirdly, we can also assume that the procurement of trust and acceptance of the state game, or rather, the procurement of legitimacy, is of concern to the game and must therefore be an integral part of the players deliberation when they decide how to act or govern. This procurement is necessary when we define the state as a coordination game, seeing as all games are dependent on the participation and consent, wilful or not, of the players.

Taking these three assumptions, we recognize that the state game continuously reacts to the changing composition of its players, the movement of things, the changing wills of the egos, and, likely, the existence of other state games. The state must then balance a delicate mix of available actions for its subjects, while also procure legitimacy for its existence from the same group. This trifecta of challenges are met with a large variety of solutions, and are the principal reason why there exists a plethora of states. For instance, a state might claim supreme right and monopoly over violence, but might defend this rule if they allow players to gain access to the monopoly through formalized channels deemed fair, like, for instance, electoral systems or education and licencing. The state continuously faces opposition in forms of disagreements on the rules of the game, the natural disagreements that come from having more than one ego participate in a decision-making process, and the group of people that are subject to it but does not recognize its authority. These disagreements are only natural, and no coordination game is without conflict. As long as there are more than one individual, there will be conflict in one for or antother. This is however a good thing. We do wish to see such disagreements, as they are signs of egos seeking to position themselves in accordance with one another, and examples of human beings taking control over their lives. This is not always a good thing, and sometimes, more often than not, the state game is occupied by a group of players with malicious intent. They can utilise their monopoly on violence to subjugate other egos and limit the freedom of other

people to a point where they feel totally subjugated. These phenomenon, called totalitarianism and authoritarianism, demonstrate the degree to which a state game can superimpose itself on subjects and free people. The totalitarian, in particular, goes further than any other state game in its attempt to discredit the dual-game power balance, even going so far as to suggest that the state game is the only game there is, and that only those who agree to this sentiment are allowed to play it. These concerns are valid, and are examples of the possible universality of the theory of perceived legitimacy: as long as a coordination game succeeds in convincing its players that it is a legitimate game, it is, for all practical and pragmatic purposes, a legitimate game. This is a frustrating revelation, one that is hard to accept for most people. However, we are here dealing with political theory, and not with ethics. The realm of moral questions exists to solve these concerns, and I believe that they have, are and will be adequately addressed there. Legitimacy is a temporal term, referring to a specific context in which a legitimate rule is dependent, first and foremost, upon fulfilment of temporal, impermanent, immaterial laws and rules that likely will seize to exist in not to long. Whether a state is ethical or not, the moral philosopher or ideologue is welcome to critique. But in the pursuit of a unifying notion of legitimacy, we cannot allow ourselves to slip.

For let us not for a moment pretend that this definition of legitimacy pays service to the state. Far from it! Considering all these facts, we can argue that the state is rarely, if ever, completely successful in its procurement of legitimacy, and therefore, rarely, if ever, completely legitimate. A state cannot be fully legitimate, as it is dependent on a series of disagreements within its framework to justify its existence. It is here, in this paradox, we find the absurdity of a state's claim to legitimacy. Firstly, consent to playing the state game is impossible for most people, as they will never get a chance to choose, freely, if they wish to play the game or not. Secondly, the instability and constant adaption of the state make it hard to even think of it as an entity that has permanent qualities, making it even harder to evaluate its legitimacy, at least over longer periods. For instance, a state may impose a rule that the majority of the people disagree with, thus reducing its legitimacy in their eyes. But, the state may then refrain from imposing the rule after the backlash, which might satisfy some, but for others might be taken as an example of back paddling and rejection of the popular will of the people. Thirdly, we can easily say that the state's attempts to procure legitimacy is challenging. The procurement has to justify the subjugation of the majority, their resignation of actions, the state's monopoly on violence, and their monopoly on the governance of the dual-game, while at the same time arguing that this is necessary. This inspires the state to position legitimacy procurement as a condemnation of evils or vices, either external or internal problems of the society, to which the state is the supposed only solution and exterminator. In its pursuit of legitimacy, the state risk exposing the total control it has over society, and can easily present itself as a dominating and unjust entity.

The state then requires a system in place to ward of these criticisms, preserve its place as the supreme coordination game, and keep its monopolies. What it requires, is a theatre.

Chapter 9: The Political Theatre and the State

Will the study of political praxis of today make the same mistakes as the libertarian movements of the USA by focusing primarily on carefully planned and highly centralized national actions in political parties, or on the few examples of larger anarchist communities in Spain and Kurdistan? Or will it attempt to permeate the philosophy's essence and metaphysical truth, as well as the ego politics itself, and develop into a genuine libertarian study that reaches deeply into the metaphysics of pure freedom as a force for education and action, a broader perspective on the causes and dangers of war, and a vision of a unified and demilitarized society? If we are to learn from contemporary thinkers and those innovators who led the idea into a new age, we must first approach these notions from a broader perspective, and aim towards a seriousness that disbands the needless infighting between us. We need to learn from the theatre, and prove that we are capable of engaging in the types of social systems that we profess are ideal.

i. The theatre as a social system

Growing up, I was blessed with brilliant parents who indulged in the most honourable of intellectual activities: arguing about the arts. My father, bless his eternal soul, believed for his entire life that art was to be found in the means of consumptive intellectual property, such as films, books, novels, graphic novels and cartoons. He defended this view until the day he died, whereas my mother, ever the sociologist, approached the question of arts from the perspective not of consumption, but as a participatory act of engagement with abstract ideas in a community. This definition is closer to what I believe myself, although I must profess that I will reserve my views on the aesthetics for a different essay. For now, we will approach it in the same manner that we approached political activity: arts is a developing social system of egos coordinating their will, rather than a static, stable and centrally controlled system. I do feel the need to draw parallels between this approach to art and political activity, for there is a specific art form that in a way formalises, or at least provides both a mental and physical example of political praxis and the individual's endeavour to cooperate with other egos towards a certain goal: the theatre. I spent the majority of my childhood and teens in the theatre, and as such I have some authority on the subject, although it dwindles with every passing year. The theatre is a strange setting, in which humans engage in a form of play often associated with children, a collective make-believe where criteria applied to determine truths are not entirely suspended, but moulded to fit an alternative setting in which the real is presupposed by a mutual consent to disbelieve between the audience and the actor. The spectator is just as important to sustaining this disbelief as the actor, who depends upon their commitment to fraudulence for the play to survive and game to continue. There is a dual concession on both ends, in which both the audience and the actor willingly surrenders a portion of their ordinance to a different kind of decree, a command to which the participants are necessitated to obey for the ideas and stories expressed to take hold of them all in the correct manner. The theatre is both make-believe, in the metaphysical sense, since it elevates

abstract notions to a total reality, but it is also a physical event, taking place with material bodies and dependent on the movement of bodies by consenting egos for the play and abstractions to take on an importance. This willingness to reject commonly accepted ideas for those that have a better, more charming, elevated flair is what makes the theatre an exceptionally unique form of social engagement, a form of social praxis that elevates everyday notions to new heights by visually and physically presenting them in front of an audience. The theatre is different from all other forms of art, at least if we are so inclined as to include other forms of artistic expressions on stages under the broader definition of theatre activities, which we naturally are for the purpose of this chapter. The theatre is not just dramaturgy, but also performances of a different nature. The ballet, the opera, the performance artist and the various other incarnations of the same spirit that first saw its expression in form in the early days of civilisation. The theatre, in a more Platonic sense, is a real of abstraction made real, a scene where we, together as a group, engage with the purely ideal as if it was raw and material. Such an engagement is not possible with literature, pictures, films or photo: the very presence of material bodies transcends the theatre from a merely visual expression of human will to a ritual. What the theatre does is empowering the performer and the audience to manifest abstractions in the real world, and make them, for a short period, as real as anything else. For it is real, in those moments, when the dialogue between the audience and the performer is perfect: in those moments, essentially, the reality of the situation is the play and the game being engaged in. Do not misunderstand: I do not suggest that the performers lie about their abstract world become real. Rather, the play itself becomes real, not just as an attempt to create a social system, but a true social system created and practised by both performer and audience, a new form of language created with the sole intent of wooing the performer and the audience to join in a dance, a song of sorts, that purely expresses unity of consenting egos. That is what the theatre is, and that is what is should be.

ii. The theatre as a mirror

The collection of egos attending and performing in a play or some form of material artistic expression on a stage are, engaging in a social system that is similar to all other social systems outside of the theatre. The difference with the theatre and the other systems is the acknowledgement that the theatre is a purposeful tool for play with ideas elsewhere deemed fictions. With this key difference, the setting is entirely different for most people, at least in the sense that it is experienced differently. Part of the rules of this social system is the resignation of certain sense and certain standards of evaluation that allows the play to continue even though the logical framework necessary for engagement with bodies outside the theatre would oppose many of the rules by default. This could be the acceptance of sitting still while being told a story by actors, accepting that the person on stage is someone else that who he really is, playing make-believe with there the theatre is located, what time of day it is, what year, what planet and what language is being spoken. The theatre requires this resignation to serve its purpose, and if the audience or actor unwillingly or purposely rejects these rules, the illusion is shattered and the play will find it harder to sustain its existence. However, one aspect of the theatre that immediately presents itself to us is its similarity with so many other social plays we engage in on a day to day basis. Although the theatre is the most extreme version of this activity, there are elements of the theatre found in all other plays, to such a degree that many can relate to certain idioms and

expressions that helps to simplify the complexity of social systems. “We all were a mask”, “I have a role to play,” “I was acting interested in her story.” These expressions are common, and allude to the theatre not just as an isolated social system, but a reference point and illustrative example of the regular dishonesty and necessary pretence we engage in on a day to day basis in all our lives. As such, the theatre is elevated further from being an aesthetic institution, but also an area of political and philosophical praxis, where we can take these ideas and explore them further in ways which challenges the hierarchy of established social systems and push for reforms of the relationship between egos and individuals. The theatre is now a mirror, a reflection of all other social systems, only safer and better protected from the backlash one could risk by engaging in the same types of activities as performers on a stage but in different social systems that lack the consent and conditions necessary for the play’s survival. If a person were to act out a personage of, let’s say, the great Napoleon or Nebuchadnezzar, or recite the works of Beckett, Miller and Ibsen as if they were material events or personal experiences, the illusion would likely be broken or greatly diminished by the absence of a theatre space, a physical location where such ideas are allowed to be expressed socially, and where the toying with boundaries of social systems is accepted and expected. The theatre survives as long as it serves this role: a mirror of other activities practices by egos in other social systems. It is here its magical power is conjured. For theatre, by nature of being a physical art form and happening in real time, as opposed to the cinema, the theatre allows for a lived experience of boundary experimentation. Whereas the film, the painting or the photo might toy with the same ideas, the theatre is a live praxis, it is an attempt to physically manifest these ideas and through presenting these ideas to a live audience, not separated through cyberspace or limited by vision alone, the theatre has, theoretically, all senses at its disposal. Through this utilisation, the theatre bridges reality and abstraction, but also social systems previously not considered to be related by its participants. The theatre, by its nature, has the ability to reflect real life scenarios not just in the experience itself, but also in the aftermath. For instance, many might draw parallels between the theatre experience and any other work-related experience one might have. In the same way, they both require, for most people, the physical representation of a worker at a work place, be it a factory or a desks, where tasks are performed, like an actors, through the embodiment of the spirit of a worker, a role taken on by the employee to satisfy the needs of an audience, be it the boss or the customers of the business with which they’re employed. This metaphor can change an ego further, when one realises that this is the reality for the actor itself. An actor is also a person doing work, and has to perform not just their role, but also their social role as an actor to satisfy their work requirements. The theatre then offers a boundless abstraction in itself: it allows the audience, actor and engager to dissolve the social systems in which they participate, and view them as a series of plays, a series of games in which we all play roles, act a certain manner, engage with each other’s according to the wants and needs of an audience or other actors, and finally return to the backstage where we reflect on our next role, our next scene and our next play. It is not just a helpful metaphor for theoretical analysis, but a possible lived praxis where we can live out philosophical and metaphysical concepts to the point where they seize to be just ideas, but real life experiences and events we can touch, smell, taste, and feel. Just by being aware of the theatre, a person runs the risk of dissolving all other social systems in which they participate, and ask the question: what is my role to play?

iii. The state as a theatre

Now that we have established the potency of the theatre, we can now apply it to the wider formalisation of a libertarian metaphysics. Our idea is clear: the ego must engage in social activity to engage in political activity. All social activity is political and all political activity is social. We are, at our core, free beings that transcend simple definitions, and are as consequences dependent on definitions to sustain the existence of social game and resource management. Political activity can simply be expressed as an advanced form of the theatre, where the world is the stage, the individual is the actor. A theatre, then, can be understood in two forms: the political theatre and the artistic theatre. They often overlap, but for simplicity's sake we will make the distinction, as there is a pragmatic reason to do so: there is clearly a commonly agreed upon distinction between an artistic theatre where people willingly go to surrender their conception of reality for entertainment and thought, and the often unconscious surrendering of reality conceptions in the political theatre, where we engage in similar acts but under a very different conception. The political theatre is, in a way, the all-encompassing activity of human civilisation. Since all social systems are political, and every act, as long as it is social, is a political act, then the political theatre can be said to be the total play we engage in, or the accumulation of all roles and plays attributed to political actions in a social system. However, from a libertarian point of view, the political theatre cannot be limited, only represented in a different manner. In short, this means that one cannot deny the existence of a grand political theatre that stretches above the limits of geography, time and social constructs, but one has to acknowledge the dangers of imagining the political theatre as being dependent or even synonymous with some of these impermanent constructs and institutions. This is where we find examples of supposed owners or monopolists of the political theatre, who claim that what they represent is the universal and only valid for of political play. However, this cannot be further from the truth. A person is a political being, and as long as there exists a social system in which they engage in, then the entirety of that system is part of the political theatre. Any attempt to deny the existence of political activity outside the ramifications of impermanent institutions is an attempt to deny, in the same breath, the existence of a universal political theatre and the inherent will of egos. Politics is the ego's communal expression, the language by which we decide on the cooperation or conflict of our wills, and the practical manifestations of these processes through praxis. Politics is not a parliament, a building, a flag or a nation: it is so much more. Therefore, one must view these attempts at limiting the definition of the political theatre to a set of approved institutions as an attempt to supplant the real with the vacuous, or to supplant the real stage of political praxis with the supremacy of *the fake-stage*. A fake-stage is an institutionalisation of the social and political being into a structured social system that claims monopoly on political activity, thus dissolving or undermining political acts that do not fit into their monopolistic rules, acts that take place on the real stage of a theatre. The fake-stage is a pretence theatre, a pretend stage that claims to be the physical manifestation of the political theatre, and a form of oppositional rejection of those acts and manifestations of wills that do not approve or legitimise the monopolist's claims. However, the fake-stage is, like everything else, in continuous development. As some point, the fake-stage can transcend its fraudulence and supplant the actual stage of the theatre in the minds of its participants, thus changing the rules of the game and presenting its social game as the only legitimate experience. However, these occasions are rare, and often take a very long time. An example is the development of language, which is a stage that gradually changes and at a certain

point supplants the previous communication method. Other times the change can be rapid, such as revolutions. There are, however, few examples of a genuine revolution that properly rejects a monopolistic tendency of consolidating political power in the hands of a few at the mercy of the many. This process of autocracy can be intensely damaging to the goal of any proper revolution, that is to create a revolution of the mind, a reformulation of the political act as being grander and fundamental to the ego's very nature. When one starts to explore this idea further, we find that one of the key functions of a state is precisely this supplanting of one model of political action, its natural and libertarian form, with that of a claimed monopoly that depends on consistent procurement of legitimacy from its subjects to justify and sustain itself. This bastardisation of the idea of what constitutes as political action leads to despair and at worst widespread use of violence to quell opposition to the centralised body that dictates in the literal sense the rules of the social game.

