Mystical Post-anarchism

By Keith James Lewis

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In Politics and International Relations

Keele University

July 2022

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the theoretical response that a mystical approach to post-anarchism can provide to the problems of domination and control within the contemporary capitalist state. In doing this, it also seeks to find a way past some of the key problems with existing anarchist and non-anarchist responses to these problems. The main claim that I make is that, by reading the apophatic mysticism of Meister Eckhart and Marguerite Porete through a post-anarchist lens, it is possible to develop a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics that has the potential to counter the dominating effects of contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty. I argue that it can do this by helping to undo the existing forms of subjectification and desire through which the contemporary capitalist state is reproduced, and by contributing to the creation of alternative, anarchistic political communities oriented around the production and proliferation of liberty and equality through the annihilation of subjectivity in divine love. In doing so, the mystical post-anarchism I argue for in this thesis advances on the existing academic literature by showing how mysticism can help overcome the implicit authoritarianism of existing anarchist approaches to political theology and (post)Marxist conceptualisations of revolution and reform in their reliance on transcendent sites of hierarchical power. At the same time, by locating the warrant for ethical and political action in a purely immanent conception of the divine, the mystical post-anarchism I argue for in this thesis also provides a much fuller elaboration of the anarchistic potential of the explicitly theological dimensions of mysticism than existing approaches to mystical anarchism. In doing so, it places mysticism at the forefront of contemporary anarchist and (post)revolutionary theory and points to the prefigurative, revolutionary potential of its further mobilisation and development.

Contents

Introduction

In spite of the large-scale polarisation of wealth and power produced by neoliberalism since the 1980s and accelerated, more recently, by the imposition of austerity regimes throughout Europe and North America in the years following the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, neoliberalism has proven remarkably resilient. While the reasons for this are varied, this can be accounted for, to a large degree, by neoliberalism's success in ensuring that its subjects are implicated in its perpetuation as a system. This has been achieved both through the production of specific forms of subjectivity and through the channelling of neoliberal subjects' desires through the circuits of capitalism. At the same time, the contemporary capitalist state has also proven itself adept at ensuring that any dissatisfaction with the liberal democratic framework alongside of which neoliberalism is most commonly articulated is diverted from the socialist and social democratic left to the authoritarian far right and populist right, which have proven themselves, historically, to be accommodating allies and facilitators of capitalism.

My aim, in this thesis, is to argue for the response that a mystical post-anarchism can offer to the dual problem of neoliberalism and the authoritarian right in our current political milieu. The main research questions I will seek to answer in this thesis are therefore: What theoretical response can a mystical post-anarchism provide to the problems of domination and control within the contemporary capitalist state? And what theoretical contribution can a mystical post-anarchism make to contemporary anarchist political theory? To answer these questions, it is also necessary to answer the following questions, which I will tackle in each of the main chapters: What problems are there with existing theoretical responses to contemporary forms of domination and control and how can a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics help overcome them? What contribution can mysticism make to the conceptualisation of an anarchistic approach to sovereignty that can stand as a non-hierarchical alternative to existing forms of political and economic sovereignty? What contribution can mysticism make to the

elaboration of an ethico-spiritual approach to the post-anarchist 'uprising of the self'? And how can mysticism contribute to the production of an anarchistic alternative to the patriarchal Symbolic around which the contemporary capitalist state is configured?

Before I can begin answering these questions, it is necessary, first, to provide a more detailed overview of our current political milieu in terms of the operation of domination and control through the production of inequalities of wealth and power within the framework of the contemporary capitalist state. The main argument I will make in the following sections is that the problems I will be setting out are, fundamentally, political theological problems in the sense that they relate to the operation of political and economic sovereignty and in that these conceptualisations of sovereignty are transpositions of divine conceptualisations of sovereignty onto the political (economic) field. In making this argument, I will pay particularly close attention to the central roles that subjectivity and desire perform in the reproduction of the social relationships through which contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty are exercised. I will then outline some of the key problems and limitations relating to existing political theoretical responses to the operation of domination and control within the contemporary capitalist state from a (post)-Marxist and (post)-anarchist perspective. This will then enable me to make the argument that mysticism, in its focus on the subject's detachment from desire and will, represents an especially productive source through which to develop a mystical post-anarchism that might be capable of contesting and creating alternatives to the dominant subjectivities and social relationships on which the contemporary capitalist state is based. I will conclude with an outline of the different chapters in this thesis.

Neoliberalism and the Contemporary Capitalist State

Global politics, over the last decade and a half, have been shaped, to a large extent, by the events of the 2008-09 global financial crisis and its aftermath. The 2008-2009 global

financial crisis produced the largest global economic downturn since the great depression (Crotty 2009; Johnstone, Saridakis and Wilkinson 2019). However, instead of prompting a period of reflection on the failures of neoliberalism followed by a shift either to an alternative model of capitalism, or to post-capitalist economies, the response of most incumbent governments to the crisis was to mobilise the state to ensure the survival and maintenance of the neoliberal system, regardless of the cost (Davies 2017). This response took the form, in most of the affected states, of the imposition (whether voluntary, as in the UK, or as a conditionality of 'bailout' loans, as in Italy, Ireland and Greece) of often brutal austerity programmes that exacerbated existing inequalities of wealth and immiserated a large proportion of their populations (Stuckler et al. 2017).

These events were followed, in 2010-11, by the emergence of a series of mass movements, starting in North Africa and the Middle East, and spreading to Europe and North America, aiming either to overthrow or reform the existing political and economic regimes in the various countries involved (Tejerina et al. 2013; Tormey 2015). From 2013 onwards, support for these movements was largely transferred, in Europe and North America, to a range of what can loosely be describes as 'movement parties' (such as Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain and 'movement candidates' (such as Jeremy Corbyn in the UK and Bernie Sanders in the US) (della Porta et al. 2017; Prentoulis 2021). However, in spite of some impressive electoral gains, these parties and candidates were, for the most part, unable to disrupt the neoliberal status quo. And it is significant that the one notable exception to this - Syriza, in Greece – went directly against its anti-austerity mandate by agreeing to pass to the same structural adjustment programme it had pledged to reject (Tsatsanis and Teperoglou 2016).

Consequently, in spite of the crisis of legitimacy it faced at the start of the global financial crisis, neoliberalism has, ultimately, succeeded in maintaining its hegemonic position and has either been largely accepted by most people within the countries affected by the crisis

(as has been attested to by the election results of most European countries) or acquiesced to (in the case of the countries involved in 'the Arab spring' in spite of the devastating effects of austerity and the continued polarisation of wealth and power that has followed from it over the course of the last decade (Stuckler et al. 2017). What is more, opposition to neoliberalism has, more latterly, taken a nationalistic turn, as can be seen in the resurgence of nationalistic and chauvinistic movements and parties such as Brexit in the UK and the BJP in India, and figures such as Trump in the US, Orban in Hungary, and Bolsanaro in Brazil (see, for example, Tansel 2016; Arsel, Andaman and Saad-Filho 2021).

The inability of the movements that emerged in the aftermath of the global financial crisis (or the movement parties and candidates that followed in their wake) either to bring about any radical economic or political change or to prevent the resurgence of the far right provides a stark reminder of the limitations of any attempts to create viable, socialist, alternatives to the existing order by working within the framework of a neoliberal world economy and the contemporary capitalist state. This being the case, it is worth noting that, in contrast to these movements, the contemporaneous anarchistic experiment with democratic confederalism in Rojava (the autonomous Kurdish lands of north and east Syria) (Knapp and Jongerden 2014; Knapp, Flach and Ayboga 2016) embarked upon following the Syrian uprising's devolution into civil war has shown itself capable of effecting much more tangible and far-reaching forms of material political and economic change (albeit on a more localized scale). At the same time, it is also worth noting that the Zapatista uprising that emerged in Chiapas, Mexico in the aftermath of the 1990s debt crisis (Nail 2012), in contrast to the more reformist movements that emerged as part of the South American "pink tide" at roughly the same time (Bull 2013; Gonzalez 2018), is also going strong, with the anarchistic institutions and ways of living it established having proven themselves to be capable of enduring over a significant period of time. While both Rojava and the Zapatistas emerged out of specific sets of circumstances that

4

are neither easily replicable nor necessarily desirable, they help to demonstrate, nonetheless, the continued importance and potential of anarchism to provide durable alternatives to neoliberalism outside of both the state and the international state system.

Political Theology and Sovereignty

Political theology represents an important lens through which to understand the operation of the contemporary capitalist state. By pointing to the theological derivation and character of key political concepts, it becomes possible to acquire a deeper appreciation of the theological structure and logic of political power and authority, the processes of domination and control that these are reliant upon, and the nature of the social and political relations through which these are exercised. I will start this section by explaining, in more detail, what political theology is, before going on to point to the central role that the concept of sovereignty plays in both the political theological problematic and the operation of power and authority in the contemporary capitalist state.

Political theology describes the interpenetration of religion and politics and, more specifically, the way in which political concepts, discourses and institutions are influenced, shaped, and underpinned by religious categories of thought (Newman 2019: 4-5). The central claim of most contemporary approaches to political theology is that, rather than being a peripheral discourse or residue of secular politics, theology plays a central (albeit often unconscious) structuring role in all areas of political life (Papais 2019: 271-272). As examples of the interpenetration of the political and the theological, Papais points to the centrality of theology to the conceptualisation of political sovereignty and legitimacy, and to the operation of power and authority within the political community, as well as to the competing models of utopia and salvation on which different forms of political community are based (2019: 270).

The concept of sovereignty is central to most approaches to political theology (Newman 2019: 4-5). It is also central to our understanding of the operation of power and authority within the contemporary capitalist state. Political sovereignty can be understood as a more or less direct transposition of the concept of divine sovereignty onto the political field. In the Judeo-Christian tradition that underpins most Western societies, this can be seen, for example, in Buber's (2016 [1949]) identification of a historical struggle between a dominant, secularised, authoritarian, and idolatrous approach to the kingship of God based on the principles of hereditary and deriving from the investment of the king or judge with God's divine authority on earth, and a more minoritarian anarcho-theocratic strand of political theology based on the direct authority of God transmitted, prophetically, through the vehicle of a divinely chosen, non-hereditary charismatic figure. Christian understandings of political sovereignty evolved in the context of the Roman Empire and, as such, were heavily influenced by Roman political philosophy and forms of government (Dzalto 2021: 35). Eusebius, in particular, played a key role in the development of a political theology based on the articulation of a direct parallel between heavenly and earthly kings in which the Christian messiah is turned into a prototype of the earthly ruler, which is, in turn, used to justify a Christian imperial theology in which the establishment and maintenance of the Holy Roman Empire is naturalized as the earthly manifestation of divine rule (Peterson 2011: 103). This is achieved, primarily, through the transposition of a theological model of divine sovereignty to the political sphere, so that, in the same way the God is characterised as a master, or lord, who rules over the whole of creation, the role of the emperor is conceived as being to rule over his or her obedient subjects (Dzalto 2021: 116).

In terms of contemporary politics, the concept of sovereignty provides a way to think about the foundations of power and authority in the political community. This is particularly important, as Newman identifies, in moments of crisis, when the legitimacy of the symbolic

order of society is brought into question (2019: 3, 17). It is precisely in such moments that sovereignty, as a site and source of transcendent authority is appealed to as a means of regaining a sense of ontological security (Newman 2019: 3). The desire for a restoration of national sovereignty expressed in the resurgence of support, in recent years, for right-wing movements such as Brexit, and for right-wing political parties and leaders such as the BJP in India, Trump in the USA, and Bolsonaro in Brazil can therefore be understood to be symptomatic of the failure of neoliberal responses to the 2008-2009 global financial crisis to find a resolution to the symbolic crisis faced by the neoliberal world economy and the transnational state architecture through which it is maintained. The problem that these movements have emerged as a symptom of can therefore be identified as neoliberalism's removal (whether through structural adjustment programmes, or the signals of markets and credit agencies) of any real controls over national economies by national governments, with the solution they prescribe being the undoing of the processes of globalisation and a return to closed borders and a strong state (Newman 2019: 1-2).

Social Contract Theory, Sovereignty, and the State of Exception

Different approaches to sovereignty (by, for example, liberals, conservatives, Marxists, and anarchists) lead to different forms of political community. Most contemporary capitalist states are founded on liberal models of sovereignty. To be able to understand how power and authority operate within the contemporary capitalist state, it is therefore necessary to have some understanding of the nature of sovereignty as liberals conceive it, and of the key features of the state form that emerged from these. The sixteenth century Reformation helped set in motion a process of secularisation that led, in many European territories, to the Church's loss of primacy in the face of the ascendency of the secular state. In medieval Europe, sovereignty referred, primarily, to the power of God as embodied in and exercised by the temporal power of the Holy

Roman Empire. On an international level, what unites the various conceptualisations of political sovereignty elaborated by early social contract theorists such as Hobbes (2017 [1651]) and Locke (2016 [1689]), is their replacement of the Medieval imaginary of a unified Christian society presided over, on a universal level, by the Holy Roman Emperor, and governed, locally, by kings, princes, and feudal lords, with the assertion of the territorially based understanding of sovereignty in which the Holy Roman Emperor is replaced by competing sovereign rulers and sovereign states (Elshtain 2008: 85, 120).

During the early modern period, sovereignty came to be associated, primarily, with absolute monarchy instead of the Holy Roman Emperor, with the monarch being considered to have a position analogous to that of God (Schmitt 2006 [1934]: 46). It was this separation of political from religious rule that, as Elshtain identifies, enabled the emergence of the concept of political sovereignty elaborated by early modern social contract theorists (2008: 123). This can be seen particularly clearly in the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. For Hobbes, sovereignty is located in the figure of "the Leviathan", who represents the power and strength of the commonwealth once 'the people' have given up their right to liberty in order to secure the protection of the state (embodied, for Hobbes, in the absolute monarch) and avoid the insecurity of the state of nature and "the war of all against all" (2017 [1651]).

Locke's later development of social contract theory can be understood to have laid the foundations for the modern liberal state through the rejection of the principle of absolute monarchy and the assertion that the scope of the sovereign state's authority should be much more circumscribed and focussed on securing the life and property of the citizenry (2016 [1689]). Where Hobbes's Leviathan remains unbounded by the legal framework of the state, the sovereign, in Locke's liberal approach to social contract theory, is therefore bound by it (Elshtain 2008: 117). Monarchical conceptions of sovereignty began to be replaced, in the modern period, with the concept of popular sovereignty. Rousseau (2004 [1762]), for example,

argued that sovereignty is located in "the general will" of the people, as expressed through the processes of assembly democracy within the framework of the juridical state. Liberal sovereignty has, more latterly, come to be identified with the legislative power of the people as expressed through the work of its elected representatives (Crockett 2011: 110). In Schmitt's view, one of the most significant repercussions of liberal interventions into political sovereignty was that "the decisionistic and personalistic element" in the concept of sovereignty was lost (2006 [1934]: 48). This can be seen in the work of later liberal constitutionalists such as Kant, Kelsen, and Rawls who, as Critchley argues, all sought to eliminate "the decision" from politics by subjecting everything to the rule of law (Critchley 2012: 105). This is a trend that has continued into contemporary liberal democracies, whose "liberal civil religion," Critchley suggests, is based on the defence of the primacy of the constitution and the deliberative processes it enshrines (2009: 275).

Although, in the liberal tradition, religion might have been formally secularized, it continues to play a key role in the structure and operation of the liberal state (Crockett 2011: 88-92). This can be seen, especially clearly, in the persistence of 'the sacred' in both liberal and conservative approaches to political sovereignty and the state form (Dzalto 2021: 88), and in the concept of 'the state of exception' this enables to emerge. Newman notes that Schmitt's political theology can be seen as an attempt to restore transcendence and 'dignity' to politics through the assertion of "an authoritarian and 'decisionistic' idea of sovereignty" (Newman 2019: 27-28). Schmitt's decisionistic approach to sovereignty rests on the belief that the most fundamental basis of sovereignty and the state form lie in their definitive determination of what constitutes public order and security, and in deciding when these are threatened or disturbed (2006 [1934]): 9-10). Schmitt notes that it is impossible to anticipate either the precise details of an emergency situation in which such a threat to public order and security might occur, or what is required for an emergency of this type to be resolved. He argues that, because of this,

"the precondition as well as the content of jurisdictional competence in such a case must necessarily be unlimited" (Schmitt 2006 [1934]: 6-7). This requires that the sovereign is not subject to any checks or balances, meaning that the sovereign "stands outside the normally valid legal system" while, at the same time, belonging to it (Schmitt 2006 [1934]: 32-33). Schmitt argues that, in order for this to be possible, it is necessary for the sovereign to be able to make decisions in exceptional circumstances or "states of emergency" in which the normal constitutional order is suspended, and the sovereign can act in an unconstrained, unlimited way (2006 [1934]: 5, 32-33).

Schmitt clarifies the relationship between sovereignty, the exception, and the law by explaining that, through 'the decision', "the state suspends the law in the exception on the basis of its right of self-preservation" (2006 [1934]: 12-13). Schmitt maintains, however, that the exception remains "accessible to jurisprudence," because both the norm and the decision take place "within the framework of the juristic" (2006 [1934]: 12-13). This leads Schmitt to suggest that the sovereignty of the state should be defined "not as the monopoly to coerce or to rule, but as the monopoly to decide" (2006 [1934]: 13). The effect of Schmitt's decisionism is to create a political distinction between friends and enemies by creating a homogenous 'people' that is constructed in opposition to an enemy comprised of internal and external others identified as being external to 'the people' that the state represents and protects (Bartelson 2014: 44).

The role of authoritarian forms of governance in contemporary liberal democratic societies can be seen particularly clearly in the interactions between foreign and domestic policy decisions. Schmitt's (2006 [1934]) conservative critique of liberalism attempts to avoid the temptations of dictatorship by grounding the sovereign decision in a clear, juridical, framework. However, without a strict separation of the powers of the judiciary and the executive, the possibility, as Agamben (2005) notes, always exists for the state of exception to

become the rule. This can be seen, for example, in the US's inauguration of a permanent state of exception through its "war on terror," (Crockett 2011: 114). This has taken two main forms. Firstly, it has entailed a suspension of international laws by individual sovereign nations in both their relations with and interventions in other sovereign states through the construction of "networks of surveillance, incarceration, control and war-making that are no longer strictly determined by national boundaries" (Newman 2010: 170-171). Secondly, it has taken the form of the indefinite suspension of many of the democratic freedoms guaranteed, domestically, through the juridical framework of the liberal state (Ericson 2008: 57). The recourse to the sovereign exception on the domestic front has become increasingly formalised, in countries like the US and the UK, through the enactment of laws relating to terrorism and surveillance as part of an ongoing process of 'securitisation' which has a clear nationalist and white supremacist dimension in its targeting of particular nationalities, ethnicities, and religions (Sparke 2008: 134). This, in turn, has created a more or less permanent, *de facto* state of exception in which all forms of dissidence are construed as threats to state security. This can be seen, for example, in the use of anti-terror laws to arrest climate change and anti-war protestors (Newman 2010: 170).

Anarchism and Sovereignty

From an anarchist perspective, secularisation succeeded in putting an end to "the tyranny of church dogma" and, in doing so, giving the individual greater freedom over his or her life and conscience (Newman 2019: 155). However, the persistence of religion in the liberal order remains evident in its creation of what Newman describes as "a space of transcendence" in which new forms of power emerge through the production of "a structural void" in civil society that these new forms of power try to fill in order to reoccupy the position of transcendence that religion has evacuated (2019: 19). This is particularly apparent in relation

to the exercise of political sovereignty. Newman argues that the concept of sovereignty points to a moment of transcendence that represents "an imaginary point of identity that fixes meaning and delineates borders and boundaries" by differentiating between inside and outside, or, as Schmitt would put it, between friend and enemy, to create a transcendent political community that takes the form of the sovereign state (2019: 3, 156). In relying on a transcendent source of sovereign authority, the liberal state therefore represents an inherently authoritarian and exclusionary social relation (Smith 2019: 427). Consequently, as Stirner argues, in freeing the individual from the despotic power of absolute monarchs, the modern, liberal state ends up binding the individual much more directly to the state through the production of "the citizen", who, in the name of equality and liberty, is subordinated to the authority of the state, to which it owes its allegiance and obedience (2014 [1844]: 95).

Where anarchists depart from liberals and conservatives is therefore in their rejection of the necessity for the state form through which transcendent forms of sovereignty are exercised (Kropotkin 2014; Proudhon 1989 [1851]). In contrast to traditional Marxist conceptualisation of sovereignty, which see the problem of capitalist domination in terms of who controls the state (Marx and Engels 1998 [1893]), anarchism therefore sees the state itself as a source of domination regardless of which class or group are in control (Bakunin 1970 [1882]). For anarchists, the state is not just an instrument of class power, or the political expression of the capitalist mode of production; it represents its own "locus of power" (Newman 2010: 77). It therefore has its own "organising principles and prerogatives" which tend towards the domination of the social forces it serves to structure and organise (Newman 2010: 78). This is because, as Newman argues, all states are founded on the same sovereign principle and are therefore underpinned by the same, unequal power relations (2010: 30). Consequently, from an anarchist perspective the state can never be a solution to the problems of domination and control because it is precisely through the state form and the centralisation

of sovereignty it produces that these problems are created (Prichard 2021: 27). This being the case, it is impossible for equality and liberty to be fully implemented within the framework of the state, because the state violates individual liberty through its laws and other coercive and violent means and violates equality by creating a concentrated monopoly on power (Bakunin 1970 [1882]). It does this, as Newman (2010: 30) notes, by claiming sole legitimacy and authority for itself, and supporting unequal class hierarchies, inequalities of wealth and economic exploitation. Consequently, anarchists reject all state systems, whether they are monarchical, authoritarian, democratic, or workers' states (Call 2002: 14).

Sovereignty and the Contemporary Capitalist State

Economic Theology: From Liberal Sovereignty to Neoliberal Governmentality

The same secularisation of theological concepts that political theologians identify in the liberal state can also be seen in the economic sphere. According to Newman (2019: 131), what economic theology shares with political theology is "a claim to the sacred, to an absolute order of truth, to being an indispensable condition [of] our existence". He suggests that this is especially apparent in the way in which modern economics "secularises certain theological concepts in its construction of the market and in its understanding of rational economic conduct" (Newman 2019: 133). The key difference between economic and political theology, however, is that economic theology is "a theology of immanence rather than transcendence," meaning that it operates, through the micropolitics of social relationships rather than an external authority (Newman 2019: 131). The micropolitical character of economic theology in the neoliberal era is captured most clearly in Foucault's (2008) governmentality thesis. Governmentality can be understood to represent a move from the direct exercise of sovereign power over individual subjects to the government of populations at a distance through "the conduct of conduct" (Foucault 2008). Governmental power therefore functions, primarily, by

"structuring and shaping the field of possible action of subjects" (Lemke 2016: 17). It is through the governmental techniques that perform this structuring role that neoliberalism, as a discourse and form of knowledge, exercises its power (Elden 2013: 14). Foucault (2008) stresses, however, that, while sovereignty and governmentality can be understood as distinct stages in the evolution of government, governmentality should be understood as a mutation, or evolution of sovereignty rather than a replacement for it. As Lemke notes, governmentality can therefore be understood as a recalibration rather than a replacement of sovereignty in which state sovereignty is exercised through informal as opposed to formal techniques of government (2016: 84). Consequently, sovereignty, under the conditions of governmentality, can best be understood as "an interconnected, reinforcing series of symbolic and material state capacities" that operate micropolitically, as opposed to a single site of sovereign authority and hierarchical command structure with a monopoly on the exercise of coercive power (Jessop 2016: 173).

Neoliberalism's attempt to reinvent sovereignty through governmental means is achieved by making the state "an *object* of economic rationalization, and not only an agent" (Davies 2017: 25). Foucault argues that where neoliberalism differs most dramatically from classical forms of liberal political economy is therefore in that where, in classical liberalism, the role of the state is to supervise the market as a means of ensuring against any interference in its mechanisms, neoliberalism seeks to turn the free market into the organizing and regulating principle of the state (2008: 247). This means that government intervention in the market in neoliberalism aims "to intervene on society so that competitive mechanisms can play a regulatory role at every moment and every point in society," so that it might then be possible to achieve "a general regulation of society by the market" (Foucault 2008: 145).

As Brown notes, the economization of the political does not occur only through the application of market principles to nonmarket fields, however; it also takes place through the conversion of political processes, subjects, categories, and principles into economic ones

(2015: 158). Organising social relations in terms of the economy and the market principle of competition means, as Brown argues, that inequality is both the premise and outcome of neoliberal society, so that, rather than being something to be avoided, it is legitimated and actively aimed towards (2015: 64). The effect of this generalization of the market principle of competition through society can be seen in the financialization of the global economy initiated by the deregulation of the financial sector in the early 1980s, which has resulted in the dramatic polarisation of wealth, on both the national and international scales, between an increasingly precarious majority and an emerging "super-rich" class comprised of billionaire oligarchs, heads of mega-corporations, and monarchies (see, for example, Regilme Jr 2019; Little and Winch 2021).

The adoption of the market principle of competition as the regulatory principle of society has particularly important implications for democracy. As Brown puts it, "economization replaces a political lexicon with a market lexicon" (2015: 206). In submitting the political to the judgement of an economic rationality, neoliberalism aims to subordinate democratic commitments to equality, liberty, inclusion, and constitutionalism to "the project of economic growth, competitive positioning, and capital enhancement" (Brown 2015: 26). This has the effect of transforming the function of the state so that it performs a primarily managerial role, with political power, in the form of democratic citizenship and popular sovereignty, coming to be viewed as a potential threat to the efficient management and economic performance of the state (Brown 2015: 35, 42). On an international level, this means that states not only govern for the market, but that they gain or lose legitimacy according to their market performance. This has led Brown to suggest that "the central ruse" of neoliberal governance is that it invokes the name of freedom (in the shape of free markets, free countries, and free men) to remove individual and collective freedoms grounded in the popular sovereignty of the demos (2015: 108). Zizek expands on this argument by suggesting that the

economic sovereignty of the market operates through a capitalist discourse whose "structure of domination" is repressed, so that, while individuals are formally free and equal in terms of both their political and their economic rights, domination continues to operate through the commodity relation (2017: 210). Neoliberal reason therefore enables the capitalist to exercise his or her domination through the naturalization of the underlying market structure of capitalism, which presents the market as the ultimate authority and arbiter of the socio-economic sphere. The authority of the capitalist master thereby "reappears in a displaced way" through what appears as the exercise of "neutral expert knowledge" among otherwise equal capitalist subjects rather than his or her structural position as capital holder, and, with this, his or her power to extract and appropriate surplus value from those without capital (Zizek 2017: 210).

Neoliberalism, Authoritarianism, and 'the Exception'

The concepts of political theology and political sovereignty do not disappear altogether in the shift from liberalism to neoliberalism. In fact, while neoliberalization has taken place, in the global North, primarily through the exercise of economic sovereignty and the practices and techniques of governmentality, in the global South it has tended to be implemented through the violent exercise of the sovereign power of the state in the form of "coups d'etat and juntas, occupations, structural adjustments … and militarized disciplining of populations" (Brown 2015: 47). At the same time, in spite of the importance of governmentality to the process of neoliberalization in the global North, the concept of political sovereignty and the exercise of sovereign power continue to play important roles in the maintenance of neoliberal hegemony in nation states within this area. As a relatively recent example of this it is possible to point to the suspension of democratic norms to uphold the neoliberal system in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-2009. Where the financial crisis could have represented a

moment of transformation in which the dominant, neoliberal economic rationality was subjected to a sustained critique, followed by discussion of a range of possible alternatives to it, what Davies describes as "a state of market exception" was instituted instead, meaning that the neoliberal, market-based system was elevated to the status of "quasi-constitutional state norm", to the effect that the full, sovereign, power of the state (and interstate bodies) was employed to preserve "an otherwise collapsing market logic" through the assertion that the neoliberal market order must survive at whatever cost (2017: 26, 148, 177, 187). As Davies suggests, this means that, where neoliberalism once relied on the tacit support of the sovereign power of the state, this reliance is now explicit (2017: 157).

The effect of this fusion of sovereign power and neoliberal governmentally is, in Newman's view, that rather than challenging the power of political and economic elites, democracy often serves to do little more than provide a means of legitimizing their rule (2010: 32). According to Newman, this means that voting has become a purely symbolic act, with any real ideological differences between major political parties having been erased, so that changes of government now represent little more than "a game of revolving oligarchies" (2010: 32). The success of "the pink tide" movements in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador in making very real differences to levels of poverty, health, literacy, and democratic participation suggest that this is not universally true. However, Lazzarato's observation that, since the 2007-2008 global financial crisis, representative systems in European states such as Italy and Greece have been suspended, political parties have been divested of power, and parliaments have been reduced to rubber-stamping the commands of the IMF, EU and European Central Bank 'troika' (2015: 102-103) provides a useful illustration of the extent of the institutional and structural barriers that parties wanting to challenge neoliberal hegemony face.

Neoliberalism and the Resurgence of the Far Right

17

One of the main consequences of the increasing imbalances of wealth and power neoliberalism functions to produce has been a widespread disillusionment with both neoliberal globalization and the democratic institutions of the liberal, juridical state (Nyyssonen and Metsala 2020; Rewizorski 2021). This has led to a proliferation of radicalized political and social movements throughout the regions most affected by neo-liberalism. On the right of the political spectrum, disaffection with the neo-liberal status quo has tended to focus, primarily, on the problem of sovereignty. Support for far-right movements and authoritarian figures such as Victor Orban in Hungary, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Donald Trump in the United States, and "Brexit" in the United Kingdom represents a reaction to the perceived loss of national sovereignty that comes as a consequence of the processes of globalisation (Lugo-Ocando 2020; Nyyssonen and Metsala 2020; Rewizorski 2021). There is, as Newman argues, a strong populist dimension to these movements and leaders, with the figure of the sovereign functioning to constitute "the people" as a unified political body (2019: 101). This relationship takes the form of a direct identification between the people and the sovereign based on a perceived national or cultural unity, which is mobilised against the figure of the enemy or outsider (constructed on the basis, variously, of nationalist, religious fundamentalist, white supremacist, patriarchal, and hetero-normative sentiments) who is seen as a threat to this identity (Newman 2019: 101).

The role of neoliberal globalisation in the construction of 'the people' implied in right populist and far right movements can be seen in the tendency of these movements to coalesce, variously, around a rejection of the flows of migration that neo-liberalism has released (Hellstrom, Norocel and Jorgensen 2020); a rejection of the power of trans-national capital and the desire for a return to forms of economic protectionism (Dent 2020); the rejection of supra-national institutions such as the European Union and United Nations, international environmental and legal conventions such as the Kyoto Agreement and the European

Convention on Human Rights (Pin 2019; Basile and Mazzoleni 2020); or different combinations of the above. Newman suggests that movements of this type should therefore be seen as part of a kind of conservative "revolution" that seeks to reconstitute a more direct, authoritarian conception of sovereignty than the technocratic governance of neoliberal rule (2019: 101).

On an intellectual level 'the new right' has played a key role in the resurgence of authoritarian politics. There are longstanding links between far-right groups and movements in Europe and North America such as Brexit, the Front National, Lega, Alternative for Germany (AfD), Vox, Party for Freedom (PVV), the Sweden Democrats, Law and Justice, PiS, Fidesz, and the Trump presidency in terms of the sharing of ideas, and identifications with the new right or core new right ideas (Orellana and Michelsen 2019: 753). While there are clear ideological differences between these groups and movements in terms of the political economic projects they put forward (where Trump advocated a return to economic protectionism, for example, most Brexiteers supported extreme neoliberal free-trade regimes), what they share is a desire to reshape the international order along more strongly identitarian lines as a means of enabling what they perceive as the strongest sovereign nations to prosper, and gain the rewards that their strength deserves (Orellana and Michelsen 2019: 766). In contrast to the fascist movement of the 1930s, this entails a desire to "reconstitute the international rules of the game", through the dismantling of right-based norms designed to ensure an equality of civil and human rights among states and populations, rather than to assert the exceptionality of a particular national group (Orellana and Michelsen 2019: 766). A further aim, and effect of the new right has been to force centre-right political parties to shift their positions further to the right to accommodate the concerns and anxieties they promote, variously, in relation to immigration foreign competition (Drolet and Williams 2018: 306) and the so-called 'culture wars' (Hunter 1992) against multiculturalism, universal rights, and liberal pluralism. While

this cultural backlash against increasing levels of immigration, multiculturalism, religious and sexual diversity and equality in many societies is a defining characteristic of many contemporary authoritarian movements, it is primarily economic insecurity, as Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2019) argue, that drives support for these movements and encourages their followers to identify the cause of their insecurity in these sources.

Subjectivity and the Contemporary Capitalist State

Where neoliberalism, as a form of economic and political theology, has perhaps been most effective, is in transforming the way the capitalist subject sees itself (Newman 2019: 134). In his account of the role of the processes of subjectification in neoliberal governmentality, Foucault argues that the generalization of the market form throughout society functions as "a principle of intelligibility and a principle of decipherment of social relationships and individual behaviour" (2008: 243). This means that the *homo oeconomicus* sought in neo-liberal society is "the man of enterprise and production" rather than the man of exchange or consumption sought in the Fordist era (Foucault 2008: 146-147). Foucault describes this neo-liberal *homo oeconomics* as "an entrepreneur of himself," meaning that he is called upon to be his own capital, his own producer, and the source of his own earnings (2008: 226). Foucault stresses that the positing of *homo oeconomicus* as the ideal subject of the neo-liberal enterprise society does not imply all behaviour represents a form of economic behaviour, however; it means that economic behaviour becomes "the grid of intelligibility" through which the individual is understood (2008: 252-253). Crucially, it also means that the individual becomes "governmentalizable" (but only to the extent that he or she is a *homo oeconomicus*) (Foucault 2008: 253).

Where, "at the dawn of the neoliberal era" (Brown 2015: 33), in which Foucault (2008) developed his understanding of neoliberal governmentality, *homo oeconomicus* was

characterized, primarily, by its entrepreneurialism, the contemporary *homo oeconomicus* retains elements of entrepreneurialism, but has been significantly reshaped by the processes of financialization. This means, as Brown identifies, that the contemporary *homo oeconomicus* can be understood to take the form of "financialized human capital" whose aim is to invest in itself and to attract investors in ways that enhance its market value in all domains of life, whether through the pursuit of education and training, "social media 'followers,' 'likes,' and 'retweets,'" or through rankings and ratings systems that might enhance its future value (2015: 33-34). At the same time, the rise of "behavioural and happiness economics" has meant that where, previously, *homo oeconomicus* was assumed, now it is actively "*taught, nudged, mimicked and nurtured into existence*" (Davies 2017: 157).

The rise and expansion of *homo oeconomicus,* in the neoliberal era, into ever more domains of social life, takes places in direct relation to the increasing contraction and diminution of *homo politicus*. As Brown argues, *homo politicus*, describes the form of subjectivity relating to "political equality and freedom, representation, popular sovereignty, and deliberation and judgment about the public good and the common" (2015: 87). It is only towards the end of the twentieth century and the advent of neoliberalism that, according to Brown, *homo oeconomicus* gains ascendency over *homo politicus* (2015: 87). The effect of neoliberal governmentality is to convert "the citizen-subject" from a political to an economic subject in the same way that the state is converted from a juridical model to the model of the firm (Brown 2015: 108). This economization of the political subject functions to eliminate any meaningful conceptualisation of the 'people' as a demos involved in the collective exercise of political sovereignty (Brown 2015: 39). Consequently, neoliberal subjects, "emancipated from all concerns with and regulation by the social, the political, the common, or the collective" are encouraged to focus exclusively on the pursuit of their own enhancement as human capital, so that they can better serve the purposes and imperatives of the market and whatever "firm,

industry, region, nation, or postnational constellation" they are implicated in and on which their survival depends (Brown 2015: 108). This elevation of the sovereignty of the market over the sovereignty of the people helps facilitate the politics of the exception by placing the *homo oeconomicus* in a position of subordination to "the nation as firm", so that it, in effect, becomes sacrificeable to the maintenance of the neoliberal order and the competitive positioning, growth, or credit rating of the nation-firm (Brown 2015: 213).

As a consequence of the neoliberalization of *homo oeconomicus*, "the precarious subject" has come to represent one of the most dominant subject positions in contemporary neo-liberal societies. The precarious subject is "a docile and obedient subject," who "the spectre of economic destitution" functions to discipline and control (Newman 2016: 25). One of the main consequences of the processes of neoliberal "subjectification" is that it enables neoliberal rule to take place primarily via specific discourses and rationalities that act through an individual's own freedom, rather than through externally imposed forms of sovereign power. In being required to function as a free, self-reliant, rational chooser, the neoliberal subject is thrust back upon itself and its own resources. This creates a state of dependency and control that, as Newman contends, takes the formal shape of freedom and independence but leads to a life of constant uncertainty that enables the subject to be governed more effectively (2016: 22-23). Under the more specific conditions of financial capitalism, the precarious neoliberal subject takes the form of what Lazzarato describes as the 'indebted man', who is encouraged, through a range of state and media technologies of control, to interiorize the belief that his precarious position is a consequence of his own choices, decisions, and inadequacies rather than an effect of the structural features of finance capitalism (2015: 41-42). It is largely as a consequence of neoliberalism's effectiveness in the various practices and techniques of subjectification described above that it has proven so resilient in the face of recent crises. As Newman notes, the limitations of a neoliberal political economic model may have become clear

for everyone to see in the years following the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, but the one of the key reasons why it has retained its dominant position, nonetheless, is precisely because it works primarily at the level of individual behaviours and practices as opposed to the more intellectual level of ideological argumentation and persuasion (2019: 135). What this means is that, even if we don't believe in neoliberalism on an ideological level, it remains difficult, nonetheless, to disentangle ourselves from the neoliberal practices that we are enmeshed in as part of our daily lives, and to undo the processes of subjectification these practices are implicated in (Newman 2019: 135).

Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity, and Sovereignty

Foucauldian analyses of neoliberalism offer an illuminating account of the importance of subjectivity to the governmental processes through which sovereignty is exercised within the neoliberal state. What they lack, however, is a detailed account of the psychic processes through which neoliberal subjectivities are produced, and through which they are made amenable to and complicit with neoliberal rule. This is something which psychoanalysis is able to help supply.

Psychoanalysis and Economic Sovereignty

To establish and maintain its hegemony, it is necessary for neoliberalism to offer its subjects something that ensures their positive, libidinal investment in the system by structuring their expectations and desires (Glynos 2001: 95). The power of Capital, in the neoliberal era, therefore comes, at least in part, from its ability to align itself, structurally, with the libidinal economy of the human subject through the operation of jouissance and the drive (Wilson 2018: 181). Economic sovereignty is consequently exercised, as Gammon (2010) argues, through the internalisation of neoliberal models of subjectivity that are reproduced through the

internalisation of the neoliberal market values of competition via the operation of the phallic economy of desire and what Dean (2009) refers to as "the fantasy of free trade" (2010: 362-363). The fantasmatic nature of capitalist desire can be seen in the fact that, at the same time that neoliberalism promises the possibilities of self-realization, freedom, autonomy, and enjoyment for those who are 'winners' in the in the competition for jobs, wages, the accumulation of capital, and whichever other signifiers of success is creates, it produces a set of material conditions in which the attainment of these things is made increasingly improbable for the vast majority (Lazzarato 2015: 186-187). Dean explains this by noting that "the fantasy of free trade" functions to cover over the "persistent market failure, structural inequalities, the prominence of monopolies, the privilege of no-bid contracts, the violence of privatization and the redistribution of wealth to the 'have mores'" through which actually-existing neoliberalism operates and through which the possibilities for freed trade among equal participants with equal opportunities (in terms of the establishment of the rules of competition and access to financial networks, capital, and information, for example) are largely foreclosed (2009: 56). By aligning itself, on a psychic level, with the drive, the circuits of capital ensure the maintenance of the subject's desire despite the repeated failure of its attempts to find jouissance under the conditions of neoliberalism described above (Wilson 2018: 180). At the same time, the inability of most people to attain the goals that neoliberalism sets and, therefore, to become 'winners' in the various market competitions it creates, produces guilt in the subject for its failure to meet the internalised measures of success that neoliberalism inculcates and fulfil neoliberalism's promise that everyone can win (Lazzarato 2015: 186-187).

A similar process can be seen in the operation of consumer capitalism. The global expansion of consumer capitalism has been achieved through a concomitant expansion of capitalist economic relations based on the cultural values and attitudes of neoliberal ideology (MacDonald 2018: 70). The central role of consumerism to capitalist accumulation in

contemporary neoliberal societies has led capitalism to expend large amounts of energy in directing its subjects' desire towards the attainment of jouissance through the purchase of consumer goods. However, as Braidotti argues, commodities are never able to appease this desire, which means the contemporary neo-liberal subject is never released from it, and therefore keeps coming back for more (2019: 96). Where contemporary "hedonistic-permissive" capitalism differs from its older precursors, in Zizek's view, is in the subordination of shame to guilt (2017: 202-203). Where shame emanates from the subject's experience of the opprobrium of society or a particular figure of societal authority, guilt emanates from the internalization of societal values via the superego and, in the context of consumer capitalism, emerges from the subject's conviction that it is not enjoying itself enough (Zizek 2017: 202-203). One of the roles that guilt plays in the reproduction of contemporary, neoliberal capitalism is therefore in making the subject believe that if it doesn't experience the satisfaction of its desire that capitalism promises, (whether through consumption, profit increases, or market growth) (Kapoor 2014: 1129) then it is because there is something wrong with it rather than with the capitalist system through which it is produced.

Psychoanalysis and Political Sovereignty

The resurgence of authoritarian forms of political sovereignty in recent years can be understood, as Bloom (2016) argues, to be directly linked to the conditions of contemporary capitalism and the exercise of economic sovereignty through the micropolitical processes of neoliberal governmentality. On the level of desire, neoliberalism functions to create the desire for the security of a sovereign figure who can offer a solution to the problem of how to negotiate the demand to exercise freedom and agency in a disciplinary regime in which subjects' freedom from direct coercion is replaced by an increasingly extensive governmental 'conduct of conduct' in which power is depersonalised and dispersed throughout ever greater areas of social

life (Bloom 2016: 25-26). The sovereign therefore holds up the fantasmatic promise that, in the absence of the opportunity for the subject to exercise freedom and agency under the conditions of neoliberal governmentality, the sovereign can do this for the subject (Bloom 2016: 24-25).

The "fundamental gesture of political theology", in Reinhard's view, is "the attribution of divine features to the person or function of the sovereign" (2014: 151). Newman explains this, in psychoanalytical terms, as the manifestation of a desire "for the sacred in the secular experience" which is evident in the recurrent call for ever stronger forms of political sovereignty. In secular societies, the authoritarian figure of the sovereign ruler comes to take the place vacated by God as the 'primal father' substitute (2019: 15). As recent examples of this, it is possible to point to political leaders such as Duterte, Orban, Trump, and Bolsonaro. These figures represent precisely the type of sovereign figure argued for by Schmitt (2006 [1934]), in that they emerge through the democratic framework of the juridical state but, when in power, assume the position of the sovereign individual responsible for deciding on when these democratic and juridical norms should be suspended through the (increasingly permanent) state of exception (Agamben 2005), in order that any potential threat to the form of society the sovereign represents might be forestalled. In Trump's case, for example, this exceptionalism was achieved by directly challenging and exposing the weakness and corruption of the law or the juridical state, through its deliberate flaunting and provocation (Andreescu 2019: 361). By doing this, he was able to establish his position as a 'perverse father' capable of restoring his followers' lost jouissance to them through his acts of transgression.

The appeal of these sovereign figures comes from their perceived strength and power and, therefore, the security and protection that is promised, in identifying with them, against the threat to the integrity of the social order posed by various internal and external others. In the case of the Indian BJP, for example, Modi offers the possibility of a return to a pre-existing, Hindu nation that has been lost due to external invasions (from both the British and the Mughal

26

empires), external enemies in the form of Muslims living outside of India in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and internal enemies in the form of Muslims living inside India, the local political elite, and 'alien' ideologies such as secularism, democracy, communism, and feminism (Kinnvall and Svensson 2018: 918). The trade-off for "the people's" consent to these new forms of authoritarianism comes, as Newman suggests, from the responses they offer to the desire for protection against the uncertainties of the outside world (2019: 102). It also comes through the fantasy that a return to a form of sovereignty that precedes the permissive, multi-cultural, liberal state represents a means of regaining the jouissance that neo-liberal globalisation has stolen from them (Newman 2019: 102; Hook 2022: 35). This can be seen, for example, in the discourse around Brexit, which repeatedly invoked the promise of a return of a former greatness, as an independent, democratic, sovereign nation, that had been lost as result of immigration policies and the institutions of the European Union (Mandelbaum 2020: 452, 468). As Mandelbaum notes, it is both the promise of the restoration of a lost jouissance, security, and fulfilment that far right and right populist movements of this type hold out, and the structural impossibility of the realisation of these promises, (on both a material and an ontological level), that ensures these movements' continued popularity and support through the perpetual deferral of the time when all the barriers to this lost jouissance have been removed (2020: 470).

Towards a Mystical Post-Anarchism

I will be arguing, in this thesis, for the response that a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics can make to the exercise of contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty and the various forms of domination and control they produce. The claim that I will be making is that, by integrating the mystical theologies of Meister Eckhart (1994) and Marguerite Porete (1993) into a post-anarchist theopolitical framework, it becomes possible

both to contest and construct non-hierarchical alternatives to the contemporary capitalist state. My aim, in this section, is to begin to make the argument for the importance of the different (mystical, post-anarchist, and theopolitical) elements of this approach (on their own and in combination) in terms of the roles that they can play in moving past the paradigms of the contemporary capitalist state, the international state system, the neoliberal world economy, and the different forms of power through which these are maintained.

We may have seen a general acquiescence to the existing political and economic status quo by a large proportion of citizens within contemporary capitalist societies in the past decade, as I argued earlier on. However, the negative affects of increasingly authoritarian forms of neoliberal rule continue to be seen, very clearly, in both the inequalities and material deprivations it is producing and the increasing generalization of conditions such as anxiety, depression and other forms of psychic malaise that result from this (Esposito and Perez 2014; Becker, Hartwich and Haslam 2021). And it is from this continued material and psychic dissatisfaction with existing political and economic regimes that the appetite for alternatives to them can emerge. In terms of the more general relevance of mysticism and the mystical post-anarchism I am arguing for to contemporary capitalist societies, it might be true that the process of disenchantment Weber (2002) describes as being crucial to the birth and consolidation of capitalism may have left little room for belief in the possibility of direct participation in the divine in both protestant religions and capitalist societies (Sherry 2009: 380), leading to a loss of the sacred (Esposito 2015: 45) in which 'the spirit of capitalism' creates "an enslavement of spirit" that subordinates the experience of the divine to the demands economic calculation, resulting in "a generalized ill-being and distaste for oneself and others" (Stiegler 2014: 33). It might also be true that there has been a significant decline in popular engagement even with the (largely disenchanted) institutions of traditional, mainstream religions in many western countries in the post-war period (Putnam 2000; Friberg and Sterri 2021). However, in recent

decades it has also been possible to identify a distinct turn to towards 're-enchantment'. As evidence of this, it is possible to point to the rapid growth of people identifying as "spiritual but not religious" (Wixwat and Saucier 2021: 121), the popularity and commercial appeal of spiritual practices from Hinduism and Buddhism in the form of yoga classes, spiritual retreats, and "mindfulness" practices in the workplace (Zizek 2001: 12-15) and a more specific interest in what can broadly be understood as mystical experiences in, for example, the practice of shamanism and the quasi-ritualistic use of drugs such as ayahuasca by members of non-indigenous western societies (Peterson, Feldes and Cova 2022). On a more political level, the role of spiritual practices (in the form, for example of guided meditations and prayers) has become increasingly visible in recent environmental movements, with the forms of spirituality on display deriving variously from the traditional monotheistic religions (including the Christian tradition I engage with in this thesis) Hinduism and Buddhism, indigenous belief systems, and various hybridizations of all the above (Kidwell 2019). At the same time, acts of protest and contestation have been increasingly conceptualised in spiritual terms, with the desire to re-enchant the world being understood as a central logic in the production of alternatives to capitalist exploitation based on spiritual rather than competitive, economic relations between individuals, societies, and the ecological systems of which they form a part (Federici 2019: 188; Kidwell 2019: 6). Spirituality also plays an important role in some existing anarchist forms of political community. The most explicit example of this is, perhaps, the Catholic Workers' Movement, which has practiced communal forms of living, in the US and elsewhere from between the first and second world wars to the present day (Pauli 2017). While the mystical approach I argue for in this thesis can, like any other spiritual practice, be co-opted and commodified by capitalism and the liberal democratic state (Zizek 2001: 12-15), it also has the potential to perform a politically transformative role if it is equipped with a clear political (and, as I argue in this thesis, anarchistic) orientation.

Despite the unequivocal rejection of religion by key anarchist figures such as Stirner (2014 [1844]) and Bakunin (1970 [1882]: 24), there is a rich and long-standing tradition of religious anarchism. From within the Judeo-Christian tradition that I engage with in this thesis, this includes the "anarcho-zionism" of Gersholm Scholem (1941) and the kibbutz movement; Martin Buber's (1996 [1949]; 2015 [1949]) anarcho-theocracy; Scholem's (1941) and Buber's (2015 [1958]) anarchistic readings of the Jewish mystical tradition; the Movement of the Free Spirit in the Middle Ages and groups like the Diggers, the Quakers and the Ranters in the Seventeenth Century (Vaneigem 1986; Bey 1996: 80; Foucault 2007; Marshall 2009: xv-xvi; Critchley 2012). Leo Tolstoy's ([1894] 2006), Jacques Ellul's ([1948]1989; 1991; 2001), and Alex Christoyannopoulos's (2011) Christian anarchist biblical exegeses; and Dorothy Day's Catholic Workers' Movement (Pauli 2017).

In the following chapters I will be arguing, after Buber (2016 [1949]), for a theopolitical approach to mystical anarchism, in contradistinction to Landauer's (1983 [1911]; 2010) and Critchley's (2012) political theological approaches and Newman's (2019) political philosophical approach to anarchism. Where Buber's theopolitics departs from Landauer's and Critchley's political theologies and from Newman's political philosophy is in that, where Landauer's and Critchley's political theologies are concerned with the sacralisation of political concepts, and where Newman's political philosophy argues for the subordination of theology to philosophy as a means of responding to political problems, theopolitics argues, instead, for the mobilisation of explicitly theological concepts as a response to the same political problems.

To develop my own, mystical post-anarchist approach to theopolitics, I will be drawing, primarily, on the anarchist potential of the movement of the free spirit that emerged in Western Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and, more specifically, the associated mystical theologies of Meister Eckhart and Marguerite Porete. The relevance of Eckhart's and Porete's thought can be seen in the continued engagement of key figures in philosophy,

political theory, and psychoanalysis with their ideas. Eckhart was "rediscovered" during the German romantic period of the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Grevatt 2016: 394). In the 20th century, many of Eckhart's key ideas, and the concepts of "being" and "releasement", in particular, were taken up by Martin Heidegger (Schurmann 1973: 111; Williams 2017: 161). In roughly the same period, Georges Bataille engaged with a range of sources from the Christian mystical tradition (including both Eckhart and Porete) to explore the concepts of kenosis, detachment, and the relationship between representation and the experience of the divine (Dubilet 2018: 149-150, 162-163). In psychoanalysis, Carl Jung also engaged extensively with Eckhart's ideas relating to "the breakthrough" and the relationship between the human and the divine in the first half of the 20th century (Dourley 2011).

In terms of my own engagement with Eckhart and Porete, where Heidegger engages in a broadly political theological secularisation of Eckhart's theological concepts, I am more interested in the specifically religious, and affective dimensions of Eckhart's and Porete's thought. While Bataille is much more interested in the experiential dimensions of Eckhart's and Porete's mysticism than Heidegger, his atheological mysticism lacks a clear ethical orientation and, in some instances, is profoundly unethical in its instrumentalization of the suffering of the other in the pursuit of ecstatic experience (Hollywood 2002: 276), and this is fundamentally in conflict with anarchism's ethical commitment to the consonance of means and ends. From a mystical perspective, it also makes it difficult to understand how the techniques Bataille describes to induce "inner experience" can lead to the emergence of the (divine) love that mysticism has as its end. The central problem with Jung's appropriation of Eckhart is that it entails a disavowal of one of the most fundamental intuitions of Freud, Lacan, and, on my reading, Eckhart and Porete, relating to the constitutive lack through which the subject is formed (Bar Nes 2022: 41; Gullatz 2010: 693). This leads Jung to understand the individual's mystical unicity with the divine in terms of a developmental process leading to the

awareness of the ego's intrinsic divinity (Bar Nes 2022: 41; Gullatz 2010: 693, 705). Consequently, Jung's appropriation of Eckhart represents a psycho-spiritual approach based on the strengthening of the ego, through the individual's mystical encounter with its 'deeper self,' that, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter is wholly incompatible with Eckhart's and Porete's ontological and metaphysical conceptualisations of the relationship between the human and the divine in terms of the annihilation of the soul or self.

My own engagement with Eckhart and Porete will focus on the anarchist reception of their ideas by Gustav Landauer in the early 20th century and, more latterly, Simon Critchley. Landauer's (1983 [1911]; 2010) political theological transposition of Eckhart's mysticism into the field of revolutionary politics in the early nineteenth century draws on the Eckhartian / Poretean concept of the annihilation of the self to argue for the importance of "killing yourself, not others" to the revolutionary transformation of society. Raoul Vaneigem (1986) and, more recently, Simon Critchley (2012), have also engaged with the Movement of the Free Spirt with which both Eckhart and Porete were, to different extents, associated, from broadly post-anarchist perspectives. (Post-)Anarchism helps give Eckhart and Porete an explicitly political, and more specifically, anti-authoritarian orientation, and its for this reason that I will focus on this body of literature in the following chapter. From an analytical perspective, my thesis draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis rather than on Jung because Lacan provides a conceptual framework that is more theoretically compatible with, and better able to elucidate the roles of desire, will, and subjectivity in mystical experience than Jung's ego-centric 'depth psychology' is able to do.

Mysticism, as Eckhart (1994) and Porete (1993) understand it, describes the experience of the temporary annihilation of the soul. My argument will be that mysticism can contribute to a post-anarchist theopolitics in the following ways. First, the process of annihilation can temporarily undo the dominant modes of subjectivity through which the hegemony of the

contemporary capitalist state is maintained and provide the opportunity for alternative modes of mystical subjectivity to emerge. At the same time, the annihilation of the soul (or subject) is able to facilitate a partial evasion of the phallic economy of desire through its replacement with an economy of divine love. Mysticism therefore offers an effective means of undoing the libidinal hold that the contemporary capitalist state has over its subjects by bringing the subject to an awareness of the impossibility of the satisfaction of its desire and by pointing to the possibilities of an alternative economy derived from the immanence and objectlessness of divine love. On an ethical level, the divine love that emerges in the soul's annihilation has the potential to produce mystical subjects who are directed by the immanence of divine love. The proliferation of this mystical subjectivity can, in turn, contribute to the creation of an alternative Symbolic order that can produce anarchistic socio-political relationships and institutions derived from the mystical experience of divine love and oriented around the principles of non-domination, equality, and liberty.

The mystical post-anarchism I will be arguing for in this thesis will therefore contribute to the existing literature on both anarchist political theology and mystical anarchism in the following ways. In contrast to Landauer's and Critchley's political theological engagements with mystical anarchism, it will take mysticism seriously, on its own terms, as a central site of and resource for political struggle. In doing so, it will provide a demonstration of the political potential of mysticism that can help to overcome the residual authoritarianism inherent to Buber's theopolitical account of divine sovereignty. Finally, by drawing on post-anarchist theory, it will also offer a more appropriate response to the operation of contemporary forms of domination and control than Landauer's and Buber's mystical anarchisms are able to do.

The final strand of theory that the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I am arguing for draws on is post-anarchism. Post-anarchism represents a relatively new intervention into anarchist theory and politics. The term 'post-anarchism' was coined by Hakim Bey (1991) in

The Temporary Autonomous Zone and developed, in different ways, most notably, by Todd May (1994) in *The Political Philosophy of Post-structuralist Anarchism*, Lewis Call (2002) in *Postmodern Anarchism,* Richard J. F. Day (2005) in *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* and, more latterly, through Saul Newman's elaboration of "Postanarchism" (2010, 2016). Post-anarchism has been theorized and interpreted in several different ways. Franks, for example, outlines three types of post-anarchism: a *Post*-anarchism that rejects traditional anarchism and draws on post-structuralism to propose critical approaches and political tactics not found within the anarchist canon; a post-*anarchism* that sees traditional anarchism as inadequate for the contemporary political milieu and seeks to draw from post-structural theory "to enrich and enliven" it; and a postmodern anarchism that draws on anarchism to analyse the contemporary, globalized political economy and to understand the actions and possibilities of oppressed groups and movements (2011: 170). My own approach to post-anarchism contains elements of both the second and the third of the approaches Franks describes. In doing so, it will attempt, like most contemporary versions of post-anarchism, to combine the most useful aspects of traditional anarchist theory (and its ethical assumptions, in particular) with more recent developments in post-structuralist and post-modern thought (Rousselle 2012: 18).

The post-anarchist dimensions of the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I am arguing for will contribute to my thesis in two ways. First, it will enable me to draw on poststructuralist (and, more specifically, Lacanian) theory to provide a post-anarchist reading of Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies that is able to offer a more sophisticated account of the nature of subjectivity and the operation of desire than either mysticism or Lacanian psychoanalysis can do on their own. The concepts of subjectivity and desire have played a central role in revolutionary and post-revolutionary politics since the late 1960s. In this period, the consensual psychoanalytical view of the necessity for the repression of desire as a means of maintaining

the social order was broken, with key theoretical figures like Marcuse, Laing, Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari arguing that Freud's Oedipus complex simply represented a means of maintaining patriarchal authority (Featherstone 2020: 404). During the events of May 1968 in Paris and what followed, groups like the Situationist International and the March 22nd Movement, largely inspired by this theoretical current, asserted that it was desire that must be placed at the centre of any process of political and social transformation (Bourg 2017: 109). Deleuze and Guattari's (2013) "Schizo-analysis" represents one of the most sophisticated attempts from within post-structuralism to re-theorize desire and its relation to the socio-political. Deleuze and Guattari rejected traditional Western conceptualisations of desire as lack to argue for an understanding of desire as an immanent, productive force that only becomes incorporated into the logic of law, castration, and drive through its canalization into the Oedipal machine of the patriarchal, capitalist state" (Bourg 2017: 111-113; Lazzarato 2017: 56). One of the central problems with Deleuze and Guattari's approach to desire is that, in its call for the radical deterritorialization of desire, it ignores the fact that capitalism is actively engaged in the same loosening of the disciplinary codification of desire and liberation of its flows that Deleuze and Guattari call for, and that it is precisely this process that it understands as the basis for social production (Esposito 2015: 194). Consequently, while Deleuze and Guattari are able to offer a convincing account of capitalism's appropriation of desire, their valorisation of desire as the free flow of libido leaves desire itself largely unproblematised (McGowan 2016: 48-49). This means that they fail to account for the constitutively representational character of both desire and the drive, and the fact that it is precisely in the repetition of the desiring subject's failed attempt to attain the impossible, Real jouissance it aims at that the drive finds satisfaction (Zizek 2012: xi-xii). The mystical theologies of Eckhart and Porete are especially well-equipped both to identify the shortcomings of Deleuze and Guattari's continued participation in the logic of desire, and to respond to it. From a mystical perspective, it is precisely through

the annihilation of desire, rather than its radical deterritorialization, that the joy Deleuze and Guattari associate with desiring-production can be attained.

The second way in which post-anarchism will contribute to my thesis is in providing an account of revolution both as uprising, or insurrection (Newman 2016) and a process of structural renewal (Day 2005) with which to align the mystical theopolitics I am arguing for that is better able to account for the operation of power and authority in the contemporary capitalist state than more traditional anarchist conceptualisations of revolution, and that is better able to avoid the reproduction of transcendent forms of authority than contemporary Marxist, post-Marxist, and autonomist approaches. Post-anarchist theory will therefore enable my mystical post-anarchist theopolitics to explore the role that mysticism can play in undoing neoliberal forms of subjectivity and desire and in producing anarchistic alternatives to them as part of the post-anarchist insurrection and the project of structural renewal.

Chapter Summary

I will end this introduction by summarising what I will be arguing in each of the following chapters.

Chapter One: In the first chapter, I will be arguing for a primarily theological, as opposed to political, approach to anarchist political theology. In doing so, I will argue that, while Buber's (2016 [1949]) theopolitics offers some important clues as to how religious and theological concepts might contribute to the construction of alternative, anarchistic forms of political and social life, it is predicated on a conception of divine sovereignty that is inherently authoritarian. I will argue that, in view of this, it is necessary to move beyond Buber's critique of political and religious authority by turning to the movement of the free spirit and the mystical theologies of Marguerite Porete and Meister Eckhart. I make the further argument that recent anarchist engagements with the movement (by Simon Critchley [2012], most notably) fail to

engage seriously with the potential of mystical experience to provide spiritual and ethical direction to the pursuit of anarchistic forms of collective life. Where Critchley (2012) decides, ultimately, to reject mysticism as a basis for his political theological project, I will be arguing for its placement right at the heart of a post-anarchist theopolitics.

The second major argument I make in this chapter is that, in the context of a globalised, neoliberal world order, any attempts to construct radical alternatives to either capitalism or the state must, necessarily, entail the radical refusal and transformation of the dominant modes of social life through which they are sustained. A contemporary anarchist theopolitics is therefore also, necessarily, a revolutionary project if it has any ambition to bring about the forms of political community it argues for. This being the case, the claim I want to make is that the mystical post-anarchism I am arguing for should also be understood as operating within the broad framework of anarchist understandings of the social revolution as structural renewal (Day 2005) and, more specifically, as part of the post-anarchist insurrection of the self (Newman 2016).

Chapter Two: The focus of Chapter Two moves on to the more specific problem of sovereignty. My aim, in this chapter, is to develop a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics based on a sovereignty of the Godhead (Porete 1993: 158). It will be my contention that a sovereignty of the Godhead can avoid the problem of authoritarianism and the hierarchical relationship between the sovereign and the political community that autocratic, liberal, and Marxist approaches to sovereignty function to produce. To make this argument, I engage, primarily, with the work of Meister Eckhart. In doing so, however, I suggest that while Eckhart (1994) can be seen to make important strides in avoiding the authoritarian implications of Buber's (2016 [1949]) conceptualisation of divine sovereignty without resorting to Landauer's (1978 [1911]; 2010) political theological secularisation of the experience of divine immanence, some problems persist with his reliance on a Trinitarian conceptualisation of divinity.

This leads me to argue for a sovereignty of the Godhead, derived from the radicalisation of the immanent dimensions of Eckhart's (1994) account of divinity, in which divine sovereignty resides in the immanence of the Godhead in the soul's ground (or what I refer to, in Lacanian terms, as the God of the Real) rather than the transcendence of the anthropomorphic, Trinitarian God (or the God of the Symbolic). I make the further argument that the transposition of the sovereignty of the Godhead onto the political sphere leads to a conception of political sovereignty in which sovereignty is diffused throughout the political community instead of residing in the transcendence of the sovereign individual or state. My final claim, in this chapter, is that a sovereignty of the Godhead therefore tends towards a form of political community based on the principles of anarcho-communism and a form of consensus-based, direct democracy.

Chapter Three: My focus, in Chapter Three, moves to the post-anarchist insurrection of the self (Newman 2016) and the role that a mystical approach to post-anarchism can play in the production of the mystical subjectivities through which it might be possible to institute the sovereignty of the Godhead (Porete 1993: 158) I argue for in Chapter Two. I draw on Lacan's account of the operation of desire and Eckhart's and Porete's conceptualisations of detachment (Eckhart 1994: 61), releasement (Schurmann 2001: 82), true poverty (Eckhart 1994: 207), and the annihilation of the soul (Porete 1993: 218) to argue for an ethics of annihilation that can contribute to the post-anarchist project of structural renewal (Day 2005) in the following ways. I will argue that, first, it can contribute to the insurrection of the self (Newman 2016) by providing a means through which the subject might detach itself from the particular objects in which the contemporary capitalist state encourages the subject to invest its desire, and beyond this, to become released (albeit temporarily) from the logic of phallic jouissance (Lacan 1999: 111) through which the contemporary capitalist state operates. I will go on to argue that an ethics of annihilation can make the further contribution of orienting the mystical subject

towards their detachment not only from the patriarchal Symbolic and its libidinal investments in the contemporary capitalist state, but also, more radically, towards its releasement from the phallic economy and the pursuit of a politics of fantasy (Dean 2009) in which political contestation corresponds with the pursuit of an impossible lost jouissance. I will then argue that the final contribution an ethics of annihilation can make comes from the foundation it can provide for an alternative libidinal economy, based on the subject's pursuit of its releasement from desire, that can contribute to the production of anarchistic forms of political community oriented around the sovereignty of the Godhead.

Chapter Four: The final chapter explores the role that a mystical post-anarchism can play in the reconfiguration of the Symbolic order, and the role that a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic can play in the production of prefigurative, anarchistic forms of political community. In this chapter, my focus moves from the discussion of mystical subjectivity to the relationship between the subject and the Symbolic order. My argument is that the production of mystical subjectivity can not only facilitate the subject's detachment from the existing patriarchal Symbolic order through which the contemporary capitalist state operates, but that, through the proliferation of mystical subjects, it becomes possible to produce an alternative, mystical post-anarchist Symbolic that might, eventually, prove capable of challenging the hegemony of the patriarchal Symbolic through which the authority of the contemporary capitalist state is sustained, and through which contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty are exercised.

I go on to suggest that the placement of the Godhead (Eckhart 1994) as master signifier for the political community can perform a uniquely apophatic role that can contribute towards the production of alternative, mystical post-anarchist political communities as part of the post-anarchist project of structural renewal. My claim is that, in orienting the community towards the God of the Real, the Godhead aims at its own deconstruction, as a signifier, and, through

this, the deconstruction of the Symbolic, more broadly. It therefore points to the constitutive lack at the heart of both the subject and the Symbolic, and to the Real of the divine as eternal being that the mediation of the signifier occludes. I make the further argument that the placement of the Godhead as master signifier for the political community also has important implications for the process of subject formation (or what Lacan [1999] describes as sexuation). I suggest that the process of subjectification the Godhead, as master signifier, orients the mystical post-anarchist subject towards can be understood as a form of spiritual praxis that actively explores and challenges the limits of the subject's and the community's castration (Lacan 2007: 123) and their relation to the Real through the (temporary) evasion of the Symbolic law (Lacan 1999: 35) (in its linguistic dimension) and the annihilation of the soul / subject in divine love. I suggest that, on a libidinal level, this means that (as I began to argue in Chapter Three) the mystical post-anarchist political community operates through an economy of divine love that, in aiming towards the subject's releasement from the economy of phallic jouissance, is directed by the objectlessness of divine love. I conclude by exploring some of the implications of the placement of the Godhead as master signifier for the constitution of the political community in terms of the relationship between mystical and non-mystical subjects, and between annihilated and non-annihilated souls.

Conclusion: I conclude the thesis first with a summary of the main arguments in each of my chapters. I then provide an explanation of how my thesis has contributed to the existing literature on anarchist political theory and contemporary anarchist and non-anarchist approaches to revolution. I then end the thesis with some suggestions for how the mystical post-anarchism I have been arguing for can be used to respond to some further political and political theoretical problems that are outside of this thesis's scope, and for how a mystical post-anarchism can be further developed as both a theoretical framework and a broader research agenda.

<u>Chapter One</u>

Anarchism, Theo-politics, and Revolution

In the introduction I outlined some of the ways in which domination and control, in their varying and intersecting forms, are exercised in contemporary capitalist societies. In doing so, I argued that the problem of sovereignty lies at the heart of any understanding of how domination and control are exercised and that this is fundamentally a problem that should be understood in political theological terms. The focus of this chapter will be on some of the ways in which religion, political theology, and theo-politics can challenge and contribute to the construction of non-authoritarian alternatives to the forms of political and economic sovereignty on which contemporary capitalist societies are based. Its main purpose is to situate the specific concerns and aims of my thesis within the broader literature(s) on political theology, sovereignty, and revolutionary change. In doing this, I will be arguing for a specifically theological, as opposed to political theological, approach to anarchism as a means of elaborating a mystical post-anarchism based on the principles of non-domination, egalitarianism, and liberty. In making this argument, my claim will be that, by engaging with the mysticism of the movement of the free spirit, it is possible to begin to find a way past the implicit and explicit authoritarianism not only of contemporary liberal and Marxist conceptualisations of political sovereignty, but of Buber's (2016 [1949]) conception of the anarcho-theocracy. I will make the further argument that, in the context of a globalised, neoliberal world economy that actively seeks to subject ever greater areas of social life to the rationalities of the market and to either co-opt or suppress any alternatives to it, any contemporary anarchist theo-politics must also be a revolutionary political project. This being the case, the claim I will therefore make is that the mystical post-anarchism I am arguing for must, necessarily, be situated within the broader framework of the anarchist social revolution and, more specifically, the post-anarchist uprising, or insurrection.

42

Anarchism, Religion and Radical Theology

My focus, in this chapter, is on the potential of anarchist approaches to religion to resist contemporary forms of neo-liberal rule and to provide a theo-political response to the problem of political theology I outlined in the Introduction. My focus is on anarchism because it offers a more wide-ranging analysis and critique of power in all its intersecting forms than any other political tradition. This focus will enable the post-anarchist theo-politics I sketch out in this chapter to develop the libertarian dimensions of theological responses to contemporary forms of domination and control while, at the same time, offering a more explicitly anti-authoritarian dimension to both the critiques and counter-projects of existing radical or liberation theologies that have emerged out of more liberal or Marxist frameworks.

Despite the comprehensive critiques of religion that anarchists like Bakunin (1970 [1916]: 24), Kropotkin (2014) and Stirner (2014 [1844]) have offered, not all anarchists reject religion out of hand. Marshall, for example, notes that anarchism is not inherently atheistic and that, for anarchists, religion itself is not inherently authoritarian and hierarchical; it only tends to become so through its institutionalisation (2011: xiv-xv; xx). Marshall suggests that, for many anarchists, the basic messages of key religious figures such as Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed resonate strongly with anarchism in their emphasis on living a simple life, sharing the earth's resources, and treating each other with love and respect (2011: xx).

Religious forms of anarchism have been traced as far back as Chuang Tzu in the second century BC (see Bey 1991: 52; Marshall 2011: xix). According to Marshall, Daoism's anarchism is evident, primarily, in its belief in the underlying unity and equality of all things and beings, and in the right of these beings to pursue their own destiny (2011: xix). In terms of its historical contributions to revolutionary struggle, Bey points to the Yellow Turbans' insurrection against the Han dynasty at the turn of the third century and the collaboration of the

Tongs with anarchists during the 1911 revolution (1996: 84). Marshall argues that an affinity can also be found between Hinduism and anarchism in that, in contrast to mainstream versions of Christianity and Islam, Hinduism has no room for a supreme God, stresses the divine nature of the unique individual, and encourages personal autonomy (2011: xviii-xix). An obvious example of Hindu anarchism's practical interventions into revolutionary politics can be seen in Mahatma Gandhi's synthesis of Hinduism with Tolstoy's pacifist approach to Christian anarchism.

Similarly, Buddhist anarchism, as Galvan-Alavarez identifies, emerged as a response to colonial domination in Korea, to industrialization, war, and the totalitarian state in Japan, and to the various authoritarian regimes that followed the fall of the Qing dynasty in China (2017: 79). More recently, Gary Snyder (1961), Kerry Thornley (1991), and Max Cafard (2006) have engaged with Buddhist anarchist thought, on a theoretical level, to explore the intersections between Zen Buddhism and anarchism in terms of their shared rejection of all fixed "*arches*", principles, or transcendent sources of truth and reality, as well as the relationship between the (no)self and collective life.

Anarchist approaches to Judaism include the "anarcho-zionism" of Gersholm Scholem (1995 [1961]) and the kibbutz movement; Martin Buber's (2016 [1949]) anarcho-theocracy; and Scholem's (1995 [1961]) and Buber's (2016 [1958]) anarchistic readings of the Jewish mystical tradition.

Christian forms of anarchism can be traced back at least as far as the millenarian Joachimites and the Movement of the Free Spirit in the Middle Ages, and can also be identified in later groups like the Diggers, the Quakers and the Ranters, who all practiced antinomian and / or mystical forms of Christianity that were deeply anarchistic in their absolute rejection of external authority and practice of egalitarian and communist forms of social life (Bey 1996: 80; Foucault 2007; Marshall 2011: xv-xvi). In the nineteenth century, Leo Tolstoy's ([1894]

2006) *The Kingdom of God is Within You* argued that the text of the Christian Bible represents a form of anarchism, as did Jacques Ellul's ([1948]1989; 1991) biblical exegeses in the latter part of the twentieth century. At the same time, intentional, or prefigurative communities, largely inspired by Tolstoy's message, also emerged in Russia and elsewhere in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Maltz 2011). Similar anarchistic communities, such as Dorothy Day's Catholic Workers' Movement, have also been active in the US and elsewhere from between the first and second world wars to the present day (Pauli 2017).

Anarchist-leaning groups have also been present throughout Islam's history. During the period of Islam's inception, the Berbers and the Bedouin both practiced forms of tribal anarchy, while, in the ninth century, the Najdiyya and members of the Kharijites challenged the theocratic tendencies of the imamate in their wholesale rejection of hierarchical forms of governance (Marshall 2011: xviii). In parallel with the Christian movements of the Middle Ages and early modern period, dervish groups such as the Qalandars and Haydaris practiced mystical forms of Islam in which all authority was rejected other than that of God (Karamustafa 1994). The more mainstream Sufi branch of mystical Islam has also advocated libertarian and egalitarian forms of Islam, along with universal love and tolerance (Marshall 2011: xviii). In terms of concrete political struggles, it is possible to point to the Nasqushbandi Sufi Order's continued struggle against Russian imperialism in Chechnya (Bey 1996: 77). More recently, Bey (1991; 1994; 1996) has engaged with the anarchist dimensions of heretical Islam, while Michael Muhammad Knight (2013) has explored the spiritual potential of Islam and psychedelia within anarchistic communities.

I will be engaging, in the following chapters, with approaches to religious anarchism that focus on the experiential (and, primarily, mystical) dimensions of religion. More specifically, I will be engaging with the mystical and spiritual anarchisms elaborated by Gustav Landauer, Martin Buber, and Simon Critchley and others' accounts of the Movement of the Free Spirit,

as these represent some of most theoretically developed examples of mystical approaches to anarchism. The main benefit of these approaches is that, in their focus on the spiritual dimensions of human relationships and socio-political life, they are particularly well-attuned to the ways in which power operates at the micro-political level. This means that they can offer some crucial resources with which to escape the political theological trap of sovereignty and contribute to the transformation of individual and collective subjectivities and forms of social life required to create anarchistic alternatives to the contemporary capitalist state.

Gustav Landauer's Spiritual Anarchism

In Gustav Landauer's spiritual approach to anarchism it is the political, rather than the theological side of political theology that takes precedence. This political theological focus is apparent in his rejection of forms of spirituality derived from the Judeo-Christian belief in a transcendent God of creation. This can be seen in Landauer's dismissal of the basic assumptions of Christian soteriology and eschatology and their claims that God gave his Son to redeem the world from sin, which he describes as "misunderstood remnants of a symbolism that once made sense, remnants that are now taken literally and held up for belief down to the last dot and letter and miraculous tale" (2010: 39). The spirit that now animates this belief is, in Landauer's view, nothing but "unspirit" and, as such, "has nothing to do with either truth or life" (2010: 39). In contrast to the 'unspirit' of the transcendent, Christian God, Landauer asserts that "everything that exists, exists for itself," "there are … no transcendent principles, for us anymore," and that "past, present and future … are only a unique / unified eternal stream that flows from the infinite to the infinite. There is neither a cause for nor an effect of this world," which means that "we only know immanent life, only present forces" (2010: 99-104). In rejecting the Judeo-Christian tradition as a foundation for a spiritual approach to anarchism, Landauer draws on the Christian neo-Platonic tradition to conceive of spirit as a "splendid

redemptive One and Universal Idea" that animates all "true thought" and "true life" (Landauer 1978: 53). According to Landauer, this spirit "gives meaning and sacredness to life," and "permeates the present with joy, strength and delight" (1978: 35). It creates "coexistence and community" in the present while, at the same time, it is the expression of "a longing for the future, for something better and unknown" (Landauer 1978: 35, 53).

In place of the religions of the Jewish and Christian faiths, Landauer argues that it is necessary to institute a new, secularized, socialist religion that he describes as "a religion of action, life, love, that makes men happy, redeems them and overcomes impossible situations" (2010: 26). Spirit plays a central role in Landauer's understanding of the new socialist religion and the anarchist societies to which it leads. This is evident in his assertions that "where spirit is, there is society. Where unspirit is, there is the state," because "the state is the surrogate for spirit," and that, "where there is no spirit and no inner compulsion, there is external force, regimentation, the state," and "the centralism of command and discipline" (Landauer 1978: 42-43). This can be seen, he suggests, in the external organization of the church and the state, whose coercive, hierarchical structures cause the spirit to decline, severing the connections it makes between individuals, and forcing it to withdraw into inwardly strong individuals (Landauer 2010: 260).

Landauer argues that, in contrast to unspirit, spirit is "something that dwells equally in the hearts and animated bodies of all individuals" (1978: 43). Consequently, anarchism, for Landauer, "is first and foremost a movement of spirit" that can only emerge from within the individual and his or her community (1978: 43). Landauer understands this spirit, primarily, as "the spirit of freedom and voluntary union" and envisages it as being something that "will act directly," and "create its visible forms out of living flesh and blood" (1978: 102-103; 2010: 216). This means that Landauer's socialist religion relies on the presence and activity of "people of spirit", who strive to create new forms of community based on a spirit of "love and

creating communality" that can overcome "the rigid structures and institutions created by hatred, lack of spirit, and meanness" (Landauer 2010: 118).

Landauer locates the inspiration for his communities of spirit in the Mosaic social order. For Landauer, the most important thing to take from the Mosaic period is the principle of a "rule and transformation by the spirit" (1978: 130) which, he suggests, creates a form of community that is unparalleled in subsequent history. The closest approximations to it, in his view, can be found in the Greek golden age and the Christian middle ages, where the spirit of community was manifested in "the society of societies," based on the interlinkage of multiple, stratified, communities, associations, and groups all springing from a common spirit (Landauer 1978: 34-35). Landauer stresses, however, that, as important as spirit might be to his conceptualisation of anarchism as the construction of new human relationships and forms of community, it is crucial that the temptation "to squint backwards towards a past that cannot be brought back" is resisted (1978: 101-102). In terms of the communities of spirit he sees emerging from his new socialist religion, Landauer therefore stresses that the precise contours of any new society, or society of societies, cannot be anticipated (1978: 130). Instead, he suggests that the common spirit he identifies in previous golden eras will take the form of a "spirit of mutuality" that creates for itself the forms and structures required to facilitate models of ownership without private property, secure forms of work without exploitation and means of exchange centred on trade rather than accumulation, and ensures the satisfaction of people's needs as both producers and consumers (Landauer 1978: 130, 215-216).

Landauer's spiritual anarchism offers an important illustration of the role that spirit can play in the formation of political communities. In conceptualising spirit as immanent to human relationships, Landauer also offers an important resource for understanding how an anarchist conception of political community might succeed in avoiding the constraints on freedom imposed by appeals to the transcendent sources of authority on which the authoritarian, liberal

and Marxist states are all founded. It also offers some important clues as to the role that a spiritual approach to anarchism might play in resisting and creating alternatives to neoliberal governmentality and the contemporary capitalist state.

However, the key problem with Landauer's approach to spirituality, in terms of the version of spiritual anarchism I want to argue for, is that, as a consequence of the process of desacralization it undergoes as part of its secular reimagining, it jettisons the most radically transformative part of the Judeo-Christian spiritual tradition (in its mystical iterations): its conceptualisation of the divine as a particular form of experience and mode of being outside of the framework of subjectivity. While I am in agreement with Landauer as regards the problematic nature of Judeo-Christian conceptualisations of a transcendent, monotheistic, creator God as a foundation for sovereignty, where I depart from him is in his assumption that it is necessary to reject Judeo-Christian conceptualisations of spirit as well. I will therefore be arguing, in the following sections, for the utilisation of a more explicitly theological and, more specifically, mystical, conceptualisation of spirit as the basis for a spiritual approach to anarchism. To do this, I will turn, first of all, to Martin Buber's theo-political approach to spiritual anarchism.

From Political Theology to Theopolitics

Where Landauer argues for a broadly political theological approach to spiritual anarchism in which spirituality is effectively secularized and desacralized, Martin Buber's spiritual anarchism, in contrast, takes the form of an anarchist theopolitics that argues for the political value of an explicitly theological understanding of spirituality. Buber's anarchist theopolitics was conceived, at least in part, as a response to Carl Schmitt's conservative account of political theology (Brody 2018: 3). As Brody argues, this means that, for Buber, theopolitics is intended to function as "a deep *inversion* of 'political theology'" and, as such, should be understood as

"a conceptual attack on Schmitt and what he stands for" (Brody 2018: 3). Buber's interest in Schmitt's political theology comes, primarily, from their shared concern and interest in the events of the Bavarian Revolution in 1918. One of the central problems the revolution functioned to crystallise, for both Schmitt and Buber, related to the relationship between anarchism and the kingdom, or kingship, of God (Brody 2018: 66-67). In Schmitt's view, the threat of anarchy the revolution represented should be countered through the assimilation of the kingdom of God to the political in a secularized theology that functions to legitimate secular politics and the authority of the sovereign through his power to decide on the exception (2006 [1934]). As Brody notes, Buber, in contrast, argues for the assimilation of the political to the theo-political kingship of God (Brody 2018: 66-67). Brody summarises the difference between these two approaches in the following terms: "if political theology deploys the power of the divine to serve the authoritarian state, then theopolitics denies any possibility of permanently legitimizing institutional human power" (2018: 54). This means that "if political theology borders on the fascistic, then theopolitics is its anarchistic antipode" (Brody 2018: 54).

Anarcho-Theocracy

Where Schmitt makes use of the figures of God and the messiah to legitimate the secularized, sovereign state, Buber's theopolitics leads him to argue for an anarcho-theocracy based on the direct rulership of God. Buber arrives at this position through an anarchist reading of key biblical passages relating to both divine and secular kingship. This reading leads him to contend that there is a strong, anarcho-theocratic tendency running throughout Jewish history (Buber 2016 [1949]). As Brody notes, Buber presents this anarcho-theocratic strand of Judaism as being involved in "a kind of transhistorical spiritual conflict" with a more secularised, authoritarian, and idolatrous political theological approach to the kingship of God (Brody 2018: 81). Buber characterises Judaism's authoritarian, political theological tendency as being

derived from the conviction that, for God's rule to be realised, it is necessary for the community to be subject to it at all times. For this to happen, it is necessary for God to have human representation in the form of a 'judge' or a 'king', who has authority of the whole political realm, rather than the purely spiritual realm to which the priest is restricted (2016 [1949]: 189-190). According to Buber, the institution of the judges becomes formalised when the people come to identify the concept of divine representation solely with the judges as a dynastic, state order (2016 [1949]: 189-190). Buber argues that the continuation of this dynastic order implied a continuity of the judges' responsibility to fulfil their commission as representatives of God. In contrast to the judges, the kings, according to Buber, tended "to sublimate the commission into a divine right without any obligation," assuming upon themselves the position of "sons of the deity" invested with the deity's full power (2016 [1949]: 189-190). Buber argues that the kings' assumption of hereditary power functioned to usher in a new era of "theopolitical realism" in which the prophet came to assume the role of "bearer of YHVH's word" (2016 [1949]: 189-190). This was a position that had no formal power but through which the prophet was tasked, nevertheless, to call the kings to account (Buber 2016 [1949]: 189-190).

Buber goes on to argue that, while, in contrast to the political theological tendency, the anarcho-theocratic tendency is never hegemonic and, in fact, only rarely predominates, it can be identified as early as the pre-state times of tribal Israel and persists well into the monarchical period (2016 [1949]). Buber (2016 [1949]) argues that this can be seen in the transfer of nomadic virtues relating to egalitarianism and the rejection of hierarchy to the settlement, and, with it, the principle of the direct rule of an invisible king who maintains order while the people live anarchistically. As Brody notes, for Buber, this tendency toward an anarcho-theocracy derived from the direct rule of God manifests itself in two ways (Brody 2018: 87). First, in the community's choice of a non-dynastic, charismatic leader who it recognizes as being the temporary vehicle of the divine spirit. (As examples of this, Buber (2016 [1949]) points to

Moses, Joshua and the Judges). Second, in the interregnum between the death of one charismatic leader and the rise of another, in which Israel has neither a human nor an institutional intermediary for YHVH's rule. The clearest expression of the anarcho-theocratic moment can, according to Brody, be seen in Gideon's rejection of the principle of hereditary monarchy when he refuses the kingship that is offered to him (2018: 105-106).

In terms of Buber's response to Schmitt, this means that, as Brody identifies, Buber's anarcho-theocracy aims, in direct contrast to Schmitt's political theological attempt to institutionalize the charismatic authority of the secular sovereign, to ensure that secular forms of sovereignty are never able to gain permanency, with the exercise of sovereignty being contingent, instead, on the sovereign's ability to provide proof of God's authorisation through the performance of specific deeds (Brody 2018: 71). This means that where, in Schmitt's political theology, the divine is put to the service of the authoritarian state, in Buber's anarcho-theocracy, institutional forms of both secular and spiritual power are actively de-legitimized as a means of ensuring the continuation of God's direct rule over the community (Brody 2018:4). Like Schmitt's political theology, Buber's anarcho-theocracy therefore asserts that it is necessary for God's authority to be mediated through earthly representation. However, in contrast to political theology's advocacy of a hierarchical system in which the sovereign assumes the temporal authority of God, Buber's anarcho-theocracy requires that the role of God's representative is to act solely as a vehicle through which God may intervene in the affairs of the community.

Where Landauer's political theological approach to spiritual anarchism offers a useful illustration of the potential role that secular forms of spirituality might play in anarchist political communities, Buber's endorsement of anarcho-theocracy helps to demonstrate the role that an explicitly theological form of spirituality can play in these same communities. In arguing, through his account of the interregnum between leaders, for an anarcho-theocracy

based on the direct rule of God without the mediation of the state, the priesthood, and their institutions, Buber succeeds in providing a vision of political community in which the authoritarian structures and functions of both the Church and the State are bypassed. As such, Buber's understanding of the role of the non-dynastic judge or prophet as a direct vehicle for the word of God also differs significantly from Schmitt's understanding of the sovereign as an autonomous power invested with God's full authority, which he may exercise entirely at his own discretion through the power of the decision. However, Buber's conceptualisation of the anarcho-theocracy remains trapped within the authoritarian paradigm of sovereignty to the extent that it is grounded in the authority of a transcendent, personalised deity who exercises direct power over the world through his chosen intermediaries. As such, it is able to do no more, ultimately, than to replace the authority of the transcendent state (whether this be theocratic, monarchical, or juridical) with a return to an equally authoritarian deity on whom the fate of the political community depends.

Hasidism, God, and the Ontology of Spirit

Buber's understanding of sovereignty derives from a conceptualisation of divinity that takes the form, primarily, of a personalised deity who stands in a relation of absolute transcendence to the world. The main problem with this, from an anarchist perspective, is that it means that, in the anarcho-theocracy, the individual finds him or herself in a relation of absolute subordination to a personalised God that requires total obedience to its will to secure a positive fate both for him or herself, and for the wider community. Consequently, the sovereignty of God functions, in effect, as a permanent bar to the attainment of freedom and autonomy from the transcendent authority of God. It is important to note, however, that in his more theological (rather than political theological) work (relating to Hasidism, in particular), Buber devotes a considerable amount of time to the discussion of God, in terms of the dialectic

of immanence and transcendence. In the following sections I will engage, in more detail, with Buber's understanding of divine metaphysics and the ontology of spirit, as a way of assessing how far it might be possible to elaborate an anarcho-theopolitics that is able to overcome the authoritarian implications of Buber's account of divine sovereignty by foregrounding the immanent dimensions of Buber's God.

According to Buber the teaching of Hasidism can be distilled into a single sentence: "God can be beheld in each thing and reached through each pure deed" (2016 [1958]: 17). Buber is keen to stress that this does not mean that Hasidism represents a form of pantheism, however. He argues, instead, that Hasidism teaches "the absolute transcendence of God, but as combined with his conditioned immanence" (Buber 2016 [1958]: 60-61). This means, he suggests, that the world irradiates from God and is "endowed with an independence of existence and striving", but amounts, ultimately, to no more than "a word out of the mouth of God" (Buber 2016 [1958]: 17, 60-61). The relationship between the created and the divine in Hasidism is encapsulated more clearly in its creation story. In summarising this story, Buber explains that, according to key Hasidic texts, God "has fallen into duality" through the act of creation (2016 [1958]: 40). This means that God has two parts: the essence of God, "Elohim", which is withdrawn from the created world; and the presence of God, "the Shekina", which "dwells in things, wandering, straying, scattered" (Buber 2016 [1958]: 40). This means that a "divine spark" lives in every earthly object and being. Each spark, however, is enclosed by "an isolating shell" which only humankind is capable of liberating so it may then be re-joined with the Elohim (Buber 2016 [1958]: 40). It is the task of each human being to help facilitate this redemption by bringing the Shekina back to its source through its service. This is done "by holding holy converse" with each object and being in the world (Buber 2016 [1958]: 60). In holding converse in this way, it is necessary for the intent of the individual to be directed towards God's transcendence so the divine immanence of each object or thing can emerge from

the exile of its shells. Only when the divine spark within each and every object and being in the world has been liberated will the created world have been redeemed and the Elohim and the Shekina reunited in eternity (Buber 2016 [1958]: 60-61).

Hasidism's conceptualisation of the Shekina has both a transcendent and an immanent dimension. It is transcendent in the sense that it represents a materialisation of God's essence, and it is immanent in the sense that the "divine sparks" through which it materialises itself are present in all objects and beings within the created world. Buber's conceptualisation of divinity diverges from the Hasidic understanding of the Shekina in its foregrounding of its transcendent dimension and emphasis on God's exteriority in his relation to humanity (2013 [1958]: 34, 94). This can be seen in Buber's claim that because God, at least in part, represents a transcendent, supernatural being, it is necessary to talk about God as a person. While he stresses that the conceptualisation of God as a personal being is not intended to capture the totality of God's being or essence, Buber maintains that it is only by making the conceptual move of personalising God that it is possible to understand how God is able to enter into "a direct relation" with the individual (2013 [1958]: 94). According to Buber, this relationship between God and the individual constitutes "a mutuality" that can only subsist between persons (2013 [1958]: 94). The specific function of this "Person God" is to make the human person capable of "meeting" both with God and with other persons and thereby enable each divine spark to free itself from its isolating shell (Buber 2013 [1958]: 95).

It is clear from this account of God that Buber understands God's immanence primarily in formal, ontological terms, as the part of the individual body, or soul, that maintains the connection between God's exteriority to the created world as 'Elohim' and presence within it as 'Shekina'. However, Buber's conceptualisation of the 'Person God' demonstrates that Buber also understands God, in more transcendent terms, as being present in the world as a separately existing entity that is radically distinct from the human person and is capable of entering into

direct relations with it. It is this transcendent dimension of God that is foregrounded in Buber's account of divine sovereignty in the anarcho-theocracy.

The Political Community, Spirit, and the Worlds of It *and* Thou

If Buber's account of the historical anarcho-theocracy clearly foregrounds the transcendent dimensions of God, in *I* and *Thou* Buber engages, much more fully, with the immanent dimensions of the divine and their theopolitical implications. In *I* and *Thou*, Buber's account of God's immanence is focussed on the individual experience of the divine. Buber's argument centres on the idea that it is possible to distinguish between a world of experience belonging to "the primary word *I-It*" and a world of relation belonging to "the primary word *I-Thou*" (Buber 2013 [1958: 5). According to Buber, while the world of *It* "is set in the context of space and time," the world of *Thou* is set, in contrast, "in the Centre, where the extended lines of relations meet" (2013 [1958]: 23, 69-70). This means that the world of *It* may be transformed into the world of *Thou* "by entering into the relational event" (Buber 2013 [1958]: 23). In moments of "full and complete relation" it is possible, Buber suggests, to experience "the full reality of the *Thou*" (2013 [1958]: 56). If the individual "goes out with his whole being to meet his *Thou* and carries to it all being that is in the world," he or she is able to achieve "full and complete relation" by entering into relation with God (Buber 2013 [1958]: 56). This "full and complete relation" can be understood in terms of the perceptual experience of "nothing beside God but everything in him." (Buber 2013 [1958]: 56, 71), in which the individual gazes and is gazed upon, knows and is known by, and loves and is loved by God in "the eternal *Thou*" (Buber 2013 [1958]: 56, 71). Buber stresses that, where the world of *It* can be transformed into the world of *Thou,* the world of *Thou*, in turn, must inevitably be transformed into the world of *It* once the relational event has run its course (2013 [1958]: 23). It is only by entering into relation that it is possible for the individual to gain "the freedom both of his being and of Being" and,

through this, to be capable of "decision" (Buber2013 [1958]): 36-37). Buber suggests that humanity has, however, proven itself, historically, to be much more inclined to turn the eternal *Thou* into *It* than to turn *It* into *Thou* (2013 [1958: 78]).

Buber is careful to distinguish between his account of the *I – Thou* relation and mysticism. The key difference between Buber's account of the individual's encounter with the eternal *Thou* and mysticism (as Buber understands it) centres on their divergent conceptions of the nature of God and the status of the relation between the human and the divine. In contrast to the mystical metaphysics of figures such as Meister Eckhart who, according to Buber, understand God, pantheistically, in terms of "Being," Buber insists that the ascription of personhood to God is indispensable to his understanding of God as "him who – whatever else he may be – enters into a direct relation with us men in creative, revealing and redeeming acts, and thus makes it possible for us to enter into a direct relation with him" (2013 [1958]: 94). This means that, in contrast to mystical accounts of the dissolution of subjectivity (or "the *I*"), the encounter between the individual and the eternal *Thou* is only possible through a relational act in which the *I* remains fully intact. The maintenance of a strict demarcation between the boundaries of the human person and the person God is therefore essential to Buber's understanding of the *I-Thou* relation (2013 [1958]: 55). This relational understanding of the encounter between the human and divine leads Buber to dismiss the experiences of divinity described by mystics as an illusion. According to Buber, the ecstatic state this refers to is actually "the enrapturing dynamic of relation", which is felt so forcibly that "the *I* and the *Thou*, between which it is established, are forgotten", rather than an experience of unity with the divine that actually "dissolves the *I* and *Thou*" (2013 [1958]: 61).

Buber's conceptualisation of the *I-Thou* relation plays a central role in his understanding of anarchism and political community. According to Buber, every great culture is founded on "an original relational incident" that takes of the forms of "an act of being made by the spirit"

(2013 [1958]: 38). This act is consolidated thorough the performance of similar spiritual acts in succeeding generations, and functions to create a community in which it is possible for both God and humankind to dwell. Buber stresses that such communities are only sustained, however, as long as there are "men of the spirit" who can enter into relation and perform these "act[s] of being" (2013 [1958]: 38).

There are clear resonances between this account of the role of spirit in the political community with that of Landauer's spiritual anarchism. However, in contrast to Landauer's secularized, socialist religion, Buber's understanding of spirit is explicitly theological. This can be seen in the connection Buber draws between spirit and the eternal *Thou*. According to Buber, "in times of healthy life" the spirit moves from the men of spirit who perform their community's founding, relational act, to all the people within the community, so that even the dullest among them gain full awareness of the *Thou* (2013 [1958]: 38). However, "in times of sickness," the world of *It* is no longer penetrated by the world of *Thou*, meaning that the community becomes spiritless and succumbs to the world of objects, causality, and "oppressive, stifling fate" (Buber 2013 [1958]: 38).

Buber understands the post-depression era in which he is writing as one such time of sickness. He insists, however, that the sickness of this age contains the conditions required for its transformation, in that it involves "a spiral descent through the spiritual underworld" that is, at the same time, an ascent, to the extent that it represents a movement towards "the break through": the point at which the descent into the spiritual underworld is complete, and the only thing that is possible is a spiritual re-birth (Buber 2013 [1958]: 39). As regards the nature of the political community he sees his own era's spiritual descent and re-birth eventually leading to, Buber follows Landauer in insisting that, rather than attempting a return to previous forms of egalitarian spiritual life, such as primitive agrarian communism or the corporate state of the

Christian Middle Ages, it is necessary to create a new form of spiritual community "out of the recalcitrant material of our own day in history" (Buber 1996 [1949]: 15).

To recapitulate the argument I have been making in this section: there is a tension between Buber's foregrounding of God's transcendence in his account of the anarcho-theocracy and his foregrounding of God's immanence in his account of the *I – Thou* relation. In his account of the historical anarcho-theocracy, divine immanence is reduced to the transcendent, personalised, creator God's presence in the world. Within this framework, specific individuals are made use of by a transcendent, Person God, in a largely instrumental way, as conduits through which to communicate the future consequences of the political community's decision to obey or disobey his will. This, in turn, leads to the production of an account of sovereignty in which God exercises absolute authority over the political community via his chosen intermediaries in the world. In his attempts to elaborate a more contemporary anarchist theo-politics, by contrast, God's immanence is given much greater prominence through Buber's focus on the role of the divine in the *I-Thou* relation between the individual and the external world. The main benefit of this approach is that it helps to demonstrate the potential of an explicitly theological understanding of 'spirit' as God's immanence in the world to play a central role in the foundation and reproduction of political community. It is able to this, primarily, as Buber demonstrates, through the creation of new social and ethical relations derived from the individual and collective experience of the divine. Like Landauer, Buber also helps to show how the exact nature of shape of a political community guided by spirit cannot be known in advance and must emerge from the specific material conditions in which they are embedded rather than through the attempt to return to a prior 'golden age'.

A Post-anarchist Critique of Buber's Anarcho-theocratic God

In spite of the greater focus on the immanent dimensions of the divine in Buber's account of the *I-Thou* relation, Buber maintains a strict distinction between the person God and the human person that stands in relation to him. From the perspective of the post-anarchist account of mystical subjectivity I will be setting out in the following chapters, this is problematic because it assumes an anthropomorphic understanding of God that is unsustainable in light both of the insights of psychoanalytical theory into the nature of the monotheistic God of Judaism, and anarchism's rejection of the hierarchical nature of the relation between God the person and the human person. The psychoanalytical critique of the monotheistic God of the Abrahamic religions builds, in large part, on Feuerbach's humanist critique of the anthropomorphic God. Feuerbach argues that God can be understood to represent an objective projection of the human being, or nature, "purified, freed from the limits of the individual man" (2008 [1881]: 12). This means that, "all predicates, all attributes of the Divine Being are fundamentally human through the personification of God," and that the human person therefore "consecrates the supernaturalness, immortality, independence, unlimitedness of his own personality" (Feuerbach 2008 [1881]: 83, 183). In terms of Buber's representation of God, what Feuerbach's critique helps to show is that, rather than God taking the objective form of a person as its mode of relating with the human person, as Buber maintains, Buber's person God can be better understood as an external projection of the human psyche and a receptacle for the qualities it holds in the highest esteem, reverence, or awe.

Freud's psychoanalytical critique of the monotheistic person God builds on Feuerbach's by pointing to the specifically patriarchal dimensions of the human person's projections. Freud argues that the psychic construction of God is the result of an infantile need for protection that even in adulthood, is never fully overcome (2008 [1927]: 36). According to Freud, the terrifying sense of helplessness experienced in childhood awakens a need for protection that is answered in the form of the father. Freud argues that this feeling of

helplessness is never fully overcome, however, and persists even into adulthood, resulting in the production of a psychic need for the existence of "another (this time mightier) father" (2008 [1927]: 36). This is expressed through the image of the anthropomorphic person God. According to Freud, the image each individual holds of the Person God "is formed in the likeness of his father," and, while the precise form of this image might, therefore, vary according to the nature of the individual's relationship with his father, God is, in effect, an exalted image of this father. (2001 [1913]: 171). Typically, the relationship between the human person and the person God is therefore marked, as Newman notes, "by the same ambivalence as the child's relationship to the father, a mixture of love and fear" (2019: 63).

If Feuerbach's critique of the anthropomorphic God of monotheism helps to cast doubt on the objective status Buber's ascribes to his God in its personal modality, Freud builds on this by helping to point to the patriarchal nature of this relationship, which is also a fundamentally hierarchical one that it assumes the absolute reliance of the human person on the love and power of the person God for its protection. The political effects of this relationship can be intimated from Freud's observation that the human person participates in the greatness of the person God, with the level of protection this God can bestow corresponding with the level of power the human person invests in it (1939: 165). In political theological terms, this effectively militates against the autonomy of the political community to the extent that it implies a form of divine sovereignty in which the well-being of the political community comes to depend, in the final instance, on the will of God and his material intervention into the course of human events. The implicit authoritarianism of this conceptualisation of God and his sovereignty is reflected and reinforced in Buber's account of the political structure of the historical anarcho-theocracy, in which the prophet or judge is understood to act as a passive vehicle for God's direct will through the prophetic function and the choice this requires the community to make to secure its good or ill fortune.

A further problem with Buber's understanding of the nature of God and the relationship between the human and the divine comes through his rejection of mysticism. Buber's anthropomorphic understanding of God means that mysticism, in his view, can only ever represent the illusory experience of a unity between the human person and the person God. One of the main limitations of Buber's anthropomorphism, on both a psychic and a spiritual level, is that this means that, while the individual is able to share in the effects of divinity in affective and perceptual terms when he or she stands in relation to God, the individual remains incapable of gaining the absolute freedom attained through the dissolution of 'the I' described in mysticism. If, however, God is understood not as a person, but something that can be characterised, most accurately, in terms of eternal being, or (as I will argue in more detail in the following chapter) the Lacanian Real (Lacan 2016), then it becomes possible to conceive God as being both interior and exterior (or, in Lacanian terms, extimate), rather than radically exterior to the subject (Lacan 1992: 139). If God is conceived, in this way, in terms of an extimate Real that evades the symbolic structure through which the subject is formed, the mystical dissolution of subjectivity Buber dismisses as illusory is entirely thinkable. In fact, from a Lacanian perspective, the individual can only experience divinity in (or as) the Real, which represents the limits of subjectivity or the 'I'. This means, in effect, that it is impossible to encounter the divine as a subject, because it is only through the experience of the dissolution of subjectivity that the divine can be apprehended.

From an anarchist perspective, the problem with the strict externality of Buber's relational, person God, as I have argued above, is that it reifies God's transcendent dimension and, with it, the fundamentally inegalitarian and authoritarian nature of the relation it assumes between this person God and the human person. One of the main political theological consequences of Buber's fidelity to the idea of an anthropomorphised person God is therefore that any approach to sovereignty deriving from this conception of God will not be able to find a way past the

fundamentally unequal relation between God and the human person from which it is derived. Buber's insistence on the transcendence and externality of God, even in his immanent modality, means that any attempt to conceive a more immanent conception of sovereignty deriving from the experience of the eternal *Thou* will, ultimately, be unable to overcome the same problem of transcendent authority that Buber's account of the historical anarcho-theocracy presents. To develop a spiritual anarchist approach to theo-politics that is able to offer a more convincing (and egalitarian) response to the problem of sovereignty, it is therefore necessary to look for an alternative conceptualisation of the divine that does not rely on a transcendent understanding of the relationship between God and the world for its guarantee.

Mystical Anarchism

In the following section I move my attention to the mystical and antinomian Christian movements of the medieval and early modern periods to start to explore some of the ways in which they might be able to overcome the various problems I have identified in Gustav Landauer's and Martin Buber's spiritual anarchisms. As I argued above, Landauer's secularised approach to spiritual anarchism is unable to account for the very specific area of experience that a theological understanding of spirit grounded in the experience of the divine alludes to. While Buber's theo-political approach to spiritual anarchism is centred on an explicitly theological understanding of spirit as divinity, it is predicated on an anthropomorphisation of God in which Buber's person God stands in an entirely transcendent relation to the human person that is inherently authoritarian. Where the mystical and antinomian Christian movements of the medieval period and beyond differ from Buber is in their foregrounding of the interiority of the divine to the human person. This, as I will argue below, leads to an understanding of political community that is grounded in the principle of

divine immanence as opposed to the divine transcendence of both Buber's account of the historical anarcho-theocracy and his contemporary theo-politics.

Mystical Anarchism and Counter-Conducts

Religious movements, as I noted at the start of this chapter, have played key roles, historically, in both challenging and providing more egalitarian alternatives to the dominating effects of the state and religion. In his analysis of the Christian pastorate, which extended, roughly, from the eleventh century to the end of the seventeenth century, Foucault argues that, if the pastorate functions primarily through a form of micro-political power "with the object of conducting men", then the resistance movements that emerged in response to them can be seen, primarily, as "revolts of conduct" (2007: 194-195). The purpose of these revolts, according to Foucault, was either to engender alternative forms of conduct; to install different leaders, or conductors; to establish different purposes and aims towards which conduct should be directed; to introduce alternative methods and procedures through which conduct might be directed; or, more radically, to escape the direction of conduct altogether. Foucault identifies five main forms of counter-conduct: asceticism; egalitarianism; mysticism; the return to scripture; and millenarianism (2007: 204-214). These counter-conducts tended to be characterised by a desire to discredit, nullify, reverse, or redistribute pastoral hierarchies and "the systems of salvation, obedience, and truth" on which these are based" (Foucault 2007: 204). According to Newman, these counter-conducts can also be viewed as "a kind of spiritual anarchism" that takes the form of "a heretical politics of insurrection" (2010: 16-17; 2019: 127). This can be seen, he suggests, in their rejection of the authority, institutions, and practices of the Church and the state, in favour of the establishment of autonomous forms of social life based on the principles of voluntary association and non-domination (Newman 2010: 16-17).

My focus, in this thesis, is on mysticism. The key feature of mysticism as a counter conduct is that it is able to evade the power of the pastorate by privileging religious experience over the external authority of the Church (Foucault 2007: 212-213). Where, in the pastorate, any communication between God and the soul must, necessarily, be mediated and controlled by the pastor, in mysticism, the communication between the God and soul is immediate (Foucault 2007: 213). This means that, instead of the soul being offered up to the pastor for examination through the act of confession, in mysticism the soul can see itself in God and see God in itself, and therefore has no need of a third party to examine it on its behalf (Foucault 2007: 212). At the same time, it is also able to bypass the hierarchical, didactic structure of the pastorate through its assertion that knowledge of God, truth, and ethical conduct is acquired directly, through mystical experience, as opposed to something that must be transmitted by the pastor to the flock. This means that, in mysticism, the soul no longer has any requirement for either the pastoral or the pedagogical input of the pastor (Foucault 2007: 212-213). It is largely because of this rejection of pastoral authority that the specifically mystical forms of counter-conduct Foucault describes have been understood by anarchists like Gustav Landauer (2010) and Simon Critchley (2009, 2012) as forms of mystical anarchism. In terms of the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I want to develop, the spiritual anarchism of mystical groups and movements offer some important resources through which to conceive a theopolitical response to the problem of sovereignty that, in contrast to Buber, does not rely on the conception of a transcendent, personalised, sovereign deity for its theological content.

The Movement of the Free Spirit

The particular focus of my engagement with the mystical counter-conducts of the Christian pastorate will be on the Movement of the Free Spirit. Where the movement of the free spirit differs, perhaps most importantly, from Buber, in terms of its account of the

relationship between politics and theology, is in its foregrounding of the experiential and, more specifically, mystical dimensions of spirit. Buber provides a detailed elaboration of a broadly Hasidic understanding of the role of spirit, as an immanent force, in the production of religious experience on an everyday, transpersonal level, in several of his works. However, as I argued earlier on, the immanent dimensions of the Hasidic conceptualisation of God are largely ignored in Buber's account of both the anarcho-theocracy and the *I – Thou* relation, which is derived, instead, almost exclusively from his account of the transcendent dimensions of spirit, in the form of the Person God.