Let us look at our definition of the theatre again, its actors and the audience, and replace the idea of the theatre with the state, or rather as a fake-stage. The state is a strange social game, in which egos engage in a form of play associated with a certain institution or polity's framework, a collective make-believe where criteria applied to determine truths are not entirely suspended, but moulded to fit an alternative setting in which the real political action is presupposed by a mutual consent to disbelieve the actual relationship between the ego and the polity. The ego is just as important to sustaining this disbelief as the state, who depends upon their commitment to fraudulence for the polity to survive and state as a social system to continue. There is chicanery in this supposed dual concession, where one pretends there to be an equality on both ends, in which both the supressed ego and the state willingly surrenders a portion of their ordinance to a different decree of community building. However, where many have claimed there is a balance between the state's monopoly on political activities and the protection it provides to the participants, one cannot deny that their participation are necessitated to obey under threats of violence from the state. Egos in these systems have to obey so that the stories and ideas conveyed by the state will all be properly absorbed, to the point where they have a fictitious monopoly, or close to it, on the conception of what a social systems is and can be, as well as what constitutes a political action. It is also a physical event because it involves herding physical bodies with violence or the threats thereof and depends on egos accepting the systems totality for the state and its abstractions to gain significance. There is, furthermore, often necessary for the state as a social system to manifest itself in symbolic materials, such as the construction of ministries, parliaments, castles and crowns. The state is make-believe in the metaphysical sense because it raises abstract ideas about monopolisation of the political theatre to a total actuality, thus bridging the realms of metaphysics with the physical reality. For instance, a body described as a town hall is defined by its function as long as the social system of the state rules with totality over the abstractions of political action in a given community of egos. Although the building is, in the literal sense, simply atoms and materials constructed after the will of one or more egos, its function, meaning its relevance to an egos determination and manifestation of its will is determined fundamentally by adherence to a states supremacy. The state is an exceptionally distinctive form of social engagement, a form of social praxis that elevates commonplace notions of what political actions is and could be to new heights by visually and physically monopolising them in front of an audience, a collection of subdued egos. This willingness of egos to reject libertarian ideas in favor of those that have a institutionalised, formal, structured and safe authoritarian flair is what gives the state its exceptional uniqueness. If we are inclined to exclude other political actions

taking place on stages accessible outside of the fake-stage, then the state is distinct from all other kinds of social systems and games: the state demands the exclusive right to performances, and demands further that these performances are to take place in only one set of physical locations. The general political dramaturgy is subjected to the limits of what the state as a social game can allow while simultaneously protecting its position. The libertarian spirit that initially manifested itself the early days of civilization is today monopolised in the government of a state, nationalism, representative democracy, and countless other incarnations of institutionalised bureaucracy. In a more platonic sense, *the state is an abstraction of authority made physically real*, a setting where we surrender our sense of reality to interact with the purely ideal notion of a state as a permanence. A freer form of political interaction is not conceivable for many, and then the humane notion of direct action, mutual aid, spontaneous solidarity, or federative democracy of individuals become not only incompatible with the roles and play of the fake-stage, but threatens the existence of the state. The state necessitates that physical objects transform what was formerly only a theoretical manifestation of the political will into a ritual. The state gives the ego and the public the ability to bring not their own, but the state's abstractions into the physical world and, for a brief time, to make them appear as real as anything else. A state is at its most genuine when rulers and subjects are having a flawless relationship; at those times, the state and game being played are essentially the reality of the scenario for all participants. Please note that I am not advocating that the institutions and physical bodies serving as function tools for the fake-stage make up a real world. I insist that these bodies and ideas only make sense as long as we interpret them from an abstract perspective. Don't get me wrong: I don't think the egos participating should pretend the state's abstract world has become real. Instead, *the play of the state becomes real*, not just as an attempt to create one of many political stages, but as a real fake-stage system that is created and used by both the egos and the dominating egos in positions to drive the fake-stage's play forward. It is a social system that was created with the sole purpose of luring the egos and the ruling egos demonstrates the unity of consent.

iv. Theatre of the Oppressed as a praxis

The theatre as an encompassing metaphysical framework for political praxis is useful not just for a philosophical analysis of the libertarian idea, but also as a tool for framing praxis and direct action. How we take this idea, can better assist in bridging ideological gaps and bringing genuine liberation, and further develop the quality as well as the quantity of people it can influence and mobilize to further develop the idea and the study of it. As an end to this chapter, I'd like to mirror the experiences learned from the "Theatre of the Oppressed" with the concepts discussed earlier, and show that the theatre, not just as a form of artistic expression, can be a political tool outside of the barriers erected by the state, a genuine form of libertarianism that explores the various forms of wills expressed by egos and the hindrances that deny their ego.

The term "Theatre of the Oppressed" (TO) refers to dramatic genres developed by Brazilian theatre artist Augusto Boal in the 1970s, first in Brazil and then in Europe. It all started with another thinker concerned with the inequality of the masses, Paulo Freire, an educator and theorist, and his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The book had an impact on Boal, and from it, he developed a set of methods, or rather a pedagogy of political dramaturgy, which were initially in line with radical-left politics and later with center-left philosophy. As such, he represents much

of the same notions this book seeks to highlight, namely the universality of the free assosicaiton of individuals outside the temporal notions of ideological frames. Boal suggested that one might employ theatre to promote social and political change, not just through performance, but by actively engaging the audience so that they can take on a more active role in the Theatre of the Oppressed, exploring, displaying, analysing, and changing their reality as "spect-actors." This is similar to the relationship professed earlier in this chapter between the ego and the state, where one must suspend one's disbelief for the purpose of facilitating a specific form of political action and societal transformation. What Boal started working on was initially developed in the 1950s as a series of theatrical analyses and critiques, but was not formally embraced until several decades later in the 1970s. Boal was a fervent advocate for the use of *participatory methods*, particularly in theatre. I fit this within my own view of politics as a collection of acts between egos, where one sees the interaction between Boal's "new media perspective" and already existing social systems and frameworks for praxis. Since the 1950s, these concepts have been further explored, giving them significance in a contemporary setting, howevere, the crucial element at its core is the connection between audience and actor. In short, the stance proposed is that the theatre is as its most effective when it is explicitly political and explicitly a relationship between actors and audiences. Much of Augusto Boal's theatrical process requires that a neutral party be at the centre of the action, or the play. This person is commonly called the 'facilitator'. In Ball's literature, this role is called the "Joker" in reference to the neutrality of the Joker card in his deck of playing cards. As we observe, the usage of play and games as metaphors and effective tools for reformulations of the relationship between people and social systems is a tried and true method. The facilitator person is responsible for the logistics of the process and ensures a fair trial, but must not comment on or interfere in the content of the performance. Because this is the realm of "spect-actors". In this context, impartiality means ensuring that the history of problems, including oppressive situations that need to be overcome by their nature, are not resolved. It is a fictional play, but realistically and as realistically plausible as possible. The result should be something like a group "brainstorming" on social issues within the community.

There are multiple forms of incarnations of this theatre, thus distinguishing further from the institutionalised nature of the state's fake-stage. The political actions taken during the Theatre of the Oppressed can be instrumental in the reformulation of the players' action on the fake-stage, and can help further deconstruct the state to increasingly make it more egalitarian, freer, and equitable and libertarian. This essay is not long enough to adequately discuss all the various incarnations in detail, so for now I will reserve myself to list a few examples of how this form of theatre might manifest. Firstly, let us consider *the Forum Theatre*. It refers to the dual roles of the people involved in the process, as spectators and actors, who both observe and create dramatic meaning and action in every performance. Another example show how the term "Spekt actor" can be used to refer to *invisible theatre*, where one performs a form of theatre action where the audience are unaware that they are part of a theatrical production, but still contribute to the discussion which is similar to another form called the *image theatre* which sees the resulting image and thinks of it as an idea. Similarities between these forms of theatre emphasizes the critical need to prevent audience isolation. The term "audience" brands the participants as subhuman. Therefore, we need to make them human and restore their ability to act fully. They also need to be actors and spectators on an equal footing with those who are accepted as actors. This eliminates the idea that the ruling class and the theatre represent only their ideals and that the audience is a passive victim of these images. In this way, the viewer no longer delegates the power to the

characters to think and act on their behalf. You are free. They think and act for themselves. Boal supports the idea that theatre is not revolutionary per se, but a rehearsal for a revolution.

Chapter 10: Epistemology

In the first part of this essay, I discussed the notion of legitimacy, or rather, of political and democratic legitimacy, a term that sees no decrease in value by referring to legitimacy of both phenomenon. The metaphysical inquiry professed here seeks to demonstrate that a democratically and politically legitimacy is based on the same foundation, namely the willing and free consent of liberated egos. That is to say, that a genuinely legitimate social system is predicated on a legitimacy conferred by egos who act on their wills. Sadly, the most common form of social systems, called states or nation states, we find that we put an equation between the genuine democratic ideal and systems where citizens and / or eligible voters grant consent to representatives to govern them. This system is by far preferable to those of autocratic or despotic dictatorships, as the liberal democracy is a down-up approach with an emphasis on citizens, and not a top-down view that positions the state's institutions as the most important actors. At least that is the meme that is being circulated, which, once again, is preferable to a social system with even more limits imposed on the ego. The key element of understanding what democracy's nature is *consent; or rather, a situation by which egos can freely exercise their wills in a cooperative manner without coercion.* It is only in such situations that it makes sense to talk about democratic ideals and principles, as only a person adequately informed on the choice they are making and without bondage can truly be said to engage in free association. This is in many ways the core of this essay's purpose: what bridges and connects all libertarian ideas is that they all acknowledge that a genuine libertarian governance body must start by recognizing that egos are unable to implement democracy unless it is happening with the egos' consent.

In short, we are unable to actively create the change we wish to see due to the rigidity of the current economic, political, judicial, social enforcement of the modern state. This monopolisation of the political theatre, limiting of social systems and socials games, limit the libertarian idea from reaching its full potential. This also feels like a natural point to repeat the author's position on the future of libertarianism: personally, I cannot foresee an immediate future where libertarianism is a viable alternative for many. There are many reasons for this, but chiefly the absence of a major libertarian global unity, a geographical centre for praxis, and the likelihood of being opposed by massive nation state's priorities. Moreover, their weapons.

As such, in another attempt to make libertarian metaphysics a more encompassing field of study, it should also branch out to include the tendency towards democracy as one of its core areas of focus. This is not meant in any way to discourage direct action, mutuality, civil disobedience, libertarian economic praxis or voluntary communities. Instead, it shifts the focus of academic inquiry into the major ideas of our school of thought towards an empirical reality, namely the expansion of democratic ideals and principles all over the world. This is not a natural cause of action, but the result of an increasing amount of education, praxis and exposure to the inequalities of our world, which then inspires more and more people to reconsider the conditions of their social systems and experiment with other games. Democracy proper is not the only good we can foresee, and the failure of many libertarians of being utterly inflexible in face of pragmatic

approaches decreases the idea's appeal to those that might need it the most. It would be absurd to devalue the expansion of democratic practices all over the world if they are in no way close to the ideal of the libertarian idealist. Consent can be granted in many ways, which is the argument those libertarians who oppose elections profess when they boycott parliamentary participation. That is their choice, and just as valid, as participating in the system in an attempt to avoid the biggest repercussions it might advance towards those that seek to dismantle it. As it stands, consent proper can only be granted when one is free and informed. However, a lighter, imperfect form of consent is given every day as we fundamentally are, and will remain for the near future, stuck in a social system against which we stand tragically disenfranchised. There is an infantile and childish tendency within libertarianism that rejects the benefits of increased access to referendums and fairer elections across the globe as a farce, while declining to acknowledge that they contribute to building consensus through a deliberative process including the relevant actors, such as empowering or informing citizens. As stated before, the focus for libertarians, in my own opinion, should be on how to increase inclusion of citizens in the agenda setting and decisions making process; consent, in particular, is viewed as an extension of democracy and therefore as an extension of the democratic legitimacy of a political system. How we do this, is the practice of democracy.

Following the arguments put forth in this essay, the coalesced libertarian critique of the state is that democracy is not possible within the borders of the state's monopoly on enforcement, simply because citizens are not empowered enough to grant consent to the governing bodies of the state for them to enforce their rules and laws. As such, democracy proper is not possible in a current society. Democracy is understood, and reformulated to serve the purpose of a wide variety of governing systems, but none of them fully achieves a *system* of democracy proper. *Democracy proper is here then understood to be a democratic system where free individuals have universal right of participation in the agenda setting and policy development of a specific geographical location.* The geographical constraint is necessary to ensure that democratic decision-making only concerns those that are directly affected by them, and that its practical plausible for people to participate in the various forums, meetings, assemblies, and extra-parliamentary procedures that might take form in such a system.

So how do we do this? It is quite "simple", really: education.

i. The ego and its epistemology

Before we can educate, we must start by building a framework for how we view learning, thinking, or more fundamentally, the epistemological processes underlying the ego. The political philosophy of libertarianism is a product of a specific context in the industrialised Western world, and found its expression in the writings of authors, activists and political figures who believe the individual to be the start and end of any legitimate social system. However, due to our school's historical background, we may safely assume that there are many assumptions within our school that requires intensified scrutiny. We are looking for not historically dependent axioms, nor metaphysical statements chained to a colonial, capitalist and mercantilist culture of oppression. We are searching for ideas that can be looked at by anyone who thinks it is their goal to reform, reconstruct, or dismantle the contemporary society as well as its future incarnations. A proper libertarian epistemology, then, must be accessible for anyone, anywhere. Why

this relentless scrutiny and quest for absolutes on this specific point, one may ask? Well, principally because it focuses on the undefined creative element of the ego's nothingness and capacity to reformulate and create itself, regardless of context. As the ego is a nothing, in the sense that it is absolved, at its core, of contextual elements, it is therefore a creative nothing, since it is able in any situation to relate analyses and process its impressions of bodies and other egos. In short, the ego is capable of transformation upon contact with new information and wisdom. Since practical libertarianism is a form of constant insurgency, so too is the intellectual basis for the ego and its will. An ego's will, in a sense, is then a a way of thinking that focuses past itself, and relates the ego's nothingness to the temporal existence around it. Because of existence temporality, then too must the ego's creative nothingness continuously adapt new information, meaning that the creation of knowledge too is temporal, and that the knowledge created is only valid as long as the temporal bodies to which the ego related continues to be of relevance to the ego's will. A libertarian epistemology is then continuously dangerous to established ideas, even those that spring from the same philosophical well. This is because, in my opinion, the goal of libertarian philosophy is not to establish an alternative political system known as *libertarianism*; rather, the objective is to foster the ego's creative nothingness. Since libertarianism is a tool for spreading free association between egos, it tends to shun purists and systematisers who want to create the ultimate libertarian theory. Therefore, we must approach the libertarian epistemology as we would approach a definition of the ego's nothingness: naming the unnameable.

ii. The Creative Nothingness and the Abyss of Non Language

Because it accepts too many of the assumptions of the dominant culture from which it originated, my understanding of epistemology is increasingly being called into question. As a result, the epistemological issue lies at the heart of various issues within the branching libertarian ideas, and, I would argue, spawns a myriad of needless divergences as we disagree on the fundamental ontology. For instance, if there was a, at least somewhat, unified starting point or foundation upon which we could birth new ideas, it would be easier for us to collaborate without infighting. "Libertarian-isms" are becoming increasingly sceptical to one another, if not outright hostile, which causes emphasis on concepts of a temporal nature that aim to eliminate the characteristics of political and economic power while maintaining the dominance mechanisms that enable this power to thrive. Let us explore a specific topic of disagreement to exemplify the abundance within the Unique. While some libertarians might disagree, many would argue that the contemporary industrial system is no longer viewed as a benign engine of progress that workers should control. Concisely, libertarianism is struggling with the notion of green politics, its method, and which praxis is suitable for reaching its goal. Libertarianism is not, as some like to portray it as, an antisocial philosophy. If anything, it is explicitly social, as the political human only exists as long as it associate with other humans. The political implications of a libertarian epistemology simply means that it is not just concerned with itself, but also with the self in position to global movements and addressing the entirety the political sphere.