The movement of the free spirit, in contrast focuses on how spirit can operate as an immanent force, in the form of an inner divinity accessible, directly, to all. This focus on inner divinity has important implications for the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I want to argue for in this thesis. One of the key problems with Buber's anarcho-theocracy, as I argued above, is that it is reliant on the supernatural intervention of a transcendent, 'Person God' in the direction of the conduct of humanity towards its eventual Redemption through the passive vehicles of the Judges and the Prophets. Because of this, although it succeeds in bypassing the sovereign power of the kings, it merely replaces their transcendent authority with the transcendent authority of an even more powerful, personalised deity. Where Buber almost entirely ignores the importance of the immanent dimension of God (the shekinah) as a foundation for anarchistic forms of political community, the movement of the free spirit places it right at its heart. Because of this, the key difference between the movement of the free spirit and Buber, from a theopolitical perspective, is that where, in Buber's theopolitics, God is wholly external to the self, the movement of the free spirit's insistence on the immediacy of the relationship between God and the soul means that there is no longer any intermediary between God and humanity. The movement of the free spirit is therefore especially useful in helping to show how it might be possible to conceive a mystical anarchist theopolitics that is

able to escape the implicit authoritarianism of a transcendent conceptualisation of divine sovereignty through a theopolitics based on the pursuit and direction of inner divinity.

Attempts to elaborate the political implications of the movement of the free spirit from a broadly anarchistic perspective are not entirely new. Raoul Vainegem's *The Movement of the Free Spirit* (1986) offers a detailed treatment of the political and economic life of the movement from within the anarchistic framework of situationism, for example, while Simon Critchley's *Faith of the Faithless* (2012) explores the political theological implications of the movement from what he describes as a neo-anarchist perspective. My focus will be on Critchley's account of the movement, primarily, as it represents the most detailed recent engagement with it, and because its explicitly political theological and anarchist foci relate most closely to my own. For Critchley (2012), the problem of original sin lies at the heart of the relationship between the pastorate and the individual soul. It is this same, fundamental problem of original sin that Critchley identifies as lying at the heart of the power of the pastorate and the mystical counter-conducts of the Movement of the Free Spirit (2012: 133). In contrast to the Medieval Church's understanding of the economy of salvation, in which the pastor operates as the earthly mediator of God's grace, the Movement of the Free Spirit maintained that grace can be obtained through the direct relationship between God and the soul. As Critchley notes, this posed a fundamental threat to the power of the Catholic Church and the governmental and legislative framework of the Christian pastorate (2012: 121). If original sin can be overcome, as the movement of the free spirit maintain, then this has "dramatic political consequences" in that the primary ontological justification for the authority of the Church and the state is removed (Critchley 2012: 133). And if grace, consequently, can be dispensed directly to the individual, then the justificatory framework for the Church's pastoral authority unravels because the soul is no longer dependent on the pastorate for its salvation (Critchley 2012: 121-122).

Critchley (2012) argues that the political expression of this freedom from original sin is anarchism or, more specifically, mystical anarchism. According to Critchley, this is manifested in the movement's anarcho-communism which, he claims, is a logical consequence of the movement's soteriology. This can be seen in his assertion that "if the spirit is free then all conceptions of mine and thine vanish" (2012: 108). The implication of this, he argues, is that "the Soul's recovery of its natural freedom entails commonality of ownership" because private property "is just the consequence of our fallen state," and "the only true owner of property is God" (Critchley 2012: 133). According to Critchley, this leads the movement of the free spirit to conclude that God's wealth should be held in common by all his creations "without hierarchy or distinctions of class and hereditary privilege" (2012: 133). Critchley goes on to assert that, in recognition of the threat it posed to the established Church, the movement took the form of a highly mobile, "secret network" of small groups connected through "powerful bonds of solidarity and love" (2012: 137). According to Critchley, these measures were less than successful, however, as can be attested to, he suggests, by the ruthlessness with which the movement was repeatedly repressed (2012: 137).

While I am in agreement with Critchley as to the implications of the movement of the free spirit's antinomianism for the authority of the Christian pastorate, there are problems, from a historical point of view, with his claim that the movement's antinomianism led to the practical enactment of an anarcho-communist theopolitics. The idea that the movement's focus on the attainment of identity with God can be considered to imply a general disregard for the pursuit of material objects and material forms of pleasure that might, in turn, find its political expression in anarcho-communism, is certainly not a position I am unsympathetic with. However, whatever the social, political and economic implications of the beliefs of the movement of the free spirit may be considered to be on a theoretical level, there is very little historical evidence to support the claim that the movement of the free spirit actually practiced

a form of anarcho-communism. Many of the individuals who can be considered to have been part of the Movement of the Free Spirit were part of the beghard or beguine communities (see Grundmann 1995; Lerner 2007 [1972]). As O'Sullivan notes, these communities were, typically, small lay penitential societies dedicated to the pursuit of "humility, simplicity, penance, prayer and study, and work". In many cases, especially early on, they also established a reputation for asceticism and mysticism (2006: 154). At the same time, there were many other individuals associated with the movement of the free spirit who were either, like Martin of Mainz and William of Hildernissen, in established Church orders, lay city dwellers inspired by "heresiarchs" like Aegidius Cantor and William of Lubeck, or, like Marguerite Porete and Bloemardinne of Brussels, largely independent from any formal orders, societies, or communities (Lerner 2007 [1972]: 229-230). It is certainly reasonable to interpret the fact that many of the individuals considered to have been part of the movement of the free spirit looked outside of the established Church to pursue their spiritual vocations as a political act deriving from their antinomian convictions. However, there is no real evidence to suggest that the anti-clericalism of those within the movement who lived, communally, as beghards and beguines, extended as far as the rejection of all forms of hierarchical authority and private property relations that would constitute the anarcho-communism Critchley claims for the movement.

Critchley's claim that the movement of the free spirit operated as a secret network of small groups connected through powerful bonds of solidarity and love is equally doubtful. There is no real evidence to suggest that the various individuals the Medieval Church accused of being participants in the heresy of the free spirit constituted an organised network. And, as Lerner notes, the literature associated with the movement of the free spirit was copied in orthodox monasteries and nunneries and transmitted openly by numerous monks and nuns (2007: 200). It is therefore much more likely that the heretical beliefs and practices of the free spirits the Catholic Church identified, variously, among the beghards and beguines, within

established orders, and outside of any communal settings altogether, emerged as largely spontaneous expressions of a mystical drive for unification with God that the Church assigned the status of a movement to, retroactively, as a means of pre-empting the threat that such a tendency might pose to its authority if the relatively heterodox collection of free spirits denounced by the Church ever, in fact, did coalesce into an organised network or movement.

If there is little evidence to support Critchley's claims that the movement of the free spirit operated as a clandestine network of anarcho-communist communities of spirit, I am, nevertheless, in agreement with Critchley that it is possible to identify a strong anarchistic current within the mystical theologies of some of the key intellectual figures broadly associated with the movement. I am also in agreement with him that the social form this current tends towards in theory, if not in practice, is anarcho-communism. My aim, in the following chapter, will be to draw on this anarchist current within the movement of the free spirit as a means of exploring the role that it might play in the elaboration of a contemporary anarchist theopolitics. I will do this by engaging in a post-anarchist reading of Marguerite Porete and Meister Eckhart. An obvious difference between Porete and Eckhart, in terms of their relationship to the movement of the free spirit, is that, where Porete appears to have been unattached to any orders, whether under or outside of the sanction of the Catholic Church, Eckhart was a prominent member of the Dominican order. However, as Grundmann (1995: 244) and Lerner (2007: 227) both argue, the line the papal bull *Ad Nostrum* draws between the Free Spirits and orthodox mystics is largely artificial. Based purely on their theological content, many of the works attributed to orthodox mystics attached to the Catholic Church, such as those of Eckhart, could have been designated as heretical just as easily as the work of individuals denounced as part of the heresy of the free spirit, such as Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*. In fact, Eckhart was often taken for a free spirt himself, not least by the Catholic Church who, in the papal bull, *In Agrico Dominico,* condemned twenty-eight articles from his teaching as heretical, largely on the basis

of their close affinity with the alleged errors of the free spirits (see Lerner 2007: 182-184). It is also worth noting that many of the individuals who formed part of the movement of the free spirit were heavily influenced by Eckhart and saw no contradiction between his beliefs and their own (Lerner 2007: 185-186). My reason for focussing on Eckhart and Porete is that their works can be considered to contain some of the most intellectually sophisticated and, at the same time, radically anarchistic accounts of mystical theology to have come out of the general milieu of the movement of the free spirit. My aim, in the following chapter, will be to focus, more closely, on the anarchistic dimensions of Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies to work out precisely what their political or, more specifically, theo-political, implications might be. This, in turn, will enable me to explore the contribution Eckhart and Porete can make to a more contemporary, post-anarchist theopolitics.

The Faith of the Faithless

The movement of the free spirit represents a specific response to the particular social, political and economic conditions of the Christian pastorate. While it can offer some important clues as to how a spiritual approach to anarchism can help both to combat and construct positive alternatives to more contemporary forms of neo-liberal and authoritarian rule, a considerable amount of work therefore still needs to be done to elaborate precisely what forms this might take. This is a task that Simon Critchley (2009, 2012) takes on in his attempts to sketch out a contemporary political theology inspired by the movement. What I want to argue in what follows is that, in taking on this task, Critchley fails to place the actual experience of mysticism at the heart of his argument for a 'faith of the faithless' and is therefore unable to draw out the full potential of the movement's mysticism for a contemporary anarchist politics.

For Critchley, what is most important about the Movement of the Free Spirit is that it helps to answer the question of how religion can function "as a force that might bind a polity" and,

more specifically, the role that civil professions of faith might play in this (2013: 64). However, while Critchley recognizes that the movement's "mystical anarchism" is "a compelling possibility," this is an approach which, ultimately, he rejects, limiting himself, instead, to the use of the movement as a point of departure for a wider discussion of the role of theological concepts in the production of political community (2012: 117). Critchley's argument for a form of civil religion, or "faith of the faithless," rests on the political theological assumption that all forms of political association depend on "the fictions of law and religion" for their "authorization and sacralisation" (Critchley 2012: 92). The main political question that Critchley (2012: 3-4) poses is therefore how a faith of the faithless might bind a political community together. Critchley (2012: 68) answers this question by arguing that, if politics is located in the realm of fiction, then what is needed is "a theory and practice of the general will" understood in terms of "a supreme fiction of final belief around which a politics might organize itself" and through which a "people" is constituted. This would be "a fiction that we *know* to be a fiction and yet in which we believe nonetheless" (Critchley 2012: 93), and would take the form, Critchley suggests, of "a creative construction of a universal out of a void" (Critchley 2012: 68). According to Critchley, this idea of a supreme fiction represents an aesthetic approach to politics in which politics is understood as a process of "radical creation" that opens up the possibility for the conception and construction of new forms of association free from domination or inequality (2012: 67).

The role of belief in the construction of a supreme fiction can be elucidated, Critchley suggests, with reference to Oscar Wilde's idea of "a faith of the faithless" (2012: 3-4). Critchley argues that, in spite of the secularisation and large-scale atheism of most Western societies, unbelievers continue to require "an experience of belief". However, this is not, he insists, a form of belief underpinned by a traditional conception of religion, whether defined by experience (as with the Movement of the Free Spirit and the various other heretical Christian

groups he discusses), or by the existence of a more orthodox, transcendent deity. Instead, he argues, after Wilde, that it is "faith as a proclamation that enacts life" (Critchley 2012: 249). This act of faith functions to bring "the inward subject of faith" into being. For Critchley, this faith of the faithless represents a more authentic form of belief than the Christian variety and, in fact, "reveals the true nature of the faith that Christ sought to proclaim" (2012: 249). Critchley argues that this is because their faith is not dependent on the guarantees of dogma, participation in sacraments, or the promise of a posthumous reward for acting in a virtuous way, all of which, he suggests, function to dissipate the inward power of faith (2012: 4). The faith of the faithless, by contrast, "cannot have for its object anything external to the self or subject, any external, divine command, any transcendent reality" (Critchley 2012: 4). As such, it is, like the forms of inner divinity the Movement of the Free Spirit and others pursued, something which is immanent to the self. When translated into secular, or civil terms, Critchley argues that what this means is that we face the following paradox: "On the one hand, to be true, everything must become a religion, otherwise belief lacks (literally) credibility or authority (2012: 4). Yet, on the other hand, we are and have to be the authors of that authority". For Critchley, the faith of the faithless is therefore "a work of collective self-creation" in which the individual becomes the smithy of his or her own soul (2012: 4).

The interaction between immanence and transcendence is crucial to Critchley's approach. As Bernstein notes, Critchley wants to maintain that the faith of the faithless requires a belief in the supreme fiction of a transcendent realm that is "exterior" to our immanence (Bernstein 2013: 53-54). However, rather than providing evidence of the need for a transcendent, supreme fiction to unite the political community, as he intends, Critchley's faith of the faithless actually provides "a sophisticated defense of a robust philosophy of immanence" (Bernstein 2013: 53-54). This can be seen in the fact that the faith of the faithless he argues for rests at least as much on an appeal to the purely immanent force of belief as on

the supreme fiction towards which this belief is directed. I would go further than this and argue that there is a clear contradiction between Critchley's claim that a faith of the faithless cannot have anything external to the self, or soul, as its object, and his call for a universal supreme fiction towards with the political community's faithless faith should be directed. Critchley's position, then, would appear to be that, on the one hand, a faith of the faithless cannot take anything external to the self as its object, but that, on the other, all forms of political association require the external authorization of a transcendent, sovereign force. These are two fundamentally different positions, and, while Critchley might acknowledge the paradoxical nature of the different claims he makes, it is not at all clear why a faith of the faithless might not be able to proceed purely through the immanence of belief, or why the transcendent, supreme fiction he calls for is actually necessary at all.

A further problem with Critchley's argument is that, in asserting the need for the immanent forms of belief he argues for to be legitimised through an appeal to the authority of a supreme fiction (albeit one which is acknowledged to be a fiction), Critchley's faith of the faithless effectively forecloses the possibilities of a politics of immanent belief beyond the framework of a transcendent conception of sovereignty. As such, it effectively re-inscribes the transcendent authority of religion and the law in a different form, via a reconfiguration of the general will. The re-imagined, general will he argues for is inimical to a mystical post-anarchist approach to politics, as I understand it, in that it functions to hegemonize the political sphere and forces any new groups, movement, or communities that might emerge to sacrifice their autonomy to a single political imaginary that might be entirely incompatible with the heterogeneous beliefs and desires of individual communities, or of the individuals within these communities.

The most significant problem with Critchley's account of the movement of the free spirit from my perspective, however, is that the principal conclusion he draws from his analysis –

that it is necessary to manufacture a "faith of the faithless" as a means of founding the political community – fails to engage seriously with the potential of mystical experience to provide spiritual and ethical direction to the pursuit of anarchistic forms of collective life. Critchley's engagement with the movement of the free spirit in *Faith of the Faithless* therefore represents a missed opportunity, in my view, to draw out the potential of the movement's mysticism for contemporary anarchist politics. Where Critchley decides, ultimately, to reject mysticism as a basis for his political theological project, I will be arguing, instead, for its placement right at the heart of a post-anarchist theopolitics. My aim, in the following chapters, will therefore be to re-evaluate the anarchist implications and potential of the movement of the free spirit through a post-anarchist reading of Marguerite Porete's and Meister Eckhart's mystical theologies. The claim I will make is that, by placing mysticism at the heart of a post-anarchist theopolitics, it becomes possible to imagine a form of political community that is no longer reliant on the transcendent authority of a sovereign deity, ruler, state, or general will, and is based on the immanence of the divine instead.

From Political Theology to Political Philosophy and back to Theopolitics again

Saul Newman's postanarchism follows Buber in rejecting political theology as a solution to the problem of sovereignty. For Newman, "political theology can only ever be the affirmation and sacralisation of political sovereignty, and therefore there can be no such thing as 'radical political theology'" (2019: 40). Newman stresses that his Schmittian understanding of the concept of political theology does not imply that there cannot be a radical theology, or that theology cannot perform an emancipatory function. He maintains that, for a radical theology to do this, however, requires that it is "no longer bound to the sacralisation of power" and is put at the service of political philosophy as a means of affirming what he sees as political

philosophy's eternal vocation: "the free and rational enquiry about how one should live" (Newman 2019: 175).

I am in agreement with Newman that it is not possible for political theology, in the Schmittian sense that Newman understands it, to be radical. I also agree with him that, if a radical political theology is impossible, a radical theology is not. Where I diverge from him, however, is in his presentation of philosophy as being inherently more valuable than theology for politics on account of its preoccupation with free and rational enquiry into how one should live, and in the supplementary role Newman assigns to radical theology in the pursuit of this aim. That political philosophy and radical theology share the same interest in how one should live is, I think, obvious. There is also no clear reason why a non-dogmatic, radical theology cannot share the same interest in free and rational enquiry that Newman assigns to political philosophy. Where radical theology departs most obviously from political philosophy (and, arguably, surpasses it), is in its foregrounding of the spiritual (understood in theological terms) over the rational. What I am therefore arguing for, in this thesis, is effectively for a reversal of Newman's call for radical theology to be put to the service of political philosophy by making the claim that political philosophy should be harnessed to radical theology in a radical theopolitics. As I have argued in my discussion of Buber, a theopolitics of this type differs from political theology in that, where political theology, after Schmitt (2006 [1934]), is concerned with the secularisation of theological concepts and categories, theopolitics, as I understand it, is pre-occupied, instead, with how radical theology can be used to respond to political problems. When political philosophy is harnessed to this, it becomes possible to make use of political philosophy's focus on free and rational enquiry (or, perhaps, more specifically, the conceptual and analytical tools it employs to do this) to support the more spiritual (again, in the theological sense) preoccupation of a radical, anarchist, theopolitics.

The Politics of the Profane

Although, as I have been arguing above, I will be rejecting his call for a political philosophical response to the problem of political theology, the "profane politics" that Newman (2019) argues for as part of his political philosophical project offers some useful resources for the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I want to develop. Newman argues that if anarchism is to contest and conceive alternatives to the transcendence of political sovereignty, it is necessary, to pursue a "profane politics" (2019: 165,168). According to Newman, the profane can be defined in terms of "a certain 'worldliness' that resists theological abstraction and transcendence and implies becoming and openness, and even a certain connectedness with the world" (2019: 158). This connectedness takes the form, Newman suggests, of "an encounter with infinity formed through incompleteness" that represents "an experience of transcendence that at the same time is limited, lacking and … profane" (2019: 82). In much the same way that Landauer's spiritual anarchism can be understood in terms of a secularised religion, Newman argues that his profane politics represents a form of radical atheism that is premised not so much on the denial of God as the affirmation of "a God who is at the same time radically incomplete, lacking, not-all" (2019: 82). Newman understands the political implications of his atheistic understanding of God in the following way: if God no longer stands transcendent over the world and, instead, forms part of "one living, interdependent entity" comprising God, human beings, and the natural world, then, from a theological perspective, it becomes impossible to sustain the political concept of sovereign transcendence" (2019: 162-163). Newman sees the pursuit of 'a profane politics' as a route out of political theology's sacralisation of transcendence through the refusal to participate in the logic of the state and the representative functions and hierarchical forms on which it is based (2019: 165, 168). It is only by thinking the profane in this radical way, he suggests, that we can arrive at "an exception to the exception, in which sovereignty is impossible" (Newman 2019: 82). In the place where

sovereignty is evacuated, a profane politics should be based, instead, on "an anarchic indifference to power" in which hierarchical relations are replaced with an "egalitarian and reciprocal model of social and political relations" (2019: 162-163, 168). This profane politics should aim, he suggests, towards the transformation of the self and its relations with others, and the creation of "alternative practices, communities and ways of life" deriving from the experience of worldliness (Newman 2019: 168). Newman suggests that a profane politics of this type might draw on the resources of anarchism, Christianity, and other religious and spiritual traditions (2019: 82).

Newman's atheistic understanding of God is worth paying particular attention to, in that it helps point to the role that an immanent conception of divinity might play in the elaboration of a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics. However, it is first necessary to clarify, more precisely, how far Newman's God is, in fact, an atheistic God. Newman's claim for the radical atheism of his profane politics rests on his conceptualisation of "a God who is at the same time radically incomplete, lacking, not-all" who forms part of a single entity comprising God, human beings, and the natural world (2019: 82). If God is understood, as it does in Newman's formulation, to denote a theistic God that takes the form of a supreme being that, simultaneously, is present in the world and stands in transcendent relation to it, then Newman's conceptualisation of God can, indeed be considered atheistic. However, if the theism against which Newman's atheism is defined is construed, more broadly, to encompass not only the theistic Gods of the most orthodox iterations of the major monotheistic religions, but non-personalistic, pantheistic models too, then it would, perhaps, be more accurate to describe Newman's God as a pantheistic, rather than an atheistic God.

Newman's atheistic (or, in my terms, pantheistic) approach to divinity offers some important clues as to how it might be possible to respond to the problem of the personalism of Buber's God and its authoritarian implications. Newman's Lacanian conceptualisation of God

also helps to show how it might be possible to develop the movement of the free spirit's and, more specifically, Eckhart's and Porete's, mystical understandings of divine immanence as a foundation for a post-anarchist political community. Where I will depart from Newman is in that my more explicitly theological approach to politics assigns a more central role to the category of the divine in the construction of anarchistic alternatives to the various forms of political and economic sovereignty exercised within the contemporary capitalist state than his political philosophical approach. This will enable me, in effect, to place political philosophy at the service of mystical theology, rather than to place theology in the service of political philosophy, in the exploration of possible solutions to the contemporary political problems I have outlined in this thesis.

Post-Anarchism and Revolution

Neoliberal capitalism, as I argued in the Introduction, is a totalizing project that aims at the extension of its logic and values into ever greater areas of social life, and over ever greater areas of the globe (Foucault 2008: 247). The success of this project is dependent, in large part, on ensuring that any forms of opposition, or any viable alternatives to it are either co-opted or actively suppressed. Examples of neoliberal co-optation include the integration of the co-operative movement in the U.S. into the centralized structures of federal government agencies (Ratner 2015); the promotion of feminist empowerment programmes by transnational corporations (Prugl 2015); and the channelling of socially transformative projects into the neoliberal circuits of social entrepreneurship (Kreitmeyer 2019). Neoliberalism's suppression of possible alternatives to it is carried out through the colonization of the institutions of either the liberal democratic or the authoritarian state as a means of ensuring against the emergence of socialist and social democratic alternatives through the representative and electoral institutions of the state (Brown 2015) and the mobilization of the various forms of indirect and

direct violence the state is able to unleash (see, for example, Clua-Losada and Rebera-Almancoz 2017; Briken and Eick 2017; Rioux 2017; De Smet and Bogaert 2017). Within this context, any attempt to institute an anarchist theo-politics is an inherently revolutionary project in the sense that it entails a transformation of communities and the wider societies of which they are part that cannot be achieved solely with recourse to the political mechanisms and processes sanctioned by either the liberal democratic or the authoritarian state. It is because of this that a contemporary anarchist theopolitics must be situated within the broader framework of the anarchist social revolution, the post-anarchist insurrection, and the project of structural renewal. In the following sections I will therefore outline how the anarchist conceptualisation of the social revolution has developed and evolved since the late nineteenth century as a means of foregrounding the importance of social, cultural, spiritual, and subjective transformation to anarchist and post-anarchist understandings of social transformation and the revolutionary process. This will help provide a clear theoretical framework in which to situate my own approach and point to the key ways in which it can contribute to the revolutionary creation of anarchistic alternatives to capitalism, the state and the various other hierarchies and forms of domination and control with which they are intricated.

Revolution and Sovereignty

In terms of the anti-authoritarian approach to theopolitics I am arguing for, one of the central problems with both the Marxist revolution and the conservative counter-revolution is that, as Newman identifies, they both serve, in different ways, to re-affirm the transcendent authority of the reconstituted state (2019: 106). Where the counterrevolution functions to safeguard the existing state order by suspending its constitution in the state of exception, the Marxist revolution functions to destroy the existing state, only to erect a new one, based on an alternative constitutional order, in its place (Newman 2019: 106).

In the Marxist political revolution, the root of this problem can be located in Marxism's desire to bring about the revolutionary transformation of the organs of state and economic power (Buber 1996 [1949]). As evidence of this, Buber points to the historical experience of the Soviet Union. For Buber, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is "*de facto* a dictatorship of the State over society" (1996 [1949]: 118). This is a form of dictatorship that is either tolerated or actively supported by the population, he suggests, on the understanding that this is what is required to complete the social revolution and bring about the "Commune State". As Buber points out, in the Soviet Union, under Lenin, there was, in fact, "no trace in the new State-order of any agency aiming at the liquidation of State centralism and accumulation of power" (1996 [1949]: 101). On a more general level, Buber contends that the strategic aim of creating a society free of hierarchy and domination through the authoritarian powers of the sovereign state is fundamentally flawed, because "there is scarcely anything harder, or more rare, than for a will invested with power to free itself from centralism" (1996 [1949]: 115). The brutal Bolshevik repression of the Kronstadt rebellion's attempts to institute a Soviet system based on the principles of council democracy represents one early illustration of this point. Consequently, from an anarchist perspective, the Marxist revolution remains caught just as firmly within the trap of authoritarianism as the various liberal, monarchical, or theocratic state forms it sets itself up against or overturns.

More recent approaches to political and social transformation from the perspectives of autonomist Marxism and post-Marxism are equally problematic. One of the key problems with Hardt and Negri's (2011) approach to revolution that Newman identifies is that its attempt to isolate the 'constituent power' of the multitude from the 'constituted power' of the state is fundamentally flawed in that constituent power always tends towards its own constitution in the form of a new political and legal order (Newman 2016: 49). According to Day, this means that the task of the multitude is, effectively, "to counter one totalizing force with another"

(2005: 152). Consequently, like the Marxist revolution, it is unable to find a way out of the paradigm of sovereignty or the authoritarianism it seeks to displace.

If Hardt and Negri's autonomist Marxism can be understood as an attempt at a non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian re-working of the Marxist revolution, Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism attempts to push Marx's key insights in a more reformist direction. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) understand western societies to be moving gradually towards ever greater levels of democracy, liberty, and equality by means of the institutions of liberal democracy. The main purpose of their idea of radical democracy is therefore to push this process along as far and as quickly as possible to create a socialist society. From a post-anarchist perspective, the main problem with Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism is that its attempts to push the liberal democratic state away from capitalism towards socialism are reliant on a logic of representation. Day notes that the main political aim, within a representative system, is to gain recognition for a particular group from the state, which then leads to that group being granted equal rights through its integration into the hegemonic social order" (2005: 75-76). In Laclau and Mouffe's approach to hegemony this can be seen in the requirement for a particular group, party or movement to stand in, (at least temporarily), via a "logic of equivalence" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) for the heterogeneous groups, parties, movements, and identities that comprise a new hegemonic bloc, who then articulates its demands to the state (Newman 2014: 97). The main problem that Day identifies with a 'politics of demand' of this type is that every demand, in anticipating a response from the state, perpetuates the power and authority of the state so that the state comes to be understood as the only means through which political and social change can be effected (2011: 107). This functions to create "a positive feedback loop" in which the state creates ever more deeper and wider apparatuses of discipline and control to maintain its power and ward off any threat a particular group, movement, or hegemonic formation might pose to its dominance, which, in turn, create ever new sites of antagonism,

82

which produce new demands and, in turn, lead to a further increase in the quantity and intensity of the disciplinary measures through which the power of capital and the state are maintained (Day 2011: 107). Consequently, Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) post-Marxist politics of demand also has the effect of closing down the space for the development of the self-regulating, non-hierarchical social relations and mechanisms of collective decision-making that characterize anarchistic political movements and communities.

The Anarchist Social Revolution

Where anarchist conceptualisations of revolution differ most clearly from Marxist ones is in their different understandings of the relationship between the political and the social revolution. The difference between the political revolution and the social revolution is that where the political revolution is focussed on the institutions, mechanisms, and instruments of political power, the social revolution is focussed on the cultural, spiritual, and economic foundations of society and the transition from capitalism to communism. In Marxism, the political revolution is carried out through the seizure of the institutions of state power, with the social revolution then being implemented, from above, through the dictatorship of the proletariat (Marx and Engels 1998 [1893]). Where anarchism departs from the Marxist approach to revolution is in its rejection of the state as a viable means of carrying out the revolution. There are two main reasons for this. First, on the social level, a change in who wields control of the existing institutions of state governance offers no guarantee that these institutions can bring about a transformation of the institutions and social relationships on which economic forms of domination and exploitation are based (Bakunin 2020 [1872]; Kropotkin 2014). Second, on a political level, the state functions merely to replace existing forms of hierarchical authority based around class, property, or capital, with new ones based around the party and its institutions of governance (Bakunin 2020 [1872]; Kropotkin 2014).

It is because of this that Bakunin argues that the social revolution cannot take place without a political revolution focussed on "the demolition of political institutions, of political power, of government in general, of the State" and "all the established powers of the bourgeoisie" directly by the proletariat rather than via the mediation of a supposedly representative party vanguard (Bakunin 2020 [1872]: 85). Bakunin's approach to the social revolution can therefore be understood, in political theological terms, to represent a millenarian understanding of revolution, in that it requires the total destruction of both the state and the bourgeois and / or feudal economy before the social revolution can begin and the construction of a communist society can be carried out from below. Kropotkin, like Bakunin, argues that, rather than conceiving the revolution in terms of two distinct periods – a political revolution followed by a social revolution – it is necessary to fight, simultaneously, against both capital and state (Kropotkin 2014 [1906]: 461). This means that the social revolution, in Kropotkin's view, must take place through the seizure of the means of production by revolutionary subjects themselves (2014 [1906]: 470). This, he argues, is because even the most revolutionary parliament, or constituent assembly "can only confirm and make lawful what has already been accomplished by the people" (Kropotkin 2014 [1906]: 461). On a practical level, the revolution, as Kropotkin conceives it, must therefore start with a series of local insurrections that then proliferate over increasingly large areas until they culminate in the widespread societal transformation that constitutes the social revolution (2014 [1910]: 551-553).

Where Bakunin focusses, primarily, on the importance of the destruction of the state institutions through which the power of the autocracy and / or bourgeoisie is maintained, Kropotkin's focus is directed more towards the creative dimensions of the social revolution. While Kropotkin is in agreement with other anarchists, such as Bakunin, that the precise form that the society that emerges from the revolution cannot be known, or planned in advance, he is careful to stress the importance of having a clear idea of the results that the social revolution

aims to achieve and of how its institutions might work (2014 [1913]: 557-558). Kropotkin argues that, for this reason, it is important for anarchists to propagate the basic principles of expropriation and collectivism as far as possible before and throughout the revolutionary process (2014 [1879]: 502; 2014 [1906]: 469). In terms of the institution of the social revolution, Kropotkin insists that, to ensure both the egalitarian and the libertarian character of the revolution, the reorganisation of production and redistribution of wealth and exchange on communist lines must be the work of the proletariat and peasantry and a product of their particular needs and desires. This means that, instead of being conceived and implemented by a party vanguard or parliamentary commission, the social revolution must emerge from below through the construction of multiple, interconnecting federations (Kropotkin 2014 [1886]: 535). This has the benefit, Kropotkin argues, of ensuring that the social revolution conforms more closely to "popular aspirations and to the demands of life and of mutual relations" than any attempt at the imposition of any political theoretical dogma from above (2014 [1879]: 501).

Landauer developed Kropotkin's conceptualisation of the social revolution further, in the early 1900s, through his conceptualisation of the process of "structural renewal". Landauer argues that structural renewal requires both a political and a social revolution. The revolution has to be political, he contends, because, in order to bring about social transformation, it is necessary to "break free of social oppression and economic hardship" (Landauer 1983 [1911]: 21-22). At the same time, he maintains that it must also be social, as it is only through the ground up process of structural renewal that it might be possible to create the new social institutions, property relations and forms of economic life needed to replace the forms of social organization through which existing forms of political power are exercised. This means that, while the social revolution is favoured over the political revolution as a route to the construction of anarchistic forms of social life, for Landauer, "social revolution can neither come to life nor stay alive without a series of political revolutions" (1983 [1911]: 21-22). However, like

Kropotkin, Landauer rejects the idea that it is possible to bring anarchism to the world via a singular, totalizing, revolutionary even that will usher in a new, millennial era as, in his view, the new institutions that emerge from the revolutionary destruction or transformation of existing sites of power in the political revolution will only ever reflect the ideals and values of the revolutionary vanguard or insurrectionary force that has seized control of these institutions, and can therefore only lead to tyranny (Landauer 2010: 87). Landauer argues that, because of this, anarchism's focus should be on the revolutionary potential of creating new institutions, unmediated by the state or corporations, and based on the principle of mutual aid.

Landauer sees the main purpose of structural renewal as being to work against what Day describes as "the colonization of everyday life" by the state and corporations by rendering existing institutions redundant in light of the positive alternatives constructed by their side (2005: 123-124). However, like Kropotkin, Landauer does not understand structural renewal as a millenarian project that might lead to a perfected, post-revolutionary society; he maintains, instead, that if power is immanent to all human relationships, the possibility of coercive and dominating forms of behaviour are an ever-present danger that can be warded off, but never eliminated (Landauer 2010: 87). The prefigurative construction of anarchist communities based on the immanence of human relationships and desires therefore requires that domination, authority, and the temptation of appeals to transcendent forms of sovereign authority must be constantly fought against and can never be finally overcome.

Buber also argues for a version of structural renewal. However, his approach to it differs from those of both Kropotkin and Landauer in some important ways. In Buber's view, both Bakunin and Kropotkin are guilty of missing what he considers to be the central point of the social revolution: that it is only capable of giving birth "to something that has already been foreshadowed in the womb of the pre-revolutionary society" (Buber 1996 [1949]: 44-45). This means that for the political revolution to serve the aims of the social revolution, three conditions

need to be met. First, the political revolution needs to "clear the ground and make the land available as communal property, and thereafter to develop it into a confederation of societies". Second, it needs to ensure that the new property relations this process implies are institutionalised to facilitate and protect their development along communal and confederate lines. And third, these two processes must be carried out "in a true spirit of community" (Buber 1949: 53). Perhaps the most significant problem with Buber's conceptualisation of the relationship between the political and the social revolution relates to his understanding of the process of structural renewal itself. The main difference between Buber and Landauer in this respect, is that Buber appears to understand the process of the "foreshadowing", or prefiguration, of anarchist communities as taking place primarily in the imagination of the revolutionary, with these ideas then being put into practice only when the political revolution has been carried out to create the political and geographical space for their enactment. The problem with this approach (as Landauer identifies in his elaboration of his own version of structural renewal) is that it risks having to wait, indefinitely, for the conditions to emerge whereby a political revolution is possible before people start living anarchistically. Landauer's approach avoids this problem by placing a much greater emphasis on the importance of engaging in prefigurative practices immediately, so that, when the political revolution does happen, the social revolution then takes the form of the consolidation and proliferation of already existing forms of anarchist community.

Structural Renewal and the Post-Anarchist Insurrection

The revolutionary strategy of structural renewal remains central to post-anarchist accounts of 'insurrection' or 'uprising'. This can be seen, most clearly, in Day's version of post-anarchism. In the changed conditions of early twenty first century neoliberal capitalism, Day's approach to structural renewal diverges from Kropotkin, Landauer, and Buber in its

greater pessimism regarding what the political and social revolution might be able to achieve in light of neoliberalism's global hegemony and what Day sees as the large-scale acquiescence of most western populations to it (Day 2005: 203). As a consequence of this pessimism, where Kropotkin, Landauer, and Buber see the purpose of structural renewal as being to render the state and its institutions redundant, Day proposes that, while the bulk of our energies should still be directed at the construction of prefigurative, anarchistic alternatives to capital and the state, we should also ensure that we engage with the existing institutions of state power as a means of protecting against and ameliorating the various forms of domination they produce (2005: 215). This is because, in Day's view, the likelihood of a large-scale political revolutions being imminent in any contemporary capitalist societies is slim and, without this, the state and its institutions are unlikely to become wholly redundant any time soon (2005: 214).

In practical terms, this means that the post-anarchist account of structural renewal can be understood in terms of what Critchley describes as an attempt to work "within the state against the state" through the creation of "interstitial distance" as a means of creating space within the state for the enactment of alternative political and social relations through which neoliberal forms of governmentality can be resisted through their replacement with anarchistic forms of autonomous life (2012: 232-233). This idea of interstitial space within the state is developed, more fully, in Hakim Bey's (1991) account of the TAZ (temporary autonomous zone), SPAZ (semi-permanent autonomous zone) and PAZ (permanent autonomous zone). Examples of autonomous zones include neighbourhood assemblies, social centres, factory occupations; the movements of the squares and Occupy in the early 2010s; and, on a larger scale, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, and the Rojava revolution in the Kurdish territories of Northern Syria. Like Bey, Day understands the purpose of the autonomous zone as being to facilitate the emergence of new forms of subjectivity and social relations, and the invention of new, localised forms of community as alternatives to, and forms of resistance

against, capitalist societies (Day 2005: 44-45). On a strategic level, Day also imagines the creation of autonomous zones as part of the process of structural renewal as an alternative to the construction of large-scale, counter-hegemonic blocs advocated by autonomist Marxists and post-Marxists which, he suggests, end up doing little more than replacing one totalizing project with another (Day and Montgomery 2011: 113). In spite of their clear preferences for versions of structural renewal as a revolutionary strategy, both Day (2005) and Newman (2010: 115) insist that more traditional revolutionary, or even reformist programmes of the type advocated by post-Marxists should not be rejected altogether, however. This is because to do so would constitute an attempt to hegemonize the field of social struggle that would be self-defeating in light of the continued dominance of the capitalist state (Day 2005: 215).

Day stresses that any approach to structural renewal based on purely local strategies of resistance that are insufficiently aware of the global systems of domination and control within which they operate are inadequate, however (2005: 209-210). He argues that in order both to resist and to create alternatives to capitalist social relations and the state form, it is therefore necessary for the diverse local struggles and forms of experimentation that form part of the process of structural renewal to be connected via a "logic of affinity" (Day 2005: 178). According to Day, participants in these experiments, in many cases, are aware of, support, and participate in each other's activities and struggles at a local level, while also linking up with other national and global struggles against gentrification, racism, sexism, police brutality, and globalization in what might be described as a loose federation of heterogenous, but broadly anarchistic, communities and movements (2005: 190-191).

Insurrection, Structural Renewal, and the Transformation of the Self

Landauer and post-anarchism both argue for the importance of the transformation of social relations and subjectivity to the processes of structural renewal. In doing so, they help

deepen the anarchist account of the social revolution as a form of large-scale social transformation. One of Landauer's most important insights relates to his identification of the state as "a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behaviour," which can be destroyed "by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another" (2010: 214). The main implication of this for anarchist revolutionary strategy is that the construction of alternative political institutions and forms of social life is dependent, in the first instance, on changes in the behaviour of individuals. This can be seen in his claim that, historically, social movements only emerge "because certain individuals began moving within themselves" (Landauer 2010: 193). For Landauer, the anarcho-communism that structural renewal strives towards will therefore only emerge as an external manifestation of a prior state of internal freedom (2010: 90). Landauer stresses that this does not mean the external work of organization, education, the construction of new institutions and new, material sites of anarchistic forms of social life should be abandoned or deferred. What it does mean, however, is that the success of this work in creating forms of political and social life that are recognizably anarchistic will be limited if they are not a product of "a new spirit won by the conquest of one's inner self." (Landauer 2010: 88-89). As Mendes-Flohr suggests, in political theological terms, rather than waiting for a divinely appointed redeemer to usher in the *eschaton*, Landauer therefore places the burden of political and social transformation squarely on humanity (Mendes-Flohr 2015: 3).

In the context of our contemporary, neoliberal era, the main implication of Landauer's insights is, as Newman argues, that any approach to political and social revolution that focuses on the transformation of external social and political conditions and institutions while leaving the psychic, libidinal investments that enable them to reproduce themselves, micropolitically, in place, are fundamentally flawed (Newman 2016: 53-54). This is because, even if the formal structures and institutions through which the power of capital and the state are exercised were

dismantled, it would still not be possible to overcome the control they wield over us through the processes of subjectivation by which they are socially reproduced. In recognition of this, Newman argues for a post-anarchist politics of insurrection that is based on both a political critique of the state and its inherent violence and domination, and an ethical interrogation of the subject's attachments, idealizations, fantasies, dependencies, and desires at the molecular level of the subject (2010: 65-66, 118-119). The purpose of the insurrection, as Newman understands it, is therefore, like Landauer's approach to structural renewal, not only to transform the insurrectionary subject's immediate surroundings and social relations, but to transform the individual psyche at the same time so that it is no longer complicit in its own domination (Newman 2014: 107).

The anarchist and post-anarchist conceptualisations of revolution I have outlined above are not unique in their identification of the central importance of the transformation of subjectivity to the revolutionary process. What distinguishes anarchism and post-anarchism from Marxist accounts of the social and political revolutions is that where, in Marxism, political subjectivity is determined by the specific material and economic conditions into which the subject is inserted (Marx and Engels 1998 [1893]), in anarchism and post-anarchism, alternative forms of political subjectivity have to be actively desired, chosen, and produced. In comparing his anarchist approach to the transformation of subjectivity with the Marxist account of the emergence of the proletariat as a revolutionary force, Landauer asserts that the "new people" the anarchist social revolution seeks to produce "does not come by itself: it 'must' not come at all, as the false science of the Marxist understands this 'must'. It *should* come, because we socialists *want* it, and because we already carry the model of such a people in our spirits" (1983 [1911]: 104).

Similarly, Newman's 'insurrection of the self' assumes that, because we are implicated in the reproduction of social hierarchies and inequalities of power at the "infinitesimal level"

of everyday interactions, work, and consumption, as well as through our conformity to the identities and roles that existing sources of constituted power confer upon us, the insurrection must be centred on a process of "radical subjectivisation" (2010: 65). However, Newman, like Landauer, is keen to stress that there is nothing inevitable about this process. (Newman 2010: 65). Where Landauer contrasts his account of subjective transformation with the classical Marxist conceptualisation of the revolutionary subjectivity of the proletariat, Newman (2010) contrasts his approach with Hardt and Negri's (2009) more recent, autonomist Marxist account of the biopolitical production of 'the Multitude'. According to Hardt and Negri, the dominant tendency in contemporary capitalism is what they describe as "immaterial production" (2009: 131-132). For Hardt and Negri, immaterial production represents not only a mode of economic production, but a form of "biopolitical production" in which new social relationships and new forms of life are created through proliferating networks of communication and common knowledge (2009: 131-132; 258, 266). While, according to Hardt and Negri, social relations and identities are produced under conditions of capitalism and private ownership, they are increasingly difficult to commodify, as they tend towards a "being-in-common" that represents a new form of subjectivity, defined by the possibility of a "becoming-common" of labour and life, which they term "the Multitude" (2009: 165-178). This is different, in their view, from the Marxist category of the proletariat in the following ways. First, it refers to everyone who works under "Empire" (their term for the multiple systems of domination and control in operation in the contemporary world order) rather than a particular, privileged class. And second, it exists not as an empirical reality, but as an immanent potential that will realise itself in its opposition to Empire once the tendency it reflects becomes sufficiently widespread (Hardt and Negri 2009: 350-352).

Newman's main objection to Hardt and Negri's conceptualisation of the "multitude", like Landauer's objection to the emergence of the proletariat, comes from its reliance on the

assumption of its inevitable emergence from the material conditions of contemporary capitalism. Newman, in fact, notes that there is a remarkable parallel between the narrative of the emergence of the multitude "through the circuits and nodes of biopolitical production and immaterial labour" and the 'classical' Marxist narrative of the emergence of the proletariat through the cogs and machinery of industrial production and factory labour (2014: 104). Newman stresses that the importance of economic, social, and technological change to the production of new forms of politics, subjectivity, and commonality should not be discounted altogether (2010: 124). What he objects to in Hardt and Negri's theory is what he sees as the determinism of its assumption that the technological and biopolitical transformations of global capitalism are a necessary stage of historical development that leads, inevitably, to the emergence of the Multitude and a new, socialist, Commonwealth (Newman 2010: 124). In *Assembly,* Hardt and Negri (2017) do pay much greater attention to the ways in which the multitude must be actively constructed. However, the various tactics and strategies they describe are still conceived as part of an immanent process of historical development that is determined, in the first instance by the transformation of the material conditions of economic production.

Newman's postanarchist account of social transformation, in contrast, understands the alternative forms of subjectivity required for the construction of anarchistic alternatives to capitalist social relations as something that needs to be actively and intentionally constructed (2010: 124). Newman argues that his postanarchist insurrection contributes to the production of alternative, anarchistic subjectivities through an affirmation of the self over the external conditions through which oppression takes place, via a refusal of the power existing sites and systems of domination hold over us (2010: 118-119, 2016: 54-56). His conceptualisation of 'insurrection' can therefore be understood as "a certain mode of thought and action" through which domination in all its forms is interrogated, contested, and, where possible, overturned

(Newman 2016: 54-56). Newman argues that, because of its focus on the internal dimensions of domination and control, the insurrection is, first of all, an internalized insurrection, or "insurrection of the self" that goes to the roots of our subjectivity and psyche before being turned outwards (2016: 13).

In understanding post-anarchism primarily in terms of the ethical transformation of the self, Newman helps to identify one of the key differences between Marxist and anarchist understandings both of subjectivity and of politics, more generally. Where Marxists understand subjectivity, primarily, in political terms, anarchists tend to understand it, primarily in ethical and, as I will argue in the following sections, spiritual terms. So, where Marxist accounts of subjectivity tend to focus, primarily, on the processes of political contestation, anarchist forms of subjectivity tend to focus more on the alternative modes of being and forms of ethical conduct that might replace the forms of subjectivity through which existing systems of domination and control are reproduced. Hardt and Negri's (2017) clarifications of their position on the inevitability or otherwise of the emergence of the multitude in their more recent work complicate Newman's account of their understanding of political subjectivity. However, what continues to separate Hardt and Negri's autonomist Marxism from post-anarchism is that it remains a fundamentally deterministic account of the transformation of subjectivity to the extent that subjectification (as it relates both to the processes of subjection and the processes of resistance) is conceived by them as a natural, historical product of material, economic relations, whereas post-anarchist accounts of the transformation of subjectivity can be understood, in more spiritual and ethical terms, as the product of various forms of askesis, which can then transform the material conditions and relations of the social world.

Spiritual Anarchism, Revolution, and the Transformation of the Self

The spiritual dimensions of anarchism's focus on the role of ethical subjectivity in the social revolution are particularly apparent in Landauer's understanding of revolution as a process of structural renewal. Landauer understands structural renewal to require a series of political revolutions to help facilitate the social revolution and the proliferation of anarchistic forms of political community it entails. On a spiritual level, this means that the political revolution is needed to bring a new spirit to power as a way of clearing the way for socialism and the change of conditions this spirit can effect (Landauer 1983 [1911]: 22). Landauer argues that, during the political revolution, "*everyone* is filled with the spirit that is otherwise reserved for exemplary individuals," and that "*everyone* is courageous, wild and fanatic, and caring and loving at the same time" (2010: 154). This spirit, he insists, is capable of sweeping aside all obstacles, "for spirit is joy, power, movement, which nothing on earth can impede" (Landauer 1983 [1911]: 30-31). However, anarchism, for Landauer, is not something that can be brought about through a single, revolutionary act that will then usher in a new, millenarian, socialist era. Once the political revolution has taken place, and the initial revolutionary spirit has dissipated, "they all want *panem et circenses,* 'bread and circuses,' again," he cautions (Landauer 2010: 154). This means that the new spirit that emerged in the revolutionary act is swept away before it has the chance to grow and for a people to coalesce around it. The task of the revolutionary, according to Landauer, is therefore to ensure that the new spirit awakened during the political revolution is carried over into the social revolution as a basis for the construction of new forms of social organization (2010: 173-174).

Landauer's insistence on the need for a spiritual approach to the process of structural renewal leads him to argue that "revolution must be a part of our social order, must become the basic rule of our constitution" (1983 [1911]: 130). To facilitate this, Landauer suggests that it is necessary to enshrine the concept of permanent revolt, understood as "a new rule and transformation by the spirit," as the founding principle of the anarchist political community

(1983 [1911]: 130). This will have the effect, he argues, of ensuring that, rather than becoming ossified and filled with "unspirit", the new institutions that emerge through the process of structural renewal will change, adapt, or be replaced, in accordance with the movement of the revolutionary spirit (Landauer 1983 [1911]: 130). Landauer suggests that the spirt by which the new institutions that emerge through the social revolution are animated "comes from within them, and yet controls them as an autonomous outside force, and is "a spirit that lives in all individuals and that goes beyond earthly and material confines" (2010: 129). This means that, in keeping with his emphasis on the importance of individual subjectivity to the process of structural renewal, for Landauer, the spiritual vitality of the institutions of anarchist community is dependent on the spiritual transformation, or awakening, of the individual, which, in turn, is dependent on the individual's connection with a force that is simultaneously internal and external to it (2010: 216). Consequently, the more the revolutionary spirit is awakened in individuals, the more the new institutions that are animated by it can proliferate and the faster people will turn away from existing institutions and the "oppression, stupidity, and pauperization" to which, Landauer argues, they have led, and the faster "the Bund of free communities and association" will replace the state (2010: 216).

Structural renewal, in Landauer's spiritual anarchism, can therefore be understood to take the form, as Newman argues, of an ongoing process of transforming both oneself and one's relations with others, rather than a direct attack on external social and political institutions (Newman 2019: 167). In making his argument for the importance of the spiritual transformation of the self and its relationships with others, Landauer draws on the Christian mystical tradition and, specifically, the work of Meister Eckhart (which I will be engaging with in more detail in Chapter Two). In Eckhart (1994), mysticism describes the experience of the annihilation of the soul. This is a process which leads to the space evacuated by the soul to be filled by God. In his appropriation of Eckhart, Landauer's account of the soul's annihilation

and the spiritual transformation of the self, in keeping with the political theological approach to spiritual anarchism I outlined in the first half of this chapter, takes on a more secular meaning. Landauer argues that if, as he contends, the pursuit of anarchist society "leads not outward, but inward," then it is necessary to "return completely to ourselves" and "our soul, which is our world," so that we can create "a new kind of human being through chaos and anarchy, through unprecedented, intense, deep experience" (2010: 89, 97). This is a process, that, according to Landauer, requires the individual to recognise that our perceptions of both the world and ourselves are a product of the particular form of spirit or unspirit by which they are animated, and that to understand "our narrow, ridiculous I" as a fixed essence is therefore a delusion (2010: 98-99). This insight leads Landauer to assert that "it is not enough for us to reject conditions and institutions; we have to reject ourselves" (2010: 89). This requires the rejection of the certainty of the 'I,' or ego, in favour of the adoption of the mantra: "'Do not kill others, only yourself'" in order to "feel one with the world in which my I has dissolved," and enable what can be understood as a mystical "World-I" to replace the I of the individual ego (Landauer 2010: 97). By doing this, Landauer argues, it becomes possible for the individual to be reborn, and, from this rebirth, to create a new world as an expression of both the "liberating, joyful strength" and the inner need for community experienced through the dissolution of the ego in the 'World-I' (2010: 89, 97). It is only once this process has taken place, Landauer insists, that anarchists and anarchy can exist (2010: 97).

Clearly, Landauer makes much more explicit use of Eckhart's mysticism in his account of the role of a spiritual anarchism in the revolutionary process than in his political theological argument for the role of spirit in the foundation of the anarchist political community. This is especially evident in his insistence on the importance of the destruction of the individual ego to the processes of subjective transformation on which his understanding of the social revolution is based. I am in agreement with Landauer as to political and, more specifically,

anarchistic potential of Eckhart's mystical theology. Landauer's account of the political ramifications of the annihilation of the soul is particularly useful in terms of its identification of the ego's construction through the particular (un)spirit of the social order of which it forms a part, and in its identification of the importance of the annihilation of this ego to the production of an alternative social order comprised of anarchistic subjects oriented towards each other and towards the wider material world on the basis of an egalitarianism derived from their pantheistic understanding and experience of the divine. The argument I will be making, in the following chapters, is that a post-anarchist engagement with Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies can build on Landauer's account of the political implications of the annihilation of the self by providing a more refined, theoretically sophisticated ontological basis for a mystical approach to the social revolution and the uprising of the self which, in turn, can ensure that is better positioned to account for the specificities of the operation of political and economic sovereignty in the context of the contemporary capitalist state.

Conclusion: Mystical Post-anarchism, Social Revolution, and the Uprising of the Self

My intention, in the following chapters, is to situate the mystical post-anarchist theo-politics I want to argue for within the framework of the anarchist social revolution and the post-anarchist uprising of the self. The main contribution my approach will make to the anarchist social revolution relates to the process of structural renewal and the construction of social relations, institutions, and symbolic structures that can function as prefigurative, anarchistic alternatives to the capitalist state. I will follow both Landauer and post-anarchism in identifying the central importance of subjectivity to the social revolution and the post-anarchist uprising of the self. My assumption, in doing so, will be that the production of alternative, anarchistic forms of (mystical) subjectivity is, primarily, an ethical and spiritual process.

In terms of the relationship between mysticism and the anarchist social revolution, I am in full agreement with Landauer as to the value of foregrounding the spiritual dimensions of the social revolution's attempt to create alternative forms of ethico-political subjectivity. I am also in agreement with him as to the more specific contribution that mysticism, and Eckhart's mystical theology, in particular, can make to the anarchist social revolution. My main point of departure from Landauer relates to his political theological approach to spiritual anarchism, which rests on the secularization of Eckhart's mystical understanding of spirituality and the annihilation of the soul. This is an approach that, as I have argued throughout this chapter, fails to capture what is most vital about Christianity's mystical tradition, its understanding of divinity, and the transformative effects of the experience of the dissolution of the self in the divine. In the following chapter, I will be making the argument that it is necessary to undertake a post-anarchist reading of Eckhart and Porete that retains the explicitly religious content of their mystical theologies. This will enable me to provide an account of sovereignty that is able to develop the latent anarchism of their approaches to mysticism while avoiding the authoritarianism inherent in their understandings of Christian soteriology and the nature of God. I will then move on, in Chapter Three, to argue for the contribution that a post-anarchist reading of Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies can make to the uprising of the self through which a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics might be instituted.

Chapter Two

The Sovereignty of the Godhead

The purpose of Chapter One was to situate the mystical post-anarchism I want to argue for within the broader, interrelated frameworks of political theology, revolution, and, more specifically, anarchist theopolitics and the anarchist social revolution. In this chapter I will be focussing on anarchist theopolitics and the contribution that a mystical approach to post-anarchism can make to the political theological problem of sovereignty. While the movement of the free spirit can be understood to represent a less authoritarian approach to theopolitics than Buber's anarcho-theocracy, some problems persist, from an anarchist perspective, with its Trinitarian understanding of the nature of God and the relationship between God and the soul. These problems relate, primarily, to the movement's failure, despite its insistence on the possibility of the soul's divinization in this world, to find a way past Christianity's reliance on the idea of a personalised, creator God who stands in transcendent relation to the human person and demands obedience from him or her. My aim, in this chapter, will be to show how it might be possible to overcome these problems by drawing out the latent anarchism of Meister Eckhart's mystical theology through a post-anarchistic reading and critique of his conceptualisation of the divine. I will do this by drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis to focus on the pantheistic strand of his theology and detaching it from its monotheistic foundation in Trinitarianism. In doing this, I will be building on and extending the anti-clericalism of the movement of the free spirit and its rejection of the transcendent authority of the Church and the State by offering an anarchist critique of Christianity's Trinitarian conceptualisation of divinity and the authoritarianism inherent to it. This will lead to me argue for a sovereignty of the Godhead that is able to draw out the latent anarchism in Eckhart's conceptualisation of divine sovereignty and, by locating sovereignty in the immanence of the Godhead, overcome the problems I identified in the previous chapter with Buber's theopolitics in terms of its

reliance on the transcendent authority of a supernatural deity who has lordship over his subjects, and with the autocratic relation between the sovereign and the political community the political theological transposition of this model of sovereignty implies.

Mysticism and the Nature of God

The movement of the free spirit goes a long way towards conceiving a mystical anarchist theopolitics capable of avoiding the reliance on transcendental forms of authority that characterises autocratic, liberal, and Marxist, responses to the problem of sovereignty, and that it is also apparent in Buber's anarchist theopolitics. It is able to do this through its rejection of the pastoral power of the Medieval Catholic Church and, more specifically, the Church's claim that God is exterior and transcendent to the human soul and can only become immanent to it through the mediation of the pastorate and its conferral of the sacraments. However, the movement of the free spirit is not able overcome the problems of hierarchy, domination, and control altogether. The first part of my argument, in the following section, will be that the main problem with the movement of the free spirit's (and Eckhart's) response to the problem of sovereignty relates to the continued reliance on a hierarchical, Trinitarian model of divinity premised on the personification of the divine. The second part of my argument will be that the transcendent, anthropomorphized God of the Trinity coexists, in Eckhart's mystical theology, with a depersonalised, neo-Platonic God of divine essence, or substance, that, in contrast to the transcendence of the (mono)theistic Trinitarian God, is fundamentally immanent and pantheistic in character, and that, the sophistication of Eckhart's attempts to synthesise these two models of God notwithstanding, they are ultimately incompatible with each other. My central claim, in this chapter, will be that it is necessary to focus on the immanent, pantheistic strand of Eckhart's thought and to separate it from the transcendent, monotheistic strand with which it is articulated in order to develop the full, anarchistic potential latent within his mystical

theology. This will enable me to conceive a more fully immanent God that is able to offer a more satisfactory response to the problem of hierarchical authority that persists within both Buber's theopolitics and the movement of the free spirit's mystical anarchism.

Eckhart's Neo-Platonic God

The argument I will be making in the following sub-sections is that there is a fundamental tension between immanence and transcendence in Eckhart's conceptualisation of God that can be mapped, loosely, onto the monotheistic, Trinitarian and the pantheistic, neo-Platonist strands of thought he draws on throughout his works. Eckhart's pantheism can be seen, most clearly, in his conceptualisation of God as "the One". According to Eckhart, "God is all and is one" (1994: 184), "all things are contained in the One, by virtue of the fact that it is one" (1994: 259), "all that God possesses is in the One, and it is one in him" (1994: 184), and "outside God there is only nothingness" (1994: 180). The pantheism of this account of divinity comes from the identification of God with "the One" and "the One" with all that exists. This means that, for Eckhart, God as the One, takes the form of an indivisible essence, as can be seen in his assertion that "the One, according to its own essence, refers to being itself or to essence – that is to a single essence" (1994: 259). Eckhart goes on to contend that "the One in its most proper sense refers to perfection and to the whole" (1994: 259). This means that "it is impossible that there could be any change or instability" in God, because "God contains all things in himself in fullness" and, for this reason, "lacks nothing" (1994: 180, 259). Eckhart characterises these qualities of perfection, plenitude, and immutability as being exclusive to God. This can be seen in his assertion that "the nature of God … is pure oneness, being free of any accretive multiplicity of distinction even at a conceptual level" and that "God alone possesses oneness" (1994: 89, 184).

In terms of the relationship between Eckhart's neo-Platonic One and the multiplicity of the created world, Eckhart argues that "all multiplicity is one and is one thing in and through the One" (1994: 259). Eckhart makes the further claim that "the One is indistinct from all things," meaning that "all things and the fullness of being are in the One by virtue of its indistinction and unity" (1994: 259). He clarifies this point further by noting that "everything which is multiple depends upon the One, but the One depends upon nothing" 1994: 184). This means that "the One descends into everything and into each single thing" while, at the same time, "remaining the One that unites what is distinct" (Eckhart 1994: 260). Eckhart stresses, however, that only God (as the One) "flows into all things … Nothing else flows into something else. God is in the innermost part of each and every thing, only in its innermost part, and he alone is *one*" (1994: 258). This implies that the One (God) is prior to the multiple (creation), and that multiplicity is generated by the One. This means that, while the multiple is dependent, for its existence, on the generative power of the One, the existence of the One is neither dependent on the multiple, nor on its generation of the multiple.

This point is central to Eckhart's understanding of the difference between God and creation. According to Eckhart, "God is God because there is nothing of the creature in him" (1994: 117). In keeping with the distinction Eckhart draws between the One and the multiple, this means that, despite his insistence that the created world emanates from God's singular, divine essence, there is a fundamental ontological distinction between God the creator and the created world. This is a distinction that emerges with and in the act of creation. More specifically, it is a result of the concept of temporality that emerges from this act, and the division this introduces between the atemporal and the temporal. Within this division, God, clearly, is on the side of the atemporal (or, more properly, eternal), and his creation is on the side of the temporal, as can be seen from Eckhart's insistence that God "has never been named within time", whereas "Creatures, sin and death belong to time," and his assertion that "nothing is as opposed to God

103

as time. Not only time is opposed to God, but even clinging to time, not only clinging to time but even having contact with time, not even having contact with time but even the smell or scent of time" (Eckhart 1994: 117, 137). God therefore remains "beyond all understanding" and therefore "above names and nature" as "no one can either speak of him or know him" (Eckhart 1994: 129, 236). Eckhart's anthropomorphic gendering of God notwithstanding, this does not imply that God stands in transcendent relation to the created world as something exterior to it. Instead, it means that Eckhart's pantheistic God can be understood to be eternal in nature and, much like the Lacanian Real (which I discuss in more detail further down), to stand in extimate (simultaneously interior and exterior) relation to the created world as something inaccessible to human cognition and the semiotic processes through which created beings attempt to understand the world.

The Trinitarian God

The transcendent dimension of Eckhart's God can be seen in his use of the Christian image of the Trinity. Eckhart attempts to read the Christian God of the Trinity, synthetically, alongside his account of the neo-Platonic One. In Sermon 6 of his German sermons, for example, Eckhart asserts that, "just as God is threefold in the Persons, he is one in his essence" (1994: 132). He expands on this attempt to integrate Christianity's account of God's transcendence with his pantheistic understanding of God's immanence in the form of the neo-Platonic One in his treatise 'On the Noble Man'. Here, he states that:

> There is neither distinction in the nature of God nor in the Persons of the Trinity according to the unity of their nature. The divine nature is One, and each Person is both One and the same One as God's nature. The distinction between essence and existence

is apprehended as One and is One. Distinction is born, exists and is possessed only where this Oneness no longer obtains (Eckhart 1994: 104).

In this passage, Eckhart draws a distinction between "the nature of God" (or divine essence) and "the Persons of the Trinity". In making this distinction, Eckhart is effectively seeking to reconcile his neo-Platonic conceptualisation of God as divine essence, or the One, with Christianity's personification of God as the three persons of the Trinity as a means of reading Christianity through a broadly neo-Platonic framework. This can be seen in his assertion that both "the divine essence" and the three Persons of the Trinity are "both One and the same One," (or of the same essence). Perhaps the best way to understand Eckhart's claim that essence and existence "is apprehended as One and is One," is that, while a formal distinction can be drawn between God's essence and God's existence, these two modalities of God are part of the same, single divine nature (the One). In making this point, Eckhart is identifying God, pantheistically, with existence. The transcendent dimension of Eckhart's understanding of God can be seen, however, in his claim that distinction "is born, exists and is possessed only where this Oneness no longer obtains". Eckhart is making the point, here, that distinction refers and applies to the created world and to creatures rather than to the creator, and that the act of creation is therefore what introduces distinction (or multiplicity) into the singular, divine nature. This means that, where Eckhart conceives God's presence in, and relation to the created world, pantheistically, in terms of divine immanence, he retains a monotheistic understanding of God as a transcendent being that is external to and the source of creation. This tension between the immanent and transcendent dimensions of God can be understood as being broadly reflective of the tension within Christianity, more broadly, between God's immanence and transcendence.

If, as I have argued above, Eckhart's God has both immanent and transcendent dimensions, Eckhart's Trinitarian God represents the most obvious manifestation of its

transcendence. This can be seen in the relationship Eckhart posits between the three persons of the Trinity and between the Trinity and the created world:

> God, the heavenly Father, is Father and not Lord either of the Son or the Holy Spirit. But God-Father-Son-and-Holy-Spirit is our Lord and is the Lord of creatures. And we say that God was Father from eternity but, from that point on where he made creatures, he was also Lord (Eckhart 1994: 74).

The distinction Eckhart draws between God the Father and God the Lord is important in that it can be understood to mean that although God the Father represents the ultimate source of creation from which both the Son and the Holy Spirit issue, this does not imply a hierarchical relationship between them in terms of their comparative importance or authority, as they all continue to represent different modalities of a singular deity. However, Eckhart's insistence that this Trinitarian God is Lord, in all three of its modalities, over the created world and all the creatures within it, demonstrates that a strong hierarchical relationship continues to exist between Eckhart's God and the various forms of life that God has created. This is problematic from an anarchist perspective in that it represents the human person as a subject of God in a manner that is directly analogous to the exploitative relationship between the Lord and the subject or serf in monarchical or feudal societies. It is problematic from a theopolitical perspective because, like Buber's anarcho-theocracy, it effectively does no more than replace an authoritarian model of political sovereignty based on a transcendent, sovereign ruler that the community is placed in a position of complete subservience towards, with an equally authoritarian model based, this time, on the direct sovereignty of a transcendent deity. This is also problematic, from a feminist perspective, because, in its anthropomorphisation of God as a father and a son, it is also a specifically patriarchal model of authoritarian rule.

This fundamentally hierarchical relationship between God and the created world is reflected in Eckhart's understanding of the created being's access to and participation in the divine. One of the central differences between the Trinitarian God from the rest of God's creation, according to Eckhart, is that "God, the heavenly Father, gives all that is good to the Son and the Holy Spirit, while he does not give but rather only lends goodness to creatures" (1994: 74). This means that where the figures of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit can be considered to be coextensive with the divine essence and the "goodness" with which this is identified, God continues to stand in transcendent relation to the rest of the created world. Consequently, and in contrast to Critchley's (2009, 2012) account of the beliefs of the movement of the free spirit, while God's creatures, on Eckhart's account, are a product of God's singular, divine essence, this essence is not intrinsic to them. Instead, their access to it is contingent on the divine will of "the heavenly Father".

For Eckhart, the figure of the Son of God plays a pivotal role in the mediation of the divine. Eckhart maintains that the reason why God became incarnate in the Son is "in order that God may be born in the soul and the soul be born in God" (1994: 112-113). If this is the case, then the access of all created beings to the divine is wholly dependent on the supernatural intervention of God the Father into the course of the temporal world through the miracle of the incarnation. As a consequence of the access to divinity God's act of incarnation confers on the soul, created beings, Eckhart argues, come to resemble the Son in that, like "our Lord," they have both "higher and lower faculties" (1994: 36). The higher faculties relate, here, to the possession and enjoyment of "eternal blessedness," while the lower faculties relate to the experience of "suffering and struggle" associated with the temporal world of creation (1994: 36). Eckhart stresses that these two faculties, while existing simultaneously in the soul, remain entirely separate from and independent of each other. The key difference between God the Son and humankind is that where the higher faculties are wholly immanent to the Son as the

Incarnation of God's eternal, divine "goodness", for the human, their presence in the soul remains contingent on the birth of God (in the form of the Son) in the individual soul.

In my discussion of Martin Buber's conceptualisation of God in Chapter One, I identified a number of problems with Buber's depiction of an anthropomorphized, "Person God". These related, primarily, to the inscription of an absolute sovereignty into the figure of God and the relations of domination between God and the temporal world that this requires. A further problem that feminist theologians have identified in relation to Christianity's Trinitarian God is that the first two persons of the Trinity, God the Father and God the Son, in representing God in exclusively masculine terms, functions to privilege the masculine over the feminine in a way that both reflects and reproduces the fundamental disparity of power on which patriarchal society is based (see, for example, Shooter 2014). Eckhart's depiction of the personalised figure of God the Father, as Christianity's representation of the creator God, presents a similar set of problems. His representation of the figure of God the Son is problematic for the additional reason that God the Son (and, more specifically, the historical figure of Jesus Christ), is a representation of the incarnation of God in time. This means that the figure of Jesus Christ has both "higher" and "lower" faculties, or that he is simultaneously divine and non-divine. While this possession of dual faculties is, as I have noted above, common to all of humankind, the figure of Jesus Christ remains separate from the rest of humanity in that, as part of the Trinitarian God, he has access to the divine in perpetuity and without the contingencies to which all other individuals are subject. This separation of the Son of God from humanity in general, through his presentation as "more divine" than any other worldly being functions to represent the Son of God, in the historical modality of the figure of Jesus Christ, as both exceptional and inherently superior to the rest of humanity. This means that, instead of standing as an emblem, or practical example, of a state of divinity that is universally attainable, he is elevated to the status of someone exceptional who can never be fully emulated and who must

therefore be worshipped, submitted to, and obeyed, thereby reinforcing the hierarchical relation Christianity posits between God and the created world.

In contrast to God the Father and God the Son, the Holy Spirit performs a largely relational role in both Eckhart's and Porete's accounts of the Trinity, as the form through which temporal beings experience the divine. In 'The Book of Divine Consolation,' Eckhart writes that "love, which is the Holy Spirit, springs and flows from the Son, and the Son loves the Father for his own sake, the Father in himself and himself in the Father" (1994: 79). Here, Eckhart equates the Holy Spirit directly with love, and states that this emanates from God the Son. In noting that "the Son loves the Father for his own sake," and that what he loves is "the Father in himself and himself in the Father," Eckhart is making the point that the object and cause of this love is God the Father: the creative, divine essence of God. This is a point that Eckhart clarifies in Sermon Nine of his German Sermons when he asks: "What is God's love?" and responds with "His essence and his being – that is his love" (1994: 139-140).

The importance of the Holy Spirit to Eckhart's conceptualisation of the relationship between the God of the Trinity and the human soul can be seen in Eckhart's claim that "If God were to be deprived of loving us, he would be deprived of his own being and divinity, for his being depends on his loving us. Thus the Holy Spirit flows forth" (1994: 139-140). The claim that Eckhart is making here is that the entire identity, function, and existence of God (as the Father) is predicated on the desire to imbue the created world and the creatures within it with divine love. If God's love, in the form of the Holy Spirit, emanates from God the Son, for the specific purpose of enabling God to be born in the soul and the soul to be born in God, the Holy Spirit can be understood as both the mechanism through which God's divine essence is made immanent within the individual soul and the form that his divinity takes. As such, the Holy Spirt, for Eckhart, is simultaneously immanent, in that, with the birth of God in the soul, it comes to reside within the soul, and transcendent, in that it emanates from outside of the soul

109

and continues to exist independently of it as the relation between God the Father and God the Son. Where the transcendence of the Holy Spirit differs most significantly from that of the other two persons of the Trinity is that although, formally, a person, it lacks the anthropomorphism of either God the Father or God the Son. This means that it does not relate to the self in the same, hierarchical manner as either of them.

Where God the Father and God the Son can be understood, on my analysis, to be fundamentally incompatible with a post-anarchist theopolitics, the Holy Spirit, in contrast represents one possible source through which it might be possible to develop a more egalitarian conception of divine sovereignty. However, while the Holy Spirit might not be directly implicated in the authoritarianism of the lordship of God the Father and God the Son, its function as the third person of the Trinity makes it difficult to extricate from the hierarchal framework of the Trinitarian God. This is also a problem, from a feminist perspective, because, as Shooter argues, if the relationship between God and the soul is conceived in terms of the relationship between a father and a son, with the Holy Spirit being the product of this relationship and the modality through which it is expressed, then there is no room for female participation in God (2014: 175). It therefore remains necessary to look beyond the Holy Spirit for an account of divinity that is able to avoid the patriarchal authoritarianism inherent to Christianity's Trinitarian strand. In doing this, it is not necessary to step out of the Christian tradition altogether. The importance attached to the metaphor of the Trinity and its anthropomorphizations of God the Father and God the Son is, as Shooter (2014) notes, largely a product of the patriarchal framework of the Early Church. It is therefore entirely possible to conceive a Christianity without the Trinity. It is for this reason that I will be arguing, in the following sections, that Eckhart's conceptualisation of the Godhead beyond God is more compatible with anarchism's egalitarianism and offers a more promising source through which to develop a post-anarchist approach to sovereignty and theopolitics more broadly.

110

The Divinisation of the Soul

In the following section, I will develop my argument that there is a fundamental incompatibility between Eckhart's representation of a pantheistic neo-Platonic God of divine essence or substance, and his account of the monotheistic, personalised God of the Trinity further. I will do this by arguing that the distinction Eckhart draws between God and the Godhead points, clearly, to the primacy of a pantheistic over a monotheistic conception of divinity in his mystical theology. This is clear, in part, in Eckhart's use of Trinitarian imagery. My contention, in this section, is that, while the imagery of the Trinity can offer a useful heuristic through which to understand the nature of the relationship between God and the soul, in view of its inherent authoritarianism, it is, ultimately, necessary to dispense with the model of the Trinity altogether. It is my contention that, by doing this, it becomes possible to release the full, anarchistic, potential latent within Eckhart's conceptualisation of the divine.

God and the Soul's Ground: between the Trinity and the One

In keeping with his broader understanding of divinity, there is a tension in Eckhart's conceptualisation of the relationship between God and the Soul between the transcendent and the immanent and between the pantheistic and the monotheistic. This tension is particularly apparent in his account of inner divinity and the soul's "ground". According to Eckhart, "God exists in all things essentially, actively and powerfully. But he is fertile in the soul alone" (Eckhart 1994: 215). This represents a pantheistic understanding of God in which God is understood in terms of divine essence. The soul, on Eckhart's account, can be understood to be comprised of a higher and a lower part that corresponds to its uncreated and created dimensions. Eckhart refers to the "highest and innermost" part of the soul in which God resides as "the ground". According to Eckhart, the ground of the soul "is free of all names and is devoid of all

forms, quite empty and free as God is empty and free in himself" (1994: 163). It is also a place "to which neither time nor the light of any image ever penetrated" in which "God creates the whole of this world" (Eckhart 1994: 123). The soul's "ground", for Eckhart, is therefore the eternal part of it, which is able to experience the divine without mediation. Consequently, Eckhart suggests, that "the truth is within, in the ground, and not without", and "whoever wishes to find light and understanding in all truth, must watch and observe this birth in themselves and in their ground" (1994: 217). This means that the ground is also the place where God is active in the soul, and from which it becomes possible to access divine "truth" or knowledge.

The transcendent, monotheistic dimension of Eckhart's account of inner divinity is evident in his use of the imagery of the Trinity to explain the process through which the soul relates to the divine. Eckhart makes use of this imagery to describe the process through which the soul relates to the divine, in its ground, in terms of the birth of God in the soul. In this account, God the Father and God the Son play the most direct role in the mediation of the divine, with the Holy Spirit more properly describing the means through which the Son and the Father are manifested in the soul's ground. Eckhart describes the nature of the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and the soul in the following way: "the Father speaks the Word and speaks in the Word and not otherwise, while Jesus speaks in the soul" (1994: 157). In drawing a distinction between God the Father's and God the Son's modalities of speaking (or of expressing their divinity) in the temporal world, the key point that Eckhart is making is that God the Father can only communicate with, or relate to the individual self, or soul, through the mediation of God the Son, who represents the incarnation of his divine Word. This means that the birth of God in the soul can only take place through, and in the form of, the person of God the Son.

In terms of the more specific roles that the three persons of the Trinity play in the birth of God in the soul, it is clear that, for Eckhart, the figure of God the Son plays the most important role. This can be seen in Eckhart's claim, in *Sermon Four* of *The German Sermons*, that, in giving birth to the Son, God the Father "makes us the same Son" (1994: 122). The nature of this identity between the soul and God the Son is clarified in Eckhart's assertion that, "if I wish to be a son of God, I must be a son in the same nature that his Son is Son" (1994: 123-124). According to Eckhart, this giving birth "is at the same time a remaining within, and his remaining within is his giving birth". The transformation of the soul enacted through the birth of God the Son can therefore be understood to give presence to God within the soul in the modality of the second person of the Trinity, with this presence taking the form of the soul's identity with the Son of God in terms of its "nature," by which Eckhart means in the uncreated modality of the Son of God as God as opposed to the created modality of the Son of God as the historical figure of Jesus Christ.

The role of the Holy Spirit in the individual's inner experience of divinity can be seen in Eckhart's assertion that "spiritual things and physical things cannot be united with each other. If divine perfection is to reign in the soul, then the soul must be spirit, as God is spirit" (1994: 230). As such, the Holy Spirit, for Eckhart, represents the medium through which the soul gives birth to God the Son. This can be seen in Eckhart's assertion that the Holy Spirit represents the power through which God the Father "bears his sole-begotten Son", which is the same power through which "the Son becomes manifest in the soul" (1994: 147, 163).

Eckhart summarises his overall understanding of the role of the different persons of the Trinity in the birth of God in the soul, through his explanation, in *Sermon Ten* of *The German Sermons*, that "it is the nature of the Son that I should be born in him and in his image", and that "it is the nature of the Holy Spirit that I should be consumed in him, dissolved in him and transformed wholly into love" (1994: 147). The soul can therefore be understood to gain

identity with the divine through its identification with the divine nature of God the Son, which is the product of God the Father, with the Holy Spirit functioning as the medium through which the birth of God the Son takes place within the soul and through which the soul is dissolved into God in the modality of divine love.

The implications of Eckhart's account of the relationship between the human and the divine are that the soul is (or, at least, has the capacity to be) simultaneously human and divine. One of the key qualities that distinguishes the human from the divine (or the created from the uncreated) is their different relation to temporality. According to Eckhart, the Father gives birth to the Son in the ground of the soul to create "an eternal present-time or Now" that enables the soul to flow into being and to receive the imprint of God's image (1994: 138). As such, it represents "the eternal birth of the Son" in the ground of the soul (Eckhart 1994:123-124). This means that the nature of the divinity in the soul's ground that results from the birth of the Son within it therefore differs from the divinity with which the created world is infused, more generally, in that it gives access to an experience of eternity that is able to overcome the constraints of temporal perception that distinguish the divine from the human (or the uncreated from the created). The effect of this experience of the eternal and the "divine power" in which we are, through it, established, is, according to Eckhart, that "neither joy nor grief, nor anything which God has created in time, can destroy us" (1994: 157). This means, as Schurmann puts it, that "in the 'ground', man lives in God and God in him; but in his creaturehood, man is of the world" (2001: 85).

Eckhart's Trinitarian account of inner divinity has clear implications for our understanding of his approach to divine sovereignty. According to Eckhart, the birth of God the Son in the soul takes the form of Jesus's revelation of himself as "an infinite wisdom which he himself is" (1994: 157). The revelation of God the Son's divine wisdom, Eckhart suggests, enables God the Father to know himself, through this same divine wisdom, as this divine

wisdom is an expression of the "Word" through which God the Father is made incarnate in the Son. The effect of God the Son's revelation of his divine wisdom is, Eckart argues, to unite the soul in this same wisdom so that "all doubt, all falsehood and all darkness is removed from her and she is placed in a pure, clear light which is God himself" (1994: 157). As a consequence of God's divine wisdom, the soul comes to know itself with and in this divine wisdom and the divine comes to know the soul with and in the same wisdom. This wisdom, in turn, leads the soul to know "the Father's sovereignty" in its "fertile generative power" as well as its "essential is-ness in simple unity without distinction" (1994: 157). For Eckhart, then, the main purpose and effect of the experience of divine unity gained through the birth of God the Son in the soul is to enable the soul to gain knowledge of God the Father's sovereignty. It is worth stressing that, although God's divinity is immanent to the human soul, the soul only gains access to this divine immanence through "the birth of God … and in no other way" (1994: 215). This means that, for Eckhart, the presence of the divine within the soul remains contingent on the power and activity of God in his transcendent, sovereign modality as God the Father. This distinction between God and the soul functions to maintain the ontological differentiation between God as divine essence or being, and "God the Lord" as *a* (triune) being, as well as that between God the Lord (or creator) and the created world.

Eckhart's Trinitarian account of the birth of God in the soul therefore maintains a fundamental separation between the created and the uncreated (or the human and the divine). This separation has clear hierarchical, authoritarian, and patriarchal dimensions in that God the Father is explicitly presented as having sovereignty over the created world and over humankind, particularly, through the mediation of God the Son. Eckhart's account of the soul's access to the divine is therefore a problem, from an anarchist point of view, primarily because of the nature of the hierarchical power relation it assumes. The figure of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, is presented, in Eckhart's account of the birth of God in the soul as an exceptional,

supernatural figure who it is necessary for the individual to dissolve his or her own personal identity in as a means of inducing the birth of God the Son in the soul. This places humankind, and the created world, more generally, in a fundamentally unequal relationship with both God the Father and God the Son, in that it becomes impossible for the individual to gain access to God the Father without their explicit identification with God the Son. This means that, rather than functioning merely as a one model or exemplar for how it might be possible for the individual to gain access to the divine, the figure of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, is elevated to the position of the unique arbiter of the soul's access to the divine and therefore, on the terms of Christian soteriology, the salvation that God the Father makes possible through God the Son. Understood in political theological terms, Eckhart's representation of the role of the Trinitarian God in the divinization of the soul can perhaps be understood best, therefore, to support an authoritarian (and patriarchal) model of temporal sovereignty in which the well-being of the political community is dependent on the absolute subjection of its members to the lordship of God the Father and God the Son.

Between the God of the Symbolic and the God of the Real

The main argument I have been making so far in this chapter is that there is a fundamental tension in Eckhart's approach to divinity between the transcendence of his monotheistic, Trinitarian God and the immanence of his neo-Platonic, pantheistic God. In the following section, I will be focussing on Eckhart's conceptualisation of the Godhead, and the distinction he draws between the Godhead and God. It will be my contention that, by drawing on Lacan's conceptualisation of the three psychic orders of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, it is possible to understand this distinction, more clearly, in terms of the difference between a God of the Symbolic and a God of the Real. I will make the further argument that Eckhart's pantheistic conception of the Godhead represents a deconstruction of the

monotheistic God of the Trinity. I will therefore be making the claim that while, in view of the subject's constitution in and through the Symbolic order, a distinction between the Symbolic God and the Real God must be maintained, Eckhart's understanding of the nature of God becomes more coherent if his conception of the God/Godhead distinction is detached from Christianity's Trinitarian framework altogether. This will then enable me to make the further argument that, by jettisoning Eckhart's monotheistic Trinitarian God, it becomes possible to conceive a wholly pantheistic approach to divinity that, while maintaining the distinction between a God of the Real and a God of the Symbolic, avoids the authoritarianism implicit in Eckhart's representation of the relation between God and the soul. My final claim will be that a conceptualisation of divinity of this type can form the basis of a post-anarchist theopolitics centred on the sovereignty of the Godhead.

The Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real

Lacan's approach to psychoanalysis is grounded in the ontological distinction he draws between the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. The Imaginary can be understood as "the order of identification with images" and therefore of relations between the self and the other (Grosz 1990: 43-46). As such, it is the order of the ego and the series of imaginary identifications through which the ego is formed and constituted (MacCannell 2016: 72-73; Chiesa 2007: 14-16). The Symbolic can be understood to comprise both "the network of signifying systems in which we live" and the semiotic dimensions of the social order this network of signifying systems functions to produce (Hollywood 2002: 157). Where the Symbolic differs from the Imaginary is in that it "insists beyond the limit of life and death", meaning that it is both precedes and succeeds the individuated body that is inserted into it as a subject (Eyers 2012: 113). The Real, by contrast, is both what persists beyond the Symbolic and "that which resists and compels symbolization" (Butler 1993: 39; Chiesa 2007: 128). As

such, it is impossible to the extent that it is inaccessible from within the framework of the Symbolic order to which the subject accedes as part of its constitution as a subject, and can only be posited, retroactively, from the subject's position within the Imaginary and Symbolic orders (Eyers 2012: 81; Lacan 2016: 118).

In terms of the relationship between the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, where reality "is generated across the registers of the Imaginary and the Symbolic", the Real can be understood as the internal condition of the emergence of the Imaginary and Symbolic orders (Eyers 2012: 4, 64). However, the Real can be conceptualized and represented "only through the reconstructive or inferential work of the imaginary and symbolic orders (Grosz 1990: 34). This means, as Lacan (2016) argues in Seminar XXIII, that the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are mutually dependent on and inextricable from each other. It is therefore necessary to conceive each of the three orders as mutually constitutive of one another rather than as external to or separable from each other (Zizek 2003: 69-70; Chiesa 2007: 123).

From God to the Godhead

In the following sub-sections I will be drawing on Lacan's conceptualisation of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real to elucidate Eckhart's account of the relationship between God and the godhead and as a means of developing a post-anarchist understanding of divinity that can form part of a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics. The difference between God and the Godhead in Eckhart's theology can be understood, broadly, in terms of the difference between God as *a* being and God as being. This can be seen in Eckhart's assertion that "God acts, while the Godhead does not act" (1994: 234). "God", here, can be understood as the Trinitarian God, while "the Godhead" can be understood as God's divine essence. The Trinitarian God "acts" in the sense that, in Eckhart's pneumatology, the three persons of the Trinity all perform distinct roles in the transmission of the divine from the creator God to the

created world. The Godhead, in contrast, "does not act" because it represents the form that this divinity takes. Significantly, Eckhart stresses that "all creatures are in God and are his own Godhead" (1994: 182), so that there is "one Godhead, since nothing yet flows forth there, nothing is moved or thought" (1994: 182). This means that, for Eckhart, the Godhead both exceeds and remains ontologically prior to God and the created world through which God is constituted as God.

The centrality of Eckhart's pantheism to his conception of the Godhead can be seen in his assertion that "all that is in the Godhead is One" (1994: 234). According to Eckhart, "One" is "that to which nothing has been added", or "the negation of negation" (1994: 182). Eckhart argues that "all creatures contain a negation within themselves", but that "with God there is a negation of negation: he is one and negates all else, since there is nothing outside God" (1994: 182). The "negation of negation", or "One", to which nothing has been added is God's divine essence. Nothing has been added to it because it is the pure, undifferentiated divinity from out of which the concept of negation and the capacity to negate flow. The negation contained within all creatures relates to the co-existence of the created and the uncreated, or the divine and the non-divine in the soul. On Eckhart's account, the uncreated, or divine part of all creatures can be found, as I noted in the previous sub-section, in the soul's ground. In claiming that, with God there is "a negation of negation", Eckhart is making the point that, in contrast to God's creatures, God (in the form of the Godhead) is pure, undifferentiated divine essence and, within the unity of this essence, the possibility for negation no longer exists.

In terms of the relationship between the Godhead and the soul, this means that, to gain unity with the Godhead, "the soul takes the Godhead where it is purified in itself, where nothing has been added to it, where nothing has been thought" (Eckhart 1994: 182). This is in the uncreated ground of the soul. According to Eckhart, it is therefore only "in Oneness that God is found", meaning that "they who would find God must themselves become One" (1994: 104).

This means that the pure, undifferentiated, divine essence encapsulated in the Godhead needs to be united with the uncreated, divine part, or "ground", of the soul to create the space for a negation of negation in which the soul might overcome its constitutive negation to find God, as the Godhead, and, in doing so, experience (albeit fleetingly) the unity of the divine.

The distinction Eckhart draws between God and Godhead can be understood, broadly, in terms of the difference between the representational and the non-representational dimensions of the divine (or, in Lacanian terms, between the Symbolic and the Real). According to Eckhart, "God 'becomes' God when all creatures speak God forth: there 'God' is born" (1994: 181-182). This means that "God" becomes a part of the Symbolic order, as a signifier, at the point where an attempt is made to capture the meaning, or convey the experience of, the divine through language. The claim that Eckhart makes is that, to gain access to the Godhead, the soul needs to "transcend God himself, in so far as he is concealed by this name, or by any name" (1994: 256). This, he explains, is because God cannot penetrate the soul's ground "unless all that has been added to him is first stripped away" (Eckhart 1994: 181-182). This means that, to gain access to the divine, it is necessary to move beyond a rational understanding of God to a direct experience of God in which the soul relates to the divine without the mediation of the signifier. When this happens, "God 'unbecomes'" and the Godhead can enter the soul's ground, in which there is no longer a distinction between God and the soul (Eckhart 1994: 234). For Eckhart, the Godhead can therefore be considered to represent the Real of divinity, in which God is stripped of its signifying power and the divine essence is encountered, directly, without the mediation of the Symbolic. This means that, for Eckhart, the persons of the Trinity can be understood to represent the form in which God is encountered in the Symbolic order, with the Godhead representing the form in which God is encountered in the Real.

The Godhead and the Trinity

120

In keeping with the broader distinction Eckhart draws between God and the Godhead, Eckhart's account of the dissolution of the Trinity in the Godhead demonstrates a clear privileging of the Godhead over the Trinitarian God in terms of the soul's relation to and experience of the divine. In Sermon Seven of his German sermons, Eckhart argues that "the soul's spark" (the phrase Eckhart sometimes uses as an alternative to the soul's ground) "is opposed to all creatures and desires nothing but God, naked, just as he is in himself" (1994: 135). This means, he suggests, that it "is not satisfied with the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit, nor with the three Persons together, as far as each exists in their particularity", and desires, instead, "to penetrate to the simple ground, to the still desert, into which distinction never peeped, neither Father, Son nor Holy Spirit" (Eckhart 1994: 135-136). According to Eckhart, this ground of God, (or the Godhead), enables the soul to become "united and sanctified in the soul's spark, which is untouched by either space or time" (1994: 135-136). For Eckhart, then, the uniting of the soul in its ground with God in its ground is contingent on the soul's ability to bypass the signifying function of the Trinity, and the mediation of experience through language that characterises the "created" (or spatio-temporal) world in which the Trinity operates as a signifier in the Symbolic order.

If, on Eckhart's account, the soul needs to actively transform itself in order to allow the Godhead to enter into its ground, God also needs to actively transform himself in order to enable the soul to access him in its ground. This is apparent from Eckhart's assertion that:

> So unified and simple is the 'citadel' in the soul … and so far above all particular manners and all power is this single oneness, that no power or manner can ever look into it, not even God himself … in so far as he exists in the manner and individual nature of his Persons … He must be simple oneness, without mode or individual nature, in which he is neither Father nor Son nor Holy Spirit (1994: 163-164).

The "'citadel' in the soul is on of the other synonyms Eckhart sometimes uses in his German sermons to refer to the soul's ground. The soul's ground, as I noted earlier on, represents the "uncreated", or non-Symbolic dimensions of the soul, and can therefore be understood to be consonant with the Lacanian Real. If the soul needs to be active in bypassing its created dimensions to realise its desire to be united with God, God, on this account, also needs to be active in stripping away all that is added to him so that he might be transformed from the Symbolic God of the Trinity into the Godhead, or Real God, and realise his desire to be united with the soul. Eckhart's reference to "the manner and individual nature" of God's persons relates to the process of individuation or differentiation inherent to the Trinitarian personification of the divine. As Schurmann notes, this entails "the negation of God as the Father, Son, and Spirit, and even of God 'insofar as he is God'" (2001: 69-70). The point that Eckhart is making is therefore that it is necessary to return to the undifferentiated "oneness" of the Godhead (or, in Lacanian terms, the God of the Real) for God to become active in the soul. This means that, just as the soul is required to seek God in his ground (or as the Godhead), God is required to transform himself from the personified modalities of the three persons of the trinity into the Godhead in order to access and make himself accessible to the soul in its ground. In Lacanian terms, this means that God and the soul can only gain unicity in the Real.

The fact that it is necessary for the Trinitarian God to return to its own ground, in the form of the Godhead, in order for God to access the soul's ground means that the Godhead clearly has primacy over the God of the Trinity in Eckhart's theology (in terms, at least, of the soul's access to the divine). As Fagge and Jackson identify, it is Eckhart's insistence that "in the same way that the Persons receive their divinity from the essence as the First Cause, humanity also receives a bit of the essence of God as 'the light of the spirit' or 'a spark'" that, in fact, places Eckhart most clearly "beyond the limits of the Christian tradition" (2016: 66).

122

This is, primarily, because Eckhart understands divinity to be immanent to both the soul and the Trinitarian God, rather than as something that is located exclusively in the God of the Trinity (Fagge and Jackson 2016: 66). Eckhart's account of the relationship between God and the Godhead remains problematic, from a post-anarchist perspective, however, insofar as it assumes the actual existence of God as an agential being who is able to transform himself from God to the Godhead. Nevertheless, if Eckhart's account of the relationship between the human and the divine is read in purely metaphorical terms, it provides a valuable illustration of the process through which the subject is required to bypass the Symbolic order in order to encounter God in the Real. What is important, however, is that, regardless of how literally his account of the Trinity is taken, Eckhart clearly subordinates the transcendent, monotheistic God of the Trinity (or God of the Symbolic) to a pantheistic God (or God of the Real). And it is in this specific modality of the God of the Real that Eckhart's God can contribute to a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics.

From the Godhead back to God again

If Eckhart privileges the Godhead over the God of the Trinity in his account of the experience of the divine, this does not mean that the persons of the Trinity do not continue to play key roles in his understanding of the individual's relation to God. This can be seen in the following extracts from 'The Book of Divine Consolation' and 'the German Sermons'. In keeping with his account of the necessity for the dissolution of the Trinity in the Godhead, in 'The Book of Divine Consolation', Eckhart refers to the Godhead as "the One which is free of all multiplicity and distinction, in which God-Father-Son-and-Holy Spirit sheds and is stripped of all distinctions and properties, and is One" (1994: 78). This extract represents an account of the process I outlined in the previous section through which the persons of the Trinity are

dissolved in "the One" of the Godhead as the soul encounters the God in the Real. However, Eckhart goes on to argue that:

> the further we are from the One, the less we are the sons and Son of God and the less perfectly the Holy Spirit rises up in us and flows forth from us; while, on the other hand, the closer we are to the One, the more truly we are God's sons and Son, and the more truly God-the-Holy-Spirit flows forth from us (Eckhart 1994: 78-79).

Where this extract differs from the ones I discussed in the previous section is in the closer attention it pays to the movement not only from the Trinity to the Godhead, but from the Godhead back to the Trinity again. This represents a Christological understanding of the individual soul's meeting with the Godhead to the extent that, as a result of this meeting, the individual becomes both one of "God's sons" (God's divinity has been born within the individual's soul) and "Son" (the individual is in the same, deified condition as Jesus Christ, the Son of God). The qualifier "the more truly" before "God's sons and Son" is significant because, if there are different degrees to which the individual can become God's sons and Son, then it means that this is a temporary condition in which the extent of the soul's coincidence with the divine increases the closer the soul comes to the Real of the Godhead, is realised during the moment of its dissolution in it, and then decreases as the soul regains its integrity and moves away from it and back to the Symbolic, once again.

Eckhart elaborates on the relationship between the Godhead and the Trinity further in his German sermons. In these sermons, Eckhart's account of the image of the divine is crucial to our understanding of how he conceptualises the soul's relation to the Godhead and the Trinity. In Sermon Thirty, Eckhart states that:

124

The divine idea takes personal form in the Son. Therefore the Son is the blueprint of all creatures and is an image of the Father, in which image the being of all creatures is suspended. Now as the soul loses her created being, she sees the light of the uncreated image, in which the soul finds her own uncreatedness, for all things are one in this image and in the nature of this image (1994: 245).

"The divine idea takes personal form in the Son" means that the Son represents the personification of divinity in the created world. The Son therefore represents both the image of God the Father and "the blueprint of all creatures" (or the form that all subsequent created being will also take). "The being of all creatures is suspended in this image" presumably because, as part of the created world and its mediation of experience through the symbolic structure of language, it is only possible to relate to the 'image' or representation of the divine, meaning that the direct experience of the divine as eternal being is 'suspended', or foreclosed, as long as the creature remains within the Symbolic. The soul losing her created being can be understood, in Lacanian terms, to refer to the process through which the subject moves from the Symbolic to the Real. According to Eckhart it is this movement that enables the Soul to see "the light of the uncreated image". The uncreated image is uncreated because it is divine. It is therefore by seeing this uncreated image of the divine in its passage from the Symbolic to the Real that enables the soul to discover "her own uncreatedness" as part of the unicity of the divine. Significantly, in making this point, Eckhart states that "all things are one in this image and in the nature of this image". If all things are one "in this image", then the implication is that the divine image of the Son is an image of the unicity of the divine essence of which the soul is also a part. In drawing a distinction between the image of the divine and the nature of the image of the divine, Eckhart is making the point that Christ, as an image, or signifier, represents the unicity of the divine in created form and, at the same time, is divine in nature, or

essence, and thus demonstrative of the soul's own, uncreated, unicity with the divine in its ground.

In the same sermon, Eckhart goes on to talk, more explicitly, about the role of the figure of Jesus Christ in the individual's access to the Godhead and experience of eternal being:

> The eternal being in which the soul finds herself is the property of the eternal image in multiplicity – since the Persons are distinct from one another – and so the soul breaks through her eternal image in order to penetrate to where God is rich in unicity … Christ says: 'No one comes to the Father except through me' (John 14: 6). Christ is the eternal image. Now the soul should not remain in him but rather must pass through him, as he himself says. This breaking-through is the second death of the soul, which is far greater than the first (1994: 245-246).

The "eternal being" the soul finds itself in is the experience of God in the Real. The word "property", in this extract, carries the meaning of both quality and possession. The eternal being Eckhart describes is therefore the property of "the eternal image in multiplicity" because it both emanates from and has likeness to the eternal image which, as I noted above, represents the Son of God as the incarnation of the divine in the created, or temporal, world. The eternal image (or Son of God) is "in multiplicity" because it is part of the world of objects within the Symbolic order. It is because of this that Eckhart insists that, in order to gain "unicity" with God and the "eternal being" this implies, it is necessary to break through the image of God the Son to reach "the Father", who, in this instance, represents the undifferentiated, divine essence, or Godhead (the God of the Real) that is the first cause of the eternal as an image, or signifier. Eckhart's interpretation of Christ's assertion that "No one comes to the Father except through me" therefore represents a radical inversion of traditional Catholic doctrine. Rather than meaning

126

that it is only possible to come to God the Father (understood in terms of the soul's access to salvation) through the belief that Christ is the Son of God, the emulation of his example, or obedience to his teaching (as in more standard Christian interpretations of the particular biblical passage Eckhart cites), Eckhart is arguing, here, that this means that it is necessary to break through the eternal image of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, in order to reach the Real that the image of Christ attempts to represent: the unicity of the divine essence. However, this does not mean that the figure of Jesus Christ does not still play a crucial role in Eckhart's understanding of how the soul comes to access God in the Godhead. In stating that "the soul should not remain in him but rather must pass through him", Eckhart is making the point that, while the soul needs to break through the eternal image of Jesus Christ to experience the eternal being of the divine essence, it is still necessary for the soul to be "in" Jesus Christ (or, in other words, to identify with his eternal image by becoming sons of God through the birth of God the Son in the soul). The point that Eckhart is making is that it is necessary to make an initial identification with the image of Jesus Christ as God the Son, but that this is only a preliminary step as, in making this identification, the soul is identifying with a particular Person of the Trinity, and therefore with the differentiated and mediated God of the Symbolic. It is therefore necessary to take the further step of passing through the image of Jesus Christ to the unicity of the Godhead to experience eternal being. From the point of view of the anarchist critique of Eckhart's conception of the divine that I am arguing for, what is perhaps most significant about this extract is the importance Eckhart attaches to the figure of Christ for the individual's access to the Godhead. In arguing that the soul can only experience eternal being by first identifying (and then becoming identical) with Christ, Eckhart holds on to a hierarchical understanding of the Trinity in which the figure of Christ is elevated above all others. Although, ultimately, the soul needs to move beyond its identification with the figure of Christ as the image of the divine, it continues to stand in a fundamentally unequal relationship to it in that the soul remains reliant

on the image of Christ to gain access to the Godhead and the more radical equality that the soul's dissolution in the divine essence implies. In terms of the anarchist theopolitcs I want to develop, this is a problem for two reasons. From a soteriological perspective, it positions Christianity and, more precisely, the particular historical figure of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, as the exclusive arbiter of the individual's salvation. Similarly, from a theopolitical perspective, it positions Christianity and the historical figure of Jesus Christ, as Son of God, as the exclusive source and site of sovereignty. In doing so, it precludes the possibility of any other religious or spiritual traditions from offering a viable route to the soul's unicity with God in the Real and, with this, to the Godhead (or God of the Real) as a source of theopolitical sovereignty.

This is a point that is reinforced by an analysis of Eckhart's account of the role of grace in the mediation of the human and divine. According to Eckhart:

The soul can discover the kingdom only with the help of the grace which inheres naturally within the highest image. Here the soul is God, savouring and delighting in all things as God. And here the soul receives nothing from God nor from creatures, since she it is who contains herself and receives all things from herself. Here the soul and the Godhead are one, and here the soul has discovered that she herself is the kingdom of God (1994: 249).

If grace inheres in the image, this means that the individual's experience of grace is a product of the soul gaining access to "the highest image", which equates to the "eternal image" of the incarnated God described above. Or, to put it in Lacanian terms, it is a natural consequence of the soul evading its mediated access to the divine in the Symbolic to discover "the kingdom of God" where the soul has identity with God in the Real and in which there is no distinction

between God and the soul. Eckhart's account of the role of grace in the mediation of the human and the divine eschews more orthodox medieval Catholic conceptions of God as a supernatural, anthropomorphic deity who dispenses grace directly to the individual soul, and on whose benevolence the individual is therefore dependent for its salvation. However, by insisting that the soul can discover the kingdom of God "only" through the grace that inheres to "the highest image", Eckhart continues, nevertheless, to position the Son of God as the exclusive site through which access to God in the Real is mediated. This means that the soul remains structurally dependent on the transcendent power of the Trinitarian God for its salvation.

Eckhart describes the culmination of the soul breaking through the eternal image of the incarnated God (and of the Trinity, more generally), in terms of the soul's return to its "first imageless image". This can be seen in Sermon Eight of the German Sermons, where Eckhart states that:

> the Holy Spirit flowers from the work in God, from the birth in which the Father generates his only begotten Son and from this outflowing in such a way that it proceeds from them both and the soul flows forth in this procession. The image of the Godhead is impressed on the soul, and in the flowing out and flowing together of the three Persons the soul flows back and is formed back into its own first imageless image (Eckhart 1994: 137).

This extract provides a useful summary of the role of all three persons of the Trinity in Eckhart's account of the relationship between the Godhead, the Trinity, and the soul. As I noted in my analysis of the first extract in this section, the Holy Spirit represents the modality through which the divine manifests itself as a relation between God the Father and God the Son, and between God the Son and the individual soul. Eckhart connects his Trinitarian understanding

of God to the Godhead through the assertion that, in the flowering and outflowing of the Holy Spirit in the Soul, "the image of the Godhead is impressed on the soul". This means that, as a result of the birth of God the Son in the soul and the subsequent emergence of the Holy Spirit within it, the soul gains access to the image of the Godhead. Eckhart's inclusion of the word "image" in the second sentence is important in that, as I have argued above in relation to the "eternal image", it suggests that, in the Trinitarian mode Eckhart describes, rather than gaining direct access to the divine, in the form of the Godhead, the soul's access to the Godhead is mediated through the semiotic structure of "the image". However, in the final clause of the sentence, Eckhart goes on to state that "in the flowing out and flowing together of the three Persons" (or in the generation of the three Persons from the divine essence and their return to it as the Godhead) the soul also "flows back" into "its own first imageless image". "The flowing out and flowing together of the three Persons" refers to the dissolution of the Trinity in the One of the Godhead. It can therefore be assumed that the image of the Godhead impressed on the soul is the soul's ground. If the image is "impressed on the soul," it means there is still a clear ontological distinction between the image and the soul. As such, it remains part of the Symbolic order of temporal existence and the semiotic processes on which the created world depends. In the "flowing together" of the three Persons into the One, however, the soul moves from a Symbolic to a Real relation to God. This, in turn, functions to transform the soul into "its own first imageless image". This "first imageless image" is a further reference to the soul's ground. The soul's ground, as I suggested above, is an image of the Godhead. It is an image because, as a product of God's creation, it necessarily represents a part of the process of differentiation initiated by the act of creation and, as such, takes the form of a signifier within the Symbolic order that the process of differentiation creates. It is its own first image because this is how it appears at the point of its creation. It is imageless because, at this point, it has not entered into the Symbolic and so does not yet function as an image (or as a signifier for other signifiers

[Lacan 1993: 184]). It is therefore through the impression of the Godhead on the soul by the combined work of the three Persons of the Trinity, that the soul is able to gain direct access to the uncreated, or divine part of itself ("its own first imageless image") in its ground. This means that not only is the soul dependent on the persons of the Trinity (and, as I have argued in the preceding extracts in this section, the figure of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, in particular) for its access to the divine; it is also dependent on the persons of the Trinity for the creation of the ontological conditions that enable this access to be possible at all. The problem then, from an anarchist point of view, is that, while Eckhart's account of the meeting between the soul and the Godhead in the soul's ground presents a radical challenge to the late Medieval Catholic Church's assertion of the absolute transcendence of God insofar as it offers a vision of the soul's radical equality with the divine in its dissolution in the eternal being of the God of the Real, Eckhart's incorporation of the concepts of the Godhead and the ground into the more traditional pneumatological framework of the Trinitarian God functions to re-inscribe the authoritarianism implicit in the hierarchical model of the Trinity on which the soteriology of the late Medieval Catholic Church is based.

Towards a Mystical Post-Anarchism

A Post-anarchist Reading of Eckhart's Mystical God

The first argument I started to make in this chapter was that there is a tension in the Christian conceptualisation of God between God's immanence and transcendence, and that, in Eckhart's neo-Platonic reading of the Trinitarian God, God's transcendence is captured in the monotheistic imagery of the three persons of the Trinity, while God's immanence is expressed in his pantheistic account of the Godhead as the neo-Platonic One. The second argument I have made is that, by drawing on Lacan, it becomes possible to distinguish between what I have been referring to as the God of the Symbolic and the God of the Real and that it is necessary to

privilege Eckhart's pantheistic God of the Godhead (or God of the Real) over his monotheistic God of the Trinity (or God of the Symbolic) to develop the latent anarchism of Eckhart's conceptualisation of the divine more fully. The third argument I have begun to make is that, while the Trinitarian imagery Eckhart employs has some use as a metaphorical device, it assumes a hierarchical model of divine sovereignty that is incompatible with the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I am interested in developing. The final argument I want to make (in relation to Eckhart's conceptualisation of the divine) is that, while, given the impossibility of the subject's access to the Real in perpetuity, a distinction between the God of the Symbolic and the God of the Real must be maintained, it is necessary, in maintaining this distinction, to detach Eckhart's God of the Godhead from the Trinitarian framework in which it is embedded more fully to ensure the compatibility of Eckhart's God with a post-anarchist theopolitics.

To briefly recapitulate my first argument, in Christian theology, God is conceived as being simultaneously immanent and transcendent and simultaneously personal and impersonal. There is an inevitable tension between these different characteristics of God that, I have suggested, can be understood in terms of a tension between a monotheistic and a pantheistic impulse within the Christian faith. In Eckhart's mystical approach to Christianity, this tension is captured in Eckhart's synthesis of Trinitarianism with neo-Platonism. The key difference between these two strands of Eckhart's thought is that where Eckhart's neo-Platonic God is understood, in pantheistic terms as 'eternal being', his Trinitarian God is understood as '*an* eternal being'. I have suggested that there is a fundamental incompatibility between the monotheistic and pantheistic strands of Eckhart's thought that relates, primarily, to the personalisation of God. In Eckhart's adoption of the neo-Platonic 'One', God is represented, in pantheistic terms, as divine essence / substance (or eternal being). In his adoption of the orthodox Christian imagery of the Trinity, by contrast, God is represented in (mono)theistic terms as a triune being comprised of three distinct persons, two of which – God the Father and

God the Son – are represented in strongly anthropomorphic terms. This distinction between God as eternal being and God as *an* eternal being is problematic, from an anarchist perspective, because the conceptualisation of God as *a* being, as I argued in Chapter One, represents a fundamentally hierarchical and authoritarian understanding of the relationship between God and the human person. The representation of God in exclusively masculine terms is also problematic, from a feminist perspective, in that this represents a specifically patriarchal form of authoritarianism. While Eckhart's partial neo-Platonicization of the imagery of the Trinity goes some way to resolving this problem, his reading of the Trinity is ultimately unable to find a way past the authoritarian and patriarchal conception of sovereignty this implies.

A Lacanian reading of Eckhart's Trinitarian God as the God of the Symbolic helps point to the representative character of the signifiers God and the Trinity and the impossibility of the attempts they constitute to represent the Real of a God that is fundamentally unrepresentable. However, whether the signifiers God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are understood to represent actually existing manifestations of God in personified form, or, whether they are understood as purely imaginary attempts to represent the Real through metaphorical means, Eckhart's use of the image of the Trinity remains problematic, from an anarchist perspective, because it represents God as a person God who, in the modalities of both the Father and the Son, has lordship over the created world. This means that, even if Eckhart's reading of the Trinity is accorded a primarily metaphorical status, it still has the effect of inscribing a fundamentally hierarchical, patriarchal, and authoritarian relationship between the human and the divine. One of the key problems with this, from the perspective of an anarchist theopolitics, is that, when this model of divine sovereignty is transposed to a political theological context, it has the effect of naturalising and legitimating equally authoritarian, hierarchical, and patriarchal models of political sovereignty.