Now then, let us look at an example of how our fundamental notions about learning and the ego's process of analysing the world around it creates significant divergences within libertarianism. An example of this within anarchism is anarcho-primitivism. Not simply political designs are raised doubt about by primitivisms, yet central types of human correspondence and classi-

fications of thought. Primitivism is a radical critique because it tries to find where oppression comes from. In particular, John Zerzan's writings probe the alleged causes of social stratification and alienation in the (typically assumed) categories of art, language, time, and agriculture.

Anyone with a green anarchist orientation cannot ignore the primitivist critique because it is so significant. However, a lot of primitivist theory has irksome contradictions that appear to be the result of neglecting epistemology. The proponents of this philosophy assert that civilization as a whole should be questioned. John Moore's book A Primitivist Primer uses the term "anarcho-primitivism" as a shorthand for a radical current that criticizes civilization as a whole from an anarchist point of view. However, because they rely primarily on anthropological data, anarcho-primitivism is firmly integrated into Western scientific discourse. If anarcho-primitivism were primarily an immanent critique, examining the goals and practices of civilization to demonstrate their incompatibility, it might be able to rely on the perspective provided by Western science. However, anarcho-primitivism asserts that it can instruct us on how to leave civilization, and the outside that is proposed is completely and qualitatively different. Anarcho-primitivist theorists don't seem to be bothered by the fact that the institutions under question are the ones defining this other from top to bottom.

In a lot of primitivist writing, the juxtaposition of naivety and uncompromising purism is frequently jarring, if not shocking. An illustration of the unacknowledged irony that pervades a lot of the anarcho-primitivist critique can be found in a line from Zerzan's book Elements of Refusal: "Truth be told, [primitive] life was lived in a ceaseless present," (12) hidden the point that verifiable time isn't intrinsic as a general rule, but a burden on it. Whatever the little number 12 is asking us to consider is irrelevant. Zerzan promptly provides a footnote to support his irrefutable assertion, informing the reader that it is a "fact." I do not want to dispute the assertion's possibility of being true in some way. The point is that a position that is completely unscientific and even anti-scientific is being disguised as academic in order to give the entire process an air of rigor and methodological legitimacy that can only make sense to the casual reader. Zerzan is an excellent writer who frequently conveys significant information, and the thesis in and of itself—that time is the primary cause of alienation—is one that merits consideration. However, when we accept civilization's methodology and conclusions while simultaneously challenging its very existence, epistemologically, we are in trouble.

In point of fact, the entire primitivist project bears the unfortunate burden of a purist theory that is plagued by impurities that it does not even attempt to address. Because it disregards the fact that culture necessarily defines nature, the primitivist tendency to value nature above culture is naive. Because it equates nature with everything that has already been subjugated and provides its opponents with the opportunity to identify with the defeated, the definition of nature as anything that is not culture will always be beneficial to power. This is a con and provides the necessary conditions for the formation of an unwittingly loyal opposition to the most ostensibly radical critique. Giving civilization hegemony over everything it claims as its own is to completely oppose civilization as it defines itself. An anarchist epistemology would try to provide this kind of definition of civilization if we want to destroy it.

Primitivisms have a wagon tied to a star, and if they want to know where they are going, they should look at how that star is moving. Anthropologists painted a very different picture of primitive life thirty years ago; the picture is also likely to look different in thirty years. Anarcho-primitivism's entire social philosophy will change in that case. How is it possible for a critique that claims to be so radical to allow itself to be compromised by having a close relationship with

the very institutions it claims to oppose? Except if primitivism's hypothesis defies the subject of epistemology, it won't stay an imperative power in disorder.

What would the epistemology of a true anarchist be like? An anarchist epistemology, it seems to me, would be one based on desire. This does not imply that we should endeavor to fully utilize knowledge; an epistemological position that asserts, "what I want to be true is therefore true" does not appeal to me because desire always arises from an idea of what is. Simply, I'm implying that as anarchists, we are aware of our desires; this cannot and will not be affected by scientific fads or societal whims. Although it is certainly possible that our desires are socially constructed, it would undermine the anarchist critique to the point where it would be irrelevant to dismiss them. As a result, I contend that anarchism could not exist without certain fundamental truths. While these are not necessarily universal truths, they are universal anarchist truths nonetheless.

Every anarchist wants to live as free a life as they can. This is absolutely true; it is a prerequisite for being an anarchist. Any other anarchist theory must start with this fundamental truth for it to be an anarchist theory. This does not imply that freedom is necessarily the objective of human existence. Instead, I believe the more modest assertion that some ways of thinking are anarchist-worthy and others are not, is what is evident, in my opinion. By definition, anarchist thinking is primarily concerned with freedom. Obviously, this does not mean much in practice, but as a general objective, it is a fact about anarchism that cannot be changed.

Second, we want to live in a way that is socially and ecologically sustainable, to the extent that anarchy is green. Although it is not logically inconceivable that a situation would arise in which it did, this second statement should not in any way conflict with the first because the institutions and practices that cause massive ecological destruction have also been involved in suppressing human freedom up until this point. If this were to occur, it is entirely possible for an anarchist to choose sustainability over freedom, but they would not be acting as an anarchist in doing so. To put it another way, even if someone doesn't think anarchism is the best way to handle a situation (which, as I mentioned earlier, is convenient), they should know that what they're advocating is not anarchy if it doesn't allow us to live as freely as possible.

Even though freedom is more important to anarchism than sustainability, the two are not incompatible. People who live free lives should be sustainable because they do not participate in institutions that are by nature oppressive and destructive.

The following are the repercussions that this has for anarchist epistemology: No matter where we get our information, neither those sources nor that information is the source of our goals. As a result, Western anthropologists do not define anarchy as such. For instance, anarchists will not alter their conception of anarchy to include patriarchy if anthropologists suddenly conclude that foraging bands were, in fact, extremely patriarchal. Because patriarchy is incompatible with anarchy, anarcho-primitivists will be forced to either drop the anarcho-prefix or the primitivist-suffix if something like this occurs. We are aware of this because we are aware of what we want. What I mean when I say "an epistemology of desire" is this. Meaning is knowledge that is guided by desire, whereas knowledge without meaning is simply data. My argument is that any other definition of meaning will have authoritarian repercussions, which is why this definition is so important.

We all get information about the world from a variety of sources. A priori, scientific sources are not declared invalid by an anarchist epistemology. We ought to be perfectly willing to make use of this kind of information. However, if anarchy is completely associated with a view of a historical phase of Western science that corresponds to one epoch in human existence, then

anarchism has become an integral part of civilization for thirty years. Lack of concern for epistemology is directly to blame for this serious flaw in anarchist thought.

If we allow our desires to be channeled into a pre-packaged scientific picture of utopia, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that we are purchasing yet another product that Western civilization is selling to us. To completely equate everything we desire with a single (pre-)historical era is to miss the point of anarchy and give in to simple nostalgia; worse, feeling nostalgic for a past that is just an idea.

We don't want to accept an anthropologically constructed social model; we want to live our own lives as freely and sustainably as possible. To avoid subordinating its agenda to that of Western science or any other institution, an anarchist critique must employ an anarchist epistemology regardless of the specific sources of our information.

My guidelines for an anarchist epistemology are extremely broad and possibly even hazy. Although the process of interpreting knowledge is complex, we should keep a few general principles in mind when doing so, I believe this is necessary. It would no longer be an anarchist epistemology if I offered a specific epistemological theory. For anarchists, knowledge's ability to be coherent and empowering is primarily determined by a desire for freedom.

iii. **Citizenship & Citizen Empowerment: a possible remedy?**

So, how does one counter the adverse aspects of legitimacy procurement, and what is the significance of this theory to the study of the metaphysics of libertarianism? Well, for starters it provides the study with a concept of legitimacy as a practical phenomenon, a form of praxis conducted by a centralised agenda-setting entity, that use it to sustain its rule through constant procurement of trust from the public governs. By defining legitimacy in this manner, we accommodate for the current status quo where the state is the agenda setter of the populace, but also for lesser entities such as friend groups, family structures, and even libertarian societies without a state where agenda setting still requires trust and consent from the participants in those specific coordination games. The conceptualisation of an entity's legitimacy as something that is not constant but changing based on the situation also allows for each ego to decide on their own the degree to which they trust or perceive an agenda setter to be trustworthy, thus also accommodating the most important part of any analysis of social systems, namely the constant changing egos and their possible transformation through constant engagement with the external bodies and entities in the coordination game they are playing.

I must stress that the following final part of the chapter is an example of how one should approach the issue of praxis from a libertarian perspective, not a solution of sorts. Whereas I do believe there to be significant benefits to my proposal, i also acknowledge that other approaches can improve the lives of everyone, increase freedom and liberty, and facilitate conditions for the blooming of a million egos. I want to demonstrate how one applies the theory of perceived legitimacy to praxis and how one can pursue change without denying the supremacy of egos or recognising the state as a constant factor. Let us first take the position that we are willing to change the institutional design of the state, a sort of deconstruction through which we decide which parts to keep and what to discard. Let us then also assume that our approach has to accommodate a gradual change to a more democratic society, and thirdly that we can achieve this through deliberation. These assumptions are made since I reject the notion of revolution or aggressive violence against the state, and believe that changing the public perception of libertarianism requires playing the same coordination game as the pre-established forces do to create change. I reserve this right in the same manner as any other libertarian reserves the right to do

something else. My argument goes as follows: if I assume that the state is only legitimate as long as it procures legitimacy from the people, one can facilitate change in the state by increasing the population's desire for more direct democratic models of governance.

Proponents of increasing a state's legitimacy sometimes argue in favour of increased deliberation and citizen empowerment. Firstly, one should define the concept of a citizen. Citizenship in a state has developed and changed vastly over the years and remains an ambiguous and even contentious abstraction of states' definitions of citizenship change. Therefore, for the sake of this section, I will focus on citizenship in general. Initially, citizenship included values and norms, as well as legal and political annotations, which were added on top of the already existing national variation, mixing in human rights frameworks and bordering on a truly global conceptualization of human rights. Although ambiguous, the official definition stems from the recognition of the state as its legal entity in various constitutions. Seeing as this essay is primarily concerned with the relationship between citizens and the state, the focus will be on citizenship in general, as every national citizenship, subject to the contextual limits and criteria of the respective states, cannot be discussed or explored. However, by focusing on citizenship in general, one can demonstrate the areas of improvement for the most fundamental notion of international citizenship in existence.

Let us say that we wish to reformulate the relationship between the state and its citizens. We are not doing this through the institutions of the state, nor are we aiming to rely on top-down approaches that could stagnate any proper libertarian effort to facilitate deliberative and direct democratic culture. Therefore, we focus on what individuals or groups can do, like NGOs. If NGOs seek to restructure the balance of power between citizens and the state, they could opt for increasing the empowerment of citizens by non-formal means as an alternative to direct political revolt and dismantling of institutions. Non-government agencies and NGOs could, therefore, explore various non-institutional projects that would empower citizens.

To avoid abstract notions of empowerment, the definition utilized in this essay is borrowed from David Levi-Faur and Frans van Waardens book Democratic Empowerment (2016). Citizen Empowerment is here a subdivision of democratic empowerment, a concept that covers political participation, democratic development, and citizenship. In particular, citizen empowerment refers to any act that seeks to provide new opportunities for citizen participation in a policy-making procedure. I prefer this definition as it accommodates the goal of a proper libertarian society, but also highlights the limits of the current system as far as democratic participation goes. Democratic empowerment is measured by the degree of expansion of citizen rights to participate in a policy-making process. Empowerment is of key importance to determining the quality of a democratic systems institutional design, and the degree to which citizens are adequately emancipated. Since NGOs are unable to create new formal avenues for participation, like the creation of direct democratic processes or reshaping the institutional balance of power between the state and its citizens, they could empower citizens in an alternative manner.

Then, the notion of legitimacy utilized in this essay has a basis in the conceptualization of legitimacy being conferred by citizens and eligible voters granting consent to representatives to govern them (Beetham & Lord 1998), which is a down-up approach with an emphasis on citizens, and not a top-down view that positions the state institutions as the most important actors. I also assume consent only be possible if the person is adequately informed of the choice they are making. An approach that focuses on the conditions of consent to being ruled benefits organizations such as Gong and NGOs that are unable to implement democratic reform directly and have to

rely on their projects to stimulate political engagement. Furthermore, citizen consent does not have to be granted exclusively through referendums and elections but could also be secured by reaching consensus through a deliberative process including the relevant actors, such as empowering or informing citizens (Wiklund, 2005). Thus, the focus should be on how to increase the inclusion of citizens in the agenda setting and decisions making process; consent, in particular, is viewed as an extension of democracy and therefore as an extension of the democratic legitimacy of a political system (Andersen & Burns 1996). Increased compliance with a regime follows from enhanced participation by the public, particularly in situations where network governance is utilized as a means to create binding resolutions for its members and relevant actors (Eising & Kohler-Koch, 1999). Due to the multi-level governance structure of the state, there are multiple points during the decision-making and agenda-setting process that citizens could potentially participate in, like through referendums but also democratic culture (Abromeit, 1998). For instance, participation is a form of consent performance that indicates democratic legitimacy in a political system (Andersen & Burns 1996). Non-government actors and NGOs should seek to facilitate citizen empowerment as a means to ensure consent from citizens and utilize the perceived democratic deficit of the state to create conditions for reform towards direct democracy.

iv. Citizen education as citizen Empowerment

NGOs should focus on non-institutional projects seeking to improve legitimacy. For this essay, I define a project to improve legitimacy, i.e. the trust in the state, as a collection of predetermined goals with organized activities aiming to legitimize the rule of the state. The literature reviewed, especially the comprehensive review of democratic nations by various scholars, indicated that education of citizens from a young age can develop democratic citizenship and increase support for democracies. Departing from this point, we look at how citizen education (CE) is defined, per the definition provided by the Council of Europe:

"education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law" (Council of Europe, 2020; Committee of Ministers, 2010).

This definition is deemed to summarize the major consensus prevalent in the academic literature review on the topic, and what units of measurements one applies when conducting research in the field. CE facilitates the construction of a democratic culture. Modern CE isn't just political, and includes issues such as climate, sustainable industrial development, LGBT+ rights, refugee and asylum policies, data protection and economic issues. But most importantly, the literature review found that citizens that are educated on their duties and rights may be more likely to consent to participation in civic and civil society networks. Citizen education is a plausible, practical and available tool for NGAs and NGOs to secure consent from polities.

Firstly, citizen education plays a significant role in the creation of a civil society that is empowered enough to conduct efficient activism. Citizen education emphasizes creating citizens that can interact with society and assimilate into their environment, where the best results are derived from education that combines theory with practical learning experiences. Secondly, CE seeks to secure stability within a political system by cultivating civic virtues, civic knowledge,

and civic culture, which combined leads to increased participation. Thirdly, citizens are empowered through education by learning not only the theory but also how to act and perform democracy through activism and engagement with the system. Fourthly, citizen education facilitated by NGOs positions the people as the ideal mediator between the community and educational institutions. Therefore, citizen education can be defined as a form of citizen empowerment.

v. Consent and democracy proper

Consent is an essential component of any democratic society, but its metaphysical necessity goes beyond just the maintenance of democracy. In fact, it is a prerequisite for the pure libertarian ideal of genuine liberated cooperation between egos, as envisioned by Max Stirner's theory of a "union of egos." At the heart of Stirner's philosophy is the rejection of fixed and universal values and norms, and the assertion that individuals should be free to pursue their desires and interests without external restrictions. Stirner argues that each individual is unique and sovereign, with no obligation to serve any abstract entity or cause, including the state, society, or even humanity as a whole. Instead, individuals should only enter into relationships based on mutual consent and benefit, forming a voluntary association or "union of egos." In this context, consent is not just a legal or ethical requirement, but a metaphysical necessity. It reflects the subjective and individual nature of reality, where each person creates their own meaning and purpose. Consent is the act of affirming one's own will, recognizing the autonomy of others, and establishing a genuine connection based on shared interests and desires.

To secure this kind of democracy proper, where individuals are truly free and equal, consent must be extended to all aspects of social and political life. This means that any form of authority or coercion, including the state and its institutions, must be based on the explicit and informed consent of those affected by it. In contrast to traditional forms of democracy, which rely on majority rule, representative government, or social contracts, a Stirnerian democracy would be based on voluntary associations and agreements, where each individual has the right to opt-out or renegotiate at any time. This would require a radical reimagining of the current political and economic system, where individuals are coerced into participating in institutions and practices that do not align with their interests or desires. For example, instead of compulsory taxation and redistribution, a Stirnerian democracy would rely on voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, where individuals freely contribute to collective projects and initiatives that they find meaningful and beneficial. This would require a shift from centralized and hierarchical structures to decentralized and self-organizing networks, where each individual has a direct say in the decisions that affect them. Similarly, instead of legal and moral codes that impose universal norms and values, a Stirnerian democracy would respect the diversity and uniqueness of each individual, allowing them to define their own ethical and aesthetic standards. This would require a rejection of fixed and absolute truths, and an embrace of fluid and evolving perspectives, where individuals constantly challenge and redefine their own identity and purpose. Ultimately, the metaphysical necessity of consent in a Stirnerian democracy reflects the fundamental nature of human existence as subjective and creative. It recognizes that individuals are an ego, a unique and sovereign entity, with the power to define and shape their own reality. It affirms that genuine liberated cooperation is only possible when each individual freely chooses to engage with others based on their own desires and interests.

Of course, the realization of a Stirnerian democracy is not without challenges and risks. The rejection of traditional forms of authority and coercion may lead to chaos and conflict, as individuals pursue their own interests without regard for others. The emphasis on voluntary cooperation and mutual aid may lead to unequal distribution of resources and power, as some individuals have more skills or resources than others. The respect for diversity and uniqueness may lead to fragmentation and isolation, as individuals withdraw into their own subjective worlds. However, these challenges are not insurmountable, and may even be necessary for the development of a truly liberated and creative society. They reflect the ongoing tension between individual autonomy and social cohesion, between subjective desire and objective reality, between ego and union.

Citizen education plays a critical role in securing the foundation necessary for individuals to make informed decisions and execute their will through genuine consent. In a society that values genuine liberated cooperation between egos, education is the key to empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the democratic process. However, this freedom can only be realized in a society where individuals are aware of their own power and have the knowledge and skills to exercise it effectively. This is where citizen education comes in.

Through citizen education, individuals can learn about the democratic process, their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and the importance of informed decision-making. This education empowers individuals to participate actively in the democratic process, ensuring that their voices are heard and their interests are represented. In this way, citizen education provides a critical foundation for the "union of egos" to flourish. Moreover, citizen education fosters a culture of civic engagement, which is essential for democracy proper. When citizens are informed and engaged, they are more likely to participate in the democratic process and hold their elected officials accountable. This, in turn, ensures that the government is responsive to the needs and desires of its citizens, which is essential for democracy to thrive. Citizen education also promotes critical thinking skills, which are essential for informed decision-making. In a society that values genuine liberated cooperation between egos, individuals must be able to critically evaluate information, weigh different perspectives, and make decisions that align with their own interests. Citizen education provides individuals with the tools they need to do this effectively, ensuring that the decisions they make are informed and in their own best interests.

In conclusion, the metaphysical necessity of consent to secure democracy proper cannot be overstated. For the pure libertarian ideal of a "union of egos" to flourish, individuals must be empowered to exercise their own power effectively through genuine consent. Citizen education provides the foundation necessary for individuals to make informed decisions and participate actively in the democratic process. By promoting civic engagement, critical thinking skills, and an understanding of democratic principles, citizen education ensures that individuals are equipped to exercise their power effectively and hold their elected officials accountable. In this way, citizen education is essential for securing democracy proper and ensuring that the pure libertarian ideal of a "union of egos" can be realized.

vi. The road forward and praxis

This chapter has demonstrated the necessity of the libertarian to rethink politics as something much more than just participation in institutions, but also as an everyday praxis that en-

compasses the totality of social systems in which we participate. Furthermore, we must also recognise that the problem of political legitimacy does not disappear in a libertarian society, but is moved from the state as an agenda setter to the collaborative and deliberative community of free individuals. There will always remain a need for agenda setting, but the concern of the libertarian critique is how this happens. Principally, there is a fundamental conflict between a libertarian and the state, and it is shown to be due to the lacking empowerment of citizens. Praxis can, and should, in my opinion, aim to educate and mobilise people on a grassroots level through NGOs aiming to utilise the increasing constraining dissensus on the state's legitimacy for the creation of proper democratic culture. The relevance of this to the inquiry into the metaphysics of libertarianism is apparent in the formulation of legitimacy as a constant and changing social system; a definitive coordination game that is present in any society, meaning it can be moulded and changed to accommodate the needs of libertarians. Politics is not wholly metaphysical, but rather a physical and practical matter. It is the expression of human wills, and not the abstraction of an idea like the nation or the people. Political activity is the totality of human to human interaction, the very web that binds us together as a group. In order for us to approach this social system we must first clearly establish that it is within these limits that all form of free actions can exist, and it is only then that we can define concrete and specific actions to take to move us closer to this ideal.

Part Three: Economics

Chapter 11: On the metaphysics of economics

The current dominant economic ideology across much of the world is without a shadow of a doubt neo-liberalism, a belief in a so-called "free market", "minimal" government intervention, and a conservative version of globalization. Many political parties, including social democrats, who often advocate for fiscal austerity, monetary policy focused on inflation control and free trade agreements that promote globalism, have adopted this ideology. However, as we approach the real of economics not from a perspective where we naively assume economics to be separate from or not a matter of politics, but rather as an expression of political discourse and engagement, symptomatic of the specific political and moral hegemony of the society in which we study economics as a science. Neo-liberalism is not just a neutral or political non-aligned "scientific" approach to economic, but a view of economics based on a particular view of human nature, which assumes that people are primarily self-interested and "rational" actors who make decisions based on their own individual interests. However, even these terms have been bastardised and perverted by centuries of propaganda, so that we now assume they have a, no pun intended, monopoly of economic terms that previously belonged to a plethora of meanings. "Market", "free trade", "rational actors." This view has led to the belief only the capitalist, neo-liberal vision of free markets, with what they refer to as minimal government intervention, will lead to the most efficient allocation of resources and promote economic growth. However, this could not be further from the case.

After the pandemic, the war of aggression by Russian on Ukraine, and the increasing wealth gaps that come with inflation, energy crisis and surges of civil unrest globally, there has been a growing critique of neo-liberalism and a renewed interest in alternative economic models that prioritize social and environmental concerns. This has led to the emergence of various movements and schools of thought, such as post-Keynesian economics, ecological economics, and feminist economics. In addition, importantly, alternative perspectives altogether on the future of humanity and social organisation.

i. Definitions

Neoliberal assumptions and principles are often taken for granted and treated as natural or objective, when in fact they are deeply embedded in cultural, social, and historical contexts. The metaphysics of economics must include beliefs about human nature, the purpose of economic activity, the nature of value, the relationship between individuals and society, and the role of government in economic affairs. One of the key assumptions of the metaphysics of economics is the neoliberal idea of individualism, which posits that individuals are rational, self-interested agents who pursue their own interests in economic activity. This assumption leads to the prioritization of state-determined and capitalist market competition and the pursuit of profit as the main drivers of economic activity, often at the expense of social and environmental concerns. Another important aspect of the metaphysics of economics is the concept of value, which refers to how we

determine the worth of goods and services. In capitalist systems, value is often reduced to market price, which is determined by supply and demand. However, this cruel definition of value ignores other important factors such as social and environmental costs, as well as the subjective value that individuals may place on certain goods or services.

The metaphysics of economics must include a coherent analysis of the beliefs about the role of government in economic affairs, and also the imbalance of power between the masses and the ruling few. In neoliberal and capitalist systems, the government's role is often limited to maintaining market competition and ensuring private property rights. However, alternative economic systems challenge this limited role and advocate for a more active role for the government in regulating economic activity and promoting social and environmental justice. In addition, the metaphysics of economics also encompasses beliefs about the relationship between individuals and society, and the purpose of economic activity. In capitalist systems, economic activity is often viewed as an end in itself, with the pursuit of profit taking precedence over social and environmental concerns. Alternative economic systems challenge this view and advocate for a more holistic approach that prioritize the well-being of individuals and communities over profit.

In examining the nature of economics, we must begin with the recognition that *economics is a social phenomenon*, a product of human interaction and exchange. Economics arises out of the free and voluntary exchange of goods and services between individuals, each pursuing their own interests and desires. Economics is the result of allocating objects in physical space based on the wills of interacting egos in a social game, also known as political systems. This understanding recognizes that economics is not an autonomous force that operates independently of human decision-making, but rather is the product of human action and interaction. However, this exchange is not simply a matter of individual self-interest, but rather is shaped by the larger social and historical context in which it takes place. The dialectic between individuals and society plays a crucial role in shaping the nature of human relations. In the realm of economics, this dialectic takes on a particular significance. The exchange of goods and services is not a purely individualistic affair, but rather is embedded within larger social structures and relations of power. These structures and relations are themselves the product of historical and cultural forces, shaping the very nature of economic activity. Economics proper can then be defined as the production of goods for consumption and sale, but this definition must not be conflated with either capitalist means of production or Marxist communism. The term economics is broad and must remain broad for it to maintain its utility in the description of both highly industrialized economic systems and more rural, traditional, or even indigenous societies. Although laissez-faire capitalism is often proposed as the only way to achieve economic growth and development, such a system can lead to inequality and exploitation. In a capitalist free market economy, power is often concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or corporations, who have the resources and influence to dominate the market. This can lead to the exploitation of workers, who may not have the ability to negotiate fair wages or working conditions. Additionally, the pursuit of profit can come at the expense of the environment and the health and well-being of communities. Marxist communism has also been shown to be problematic in practice. Centralized planning and control of the means of production can result in a lack of innovation and individual initiative. Furthermore, it can lead to the concentration of power in the hands of a small group of government officials, resulting in authoritarianism and oppression. Instead, a libertarian approach to economics emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and autonomy, while also recognizing the need for cooperation and social responsibility. This approach allows individuals to pursue their own

economic interests while also holding them accountable for the impact of their actions on others and the environment. Collective action and cooperation are essential in achieving common goals. In some cases, this involves the creation of worker cooperatives or other forms of collective ownership, where workers have a say in the decision-making process and share in the profits.

Thus, we see that economics is not simply a matter of individuals pursuing their own interests, but rather is a complex interplay between individual agency and larger social structures. The dialectic between these two forces shapes the very nature of economic relations, as well as their broader social and political implications. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that this dialectic is not static or unchanging, but rather is subject to constant evolution and transformation. As the social and historical context in which economic activity takes place shifts and changes, so too do the very nature of economic relations. In this sense, we can see that economics is not a fixed or immutable entity, but rather is subject to constant change and transformation. This transformation is itself driven by the dialectical interaction between individual agency and larger social structures, as each seeks to shape and redefine the nature of economic relations. In this way, we can see that the nature of economics is fundamentally dialectical, shaped by the interplay between individual agency and larger social structures. This dialectic gives rise to a constantly evolving and transforming economic landscape, shaped by the historical and cultural forces that shape our broader social and political realities. Thus, in examining the nature of economics, we must be mindful of the larger social and historical context in which economic activity takes place. Only by recognizing the dialectical relationship between individual agency and larger social structures can we truly understand the complex and multifaceted nature of economic activity, and the broader social and political implications that it entails.

ii. Anthropology of economics

In order to fully grasp the anthropology of economics, we must begin by examining the underlying human nature that gives rise to economic activity. Humans are social creatures, and as such, we are naturally inclined to interact with one another in a multitude of ways, including through the exchange of goods and services. This exchange, which we call economics, is a fundamental aspect of human society, and has taken on many different forms throughout history. To suggest that capitalism or neoliberalism is the only possible form of economic organization is not only short-sighted but also inherently flawed.

Indeed, the dialectic of history has shown us that economic systems are in a constant state of flux, always evolving and adapting to the changing needs and desires of society. This dialectic is what drives the development of economic systems, as individuals and communities seek to find better and more efficient ways of meeting their needs and wants.

Furthermore, the anthropology of economics also tells us that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to economic organization. Just as different societies have developed different forms of government and social organization, so too have they developed different economic systems. For example, some societies have embraced communal ownership and distribution of resources, while others have emphasized individual ownership and competition. Still, others have developed hybrid systems that incorporate elements of both communal and individual ownership.

To suggest that any one of these approaches is inherently better or worse than the others is to ignore the complex and multifaceted nature of human society. Rather, we must recognize

that each system has its strengths and weaknesses, and that the optimal economic system for any given society will depend on a wide range of factors, including cultural values, geographic location, and historical context. At its core, the anthropology of economics tells us that economics is a reflection of the complex social relationships that exist between individuals and communities. To view it solely through the lens of capitalism or neoliberalism is to ignore the rich and varied history of economic organization that has existed throughout human history. Instead, we must approach economics with an open mind, recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and that the optimal economic system for any given society will depend on a multitude of factors. Only by embracing this complexity can we hope to create truly just and equitable economic systems that serve the needs and desires of all members of society.

Furthermore, in examining the anthropology of economics, it is important to recognize that different cultures and societies have developed their own unique economic systems. These systems are often shaped by historical and cultural factors, as well as environmental conditions and the availability of resources. For example, many indigenous societies have traditionally practiced forms of communal ownership and collective decision-making in regards to their economic activities. These systems prioritize community well-being and sustainability over individual profit and accumulation of wealth. Similarly, in many traditional rural societies, economic activities are often embedded in social relations and customs, with goods and services exchanged as part of reciprocal relationships.