The final argument I want to make in this section is that, if Eckhart's Trinitarianism is fundamentally incompatible with a post-anarchist theopolitics, it is necessary to detach Eckhart's God from its Trinitarian framework entirely. As I have been arguing throughout this chapter, Eckhart's God is the product of his synthesis of the Christian tradition of Trinitarianism with the neo-Platonism of figures such as Plotinus, Proclus, and Dionysius the Areopagite. As Fagge and Jackson note, one of the key propositions the late Medieval Church inquisitors condemned as heretical in Eckhart's work is what they interpreted as the pantheism of his assertion of the unicity of God (Fagge and Jackson 2016: 57). This assertion was a problem for Eckhart's inquisitors because, if God is one with no distinction, then it calls into question both the necessity for and viability of the persons of the Trinity. While, as I think it is clear from my analysis in this chapter, Eckhart, in fact, goes to great lengths to integrate his neo-Platonist account of the oneness of God into a Trinitarian framework, his inquisitors were, nevertheless, correct in identifying the heretical potential of Eckhart's assertion of God's unicity. And it is precisely this heretical potential (which, I am arguing, is also its anarchistic potential) that I am interested in developing here.

If it is accepted that, in view of the temporary nature of the subject's encounter with the Real, there must, necessarily, be both a God of the Symbolic and a God of the Real, the question this then raises is whether the God of the Symbolic must also be a Trinitarian God. Perhaps the key point that emerges from a Lacanian reading of Eckhart's conceptualisation of divinity is that the Trinitarian personification of God is incapable of capturing either the nature of God or the inner experience of the divine that it purports to represent. This being the case, the image of the Trinity can therefore be considered as just one of many possible failed attempts to represent the Real of divinity in terms of its manifestation in the Symbolic. So, if Eckhart's neo-Platonic conceptualisation of the Godhead functions to undercut his more orthodox Trinitarianism by demonstrating the necessity of moving past the image of the Trinity to

encounter the Godhead beyond God; if the authoritarian dimensions of Eckhart's Trinitarian God are incompatible with anarchism's commitment to non-domination and egalitarianism; and if, at the same time, it is possible to maintain a distinction between a God of the Symbolic and a God of the Real without recourse to the problematic imagery of the Trinity, then it is also possible to provide a post-anarchist account of Eckhart's God that dispenses with the Trinity altogether. By doing this, it becomes possible to conceive a more fully pantheistic God of the Godhead that relates to the soul in a non-hierarchical way and that can therefore operate, much less problematically, as the foundation for a post-anarchist theopolitics.

The Sovereignty of the Godhead

In the final part of this section I will start to explore how Eckhart's mystical theology can contribute to the elaboration of an approach to divine sovereignty derived from a pantheistic, post-anarchist reading of Ekhart's God that foregrounds the immanence of the Godhead (or God of the Real) rather than the transcendence of the Trinitarian God (or the God of the Symbolic, more generally). This will then enable me, in the final section of this chapter, to explore the political theological implications of a sovereignty of the Godhead in terms of the role that it might play, as an approach to political sovereignty, within a post-anarchist theopolitics. The argument I have been making so far in this chapter is that, by focussing on Eckhart's God of the Godhead and bypassing his God of the Trinity, it becomes possible to conceive an understanding of divinity that is able to avoid some of the more problematic aspects of Christianity in terms of its reliance on a hierarchical and patriarchal understanding of the relation between the human and the divine. The final argument I want to make in this chapter is that a post-anarchist reading of Eckhart's account of divine sovereignty, it becomes possible to formulate an anarchist theopolitics, based on the sovereignty on the Godhead, that, on a theological level, is able to avoid the authoritarian implications of a Trinitarian model of

divine sovereignty and, on a political level, is able to offer a more convincing route out of the authoritarian paradigm of political sovereignty in which existing approaches to anarchist theopolitics remain trapped.

To make this argument, I will also be drawing on the work of Marguerite Porete. This will enable me to contrast Eckhart's Trinitarian account of "the Father's sovereignty" (1994: 157) with Porete's account of the sovereignty of the Godhead (1993: 156). In his account of the Father's sovereignty, Eckhart describes the presence of God in the soul in terms of "the Father's sovereignty in fertile generative power, and essential is-ness in simple unity without distinction" (1994: 157). In doing so, he associates God the Father with the divine essence out of which the created world was generated. This can be seen, then, to represent an embryonic formulation of an approach to sovereignty that is derived from the experience of God's immanence or, in Lacanian terms, of God in the Real. The main problem with this attempt is that, in drawing on the figure of God the Father as his primary source of inspiration, Eckhart situates his account of divine sovereignty squarely within the framework of the Trinity. This means that, in spite of his attempts to foreground both the immanent and the pantheistic dimensions of God in his description of God the Father, Eckhart's recourse to the imagery of the Trinity means that, when understood within the context of his broader understanding of the Trinity and the lordship of both God the Father and God the Son, his approach to divine sovereignty remains trapped within the same authoritarian paradigm as the Trinity, more broadly.

This is a problem that Porete is largely able to avoid through her location of the source of divine sovereignty in the Godhead. In her account of the annihilated soul, Porete makes the claim that, so long as the soul "is in the Being by which God makes her to be" and "is thus unencumbered in all aspects", she "loses her name in the One in whom she is melted and dissolved through Himself and in Himself" (Porete 1993: 158). In participating in this

experience, the soul, according to Porete "rises in sovereignty" (1993: 158). This means that, as a result of its annihilation, the soul "is in the sovereign state where … [i]f she does any exterior thing, it is always without herself. If God does His work in her, it is by Him in her, without herself, for her sake" (1993: 156). Porete's description of "the Being by which God makes her to be" equates more or less directly to Eckhart's understanding of "eternal being". The state of eternal being that the "unencumbered" (or annihilated) soul is able to experience takes the form of the soul's dissolution in "the One", or God in the form of the divine essence. As a part of this process of annihilation, the soul "loses her name" as it moves from an encounter with God, in the Symbolic, in which the soul and God represent two distinct signifiers and ontological entities, to the direct experience of God in the Real that evades the processes of signification altogether, and in which God and the soul are indistinguishable. For Porete, then, sovereignty represents this condition of annihilation in which it is no longer possible to distinguish between the soul and God, and in which, therefore, any action that the soul performs is performed through and by God, as the Godhead. This means that, where Eckhart's understanding of sovereignty remains partially tied to the God of the Symbolic (his representation of God the Father in terms of God's immanent and pantheistic dimensions notwithstanding), Porete's sovereignty of the Godhead represents a sovereignty of the God of the Real. Some problems remain with Porete's representation of the God into which the soul dissolves, in gendered terms, as "Himself". However, these can be overcome, straightforwardly, through the replacement of Porete's gendered language with the more neutral terminology of the Godhead. By doing this, it is possible to conceive a form of sovereignty that, in its identification of the annihilated soul with the divine immanence of the Godhead (or God of the Real) rather than the transcendent authority of the Trinitarian God (as the God of the Symbolic), is able to evade the authoritarian pitfalls inherent in the location of divine sovereignty in the transcendent figure of God the Father.

I will conclude this section with a brief reflection on how a sovereignty of the Godhead relates to the broader political theological project of the movement of the free spirit and is able to resolve some of the key problems with the movement that I identified in Chapter One. It is difficult to know, given the dearth of material documenting the beliefs and practices of the movement of the free spirit from sources other than their detractors in the late Medieval Church, how homogenous these beliefs and practices were or how far the various individuals and groups that comprised the movement adhered to or departed from the doctrine of the late Medieval Church in relation to the Trinity and the location of the divine. Nevertheless, the movement itself did produce a sufficiently large and diverse body of work to suggest that its beliefs ranged, on a theological level, from a rejection of God's absolute transcendence to the possibility of the full transformation of the soul into God and, on a political theological level, from a full commitment to the authority of the pastorate to an anticlerical rejection either of the mediation of the pastorate, the power of the sacraments, or both. Meister Eckhart (and Marguerite Porete) can probably be considered to fall somewhere towards the less radical ends of both of these scales. However, I have shown that, by reading Eckhart and Porete through a post-anarchist lens, it becomes possible to radicalise their theologies to conceive a more immanent and more egalitarian understanding of divine sovereignty derived from the Godhead (or God of the Real). In the final part of this chapter I will argue that this can help provide the resources to develop an account of political sovereignty that might form part of an anarchist theopolitics of the type sought (but perhaps not fully realised) by the movement of the free spirit.

From Divine Sovereignty to Political Sovereignty

My aim, in the final part of this chapter, it to explore how a sovereignty of the Godhead can be transposed from the theological to the political theological and how it might operate within the specific context of the contemporary capitalist state. Political theology (at least of

the Schmittian variety) is interested, analytically, in the way in which theological concepts and categories are transposed onto the political sphere. In terms of the concept of sovereignty, one of my main concerns, in this thesis, is therefore with the relationship between divine sovereignty and political sovereignty. What I want to do in the final section of this chapter is to explore how the sovereignty of the Godhead I have started to sketch out above can be transposed onto the political sphere as a form of political sovereignty, and how it can respond the problems I have identified with the various non-anarchist and anarchist approaches to political sovereignty and political theology I have surveyed in this thesis so far.

The Sovereignty of the Godhead and Political Theology

The site of political sovereignty has shifted, historically, from the various forms of monarchical and juridical power against which Buber's anarcho-theocracy emerges, to the imperial power of the Roman Empire in the Early Christian, New Testament era, then to the intersecting powers of the Church and the feudal state during the Christian pastorate, and on to the juridical foundation of the modern liberal democratic state (see, for example, Foucault 2007, 2008). Historical shifts in the location of economic sovereignty have been less variable, in that, during the periods described in the Hebrew Bible and the Early Christian period, economic and political sovereignty were located in the same place. Similarly, during the feudal period of the Christian pastorate, although the sites of political and economic power were much more diffuse, economic sovereignty, ultimately, resided in the same place as political sovereignty: with the monarch. With the emergence of capitalism and the liberal state, by contrast, political and economic sovereignty become divided, with political sovereignty continuing to reside in the transcendence of the juridical state form, and economic sovereignty coming to be located in the immanence of "the invisible hand" of the market (Newman 2019: 131-134).

139

The nature and form of political and economic sovereignty in contemporary neo-liberal societies are clearly not the same as during the time that Eckhart was writing, or during the historical periods in which the biblical texts he comments on were produced. In contemporary, neoliberal societies, this separation of political and economic sovereignty underwent a further change, in that the market form, as Foucault identifies, now comes to take on the role of the dominant logic and rationale on which the exercise of political sovereignty is based (2008: 243). It does this through the operation of what Foucault describes as governmentality, in which power is exercised through the conduct of conduct and the production of subjectivity and desire (2008: 243). Foucault stresses that the emergence of neoliberal governmentality does not imply that older forms of sovereign power are altogether excised, however (2008: 191, 313). The popularity of figures such as Putin, Duterte, Trump and Bolsonaro demonstrate that appeals to authoritarian versions of political sovereignty continue to hold a strong popular appeal even now.

My account of divine sovereignty has been based on a critique of the Trinitarian God that has sought to problematise the representation of God's sovereignty in terms of the absolute authority of a transcendent, personalised, deity. From a political theological perspective, this anthropomorphisation of God represents a transposition of an authoritarian model of political sovereignty onto the image of the divine. This functions to justify forms of political sovereignty in which power is concentrated in a transcendent ruler, institution, or behavioural code to whose authority the rest of the political community is obliged to submit. From a political theological perspective, a sovereignty of the Godhead derived from the experience of God in the Real presents a challenge and radical alternative to conceptions of political sovereignty where sovereignty resides either in the autarch, the state, or other forms of transcendent authority which take their warrant from a hierarchical model of the divine – human relationship. The representation of God as being, in the form of the Godhead, rather than a being, as one of

the persons of the Trinity, avoids the problem Feuerbach (2008 [1881]) identifies of humankind creating God in its own image. If God is equated with divine being rather than the abstracted personification of the attributes and qualities that a particular group or community holds in the highest esteem, then the concept of sovereignty also becomes detached from the hierarchical and patriarchal roots on which Judeo-Christian society is based. This is because it is no longer possible to draw a direct equivalence between God and the Sovereign, because God is no longer invested with the same features, characteristics, or values as those which the sovereign represents, and on which the sovereign's authority rests. Instead, God (as the Godhead) comes to represent the source and essence of divinity as eternal being, with the Soul's annihilation replacing the figure of the sovereign as the means through which it becomes possible to access the divine will (understood, in depersonalised terms, as the Real of eternal being, rather than the desire and intent of a personalised divine being). The individual's spiritual and ethical conduct therefore comes to be guided by this depersonalised divine will, as eternal being, and the means through which all members of the political community can become sovereign subjects without recourse to the mediation of a representative function to which the political community is required to defer whether this takes the form of the quasi-divine figure of the king (as in Buber's anarcho-theocracy) (2016 [1949]), the sovereign (as in Schmitt's model) (2005 [1934]), or the transcendent authority of a general will (as in Rousseau 2004 [1762] and Critchley [2012]), or the market (as in neoliberalism) (Foucault 20080 to which the political community is required to defer.

Where a sovereignty of the Godhead differs from the various models of political sovereignty I have outlined above, is that, instead of implying a vertical, hierarchical relation between, on the one hand, a transcendent site of authority through which sovereignty is exercised, and, on the other, the rest of the political community which is subjected to this power and on which sovereignty is exercised, with a sovereignty of the Godhead, the concept of

sovereignty is radically democratised. The radical democratisation the sovereignty of the Godhead enacts therefore takes place through the removal of the justification either for a hierarchical, political theological system in which the sovereign ruler or state assumes the status of intermediary, or earthly representative of God's sovereign rule, or for a model of political sovereignty in which God's transcendent power and authority is taken as a template for earthly governance. It also removes the justification for the transcendent authority of abstract concepts such the market, the people, or the proletariat, through which the rule of the sovereign is justified and for which its power is exercised. In contrast to hierarchical approaches to political sovereignty based on the transcendence of divine and / or temporal sources of authority, a sovereignty of the Godhead therefore points, instead, to a form of political community in which sovereignty is immanent to all members of the community and diffused equally throughout it.

The sovereignty of the Godhead I am arguing for departs, however, from the millenarianism of the various mystical groups and movements Newman (2019), Critchley (2012), and other anarchists describe, in the following way. Where the millenarians of the thirteenth century and beyond understand the mystical overcoming of original sin, in eschatological terms, as a general condition of the community entailing a return to a prelapsarian state of Edenic bliss in which all antagonism has been eliminated, in my reading of Eckhart, the soul's annihilation represents an extraordinary condition that is typically only experienced by a small proportion of the community and that can only ever represent a temporary state. The most obvious political and ethical implications of this (which I will explore, in more detail, in Chapter Four) are that it becomes necessary to conceive forms of political community and ethical relations in which, in contrast to the millenarian movements of the Middle Ages and beyond, original sin (understood, in Lacanian terms, as the subject's constitutive alienation from the Real) has neither been universally, nor permanently, overcome. At the same time, a sovereignty of the

142

Godhead also challenges, and diverges from, eschatological approaches to political theology (see, for example, Dzalto 2021) that assume the ultimate perfectibility of the socio-political order as the kingdom of God after the Parousia. This is because, in the Lacanian reading of the divine-human relation I have been arguing for, the subject's dissolution in the Real of the Godhead is understood as something that can only take place, in the here and now, as a temporary condition, rather than something that finds its completion in a perpetual Real jouissance produced through the eschatological event of bodily resurrection at an unknown future point in history.

The Sovereignty of the Godhead and Structural Renewal

A sovereignty of the Godhead can contribute to the post-anarchist insurrection and the project of structural renewal in the following ways. The identification of sovereignty with the Godhead means that sovereignty is located outside of, or at the point of failure in the processes of signification and, therefore, the particular symbolic system on which the dominant social order is based. Because of this, a sovereignty of the Godhead can function to reveal the contingency of the symbolic foundations of the contemporary capitalist state. Crucially, in revealing the contingency of these symbolic systems, it also becomes possible to imagine and pursue alternatives to them. The sovereignty of the Godhead can therefore contribute to the process of structural renewal by encouraging the subject to disengage from the dominant social order and transcendent authority of the hetero-patriarchal state, the market, and the various other sites of domination with which these intersect, and to create anarchistic alternative to them derived from the direction of the experience of the divine in the soul's ground.

In terms of the particular form that a post-anarchist political community based on the sovereignty of the Godhead might take, it is important to stress, as Landauer (1983 [1911: 44) and Buber (1996 [1949]: 56) both do, that the rigid application of utopian blueprints should be

143

avoided. Because power is immanent to all social relationships, liberty and equality can neither be produced nor guaranteed by any particular system, structure, or institution, which means that where these do succeed in promoting liberty and equality, the possibility always remains for them to become sites and sources of domination and control at a later date. In this regard, Landauer's spiritual anarchism is particularly useful in helping to show how a spiritual approach to anarchism based on the sovereignty of the Godhead can contribute to the production of prefigurative political communities that can stand as alternatives to and eventual replacements for the dominant social order. Landauer (1983 [1911) argues for an anarchism that places "spirit" at the centre of the revolutionary struggle and the process of structural renewal. In calling for a new revolutionary spirit of anarchism, Landauer stresses that the specific institutions and forms of social organisation that this spirit produces can neither be anticipated nor assumed to take a fixed, unchanging form. Instead, they will emerge, adapt, and evolve, he suggests, in a process of perpetual flux or experimentation, as "the spirit is always moving and creating; and what it creates will always be inadequate, and never will perfection become an event except as an image or idea" (Landauer 1983 [1911: 129). This means that each generation will produce the institutions and social relationships that correspond to its own, particular spirit, and that these institutions will, themselves, be subject to revolutionary transformation should they become too rigid and the spirit flee from them. There are clear parallels between Landauer's understanding of the operation of spirit and my own understanding of the operation of the sovereignty of the Godhead. As in Landauer's spiritual anarchism, a post-anarchist theopolitics based on the sovereignty of the Godhead would be guided by the experience of divine immanence, meaning that the social and political institutions and structures of the political community would emerge from the social relationships established between subjects on the basis of the Godhead's immanent direction.

Post-anarchist theorists such as May (1994), Call (2002), and Newman (2016) all follow Landauer and Buber in maintaining that it is impossible to create a clear blueprint for post-anarchist societies, arguing that the specific social practices through which these societies are constituted need to be elaborated through a process of ongoing experimentation. At the same time, however, they also argue that some of the contours of what Agamben (1993) describes as "the coming community" can be seen both in the practices and spirit of previous eras, and in contemporary anarchistic movements, communities, and theoretical developments. The contribution my thesis makes, in this regard, is to the final category of theoretical developments. With that in mind, if the precise shape and form of the socio-political order that a sovereignty of the Godhead might produce cannot be known in advance, it is possible to imagine what the rough outlines of this might look like, nevertheless. What seems clear is that a sovereignty of the Godhead, in being derived from the soul's direct participation in the divine, represents a radically egalitarian understanding of sovereignty in which sovereignty, in being located within the individual soul, is distributed horizontally, throughout the community. A sovereignty of the Godhead therefore implies a form of political community outside the hierarchal framework of the state and, as in Critchley (2012) and others' reading of the movement of the free spirit, would translate, most obviously, to a form of anarcho-communism.

If the most obvious expression of the sovereignty of the Godhead (in terms of the basic constitution of the social order) is a form of anarcho-communism, the most obvious expression of the sovereignty of the Godhead (in terms of the processes of political decision making) is a form of consensus-based direct democracy. From an anarchist perspective, the problem of political decision-making is, primarily, a problem of representation. The problem with both authoritarian and liberal democratic approaches to political decision making, from this perspective, is that they function to alienate members of the political community from the immediacy of the political process by replacing the individual's direct participation in a

political decision with a representative (whether in an elected or unelected form) who performs this role in their place. In view of the impossibility of the political representative being able to know the will or desire of each political subject, this process of representation is inimical to anarchism's pursuit of both individual and collective liberty and autonomy. In the mystical post-anarchist framework I have been elaborating in this chapter, this process of alienation can be understood to mirror the subject's more fundamental alienation from the Real that takes place in its accession to the Symbolic. A sovereignty of the Godhead would respond to this problem of alienation through the institution of a form of political decision-making that takes place through the direct interaction of mystical subjects, guided by the ethico-spiritual direction of the Godhead, rather than the mediation of other subjects who claim to be able to represent them. Beyond these brief observations, however, I remain in broad agreement with both post- and mystical anarchists in arguing that the precise contours of a mystical post-anarchist society cannot be dictated or imagined in advance, and will only emerge, develop, and change through a process of constant experimentation with no clear end point or final goal, animated by the immanent direction of the Godhead and the social relationships it functions to produce.

The Sovereignty of the Godhead and the Uprising of the Self

In its location of sovereignty in the soul's identity with God in the Real, a sovereignty of the Godhead represents an immanent understanding of sovereignty. One of the most important implications of this is that the imagination and pursuit of alternative forms of political sovereignty beyond the symbolic system of contemporary capitalism come to take place, in the first instance, on the psychic terrains of subjectivity and desire. What I will therefore be arguing in the next chapter is that the pursuit of a sovereignty of the Godhead must, necessarily, be predicated on the undoing of the processes of subjectification through which the transcendent authority of the contemporary capitalist state is reproduced. I will

146

contend that it is only by doing this that alternative, anarchistic forms of subjectivity and desire, derived from the experience of God in the Real, can emerge. This, in turn, can help open up the possibility (as I will argue in Chapter Four) for the imagination and creation of an alternative Symbolic order based on the anarchism of the sovereignty of the Godhead rather than the hierarchical authority of God, the state, the market, or the law. If the purpose of this chapter has been to sketch out what a sovereignty of the Godhead might mean as a form of both divine and political sovereignty, this means, then, that my aim, in the next chapter, will be to show how a sovereignty of the Godhead can be instituted, on a subjective level, as part of the post-anarchist insurrection of the self.

Chapter 3

An Ethics of Annihilation

In Chapter One I argued that, in the context of a globalised, neoliberal, world economy that actively seeks to subject ever greater areas of social life to the rationalities of the market, any attempts to construct radical alternatives to either capitalism or the state form must, necessarily, entail the radical refusal and transformation of the dominant modes of social life through which they are sustained. I went on to suggest that, because of this, a contemporary mystical anarchist theopolitics needs to be understood as a part of the broader project of the post-anarchist 'uprising' or 'insurrection of the self' (Newman 2016). In this chapter I will explore, more precisely, how a mystical post-anarchism can contribute to the post-anarchist insurrection. In doing so, I will suggest that the most significant contribution that a mystical approach to post-anarchism can make to the post-anarchist insurrection is through the elaboration of an ethico-spiritual approach to the transformation of subjectivity and the subject's relation to desire. This is an approach that I will develop through a a synthetic reading of Meister Eckhart's and Marguerite Porete's mystical theologies with Lacanian psychoanalysis and post-anarchist theory.

I will begin the chapter by pointing to some of the key points of convergence between mysticism and psychoanalysis in terms of their focus on the problems of desire and the will and in the responses they offer to these problems. I will then carry out a more detailed analysis of the operation of desire and will in psychoanalysis and mysticism as a means of providing a synthesis of the two approaches that can furnish the mystical post-anarchism I am arguing for in this thesis with a more sophisticated account of the relationship between mysticism, subjectivity, desire, and will than either of these two approaches can do on their own. After that, I will move on to a discussion of the different solutions offered by Lacanian psychoanalysis and Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies to the problems of desire and

will and the various existential and political sources of dissatisfaction that might prompt the subject to engage in mystical practice or enter into the psychoanalytic clinic. To do this, I will read Eckhart's and Porete's accounts of the mystical praxis of detachment and the concept of divine love alongside Lacan's account of the ethics of psychoanalysis, the processes of sexuation, and the experience of feminine jouissance to argue for an ethics of annihilation aiming at the production of a non-phallic economy of divine love. I will conclude the chapter by drawing together the various strands of my argument to explain how these concepts can contribute to an ethics of annihilation derived from a synthesis of the mystical praxis of detachment with Lacan's conceptualisation of sexuation and feminine jouissance, and by clarifying how an ethics of annihilation can contribute to the post-anarchist uprising and the project of structural renewal.

Between Mysticism and Psychoanalysis

One of the most striking commonalities between Lacanian psychoanalysis and the mysticism of Eckhart and Porete is, according to Hollywood (2002), that they both utilise versions of apophasis, or negative theology. In making this argument, Hollywood notes that, for Lacan, the goal of psychoanalysis, like that of mysticism in its apophatic modality, is to refuse "the claims to mastery and wholeness" on which contemporary, patriarchal societies are based (2002: 16-17). The apophatic dimensions of mysticism can be seen in the series of negations it enacts between the soul and God, which function, in effect, to reveal the unicity of God and the soul in their grounds. Hollywood argues that psychoanalysis also functions as a form of negative theology by using a form of "unsaying" to heighten the tension between the Imaginary and the Symbolic so that the Real can emerge (2002: 164-166).

In Seminar XX, Lacan (1999) also makes several explicit connections between psychoanalysis and mysticism. This can be seen, for example, in his assertion that the writings of Christian mystics such as St John of the Cross and St Teresa d'Avila "are neither idle chatter nor empty verbiage; they provide, all in all, some of the best reading one can find," and the suggestion: "at the bottom of the page, drop a footnote, 'Add to that list Jacques Lacan's *Ecrits*, because it's of the same order'" (Lacan 1999: 75-77). This shows that not only does Lacan consider mysticism to be an important resource for his own psychoanalytical project; he considers his own output to be comparable to mysticism in its nature and intent.

A further point of commonality between mysticism and psychoanalysis is that they are both practices that the subject embarks upon as a result of its dissatisfaction with the existing conditions of its spiritual or psychic reality (Parker 2011: 150-151; Porete 1993: 133-134). This dissatisfaction arises, on an existential level, from the subject's constitutive alienation from the Real. On a political level, the subject's dissatisfaction derives, within the context of the contemporary capitalist state, from the inequalities of power and wealth produced by neoliberalism (Lazzarato 2017), the violence through which neoliberal policy regimes are implemented and reproduced (Tansel 2017), and the catastrophic environmental effects these policies produce (Kolbert 2014). It also derives from the structural impossibility of the satisfaction of desire promised by the various objects presented to it by consumer capitalism (Dean 2009, McGowan 2016) and of the jouissance promised by nationalist (Mandelbaum 2020) and other chauvinistic leaders and movements (Carusi 2021; Valdes 2022), as well as from the various negative conditions (such as guilt, anxiety, and depression) that are produced through the processes of subjectification on which these systems and formations are based (Lazzarato 2015: 186-187; Braidotti 2019: 15-17, 37).

Will, Desire, and Drive in Mysticism and Psychoanalysis

Mysticism and Lacanian psychoanalysis both respond to this condition of dissatisfaction by seeking to effect a change in the nature of the subject's relationship to its will or desire (Eckhart 1994:61; Pound 2008: 56-57). Where the focus of psychoanalysis is on the role of desire and drive, the focus of Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies is on the role of the will. While these concepts are not directly equivalent to each other, there is a clear relationship between the will, desire, and drive. The purpose of this section is therefore to clarify what the nature of these relationships are. By reading Porete's and Eckhart's accounts of the will alongside the psychoanalytical concepts of desire and drive and clarifying the differences and equivalencies between these different categories, my aim is to set out a post-anarchist account of subjectivity and desire that can contribute towards the development of an ethico-spiritual approach to the post-anarchist uprising of the self (Newman 2016).

The Symbolic Law, Castration, and Phallic Jouissance

Freud's and Lacan's psychoanalytical accounts of the nature and operation of desire are both premised on their different understandings of Darwin's myth of the primal horde and Sophocles' drama, Oedipus Rex. In Freud's (2001 [1913]) account of the myth of the primal horde, the most primitive societies consisted of small groups in which the strongest male jealously reserved all the females in the group for himself, meaning that everyone in the group (with the exception of this one individual) was subject to the phallic law through which incest and sexual promiscuity were proscribed. The originary moment in Freud's account of the primal horde comes from the murder of the primal father at the hands of his brothers and sons in an attempt to gain a share of the women that the primal father had taken for himself (2001 [1913]: 164-165). According to Freud, the guilt produced by this murder led to the establishment of a pact prohibiting any further acts of murder, incest, or sexual promiscuity so that the primal father's original injunction is reinstated and, in fact, strengthened (2001 [1913]:

166). Freud interprets the events described in this myth as the basis of a universal law that (a relatively brief flirtation with matriarchal societies notwithstanding) functions to structure all subsequent societal forms (2001 [1913]: 167). In the context of Western civilization, this means that all men are subject to the phallic law, with the exception of a single, mythical figure, who comes to assume the role of the primal father who both embodies and is responsible for delivering the law (Freud 2001 [1913]: 164). Freud's conceptualisation of the Oedipus complex functions to transpose the law of the father onto the family unit and the processes of sexuation (2001 [1913]: 151). According to Freud, the child's desire to enjoy the mother brings it into conflict with the father, and it is only through the threat of castration the father is assumed to present that this desire is renounced and the child is able to resolve the Oedipus complex in submitting to the phallic law (2001 [1913]: 151).

Lacan's (1999) structural linguistic reworking of Freud's psychoanalytical account of the operation of the phallic law argues that the full (or Real) jouissance from which the subject has supposedly been barred through its submission to the phallic law is an illusion posited, retroactively, by the subject to mask the fact that it has never, in fact, possessed the full jouissance it desires. Moreover, it is, according to Lacan, precisely its constitution as a subject that is responsible for the lack the subject experiences, and that maintains the bar between it and full jouissance. This is clear from Lacan's assertion that "man is but a signifier because where he comes into play as a signifier, he comes in only *quoad castrationem,* in other words, insofar as he has a relation to phallic jouissance" (1999: 35). This means, that, as a consequence of the symbolic castration the subject undergoes, necessarily, through its constitution as a subject, there is a barrier between the subject's desire "for something as formulated or articulated in signifiers (S)", and what can satisfy it" (Fink 2002: 37). The only jouissance the subject is capable of experiencing is therefore a partial, substitute jouissance mediated through and conditioned by the signifier and the Symbolic order rather than experienced, directly, in

the Real. The result of this is that, as Lacan puts it, "'That's not it' is the very cry by which the jouissance obtained is distinguished from the jouissance expected" (1999: 111). This means, as Fink notes, that "Phallic jouissance is the jouissance that fails us, that disappoints us" (2002: 37). It is, in fact, precisely this failure that "opens up and sustains the space of desire" itself in the gap that thereby persists between the desiring subject and the impossible, Real jouissance it desires (Zizek 2003: 61).

The name Lacan gives to what then comes to fill (or attempt to fill) the gap between the subject's desire and the full jouissance this desire aims towards, is the object *a*. According to Lacan, the subject's desire aims at a range of different objects, each of which, it hopes, will prove capable of satisfying this desire through the provision of the full jouissance that would enable the subject to overcome the lack it experiences by suturing the split through which it is barred from the Real and thereby constituted as a subject (Lacan 1999: 126). Rather than taking the form of a particular object towards which the subject directs its desire, the object *a* can therefore be understood as both the root cause of the subject's desire, and the lost object that prevents it from experiencing the full jouissance it believes it once had. The economy of phallic jouissance operates through the identification of a series of more tangible objects that come to stand in for the object *a*, as the object of the subject's desire, each of which the subject believes is the lost object that can overcome its lack and restore the jouissance that is lost to it (Lacan 1992: 360). The object *a* can, because of this, be understood to open up the lack that it offers the promise of being able to fill in (Zizek 2017: 74). The object *a* is therefore not something that fills in the void, "it is the materialization of this void as such, its placeholder" (Zizek 2017: 55). As the lack through which the subject is constituted is a product of its accession to the Symbolic order and the alienating effects of the representative function of the signifier, the desire of the subject exists in a dialectical relation with its lack. Any final overcoming of the subject's lack is therefore structurally impossible (not only because of the lack of the heart of

the subject, but because of the lack at the heart of the Symbolic, which means that, in being constituted through "the intervention of the signifier" (Lacan 2007: 15), the Symbolic "can never capture the totality of the real" (Stavrakakis 1999: 52).

Because both the subject and the Symbolic are fundamentally lacking, the only satisfaction the subject is able to achieve is through the drive that circles around the object *a* and the repetition of the loss that marks the inevitable failure of the subject's continued attempts to regain the lost object through which its lack will be overcome (McGowan 2016: 30-31). In terms of the relationship between desire and drive, drive can therefore be understood to be what sustains desire. As Zizek argues, the drive takes the form of an eternal, closed loop in which the subject aims, unconsciously, at its impossible satisfaction in the attainment of Real jouissance (2001: 94-98). It is only through the operation of the Symbolic law that the drive is transformed into desire and that the subject's pursuit of its lost jouissance is transformed into a search for the lost object that might prove capable of securing the lost jouissance that it stands in for. Consequently, the subject fundamentally misrecognizes how it obtains satisfaction. Although the subject gains its satisfaction, unconsciously, from the repetition of its originary loss, it associates its satisfaction, on a conscious level, with the presence of a specific object that will restore what has been lost (McGowan 2016: 32). Importantly, however, because the loss the subject experiences is a product of its constitution as a subject, its search for its lost jouissance is equally incapable of being satisfied whether it operates at the level of desire or at the level of the drive (Verhaeghe 2002: 133).

The phallic economy of desire plays a central role in the operation of neoliberal capitalism. It is through the object *a* that capitalism is able to exploit the subject's constitutive lack through the suggestion that this lack can be filled by means of consumerism and materialism (Kapoor 2014: 1129). As McGowan (2016) notes, the animating principle of capitalism is accumulation. For capitalism to be successful, it is necessary for the capitalist subject to believe it can obtain

the lost jouissance that the object *a* represents through its investment in the capitalist system and the accumulation of commodities, profits, or wealth (McGowan 2016: 36). It is towards this aim that capitalism works actively to create (largely through the marketing and advertising industries) a sense of dissatisfaction in its subjects that causes them to believe that this lack can be overcome by obtaining a particular material object or series of objects. The success of capitalism, in this regard, comes from the fact that, at the same time that capitalist accumulation holds out the promise that the subject's desire can be satisfied through the various objects it encourages the subject to produce, distribute, or consume, its success, as a system, is based on the impossibility of these objects ever bringing the satisfaction that would put an end to the subject's desire (McGowan 2016: 21). Capitalism's failure to deliver what it promises is therefore fundamental to its logic. To refer to the specific example of consumerism, a brand might want to produce some degree of customer satisfaction, but its goal is ultimately to produce enough dissatisfaction to keep customers returning for more or newer products or services (McGowan 2016: 40-41). In fact, if capitalism were genuinely capable of providing the satisfaction that would put an end to the subject's desire, this would put an end to the capitalist system (Kapoor 2014: 1129). The aim of capitalism, as a system of accumulation, is therefore to constantly produce desire, so that the capitalist subject never has enough and is continually seeking more objects to accumulate to find the truly satisfying object that will prove capable of filling its void (McGowan 2016: 21). Capitalism can therefore be understood to be driven by an insatiable lack that the capitalist subject constantly seeks to fill, but which can never be filled, no matter how much it consumes, grows, or increases its profit or market share (Kapoor 2014: 1129).

It is, nevertheless, precisely capitalism's failure to deliver on what it promises that enables the capitalist subject to experience a partial jouissance through the unconscious drive that circles round the object *a* and which enables the subject's desire to be sustained (McGowan

2016: 22, 39). As McGowan argues, the drive is therefore also crucial to capitalism's enduring appeal. The satisfaction that capitalism provides comes from the fact that what appears, from the perspective of desire, as the perpetual failure of a movement from commodity to commodity in search of an impossible jouissance, is, from the perspective of the drive, the satisfying repetition of the originary loss of the object through which desire is enabled to emerge (McGowan 2016: 39). The success of capitalism, on a libidinal level, therefore comes from the fact that it "enables us to envision the possibility of a satisfaction that is structurally unattainable" while, at the same time, allowing the traumatic source of the partial jouissance the subject is able to achieve (the originary loss of Real jouissance through which the subject is constituted) to remain unconscious (McGowan 2016: 22).

The subject's relationship to the object *a* is governed by the concept of fantasy. Fantasy functions to structure desire in the sense that the subject's desire for a particular object is based on the belief that this object will offer the means through which the subject will overcome its lack and regain its lost wholeness (Zizek 1997). In doing so, it has the effect of covering over the constitutive nature of the subject's lack and the fact that, through its insertion into the economy of phallic jouissance, it is barred from the Real jouissance it unconsciously desires. What the subject therefore misses in its fantasmatic relation to the object of its desire is that it is only through the dissolution of both itself, as a subject, and the Symbolic order out which its subjectivity is generated, that the gap between the partial jouissance it is capable of obtaining in the Symbolic order and the Real jouissance it unconsciously desires can be overcome (Glynos and Stavrakakis 2008). This, in turn, means that, in aiming towards the realization of its desire, the subject is, in effect, risking its own annihilation. Because of this, the object *a* "is simultaneously desired and feared," as the subject intuits that the full jouissance it seeks can only be obtained at the cost of its continued existence as a subject (Rose 2019: 61). This means that, within the libidinal economy of phallic jouissance, it is therefore necessary for the gap

156

between the Symbolic and the Real to be maintained, through the operation of fantasy, "in order to protect the subject from a loss of being" (Barnard 2002: 180). The symbolic law that governs the operation of phallic jouissance can therefore be understood, primarily, to function as a barrier against the subject's traumatic encounter with the Real (Zizek 2001: 76). In terms of the relationship between fantasy and drive, "*fantasy is the very screen that separates desire from drive*" in the sense that it provides the symbolic narrative through which the subject is able to (mis)perceive the void drive circulates around as the primordial loss through which its desire is constituted, thereby providing "a *rationale* for the inherent deadlock of desire" (Zizek 1997: 43).

In terms of the operation of political and economic sovereignty, it is fantasy that functions to support our political projects, social roles, and consumer choices, and that allows us to imagine a future state in which the limitations barring our current enjoyment can be individually and collectively overcome (Glynos and Stavrakakis 2008: 261). While the lack of full jouissance that fantasy seeks to overcome is a necessary ontological condition of subjectivity, within the fantasmatic economy of phallic jouissance, this ontological necessity must be actively disavowed. On a political level, the cause of the subject's lack in far right and right populist movements, for example, is therefore misattributed, as Glynos and Stavrakakis argue, to the loss of a supposed golden era, such as Ancient Greece and/or Byzantium in the case of modern Greek nationalism, or the Jewish kingdom of David and Solomon in Jewish nationalism, with the loss of the full jouissance associated with this golden eras often being attributed to the acts of a malevolent 'Other' (2008: 261). The contemporary resurgence of nationalist politics in countries such as Hungary, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States can therefore be at least partially explained through the operation of the libido, with the promise of full jouissance that nationalist fantasies hold out functioning to engage the nationalist community's "sense of belonging, community and pride" (Kapoor 2014: 1130).

On the level of political economy and the neoliberal state, the subject's constitutive lack is covered over through what Dean (2009) describes as the neoliberal fantasy of free trade. This fantasy centres on the claim that an unfettered market is the most efficient way of ensuring that individual needs are met, meaning that freed trade is construed as a positive sum game in which, through the liberation of markets from external constraints, everybody can benefit (Dean 2009: 55). What this fantasy functions to cover over, in Dean's view, is "persistent market failure, structural inequalities, the prominence of monopolies, the privilege of no-bid contracts, the violence of privatization, and the redistribution of wealth to the 'have mores,'" that have resulted from economic de-regularization and the unequal access to information, distribution, financial networks, and to the processes through which the rules of free trade are constructed that the free trade fantasy functions to occlude (2009: 56). On an affective level, the operation of 'actually existing' free trade has the effect of producing "a series of tensions and anxieties associated with our failure to enjoy," in which the fantasy of free trade functions to shift the cause of these anxieties from the neoliberal market system, to the individual and the state (Dean 2009: 59). The political consequence of the free trade fantasy is therefore to present the solution to our failure to enjoy the benefits of the free market as the further strengthening of the neoliberal system and the elimination of any internal or external barriers to the market's unfettered operation through which our enjoyment is stolen (Dean 2009: 62).

Mysticism, Will, and Desire

Where the focus of psychoanalysis is on desire and the drive, Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies focus primarily on the will, with desire being conceived largely as a secondary phenomenon in relation to the will. In Eckhart's and Porete's versions of Christian soteriology, the unity of the body and spirit is understood to have been destroyed through Adam's original sin, meaning that an ontological distinction is introduced between the divine

and the non-divine within the human soul (or, in Lacanian terms, between the Symbolic and the Real). Original sin can therefore be understood to approximate, fairly straightforwardly, to the process of symbolic castration in Lacan, in that it refers to the process through which Adam and his descendants are barred from the full jouissance of paradise as a consequence of Adam's decision to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the accession to the Symbolic order and its systems of knowledge and morality this implies. However, with the incarnation, death, and resurrection of God the Son, in the form of Jesus Christ, it becomes possible for the unity of body and spirit to be restored. From a post-anarchist perspective there are clearly problems with the soteriological framework Eckhart and Porete are working in, in terms of both the metaphysical and the hierarchical presuppositions entailed in the idea that humanity is being punished for the transgression of the law of the anthropomorphic figure of a sovereign deity and in the idea that it is only through the subsequent intercession of this same sovereign deity (albeit in a different modality) that humanity can be absolved for its transgression. However, if the myth of the fall is accorded a purely metaphorical status, then it can be read (like Lacan's account of the Oedipus myth and the myth of the primal horde), as a useful allegory for the genesis of the subject through its alienation from the Real. This requires (again, as in Lacan's reading of Oedipus and the myth of the primal horde) an understanding of the events the Fall describes as a dramatization of the process of subject formation undergone by all human animals (rather than just Adam and Eve as the first human animals) and requires that the loss of paradise produced by Adam's original sin is understood as a retroactive, rather than a chronological event.

The problem of "will" lies at the heart of Eckhart's and Porete's understanding of Christian soteriology. Eckhart and Porete both draw a distinction between the created (or non-divine) will, and the uncreated (or divine) will. Porete links the divine will explicitly to the Trinity. This can be seen in the following extract from *The Mirror of Simple Souls*: "Now

159

consider … what kind of thing is the will of God. It is the whole Trinity, who is one will. Thus the will of God is one divine nature in Trinity. All this the Soul owes to God from one sole defect" (1993: 179). The assertion, in the final sentence of this extract, that the soul owes all this to God through one small defect clearly relates to original sin, implying that the existence of the Trinity (as, in the terms I set out in the previous chapter, a manifestation of the God of the Symbolic) and the concept of divine will as something distinguishable from the soul's created will is a consequence of the original sin inherited from Adam. If, as Porete is contending here, the Holy Trinity represents one will, and this one will represents the divine nature in Trinity, this would appear to mean one of two things. Either the divine will is identical with the Trinity (as the God of the Symbolic), or the divine will goes beyond the individual persons of the Trinity to the divine nature, understood to mean the Godhead, (or God of the Real) that the Trinity is the Symbolic representation of. If the first of these readings is correct, then this would appear, at first sight, to support the idea that the divine will is derived from the Symbolic order. If the second reading is correct, this would appear, instead, to support the idea that the divine will derives from the order of the Real. However, if it is remembered that it is Adam's fall that opens up a division between the God of the Trinity and the Godhead and between the created will and the uncreated will then these two, apparently divergent, readings can be harmonized. Prior to Adam's fall, there was only one will: the divine will. The distinction between the created will and the uncreated will only emerges (retroactively) as a consequence of Adam's original sin. At the same time, Adam's fall also introduces a perhaps more fundamental experiential split between the paradisal Real jouissance from which Adam is retroactively barred, and the mediated, partial jouissance he can now obtain as a subject within the Symbolic order. This means that, in the postlapsarian world produced through the advent of the signifier, the uncreated will (as it exists, as a signifier, in antonymic relation to the created will) is, necessarily, a part of the Symbolic order, and, as such, can be understood to be

160

something which created beings (or subjects) relate to, within this order, through the mediation of an image, or sign. The particular sign that best signifies the nature of the divine will is, on Porete's account, the Trinity. However, the fundamental difference between the existential / psychic experiences of the Symbolic and the Real these two forms of will relate to is maintained.

If, in Christian soteriology, Adam's recourse to the created will is responsible for humanity's universal fall from grace, this grace is restored through Jesus Christ's abandonment of the created will. Jesus's abandonment of the created will then comes to stand as the model for how Christ's followers might overcome their own fallen states and thereby participate in the divine, uncreated will. It is worth noting that there is an apparent aporia at the heart of this account of Christian soteriology. If Adam's wilfulness in deciding to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil can be understood as being derived from his created will, the question this poses is how the originary split between the uncreated and created will emerges if, prior to this point, Adam participated in the full jouissance provided through his alignment with the uncreated will of God in his paradisal existence in the Real. This apparent aporia again points to the value of a retroactive reading of the Fall. If Adam's fall is read in this way, then Adam's wilfulness can be understood as something that is posited, retroactively, to account for the lack he experiences as a consequence of the bar on the paradisal full jouissance he encounters through his participation in the Symbolic order out of which morality emerges.

The expiation of Adam's original sin through Jesus's relinquishment of the created will opens up a space for the soul to regain access to the divine will and Real jouissance through what Eckhart (1994) describes as the birth of God in the soul. This process is predicated on the total abandonment of the created desire and will that emerges from and in the Symbolic order so that the soul can act in accordance with the divine will once again. Eckhart understands the distinction between the created and the uncreated in terms of nothingness and being.

161

'Nothingness' relates to the created world and the Symbolic order on which it is based, whereas 'Being' relates to the uncreated, or the Real. For Eckhart, to become reconciled with God's will, it is therefore necessary for the creature to "take leave of nothingness" (the Symbolic) and "grasp perfect being" (eternal being, or the Real), "in which there is a right will" (1994: 173).

Neither Eckhart nor Porete devote any real space to clarifying the precise nature of the relationship between desire and will. However, it is possible to gain a reasonable understanding of how these concepts relate to each other in their soteriological frameworks through a careful reading of some of the key passages in which they refer to these two concepts together. According to Eckhart, for the soul of the "good person" to be able to act in accordance with God's will, they "should be so entirely united in their will with God's will that they desire the same thing that God desires, even when this entails injury to themselves or indeed their own damnation" (1994: 64). In order to achieve this reconciliation of created and uncreated will, Porete asserts that the soul must overcome both "the pleasures of the body" and "the desires of the spirit" that crowd out the divine will which had previously maintained "the unity of body and spirit in piety" (Porete 1993: 217). This means that the postlapsarian split between the created and the uncreated aspects of the soul is reconciled through the alignment of the created will with the uncreated will in what amounts to (and is achieved by, as I will explain in more detail in the following sections) the renunciation of the created will. This renunciation of the created will also requires a renunciation of desire, which derives from the created aspect of the soul, and which can be understood, in poststructuralist terms, to be derived from the discourses, rationalities, and epistemes generated by the Symbolic order.

The nature of the individual's relationship to the created and the uncreated will can be seen in Eckhart's response to the question of how 'the good person' might know that he or she is responding to and acting in accordance with God's will rather than his or her own, created will. According to Eckhart, "if it were not God's will even for a moment, then it would not

exist" (1994: 141). God's will can therefore be understood to approximate to the idea of fate or destiny (understood in terms of whatever happens rather than the plan or whim of a supernatural, personalised being). For Eckhart, the spiritual well-being of the soul is dependent, therefore, on the individual's relationship with, and attitude towards, the created and uncreated will. Eckhart puts this point in the following way: "If God's will is pleasing to you, then whatever happens to you, or does not happen to you, will be heaven". On the other hand, "those who desire something other than God's will … are always in trouble and misery … and suffering is their perpetual lot" (1994: 141). It is

If, in the extracts above, desire is understood, primarily, as something that needs to be overcome, this does not mean that desire is construed by Eckhart or Porete in purely negative terms. This can be seen in the active role Eckhart, in particular, assigns to desire in the reconciliation of the created will with the uncreated will of God:

> Whoever wishes to begin a new life or work should turn to their God, desiring with all their strength and devotion that he should send them the best thing of all, that which is most precious to him and worthy, which they themselves desire and intend nothing of self but only the most precious will of God and that alone (1994: 42).

In this extract, Eckhart is making the argument that, in order for the individual to begin a new life in which the soul is reconciled with the uncreated will of God, it is necessary for them to desire that God should enable them to desire and intend "nothing of self" (by which he means the created, non-divine aspect of the soul from which desire and the created will to which 'intend' refers are derived) and only the uncreated will of God. In terms of the relationship between desire and will, this means, in effect, that to gain access to and become reconciled with the will of God, it is necessary to desire to will nothing but the will of God and, therefore,

163

to be free, ultimately, from desire and the created will. So, in Lacanian terms, this means that it is necessary to desire to evade the desire of the Symbolic (or the big Other) in order to align the created will with, and experience, God's uncreated will.

Reading Eckhart's and Porete's mystical accounts of the operation of desire and the will alongside a Lacanian psychoanalytical account of desire in the way I have attempted above makes it possible to situate their mystical theologies within a broader, post-anarchist account of subjectivity. This is important because contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty operate through the production of subjectivities that are constituted, in part, through the subject's libidinal investment in the desire of the Other (in the form of the contemporary capitalist state) and the various neoliberal, authoritarian, and chauvinistic discourses and rationalities through which this is produced. The argument I will be making in the following sections is that one way of overcoming the hold that the Other has over us is by exploring the potential of the uncreated, divine will as a source of alternative spiritual and affective inspiration. I will suggest that this can be done by reading Eckhart's mystical praxis of detachment alongside Lacanian psychoanalysis as a means of elaborating an ethics of annihilation that can form part of the post-anarchist uprising of the self.

Traversing the Fantasy: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis

In the following section I will build on the mystical post-anarchist account of the operation of will and desire I sketched out in the previous section by examining the relationship between the different solutions to the problems of will and desire offered in Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies and Lacanian psychoanalysis. This will then enable me to sketch out a mystical post-anarchist synthesis of these different approaches to the transformation of the subject's relation to desire, and to help show how the ethics of annihilation this constitutes can contribute to the post-anarchist uprising of the self.

There are clear parallels between the different solutions to the problems of desire and will offered by Lacanian psychoanalysis and mysticism. As Amy Hollywood argues, psychoanalysis and mysticism can both be understood to have a double function: psychoanalysis is both a discourse and practice that claims to have access to a particular truth about the subject and, at the same time, "the site of a bodily affect that goes beyond knowledge"; mysticism, similarly, is both "a language and an experience of divine presence," and the site of a mystical affect that goes beyond both knowledge and God as the Symbolic, or big Other (2002: 153). According to Hollywood, this resonance between psychoanalysis and mysticism is reflected in the fundamental problem they both identify: the unconscious desire for an Other through which the alienated subject might become whole, and the structural impossibility of the fulfilment of this desire (2002: 164). It can also be identified in the techniques they both employ. In the same way that the neoplatonic Christian mystical tradition exemplified by Eckhart and Porete is based on a simultaneous cataphasis (saying) and apophasis (unsaying) about God, Lacanian psychoanalysis both speaks about the unconscious, and "unsays" it through its emphasis on the Real and the priority of affect over representation (Hollywood 2002: 153).

One of the central aims of Lacanian psychoanalysis, from a clinical perspective, is to change the subject's relation to the cause of its desire: the object *a*" (Fink 1995: 62). It attempts to do this by enacting a traversal of fantasy that enables the subject to come to terms with the impossibility of its attempts to satisfy its desire and the overcoming of the constitutive alienation through which it is produced as a subject that this would require (Parker 2011: 89). The role of the analyst is therefore to reconstruct the analysand's fundamental fantasy: the belief it holds that the alienation (or lack) it experiences can be overcome by means of the particular object to which its desire is fantasmatically attached. This is done by helping bring the analysand to a conscious awareness of the object cause of its desire (the object *a*) and, with

this, the lack at the heart of both its own subjectivity, and the Symbolic order through which it is constituted as a subject (Pound 2008: 56-57). This process of traversal enables the subject to understand the impossibility of its attempts to recover its lost jouissance (and thereby suture this lack) through the pursuit of the objet *a* (Fink 1995: 62-63). In doing so, the traversal of fantasy helps the subject to understand that the partial jouissance it *is* able to obtain is derived not from the satisfaction of its desire, but from the drive that circles round the object *a* and sustains desire through the failure of each object to which the subject attaches its desire to provide the Real jouissance that it unconsciously aims towards (Zizek 1997: 43).

The traversal of fantasy can therefore be understood to entail a subjective shift from the register of desire to the register of drive (Zizek 1997: 53). If the phallic economy of desire is structured around a metonymic movement of desire between different objects in which jouissance is constantly deferred or missed, the drive represents the transition to a different relation to desire in which desire's metonymic logic is undone. This shift from desire to drive can therefore be understood as an immanent transcendence of the metonymic chain of desire that seeks to undo the subject's attachment to the different objects it fantasmatically identifies as the sources of its lost jouissance. Consequently, the traversal of fantasy that enacts this shift represents a shift from the perpetual failed attempt to obtain the object that will satisfy the subject's desire, to the recognition that full jouissance is impossible and that the partial jouissance the subject is capable of obtaining through the phallic economy is obtained precisely in these attempts' repeated failure (Zizek 1997: 43).

The ethical consequence of the traversal of fantasy is that it enables the subject to assume responsibility for its own jouissance (Fink 1995: 66). In doing this, the subject is forced to renounce its belief in a big Other that founds and guarantees the Symbolic order and is capable of delivering the jouissance it desires to it, and to take responsibility for its own actions and desires without reference to a transcendent moral code or law (Rose 2019: 74). In terms of

its political implications, the traversal of fantasy enables the subject to become aware of the fantasmatic nature of its belief that its jouissance has been stolen from it by the Other, whether in the form of a particular political ideology, system, policy, or group. At the same time, it also enables the subject to come to terms with the impossibility of reclaiming this fantasmatic lost jouissance either through the elimination of these supposed barriers to full jouissance or the pursuit of an alternative political ideology, system, policy, or group identification. By identifying with the cause of its desire (the object *a*), the political subject is able to come to understand that its inability to obtain the full jouissance it unconsciously desires is a consequence of both its own constitutive lack and the lack in the big Other, and therefore something that will remain unaffected by the overcoming of the various political barriers it had previously identified as the cause of its lost jouissance (Stavrakakis 1999: 139). In enacting a shift from desire to drive, the political subject comes to recognise that the only jouissance available to it comes from the drive that circulates around the object *a,* and that, in doing so, sustains the subject's desire. This means that, for the political subject who has traversed the fantasy, any political project that is pursued or political act that is carried out takes place in the knowledge that the jouissance this will bring can only ever be partial, and that it can never fully suture the lack at the heart of both the subject and the Other.