In contrast, capitalist economic systems prioritize the accumulation of wealth and profit through the market exchange of goods and services. This system is based on the idea of individual self-interest and competition, with the goal of maximizing profit and growth. However, this system has been criticized for leading to inequality, exploitation, and environmental destruction. In examining these different economic systems, it becomes clear that capitalism and neoliberalism are not the only possible forms of economic organization. Rather, there are multiple ways in which humans can interact with each other in order to allocate resources and exchange goods and services. From a Hegelian perspective, this diversity of economic systems reflects the dialectical process of history, in which the development of one system leads to its own contradictions and the emergence of a new system. In this way, the anthropology of economics can be seen as an expression of the dialectical process of history, in which different economic systems arise and transform in response to the contradictions and challenges they face. However, it is also important to recognize that economic systems are not static and unchanging. Rather, they are shaped by ongoing social and historical processes, and are subject to change and transformation over time. In this sense, the anthropology of economics is also an expression of the ongoing process of historical development, in which humans continue to create and transform their social and economic systems in response to changing conditions and challenges. Which brings us to the dominant cultural and political hegemony of our economic organisation today: neo-liberalism.

As we continue our discussion on the anthropology of economics, it is important to consider historical examples of alternative economic systems. These examples demonstrate that it is not only possible to reject neoliberalism and capitalism, but also to create alternative modes of economic organization that challenge their philosophical and metaphysical foundations.

The first example I would like to consider is the economy of Ancient Athens[1]. In Athens, economic life was characterized by a system of exchange that was based on the principles of reciprocity and gift-giving. In this system, individuals would exchange goods and services with one another in a way that emphasized social relationships rather than profit. Wealth was not accumulated through the acquisition of capital or the exploitation of labour, but rather through one's social standing and the ability to give generously to others. The second example is the economy of the Medieval period, particularly during the time of the guilds. The guilds were associations of artisans and craftsmen who regulated the production and distribution of goods in the cities and towns of Europe. They were governed by strict rules and regulations that ensured fair wages, good working conditions, and high quality standards. The guilds were not capitalist enterprises, but rather cooperative organizations that emphasized the common good over individual profit. The third example is the economy of the Zapatistas in modern-day Mexico. The Zapatistas are a group of indigenous people who have created their own autonomous communities in the state of Chiapas. In these communities, the economy is based on principles of collective ownership and control over the means of production. Land is communally owned and worked by the people, and the surplus is distributed according to need. This system challenges the capitalist notion of private property and profit, and instead emphasizes the importance of community and solidarity.

What these examples demonstrate is that there are alternative modes of economic organization that challenge the philosophical and metaphysical foundations of neoliberalism and capitalism. These alternatives are based on principles of reciprocity, cooperation, and community, rather than individualism and profit. They recognize the importance of social relationships and the common good, and reject the notion that wealth can only be accumulated through the exploitation of labour or the acquisition of capital.

iii. Neo-liberalism and its internal illogic

Neo-liberalism, the dominant economic paradigm of the past few decades, has had significant philosophical and metaphysical impacts on society. While neo-liberalism advocates for free markets and individualism, it has led to the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few, resulting in increased inequality and injustice. However, meoliberalism has proven to be one of the most elusive and complex phenomena of the modern era. Its complexity lies in its inherent looseness and the difficulty in defining its precise contours, which can often make it challenging to criticize or challenge. Indeed, the very nature of neoliberalism is such that it can exist almost anywhere, and everywhere, like a phantom that steals through our lives in a variety of ways. The danger posed by neoliberalism is precisely because of its slipperiness. It is not just an economic system, but a totalizing ideology that has infiltrated every aspect of our lives. From the way we shop, to the way we communicate, to the way we see ourselves and others, neolib-

[1] It is important to note that while the economic system of ancient Athens, particularly during the fifth century BCE, was marked by some innovations such as the development of a monetary economy and a system of public finance, it was also deeply flawed in many ways. Notably, the Athenian economy was based on the exploitation of slaves, who made up a significant portion of the population, and women were largely excluded from economic and political life. Additionally, while Athens is often hailed as a beacon of democracy, it is important to remember that it was also marked by autocratic tendencies, with leaders such as Pericles exerting significant control over the city-state's affairs. Thus, while Athens may offer insights into alternative modes of economic organization, it is crucial to approach it with a critical eye and not to glorify or romanticize aspects of its society that are inherently illiberal.

eralism has managed to subsume almost every area of human activity. Its effects can be seen in the proliferation of brands, the rise of social media, and the commodification of the self as a product to be marketed and sold. Moreover, neoliberalism has managed to degrade all relationships between egos to one of capitalist vendor and buyer, where every interaction is reduced to a transactional exchange. It has created a culture of competition, individualism, and self-interest, where the pursuit of profit is the only driving force. In such a world, human beings are reduced to mere economic agents, whose worth is determined by their ability to generate revenue. The sheer scale and scope of neoliberalism can make it difficult to even recognize its presence, let alone resist it. It has managed to insinuate itself into every aspect of our lives so that even our most intimate relationships are governed by the logic of the market. It has infiltrated our schools, our hospitals, and our governments, and has transformed them into corporate entities, whose only aim is to maximize profits.

Furthermore, neoliberalism's insidiousness is reflected in the fact that it is not just an economic system, but a political and cultural one as well. Its ideology has become so ingrained in our culture that it has become almost impossible to critique it without being accused of being anti-modern or anti-progress. It has managed to create a world where dissent is almost impossible, and where any attempt to challenge the status quo is dismissed as being nostalgic or regressive.

From the perspective of free market socialism and anarchism, neo-liberalism's inherent contradictions and hypocrisy necessitate its eventual self-destruction. Free market socialism and anarchism share the belief that capitalism is an inherently flawed economic system that is fundamentally at odds with the values of democracy and justice. They argue that capitalism prioritizes the accumulation of wealth and power by a few at the expense of the majority, perpetuating inequality and oppression. In contrast, free market socialism and anarchism advocate for a decentralized economic system that prioritize cooperation, mutual aid, and community ownership. Neo-liberalism's focus on individualism and free markets has led to the privatization of public goods and services, such as healthcare, education, and water, resulting in increased costs and decreased accessibility. This has disproportionately affected the most vulnerable members of society, including low-income individuals and communities of colour. Free market socialists and anarchists argue that such privatization goes against the principles of democracy and justice, as it allows corporations and the wealthy to wield disproportionate influence and power over public policy and decision-making. Furthermore, neo-liberalism's emphasis on deregulation and limited government intervention in the market has led to the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few corporations and individuals. This concentration of power and wealth leads to the creation of an oligarchic ruling class that has undue influence over political and economic decision-making. In contrast, free market socialism and anarchism advocate for a decentralized economic system that prioritizes community ownership and decision-making, limiting the concentration of wealth and power.

Another inherent contradiction in neo-liberalism is the tension between individualism and community. While neo-liberalism advocates for individual freedom and choice, it often comes at the expense of community welfare and well-being. For example, deregulation of environmental protections and labour standards may benefit corporations and wealthy individuals, but it can have devastating consequences for the environment and working-class communities. Free market socialism and anarchism argue that true individual freedom and choice can only be achieved in the context of a healthy and just community.

Finally, free market socialism and anarchism argue that neo-liberalism's obsession with economic growth and profit maximization is unsustainable and ultimately self-destructive. The pursuit of never-ending growth leads to the exploitation of natural resources and the exploitation of workers, resulting in ecological devastation and social unrest. In contrast, free market socialism and anarchism advocate for a sustainable and just economic system that prioritize the well-being of people and the planet over profit. From the perspective of free market socialism and anarchism, neo-liberalism is a flawed economic system that is fundamentally at odds with the values of democracy, justice, and community. While neo-liberalism advocates for individualism and free markets, it has led to the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few, resulting in increased inequality and oppression. Free market socialism and anarchism advocate for a decentralized economic system that prioritizes cooperation, mutual aid, and community ownership, which they argue is more sustainable, just, and equitable. The inherent contradictions and hypocrisy of neo-liberalism necessitate its eventual self-destruction, and the emergence of a new economic system that is grounded in the principles of democracy, justice, and community.

We must reject the idea that there is only one correct way to organize an economy. The dominant economic systems of neoliberalism and capitalism are rooted in a Western, Enlightenment-based worldview that prioritizes individualism and competition. However, alternative modes of economic organization have emerged throughout history that challenge these foundational assumptions and offer a different vision of how humans can relate to each other through economic exchange. One such alternative is gift economy, a concept rooted in indigenous and non-Western cultures. In a gift economy, goods and services are exchanged based on social ties and obligations rather than market values. The emphasis is on building relationships and reciprocity rather than maximizing profit. This approach challenges the individualistic, competitive nature of neoliberalism and capitalism and prioritizes community and cooperation. Another alternative is participatory economics, which was developed as a response to the limitations of both capitalism and centrally planned economies. Participatory economics is based on the principles of self-management, balanced job complexes, and participatory planning. In this system, workers have a say in the decision-making process and share in the profits, challenging the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few in a capitalist system. Similarly, cooperatives are another alternative form of economic organization that challenge the capitalist model. In a cooperative, the means of production are owned and controlled democratically by the workers who use them. This approach prioritizes collective ownership and decision-making rather than private profit. These alternative modes of economic organization offer a revolutionary rejection of the foundational assumptions of neoliberalism and capitalism. They prioritize community, cooperation, and democracy over individualism and competition. However, it is important to acknowledge that none of these systems are perfect or immune to criticism. Each has its own limitations and challenges, and the implementation of any alternative economic system would require careful consideration and experimentation. Additionally, it is crucial to recognize that economic systems are not separate from other social and political structures. They are deeply interconnected and shaped by the same power dynamics that shape society at large. Any effort to create a more just and equitable economic system must also address issues of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. Reject the idea that there is only one correct way to organize an economy. Alternative modes of economic organization challenge the foundational assumptions of neoliberalism and capitalism and offer a different vision of how humans can relate to each other through economic exchange. While each alternative has its own limitations and challenges, they offer valu-

able insights into how we can create a more just and equitable economic system that prioritizes community, cooperation, and democracy over individualism and competition.

iv. The impossibility of a union of egos

In a capitalist system, the idea of a union of egos is impossible. This is because capitalism reduces individuals to mere brands, reducing all relationships to networking, love affairs to reproduction of human beings for the increasing workforce, and all passions to marketable aspects of one's personal brand. The capitalist system is structured in such a way that it encourages individuals to focus solely on themselves and their own interests, leading to the breakdown of any notion of community or collective action. This is why a rejection of the fundamental metaphysics of capitalism is necessary in order to achieve any kind of meaningful change. The capitalist system is based on the idea that individuals are separate and distinct entities, pursuing their own interests in competition with one another. This is reflected in the way that people are encouraged to view themselves as brands, constantly marketing themselves to potential employers, business partners, or even romantic partners.

This reduction of the self to a brand is a fundamental aspect of the capitalist system, and it is one of the reasons why collective action is so difficult to achieve. In order to come together as a community, individuals must be willing to see themselves as part of something larger than themselves, and to put aside their own interests in order to work towards a common goal. However, in a capitalist system, this kind of selflessness is actively discouraged, as individuals are encouraged to view themselves as competitors rather than collaborators.

This is not to say that collective action is impossible in a capitalist system, but rather that it is much more difficult to achieve. In order to overcome the individualistic tendencies of capitalism, it is necessary to reject the fundamental metaphysics of the system and to embrace a different way of thinking about ourselves and our place in the world. To truly escape the trap of capitalist ideology and the neoliberal institutions it has built, we must not just deconstruct, but actively reconstruct and re-educate ourselves. This requires a radical shift in our thinking and a commitment to rebuilding our economic systems from the ground up.

First and foremost, we must recognize the limitations of the current economic discourse and reclaim the original meanings of economic terms that have been co-opted by capitalist ideology. For example, the concept of "value" has been reduced to its monetary form, while its original meaning as something that is inherently valuable or useful to society has been ignored. By returning to this original understanding, we can shift our economic focus away from profit maximization and towards the creation of goods and services that actually benefit society as a whole. Furthermore, we must reject the idea that the market is an infallible arbiter of value and instead recognize the need for democratic decision-making in economic affairs. This means creating spaces for public debate and discussion about economic policies and practices, rather than leaving these decisions solely in the hands of a small group of elite capitalists. Additionally, we must actively educate ourselves and others about the true costs of capitalist and neoliberal institutions. This means acknowledging the environmental degradation, social inequality, and cultural homogenization that are inherent in these systems, rather than dismissing them as necessary evils or externalities. By educating ourselves about the true costs of these systems, we can better understand the urgency of creating alternative economic models that prioritize sustainabil-

ity, equity, and diversity. In order to rebuild our economic systems, we must also recognize the importance of local and community-based solutions. Rather than relying solely on large-scale, top-down approaches to economic development, we must create spaces for bottom-up, participatory approaches that prioritize the needs and perspectives of local communities. This means supporting worker-owned cooperatives, community land trusts, and other forms of democratic economic organization that prioritize collective decision-making and the equitable distribution of resources. Finally, we must recognize that economic systems are deeply interconnected with social and political systems, and that we cannot truly rebuild our economic systems without addressing the underlying power dynamics and structural inequalities that shape our society. This means actively challenging systems of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression that are perpetuated by capitalist and neoliberal institutions. We must work to create a more just and equitable society that values the well-being of all individuals, rather than just a small elite.

Chapter 12: On Stirner, rationality and will

In the modern era of philosophy, rationality has been the cornerstone of intellectual inquiry and progress. However, the question of where rationality lies within the human experience remains a subject of much debate. One approach to this question is to examine the role of the ego in relation to rationality. Does the ego possess rationality, or is rationality something that transcends the individual and cannot be located within the ego? Furthermore, if the ego does possess rationality, how does this rationality manifest itself in the actions of the ego? These questions are particularly relevant to the modern era, where the individual is placed at the canter of society, and self-interest is celebrated as a driving force for economic and political progress. As I have argued, the individual ego is the only true foundation of reality. Individuals for their own benefit construct all social institutions, including the state and religion, and that they have no inherent authority or legitimacy. Our rejection of external authority is mirrored in our rejection of abstract ideals, such as morality and reason, which we argue are used to justify the power of the ruling class. However, this rejection of abstract ideals does not mean that we rejects rationality altogether. Instead, we argue that rationality is an attribute of the ego, and that it is expressed through the ego's will. The ego is a dynamic force that is constantly in motion, seeking to assert its own desires and interests. Rationality is the tool that the ego uses to navigate the world and achieve its goals. This view of rationality as an attribute of the ego has important implications for how we understand the relationship between the individual and society. If the ego is the only true foundation of reality, then social institutions are merely constructions of individuals, and they have no inherent authority or legitimacy. This means that individuals have the power to reject these institutions if they do not serve their own interests.

i. Definition of rationality

In the history of philosophy, the concept of rationality has been one of the most hotly debated and contested topics. At its most basic level, rationality refers to the ability to think and reason logically and coherently. However, philosophers have disagreed over the nature and scope of rationality, leading to various competing definitions. One major philosophical disagreement over the definition of rationality is between the rationalists and the empiricists. Rationalists, such as Descartes and Leibniz, argue that rationality is innate and that knowledge can be acquired through reason alone, without any reliance on sensory experience. They hold that rationality is an a priori capacity that is independent of the world and its contingencies. In contrast, empiricists, such as Locke and Hume, maintain that rationality is based on sensory experience and that knowledge comes from observing and interacting with the world. They hold that rationality is an a posteriori capacity that is dependent on empirical evidence. Another philosophical disagreement over the definition of rationality is between the formalists and the substantive theorists. Formalists, such as Kant, argue that rationality is a formal property of thought and that it

consists of the ability to apply logical rules and structures to propositions. They hold that rationality is a universal and objective capacity that is not tied to any particular content or context. In contrast, substantive theorists, such as Hegel and Marx, maintain that rationality is a substantive property of thought and that it is tied to the specific content and context of human experience. They hold that rationality is historically and socially conditioned and that it is shaped by the material and cultural conditions of a particular society. Finally, there is a philosophical disagreement over the relationship between rationality and the will. Some philosophers, such as Spinoza, argue that rationality and the will are the same, and that rationality is the foundation of all human action. Others, such as Nietzsche, contend that the will is independent of rationality and that rationality is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. Still others, such as Stirner, maintain that the ego, rather than reason or the will, is the fundamental unit of human experience, and that rationality is merely a tool that the ego can use to achieve its own ends.