One of the most important limitations of the Lacanian ethics of the psychoanalysis, from a mystical post-anarchist perspective, is that although the traversal of fantasy succeeds in moving the subject past the deadlock of the economy of phallic jouissance, in changing the subject's relation to desire, it is unable to exit from the paradigm of desire altogether. While the traversal of fantasy (on its own) might offer the subject a means of understanding and coming to terms with the impossibility of the full jouissance its desire unconsciously aims towards, the renunciation of the the pursuit of the object *a* that this implies fails to conceive an alternative to, or route past, the partial jouissance that is produced by the drive. In the following section, I

167

will argue that it is possible for the subject to move past the deadlock of drive at which the Lacanian ethics of psychoanalysis stops, through Eckhart's and Porete's accounts of the spiritual praxis of detachment. This will then enable me to show, in more detail, how mysticism can help to combat the dominant modes of subjectivation through which contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty are exercised.

Mystical Praxis: Detachment, Releasement, and the Annihilation of the Soul

The focus of the following section is on the role that Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies can play in helping to find a way past the deadlock of the drive. My argument, in this section, is that while the traversal of fantasy represents an important step in finding a way past the fantasmatic economy of phallic jouissance through the reconciliation of the subject to the fantasmatic quality of its desire, mysticism is able to move beyond this by offering a means of moving past desire altogether (albeit impermanently) through the replacement of both desire and drive with divine love in the temporary annihilation of the soul. This is important, from a political perspective, because it helps to provide a deeper understanding of how the subject might come not only to traverse the fantasy through which its constitutive lack is covered over through the economy of phallic jouissance and the promises of jouissance offered by the contemporary capitalist state and the authoritarian right, but how it might be possible to conceive an alternative mode of subjectivity and an alternative relation to desire outside both the dominant modalities of subjectivity and desire promoted and produced under the conditions of contemporary capitalism and the Lacanian paradigm of the drive.

Detachment

In Eckhart's and Porete's mystical soteriologies, the source of the soul's dissatisfaction is located in its attachment to the things of the created world. The solution it posits to this is

the relinquishment of its attachment both to these things and to the created faculties of desire and the will through which these attachments are produced, so that the uncreated, or divine will might then take their place. According to Eckhart, this can only happen through a process of "detachment." Eckhart sees detachment as a response to the problem of suffering caused by the subject's attachment to the "transitory things" of the created world which, he argues, prevent it from loving God fully and living in accordance with God's will and the Real jouissance this leads towards (1994: 61). Detachment therefore takes the form of the subject's detachment of its desire and will from these transitory things so that it can love God fully and live in accordance with divine will. Detachment, according to Eckhart, leads the subject to become "receptive to nothing except God," and compels God to come to the soul (1981: 286).

According to Eckhart there are three key stages to the process of detachment. First, it is necessary to sever our attachments to ourselves and all created things. Second, instead of desiring, or loving something in the created world that is good, we should desire or love the "goodness as such" (or the Godhead) from which all good things flow, as the objects of the created world are only worthy of our love and desire "in so far as God is in them". Eckhart stresses that this principle also applies to God himself: rather than desiring and loving God for "his heavenly kingdom" or what we believe God can do for us, (in terms of the attainment of a future paradisaic state or any present benefits God might be able to bestow) we should desire and love him in and for himself, (in the modality of divine love, as the Godhead beyond God, or the God of the Real). It is only by doing this that is possible to "dwell in him," (or to live in accordance with God's will, understood in terms of the immanent direction of the Godhead in the modality of divine love). The third stage is closely related to the second and requires that we should detach ourselves from God himself and take God "in the pure and clear substance in which he possesses himself" (in other words, as the Godhead, or God of the Real, beyond the God of the Symbolic). It is only by doing this, Eckhart maintains, that we "will remain in

169

him" and participate in the eternal being constituted by our experience of God in the Real. (1994: 148-149). This means, as Hollywood notes, that Eckhart's conceptualisation of detachment can be understood as a form of apophasis designed to unsay, or strip away, all the accretions of both the created world and God him(or it)self (1995: 193-194). As a form of spiritual practice, this means that detachment works by undoing "the layers of attachment to human, creaturely things" that prevent the soul from accessing the Godhead in its divine ground (Hollywood 2001: 36).

Importantly, Eckhart (1994: 179-180) stresses that detachment represents an ongoing process rather than a final, irrevocable state. This can be seen in his assertion that: "Whoever entirely renounces themselves even for a moment would be given all things. But if someone abandoned themselves for twenty years and then took themselves back for a moment, then it would be as if they had never renounced themselves at all." This means that, in keeping with Lacan's insistence on the structural impossibility of Real jouissance within the co-ordinates of a phallic libidinal economy, the access to this impossible, Real jouissance (or, in Christian terms, heaven) that detachment leads to is only possible for as long as the subject is able to relinquish its attachments to both itself, as a subject, and the Symbolic order in which the objects of the created world are constituted as objects.

To relate Eckhart's conceptualisation of detachment back to the ethics of psychoanalysis, the spiritual praxis of detachment can be understood as one possible route through which a traversal of fantasy can be enacted, insofar as it entails an appreciation of the structural impossibility of the Real jouissance the subject unconsciously aims towards in the attachment of its desire and will to the objects of the created world. On a political level, it can therefore contribute to the overcoming of the subject's attachment to the various objects presented as sources of jouissance within the contemporary capitalist state. This process can, in turn, contribute to the broader post-anarchist uprising of the self by helping to undo the processes of

170

subjectivation through which contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty are exercised. However, as I will argue below, Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies go beyond the traversal of fantasy by showing how it might be possible to move past the deadlock of both desire and drive in the soul's identity with the Godhead.

Releasement

Where the traversal of fantasy might, in enacting a shift from desire to drive, offer a route past the subject's fantasmatic attachment to the object *a* and the promise of an impossible, Real jouissance it holds out, it remains tied to the paradigm of desire to the extent that that it is precisely through the subject's failure to obtain satisfaction in the object *a* that the closed loop of the drive is maintained. If the Eckhartian practice of detachment can be understood to enact the same traversal of fantasy Lacan calls for, the concept of releasement goes beyond this in that, rather than stopping at the subject's reconciliation with the drive through its detachment from the various objects of desire presented to it from within the Symbolic order, it aims past this to the subject's releasement from desire altogether.

In Eckhart's mystical theology, if detachment helps to show how mysticism can help the subject to relinquish its attachment to the objects of the created world (or Symbolic order), then the concept of releasement, helps to explain what happens to the soul / subject once detachment has been achieved. As Schurmann notes, the logical conclusion of the process of detachment is the arrival at a state in which there is nothing left for the soul to detach itself from (2001: 82). Where, in detachment, the focus of the individual's spiritual practice is on the disassociation of its will and desire from the material objects of the Symbolic order, releasement goes beyond this by focussing on the will and desire themselves, and the renunciation of the acts of willing and desiring. Consequently, all other forms of spiritual praxis, must, ultimately, be subject to the practice of detachment for releasement to be achieved

(Schurmann 2001: 105-106, 109-110). This includes all forms of ascetic or charitable works. It also includes any form of devotion to God. As Schurmann puts it, "Let God be, stop seeking him, abandon God, and then you will find him. Only he who does not seek will find" (2001: 110). This is because, if detachment functions to "regulate man's dealings with things, that is, created substances," in releasement, detachment itself is abandoned "insofar as it is still a 'work' of man" deriving from the created will (Schurmann 2001: 31, 105-106), (and therefore from the Symbolic order).

When an individual has attained a state of releasement, the will "has nothing to obey, except itself (Schurmann 2001: 117). In its detachment from both the created objects of the Symbolic order and its own created desire and will, there is nothing left in the person in a state of releasement to will or desire with, meaning that the divine will can emerge in the place where the created will has been evacuated. In this state, the divine will can be understood, in Lacanian terms, to operate in the Real, and is stripped of all intentionality or purpose, as intention and purpose are fundamentally discursive in nature and therefore, as Schurmann insists, "have no place in releasement." (Schurmann 2001: 108). Consequently, the will, in what Schurmann describes as "its preoriginary origin," (or, in Lacanian terms, the Real) becomes anarchic, in that it is no longer subject to any desire, command, or principle, whether human or divine (2001: 117). As a result of this assimilation of the individual will, in its "preoriginary origin," to the Real of divine will, the soul, in its releasement, effectively becomes indistinguishable from God, as its individuality is replaced with its total identity with God in the modality of eternal being (Schurmann 2001: 174, 189, 206).

Where detachment is focussed on the subject's overcoming of its attachment to the objects of the created world, releasement therefore extends the process of detachment by focussing on the subject's need to overcome its attachment both to the act of willing and to the God towards which the will, ultimately, aims, insofar as these both still constitute "created

things" and, as such, form part of the Symbolic order. So, if the ethics of psychoanalysis helps bring the subject to an awareness of the fundamental fantasy through which its desire is structured, and detachment can help to provide a specific form of spiritual practice through which the subject might traverse this fantasy, releasement goes beyond both detachment and the traversal of fantasy through the subject's detachment not only from the objects its desire and will aim towards, but from the desire and will through which these attachments are made.

In terms of the contribution that releasement can make to the post-anarchist uprising of the self, if detachment helps the subject to overcome its attachments to the various objects, states, and conditions the capitalist state serves to valorise, releasement goes beyond this by enabling the subject to break out entirely from the economy of phallic jouissance from which desire emanates. As I will argue in the following sections, in doing so, it also goes beyond the traversal of fantasy by enabling the subject to move past its reconciliation with the drive.

(True) Poverty, the Breakthrough, and the Annihilation of the Soul

In the soul's releasement, the subject becomes indistinguishable from God as the created will is replaced by the divine will in the Real. Eckhart and Porete explore the nature of this condition, in more detail, through the concepts of true poverty, the breakthrough and the annihilation of the soul. The process of releasement can be understood to lead to a spiritual condition that Eckhart (1994) describes as "true poverty" and that Porete (1993) refers to as the annihilation of the soul. The concept of poverty is broadly analogous to detachment, or, perhaps more precisely, can be considered to relate to the final stages of detachment, prior to the soul's releasement. True poverty, as the final state that spiritual poverty leads towards, can be understood to refer to the spiritual condition attained by the soul in its releasement.

When Eckhart talks about poverty, he is referring to poverty of spirit rather than any sort of material poverty which, in Eckhart's soteriological framework, would fall into the

173

category of "works," or ascetic practices that, as products of the Symbolic order, the subject needs to detach itself from. The main function of the cultivation of spiritual poverty is to complete the process of detachment, and releasement it leads to, by ensuring that there is nothing left of "the creature" in the soul. This can be seen in Eckhart's assertion that:

> … we say that we should be so poor that we neither are nor possess a place in which God can act. If we still have such a place within us, then we still have multiplicity. Therefore I ask God to make me free of 'God', for my most essential being is above 'God' in so far as we conceive of God as the origin of creatures (1994: 207).

The God that Eckhart is asking to be made free of is the God of the Symbolic, and the God that he is asking to make him free of 'God' is the God of the Real. What Eckhart is calling for is therefore a total evisceration of the soul through which it can become detached not only from the created things to which its desire and will attach themselves, or from the created desire and will through which these attachments are made, but from any symbolic construction, (including God), that forms part of the "multiplicity" of the created universe of the Symbolic order.

Eckhart's understanding of the operation of desire and will is predicated on a conception of the soul as ontologically split between the created and the uncreated. This split has either been explicit or implicit in all of the Eckhartian concepts and categories I have discussed in this chapter. It is especially important to his understanding of poverty, however. As part of his discussion of poverty, Eckhart states that, "according to the manner of my unborn nature, I have been eternal, as I am now and ever shall be. But what I am according to my nature which was born into the world, that shall die and turn to nothing, for it is mortal. Therefore it must decay with time" (1994: 207-208). Eckhart's "unborn nature" refers to the uncreated, divine nature, which is eternal. "My nature", in contrast, refers to the created, non-

divine nature. This, unlike his unborn nature, is subject to the temporality of duration. This means that, in order for the soul to achieve the state of spiritual poverty required to ensure there is no place for God to act in it, it is necessary for the soul's own nature to be overcome so that the soul can participate in the unicity of God, as the Godhead (or God of the Real) in its ground.

The pursuit of spiritual poverty culminates in the attainment of "true," or "ultimate" poverty. Eckhart insists that, "if it is the case that someone is free of all creatures, of God and of themselves, if God finds a place to act in them, then we say: as long as this exists in someone, they have not yet reached the ultimate poverty" (1994: 207). In Lacanian terms, "being free of all creatures, of God and of themselves" means that the soul has succeeded in moving beyond its imaginary identifications with itself, God, and all other objects of creation as signifiers within the Symbolic order. In stressing that if, in doing so, it is still possible for God to find "a place to act in them", Eckhart, as I noted above, is making the point that the soul has not yet achieved the spiritual condition of "ultimate poverty," because the existence of a place in the soul in which it is possible for God to act implies that there is still a distinction between God and the soul. For Eckhart, "true poverty of spirit" therefore requires that the soul:

> be so free of God and all his works that if God wishes to act in the soul he must himself be the place in which he can act … For if God finds us *this* poor, then God performs his own active work and we passively receive God in ourselves and God becomes the place of his work in us since God works within himself (1994: 207).

This place where God can act as the place itself is, as I outlined in Chapter Two, the ground of the soul that, in Lacanian terms, experiences God in the Real, as the Godhead and where God and the soul are indistinguishable from each other. It is therefore only by relinquishing the soul's created dimensions (the faculties that enable the processes of differentiation, mediation,

and signification through which it functions in the temporal modality of duration) that the individual is able to find its ground and, through this, to achieve the true poverty of spirit required to gain identity with the divine, so that God then "works within himself".

According to Eckhart, it is through poverty that "we attain again the eternal being which we once enjoyed, which is ours now and shall be for ever" (1994: 207). Eckhart, here, is opposing the "eternal being" of the uncreated, divine essence, with the mediated experience of "created being" and temporality to which it is ontologically prior. The Real of divine essence can be understood, on this account, as an actually existing state of full jouissance that is experienced prior to the act of creation, but which is lost in and through this act and the emergence of both the subject of the signifier and the Symbolic order through which the subject is formed. This literal, as opposed to retroactive understanding of the subject's loss of eternal being is problematic, from a Lacanian perspective as I have explained above. However, in noting that "eternal being" is "ours now and shall be for ever", Eckhart makes a break from the soteriology of the late medieval church to argue that, while created being is finite, uncreated being is eternal, and that this eternal form of uncreated being is accessible to the creature, alongside its created being, now, in the created world. By doing so, he is making the claim that the condition of true poverty and the Real jouissance of eternal being to which it leads are attainable from within the temporal world rather than being accessible only prior to the advent of and following the death of the embodied subject.

The move from poverty to true poverty takes place, in Eckhart's account of the mystical transformation of the self, via what he calls "the breakthrough". According to Eckhart, the attainment of "perfection" and "blessedness" is dependent upon "our breaking through, passing beyond all createdness, all temporality and all being and entering into the ground that is without ground" (1994: 187). Createdness, temporality, and being are all qualities associated with and derived from the Symbolic order. The "ground that is without ground" refers to the ground of

the soul, which is groundless because it relates to its divine modality as part of God's eternal substance, or being, and is therefore ungrounded by anything from within the created, or Symbolic order. In Lacanian terms, the point that Eckhart is making is therefore that, in order for the soul to attain true poverty and the 'perfection' and 'blessedness' in the Real of its uncreated ground that this brings, it is necessary to "break through" the Symbolic order and the created things of which it is comprised.

Eckhart (1994: 208) describes the consequences of the breakthrough from poverty to true poverty for the will in the following terms:

> … in the breakthrough, where I am free of my own will and of God's will and of all his works and am free of God himself, there I am above all creature and am neither 'God' nor creature, but I am rather what I once was and what I shall remain now and evermore … I receive such great wealth that God, with all that he has as 'God' and with all his divine works, cannot satisfy me, for the consequence of this breakthrough is that God and I become one … God can find no place in us then, for with this poverty we attain that which we have eternally been and shall forever remain. Here God is one with our spirit, and this is poverty in its ultimate form.

In asserting that, in the breakthrough, he is "free from my own will and God's will and his works", Eckhart is making the point that God's will and works can impact upon the human person only through, and as a consequence of, the distinction between God and the human person that emerges with the act of creation that brings both the God of the Symbolic and the alienated human subject into being. In the breakthrough, this distinction is overcome, however, meaning that it is no longer possible for either God's will or his works to impact upon the soul because this would imply the continued distinction between God and the soul, or the created

177

and the uncreated, which, in the breakthrough, is no longer upheld. It is because of this indistinction between God and the Soul that the soul is "neither 'God' nor creature", but "what I once was and what I shall remain now and evermore": a part of the unicity of the divine essence, or Godhead, in the soul's ground. Eckhart makes this argument explicit in his assertion that God and his divine works can no longer satisfy him because "God is one with our spirit", due to the fact that, in the condition of ultimate (or true) poverty the breakthrough engenders, "God can find no place in us". This should not be understood, in my view, as "a passage into a form of transcendent subjectivity", as McGinn (2001: 144) maintains, however, so much as an evisceration of subjectivity as such through the fissure the breakthrough effects within the transcendent structure of the Symbolic order.

The experience of the breakthrough and the condition of true poverty it engenders are captured, in Porete's work, through the idea of the annihilation of the soul. According to Porete, the annihilation of the soul can be understood as a process in which he soul "*is stripped of all things because she is without existence, where she was before she was. Thus she has from God what He has, and she is what God is ... in that point in which she was, before she flowed from the Goodness of God*" (1993: 218). In noting that the soul "*is stripped of all things*", Porete, like Eckhart, in his account of the breakthrough, is making the point that, in its encounter with God as the Godhead, the soul is free of all the "things" that constitute the differentiated, created world, and the Symbolic order through which these are constituted. Again, like Eckhart, Porete's assertion that this is because the soul "*is without existence, where she was before she was*" shows that this is, for her, a condition in which the soul has returned to the experience of divine unity that precedes its differentiation from the eternal divine substance and its existence as a subject of the signifier through its accession to the Symbolic order. In asserting that "*she is what God is*", Porete is making the claim that, as a result of the soul's annihilation, there is no longer any means of distinguishing the Soul from God, meaning that the Annihilated Soul

finds nothing in herself that is not God, and that, as in Eckhart's account of the condition of true, or ultimate poverty, she is only that which God is in her (Porete 1993: 145, 220).

In terms of the overall aims and effects of the pursuit of true poverty and the annihilation of the soul in relation to the will and desire, the main point that Eckhart and Porete are making, in their discussions of the soul's "unborn nature" in a condition of "naked", "eternal" being, or annihilation, is that the attainment of the condition of true poverty / annihilation entails a return to the soul's pre-originary state as part of an undifferentiated, divine essence in the Real of the Godhead. In this state, the soul has succeeded in detaching itself from the created things of the Symbolic order, the created desire and will through which these attachments are formed, and, more broadly, the Imaginary and Symbolic orders through which the soul exists as a soul (or as a subject) to itself and to others. Consequently, the soul's will and desire, in this modality, are wholly divine, as they both emanate from and attach themselves to the Real of the Godhead, which they have attained (or regained) unicity with through their annihilation and through the annihilation of the subjectivity that is their condition of being.

It is worth stressing that the full jouissance of eternal being that the annihilation of the soul (temporarily) produces does not entail a restoration of the subject's lost plenitude through the soul's unity, or fusion with God as two distinct, Symbolic objects or entities; instead, it entails the total dissolution (or annihilation) of the subject in the Real of the Godhead. One of the most significant implications of Eckhart's conceptualisation of the division between the uncreated and the created in the individual soul is that the individual's experience of the birth of God does not imply that the individual thereby comes to gain permanent access to God's divinity, or, in other words, that the individual becomes fully divine. As it would be impossible for the annihilated soul / subject to function as a social being in a perpetual state of dissolution, the encounter with the Godhead / Real that this entails must therefore be understood to take the form of a fissure of the Symbolic order through which it becomes possible, temporarily, to

experience the Real of eternal being rather than as a permanent overcoming of the Symbolic law and the constraints of phallic jouissance it imposes.

This means that, where jouissance, in aiming beyond pleasure, takes the subject to the limit of its subjectivity but is unable to go beyond this point to the Real jouissance it desires, the experience of true poverty / the annihilation of the soul entails a dissolution of subjectivity through which it becomes possible to participate (albeit temporarily) in the full jouissance that, paradoxically, the mystical subject no longer desires. Consequently, where, for Lacan, the partial jouissance obtainable from within the economy of phallic jouissance takes the form of a 'painful pleasure' (Lacan 2007: 185) that, ultimately, fails to provide the subject with the satisfaction it desires: "this is not it" (Lacan 1999: 111), the mystical experience of true poverty / the annihilation of the soul, by contrast, is free from anxiety and pain (Porete 1993: 85) and characterised by the feeling that this is exactly it.

In terms of the relation between the mystical praxis of detachment and the economy of phallic jouissance Lacan describes, Eckhart and Porete are able to avoid, and offer a route out of the logic of fantasy in that, while the practice of detachment can be motivated by the fantasmatic desire for the Real jouissance entailed in the annihilation of the soul in the Godhead, it is, paradoxically, only through the renunciation of desire and its fantasmatic supports that this is obtained. Where the Lacanian traversal of fantasy aims to help the subject understand the fantasmatic nature of its desire and the impossibility of the promise of full jouissance held out by the object *a* and to reconcile it to the drive that circles around the object and sustains desire, the mystical praxis of detachment therefore goes beyond this in aiming at the subject's (temporary) releasement from both desire and drive rather than merely becoming reconciled to the impossibility of the jouissance it provides.

If releasement enables the subject to break free from the economy of phallic jouissance by overcoming the created desire and will through which its attachments to the sources of

jouissance promised by the contemporary capitalist state are formed, the breakthrough, and the condition of true poverty, (or the annihilation of the soul), to which it leads help point to some of the alternative modes of being that might be possible outside of both the economy of phallic jouissance and the circuit of the drive, and through which alternative forms of subjectivity might be created. In terms of the broader project of structural renewal the post-anarchist uprising of the self implies, Eckhart's conceptualisation of the breakthrough can help to show how the possibility is opened up for the conceptualisation of an alternative economy outside of the co-ordinates of both desire and drive. The attainment of the condition of true poverty, or the annihilation of the soul, can contribute to the production of this alternative economy, as I will argue in more detail in the following sections, through the generation of forms of mystical subjectivity that might offer positive alternatives to the neoliberal and chauvinistic forms of subjectivity produced within the contemporary capitalist state.

Mysticism and Feminine Jouissance

Lacan helps point to one possible route through which mysticism might contribute towards the production of a non-phallic economy of desire and will through the concept of feminine jouissance. My aim, in the following section, is to explore the relationship between feminine jouissance, the traversal of fantasy, and Eckhart's and Porete's accounts of the mystical praxis of detachment as a first step in my argument for an ethics of annihilation that might facilitate the subject's move beyond the co-ordinates of phallic jouissance to an economy rooted in the experience of its own dissolution in its encounter with the Real of the Godhead. In doing this, I will argue that Lacan's theorisation of the processes of sexuation and the experience of feminine jouissance can help form the basis of an economy grounded in the experience of the mystical breakthrough into true poverty, or the annihilation of the self. I will go on to argue that this economy can contribute to the post-anarchist project of structural renewal by

functioning as an alternative to the phallic economy on which the contemporary capitalist state is based, and through which its sovereignty is exercised.

Sexuation, Jouissance, and the 'Not-whole'

The Lacanian traversal of fantasy offers an effective means of bringing the subject to an awareness of the impossibility of overcoming its constitutive lack through the economy of phallic jouissance. However, in doing so, as I argued earlier on, it is unable to move the subject past the paradigm of desire altogether. In focussing on the drive that circles round the object *a* and functions to sustain desire, rather than resolving the problem of the subject's inability to obtain full jouissance, it merely reconciles the subject to this inability. In his conceptualisation of feminine jouissance, Lacan does, however, offer some important clues as to how it might be possible to move past the deadlock of both desire and drive.

Lacan develops his account of feminine jouissance alongside his broader theorisation of the processes of sexuation. The concept of sexual difference is elaborated, in Freudian psychoanalysis, with reference to the Oedipus myth and the castration complex. For Freud, sexual difference is understood in terms of whether someone has or does not have a penis (Homer 2005: 95; Brousse 2021: 16). For Lacan, by contrast, sexual difference is conceived as a problem of signification rather than biology. To understand Lacan's account of sexual difference better, it is useful to distinguish between the imaginary level of sexual identity, in which the ego is constituted through its identifications with one or both parents (or parental figures); and the symbolic level of sexuation in which the subject is constituted through the position it takes in relation to the phallus as the signifier of castration or lack (Fink 1995: 116). There is no necessary complementarity between these two levels: it is possible for a person who identifies as a woman on the level of her imaginary identifications to assume a masculine

subject position in relation to the phallus, and it is equally possible for a person who identifies as a man to assume a feminine position in relation to the phallus (Fink 1995: 116).

Subjects who assume a masculine position in relation to the phallus are, for Lacan, wholly determined by the phallic function and its alienating effects or, put another way, are wholly subject to the effects of symbolic castration (Fink 1995: 106). The feminine subject is differentiated from the masculine subject primarily through being "not-whole". In Seminar XX, Lacan argues that "if what I claim is true – namely, that woman is not-whole – there is always something in her that escapes discourse" (999: 33). The premise of this statement is that, if woman (the feminine subject) were whole, she would not escape discourse. Being whole can therefore be understood as meaning to be fully integrated into the discursive universe of the Symbolic order (or wholly castrated). The claim Lacan is making is therefore that, because woman is "not-whole", there is something in her (an excess, or surplus) that cannot be fully integrated into the Symbolic, and that therefore escapes discourse, and results in her not being wholly castrated. This does not imply that the phallic function is entirely inoperative in the feminine subject, as Fink (1995: 112) stresses; were this to be the case the subject, in being constituted through the gap between the Real and the Symbolic through which the drive is produced, would be unable to function, as a subject, within the Symbolic order.

Translated into Lacan's formulations of sexuation, the phallic economy of desire can therefore be understood to equate to the masculine subject position and the pursuit of the object *a* that will restore the subject's lost wholeness, with the drive being equivalent to the feminine subject position and the logic of the not-all that renounces the pursuit of jouissance and rejects the totalising effects of the master signifier by embracing the lack that constitutes both the subject and the Symbolic (Rose 2019: 81-82).

The nature of the subject's relation to the phallus has a direct effect upon the type of jouissance it is able to obtain. While the masculine subject is restricted to the experience of

183

masculine (or phallic) jouissance, the feminine subject is able to experience a supplementary feminine (or Other) jouissance in addition to the phallic jouissance experienced by the masculine subject (Barnard 2002: 172; Fink 2002: 36). As in Lacan's account of sexuation, more broadly, the subject's relation to jouissance is therefore determined neither by biology nor by the processes of Oedipalization through which its gender is assigned to it (Brousse 2021: 4). The masculine subject position therefore represents the dominant position for all speaking subjects (Brousse 2021: 42). This means that phallic jouissance is the predominant form of jouissance that is experienced by all subjects, regardless of anatomy, Oedipalization, or even of the subject's sexuation as masculine or feminine.

To recapitulate the difference between masculine (or phallic) jouissance and feminine jouissance, for both masculine and feminine subjects phallic jouissance represents the predominant form of jouissance that is available to them. Phallic jouissance is the form of jouissance obtained from within the framework of fantasy, in which the subject seeks to overcome its constitutive alienation, or lack, through the fantasmatic attachment of its desire to a particular object that comes to perform the role of object *a*: the object that simultaneously causes desire and that holds out the (impossible) promise of the restoration of the subject's lost jouissance. It is a form of jouissance that always disappoints, in that the obtainment of full (or Real) jouissance the subject's fantasy unconsciously aims towards remains impossible, and that what the subject obtains, instead, is a substitute, partial jouissance of the drive that, as Fink suggests, is circumscribed by the phallic function, in the sense that it is derived from the Symbolic as opposed to the Real (1995: 106). The feminine subject position, in contrast, produces what Lacan describes as feminine, or "Other" jouissance (1999). According to Lacan, 'woman' (the feminine subject), as the "not-whole," "has a supplementary jouissance compared to what the phallic function designates by way of jouissance" (1999: 73). This supplementary jouissance is located beyond the phallus, and therefore beyond the castrating

effects of the Symbolic order. Lacan goes on to argue that "there is no other than phallic jouissance – except the one concerning which woman doesn't breathe a word, perhaps because she doesn't know *(connait)* it, the one that makes her not-whole." (1999: 60). What this seemingly contradictory statement means, in effect, is that there is no other form of jouissance available to the subject in the Symbolic order. The feminine jouissance Lacan is alluding to is therefore located beyond the Symbolic, in the Real, where woman (the feminine subject) is unable to know or talk about it because, in making her not-whole, it evades the castrating effects of the phallus, and is not, therefore, subject to the processes of signification or cognition through which Real jouissance is barred, and through which knowledge of, or about this Real jouissance might be acquired or communicated to others.

In terms of the nature of the supplementary, feminine jouissance the feminine subject is able to access, Lacan asserts that: "When I say that woman is not-whole … it is precisely because I raise the question *(je mets en question)* of a jouissance that … is in the realm of the infinite" (1999: 103). Because it is "in the realm of the infinite," in contrast to the limited jouissance offered to the masculine subject, this feminine jouissance, is limitless. The infinite should be understood, here, not in terms of duration, as the condition of unending, chronological time (which would be impossible within the context of the finite nature of human existence), but to relate to the eternal, understood as the condition of timelessness, or being outside of time, in which full (or infinite) jouissance is experienced within time, but as an interruption, or suspension, of chronology. If the supplementary, feminine jouissance Lacan describes relates to the realm of the infinite, then, as chronological time is a product of and one of the most fundamental matrices of, the Symbolic order, it must, necessarily, be located at the point of its failure, in the Real.

Mysticism, Feminine Jouissance, and the "not-whole"

185

The concept of feminine jouissance is important to the mystical approach to post-anarchism I am elaborating in this thesis because, by integrating this concept into a mystical post-anarchist framework, it becomes possible to imagine a non-phallic libidinal economy grounded in the mystical experience of the annihilation of the self. Lacan draws a direct equivalence between feminine jouissance and the jouissance experienced by the mystics through the concept of the not-whole:

> Mysticism … is something serious, about which several people inform us – most often women, or bright people like Saint John of the Cross, because … when one is male … One can also situate oneself on the side of the not-whole. There are men who are just as good as women. It happens. And who also feel just fine about it. Despite – I won't say their phallus – despite what encumbers them that goes by that name, they get the idea or sense that there must be a jouissance that is beyond. Those are the ones we call mystics (1999: 76).

In associating mysticism with "the not-whole," Lacan is making the claim that mysticism, like (or as a form of) feminine jouissance, is an experience that is only accessible to the feminine subject (understood in terms of sexuation and the subject's relation to the phallus). By noting that it is experienced by both men and women (understood in terms of sexual identity and the process of Oedipalization through which the ego makes its gender identifications) Lacan is making the point that the subject's ability to assume a feminine subject position by situating itself on the side of the not-whole is not connected to (and should not be conflated with) the subject's sexual identity. In noting that men 'get the idea or sense that there must be a jouissance that is beyond', Lacan is underlining the point that men (again understood in terms of sexual identity) are just as capable as women (defined in these same terms) of intimating

186

that it is possible to obtain a jouissance that is beyond the phallus (and its castrating effects) and, therefore, of assuming the feminine subject position through which it becomes possible to obtain a limitless Real (or feminine) jouissance.

Chiesa develops Lacan's mystical reading of feminine jouissance further by relating it explicitly to the concept of the divine. Chiesa argues that, "in experiencing God *qua* the non-totalizability of the symbolic order, feminine *jouissance* approaches him in a way that is contrary to any theology that … has identified the divine with a 'supreme Being,' a One who fully enjoys himself" (2014: 185). In relating feminine jouissance to the experience of God as "the non-totalizability of the symbolic order," Chiesa is making the claim that the God of the mystics is located not within the Symbolic order, but at the point of its failure to cover over the gap between meaning and being where the Real emerges. In noting that feminine jouissance therefore does not approach God in the same way as any theology that "has identified the divine with a 'supreme Being'," Chiesa is making the point that the God of the mystics that feminine jouissance leads the subject towards is therefore not the anthropomorphic supreme being of theism, but what might be described, (in the terms I set out in Chapter Two), as a state of eternal being that is beyond the phallus and the Symbolic order's castrating effects.

Chiesa makes the further point that this God is also not "a One who fully enjoys himself". (Or a version of the Freudian primal Father who, alone, is capable of experiencing the full jouissance that is barred to all other subjects through their Symbolic castration). It is important to emphasise that the "One" Chiesa describes differs, fundamentally, from the "One" described by Eckhart and Porete. Where the "One" invoked by Chiesa (and Lacanian psychoanalysis, in general) can be understood as a condition of wholeness and plenitude, Eckhart's and Porete's mystical reading of the neo-Platonic "One," by contrast, is better understood in terms of undoing and disintegration, or de-creation. It is precisely this mystical One that feminine jouissance, on my understanding of it, leads towards. Rather than taking the

form of the restoration of a mythical wholeness through the subject's possession of, or unification with the *objet a*, the experience of feminine jouissance can therefore be understood to be co-extensive with Eckhart's breakthrough, and entail a total loss of subjectivity and, with this, a shift from the Symbolic and Imaginary orders through which the subject exists as a subject, to the Real of true poverty, or the annihilation of the soul. The experience of feminine jouissance, in turn, has the effect of revealing the contingency of the phallic economy of desire and the possibility of an alternative, non-phallic economy within the Symbolic.

Mysticism, Feminine jouissance, and the Post-anarchist Uprising of the Self

The mystical experience Lacan describes in his conceptualisation of feminine jouissance can contribute to the post-anarchist uprising of the self both through the challenge it presents to the dominant, phallic economy on which the contemporary capitalist state is based, and the alternative libidinal economy it opens up the possibility for. The experience of feminine jouissance provides the subject with direct knowledge (on a spiritual and affective, or experiential level) of the fact that an unlimited, or full jouissance can be obtained (albeit temporarily) beyond the logic of fantasy. The most obvious political effect of feminine jouissance is therefore that it offers a direct point of comparison with the limited, or partial jouissance that is available to the subject within the phallic economy of the contemporary capitalist state, whether this is through the subject's identification with the transcendental authority of the sovereign state, either in the figure of the sovereign ruler, as in Hobbes (2017 [1651]) and Schmitt (2006 [1934]), the people, as in Rousseau (2004 [1962]) and Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the proletariat, as in Marx and Engels (2008 [1873]), or the multitude, as in Hardt and Negri (2009); nationalist groups and movements, in both their liberal, multicultural (Agamben 2005) and ethnocentric (Hellstrom, Norocel and Jorgensen 2020) forms; or through

the practices of consumer capitalism, capital accumulation, or the cultural and social capital that these provide (Dean 2009; McGowan 2016).

The mystical praxis of detachment can enable the subject to bypass the economy of phallic jouissance by moving from a masculine to a feminine subject position and, through this, experiencing the feminine jouissance beyond the phallus that Lacan describes. Within the context of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the spiritual practices of detachment and releasement can therefore be understood to have, as their goal, the subject's releasement both from the libidinal economy of phallic jouissance and the drive that circles around the object *a*, and thereby sustains desire. It is worth stressing, however, that, in doing this, the mystical subject is not replacing its unconscious pursuit of full jouissance through the object *a* with the conscious pursuit of full jouissance, without the mediation of the object *a,* as an end in itself, as this would, in effect, be to revert to the phallic logic of desire, and thus prevent the subject/soul's releasement from being possible. Feminine jouissance should therefore be understood as the product, or consequence of the subject's releasement from will and desire, and from the economy of phallic jouissance into which these are inserted, rather than its aim. The subjective shift from desire to drive that Lacan advocates as part of the traversal of fantasy can therefore be understand as a preliminary step in the process of releasement and the feminine jouissance (or annihilation of the self) that can result from this.

In terms of the relationship between feminine jouissance and the post-anarchist uprising, the experience of feminine jouissance provides evidence of the possibility of the temporary attainment of the Real jouissance that the contemporary capitalist state promises but cannot deliver. In pointing to the possibilities of a jouissance beyond the phallus and the subject's fantasmatic relation to the object *a*, it has the effect of highlighting the structural causes of the contemporary capitalist state's failure to deliver on what it promises. In doing so, it helps demonstrate the impossibility of Real jouissance not only within the framework of the

specifically capitalist configuration of the socio-political order, but from within the framework of the Symbolic order as such. To summarise my argument in the sub-sections above, the concept of feminine jouissance is therefore useful for a mystical post-anarchism because it helps to differentiate between the limited jouissance obtained through the Imaginary and Symbolic orders from the Real jouissance produced through a mystical praxis of detachment. It also helps to point to how it might be possible to imagine a non-phallic alternative to both phallic jouissance and the drive as the primary libidinal economic foundation for the post-anarchist political community. What the concept of feminine jouissance lacks, however, is a clear ethical content, focus, or orientation in which this economy can be grounded. This is something that Porete's conceptualisation of divine love can help to supply.

Divine Love

The concept of divine love plays a key role in the mystical processes of detachment, releasement, and the breakthrough into true poverty/the annihilation of the soul. In terms of the ethics of annihilation I am arguing for in this chapter, it can therefore help to explain, more precisely, how the subject can become released from the economy of phallic jouissance. In doing so, it can also contribute to the broader post-anarchist uprising by bringing a clear ethical orientation to the ethics of annihilation I am arguing for. My argument, in what follows, will therefore be that the processes of detachment, releasement, and the breakthrough into true poverty / the annihilation of the soul, culminate in the replacement of desire with divine love. To make this argument, it will be necessary to draw a distinction first, between created and uncreated love and second, between the soul's relationship to divine love in the different stages of its spiritual transformation. This will then enable me to argue for the role that divine love can play as the foundation for a non-phallic economy of desire in which the subject aims to

detach itself from the economy of phallic jouissance and, in moving from a masculine to a feminine subject position, replace desire with divine love.

From Created to Uncreated Love

While Lacan does talk about different forms of love (see Verhaeghe 1999; Hollywood 2002: 169; Reinhard 2014: 154), his focus is, primarily, on romantic love. For Lacan, love is linked, very closely, to the concept of desire. This is clear, for instance, in his claim that "Love … is not aware that it is but the desire to be One, which leads us to the impossibility of establishing the relationship between … them-two sexes" (1999: 6). For Lacan, love can therefore be understood as the fantasmatic support that covers over the fact that "there is no sexual relationship" (1999: 6) and, with this, the impossibility of the subject's desire to overcome its symbolic castration through the attainment of a mythical lost wholeness through which the subject can become one with the object of its desire. In terms of the distinction I have been making in this thesis, between the created and the uncreated, Lacan's account of love, in its fantasmatic relation to desire, can be understood as a form of created love. In Porete's mystical theology the focus, by contrast, is on uncreated, or divine love, and its role in the mystical praxis of detachment and in the subject's releasement from created love.

The distinction Porete draws between created and uncreated love can be seen in her reflection on the resurrected Jesus's decision to depart from his apostles:

He said: 'It is necessary that I go away.' This was grievous for them to hear, yet by this grief they were able to perceive that their love was natural and not divine … But [such love] impedes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, [gifts] which can sustain only divine love, which is pure, without mingling from nature (1993: 202).

In asserting that divine love "is pure without mingling from nature," Porete draws an implicit distinction between divine (or uncreated) love (which is not mingled with nature, or the created world) and a created love (that is). Her insistence that the love of the apostles "was natural and not divine," and that "[such love] impedes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which can sustain only divine love", shows that, on Porete's understanding, the existence of created love in the soul functions as a direct impediment to its reception of God in the form of the Holy Spirit and its gifts, which are contingent on the exclusive presence of divine love.

Detachment and Divine Love

The distinction Porete draws between created and uncreated love relates to the broader mystical praxis of detachment in the following way. Prior to the soul's detachment, there is a clear distinction between created and uncreated love. To refer back to the section in *The Mirror of Simple Souls* I quoted from above, the problem that Porete identifies relates to the soul's propensity to direct its created love towards created, as opposed to uncreated, things. Instead of being directed at Jesus's uncreated nature (his divinity), the created love of Jesus's disciples is directed at his created nature (his personality). This focus on the created dimensions of Jesus Christ functions as a barrier to the reception of the divine that the processes of detachment and releasement lead towards. The argument that Porete is therefore making is that the soul's access to the divine is contingent on the detachment of its (created) love from created things.

If the first step the soul needs to take to gain access to the divine is to detach itself from its love of created things, the next step in this process of detachment is for the soul to detach itself from its created love to allow divine love to emerge. This can be seen in the following extract from *The Mirror of Simple Souls* in which Porete writes: "I began to depart from my infancy and my spirit began to become old when my will died and my works finished and my love ended which made me charming. For the overflowing of the divine Love … revealed

suddenly Him and me" (1993: 215-216). In describing how, with the death of the will, the soul departs from its infancy and the spirit becomes old, Porete is, in effect, referring to the process of releasement through which the soul enters into a state of spiritual poverty. By placing the ending of love alongside the death of the will, Porete is drawing an equivalence between will and love in terms of their created nature and the barriers they both therefore represent to the pursuit of the divine will and the attainment of divine love, respectively. Porete's assertion that "the overflowing of the divine Love" reveals "Him and me" shows that, for Porete, the experience of divine love leads directly to an encounter with God. Importantly, in this state of spiritual poverty, a clear distinction persists both between the soul and God, and between the soul and the divine love through which the soul gains access to God. As such, in this condition, prior to the breakthrough and annihilation of the soul, the soul's encounter with both divine love and God takes place through the mediation of the Imaginary and the Symbolic rather than taking the form of the soul's identity with them in the Real.

If the process of detachment culminates in the soul's releasement from its own, created, love, and the emergence of divine love in its place, with the breakthrough into true poverty or, in Porete's terms, the annihilation of the soul, the distinction between the soul and God (in the modality of divine love) is erased entirely, so that the soul, in its annihilation, becomes divine love. This can be seen in Chapter Seven of *The Mirror of Simple Soul's* where the allegorical figure of Love explains to Reason that "it is no longer her will which wills, but now the will of God wills in her; for this Soul dwells not in love which causes her to will this through desiring something. Instead, Love dwells in her who seized her will, and Love accomplishes Love's will in her" (Porete 1993: 85). In saying that the soul no longer wills because God now wills in her place, Porete is describing the condition of the soul's annihilation. In this condition, the soul has completed the process of releasement through which it detaches itself from its created will and has broken through the Symbolic order through which the alienation of the soul from

193

God is maintained, to the Real. In describing the relationship between love and desire within this process, Porete makes a distinction between 'love' (uncapitalised), which can be understood to represent created love and is responsible for the production of desire and will, and 'Love' (capitalised), which can be understood to represent uncreated (or divine) love. Porete's assertion that, rather than the soul dwelling in love, Love dwells in the soul and accomplishes its will in her can be seen as a demonstration of the culmination of the process of releasement, in which the soul, in detaching itself from both its created will and created love, has facilitated the replacement of the created will with God's uncreated will, which is manifested in the form of divine love. Consequently, "Love works in her without her" meaning that there is nothing left of the creature in the annihilated soul, as it is now driven solely by divine love (Porete 1993: 85).

The implications of this for the soul's divinization can be seen in the following proclamation from Love: "I am God, says Love, for Love is God and God is Love, and this Soul is God by the condition of Love. I am God by divine nature and this Soul is God by righteousness of Love." (Porete 1993: 104). In asserting that "I am God, Says Love, for Love is God and God is Love," Porete is making an explicit identification of divine love with God. The key difference that persists between God and the soul in terms of their relationship to Love and the divinization it effects, in the soul's annihilation, can be seen in Love's assertion that "I am God by divine nature and this Soul is God by righteousness of Love". If Love is God by divine nature, this means there is nothing created, or non-divine in it or, in Lacanian terms, it exists purely in the Real. If, by contrast, the soul is God "by righteousness of Love," it is created in nature or exists as a subject in and through the Symbolic order, and can only become divine, or exist in the Real, through the intercession of Love.

Porete describes the effects of the soul's identity with God in the modality of divine love on the (annihilated) soul through the following declaration from the character Soul: "I

194

was, says this Soul, and I am, and I will be always without lack, for Love has no beginning, no end, and no limit, and I am nothing except Love. How would I have anything else? This could not be" (1993: 162). The annihilation of the soul, for Porete, represents a condition in which the annihilated soul no longer experiences any lack as, in being "nothing except Love," there is no longer any distinction between the soul, as divine love, and God, as divine love. This means that there is no distinction that can be made between the loving subject and the object of the subject's love and that, consequently, the soul's created love, like its desire, is annihilated at the same time as the soul, as there is no longer any split within the soul (because the soul, as such, no longer exists) through which the soul's created love (and the desire it functions, in the fantasmatic economy of phallic jouissance, to cover over) can be sustained. The annihilated soul's identity with God as divine love does not, therefore, represent an overcoming of lack through the restoration of the subject's lost plenitude in the realisation of its desire, but the annihilation of both subjectivity and desire and, with it, the conditions through which the subject exists as a desiring subject.

The experience of the soul's annihilation in divine love has important implications for the post-anarchist uprising of the self. The experience of divine love might not be able to eliminate the conditions of precarity (based on the logic of competition and the systematic dismantling of the protections afforded by the welfare state) through which anxiety, guilt and other negative emotions and affects are generated in the neoliberal state. However, the negation of negative emotions and affects that the experience of divine love effects (Porete 1993: 85) can help to challenge and undo the existing psycho-affective regime and the anxiety and guilt of the precarious neoliberal subject it functions to produce. It can also help point to the possibility of alternative social and economic relationships based on the generation of affects and relations derived from the experience of divine love. In terms of the ethics of annihilation I have been working towards in this chapter, the affective memory of divine love that the

195

annihilation of the soul leaves, in the soul's return of subjectivity, is able to produce an ethico-spiritual form of mystical subjectivity that both emanates from and is oriented towards the reproduction and proliferation of divine love.

Towards an Ethics of Annihilation

The Ethics of Annihilation

My aim, in the final section of this chapter, is to consolidate the post-anarchist synthesis of Lacanian psychoanalysis and Meister Eckart's and Marguerite Porete's mystical theologies I have been working towards in this chapter by clarifying how the various concepts I have discussed so far can be combined and integrated into a mystical post-anarchist ethics of annihilation. The argument I have been making is that, if Lacanian psychoanalysis can help equip Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies with a more robust account of the nature of subjectivity and the operation of desire, the solution that it offers (prior to the theorisation of feminine jouissance) to the problem of the fundamental dissatisfaction that prompts the subject to embark upon a path of detachment or to enter into analysis and, on a more collective level, to attempt to bring about social and political change, is less useful from a mystical perspective. In its prescription of a traversal of fantasy, the ethics of psychoanalysis enables the subject to understand the impossibility of the satisfaction of its desire through the object *a,* and to come to terms with the limited nature of the jouissance obtainable through the drive that circles around the object *a* and, in doing so, sustains the subject's desire. However, the effects of the Lacanian traversal of fantasy (on its own) are limited the reconciliation of the subject to the impossibility of the jouissance its desire aims towards.

Lacan's later conceptualisation of feminine sexuality and feminine jouissance helps open up the possibility for an alternative to either desire or drive in which the ethics of psychoanalysis ultimately remains trapped. However, these concepts remain relatively

undeveloped by Lacan in terms of their integration into a broader ethical framework and, from a mystical perspective, in terms of their spiritual implications. The argument I have therefore been making is that, by reading the Lacanian concepts of sexuation and feminine jouissance alongside Eckhart's mystical praxis of detachment and releasement, it is possible to develop the spiritual and ethical implications of these concepts more fully. This, in turn, makes it possible to conceive an ethics of annihilation in which the subject/soul can not only detach itself from the various objects of desire presented to it from within the contemporary capitalist state (whether these relate to the processes of capitalist consumption (Dean 2009; Kapoor 2014) or the subject's identifications with the implicit or explicit authoritarianism of existing liberal and conservative leaders, movements, and ideologies) (Newman 2019) and with this, from the fantasmatic promise of full jouissance that they hold, but also release itself from its attachment to the phallic libidinal economy through which these attachments are produced. Where the ethics of annihilation I am arguing for departs from Lacanian psychoanalysis is in that, rather than being satisfied with the subject's reconciliation with the drive, it aims past this to the subject's releasement from both desire and drive through the annihilation of the subjectivity from which desire and drive both emanate. As it is impossible for the human animal to maintain social relationships with other human animals outside the framework of subjectivity and the Symbolic order, the (annihilated) soul's releasement from the drive can only ever represent a temporary condition. However, where the ethics of annihilation diverges from a Lacanian traversal of fantasy is that, in the annihilated soul's return to subjectivity, instead of being satisfied with being reconciled, once more, to the drive, the subject aims to release itself from both desire and drive, once again, by reembarking on the path of detachment that leads to its annihilation.

In terms of the relationship between feminine jouissance and divine love, the mystical praxis of detachment can be understood, first of all, to enable the divine will to emerge through

the subject's releasement from the created will and desire and from the economy of phallic jouissance within which they operate. It is in the modality of divine love that the soul encounters the divine will, and it is the subject/soul's identity with, or annihilation in divine love that the divine will ultimately aims towards. Consequently, it is divine love that enables the subject/soul to move past the economy of phallic jouissance and to experience the feminine jouissance beyond the phallus that Lacan describes, and it also the experience of the subject/soul's annihilation in divine love that the concept of feminine jouissance denotes. At the same time, divine love can be understood as being what replaces both desire and drive when, through the processes of detachment and releasement, the subject has broken through into a state of true poverty (Eckhart 1994: 207), or annihilation (Porete 1993).

Where Lacan's conceptualisation of feminine jouissance offers a foundation for the conceptualisation of an alternative to the economy of phallic jouissance, Porete's account of divine love makes it possible to conceive a non-phallic economy with a clearer and more direct ethico-spiritual focus than Lacan's conceptualisation of feminine jouissance can do on its own. It can do this by providing (and functioning as) an immanent source of ethical and spiritual direction that can inform the actions of the (annihilated) subject/soul even in the subject's return to subjectivity. While the annihilated soul's identity with the Godhead in the modality of divine love can only ever be temporary, the presence of divine love can persist in the soul's return to subjectivity, in the form of an objectless (in contrast to the objectlessness and subjectlessness of the soul's identity with divine love), generalized love that can be understood as the perfect expression of the Christian injunction to 'love your neighbour' (New Revised Standard Version, Mark 12:31).

The Ethics of Annihilation and the Post-anarchist Insurrection

198

In terms of the implications of an ethics of annihilation for the post-anarchist uprising, the spiritual practices of detachment and releasement can contribute to the process of structural renewal by helping the subject to respond to the conditions of alienation and dissatisfaction it finds itself in within the contemporary capitalist state. They can do this by providing a clear praxis through which the subject can detach itself from the multifarious objects of desire presented to it within the context of the contemporary capitalist state, and through which it can release itself from the broader economy of phallic jouissance through which these desires are produced and through which the conditions of the subject's discontent are reproduced.

In enabling the subject to detach itself from the economy of phallic jouissance, these practices have the effect of shifting the subject's position in relation to the phallus from the masculine to the feminine and, through this, of orienting it towards a full, feminine (or Real) jouissance that is located beyond the phallus and the Symbolic, partial jouissance it provides. The assumption of a feminine subject position in relation to the phallus can, in turn, contribute to the post-anarchist project of structural renewal by providing the foundations for a non-phallic economy around which both the individual subject and the prefigurative anarchistic communities of which it forms a part can orient themselves. At the same time, the experience of the annihilated soul's identity with the Godhead (or God of the Real) in the modality of divine love can provide a clearer ethical dimension to the alternative libidinal economy of the prefigurative anarchistic community. The ethics of annihilation therefore represents both a mode of being and a form of politics in which desire is replaced with divine love as the motor for individual ethical conduct and for the production of the anarchistic social relationships and institutions through which the mystical post-anarchist political community is constituted. In doing so, it embodies the Eckhartian principle of "living without a why" (Schurmann 2001), in which the desire to overcome what it lacking in both the subject and the Symbolic through the

object *a* is replaced by the aimlessness and objectlessness of divine love (Hollywood 1995: 116; Kangas 2011: 312).

The pursuit of the mystical praxis of detachment does not, of course, enable the mystical post-anarchist subject to evade desire or the drive in any final, or permanent way; the impermanence of the experience of feminine jouissance (or, in mystical terms, the annihilation of the soul) means that the subject must continue, necessarily, to operate, primarily, through the mediation of the Imaginary and Symbolic orders and to be subject to the desire and drive that are produced in the subject's constitutive alienation from the Real. This being the case, the subject's attempts to become released from both desire and drive will be an ongoing process that can never be completed. Consequently, no matter how far the mystical subject, (or the mystical post-anarchist political community, more broadly) might be able to release themselves from the phallic economy around which the contemporary capitalist state is configured, or from the drive through which their desire is perpetuated, this is something they will never be able to say they have ever, finally, done.

At the same time, it also means that however much success the post-anarchist project of structural renewal might have in undoing the contemporary capitalist state, or in constructing alternative, anarchistic communities that might take its place, these communities will always remain communities in process in which the various forms of domination and control that emerge from the phallic libidinal economy are never entirely overcome. This means that the post-anarchist uprising of the self can only ever represent an ongoing process rather than a final, eschatological, revolutionary event that leads to a society free from all forms of domination, hierarchy, or exploitation in a return to a pre-lapsarian state of perpetual, limitless jouissance. However, while the practice of detachment (as with the broader ethics of annihilation it forms part of) can have no final conclusion or end, the more practice the subject has in the art of detachment, the more proficient he or she will become at attaining releasement

and the annihilation of the soul, and, through this, of recreating the divine love through which the social and ethical relations of the political community, along with its processes of political decision-making, are sustained.