Max Stirner's concept of the ego as the primary unit of human experience challenges traditional philosophical ideas about rationality. According to Stirner, rationality is not an innate quality of the human mind, but rather a tool that the ego can use to achieve its own ends. This approach to rationality is particularly suited for a libertarian metaphysics, as it emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and autonomy. Stirner's view of rationality is based on his understanding of the ego as self-determining individuals who is free to act according to their own desires and interests. For Stirner, the ego is not bound by any external rules or constraints, but is only limited by its own power to achieve its goals. In this sense, rationality is merely a means to an end, a tool that the ego can use to achieve its own aims. This understanding of rationality is particularly suited for a libertarian metaphysics, which emphasizes the importance of individual freedom and autonomy. In a libertarian society, individuals are free to pursue their own interests without interference from the state or other external authorities. This requires a certain degree of rationality, as individuals must be able to make informed decisions about their own lives and take responsibility for their actions. However, Stirner's approach to rationality also raises some important questions about the nature of freedom and autonomy. If rationality is merely a tool that the ego can use to achieve its own ends, does this mean that the ego is ultimately constrained by its own desires and interests? Is there a danger that the pursuit of individual freedom and autonomy could lead to a form of selfishness or egotism that undermines the common good? One way to address these concerns is to emphasize the importance of community and social responsibility in a libertarian society. While individuals should be free to pursue their own interests, they should also recognize their obligations to others and work towards the common good. This requires a certain degree of rationality, as individuals must be able to balance their own desires and interests with the needs of the community as a whole. Overall, Stirner's view of rationality as a tool for the ego highlights the importance of individual freedom and autonomy in a libertarian society. However, it also raises important questions about the nature of freedom and the role of the individual in society. As we continue to explore the possibilities of libertarianism as a political philosophy, we must grapple with these questions and seek to find a balance between individual freedom and social responsibility.

ii. The location of rationality

In Stirner's philosophy, rationality is located within the ego itself. The ego is the foundation of human experience and identity, and it is through the ego that rationality is expressed. Rationality, for Stirner, is not an external force that humans must obey or adhere to, but rather a tool that the ego can use to achieve its own ends. To further explore the relationship between the ego and rationality, we can create an algebraic model of rationality based on Stirner's definition. This model can be understood as an algorithmic expression of making a choice by analysing sets of various possibilities for the ego's will and picking the one that aligns with the ego's interests.

Let us assume that the ego is presented with a set of choices, A, B, and C. Each choice has a set of properties that can be evaluated in terms of how they align with the ego's desires and interests. We can assign a numerical value to each property and use these values to create an equation that will help the ego make a decision.

For example, choice A may have the properties x, y, and z, which have values of 3, 5, and 2 respectively.

Choice B may have the properties w, x, and y, with values of 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

Finally, choice C may have the properties z, w, and x, with values of 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

To determine which choice is the most rational for the ego, we can create an equation that takes into account the numerical values of each property. For instance, we can use a weighted sum to calculate the total value of each choice.

Let us say that the ego assigns a weight of 0.5 to property x, 0.3 to property y, and 0.2 to property z.

Using these weights, the equation for choice A would be:

(0.5 x 3) + (0.3 x 5) + (0.2 x 2) = 2.9

Similarly, the equations for choices B and C would be:

(0.5 x 3) + (0.3 x 4) + (0.2 x 2) = 2.9

(0.5 x 2) + (0.3 x 3) + (0.2 x 1) = 1.9

Based on these calculations, the ego would most likely choose either choice A or B, as they have the highest values. However, the choice ultimately depends on the ego's individual desires and interests, which cannot be reduced to a formula or algorithm. This model of rationality aligns with Stirner's philosophy in that it places the power of decision-making in the hands of the individual ego, rather than external forces such as reason or the will. By using rationality as a tool to evaluate choices based on the ego's interests and desires, the ego is able to assert its own agency and autonomy in the world. Furthermore, this approach to rationality is well-suited for a libertarian metaphysics and the application of libertarianism as a political philosophy. Libertarians emphasize individual freedom and the importance of personal choice, which aligns with Stirner's emphasis on the ego as the foundation of human experience. By using an algorithmic model of rationality, individuals are able to make choices that align with their own interests and desires, without being restricted by external forces or societal norms.

iii. Critique of rationality

While the algebraic model of rationality based on Stirner's definition may seem straightforward, it is important to consider its limitations and potential problems. One of the key issues

with this model is the potential for conflict of interest between the ego and other individuals or groups. This can occur when the ego's desired outcome is not aligned with the desires or interests of others. For example, consider a scenario where an individual desires to acquire a particular piece of property, but this property is also desired by several other individuals. The ego's rational choice may be to use whatever means necessary to acquire the property, regardless of the impact on others. However, this conflicts with the desires of the other individuals who also want the property, potentially leading to an ethical dilemma.

Another issue with the algebraic model of rationality is that it assumes that all values, x, y, z, and w, are known and accurately quantifiable. In reality, this is often not the case, and there may be significant uncertainty or ambiguity around one or more of these values. For example, consider a situation where an individual is trying to decide whether to take a new job. They may have a clear idea of the salary (x) and job duties (y), but the value of job satisfaction (z) may be difficult to quantify or predict. In such cases, the algebraic model may not provide a clear answer, and the individual may need to rely on other factors, such as intuition or personal values, to make a decision. A further complication arises when the values of x, y, z, and w are too close to each other or too difficult to differentiate. For example, consider a scenario where an individual is trying to choose between two potential romantic partners. The potential partners may have similar qualities in terms of physical attractiveness (x), personality (y), and shared interests (z), making it difficult to make a rational decision based on these factors alone. In such cases, the algebraic model may not provide a clear solution, and the individual may need to rely on other factors, such as emotional intuition or social norms, to make a decision. While the algebraic model of rationality based on Stirner's definition provides a useful framework for understanding how the ego may make choices based on its own desires and interests, it is important to consider its limitations and potential problems. Conflict of interest, uncertainty, and difficulty differentiating between values can all complicate the decision-making process and make it difficult to rely solely on rationality.

In order to determine if a choice made by an ego is rational or not, we must establish certain criteria. One possible approach to this is to create a truth function that can determine whether a choice is rational or not, based on a set of predetermined conditions.

Firstly, let us consider a scenario where an ego is faced with multiple options, and must choose one that aligns with its self-interest. To determine if the ego has made a rational choice, we can establish the following criteria:

1. The choice must be based on a thorough analysis of available options and their potential outcomes.

2. The choice must align with the ego's self-interest, as defined by the ego itself.

3. The choice must not violate any moral or ethical principles held by the ego.

Using these criteria, we can create a truth function that can determine whether a choice is rational or not. Let us assign a value of 1 to each condition that is met, and a value of 0 to each condition that is not met. Then, we can create a truth table that looks like this:

Option Analysis	Self-Interest	Moral/Ethical Principles	Rational Choice?
1	1	1	1
1	1	0	0
1	0	1	0
1	0	0	0
0	1	1	0
0	1	0	0
0	0	1	0
0	0	0	0

As we can see from this truth table, a choice is only considered rational if all three criteria are met. If the ego has not thoroughly analysed the available options or if its choice violates any moral or ethical principles, the choice is not rational. If the choice does not align with the ego's self-interest, it is also not rational. However, it is important to note that this truth function is not without its limitations. It assumes that the ego has perfect knowledge of all available options and their potential outcomes, which is rarely the case in real-world scenarios. Additionally, the criteria for rationality may vary depending on the context and individual values of the ego. Furthermore, there may be cases where the ego's self-interest is in conflict with the self-interest of others, or where the ego's moral or ethical principles conflict with its self-interest. In such cases, the ego may have to prioritize one set of criteria over another, which may result in a choice that is not fully rational according to this truth function. While an algebraic model of rationality can be useful in determining whether a choice is rational or not based on predetermined criteria, it is important to recognize its limitations and the potential conflicts that can arise between the criteria for rationality. The ego's will is not a fixed entity, and its rationality may shift depending on the specific circumstances and values of the ego.

iv. Rejection of the meme of objective rationality

Using the algebraic model described earlier, it becomes apparent that when dealing with human experience, the concept of rationality can only ever be a theoretical construct. As previously illustrated, even a seemingly rational choice can be complicated by unknown or incomparable values, or by the inherent conflicts of interest that arise when multiple egos are involved in the decision-making process. The very idea of rationality suggests a sense of objectivity that is fundamentally incompatible with the subjective nature of the ego. It implies a set of criteria that are universally applicable, regardless of context or individual experience. This is simply not possible when dealing with human beings, who are influenced by a multitude of factors that cannot be easily quantified or compared. As a result, while the concept of rationality may be useful in certain contexts, it should never be taken as an absolute guide or master of the ego's will. The ego must always be the ultimate arbiter of its own actions, as only it has the full knowledge of its own experience and values. An overreliance on rationality can stifle the development of free egos. If an individual becomes too focused on what is perceived to be the "rational" choice, they may lose sight of their own desires and values, and become a slave to the very concept of rationality itself.

In the algebraic model of rationality based on Stirner's definition, it becomes clear that rationality cannot be obtained as long as one or more values are unknown. This is because the model relies on the ability to accurately weigh the values of x, y, z, and w in order to make a decision that aligns with the ego's will. If any of these values are unknown, the model falls apart and rational decision making becomes impossible. For example, if the value of x is unknown in a particular situation, the ego cannot accurately assess the potential outcomes of different choices and therefore cannot make a rational decision. Similarly, if the values of y, z, or w are too equal, the ego may struggle to prioritize between them and again rational decision-making becomes difficult. In this sense, the algebraic model highlights the limits of rationality and the importance of acknowledging the inherent uncertainty of any decision-making process. The concept of rationality has been entrenched in economic models for centuries, and it is often presented as an objective standard by which all human action should be measured. However, this notion of rationality is a mere illusion, a fetish that we have created and elevated to a divine status. We must liberate ourselves from the grip of this false idol and recognize that rationality is a tool, not a god to be worshipped. One of the main issues with the idea of rationality is that it assumes that humans are purely rational beings, guided only by their own self-interest. However, this view is far too simplistic and ignores the complex interplay of emotions, social dynamics, and cultural influences that shape human behaviour. Furthermore, the notion of rationality is often used to justify economic inequality, as those who are deemed more rational are seen as more deserving of wealth and success. This perpetuates a system of oppression that only benefits a select few at the expense of the many.

The idea of rationality has become so deeply ingrained in our cultural consciousness that it is often used to suppress dissent and critical thinking. Any ideas or actions that do not conform to the narrow constraints of rationality are dismissed as illogical or irrational, even if they may be beneficial to society as a whole. This creates a dangerous situation in which individuals are discouraged from thinking creatively or questioning the status quo, ultimately leading to stagnation and a lack of progress. To fully liberate ourselves from the grip of rationality, we must reject the idea that there is an objective, universal standard of rationality that can be applied to all human behaviour. Instead, we must recognize that rationality is subjective, and it is dependent on the context in which it is applied. What may be considered rational in one situation may not be in another, and this is something that must be taken into account when making economic decisions. We must recognize that the pursuit of rationality has limitations and can never provide a complete understanding of the world around us. Human action is inherently unpredictable, and there will always be unknown variables that can impact the outcome of any decision. Rather than relying solely on rationality, we must embrace a more holistic approach to decision-making that takes into account not only economic factors but also social, cultural, and environmental factors.

We stand at a crossroads in history, facing challenges that threaten the very fabric of our society. We live in a world that has been shaped by a particular form of rationality that prioritizes efficiency and instrumental reason over ethical considerations. This rationality has been deeply embedded in our culture, politics, and economics, and has led to some of the most heinous atrocities in human history. The horrors of the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima were not the result of irrationality, but rather the product of a particular kind of rationality that prioritized ends over means. This same form of rationality is reflected in the growing power of the bureaucratic state and the increasing emphasis on technological efficiency in modern societies. But we cannot afford to be complacent. We cannot continue to rely on this narrow form of rationality

to guide our actions. We must broaden the concept of rationality to include ethical and moral considerations, to prioritize human flourishing and social justice, rather than technological efficiency and bureaucratic control. The Frankfurt School, a group of critical theorists, recognized this challenge in the aftermath of World War II. They pointed out that rationality is not a neutral concept, but rather deeply embedded in cultural, historical, and political contexts. They argued that the dominant form of rationality in Western societies had become detached from ethical and moral considerations, and that this instrumental rationality was reflected in the growing power of the bureaucratic state and the increasing emphasis on technological efficiency in modern societies. The bombing of Hiroshima and the Holocaust serve as stark reminders of the destructive power of this kind of rationality, which prioritizes the ends over the means, and leads to the deaths of innocent people. We cannot continue to rely on this form of rationality to guide our actions. We need a new form of rationality that takes into account ethical and moral considerations, that prioritizes human flourishing and social justice. The challenge we face today is to create a new form of rationality that can address the pressing social and political issues of our time. This requires a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between reason and society, and a recognition of the limitations of instrumental rationality. We must recognize that reason is not a neutral concept, but rather deeply embedded in cultural and historical contexts, and that any attempt to create a truly rational society must take into account ethical and moral considerations. We must reject the divinity of rationality as an objective thing, and instead recognize that it is a tool that can be used for good or for ill. We must embrace a new form of rationality that prioritizes human flourishing and social justice, that recognizes the limitations of instrumental reason, and that is deeply embedded in ethical and moral considerations. This is our call to action. Let us reject the old form of rationality that has led to so much destruction and suffering, and embrace a new form of rationality that prioritizes the well-being of all people. Let us recognize that reason is not a neutral concept, but rather deeply embedded in cultural and historical contexts, and that any attempt to create a truly rational society must take into account ethical and moral considerations.

Chapter 13: On the metaphysics of causation

Human beings have the ability to process information through perception, which leads to the expression of their ego through acts and will based on the obtained knowledge. This implies that learning is the process by which individuals gain knowledge and expand their understanding of the causal relationships in reality. Empiricism becomes the preferred means of interpersonal knowledge exchange because it accommodates the principle of causality, which appeals to the unique ego's perception of reality. In addition, it deals with what we can rationally explain to one another by appealing to the fundamental law of logic within libertarian metaphysics. Perception is the basis for acquiring knowledge, and learning is the process of understanding the causal relationships in reality. Through learning, individuals can gain knowledge and expand their understanding of the world around them. This means that humans have the capacity to learn and understand the causal relationships between entities. Every individual has the same capacity to cause causal relationships by expressing their will in reality, and their ability to do this is equally distributed. The expression of will in reality can lead to causal relationships, and this can be seen in the interactions between individuals. When an individual expresses their will towards another human being, there is a causal relationship between that act and the corresponding response. This could be based on the sum-total of information that both individuals have accumulated through their existence. As such, individuals can act towards each other based on their will and try to engage physically with each other, depending on the context of their engagement.