In terms of the relationship between the ethics of annihilation and the sovereignty of the Godhead I began to elaborate in the previous chapter, it is through this ethical grounding of the non-phallic libidinal economy in divine love that the sovereignty of the Godhead can emerge within the post-anarchist political community. The sovereignty of the Godhead therefore functions, on an individual level, as the source and warrant for ethical and political conduct, with divine love representing the particular modality through which this sovereignty is expressed. On a communal level, the sovereignty of the Godhead can, consequently, be understood as the ultimate source of authority on which the post-anarchist political community is founded, and the source of the warrant for the creation of anarchistic social relationships and political institutions derived from an ethics of annihilation and grounded in the economy of divine love.

My argument, in this chapter, has been for the role that an ethics of annihilation can play in the post-anarchist uprising of the self, both in terms of the undoing of the existing forms of subjectivity and economy of desire through which the contemporary capitalist state is reproduced, and in terms of the production of alternative modes of subjectivity and relations to desire that might form the basis for alternative, prefigurative, anarchist political communities as part of the project of structural renewal. In the final chapter, I will focus on the constructive dimensions of the post-anarchist insurrection by situating the ethics of annihilation more squarely within the context of the mystical post-anarchist political community as part of a wider exploration of the relationship between the subject and the Symbolic and the role that a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic can perform in the production of mystical post-anarchist communities that can function as prefigurative alternatives to the contemporary capitalist state.

201

<u>Chapter Four</u>

The Mystical Post-anarchist Symbolic

In this final chapter, my focus shifts from the roles of subjectivity, desire, and the will in the post-anarchist uprising of the self to the relationship between the subject and the Symbolic order and the role that mysticism can play in the production of a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic that can form the basis for prefigurative, mystical post-anarchist political communities as part of the post-anarchist project of structural renewal. The chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first section, I draw an analytical distinction between the Symbolic in its purely linguistic dimension and the Symbolic in its broader, social dimension. In doing so, my focus is on the ways in which the symbolic law, in its social dimension, operates, within the context of the contemporary capitalist state, through the interpenetration and mutual constitutivity of the Symbolic and the subject. This enables me, in the second section, to argue for the contingency of the Symbolic as a social order and to point to some of the most important ways in which the transformation of the subject's relation to the big Other can contribute to the contestation and transformation of the Symbolic, more broadly. In the third section, I will examine the role that a mystical post-anarchism can play in these processes of contestation and transformation. In doing so, I will argue that the positioning of the Godhead as the primary master signifier for the prefigurative, mystical post-anarchist political community can contribute to the institution of a sovereignty of the Godhead that can function to produce a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic oriented towards the reproduction of mystical post-anarchist subjects participating in an economy of divine love.

The Patriarchal Symbolic and the Contemporary Capitalist State

In the first section of this chapter, I will set out how the Symbolic law functions within the context of the contemporary capitalist state in terms of its contribution to the operation of

political and economic sovereignty. In doing this, I will argue that it is possible to make an analytical distinction between the Symbolic as a linguistic order and the Symbolic as a social order. This will enable me to assess how the Symbolic law operates, first, in terms of the subject's constitutive alienation from the Real (or, in theological terms, original sin), and second, in terms of the patriarchal social order and the processes of Oedipalization through which the contemporary capitalist state is configured. This will then enable me, in the sections that follow, to establish how far the Symbolic law, in its two modalities, can be evaded or overcome, and the extent to which it might be possible for a mystical approach to post-anarchism to contribute to the contestation of the Symbolic authority of the contemporary capitalist state and the reconfiguration of the Symbolic order from which its authority is derived.

The Symbolic Law, Language, and the Limits of Mysticism

My assumption, in the following sections, is that it is possible to draw an analytical distinction between the Symbolic as a linguistic order and the Symbolic as a social order. In making this distinction, I want to argue that, if the Symbolic law as it relates to the order of language it functions to found is (for the most part) fixed, the Symbolic law as it relates to the social order it functions to found is contingent, and therefore open to a much greater and more durable contestation. Campbell draws a similar distinction to the one that I want to make by differentiating between "a symbolic order, which is the necessary ordering of symbolic relations," and "the Symbolic order, which is the arrangement of signifiers in relation to the phallic signifier" (2004: 172-173). The first of these categories relates to "the structure of language as the differential organization and articulation of signifiers," whereas the second relates to "the Law of the Father, which structures signifiers in relation to the phallus" (Campbell 2004: 172-173). The key distinction that Campbell is drawing, here, is therefore

between the purely linguistic dimensions of the Symbolic order as a linguistic order of signification, and the social dimension of the Symbolic order, through which signifiers are imbued with specific cultural meanings in their relation to each other.

The patriarchal imagery of the Oedipus myth plays a key role in Lacan's account of the process through which the subject is formed in its accession to the Symbolic order. It is worth noting that, in contrast to the position I am taking in this chapter, Irigaray (1985) and Butler (2004: 45, 158), among others, argue that the patriarchal imagery Lacan employs to describe the formation of the subject as a sexuated being demonstrates that the subject's entry into language is co-extensive with, and analytically inseparable from its entry into the patriarchal social order. Butler, for example, argues that, in Lacan's structuralist reading of the Oedipus myth, the patriarchal kinship positions of the nuclear family are "elevated to the status of fundamental linguistic structures" through which the cultural intelligibility of any act of signification is secured (2004: 45-46). For Butler, the attempt to separate the symbolic from the social law in Lacan's account is therefore impossible because "the symbolic itself is the sedimentation of social practices" (2004: 44).

It is certainly true that, in Lacan's largely descriptive account of the operation of the Symbolic law within the specific context of patriarchal society, the subject's entry into language and its entry into the social order are, indeed, co-extensive with each other. It is also worth noting that Lacan does not provide any detailed explanations of how the symbolic law might operate within the context of a non-patriarchal society. This does not mean that it is not possible to draw a distinction between Lacan's account of the subject's relationship to the Symbolic as linguistic order and the Symbolic as social order on an analytical level, however. The claim I am making is that, in drawing this distinction, it is possible to argue that, while the Symbolic order, as a linguistic order, might be largely fixed and unchanging, the Symbolic

order, as a social order, is contingent, and therefore open to the possibility of its reconfiguration.

Lacan's (2007) understanding of the operation of the Symbolic law is derived from a re-reading of Freud through the lenses of structural linguistics and structural anthropology. In this re-reading, the threat of castration that prompts the subject to renounce the desire for the mother and the death of the father is reconceptualised in terms of the subject's relationship to language. More specifically, it is re-read in terms of the prohibition on full jouissance that the subject faces through its entry into language and the alienation from pure being that the representative function of language enacts (Lacan 1999: 35). The figure of the father as the agent of (Symbolic) castration and, therefore, site of the law, plays a central role in Lacan's reworking of the Oedipus complex. In *Seminar XVII* Lacan argues that, behind the Oedipus myth, there is "a structural operator, which is called the real father" that articulates an impossibility at the heart of the Freudian system (2007: 123). The real father, according to Lacan, represents the impossibility of full jouissance within the Symbolic order. In articulating this impossibility, the real father is "imagined as a depriver" and therefore comes to take up the position of "the imaginary father" which, according to Lacan, "necessarily, structurally depends on something that evades us, which is the real father" (2007: 123). It is the function of this real father, according to Lacan, to operate as "the agent of castration. Castration, for Lacan, is a Symbolic operation "that is introduced through the incidence of a signifier" and is "properly articulated with what only concerns the imaginary father, namely the prohibition of *jouissance*" (2007: 128-129, 137). The real father can therefore be understood to represent "the phallic function" which gives rise to Symbolic castration in the form of the alienation from being that takes place through the representative function of the signifier as the subject is integrated into the linguistic structure of the Symbolic order as a subject (Rousselle 2019: 21-25).

In terms of the operation of the Symbolic order as a linguistic order, the central Oedipal image of "the phallus" can therefore be understood to perform a purely metaphorical role in its designation as the site, or source, of the Symbolic law, with the related metaphor of castration describing the process by which the subject is barred from Real jouissance in its accession to the Symbolic order as the order of language. For Lacan, the phallus is closely related to the paternal metaphor of "the Name-of-the-Father". The Name-of-the-Father functions as the "signifier of signifiers" denoting the existence of the structure of language as "the differential signifying chain as such" (Chiesa 2007: 94). This means that the name-of-the-Father is actually meaningless; its function is not to signify, but to enable the emergence of signification as such in the signifying chain through its role as "the Other of the Other" (Chiesa 2007: 94). The phallus, in contrast, represents "the signifier of the signified as such", meaning that signification as such is fundamentally phallic in character for Lacan (Chiesa 2007: 92). In performing this role, the phallus has no fixed referent or signified, and this is why, throughout Lacan's work, its Symbolic function is expressed through its imbrication with a range of objects (such as the child, the woman's body, and the penis) (Grosz 1990: 125).

Lacan's reconceptualization of the Symbolic law as the prohibition on Real jouissance means, as Chiesa (2007) stresses, that the desire for the mother (as lost object) must not and cannot be satisfied. It must not be satisfied because its satisfaction would entail "our utter conscious and unconscious desubjectivation" (meaning that the dissolved subject, or non-subject would be unable to participate in the Symbolic order) (Chiesa 2007: 169-170). It cannot be satisfied because, even if the subject's desire is consummated through the physical act of incest, the Real jouissance this desire unconsciously aims towards remains impossible. This means, in effect, that "the law prohibits something which is already 'inaccessible'" (Chiesa 2007: 169-170). At the same time, the Symbolic law also teaches the subject to desire in the sense that it is the prohibition on Real jouissance that splits the subject and creates desire in the

207

gap it introduces between the Symbolic and the Real. In terms of the subject's relation to the phallic function of the real father, the subject's symbolic identification with the phallic signifier therefore occludes the ontological lack through which it is constituted and, in doing so, defends against the threat this poses to its perception of itself as a unified subject (Campbell 2004: 68).

The invariability of the Symbolic order as a linguistic order is also apparent both in Lacan's elaboration of the ethics of psychoanalysis and his conceptualisation of feminine jouissance. In his account of the ethics of psychoanalysis, Lacan's (1992) advocacy of a traversal of fantasy calls for an acceptance of the impossibility of overcoming the Symbolic law insofar as it relates to the subject's alienation from Real jouissance through its constitution as a subject. In doing so, it reinforces the power of the Symbolic law and the impossibility of its overcoming and, with this, the invariability of the Symbolic order it functions to institute. Similarly, the concept of feminine jouissance is posited by Lacan (1999: 73) as a supplement to phallic jouissance, rather than a potential substitute or replacement for it. This means that Lacan views a phallic economy constituted through the failure of both the subject and the Symbolic order to cover over the impossibility of any attempt to attain the Real jouissance the subject unconsciously desires as a universal condition. This, in turn, implies that the Symbolic law through which this impossibility is recognised on a structural level is an equally universal (and invariable) phenomenon. While the mystical experience of the annihilation of the soul I described in Chapter Three, like the experience of feminine jouissance, can be understood to represent a temporary evasion of the Symbolic law in its linguistic modality, the possibility of the law's temporary evasion does not imply the possibility of its overcoming in any lasting or permanent way.

One of my arguments in Chapter Three was that it is possible to read the Christian concept of original sin through Lacan's conceptualisation of the Symbolic law. In this reading, Adam's original sin of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil can be understood

to describe the process through which Adam and his descendants are barred from Real jouissance through their entry into the Symbolic order and the systems of knowledge and morality it functions to produce. Where Christianity differs from Lacanian psychoanalysis (at least prior to Lacan's discussion of feminine jouissance in *Encore*) is in that it posits the possibility of an overcoming of original sin through the restorative act of grace that takes place through the death of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. For Eckhart (1994) and Porete (1993), in contrast to more orthodox accounts of Christian soteriology that defer the soul's attainment of a paradisal Real jouissance either to Christ's millenarian second coming, an afterlife that follows the individual's bodily death, or both, this overcoming of original sin can be understood to entail an immediate (albeit impermanent) overcoming of the Symbolic law and the bar on Real jouissance it enacts. Significantly, however, rather than taking place, within the Imaginary order, through the resolution of the subject's lack and a restoration of a lost subjective plenitude, this takes place, in the Real, through the annihilation of the soul, or the dissolution of subjectivity. In view of the fact that the social world in which the annihilated soul/subject must live is constituted through and dependent upon the Symbolic order, this annihilating encounter with the Real can only represent a partial, temporary overcoming of the Symbolic law and the conditions of original sin, however. This means that the subject's subjection to the Symbolic law and its castrating effects remains a necessary pre-condition of its existence as a subject in the social world.

The Symbolic Law, Patriarchy, and the Contemporary Capitalist State

Lacan's account of the symbolic law describes the prohibition on full jouissance that marks the subject's constitution as a subject, and the substitution of the immediacy of being for the mediation of the signifier that thereby inaugurates its accession to the symbolic order on the most fundamental level of its entry into language. However, this is not the only function

of the symbolic law; it also describes the constitution of the Symbolic order as a social order and, in Lacan, of a specifically patriarchal social order. The figure of the Symbolic father plays a central role in Lacan's account of the operation of the Symbolic law in its social aspect. For Lacan, the myth of the primal horde can be understood as an attempt to explain the origination of patriarchal society. Where Freud (2001) understands the primal Father as an actually existing, historical figure who continues to exert an ontogenetic and phylogenetic influence on civilization, for Lacan (2007), the primal father is an imaginary figure that forms part of an originary myth to which he accords a strictly fantasmatic status. The phallus, as the master signifier through which the law of the father is reproduced, can therefore be understood to have the effect of structuring the social order by producing Oedipalized forms of subjectivity and relations between subjects and of thereby enabling both the inauguration and reproduction of patriarchal society in its various historical iterations, including its current iterations in the variegated forms of the contemporary capitalist state.

In terms of the relationship between the patriarchal social order and subjectivity, Lacan describes two forms of identification through which the formation of the subject, as an Oedipalized subject, takes place: symbolic identification with the "ego-ideal" and imaginary identification with the "ideal-ego" (Rothenberg 2022: 147). The ideal-ego is the idealized image the child constructs of its own ego, whereas the ego-ideal is what the child tries to impress with the image of its ideal-ego and corresponds with the big Other as "the ideal I try to follow and actualize" and who "watches over me and impels me to give my best" (Zizek 2006: 80). The child's position as a sexed, Oedipalized, subject is determined by the nature of its imaginary identification with the symbolic father and the question of whether it has or does not have possession of the (symbolic) phallus (Lacan 2007). This process functions to form the child's ego-ideal via its imaginary identification with the symbolic father and, through this process, the child is able to enter into the Symbolic order as a sexed, Oedipalized, subject. The

formation of the ego-ideal is predicated on the child's symbolic castration. However, the nature of the identification with the symbolic father differs between the boy and the girl. While the boy's identification with the symbolic father is based on the promise that he will one day have the phallus too, the girl's identification with the symbolic father is based on the lesser promise that she will have a phallus substitute in the form of her own child (Chiesa 2007: 84-85).

In describing the operation of the Symbolic order as a social (or socio-political) order, it is important to emphasise the fundamental interpenetration of the subject and the Symbolic. If, following Zizek, the ideal ego can be understood to operate as the idealized image of the ego and the ego-ideal can be understood as the point of identification within the Symbolic from which the subject observes and judges itself, the superego can be understood as the ego ideal's malevolent counterpart that continually assails the subject with impossible demands and mocks its failure to meet them (2006: 80-81). In terms of the relationship between the Other (understood as the socio-symbolic order of language and the law and the internalized manifestation of the law of the father in unconscious form) (Grosz 1990: 117; George 2022: 241) and the subject, this means, as Chiesa notes, that "the subject is a subject only insofar as he is a 'speaking subject'" and that, as such, his (or her) position as a subject is constituted by the big Other (as the Symbolic order of language) (2007: 141). The role of the Other (in the modality of the Symbolic as social order) in the constitution of subjectivity can also been seen in the production of the Oedipalized subject's ego-ideal which, as Zizek puts it, represents "the point in the big Other from which I observe (and judge) myself" (2006: 80). The interpenetration of the big Other and subjectivity is evident, as well, in the operation of desire, where it is the desire of the Other that causes the subject to desire what it desires (Hook 2022: 132); in the subject's production as an Oedipalized subject in relation to the phallus; and in the particular structure of the subject's desire that this relation functions to inscribe.

The specifically patriarchal form of society the symbolic law functions to create is, as Campbell notes, maintained through "a fraternal form of sociality" (2004: 158-159). This fraternal foundation of patriarchal society is captured, in the founding myth of the primal horde, in the accord arrived at between the brothers, following the murder of the father, to renounce their claim of the jouissance of the mother. The fraternal order is constituted through the relation the brothers imagine between themselves through their shared relation to the murdered father, with both the paternal identification each of them make with the father, as sons, and the fraternal identification they make with each other, as brothers, creating a fraternal bond between them (Lacan 2007). As Campbell stresses, this is not just a bond between siblings; it is a bond between brothers, specifically, as the male children of the father (2004: 159-160). The Symbolic law therefore functions to create a patriarchal society "founded in a phallic representational economy" in which the law of the symbolic father acts as the guarantor for a cultural order in which the construction of differentiated 'masculine' and 'feminine' subjects institutes "a fraternal form of sociality" in which women function as "objects of exchange" (Campbell 2004: 158-160). The effect of this is to inaugurate a patriarchal society, based on a fraternal bond, in which the law of the father operates, primarily, on a symbolic level, through the unconscious, rather than through brute force (Campbell 2004: 159).

The political theological roots of psychoanalysis's account of the operation of the Symbolic law can be located in the transition, in European societies, from the Christian pastorate to secular modernity. For both Freud and Lacan, God represents the expression of a structural need for a place of transcendence and point of exception that can function as the guarantee for the Symbolic order (Newman 2019: 74). God can therefore be understood as an extimate substitute for the symbolic father whose authority operates, externally, as a figure of moral prohibition and, internally, as the voice of the superego. As such, God represents a master signifier that anchors meaning and functions as an Other of the Other that covers over the

212

constitutive void through which the Symbolic order is constituted (Newman 2019: 74). In political theological terms, God's position as a master signifier has functioned, historically, to produce a transcendent conception of divine sovereignty which, when transposed to the political field, has provided a warrant for authoritarian and hierarchical forms of political sovereignty based on the rule of the divine king, who claimed his authority directly from God (Newman 2019: 64-65). Consequently, instead of inaugurating the birth of a more democratic society based on the equality of the brothers, the murder of the father that the myth of the primal horde describes has led, historically, to the emergence of monarchical social formations in which the primal father is replaced with the divine king, whose patriarchal authority is then institutionalised in the form of the authoritarian state. Newman argues that, with the transition from the pastorate to secular modernity, the removal of God as a source of external authority in contemporary, secular societies, instead of leading to the subject's freedom from the authoritarian rule of the divine king, has therefore resulted in an internalisation and intensification of the prohibition God represents (2019: 75-76). Or, as Lacan puts it: "God is dead, nothing is permitted anymore" (2013: 25). In modern (and contemporary) societies, the symbolic law of the father continues to shape social relations between subjects through "a kind of social unconscious that structures our rituals and beliefs" (Crockett 2014: 256).

In political terms, this is reflected in the fact that, in the liberal democracies that emerged with the shift to capitalist modernity, the socio-symbolic order remained an Oedipal order founded, as Campbell notes, on a fraternal social pact, based on the principles of 'liberty, equality, fraternity', in which the fraternal continues to refer exclusively to the relationship between brothers rather than the relationship between sisters or between brothers and sisters (2004: 160). At the same time, the place of sacredness and transcendence created by the murder of the father persists, within contemporary liberal democracies, in spite of their founding myths of revolution against the arbitrary authority of feudal society, as a space through which the

213

sovereign exception is able to emerge (Newman 2019: 67). As examples of this it is possible to point to the structural adjustment programmes forced on populations in South America and Africa throughout the 1970s and 1980s and, more recently, the suspension of democratic norms in countries such as Italy and Greece to impose austerity regimes in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-2009. As Agamben (2005) argues, the possibility also exists for this state of exception to become the permanent rule. This can be seen, as I noted in the Introduction, in the restrictions on freedom that accompanied the securitisation of the state as part of the so-called 'war on terror' in the 2000s, in which many of the democratic freedoms guaranteed, domestically, through the juridical framework of the liberal state were indefinitely suspended in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom through the enactment of various anti-terrorism laws based on the institution of universal surveillance systems and the designation of an increasingly wide range of dissident behaviours as threats to state security (Crockett 2011: 114; Newman 2010: 170-171). This means that, in the contemporary capitalist state the primal father continues to exercise an influence over the social world through, as Newman argues, both his abstraction into the symbolic authority of the law, and the embodiment of "a kind of obscene, violent and excessive presence lurking behind it" (2019: 67).

This is not to say that this violent and excessive presence always exists in the background of the state in the modern and contemporary eras. Nazi Germany, the fascist republics of Italy and Spain, as well as more recent authoritarian regimes in Russia, Hungary, the Philippines, and Brazil have continued to emerge throughout the secular (and post-secular) era, with their leaders representing more of less direct substitutes for the primal father in terms of the combination of love and fear they have inspired. As I argued in the Introduction, the appeal of these figures comes from their perceived strength and power and, therefore, the security and protection that is promised, in identifying with them, against the threat to the

integrity of the social order posed by various internal and external others (Kinnvall and Svensson 2018: 918; Newman 2019: 102). It also comes through the fantasy that a return to a form of sovereignty that precedes the permissive, multi-cultural, liberal state represents a means of regaining the jouissance that neo-liberal globalisation has stolen them from (Newman 2019: 102; Hook 2022: 35-48). The fear they inspire is based on the explicit threats of violence they offer should their laws and norms be transgressed.

It is also possible to observe the emergence of a new phenomenon of what Newman refers to as "perverse fathers," such as Silvio Berlusconi, Donald Trump, and Boris Johnson, who he describes as "clownish and openly transgressive figures" (2019: 78). The love that the perverse fathers Newman describes inspire can be understood to derive from the promise of the same return of the stolen jouissance offered by more traditional authoritarian figures (Andreescu 2019: 358). However, it also comes from the appearance of their unabashed transgression of the norms and customs of the liberal democratic state and the promise they implicitly offer to their followers that, in identifying with them, it is possible to share in the jouissance they enjoy as a consequence of these transgressions (Andreescu 2019: 361). Where the perverse father differs from other authoritarian figures is in that they are more likely to inspire amusement than fear.

The same secularisation of theological concepts that political theologians identify in the liberal state can also be seen in the economic sphere. If, in the capitalist epoch, political sovereignty is located in both the abstracted symbolic authority of the state and a spectral, or not so spectral, paternal figure whose sovereign authority acts as its guarantee, economic sovereignty, as McGowan argues, comes to be expressed through the abstracted symbolic authority of 'the market' (2016: 114-115). With the decline of God as the Symbolic father and guarantor of the Symbolic order that marks the birth of capitalist modernity, the market comes to replace God as a new site of transcendence and sacredness. In contrast to the omnipotent and

omniscient God of the monotheistic religions, the market, like the state, exercises its authority through symbolic means, operating as a new master signifier through which social relations and forms of subjectivity are configured (McGowan 2016: 114-115, 124). The economic sovereignty of the market operates through a capitalist discourse whose "structure of domination" is, as Zizek argues, repressed, so that while individuals are formally free and equal in terms of their rights to property ownership, domination continues to operate through the commodity relation (2017: 210) and the inequalities of power and wealth this functions to produce (Dean 2009: 56). Within this framework, the capitalist is able to exercise his or her domination through the naturalization of the underlying market structure of capitalism, which has the effect of presenting the market, as opposed to the capitalist, as the ultimate authority and arbiter of the socio-economic sphere, so that the authority of the capitalist master "reappears in a displaced way" through what appears as the exercise of "neutral expert knowledge" rather than his or her structural position as capital holder and, with this, his or her power to extract and appropriate surplus value (Zizek 2017: 210).

Within the more specific context of contemporary capitalism, economic sovereignty also comes to operate, on a psychic level, through the production of guilt. According to Zizek, where contemporary "hedonistic-permissive" capitalism differs from its more traditional precursors is in the subordination of shame to guilt and of the ego ideal to the superego (2017: 202-203). Where shame operates through the Other's gaze, guilt emerges through the subject's inner voice, which, as the internalized manifestation of the Other, functions as "an obscene superego injunction" that makes the subject guilty for not fully enjoying itself (Zizek 2017: 202-203). One of the roles that the superego plays in the reproduction of contemporary capitalism is therefore in making the subject believe that if it doesn't experience the full jouissance capitalism promises, then it is because there is something wrong with it rather than with capitalism and its ability to deliver what it promises. A further means through which the

superego functions to produce guilt is through the internalisation of the neoliberal market values of competition. As Lazzarato argues, at the same time that neoliberalism promises the possibilities of self-realization, freedom, autonomy, and enjoyment for those who are 'winners' in the in the competition for jobs, wages, the accumulation of capital, and whichever other signifiers of success is creates, it produces a set of material conditions in which the attainment of these things is made increasingly improbable for the vast majority (2015: 186-187). The failure of most people to attain the goals that neoliberalism sets and, therefore, to become 'winners' in the various market competitions it creates, produces guilt in the subject through the superegoic internalisation of the neoliberal values and assumptions through which the terms of its success and failure are set.

It is worth stressing that the internalisation of the ideology and discourse of the big Other through the superego does not represent a form of Marxian false consciousness. As Zizek argues, the classical Marxist understanding of ideology as operating through the subject's 'false consciousness' implies a distance between social reality and our distorted representation of it that assumes it is possible to have a view of social reality that is entirely free from ideology (1989: 24-25). It is only possible to maintain this view, however, through a disavowal of the material conditions and ideological presuppositions through which its understanding of what is true and what is false is based (Zizek 1989: 24). For Zizek, ideology should therefore be understood to operate not as a form of false consciousness that masks the real state of things, but as the unconscious fantasy that structures our social reality (1989: 30). It is by understanding ideology in this way that it becomes possible to explain why, even if a subject is fully aware of the oppressive conditions that structure its social reality and of the ideological basis of these conditions, it can remain under the sway of ideological fantasy, nonetheless (Zizek 1989: 29-30). Consequently, even if the subject knows that it is living under oppressive conditions, and even if it is aware of the ideological reasons for this, by participating in the

social reality within which it finds itself instead of actively attempting to change it, it acts as though it does not (Zizek 1989: 29-30).

The Contingency of the Patriarchal Symbolic and the Contemporary Capitalist State

If the Symbolic law is (largely) fixed in terms of the operation of Symbolic castration as it relates to the Symbolic as an order of language, the key questions I want to tackle in this section are how far it might be possible to evade the operation of Symbolic castration as it relates to the Symbolic as a social order, and how far the Symbolic order, as social order, can be contested or transformed.

The Contingency of the Symbolic Order as a Social Order

In her feminist critique of psychoanalysis, one of the key problems Irigaray identifies with its account of patriarchal society is that, while it "utters the truth about the status of female sexuality, and about the sexual relation", it stops there, refusing to analyse either its own historical determination or the implications of this, which means that it becomes part of a phallocentric discourse that is made into "a universal and eternal value" (1985: 102-103). This is problematic, from both a feminist and a post-anarchist perspective, because it naturalises existing, patriarchal subjectivities and social relationships and forecloses the possibility of the production of alternative, non-patriarchal forms of sexuation and subjectivity.

Although Lacan's primary focus might be on the specifically patriarchal configurations of the Symbolic order that have accompanied the advent of secular modernity, his insistence that there is no Other of the Other helps to show that, for Lacan, the Symbolic order, as a social order, does not have, necessarily, to be configured in any one particular way, and that any existing configuration of the Symbolic order (including the dominant, patriarchal Symbolic on which the contemporary capitalist state is based) is therefore subject to contestation. Chiesa

218

argues that Lacan's conceptualisation of the paternal law as the Name-of-the-Father implies that "there is a (symbolic) Other of the (symbolic) Other" in which the second Other, (as the order of signifiers or the Symbolic as the order of language) is guaranteed by the first Other, which is the transcendental Symbolic law (or the Name-of-the-Father) (Chiesa 2007: 107). However, Lacan makes the further argument that the Other (in the form of the Symbolic order as a social order) is fundamentally lacking and incomplete, meaning that there is no Other of the Other, and therefore no Other, or Name-of-the-Father, outside of our own symbolizations of them, who can guarantee meaning for us (2007: 15). If there is no Other of the Other, then the Other has no transcendental guarantee, meaning that there is nothing to guarantee its coherence or fullness, and that, consequently, it "can only be a barred Other" (Stavrakakis 1999: 46). This means that the place of transcendence symbolised by the Symbolic father is purely imaginary in character, and that the idea of a primal (or real) father who functions as both the source of and a point of exception to the Symbolic law is a fantasy (Newman 2019: 74). Because there is no Other of the Other, it is only "the intervention of the signifier" that makes the Other emerge (Lacan 2007: 15). The central feature of the Lacanian Symbolic is therefore that it is fundamentally lacking in the sense that language "can never capture the totality of the real" (Stavrakakis 1999: 52). This means that any attempt to represent the Real is doomed to fail (Stavrakakis 1999: 86). If there is no Other of the Other, and if the (symbolic) Other (as a social order) is therefore a product of our own fantasmatic symbolizations, then there is clearly no single way that the Symbolic order must, or should be, configured. And if there is no single, necessary way in which the Symbolic must or should be configured, then its existing configuration as both a patriarchal and a capitalist order can be contested and transformed.

The Name-of-the-Father, the Phallus, and the Quilting Point

219

My aim, in this chapter, is to explore the role that a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics can play in the contestation the existing Symbolic order as a social order and the production of an alternative to it. If, as Lacan insists, there is no Other of the Other and the statuses of the Name-of-the-Father and the phallus are therefore relegated to the position of constructions of the Imaginary rather than fixed structures operating as transcendental guarantors of the Symbolic order, then, in view of their centrality to Lacan's understanding of the Symbolic as a social order, any attempt to theorise how the Symbolic can be reconfigured must, necessarily, engage with these concepts and the implications of their changed status for our understanding of the operation of the Symbolic law.

Both the phallus and the Name-of-the-Father are concepts that Lacan draws from Freud's account of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipus complex is clearly designed to describe a patriarchal society. However, in the context of the discussion of the possibility of a reconfigured, non-patriarchal Symbolic order I want to have, this does not mean that it becomes altogether unintelligible. In terms of the operation of the Symbolic as an order of language, the use of the patriarchal imagery of the Oedipus myth, and the phallus, in particular, may continue to perform the same metaphorical function in the context of a non-patriarchal society as in a patriarchal society in relation to their description of the process through which the subject is barred from Real jouissance as a condition of its constitution as a subject. In the different context of Lacan's theorisation of the Symbolic order as a social order, the phallus, in contrast, performs a metonymic rather than a metaphorical role, representing the master signifier that functions to determine the conditions of intelligibility for the social order and, in doing so, determining its configuration as a specifically patriarchal order. While, as Grosz argues, the phallus aligns with the penis in patriarchal societies as a master signifier reflecting the cultural value of the male sex organ, the distinction Lacan draws between the phallus and the penis means that it is possible for the phallus to align with other objects reflective of other social

orders based on different systems of valorisation (1990: 119). As examples of this, Grosz (1990: 121) points to the phallic function of the family insignia in ancient Greece which differentiated slaves from free men through their access to the family name, while Wapeemukwa (2022: 93) highlights the intertwining of gender and race in the determination of the signifying function of the phallus in the specific context of colonial societies. The possibility therefore remains for the phallus to continue to function as a metaphor for the orienting role of an alternative master signifier in a non-patriarchal society. At the same time, castration can also still serve as a functional metaphor for the subject's successful integration into the social order and implicit acceptance of the social and cultural laws, values, customs, and beliefs on which it is based through the renunciation of the jouissance that could be attained through their transgression.

However, if the imagery of the Oedipus myth continues to be functionable, on a metaphorical level, in a non-patriarchal society, outside of the patriarchal context it describes, it loses much of its original congruency and force. At the same time, if we take on board Irigaray's contention that, to undo the effects of patriarchy, it is necessary to "disrupt the entire order of dominant values, economic, social, moral, and sexual", including the theoretical and linguistic frameworks which found the social order as a patriarchal system (1985: 165), then it is important to dispense with the patriarchal imagery of the Oedipus myth (even if it is mobilised to a non- or even anti-patriarchal end) to avoid the reproduction of the patriarchal values and assumptions through which these images are constructed. So, to describe the process through which the subject accedes to the Symbolic order in the context of a non-patriarchal society, it is necessary either to invoke a new, or alternative myth, or, more straightforwardly, to dispense (as far as possible) with the framework of mythology altogether.

Lacan helps provide the conceptual tools to do this through his theorisation of the "quilting point" (1997: 258-271). The quilting point (or *point de capiton*) functions to fix the

meaning of a chain of signifiers. Its role is therefore to establish a particular master signifier as the transcendental site through which the conditions of intelligibility for all subsequent acts of signification are produced (Stavrakakis 1999: 60). However, as Stavrakakis notes, the *point de capiton* is never able to produce a meaning that is eternally stable; it merely gives the appearance that this is what it does (1999: 60). If there is no Other of the Other and the Symbolic is therefore structurally lacking, this means that there is no longer any privileged signifier of signifiers to guarantee the Symbolic order and that, in its place, there is, instead, a potentially infinite plurality of master signifiers capable of acting as quilting points by signifying the signified as such and "fixing the subject's unconscious in a fundamental fantasy" (Chiesa 2007: 102). In terms of the patriarchal order that Lacan describes, the implication of this is that the Name-of-the-Father (which was, previously, the signifier of signifiers) comes to be perfectly identified with the symbolic phallus (the signifier of the signified as such) which, despite its continued role in the processes of sexuation through which the Oedipalized subject is produced, is relegated to the position of one of many possible master signifiers (Chiesa 2007: 101-102). Instead of operating as transcendent guarantor of the Symbolic order as such, the newly conflated Name-of-the-Father/phallus therefore becomes simply the most dominant current "phantasmatic compensation or defence" through which the political community attempts to suture the constitutive lack at the heart of the Other (Chiesa 2007: 101-102).

It seems clear, then, that the privileged position Lacan assigns to both the Name-of-the-Father and the phallus in some of his work from the 1950s is largely downgraded, later on, as Carusi argues, insofar as the master signifier of the Name-of-the-Father/phallus is represented, more clearly, as a quilting point for "an historically patriarchal social structure" rather than for the social order as such (Carusi 2021: 14-15, 157). This argument is sometimes taken further through the claim that, from the 1960s, Lacan abandons the concepts of the Name-of-the-Father and the phallus altogether (see, for example, Crockett 2014: 256-257). This argument can be

challenged by pointing to the key structural role Lacan (1999) still assigns to the phallus in Seminar XX in his account of the Symbolic order not just as a social order, but as an order of language, and to the importance he attaches to the concepts of sexuation and feminine jouissance in the structuration and of the subject as a sexuated subject. Nonetheless, what is clear is that Lacan's theorisation of the quilting point opens up the possibility both for the Symbolic, as social order, to be configured around a different master signifier, and for an alternative set of signifiers to be employed to account for the operation of the Symbolic order as an order of language.

If the phallus is theorised merely as one of many possible master signifiers, then the implications of Lacan's theorisation of the quilting point are that, as a social order, the Symbolic can be understood as "a discursive field of representation" that is articulated through the selection of a particular set of signifiers and the repression and exclusion of other possible signifiers in an impossible attempt to represent a Real that is ultimately unrepresentable, but that makes its presence felt in the failure of these attempts at representation (Stavrakakis 1999: 39). If the Symbolic can never fully succeed in its attempts to represent the Real, this opens up the possibility for the Symbolic order, as a social order, to be configured in different (non-patriarchal, non-capitalist etc.,) ways (which will all, however, necessarily fail in this attempt as well). As Carusi maintains, an alternative to patriarchy, as a symbolic system, can therefore be constructed by thinking beyond the phallus both to refuse its primacy and to produce a new master signifier around which a new symbolic system can coalesce and which can function as a quilting point for new forms of subjectivity (2021: 117, 160).

At the level of the individual subject, the quilting point is what functions to bring the individual into being as a subject through the interpellation of a particular master signifier. It can therefore be understood to represent "the point of the subjectivation of the signifier's chain" (Zizek 1989: 112). In the context of the existing patriarchal Symbolic, it is through the phallus,

223

as master signifier, that subjects are produced, as sexed beings, via the process of Oedipalization. Within this patriarchal framework, Lacan uses the concept of 'sexuation', as I argued in Chapter Three, to describe the extent to which the subject is 'whole' or 'not-whole' in relation to the discursive power of the phallus (1999: 33). On this account, if the subject is 'whole', this means it is wholly subjected to the phallic function (or, in terms of its relation to the Symbolic as a social order, fully Oedipalized), and this, for Lacan, is the masculine subject position. If the subject is 'not-whole', this means that it is not wholly subjected to the phallic function (or not fully-Oedipalized), and this, for Lacan, is the feminine subject position (1999: 76). If the operation of the phallus as master signifier for the social order is contingent in Lacan's account of the operation of the Symbolic law, then this implies that the processes of subjectivation through which the subject is produced in relation to the master signifier are also contingent in terms of the differentiated forms of subjectivity produced by the master signifier (but not, significantly, in terms of the extent to which the subject is subjected to the phallic function that the master signifier performs).

Within the context of the existing patriarchal Symbolic it is necessary, as Campbell argues, to assume a feminine subject position as a preliminary point of resistance within the dominant social order (2004: 173). However, it is only by moving beyond the phallus altogether that it is possible to imagine an alternative master signifier through which the Symbolic, as a social order, can be configured. This master signifier can then function as a quilting point for the production of alternative subjectivities that are formed through their relation to it rather than to the phallus. The question the replacement of the phallus as a master signifier then raises, is whether the subjects the new master signifier operates as a quilting point for will continue to be sexed in terms of the differented forms of subjectivity produced by the master signifier, or whether they will, instead, be exclusively sexuated in terms of the extent to which they are 'whole' or 'not-whole' in relation to the phallic function of the master signifier. I will return to

this question in the final section of this chapter, where I explore the implications of the production of alternative master signifiers for the processes of subject formation within the political community.

The Quilting Point, the Master Signifier, and the Contingency of the Socio-political Order

If the Symbolic order, as a social order, is, as I have been arguing, contingent, it is possible to contest the particular configuration of the Symbolic that the symbolic law functions to institute and reproduce. As the contemporary capitalist state is reliant on the same point of transcendence created by the Name-of-the-Father and the phallus as the patriarchal society out of which it has emerged, my argument in this sub-section is that the symbolic foundations of the contemporary capitalist state are also contingent and, therefore, subject to the same processes of contestation. As Stavrakakis argues, the historical and cultural relativity of different forms of social reality demonstrates that there is no one, single way in which the social order can or should be configured, and that any existing configuration of society is always subject to the possibility of its later dislocation (1999: 124). This, of course, includes the existing manifestations of the contemporary capitalist state. Zizek identifies the reason for this as being that society is traversed, on an ontological level, by "an antagonistic split which cannot be integrated into the symbolic order" (1989: 141-142). This means that that any attempt to construct a society that is not split in this way is a "social-ideological fantasy" (Zizek 1989: 141). It is, in contrast, the recognition of this antagonistic split – the moment of the encounter with the Real in the failure of the Symbolic as a social order – that, for Stavrakakis, reveals "the moment of the political *par excellence*" (1999: 73-74). This traumatic encounter with the Real demonstrates the impossibility of any fantasmatic conception of the social order as a harmonious totality and initiates the process of contestation between its possible configurations. It is this process of ongoing contestation that, according to Stavrakakis,

constitutes the political as a series of recurring interpellations and battles over identifications, and as the hegemonic struggle for the institution of competing social fantasies (1999: 73-74).

As with the patriarchal social order, the contestation and reconfiguration of the contemporary capitalist state is carried out, at the symbolic level, through the production of alternative master signifiers and quilting points. According to Stavrakakis, the articulation of new master signifiers can only be carried out in the context of the dislocation of the existing socio-political order (1999: 74). This is because, he suggests, it is the lack created by the process of dislocation that creates the desire for a new articulation of the social. If dislocation is understood in terms of a crisis that functions to bring the capacity of a given discursive regime to adequately account for the existing social reality into question, it is important to stress that, from a post-anarchist perspective, the contestation of the existing socio-political order via the articulation of alternative master signifiers and discourses is not contingent of the emergence of any particular crisis in the existing socio-political order. Indeed, the post-anarchist conceptualisation of the uprising, or insurrection, as a process of structural renewal, argues explicitly for the importance of a prefigurative politics in which anarchistic political communities are actively constructed at the interstices of the dominant socio-political order prior to the emergence of any particular crisis of legitimacy that might bring about the dismantling of the existing order (Day 2005; Newman 2016). In doing so, it assumes the pre-existence of the desire for an alternative configuration of the social order prior to any explicit crisis that the existing order might encounter. If, dislocation, on the other hand, is understood, (more minimally), in terms of an appreciation of the ontological impossibility of the attempts of the existing socio-political order to fully, or adequately, represent the Real, and thereby cover over the antagonistic split through which the social order is constituted (see, for example, Dahlberg 2011: 46), then the production of any alternative master signifiers, discourses, or prefigurative political communities are not, indeed, possible without this initial understanding.

226

That said, it is precisely the process of dislocation (understood in the first sense of a crisis in the social order) that facilitates the disarticulation of the master signifiers and quilting points around which the existing socio-political order is configured that would then enable prefigurative anarchistic political communities, in the final stages of the post-anarchist revolutionary project, to replace the dominant order (via the articulation of alternative master signifiers and discourses) when this order does reach its moment of crisis.

Towards the reconfiguration of the Socio-Political Order

In the next part of this section, I want to move on from the identification of the points of structural variability inherent to the Symbolic order as a socio-political order, to the more specific discussion of the contingency of the existing patriarchal order and the contemporary capitalist state. Earlier on in the chapter I argued that the liberal democracies on which many contemporary capitalist states are based operate as sexuated, patriarchal orders founded on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and that this particular configuration of liberal democracy can be understood in terms of Freud's myth of the primal horde, and the reconfiguration of patriarchy as a fraternal order that it functions to inscribe. Through his theorisation of the quilting point, Lacan points to the fundamental contingency of the Symbolic order as a social order and enables us to imagine how it might be possible to reconfigure the existing, liberal democratic foundations of the contemporary capitalist state. If the reproduction of liberal democracy as a fraternal order is a consequence of the positioning of the phallus as master signifier for the social order and the processes of Oedipalization this functions to institute in both the subject and the social order, an alternative social order can be produced through the replacement of the phallus with an alternative master signifier as the quilting point around which a non-fraternal and non-patriarchal society can be configured.

A further, structural, problem that I identified in the first section of this chapter relates to the persistence of a point of transcendence that functions as the Other of the Other for the social order. Within the context of liberal democracies, it is this point of transcendence that facilitates the emergence of a sovereign exception, beyond the juridical authority of the state, that can reinstitute the sovereign authority of the Symbolic father (Newman 2019: 74). The main question that emerges in attempting to address this problem, is whether the space for transcendence that enables the state of exception (as opposed to the specific historical manifestations of it) within the liberal democratic state is also contingent, or a structural necessity. Within the context of liberal democracy, this space for transcendence is produced by the transposition of the primal father to the position of the simultaneously internal and external point of exception guaranteeing the juridical authority of the state. However, Lacan's insistence that there is no Other of the Other (or no transcendent guarantee for the big Other) helps point to the imaginary quality of the father and his law and, with it, the contingency of the space of transcendence it creates for the sovereign exception. This being the case, the implicit authoritarianism of liberal democracy can be challenged by pointing to the contingency of its authority and the fantasmatic nature of space of transcendence out of which the state of exception can emerge.

If the point of transcendence for liberal democracies is located in the spectral figure of the Symbolic father that guarantees the socio-political order, as the Other of the Other, in illiberal democracies and authoritarian states, the figure of the Symbolic father is transposed, more straightforwardly, to the figure of the authoritarian leader. Where the authoritarian leader and perverse father differ from the more conventional leaders of liberal democracies is that their authority derives, primarily, from a combination of their own charismatic leadership and their role as figurehead for a particular group or people that coalesce around them through the process of identification, rather than from their occupation of the position of President or Prime

Minister and the institutional authority their position invests in them (Zizek 1989: 163-164). What is perhaps most important to note, however, is that, if the power and authority of the leader is sustained through the group's identifications either with the leader, the group or people the leader represents, or the institutional authority the leader is invested with, then the leader's authority can be undone through a process of disidentification from him or her. The claim I will be making in the final section of this chapter is that mysticism can play a key role in this process.

The questions this then raises are, first, whether the socio-political order can function without a point of transcendence through which its authority can emerge. Second, whether the only available means of creating a political community is through the political subject's identifications with alternative, (whether less overtly authoritarian, or ostensibly anti-authoritarian) manifestations of the Symbolic father. Third, whether replacing the Phallus with an alternative master signifier might contribute to the production of alternative manifestations of the ego-ideal and superego and, with this, alternative forms of group identification outside of the hierarchical framework of patriarchy and the processes of Oedipalization on which it is based. And fourth, whether, instead, the removal and replacement of the phallus (and the Oedipus complex it functions to instantiate in the context of the patriarchal social order) would remove the necessity for the ego-ideal and superego altogether. I will attempt to answer these questions in the following section by exploring the role that a post-anarchist reading of Meister Eckhart's conceptualisation of the Godhead can play in the production of an alternative master signifier through which the socio-political order might be reconfigured.

Mystical Post-anarchism and the Reconfiguration of the Symbolic as a Social Order

In the final section of this chapter, I will move on from the discussion of the contingency of the Symbolic as a social order to the discussion of the role that a mystical post-anarchism

can play in the process of structural renewal through the contestation of the symbolic authority of the existing patriarchal order and contemporary capitalist state, and in the production of an alternative, non-patriarchal and non-hierarchical Symbolic. In doing so, I will focus, primarily, on the relationship between the subject and the Symbolic, and on the role that an ethics of annihilation can play in the transformation of the socio-political order and the proliferation of mystical subjects through the processes of sexuation.

The Godhead as Master Signifier

Within the Lacanian framework I have been outlining above, the master signifier functions to establish the conditions of intelligibility for the social order and the various social relationships and social practices through which the social order is constituted. At the same time, it functions as a quilting point for the production of sexuated forms of subjectivity that are differentiated in terms of the subject's relation to the master signifier. This relationship between the subject and the master signifier is central to both the reconfiguration of the existing Symbolic order and the production of alternatives to it. The focus of the first part of this section will be on the implications of the institution of the Godhead as the primary master signifier for the political community in terms of the production of an alternative to the patriarchal Symbolic on which the contemporary capitalist state is based.

My contention is that the institution of the Godhead as master signifier for the political community makes it possible to construct a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic that can function as a prefigurative alternative to the existing patriarchal, capitalist Symbolic. As such, the placement of the Godhead as master signifier can be understood to represent the formal expression of a sovereignty of the Godhead. Where the Godhead differs from other master signifiers (as I will argue in more detail further down) is that it has a fundamentally deconstructive effect that reveals the inherent contingency of both the Imaginary and the

230

Symbolic orders and the Real of divine love that persists beyond the phallus, where the Imaginary and the Symbolic fail. One way of illustrating this effect is by reading my conceptualisation of God and the Godhead as the God of the Symbolic and the God of the Real alongside Lacan's conceptualisation of a God that is neither one nor two (Lacan 1999: 77). If Lacan's representation of God as neither one God nor two God's can be understood to mean, as Newman (2019: 82) argues, that God has two faces, and if one of these faces relates to the 'not-all' and feminine jouissance, then the other face relates to the 'all' of the Symbolic order, or big Other, and phallic jouissance. This representation of the two faces of God can be understood to correspond, very closely, with my own understanding of the relationship between a God of the Real and a God of the Symbolic derived from Eckhart's distinction between the Godhead and God. So, if the first face of God (that relates to the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and phallic jouissance) can be understood as the God of the Symbolic, the second face of God (that relates to the 'not-all' and feminine jouissance) can be understood as the God of the Real. In Eckhart's account of the relationship between God and the Godhead, the Godhead can be understood to perform an apophatic, or deconstructive function in the sense that it points to the Real of God as eternal being that lies beyond both the anthropomorphic imagery of the Trinity and, more fundamentally, the Symbolic order through which God exists as a signifier (1994: 181-182). In terms of its function as master signifier, the deconstructive potential of the Godhead, as a signifier of the Real of eternal being, comes from its ability to replace the transcendence of God, as 'the Other of the Other' who guarantees the social order (and the various alternative manifestations of the symbolic father that come to occupy the space of transcendence vacated by God in the secular age) with the immanence of divine love. Where the Godhead departs, most obviously, from both God and the various manifestations of the symbolic father he has been replaced with, in this respect, is that it operates towards the auto-

deconstruction of the Symbolic order and towards the exposure of the unmediated experience of eternal being as divine love that the Symbolic order both occludes and bars.

The institution of the Godhead as the primary master signifier for the community effectively follows Stavrakakis's suggestion that "the best way to organise the social might be one which recognises the ultimate impossibility around which it is always structured" (1999: 96). One of the key functions of the Godhead, as master signifier, is to foreground the second face of God (the God of the Real) that reveals both the Imaginary-Symbolic derivation of the first face of God (God as the Other of the Other through which the Symbolic is founded and guaranteed) and the impossibility of the contemporary capitalist Symbolic's attempts to represent the totality of the Real. Stavrakakis argues that our response to this recognition of the impossibility of the Symbolic's attempts at totalisation should be to traverse the fantasmatic processes through which we attempt to cover over the constitutive lack at the heart of the Symbolic by recognising the contingency of all symbolic constructs (1999: 89). The Godhead can perform broadly the same functions that Stavrakakis describes. However, it has the potential to go beyond the recognition of the impossibility of the Symbolic's attempts at totalisation by orienting the political community it produces towards the Real of the Godhead, via a more radical releasement from the libidinal economy on which the fantasmatic constructs of the Symbolic are based.

If the phallus, as master signifier, operates as a metonym for the symbolic law of the patriarchal order, this means that the concept of symbolic castration, as it relates to the Symbolic order as a social order, describes the process through which the subject accedes to the social order. In the context of patriarchal society, symbolic castration therefore relates to the subject's accession to the patriarchal social order through its acceptance of the Symbolic law of the father (in the form of the prohibitions on incest and parricide) that founds the social order as a patriarchal order (Lacan 1999: 35). If Symbolic castration (in its social dimension)

is understood, broadly, in terms of the subject's accession to the social order through its submission to the particular laws, customs, norms, values, and beliefs on which a society is based, then the process that symbolic castration describes will continue to exist in the context of a non-patriarchal society, even if the patriarchal language used to describe it is no longer applied. Within the specific context of an anarchistic social order oriented around the Godhead as master signifier, the process that symbolic castration describes would therefore still apply, with the subject's accession to the social order being dependent on its acceptance of the Symbolic law that the Godhead functions as a metonym for. However, the adoption of the Godhead as master signifier would, in effect, represent a reversal of the process of castration as it is understood in patriarchal societies, in the sense that, rather than attempting to shape and fix the symbolic co-ordinates of the socio-political order as a signifying system, the process of Symbolic castration through which the law of the Godhead is submitted to represents a fundamentally deconstructive project. The subject's submission to the symbolic law of the Godhead would therefore imply the subject's participation in the Godhead's function, as a master signifier, of pointing to the constitutive lack through which the Symbolic order and symbolic law itself are formed, and the possibilities of the (annihilated) subject's participation in the Real of eternal being, as divine love, through a process of detachment from both the Symbolic and the symbolic law as such.

The Internalisation of the Symbolic Law: from the Phallus to the Godhead

If the symbolic law can be understood to relate to the conditions of the subject's entry into the Symbolic order as both a linguistic and a social order, symbolic castration describes the process through which the subject is (on a linguistic, or ontological level), barred from Real jouissance, and (on a social level) required to submit to the particular set of laws, customs, values, and beliefs on which the social order is based. It is through the subject's identification

233

with the symbolic father that the symbolic law is internalised in the form of the ego ideal and the superego (Grosz 1990: 117; George 2022: 241). My aim, in this sub-section, is to explore the implications of the replacement of the phallus with the Godhead as master signifier in terms of this internalization of the symbolic law, the transformation of the socio-political order, and the post-anarchist project of structural renewal.

The post-anarchist project of structural renewal aims to overcome the dominant socio-political order through the construction of anarchistic communities that can function as prefigurative alternatives to the contemporary capitalist state and, eventually, as replacements for it, by rendering the state obsolete. The project of structural renewal forms part of a wider insurrectionary struggle that is predicated upon, 'the insurrection of the self (Newman 2010: 65-66). In the context of mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I have been arguing for so far, this insurrection of the self takes place through what I have called an ethics of annihilation. The role that the ethics of annihilation plays in the project of structural renewal is to undo the processes of subjectification through which the contemporary capitalist state is reproduced. This includes the internalization of the laws, customs, values, and beliefs on which it is based through the operation of the ego ideal and superego, and the identificatory processes through which these faculties are produced. Stavrakakis helps show how this can be achieved through his observation that "to have a non-totalisable relation to the Other we must relate – identify – with the lack in the Other and not with the Other *per se*" (1999: 139). If the ego ideal and the superego are the faculties through which the Other is internalised, then its internalisation can be undone, as Stavrakakis argues, through the subject's identification with the Other's constitutive lack. However, this step would be followed, in a mystical post-anarchist insurrection of the self, by a more comprehensive process of disidentification derived from the ethics of annihilation. This would mean that the subject would move from an identification with the lack in the Other (and the disidentification from the symbolic father and the exiting

configuration of the Symbolic that this implies) to a more general releasement from the process of identification through which these identifications are made. As one of the key functions of the superego is to produce guilt (Lazzarato 2015: 186-187; Zizek 2017: 202-203), the ethics of annihilation would have the further effect, in releasing the subject from its attachment to the Other and the ego ideal and superego functions through which it is internalized, of negating the shame and guilt that these faculties produce.

The main focus of structural renewal is on the construction of prefigurative anarchistic alternatives to the dominant social order. In the context of the mystical post-anarchist political community, if the phallus is replaced with the Godhead as the primary master signifier for the social order, then the castration complex, as the mechanism through which the subject internalizes the symbolic law of the father in its accession to the patriarchal order, can either be more fully metaphorized so that it is limited to the description of the process through which the subject accedes to the Symbolic order (as a social order) in general, or it can be dispensed with altogether. In view of the implication of the imagery of the Oedipus myth in the reproduction of patriarchal society (Irigaray 1985: 165), the second of these options is clearly preferable. This de-Oedipalization of the symbolic law then raises the following questions: if the ego ideal and superego are created, as part of the resolution of the Oedipus complex, through the subject's identification with the symbolic father, what happens to them if the phallus and the Oedipal framework of patriarchal society it creates are dispensed with? And how would the ego ideal and superego be either transformed or replaced in the context of a social order in which the Godhead operates as the master signifier instead?