The capacity to understand causal relationships is based on previous experiences, the capacity to reason, and the exchange of information between individuals. Empiricism becomes the preferred means of interpersonal knowledge exchange because it appeals to the unique ego's perception of reality and accommodates the principle of causality. Empiricism deals with what can be rationally explained to one another by appealing to the fundamental law of logic within libertarian metaphysics. The importance of understanding the causal relationships between entities is that it can help individuals better understand the world around them. This understanding can lead to the development of new ideas, which can be used to solve complex problems such as climate change, sexism, despotism, and racism. Libertarianism provides a path to socialism, which promotes the idea of equality among individuals and encourages the free exchange of ideas. This allows individuals to express their will and engage with others to create a better future for themselves and the world around them.

i. The nature of causation

At its core, causation refers to the relationship between objects or events where one thing (the cause) brings about another (the effect). In the physical world, causation is a necessary relationship between objects that occurs independently of human perception. This means that even if humans did not exist, causation would still exist as an objective fact of the universe. However, the interpretation of causation and its relationship to the social world is where things become

more complex. Each human being has a unique perception of reality due to the individual nature of their consciousness. This means that the way in which individuals perceive causation and its effects may differ, leading to a plethora of interpretations and understandings. The will of the unique ego plays a crucial role in how humans interpret and construct social constructs of causation. The will is the driving force behind human action, and as such, it is a crucial factor in how humans perceive and construct causation. The will of each individual ego is unique and reflects the individual's autonomy, which is the sum total of their actions and decisions throughout their life.

The concept of autonomy is central to the text's argument about the nature of causation. Autonomy refers to the individual's ability to act freely and make decisions based on their own will. This means that each individual ego has the power to shape their understanding of causation and the effects that it has on the world. However, this autonomy is not unlimited, as there are restrictions imposed by physical reality and the limits of human perception.

Then we can assume that an interpretation of causation and its effects is inherently unknowable due to the unique nature of human consciousness and the limitations of human perception. However, this is not a dead end. Humans construct social constructs of causation as a way of making sense of the world and explaining the causal relationships that exist between events and objects. In the physical world, causation is a necessary relationship between objects that occurs independently of human perception. However, the interpretation of causation and its effects is shaped by the unique nature of human consciousness and the individual's autonomy. Humans construct social constructs of causation as a way of making sense of the world and explaining the causal relationships that exist between events and objects.

ii. Epistemology and causation

Epistemology of causation refers to the study of how we acquire knowledge and understanding about causal relationships. In this context, the algebraic formula for the epistemology of causation could be expressed as follows:

$$C = K + R$$

where C represents our knowledge of causal relationships, K represents our innate understanding of causation, and R represents the information we acquire through experience and observation.

The formula suggests that our knowledge of causal relationships is a combination of our innate understanding of causation and the information we acquire through experience and observation. This implies that our understanding of causation is not solely based on experience and observation, but also on our innate cognitive abilities. Furthermore, the formula suggests that while our knowledge of causal relationships may be updated through experience and observation, our innate understanding of causation remains unchanged. This is because our innate understanding of causation is a fundamental aspect of our cognitive abilities and is not dependent on external factors. The implications of this formula are significant for the epistemology of causation. It suggests that our understanding of causation is not solely based on empirical evidence, but also on our innate cognitive abilities. This means that our understanding of causation

is not simply a result of observing cause-and-effect relationships, but also of our ability to reason and conceptualize causal relationships.

Moreover, the formula implies that our understanding of causation is not fixed but is constantly evolving. As we acquire new information and gain new experiences, our knowledge of causal relationships may change and evolve. However, our innate understanding of causation remains a constant aspect of our cognitive abilities. Then, if we accept the idea that every unique ego has a fully individual consciousness and perception of reality, and that every unique ego has an individual capacity for expressing the will of their unique ego, then it follows that each individual will have their own unique understanding of causal relationships. From this perspective, it is part of the ego's nature to constantly update its understanding of causal relationships. As each unique ego engages with reality and expresses its will, it gains new knowledge and experiences that can inform its understanding of causal relationships. The unique ego is constantly learning, adapting, and updating its understanding of causal relationships based on its experiences.

However, it is important to note that this perspective does not suggest that the ego's knowledge of causal relationships' existence is subject to constant change. The concept of causation, as a necessary relation between objects in the physical world, is a fundamental aspect of our understanding of reality. While each unique ego may have a different understanding of specific causal relationships, the concept of causation itself is not subject to change. This perspective also highlights the limitations of our understanding of causal relationships. As the previously noted, an ego's inability to be omniscient and present at multiple places at the same time means that there is a limit to how many possible acts of expressing the ego's will in any given situation. This means that our individual experiences and perspectives will always limit our understanding of causal relationships.

Given these limitations, it is important to acknowledge the role of social constructs in our understanding of causal relationships. As individuals share their experiences and perspectives with one another, social constructs emerge that can help us make sense of complex causal relationships. These constructs are not objective truths, but rather are interpretations of reality based on shared experiences and perspectives. To illustrate further the benefits and problems of the model, let us look at five hypothetical situations.

1. A new-born baby is born with a rudimentary understanding of causation, which is represented by K. As the baby grows up and interacts with the world, it gains more knowledge about causation, represented by R. Over time, the baby's knowledge of causation (C) increases, and the formula becomes C = K + R.

   Limitations: The formula assumes that K is fixed and does not change over time, which may not be entirely accurate. Also, the formula does not take into account the possibility of unobservable causal relationships that may exist.

   Utility: The formula is useful in understanding how our knowledge of causation develops over time through experience and observation.

2. A scientist conducts a controlled experiment to test a hypothesis about a particular causal relationship. The scientist's prior knowledge of causation (K) informs their hypothesis, and the results of the experiment (R) provide new information about the causal relationship. The formula becomes C = K + R.

Limitations: The formula assumes that K is accurate and reliable, which may not always be the case. The formula also does not account for the possibility of confounding variables that may impact the results of the experiment.

Utility: The formula is useful in understanding how scientific knowledge about causal relationships is developed through experimentation.

3. A person witnesses an event and draws a conclusion about the causal relationship between the observed phenomena. The person's prior knowledge of causation (K) informs their conclusion, and their observation (R) provides new information about the causal relationship. The formula becomes C = K + R.

   Limitations: The formula assumes that the person's prior knowledge of causation is accurate and reliable, which may not always be the case. The formula also does not account for the possibility of biases and subjective interpretations that may impact the person's observation.

   Utility: The formula is useful in understanding how people make causal inferences based on their prior knowledge and observations.

4. Situation 4: A person believes in a particular causal relationship based on cultural or social conditioning, represented by K. The person's observation (R) may confirm or challenge their belief, resulting in an update to their knowledge of causal relationships (C). The formula becomes C = K + R.

   Limitations: The formula does not account for the possibility of false beliefs being reinforced through confirmation bias, social influence, and other factors.

   Utility: The formula is useful in understanding how cultural and social conditioning can impact our understanding of causal relationships.

5. A person encounters a novel situation with no prior knowledge of causation (K). The person observes the situation (R) and forms a tentative understanding of the causal relationships involved, represented by C. As the person gains more experience and observes similar situations, their knowledge of causation (C) increases. The formula becomes C = R.

   Limitations: The formula assumes that observations are sufficient for the formation of knowledge of causal relationships, which may not always be the case.

   Utility: The formula is useful in understanding how we can form new knowledge of causal relationships through observation and experience.

iii. The role of the will in causation

The will of the ego plays a crucial role in causation, as it is through the will of the unique ego that human beings engage and interact with reality, and it is this engagement that allows them to identify and understand causal relationships. The ego's will is what gives rise to human action, and it is through action that we are able to affect the world around us, making it possible for us to establish causal relationships. At the heart of the ego's will is autonomy, the ability to act freely and independently, according to one's own desires and goals. Autonomy is what

allows us to express our unique perspective on the world, and it is this unique perspective that gives rise to our individual understanding of causal relationships. As we engage with reality through our actions, we are able to observe patterns and regularities, and we begin to form an understanding of how the world works. However, this understanding is always limited by the individual's unique perspective and experiences. No two egos are exactly the same, and therefore no two individuals will have the same understanding of causal relationships. This is where the will of the ego comes in, as it is through the ego's will that we are able to continually update and refine our understanding of the world. The will of the ego allows us to question our assumptions and beliefs, and to seek out new experiences and information that can help us better understand the causal relationships that govern the world around us. As we engage with reality through our actions, we are able to test our understanding of causal relationships, and to refine our knowledge as we learn from our successes and failures. Of course, the will of the ego is not infallible, and it is possible for individuals to hold mistaken beliefs about the world. However, it is through the process of engaging with reality and testing our understanding of causal relationships that we are able to identify and correct these errors. This process is ongoing, and it is through the will of the ego that we are able to continually refine and update our knowledge of the world.

iv. Limits of known causation

Our knowledge of causation can never be accurate because it is impossible for us to grasp the essence of causality itself. Causation is a complex and abstract concept that is beyond our understanding, and any attempt to fully comprehend it is bound to be flawed and incomplete. One of the main flaws of the algebraic formula for the epistemology of causation is that it assumes that our knowledge of causation can be accurately quantified. The formula suggests that our knowledge of causation is made up of two components, our innate understanding of causation (K) and the information we acquire through experience and observation (R). However, this assumes that our innate understanding of causation is fixed and unchanging, and that we can accurately measure the impact of new experiences on our knowledge of causation. In reality, our understanding of causation is constantly evolving and changing, and it is impossible to accurately measure the impact of new experiences on our knowledge of causation. Another flaw of the algebraic formula is that it assumes that our knowledge of causation is based on observation and experience alone. While observation and experience play an important role in shaping our understanding of causation, they are not the only factors that contribute to it. Our cultural and social background, our personal biases and prejudices, and our individual experiences all shape our understanding of causation in unique ways. As such, it is impossible to accurately quantify the impact of these factors on our knowledge of causation using a simple algebraic formula. Moreover, as humans, we are limited by our own perspective and cannot fully comprehend the complexity of the world around us. Our knowledge of causation is limited by our ability to observe and understand causation, and there will always be aspects of causation that we are unable to fully comprehend. For example, our understanding of causation is limited by our inability to observe the impact of events that occurred in the distant past or those that occur in parts of the world that we have no access to. Our knowledge of causation is inherently flawed and limited by our own perspective and understanding. While the algebraic formula for the epistemology of causation provides a useful framework for thinking about the factors that contribute to our knowledge of causation, it is

important to acknowledge its limitations. We must accept that our understanding of causation will always be incomplete and that there will always be aspects of causation that are beyond our grasp. As such, we must approach our understanding of causation with humility and recognize that our knowledge is limited by our own inherent biases and limitations.

Given the limitations of human knowledge of causation, it is necessary to develop an alternative algebraic formula for the epistemology of causation that acknowledges this fundamental inability of humans to know the true causal relationship between any movements of two or more bodies. One possible alternative formula could be:

C = K + R + E

where C represents our knowledge of causal relationships, K represents our innate understanding of causation, R represents the information we acquire through experience and observation, and E represents our estimation of the causal relationship between two or more bodies. In this new formula, E stands for estimation, which is a recognition that we can only approximate the true causal relationship between any given movements of two or more bodies, rather than know it with certainty. This estimation is based on our experience and observation of patterns of events, but it is always subject to error and revision, as we constantly update our understanding of causal relationships based on new information. It is important to note that this new formula still recognizes the role of innate understanding of causation (K) and the information we acquire through experience and observation (R), as they form the basis of our estimation of causal relationships. However, the addition of E emphasizes the uncertainty and limitations of our knowledge of causation, and acknowledges that our understanding of causation is always subject to revision and refinement. In practical terms, this new formula could help us approach the study of causation with more humility and caution, recognizing that our understanding of causal relationships is always incomplete and subject to revision. It could also encourage us to seek out more diverse perspectives and sources of information in order to refine our estimation of causal relationships, and to be more open to revising our understanding in light of new evidence. The addition of the estimation factor (E) in the formula for the epistemology of causation emphasizes the fundamental limitations of human knowledge of causation, while still acknowledging the importance of innate understanding and experience-based learning. By recognizing the uncertainty and limitations of our knowledge of causation, we can approach the study of causation with more nuance and caution, and work towards developing a more robust and accurate understanding of the complex relationships between bodies in the physical world.

The second model, C = K + R + E, offers better utility for the metaphysics of economics because it acknowledges the limitations of our knowledge of causation and includes an estimation factor. The estimation factor, E, allows for a recognition that our knowledge of causation is not absolute, and that there is always a degree of uncertainty when trying to predict the causal relationship between two or more bodies in economic systems. Here are some examples of how the C = K + R + E model is useful for the metaphysics of economics:

· Market trends and forecasting: Economic analysts often use statistical models to forecast market trends and make predictions about the future performance of stocks and other investments. However, these models are limited by the accuracy of the data that is used as input. By incorporating an estimation factor, E, into the model, analysts can account for the uncertainty that exists in the causal relationship between economic variables, which can improve the accuracy of their predictions.

· Policy decisions: Governments often use economic models to make policy decisions that affect their economies. For example, a government might use a model to estimate the impact of a tax cut on consumer spending. However, these models are limited by the assumptions that are built into them. By including an estimation factor, E, into the model, policymakers can recognize that their estimates are not absolute and adjust their decisions accordingly.

· Investment decisions: Investors often use models to make decisions about which stocks to buy or sell. These models are limited by the accuracy of the data that is used as input and the assumptions that are built into them. By incorporating an estimation factor, E, into the model, investors can recognize that their estimates are not absolute and adjust their investment strategies accordingly.

The C = K + R + E model can offer better utility in practical situations where there are complex systems and multiple variables at play. A good example of this is grassroots city planning for waste management. In this scenario, city planners may have an innate understanding of the causal relationship between waste disposal and environmental pollution (represented by K). They may also have acquired information through experience and observation (represented by R) on how waste management systems work, including which technologies are more effective in reducing pollution levels, and the costs involved in implementing these technologies. However, there may still be uncertainty about the precise causal relationships between waste management practices and pollution levels, as different cities may have different circumstances, and there may be many variables at play that are difficult to fully understand or control. For example, certain types of waste may be more hazardous to the environment, while certain areas may be more vulnerable to pollution due to geographical factors. In such cases, city planners may need to make an estimation of the causal relationship between waste management practices and pollution levels (represented by E). The C = K + R + E model can be useful in such situations because it allows city planners to account for the uncertainty and complexity of the system, while still making informed decisions about waste management. For example, by estimating the causal relationship between waste management practices and pollution levels, city planners can choose the most effective waste management practices that are feasible and cost-effective in their specific context. They can also monitor the impact of their decisions and adjust their estimations and strategies as necessary. In contrast, the C = K + R model may not fully capture the uncertainty and complexity of the system, which could lead to suboptimal decision-making. For example, city planners may overlook certain variables that are important in determining the causal relationship between waste management practices and pollution levels, or they may underestimate the impact of certain waste management practices on the environment.

Chapter 14: On the metaphysics of pragmatic incompatibilism

The concept of free will has been debated for centuries in philosophy, religion, and science. One of the most prominent debates is the question of whether free will is compatible with determinism. The traditional view of determinism is that every event, including human actions, is determined by previous causes and conditions. In other words, if we knew everything about the universe at a given moment, we could predict with certainty every future event. However, the idea of free will suggests that humans have the ability to make choices that are not predetermined by prior causes. In this context, pragmatic incompatibilism is a philosophical position that acknowledges the practical limitations of human knowledge and agency. As the opening text explains, we are restricted by our inability to perceive reality from more than one point of view and our own ego, and our actions are limited by physical and social constraints. Therefore, the pragmatic incompatibilist approach assumes that while we cannot know for certain whether determinism is true or false, we must act as if our will is free, since we cannot act as if everything is predetermined. This perspective acknowledges that our actions are influenced by various factors such as genetics, environment, and past experiences, but it also recognizes that we have the capacity to make choices and create our own future to some extent. However, the freedom of our will is not absolute, and it is constrained by various factors that we cannot control. In other words, we have a limited form of free will that is influenced by the circumstances and limitations of our existence. Pragmatic incompatibilism raises important questions about the nature of human agency and responsibility. If our actions are not entirely predetermined by prior causes, to what extent are we responsible for the consequences of our actions? What ethical implications does this perspective have for issues such as punishment, justice, and moral responsibility? In this chapter, we will explore the philosophical underpinnings of pragmatic incompatibilism and its implications for various fields of inquiry. We will examine the arguments for and against the compatibility of free will and determinism, and the practical limitations that inform the pragmatic incompatibilist position. We will also explore the ethical and social implications of this perspective and the challenges it poses for traditional views of human agency and responsibility. Ultimately, we will see that pragmatic incompatibilism offers a nuanced and realistic perspective on the nature of human action and the limits of our knowledge and control.

i. Limitations of Will

However, this does not mean that the ego's will is unlimited. In fact, there are several limits to the ego's will within the framework of pragmatic incompatibilism. First, the ego's will is limited by the physical and mental capabilities of the individual. We are only able to act within the constraints of our physical bodies and our mental abilities. For example, if we are physically incapable of lifting a heavy object, our will to do so is limited by our physical capabilities. Similarly, if we lack the mental capacity to comprehend a complex idea, our will to understand it is limited by our mental abilities. Second, the ego's will is limited by the environment in which it exists.

The physical world presents constraints on our ability to act, such as the laws of physics and the limitations of technology. Additionally, the social and cultural context in which we exist places constraints on our behaviour. For example, societal norms and laws restrict our ability to act in certain ways, and social expectations and pressures can limit our expression of our will. Third, the ego's will is limited by the actions of others. We exist in a world with other individuals who also have their own wills and desires. These individuals may act in ways that limit our ability to express our own will, or they may directly oppose our will. For example, if two individuals both desire the same limited resource, their wills are in conflict and only one may be able to achieve their desired outcome. Fourth, the ego's will is limited by the unpredictability of the future. While we may act as if our will can create an indefinite number of hypothetical causal relationships, the reality is that we cannot predict the future with certainty. We may make choices that we believe will lead to a certain outcome, but external factors beyond our control may intervene and prevent that outcome. These limits on the ego's will are not meant to imply that we should give up on the pursuit of our desires or that our actions are entirely predetermined. Rather, they serve as a reminder that our actions are not solely the result of our own free will, but are influenced by a multitude of factors. The recognition of these limits can also help us to make more informed decisions, as we take into account the various constraints on our actions.

ii. The Indefinite Nature of Reality

In pragmatic incompatibilism, the indefinite nature of reality is recognized, signifying that reality cannot be predetermined but can be shaped by the choices and actions of individuals. The reality we experience is the result of a multitude of variables, and the choices we make can have a significant impact on the course of events. This understanding of reality is fundamental to pragmatic incompatibilism as it highlights the role, or rather the necessary assumption, of free will and the responsibility of individuals to make choices that impact the world around them. The indefinite nature of reality renders determinism and necessitarianism incompatible with pragmatic incompatibilism. These philosophical positions contend that all events in the world are predetermined by either a first cause or a chain of causality. However, if reality is indefinite, it cannot be predetermined in this manner, and it falls upon individuals to shape reality through their choices and actions. This view of reality accentuates the significance of individual agency and the freedom to make choices that can influence the course of events. Nonetheless, it also recognizes the limitations of individual agency since we can never comprehend all the variables that may affect the outcome of our choices. This awareness of the limitations of individual agency distinguishes pragmatic incompatibilism from more extreme forms of libertarianism that may sometimes overestimate the degree of control that individuals possess over their lives. Despite the constraints of individual agency, pragmatic incompatibilism still stresses the importance of individual responsibility. Even if we cannot manage all the variables that may impact the outcome of our choices, we still have an obligation to make choices that positively affect the world around us. This implies that we cannot just evade our responsibilities or attribute our actions to external factors. Instead, we must take responsibility for the choices we make and their impact on the world. The indefinite nature of reality also has ramifications for our ethical and moral outlook. If reality is indefinite, there is no predetermined set of ethical rules that we must follow. Rather, we must make ethical choices based on the specific circumstances we find ourselves in. Therefore, ethical choices are not merely a matter of following a set of rules, but require careful consideration of the situation at hand. This view of ethics underscores the significance of practical wisdom, which is the ability to make sound decisions in specific situations. Practical wisdom is not solely a matter

of adhering to rules or principles but necessitates a profound understanding of the situation and the ability to make good judgments about the appropriate course of action. This view of ethics is often referred to as virtue ethics, and it accentuates the importance of developing good habits and character traits that enable us to make good choices in various situations. The indefinite nature of reality also has implications for the way we approach science and the natural world. If reality is indefinite, science cannot merely reveal a predetermined set of laws that govern the universe. Instead, science must be viewed as a continuing process of discovery and exploration as we endeavour to comprehend the complex interactions of the world around us. This perspective on science highlights the importance of curiosity, exploration, and openness to new ideas, rather than solely relying on fixed principles.

iii. The Pragmatic Incompatibility of Determinism and Necessitarianism

The problems with determinism and necessitarianism within libertarianism become more apparent when using the algebraic formula for the epistemology of causation that acknowledges the fundamental inability of humans to know the true causal relationship between any movements of two or more bodies. Determinism and necessitarianism assume that the causal relationship between events is knowable and predetermined, but the epistemology of causation formula highlights the fact that humans can never fully know the causal relationship between any two events. Our understanding of causation (K) is limited, and the information we acquire through experience and observation (R) is always incomplete. Additionally, our estimation of the causal relationship between two or more bodies (E) is always subject to error. This assumption leads to the denial of free will and individual agency since all events are seen as predetermined or necessary. In contrast, libertarianism recognizes the limitations of human knowledge and emphasizes the importance of individual agency and free will. The formula supports the view of libertarianism by highlighting the limitations of human knowledge and the importance of individual choices and actions in shaping the course of events. The formula also highlights the fact that our estimation of the causal relationship between events is always subject to error. This further supports the view of libertarianism by emphasizing the importance of individual responsibility and the need to make choices that have a positive impact on the world around us. By acknowledging the limitations of our understanding of causation, we can recognize the importance of individual agency and free will in shaping the world around us. Thus, the epistemology of causation formula highlights the limitations of human knowledge and the importance of individual agency and free will, which is in line with the view of libertarianism.

iv. The pragmatic necessity of free will.

I would argue that the concept of "free will" is somewhat irrelevant when it comes to the actions of the ego. What matters is not whether free will is real or not, but rather how we act in accordance with the will of the ego. To begin with, the concept of free will is a highly contested and nebulous concept. Many philosophers and thinkers throughout history have debated its existence, with some arguing that it is an illusion and others asserting that it is a fundamental aspect of human nature. However, in my view, these debates miss the point entirely. The question of whether or not free will exists is ultimately irrelevant because it does not have any practical bearing on our lives. Instead, what matters is the will of the individual ego. The ego, or the self, is the only true authority in one's life. It is the source of all desire and motivation, and it is the driving force behind all of our actions. As such, the ego should be the only thing that matters when it comes to decision making and action. Whether or not free will exists is of little consequence, because ultimately our actions are determined by the will of the ego. It is the ego that

makes the decisions, and it is the ego that is responsible for the consequences of those decisions. Whether or not those decisions are predetermined by some external force or are the result of a genuine exercise of free will is immaterial. Furthermore, the concept of free will can actually be harmful in some ways. If we believe that our actions are determined by some external force, we may feel powerless and resigned to our fate. This can lead to a sense of apathy and hopelessness, and can prevent us from taking action to improve our situation. On the other hand, if we believe that we have free will, we may feel overly confident in our ability to control our lives. We may believe that we can overcome any obstacle or challenge, and may fail to take into account external factors that can influence our actions. In either case, focusing on the concept of free will can be distracting and unhelpful. Instead, we should focus on the will of the ego and how we can align our actions with its desires. By doing so, we can live a more fulfilling and meaningful life, regardless of whether or not free will exists.

Then, taking this as the foundation for our approach to the notion of "free will," there is a pragmatic necessity of free will within the metaphysics of pragmatic incompatibilism. Firstly, accountability. Accountability is a vital aspect of human society, and it is essential for maintaining order and justice. For accountability to be possible, it presupposes that individuals have the capacity to make choices and act on them, and that they can be held responsible for the consequences of those actions. If the reality of free will were absent, accountability would be rendered meaningless, as all actions would be predetermined and beyond the control of individuals. Therefore, free will is a necessary condition for accountability. The pragmatic necessity of free will can be observed in our daily lives. Choices are made constantly, and we believe that the choices we make have consequences that are within our control. We hold ourselves and others accountable for our choices, and we expect others to do the same. The belief in free will is deeply ingrained in us, and it is difficult to imagine a world without it. Thus, the reality of free will is a necessary condition for the functioning of human society. Secondly, the role of the ego in reality must be considered. The ego, or the self, is the only true anchor in reality according to pragmatic incompatibilism. This means that the individual's sense of self is the only thing that is truly real, and that everything else is either a product of the mind or a construct of language and culture. The ego is what gives us a sense of agency, and it is what allows us to make choices and act on them. The ego is also what provides us with a sense of identity and continuity over time. Without the ego, there would be no sense of personal identity, and we would not be able to connect our past experiences with our present selves. The ego is what defines us, and it is the only thing that is truly real. The pragmatic necessity of free will within the metaphysics of pragmatic incompatibilism is crucial for maintaining accountability and for anchoring the self in reality. Without free will, accountability would be rendered meaningless, and human society would cease to function. The belief in free will is deeply ingrained in us, and it is necessary for our daily lives.

v. Economics proper

Let us define the ego's set of choices as A, B, and C, with each choice having a set of properties that can be evaluated in terms of how they align with the ego's desires and interests. We can assign a numerical value to each property and use these values to create an equation that will help the ego make a decision.

Let's represent the value of each property for choice A as ax, ay, and az; for choice B as bx, by, and bz; and for choice C as cx, cy, and cz.

Next, let's consider the alternative algebraic formula for the epistemology of causation, where C represents our knowledge of causal relationships, K represents our innate understanding of

causation, R represents the information we acquire through experience and observation, and E represents our estimation of the causal relationship between two or more bodies.

We can combine these two models to create an expression for how the ego can make a rational choice:

Choice = (K + R + E) * (ax + ay + az, bx + by + bz, cx + cy + cz)

Here, the ego's innate understanding of causation (K), information acquired through experience and observation (R), and estimation of causal relationships (E) are multiplied by the values assigned to each property of each choice.

This expression allows the ego to weigh the properties of each choice based on their alignment with its desires and interests, while also taking into account its understanding of causation and estimation of the causal relationships involved.

In other words, the ego can use this formula to make a rational choice by analyzing the sets of various possibilities for its will and picking the one that aligns with its interests, while also taking into account its understanding of causation and the estimation of causal relationships involved. The presented model for the ego's decision-making process can prove to be a valuable tool in creating more effective economic models. Particularly, it can be advantageous in cases where traditional models that assume all economic actors are perfectly rational may not be applicable. These traditional models fail to account for the intricate psychological and cognitive factors that affect human decision-making processes. By analyzing the inputs that influence decision-making, such as emotions, preferences, and beliefs, economists can develop a deeper understanding of how individuals make choices. This information can be used to create more effective economic models that consider the full range of factors that influence human decision-making. This is in line with my argument that human behavior is not solely determined by rational thought, but rather by the material conditions that shape individuals' interests and desires. The model can prove useful in the analysis of consumer behavior. By understanding how consumers make choices, businesses can create more effective marketing strategies that appeal to their target audience's interests and desires. Businesses can use the model to analyze consumer preferences and create products and services that align with those preferences. Additionally, they can use the model to understand how consumers perceive and value different products, which can help optimize pricing strategies. This highlights the significance of the role of the individual consumer in a capitalist system, where the market caters to their needs and desires. The model can also be applied to financial markets, where traditional models that assume all actors are rational may not be sufficient. By analyzing the inputs that influence decision-making, such as emotions, cognitive biases, and social pressures, economists can develop more accurate models of financial markets. These models can be used to predict market trends, identify opportunities for investment, and develop more effective risk management strategies. This underscores the role of subjective factors in shaping economic systems, rather than relying solely on mathematical calculations. Another application of the model is in the analysis of public policy. By understanding how individuals make decisions, policymakers can design policies that are more effective in achieving their desired outcomes. They can use the model to understand how individuals respond to incentives and design policies that align with their interests to encourage certain behaviors. This highlights the importance of understanding the behavior of individuals and how it affects the functioning of the economy. Moreover, the model can also be used in the development of machine learning algorithms that replicate the decision-making processes of individuals. By incorporating the model's inputs and equations, developers can create algorithms that make decisions based on a wider range of fac-

tors than traditional models that rely solely on mathematical calculations. This represents a new era of technology and data-driven decision-making in the economy.

Let us employ the model to make an anticipation regarding a hypothetical market trend for a novel variety of plant-based meat product. Assume that the consumers have a choice of three options: the new plant-based meat product (A), a traditional meat product (B), and a vegetarian option (C), each possessing unique properties that can be assessed based on their alignment with consumers' interests and preferences.

Choice A, the plant-based meat product, may tout environmentally sustainable attributes, being devoid of cruelty, and containing lower calorie counts compared to traditional meat products. On the other hand, choice B, the conventional meat product, may showcase properties like high protein content, a familiar taste, and ease of availability. Meanwhile, choice C, the vegetarian option, might offer attributes such as promoting healthy eating habits, environmentally-friendly production processes, and cruelty-free preparation methods.

As per the model, the consumers will assess each alternative's characteristics through their subjective values and assign numerical scores to them, with the choice that aligns most closely with their interests receiving the highest numerical score. Therefore, if the consumers value the environment and animal welfare, they may attribute higher scores to choices A and C, while assigning a lower score to choice B. Conversely, if the consumers value taste and convenience, they may assign higher scores to choice B and a lower score to choices A and C.

Based on this, we can predict that the market will shift towards plant-based and vegetarian options if there is a growing awareness and concern for the environment and animal welfare, leading to an increase in demand for choices A and C. However, if taste and convenience remain the dominant factors, the market may not undergo significant changes. It is imperative to note that this prediction is merely hypothetical, and various factors such as pricing, marketing, and availability can influence market trends.

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