To answer these questions, it is useful to draw a distinction between the role of God (or the God of the Symbolic) as both a master signifier and a manifestation of the Symbolic father, and that of the Godhead (or the God of the Real). According to Newman:

God is a master signifier, a symbolic father substitute operating as a point of authority that is both external and internal to the subject, becoming the figure of moral prohibition, the voice of the superego, and fulfilling a structural function of anchoring meaning and of covering up the void or radical contingency of the symbolic order (2019: 74).

The Godhead differs from God most obviously, as a master signifier, in the deconstructive function it performs. If God can be understood as a manifestation of the symbolic father that operates both as the transcendent guarantor of the Symbolic order and an internalized source of authority within it, the Godhead aims towards the deconstruction of these Symbolic modalities of God, and of God him- (or it)self, insofar as God exists as a signifier within the Symbolic order. The role of the Godhead, as master signifier, can therefore be understood in terms of the internalisation of a version of the symbolic law that aims towards its own deconstruction via the ethics of annihilation.

The institution of the Godhead as master signifier in the mystical post-anarchist political community would therefore have the effect of undoing the process of Oedipalization through which the Symbolic father, the ego ideal, and superego are all formed. As the ego ideal and superego are both formed through the subject's identification with the symbolic father, the positioning of the Godhead as master signifier would mean that the subject, in its accession the Symbolic order, would no longer identify with the patriarchal figure of the symbolic father, as the patriarchal framework through which the symbolic father is produced would no longer exist. Because the function of the Godhead is fundamentally deconstructive, the Symbolic father would be replaced not with an alternative, less hierarchical familial figure (or substitute for this) but with the Godhead itself. The effect of this would be to orient the subjects produced within the mystical post-anarchist Symbolic towards their detachment from all sources of

Symbolic authority and, therefore, from the big Other and the various ego formations through which this is reproduced on a subjective and intersubjective level.

The Symbolic Law, the Godhead, and the Political Community

The symbolic father represents the transcendent source of authority that lies behind the official site of sovereignty within the political community as both its guarantor and the point of exception through which the constitutional and legal norms on which the sovereignty of the state is based can be suspended through the institution of a temporary, semi-permanent, or permanent state of exception (Newman 2019: 67). There is close relationship between the creation of a site of transcendence that can be occupied either by the sovereign leader, directly, or a particular master signifier such as the 'the law', 'the constitution,' 'the people', or 'the proletariat' (that functions as the site of sovereignty for the political community) that the political leader represents, and the processes of identification through which the political community is formed. If the symbolic law (in its socio-political aspect) is internalised through the formation of the ego ideal and superego, then the political community is constituted, in turn, through the identifications of its members with the leader of the community, who comes to perform the role of the symbolic father for the community and, at the same time, comes to take on the function of the ideal ego for the political subject. It is through this internalisation of the law that the symbolic father embodies that sovereignty is exercised on a subjective level.

If the symbolic law and the sovereign authority of the state are internalised through the process of identification with the figure of the leader via the mechanism of the ego ideal and superego, their authority can be undone through a process of disidentification. As I argued in the first section of this chapter, the figure of the leader, as a manifestation of the symbolic father, plays a central role in both democratic and authoritarian political communities as the object towards which the desires and fantasies of the community are directed and for whom

the community sacrifices at least a portion of its freedom and autonomy (Newman 2019: 102; Hook 2022: 35-48). As Newman notes, (following Freud) the authority of the leader and the power he or she exercises over the community through this is therefore a product of the community's idealisation of the leader through the fantasies that its projects onto him or here, rather than any qualities or attributes the leader possesses in and of him or herself (Newman 2019: 70). My argument is therefore that it is possible to negate the symbolic authority of the political leader through a process of disidentification with both the leader and the particular ideological formations that either coalesce around him or her, or that he or she represents. Through this process of disidentification it becomes possible to undo the effects of the internalisation of the symbolic law through the mechanisms of the ego ideal and superego. This process of disidentification is motivated, from a post-anarchist perspective, from an understanding of the incompatibility of a representative system of political government with the fundamental anarchist values of equality and liberty (whether representation takes place through explicitly authoritarian means, via the figure of the authoritarian leader, or through democratic means, via the figure of the political representative).

The question that follows this process of disidentification is then whether the only alternatives available to the political subject are further identifications with alternative manifestations of the symbolic father (either of a less overtly authoritarian, or ostensibly anti-authoritarian nature). This question relates, quite closely, to the problem Lacan identified in relation to the May 1968 uprising in Paris: "Revolutionary aspirations have only one possibility: always to end up in the discourse of the master. Experience has proven this. What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will have one!" (cited in Newman 2004: 6). As Newman notes, Lacan's assertion can read in two ways: it can be read as a straightforward dismissal of any form of radical political activity on the basis that it can only lead to different forms of domination, or it can be read as a warning against the dangers of reaffirming structures

of power and authority that any revolutionary endeavour must confront (Newman 2004: 6). For Newman, this second reading of Lacan's pronouncement aligns Lacan with the anarchist position to the extent that they both point to the dangers of domination being reproduced precisely in the revolutionary attempt to overcome it. Consequently, one of the most fundamental questions that (for both the anarchist and Lacan) the revolutionary subject must address, is how a radical politics can avoid the reaffirmation of power and authority (Newman 2004: 6).

In contrast to Newman's (2004) own, post-anarchist reading of Lacan, Zizek (2017) would appear to support the first reading of Lacan's proclamation Newman suggests. According to Zizek the main paradox of contemporary revolutionary politics is that appeals to horizontal forms of self-organization and direct action are not enough; to rouse individuals from their inertia and their blind faith in the representative structures of liberal democracy and motivate them to engage in "the self-transcending emancipatory struggle for freedom", a master is needed (2017: 215). To illustrate this argument, Zizek points to the example of Venezuela, in which the supposedly "molecular self-organizing multitude" succeeded in overcoming the hierarchical state order by organising itself around the charismatic figure of Hugo Chavez, as well as to the fact that the country's attempts to develop forms of direct democracy such as local councils, cooperatives, and worker-run factories have been reliant on Chavez's same leadership for their implementation (2017: 214-215). The assumption that Zizek is making here, is therefore that the production of a new master is unavoidable and a necessary cost of any successful revolutionary struggle.

Zizek's claim that, in the specific example of Venezuela he describes, the process of social and political transformation is heavily reliant on the representative function of the political leader who performs the role of the symbolic father towards whom the political desires and fantasies of the community are directed is not inaccurate. It is also worth noting that the

239

various political struggles within liberal democratic states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Greece that followed the global financial crisis in 2008-2009 all shifted (in much the same way as in Venezuela) from largely horizontal, leaderless mass movements outside of the formal, representative structures of liberal democracy, to more mainstream political parties all headed by distinct leaders, with varying degrees of charisma, who can be understood to have performed the same role of master that Zizek describes. However, political struggles do not have to follow this pattern, and are entirely possible without recourse to a charismatic leader, or new master, as the contemporaneous, anarchistic example of the revolutionary democratic confederalist project of Rojava in the Kurdish territories of North Syria and Turkey, demonstrates. It is also worth pointing out that, in terms of their material, transformative effects, the autonomous zones established in Rojava have been significantly more effective (albeit on more localized scales) than the various "movement parties" (della Porta et al. 2017) and charismatic leaders into which much of the energy of social movements such as Occupy and the Indignados was redirected from the mid-2010s.

From a post-anarchist perspective, perhaps the most problematic issue with the reliance on the representative function of the political leader both within the dominant social order and among political movements aiming at either the transformation or replacement of this order relates to the fundamentally authoritarian character of the relationship between the group and the leader this implies. It is precisely through this authoritarian relationship and the ego identifications on which it is based that the symbolic law is internalised, whether the Symbolic is configured along explicitly authoritarian or more ostensibly egalitarian lines. So, to refer back to the question I posed above as to whether the process of disidentification from existing political leaders that forms part of the first stage of structural renewal must, necessarily, be followed by a series of further, alternative identifications, it is clear that, while identifying with the socialist and social democratic political leaders of the 'pink tide' in South America or the

austerity era movement parties in Europe and the United States is less problematic (in terms of the reproduction of domination and control) than identifying with the various symbolic fathers and primal father substitutes through whom existing forms of political sovereignty are exercised, identification with a political leader entails the same relinquishment of individual and collective liberty and equality (albeit to a different degree) to the process of representation, regardless of who the political leader might be. Earlier on in the section I noted that Stavrakakis' response to this problem was to argue that, instead of identifying with the Other or with the symbolic father who embodies the symbolic law, the subject should identify with the lack in the Other as a means of highlighting the fantasmatic nature of the group's identifications with the leader and the impossibility of the Other's attempts to cover over the fundamental antagonisms through which the symbolic is constituted (1999: 139). My own response to this problem was to suggest that, from a mystical post-anarchist perspective, while this identification with the lack in the Other is an important step in the path of detachment from the dominant socio-political order, it is necessary to move beyond this to a more general releasement from the process of identification altogether. This means that, instead of looking at, or constructing, the figure of the leader as a source of direction for political struggle and transformation, the political subject should act outside of the hierarchical, representative structures through which the leader operates. In doing this, it can pursue a sovereignty of the Godhead in which the warrant for political action is located in the immanence of divine love and in which political leadership is therefore (as in the case of the Rojava revolution) distributed horizontally throughout the group.

In terms of the affective dimension of both political and economic sovereignty, in the first section of this chapter I argued that the effect of the internalisation of the Other, in the form of the ego ideal and superego, was to produce shame and guilt. In the context of the contemporary capitalist state, the ego ideal produces shame through the subject's inability to

measure up to the particular values and standards that the ego ideal, as the internalised manifestation of the political leader, represents (Zizek 2006: 80-81). In the more specific context of neoliberalism and the operation of economic sovereignty, the superego, as Zizek argues, comes to predominate over the ego ideal, producing guilt in the subject as a consequence of its inability to enjoy the objects of capitalist desire enough (Zizek 2017: 202-203). If the mystical post-anarchist response to the exercise of political and economic sovereignty through the operation of shame and guilt is to pursue an ethics of annihilation, the subject's pursuit of its detachment and releasement from the superego, the ego ideal, and the identifications through which they are formed, would also imply its detachment and releasement from the values, assumptions, and beliefs against which the subject is measured, and the guilt and shame that are produced through the subject's failure either to achieve what the capitalist state, in its various iterations, demands of it, or to obtain sufficient jouissance from the objects of desire it presents to it. This does not mean that an ethics of annihilation would be able to eliminate the guilt and shame produced by the superego and ego ideal completely. In the same way that the ego ideal and the superego continue to exist within the Symbolic order through which the subject is constituted, the guilt and shame that the superego and ego ideal produce also continue in the annihilated soul's return to subjectivity. The difference, for the annihilated soul, (in the context of the dominant social order) would be that, because of its understanding of the fantasmatic nature of the phallic economy through which its objects of desire are produced, (and the alternative to it offered by divine love), the effect of the guilt and shame the contemporary capitalist state is able to produce would be more easily negated.

In the context of structural renewal, the question that still needs to be asked is whether the institution of the Godhead as master signifier for the prefigurative mystical post-anarchist community contributes to the production of alternative manifestations of the ego-ideal and

superego and, with this, alternative forms of group identification outside of the hierarchical framework of patriarchy and the processes of Oedipalization on which it is based, or whether it would remove the necessity for the ego-ideal and superego altogether. In view of its fundamentally deconstructive function, it seems clear that the role of the Godhead would be to orient the political subject towards the negation of the ego and its various formations. In the context of the contemporary capitalist state, as the broader political community is (at least in part) constituted through the particular identifications through which the subject's various ego formations are also constituted, the broader consequence of this, for the political community, as a whole, is that the political community will also be constituted through the identifications its members make with the ideologies and discourses of neoliberalism and the state, and with the particular political leaders who represents these ideologies, or around which these ideologies coalesce. In the different context of the post-anarchist prefigurative political community, the operation of the ego ideal, ideal ego, and superego are less obviously problematic in that they are derived from a Symbolic order oriented around the key anarchist values of equality and liberty rather than the hierarchical and authoritarian foundations of neoliberal ideology and the state form. Nevertheless, as psychic formations, they remain tied, fundamentally, to the operation of subjectivity and, as such, continue to represent a barrier to the subject's annihilation in the Real of the Godhead from which divine love and the ethical orientation of the annihilated soul can emerge. The total negation or elimination of these faculties would not be possible, however, given that the annihilated soul's attainment of an egoless state can only ever be temporary and must be followed, necessarily, by a return to the Symbolic order in which the ego (along with the ideal ego, the ego ideal and the superego) continue to exist. This means that the ethics of annihilation the Godhead orients the political subject towards represents a perpetual practice of detachment and releasement that can never be completed in any final sense.

In terms of the affective dimension of the ego and superego, if the ethics of annihilation towards which the Godhead orients the community implies the subject's pursuit of its detachment and releasement from the ideal ego, the ego ideal, and the superego, then it can be assumed that, if the subject succeeds in releasing itself from these faculties, then it will also be released from the guilt and shame these faculties function to produce, irrespective of their particular ideological derivation. This is because, in the state of annihilation the practices of detachment of releasement lead towards, the annihilated soul gains identity with the Godhead as divine love, which is, as I argued in Chapter Three, can be understood as a state of grace with which guilt cannot co-exist (Porete 1993: 85). This does not mean that guilt would be eliminated from the political community, entirely, however. In the same way that the ego and its formations continue to exist within the Symbolic order through which the subject is constituted, the guilt that the superego produces also continues in the annihilated soul's return to subjectivity. The difference, in the context of the anarchistic prefigurative community, is that the guilt the superego produces derives from the subject's relation to the values, assumptions, and beliefs of anarchism rather than neoliberalism. However, what an ethics of annihilation encourages the mystical subject to do, is to maintain a focus on the symbolic derivation of the ego, its various formations, the objects of the identificatory processes through which they are formed, and the guilt they function to produce, as well as to the fundamental barrier these represent to the subject's access to the Real of the Godhead and the ethical orientation this provides, whether the Symbolic is configured along statist, capitalist, or anarchistic lines. In the context of the mystical post-anarchist political community, the Godhead therefore differs from other possible master signifiers in that, rather than merely changing the particular objects the subject identifies with as part of the internalisation of the big Other through which the ego ideal and the superego are constituted, it aims towards the subject's detachment from these objects and releasement from the processes of identification

244

through which they are formed. In doing this, it seeks to negate the effects of the big Other in terms of the guilt it functions to produce, and to replace it with the Real of divine love as the locus of both the subject's and the political community's warrant for ethico-political actions and relationships.

Where God, as a manifestation of the symbolic father can be understood to represent the big Other, the Godhead denotes the Real of divinity that lies at the points of failure in the Symbolic that the big Other and the processes of signification, more broadly, are unable to cover over. In terms of the operation of the sovereignty of the Godhead, the institution of the Godhead as master signifier for the social order therefore functions to formalise the operation of a sovereignty of the Godhead in which sovereignty is located in the immanence of divine love as opposed to the symbolic father or the big Other. Instead of becoming a new manifestation of the big Other, the Godhead, therefore works actively towards the big Other's deconstruction. If sovereignty is situated, immanently, within the Godhead, then sovereignty, in the mystical post-anarchist political community, emerges organically in, and is exercised through, the interactions between mystical subjects and the social relationships and institutions they create. The political form that a sovereignty of the Godhead tends towards is, as I argued in Chapter Two, an anarcho-communism based on the practice of direct democracy. If political decisions within the mystical post-anarchist political community are made exclusively through a directly democratic process informed by divine love, then there is no place for a site of transcendence outside of the immanence of the Godhead and the direct democratic process it informs. At the same time, if the political community is organised, economically, around the principles of anarcho-communism and the needs of both the political economic subject and the natural world, then there is also no place for the transcendent authority of the market, as economic relations will be constructed, instead, through the immanent direction of divine love. This means that there is no room for the transcendence of either a divine or a political sovereign,

or of the abstracted sovereignty of 'the market', and therefore no point of transcendence out of which a state of exception can be instituted.

Sexuation and Subjectivity: from the Phallus to the Godhead

The Symbolic, as a social order, functions to shape both the nature of individual subjectivity and the conditions through which intersubjective relations take place. These subjectivities and intersubjective relations, in turn, function to reproduce the Symbolic order as both a linguistic order and as a social order. This means that the Symbolic is both productive of subjectivity and produced by intersubjective relations in a circular economy that remains susceptible, nevertheless, to certain interruptions, contestations, or breaks. When they occur with enough frequency and on a large enough scale, these have the potential either to alter the particular coordinates of the Symbolic order or to produce a new Symbolic, either on a localized or a more universal scale. If the Symbolic is formed through, or as an aggregate of the individual subjectivities and intersubjective relations of a particular community, mysticism represents one route through which subjectivity and intersubjective relations can be radically transformed. A proliferation of mystical subjectivities therefore has the potential either to produce a fundamental reconfiguration of the Symbolic order or to produce a new Symbolic order altogether.

In terms of the relationship between subjectivity and the master signifier within the mystical post-anarchist framework I am elaborating, the ethics of annihilation I outlined in Chapter Three can be understood to produce mystical subjects who, when they form social relationships with other mystical subjects, can create groups or communities in which these subjects' orientation towards the Godhead (through their focus on the spiritual practices of detachment and releasement) can position the Godhead as the master signifier for the social order. If the process of sexuation is understood in terms of the subject's relation to the Symbolic

order and the master signifier that determines the conditions of intelligibility for the social order rather than in terms of biological sex or gender (Barnard 2002: 172; Fink 2002: 36), then, in the same way that, in the patriarchal order, subjects are produced, as sexuated subjects, through their relation to the phallus, the Godhead, as master signifier, can go on to produce subjects who are formed in terms of their relation to the Godhead.

In the patriarchal order, the process of sexuation produces subjects who are sexuated either as phallic (masculine) or non-phallic (feminine) subjects. On a social level, the process of sexuation differs from the process of Oedipalization in that, where the Oedipus complex determines the gender of the child in terms of its possession or lack of the phallus (understood both as the symbolic abstraction of the penis, and the patriarchal authority it represents), sexuation describes the relationship of the subject to the phallus in terms of how far it accepts or evades the phallic determinations of the Oedipus complex and the differential social status it allocates to boys and girls (Lacan 1999: 33). The phallic (masculine) subject can therefore be understood as having accepted the phallic logic of the Oedipus complex, whereas the non-phallic (feminine) subject can be understood as being able to evade it (1999: 76). Because of this, in the context of a patriarchal society, the feminine subject position is the necessary starting position, as Campbell argues, from which any attempt to contest, overturn, or produce alternatives to the existing symbolization of the social order must take place (2004: 173). In challenging the phallic logic of the patriarchal Symbolic, the feminine subject can therefore contribute to the production of an alternative discursive orientation to the phallus that can be understood as the first step towards the rejection of the phallus altogether and to the institution of an alternative master signifier through which a non-patriarchal Symbolic can be inscribed.

The questions this still leaves unanswered are what happens to these subject positions in the context of a non-patriarchal society, and what role might the Godhead play in the production of alternatives to them? To answer the first of these questions: if the phallus is

removed as the master signifier, it can be assumed that the process of sexuation no longer takes place with reference to the subject's relation to the phallus (understood, metonymically, as a symbolic representation of the male sexual organ and the social power this signifies within the specific context of patriarchy). However, it remains possible for the phallus to continue to operate as a metaphor for the master signifier in a non-patriarchal society, in which case the masculine and feminine subject positions would continue to describe the nature of the subject's relation to the master signifier. However, as I argued in the previous section, following Irigaray (1985), these categories, in being the product of a patriarchal Symbolic, have the effect of reproducing the patriarchal assumptions and logic on which this process of categorization is based, such as the equation of the masculine with a position of dominance and totalization and the equation of the feminine with a position of subjugation and exclusion. To overcome this problem, it is therefore necessary to dispense with the patriarchal language of the Oedipus complex altogether and to replace it with a more directly descriptive set of signifiers. This can be done, straightforwardly, by replacing the phallus with the master signifier and replacing the categories of masculine and feminine with those of predominant and minoritarian. Within this framework, the predominant position would relate to the master signifier's successful determination of the symbolic constitution of the subject, with the minoritarian position relating to the concept of the 'not-all' and the subject's partial evasion of the Other's totalising effects.

What happens to the process of sexuation within the context of a non-patriarchal society depends on the nature of the master signifier that comes to replace it. The replacement of the Phallus with the Godhead, specifically, as the master signifier for the social order, can have the following effect. As the Godhead plays a fundamentally apophatic role in that it points to the God of the Real that lies outside of the Symbolic order through which God exists as a signifier, it also points to the contingency of the Symbolic order more broadly and, through this, the contingency of the sexuated positions the phallus functions to produce. The replacement of the

248

phallus with the Godhead as master signifier would therefore mean that subjects would no longer be formed as Oedipalized subjects. In terms of the relationship between the Symbolic law and sexuation, the operation that symbolic castration describes as it relates to the subject's accession to the Symbolic as a social order (the subject's implicit acceptance of the laws, customs, values and beliefs on which the social order is based) would continue to exist, but in a non-Oedipal form. However, for this to happen, it is not necessary for there to be an initial division of subjectivity into masculine and feminine modalities. Instead, the metaphor of sexuation would operate purely as a description of the extent to which the subject is 'all' or 'not-all' (or how fully its constitution as a subject is determined by the big Other). In the specific context of a post-anarchist social order oriented around the Godhead as master signifier, this would mean that the subject's masculine or feminine (or, more properly, predominant or minoritarian) position would undergo a reversal of meaning in the sense that the subject's position would be determined by how far it takes on the Godhead's attempts to orient the subject towards the Real of eternal being that its constitution, as a subject, through the Symbolic order, functions to alienate it from, and how far it rejects these attempts in favour of its continued immersion in the alienating effects of the Symbolic order.

Mystical Subjectivity, the Symbolic as a Social Order, and the production of the Post-anarchist Political Community

If the argument I made above was that the replacement of the phallus with the Godhead as master signifier for the Symbolic order can lead to production of non-Oedipalized subjects formed through their relation to the Godhead, the question this raises is how the production of mystical subjects through their relation to the Godhead relates to the production of mystical subjectivity through the ethics of annihilation. I will argue, in what follows, that by answering this question it becomes possible to ascertain how these two process can work together to help

249

transform the Symbolic, as a socio-political order, and how, in doing so, they can contribute to the post-anarchist insurrection and the project of structural renewal.

The relationship between the mystical subjectivities produced through the ethics of annihilation and the mystical subjectivities produced through the process of sexuation can be understood in the following way. In the context of the existing configuration of the Symbolic, the ethics of annihilation represents a process that enables the subject to detach itself from the particular objects of desire presented to it by the contemporary capitalist state in its various iterations, and through which it is able to gain releasement from the phallic economy through which its desire is produced. If, in the patriarchal order, the process of sexuation produces subjects who are sexuated, through their relation to the phallus, as either masculine or feminine subjects, then, as Campbell argues, the feminine subject position, as an expression of "the *not all* of women*", can be understood as a fundamentally political position that reveals "the failure of the phallic signifier and the socio-symbolic order which it guarantees" and opens up the possibility of the production of "new forms of socio-symbolic relations and subjectivity" (2004: 90). Within this context, it is therefore only through the assumption of the feminine subject position that an ethics of annihilation can be embarked upon. However, the proliferation of the mystical subjectivities an ethics of annihilation is able to produce has the potential to lead to the creation of mystical post-anarchist political communities in which the social and ethical relations between mystical subjects are sufficiently different to those within the dominant social order as to produce an alternative master signifier to the phallus (in the form of the Godhead) which, in turn, functions to produce subjects whose accession to the social order is determined through their relation to the Godhead rather than the phallus.

This would not obviate the need for an ethics of annihilation, however. The annihilation of the soul that the spiritual practices of detachment and releasement lead towards can only ever be a temporary condition, which means that the ethics of annihilation represents an

ongoing project that can have no final end. In the context of the mystical post-anarchist political community oriented around the Godhead as master signifier, this would mean that the ethics of annihilation would move from being a minoritarian project to the dominant ethical orientation for the community. At the same time, it would also mean that the objects from which the subject is required to detach its desire would change from those produced within the framework of the contemporary capitalist state to those produced by the social, political, and economic institutions of the anarchist political community (as well as whatever fantasmatic temptations these institutions might constitute in terms of the possible suturing of the constitutive antagonisms of the Symbolic as such). The specifically political dimension of the ethics of annihilation I outlined in the previous chapter therefore relates to the political subject's detachment not only from the structures and institutions of the existing socio-political order, but from the idea that the socio-political order's fundamental lack and antagonisms can be sutured by means of the transformation or replacement of these structures and institutions.

It is worth noting that the positioning of the Godhead as master signifier would be a product of the sedimentation of actually existing social practices derived from the proliferation of mystical subjects and the relations these subjects establish between themselves, rather than something takes place as a consequence of a deliberate decision that enacts a seamless shift from a patriarchal to a non-patriarchal society. What this means, in terms of the processes of subject formation within the mystical post-anarchist Symbolic, is that, in the nascent post-anarchist political community, the Godhead would compete with the phallus to the extent that, in spite of the community's conscious rejection of the patriarchal order, the phallus, in view of its continued hegemony within the dominant social order, is likely to exercise a continued unconscious effect on the mystical post-anarchist subjects through which the community is comprised. It is therefore probable that it would only be through and after successive processes of subjectification through the Godhead, and only through and after successive ethical

encounters with the Godhead in the annihilation of the soul, that the Godhead would be likely to be able to negate the unconscious effects of the phallus altogether.

The Godhead, the Economy of Divine Love, and the Symbolic as a Socio-Political Order

The processes of subjectification, whether these take place through the operation of the symbolic law of the Godhead or the ethics of annihilation, have a direct impact on the nature of the jouissance that the subject and the broader political community are capable of obtaining and on the nature of the libidinal economy through which this jouissance is produced. Within the context of the patriarchal society Lacan describes, the masculine subject participates exclusively within the fantasmatic economy of phallic jouissance and the impossible attempt to obtain full jouissance through the object *a*. The feminine subject also participates in the economy of phallic jouissance, but is capable of obtaining a supplementary, feminine jouissance that takes the form of the temporary experience of full, or Real, jouissance that can be understood to be "beyond the phallus" (Lacan 1999: 76) in the sense that it operates outside of the processes of signification, rather than simply outside of the framework of a specifically patriarchal configuration of the socio-political order that the phallus stands, metonymically, as the master signifier for.

In terms of the post-anarchist project of structural renewal, the role that feminine jouissance can play within the context of the existing, contemporary capitalist state is to demonstrate the possibility of the temporary attainment of the Real jouissance that capitalism promises but is unable to deliver. In pointing to the structural nature of capitalism's failure to deliver on its promises of Real jouissance, the concept and experience of feminine jouissance helps show that Real jouissance is impossible not only within the framework of the specifically capitalist configuration of the socio-political order, but from within the framework of the phallic economy of desire through which the subject is constituted as a desiring subject through

252

the process of Oedipalisation by which it submits to the Symbolic law of patriarchal society. The corollary of this is that it is therefore only by rejecting the phallic economy of desire that it becomes possible to obtain a feminine jouissance in which the alienating effects of the Symbolic are bypassed. The supplementary feminine jouissance that the adoption of a feminine subject position in relation to the phallus is able to bring can therefore be understood as an essential preliminary step in the pursuit of an alternative libidinal economy to the fantasmatic economy of phallic jouissance through which the dominant social order of the contemporary capitalist state is reproduced. As Lacan stresses, within the context of the patriarchal society he describes, feminine jouissance has a supplementary status in relation to masculine, or phallic jouissance (1999: 73). This means that feminine subjects do not participate exclusively in feminine jouissance; they remain capable of experiencing both masculine and feminine jouissance.

If masculine and feminine jouissance, as signifiers, can be understood, as I argued above, to be a product of a patriarchal Symbolic in which the masculine signifies a position of dominance and the feminine signifies a minoritarian position, then, as with the broader subject positions out of which these two forms of jouissance emerge, when they are transposed to the different context of a social order organised around the Godhead as master signifier, the role and relevance of these categories must be re-evaluated. Within the context of a mystical post-anarchist social order, if the linguistic framework of the patriarchal order is dispensed with, then it becomes possible to use non-Oedipal language to describe the phenomena these terms denote by referring to masculine jouissance as partial, or limited jouissance and referring to feminine jouissance as full, unlimited, or Real jouissance. Partial (or limited) jouissance would therefore denote the form of jouissance that can be obtained from within the Symbolic order and the economy of desire, while full (limitless or Real) jouissance would denote the form of jouissance that can be obtained beyond the processes of signification the phallus denotes.

In the specific context of the mystical post-anarchist political community, the positioning of the Godhead as the primary master signifier for the political community raises the questions of what forms of jouissance the mystical post-anarchist subject is capable of experiencing, and what type of libidinal economy it can participate in. Where the mystical post-anarchist political community differs from the contemporary capitalist state is that, in a mystical post-anarchist political community organised around the Godhead and oriented towards an ethics of annihilation, it is the minoritarian / feminine, as opposed to dominant / phallic subject position that is valorised. This means that where the subjects of the contemporary capitalist state assume that jouissance can be obtained through their fantasmatic attachment to a succession of objects that stand in for the object *a* and the Real jouissance the subject unconsciously desires, the mystical post-anarchist subject proceeds from the assumption of the structural impossibility of these attempts and the conviction that it is therefore necessary to assume a minoritarian / feminine subject position to release themselves from their attachment to this economy through the annihilation of the self. In the return to subjectivity that follows the annihilation of the soul, the ethics of annihilation the Godhead orients the community around encourages the mystical subject to resume its path of detachment as a means of, once more, gaining releasement not only from the economy of phallic jouissance, but from the drive that circles around the object *a*, as well.

One of the challenges faced by a mystical post-anarchist political community oriented, through the Godhead, towards the annihilation of the soul, is ensuring that it does not become implicated in the production of a social order oriented towards the fantasmatic attempt to deny or overcome symbolic castration (as it relates to the Symbolic in its linguistic dimension and the ontological bar on Real jouissance it enacts) in any final way. How the mystical post-anarchist political community can do this, is by ensuring that the experience of the full jouissance of eternal being as divine love is not what is directly aimed for, or desired, and

through this, eliminating, as far as possible, the object *a* through which fantasy is produced. It can do this precisely by orienting the subject towards its releasement from the created will and desire through which the fantasmatic economy of phallic jouissance operates. This means that, instead of functioning as another object *a*, the Godhead, as master signifier, performs an apophatic function in that it has the effect of orienting the group towards the undoing of the symbolic edifice not only of the existing socio-political order, but of the socio-political order itself, through its uncovering of the lack through which both the subject and the Symbolic are constituted, and the impossibility of the jouissance offered by the big Other, however the Symbolic might be configured and whatever the nature of the desires produce by it. This means that, while the production of the mystical post-anarchist Symbolic might represent an overcoming of the symbolic law of the patriarchal capitalist social order, in recognizing that the production of subjectivity is coextensive with the production of desire (whether the subject relates to this desire through the mechanism of fantasy or the drive), the symbolic law of the mystical post-anarchist social order is premised on the assumption that the symbolic law (as it relates to the ontological dimension of the Symbolic as an order of language) can only ever be temporarily overcome through the annihilation of the subject / soul.

As a part of the post-anarchist insurrection and the project of structural renewal, the mystical post-anarchist political community can, in aiming towards its releasement from the fantasmatic logic of desire, be considered, primarily, as an ethico-spiritual orientation that has no expectations or aims. As such, it represents the collective embodiment of the Eckhartian / Poretian principle of "living without a why", in which the desire to overcome what is lacking in both the subject and the Symbolic through the object *a* is replaced by the aimlessness and objectlessness of divine love (Hollywood 1995: 116; Kangas 2011: 312). And it is on the role of divine love in the constitution of the mystical post-anarchist political community, in its Symbolic dimensions, that I will focus in the final part of this sub-section.

In terms of the relationship between divine love and jouissance, feminine (or Real) jouissance can be understood to describe the form of jouissance that is obtained through the annihilation of the soul / subject in its identity with the Godhead as divine love. At the same time, divine love can be understood as being what replaces desire when, through the processes of detachment and releasement, the subject has broken through into a state of true poverty (Eckhart 1994: 207). The positioning of the Godhead as master signifier for the social order can therefore be understood to represent the institutionalisation of an ethics of annihilation that, through the processes of detachment and releasement, aims towards the overcoming of the economy of phallic / fantasmatic jouissance in the soul's annihilation in divine love. In doing so, it acknowledges the ultimate structural impossibility of any overcoming of desire or drive in perpetuity, as these are produced precisely through the subject's constitutive alienation in the representational apparatus of language and in its accession to the social order. The effect of the Godhead, as master signifier, as it relates to desire, is therefore to orient the social order towards the renunciation of any attempt to overcome this constitutive alienation through a return to the Real jouissance the desiring subject unconsciously aims towards, through its releasement from both the fantasmatic economy of phallic jouissance and the drive that circles round and sustains this desire. Paradoxically, however, it is precisely through the renunciation of and releasement from desire and the paradigm of phallic jouissance that the annihilated soul, in its identity with the Godhead as divine love, experiences the Real jouissance that the desire it has renounced unconsciously aims towards. The annihilated soul's releasement in its identity with the Godhead, can only take the form of a temporary evasion of desire, however. This is because it is only as a subject that the human animal can relate to other human animals, and, because subjectivity is co-extensive with the production of desire, the subject must, necessarily, be a desiring subject. This means that the subject can never attain either a perpetual identity with the Godhead or a final releasement from the desire (whether its relation to it is through

fantasy or the drive) precisely because doing either of these things is only possible through the annihilation of subjectivity.

This is not to say that an economy of divine love cannot produce some more durable effects within the political community beyond the ephemerality of the soul's annihilation, however. Although the annihilated soul's identity with the Godhead can only be temporary, the experience of divine love that is produced in (or constituted by) the annihilation of the soul can persist (at a lower level of intensity and in a different form) in the soul's return to subjectivity, with the dissolution of both subjectivity and objectivity entailed in the soul's annihilation in divine love being replaced, in the return to subjectivity with an objectless, (but no longer subjectless), generalized love through which it becomes possible to practice the Christian injunction to 'love your neighbour' (New Revised Standard Version, Mark 12:31) through the indiscriminate act of loving. At the same time, while it is possible for the subject to attain a state of detachment that leads to its releasement and then annihilation, this state of releasement (as with the soul's annihilation) does not constitute a permanent condition. As it is impossible to exist, as a subject, in a perpetual Real, the subject must return, necessarily, to the Symbolic, and embark on the path of detachment anew. The practice of detachment (as with the broader ethics of annihilation it forms part of) is therefore a continual process with no final conclusion or end. However, the more practice the subject has in the art of detachment, the more proficient he or she will become at attaining releasement and the annihilation of the soul, and, through this, of recreating the divine love through which the social and ethical relations of the political community, along with its processes of political decision-making, are sustained.

In the context of the revolutionary ambitions of the post-anarchist insurrection, the Godhead's position as master signifier also functions to forestall any fantasmatic desires or beliefs in the possibilities for any final conclusion to the processes of transformation and

struggle on which the construction and proliferation of anarchistic political communities is based, even once these communities have become established, and even if the existing, hierarchical orders lose their positions of hegemony or domination. This is because of the impossibility of any final closure of the Symbolic or any final suturing of the antagonisms through which it is constituted. However, while a mystical post-anarchist political community organised around the Godhead might not be able to evade desire in any final way, where the economy of divine love, like the Lacanian traversal of fantasy, differs from the economy of phallic jouissance, in a political sense, is that instead of identifying the various goals, aims, and objects of desire produced either within the contemporary capitalist state, or within a socialist or anarchist society based on the same, fantasmatic logic, as the sources of a lost jouissance that the community seeks to regain, it rejects the pursuit of jouissance altogether. Where it goes beyond the register of the drive, however, is in aiming not only for the community's detachment from the various objects of desire these different social formations might offer, but its releasement from the desire that attaches to them and the libidinal economy out of which this desire (whether it is related to through the registers of desire or drive) is produced. This means that, rather than simply reconciling the subject (and the broader political community) to the impossibility of any final overcoming of domination or control through a shift from an economy of desire to an economy of the drive, the economy of divine love aims at the community's releasement from both desire and drive in favour of the ethical assumption of a generalised, temporal approximation of divine love, unattached to any particular object, derived from the temporary annihilation of the soul / subject in the Godhead. This represents an ethico-poltical position in which political actions are the product of the immanent operation of divine love, and in which the pursuit of the realisation of any final political project or aim is renounced in favour of a perpetual struggle to counter and undo the multiple, intersecting forms of domination and control that exist both within and beyond the contemporary capitalist state

258

with the practice of a divine love that has no final aim or expectations beyond its own proliferation.

The Mystical Post-anarchist Symbolic and the Constitution of the Political Community

The processes of subjectification instituted by the Godhead as master signifier for the mystical post-anarchist political community and the economy of divine love these processes function to orient the community around have important implications in terms of the social and ethical relations through which the political community is constituted. To explore these implications more fully, I will be drawing on Marguerite Porete's (1993) distinctions between "the sad soul" and "the lost soul" and between "Holy Church the Great" and "Holy Church the Little". According to Porete, there are two types of soul: the sad soul and the lost soul. These souls, in turn, belong to one of two types of church: Holy Church the Great, or Holy Church the Little. Sad souls belong to Holy Church the Great, while lost souls belong to Holy Church the Little. The lost souls of Holy Church the Little are characterised by their reliance on reason, the teachings of scripture, and other sources of created authority (Porete 1993: 133-134). The sad souls of Holy Church the Great are distinguished from the lost souls by their pursuit of the alternative path of detachment from the created world. They are motivated in this path by the conviction that "there is a being better than theirs", and it is this conviction, and the recognition of the insufficiency of their current existence that comes from it, that makes these souls sad (Porete 1993: 134).

Porete's distinction between the sad soul and the lost soul and between Holy Church the Great and Holy Church the Little can go some way to help elucidate the relationship between the mystical post-anarchist political community and the contemporary capitalist state. As with Porete's sad souls, the post-anarchist mystical subject, as I have conceived it, is characterised by its desire to embark upon a path of detachment. This desire emerges from the

subject's same dissatisfaction with its existential condition, the same intimation that an alternative mode of being is possible, and the same sadness that the inability to experience this brings. Within the context of the contemporary capitalist state, this desire is likely to derive from a range of more specific sources of dissatisfaction relating to the negative effects of contemporary forms of capitalism and the various hierarchical systems with which they intersect, such as the inequalities of power and wealth they create (Lazzarato 2017), the violence through which they are implemented and reproduced (Tansel 2017), and their catastrophic environmental effects (Kolbert 2014). On a psychic level, the subject's sadness comes from its appreciation that the jouissance offered by contemporary capitalism and the various hierarchical formations with which it intersects is unattainable, and from the various negative affects that are produced through the processes of subjectification through which these systems and formations are, at least in part, reproduced (Lazzarato 2015: 186-187; Braidotti 2019: 15-17, 37).

In terms of the constitution of the political community, this would mean that, as in Porete's Holy Church the Great, the subject's status as a sad soul would be a precondition of its entry to the mystical post-anarchist political community, but that, within this community, there would be significant differences among community members in terms of how far along the path to annihilation they might be. The same differences will therefore apply when considering the extent to which the post-anarchist political community is able to evade the castrating effects of the symbolic law in its linguistic (or ontological) dimension. While some of the members of the community will have succeeded in temporarily overcoming the symbolic law through the annihilation of the soul, others will not, but will have the potential to be able to do this through their pursuit of the ethics of annihilation the Godhead orients the community towards.

If the mystical post-anarchist political community can be understood to be analogous with the sad souls of Holy Church the Great, the citizens of the hegemonic capitalist state are analogous with the lost souls of Holy Church the Little. In terms of the post-anarchist insurrection and the project of structural renewal, Holy Church the Little can therefore be understood to be analogous with the existing institutions of the contemporary capitalist state whose power and authority the mystical post-anarchist subject, or sad soul, aims to negate through its detachment from it. Holy Church the Great, in contrast, can serve as a model for the particular prefigurative communities that the mystical post-anarchist sad soul might attempt to construct (in combination with a broader and more heterogenous network of other broadly anarchistic communities with which it might interact via a logic of affinity [Day 2005]), as alternatives to, and eventual replacements for, the contemporary capitalist state.

One of the areas in which Porete's two churches differ from each other most obviously is in their contrasting approaches to ethics and morality. For the lost souls of Holy Church the Little, the moral code of society is based on the transcendent authority of a fixed set of moral laws, edicts, prescriptions and proscriptions derived from a particular set of texts, institutions, and religious figures (Porete 1993: 122-123). For the sad souls of Holy Church the Great, by contrast, the source of ethical authority is located in the immanence of the Godhead (Porete 1993: 122-123). It is important to stress, however, that, in view of the temporary nature of the soul's annihilation, whether the sad souls that comprise Holy Church the Great are annihilated souls or are at an earlier stage of the process of detachment, they remain castrated. This has important ethical implications. One of the potential problems created by both the differential status of the sad souls in terms of whether they have or have not experienced the soul's annihilation, and the temporary nature of the soul's identity with the Godhead for those who have, revolves around the question of what happens in the return to subjectivity. More specifically, it raises the question of whether some sort of normative framework is required to

deal with the problem of how (far) it can be known or agreed that an individual's conduct does, in fact, derive from the experience and direction of divine love, or whether the divine derivation of an act is simply being claimed in order to justify or rationalize a particular desire that somebody might have.

Porete responds to this problem with reference to the paradigm of Aquinian virtue ethics that dominated the medieval church. Porete's (1993) argument, throughout *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, is that, while the virtues must be rejected as a set of prescriptions that determine the individual's ethical conduct in favour of the annihilated soul's direct encounter with the immanence of divine love, this does not mean that the annihilated soul ceases to behave in a virtuous manner; it means that the virtuous conduct of the annihilated soul emerges directly from the Godhead instead of through the prescriptions and proscriptions of a particular ethical code. This means, in effect, that the empirical experience of mysticism serves as the yardstick against which the individual's ethical conduct is measured and through which it can be determined whether this conduct derives from the soul's annihilation in the divine love of the Godhead and can therefore be understood as an expression of the Godhead's sovereignty. One of the potential problems with this approach is that it is only those within the community whose souls have been annihilated who are in a position to judge whether the individual's conduct derives from the Godhead; for those whose souls have not been annihilated there is no empirical means of validating or invalidating an individual's ethical claims. However, this problem is largely resolved by the shared commitment of the sad souls who comprise Holy Church the Great to a path of detachment and, in the specific context of the post-anarchist political community, to their shared commitment to the basic set of values and axioms that post-anarchism supplies (relating to the principles of equality, liberty, non-domination, and mutual aid) and against which the ethical conduct of the individual community member can be judged.

262

If the laws, customs, norms, and beliefs of the political community emerge, organically, from the experience of divine love, then there are no formal, or fixed laws to which the post-anarchist sad soul is required to submit. However, the implicit agreement of the members of the prefigurative, mystical post-anarchist community to take their ethical lead from the Godhead does, itself, represent a version of the symbolic law (in its social aspect). So, while, within the context of the contemporary capitalist state, the mystical post-anarchist subject can be understood to be in a position of transgression in relation to the symbolic law (as it relates, again, to the social order) and to therefore have refused its castrating effects, in the specific context of the mystical post-anarchist political community, the mystical post-anarchist subject is castrated not only in terms of its constitutive alienation as a subject, but also in terms of its acceptance of the values, customs, and beliefs on which the community is based. However, the nature of its castration differs, fundamentally, from its castration within the contemporary capitalist state, in that the placement of the Godhead as master signifier functions to orient the mystical post-anarchist subject towards the deconstruction of the symbolic foundations of the socio-political order and the customs, values, beliefs, and norms the symbolic law represents. In the mystical post-anarchist political community, the symbolic law would therefore tend towards its own dissolution to the extent that it aims at an encounter with the Real in which the divine will of the Godhead can emerge through the annihilated soul's identity with the Godhead as divine love.

One of the key points that distinguishes Porete's account of the two churches from the millenarianism of contemporaneous movements such as the followers of Joachim de Fiore (Foucault 2007), is that the existence of Holy Church the Great does not imply a return to a pre-Lapsarian Edenic state, or the advent of an earthly paradise in which all antagonisms have been overcome. Porete's account of the two churches also distinguishes itself from millenarianism in the different soteriological and eschatological assumptions that it holds. One

accusation that is possible to level against Porete is that her mystical theology is fundamentally elitist in the sense that, as with the millenarian movements, only a small number of 'noble souls' are deemed capable of annihilation. This accusation is supported by the fact that the purpose of Porete's book, as O'Sullivan identifies, is to teach those souls who are not yet 'unencumbered' about the possibility of spiritual 'perfection' and to provide a set of spiritual instructions through which attain this (2006: 156). As such, the text is targeted at the sad souls Porete believes capable of following the practices she sets out rather than the lost souls who she considers to be incapable of perceiving their truth (Babinsky 2003: 46). Porete's text can therefore rightly be considered elitist in two ways: first, in the sense that it is directed specifically at a relative spiritual elite, and second, in the sense that it assumes that only this elite group is capable of spiritual perfection. Importantly, however, Porete diverges from millenarian accounts of spiritual election in that she does not equate the ability to attain a state of (temporary) spiritual perfection through the annihilation of the soul with the ability to attain eternal salvation. As Babinsky stresses, although the lost souls are incapable of gaining unicity with the divine as embodied souls within the created world, the act of baptism ensures they are saved to eternal life once their bodies have expired (2003: 44).

In the pantheistic, post-anarchist reading of Eckhart's and Porete's mysticism I have been undertaking in this thesis, the concept of eternal life (or being) is detached from its Christian soteriological and eschatological roots in the sense that 'the eternal' is conceived, primarily, as something that is attainable, intermittently, during the life of the human animal, through the annihilation of subjectivity. As the experience of eternal life (or being) is both predicated on and entails the dissolution of the subject/soul, any more permanent form of eternal life/being that might exist beyond the biological death of the human animal must therefore take place outside of the framework of subjectivity too. Salvation to eternal life, from this perspective, is therefore something that is granted to all human animals (rather than just

264

those who have been baptised) following the permanent annihilation of the subject/soul that comes with the biological death of the embodied subject. On this reading, what distinguishes the sad soul from the lost soul is therefore solely its ability to attain (temporarily) the full jouissance of eternal being as an embodied subject. It is worth stressing, however, that, on my reading of Porete, while it is not possible for the lost soul to gain releasement from the phallic economy of desire and, through this, to become an annihilated soul, there is no logical reason why it is not also possible for the lost soul to become dissatisfied with the limited jouissance and negative psychic conditions provided within the phallic economy and, through this, to be transformed into a sad soul. Consequently, although Porete's *Mirror of the Simple Souls* might be addressed to a relatively elite group of 'sad souls', the possibility of becoming a sad soul can be considered to be open to everyone.

The accusation of elitism has also been levelled against post-anarchism. Franks, for example, argues that, in approaches to post-anarchism influenced by Deleuze and Guattari's, nomadism, there is a focus on the self-emancipation of individuals and small groups that leaves the unenlightened to remain exploited and has the effect of creating a new form of social hierarchy that has the liberated, anarchistic community at the top and the unliberated remainder at the bottom (Franks 2007: 139). In Day's (2005) case, the accusation of elitism can be directed at his conviction that, in spite of neoliberalism's continued polarisation of wealth and power throughout the world, a vast, silent majority in the G8 countries, at least, continues to participate in its own domination. As Day puts it: "On this score I believe that Jean Baudrillard is quite correct: the revolution has in fact occurred, the masses of the First World have chosen quiescence, and nothing we can do will change their behaviour for the better" (2005: 126). If a majority of populations in the G8 and the global north have chosen acquiescence to the contemporary capitalist state, this means that the post-anarchist TAZ, SPAZ, and PAZ that Day (2005) advocates is indeed the preserve of a small, enlightened few. However, the fact that the

TAZs, SPAZs, and PAZs that Day advocates as part of his post-anarchist approach to structural renewal are, like Porete's Holy Church the Great, comprised of a relatively small number of people, does not imply that they will remain minoritarian groups or endeavours. In fact, in keeping with the broader anarchist tradition of social revolution of which structural renewal forms a part, the specific aim of these groups / communities is to expand and / or proliferate as a means of undoing the hegemony of capitalism and the dominance of the state, and of constructing anarchistic alternatives to them. So, in this sense, they have an explicitly anti-elitist aim.

To address Franks's critique, and the accusation that post-anarchism creates a new type of social hierarchy, in relation to the mystical post-anarchist political community, it is important to stress that the sad souls that comprise the mystical post-anarchist community are not a fixed group, and remain open to entry by any individual who, in his or her disillusionment with the contemporary capitalist state, makes a spiritual move from the subjective position of the lost soul to that of the sad soul. At the same time, in pursuing the revolutionary strategy of structural renewal, a mystical post-anarchism aims to encourage both the expansion and the proliferation of mystical post-anarchist communities that might then connect with other mystical and non-mystical anarchistic communities as well as other, non-anarchistic communities that are broadly sympathetic to its aims, as part of a broader revolutionary struggle in which these diverse communities relate to each other through a logic of affinity.

At the level of the individual community, it is clear that the state of annihilation that Porete describes is neither achieved nor achievable by all members of the community. However, there is no reason why the relative rarity of these experiences and the fact that the mystical post-anarchist political community will therefore be comprised of both annihilated souls and non-annihilated, sad souls, should lead to the creation of hierarchical social relationships or institutions based on these spiritual differences. In fact, while it might not be

possible to prevent the emergence of informal hierarchies based on these differences entirely, the spiritual practices of detachment and releasement can go a long way in helping to ensure the community's detachment from both the ego and the Symbolic, and with this, from the competitive and hierarchical logics that might encourage the individual and the community to attach greater personal importance to some individuals over others on the basis of the spiritual states they have attained. These same practices and orientations can also help encourage the individual and the community to detach themselves from the framework of moral judgement out of which the individual, and the community, more broadly, would derive the feelings of superiority over the lost souls outside the community that is also implicit in the production of the alternative social hierarchy that Franks describes.

The economy of divine love that the mystical post-anarchist community is animated by would also help ensure against the emergence of social hierarchies by producing a climate in which the individuals within the community are guided, in their actions, by the immanence of divine love and, with this, the love of their neighbour, whether the neighbour is an annihilated soul, a sad soul, or a lost soul. The objectless love that this implies would help ensure against the attachment of greater importance, or greater love and affection to specific subjects within the community over others within and outside of it based on their spiritual abilities or achievements. In doing so, it can contribute to the production of a climate in which the community actively seeks to work against whatever spiritual hierarchies might exist within it and outside of it by aiming, through the ethics of annihilation, at the releasement of all the subjects from the economy of phallic jouissance and the hierarchal distinctions produced within the contemporary capitalist state.

Conclusion: The Mystical Post-anarchist Symbolic

267

I will conclude this chapter with a summary of the main symbolic features of the mystical post-anarchist political community I have been describing as a means of consolidating and, hopefully, adding some greater coherence to the various arguments I have put forward so far. If the contemporary capitalist state forms part of a broader, patriarchal Symbolic, then one of the ways in which its symbolic authority can be challenged and overcome is through the production of an alternative master signifier that can function as metonym for the values, customs, and beliefs around which the Symbolic, as a social order, can be configured. By replacing the phallus with the Godhead as the master signifier for the social order, it is possible to produce what I have been describing as a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic. Where the Godhead differs from the phallus and other master signifiers is in the fundamentally apophatic, or deconstructive, function that it performs. This means that, in terms of the symbolic law through which the Symbolic order, as a social order, is inscribed, the Godhead tends towards its own deconstruction and to the deconstruction of the Symbolic, more broadly, in both its social and linguistic modalities, and towards the Real of divine love that the symbolic law places a bar upon. One of the central assumptions of Lacanian psychoanalysis is that there is a fundamental interpenetration between the Symbolic and the subject. The subject is formed through its accession to the Symbolic and shaped by its discourses, values, beliefs, and customs. At the same time, it remains possible for subjects to adopt alternative values, beliefs, and customs and, by acting collectively, either reconfiguring the existing coordinates of the Symbolic or producing alternatives to it. The mystical post-anarchist Symbolic I have been arguing for in this chapter is therefore formed through a proliferation of alternative, mystical subjectivities, produced through the ethics of annihilation I described in Chapter Three, and represents a prefigurative alternative to the dominant, patriarchal Symbolic on which the contemporary capitalist state is based.

At the level of the political community, the placement of the Godhead as the master signifier for the political community orients the mystical post-anarchist community towards a detachment from the Symbolic (in both its social and linguistic / ontological dimensions), through the ethics of annihilation, and towards the Real of the Godhead, which operates as the site of sovereignty and the source of ethico-political conduct in the modality of divine love. In doing so, the Godhead can help to negate the effects of the superego and the guilt it produces, within the context of the contemporary capitalist state, by orienting the community towards its detachment from the Symbolic law (in its social dimension) and the various prescriptions and proscriptions on which it is based. In the context of the mystical post-anarchist political community, the superego remains operative, but the guilt it produces derives from the subject's perceived failure in its attempts to enact the ethics of annihilation around which the community is oriented. However, the ethics of annihilation that the Godhead orients the community towards has the effect of encouraging the mystical subject to detach itself not only from the ideologies, discourses, and desires of the Other (whether the Other is configured along neoliberal, chauvinistic, or anarchistic lines), but from the superego as well, and, through this, to escape (albeit imperfectly) its effects. At the same time, the deconstructive function of the Godhead, as master signifier, also functions to counteract the shame produced through the ego ideal by encouraging the subject to detach itself from its identification with the political leader (as a symbolic father substitute) and, through, this, to become released from the effects of the internalisation of the symbolic law that the political leader represents. While it might not be possible to eliminate the ego ideal altogether, the ethics of annihilation that the Godhead orients the community towards is able to help minimise its effects by encouraging the subject to detach itself from any manifestations of the symbolic father that might emerge. In doing so, it can help forestall the emergence of the authoritarian relations on which both liberal and authoritarian states are based.

In terms of the processes of subject formation, the positioning of the Godhead as master signifier for the mystical post-anarchist political community has the further effect of reconfiguring the processes of sexuation so that the subject is formed in terms of its relation to the Godhead rather than the phallus. In view of the apophatic function of the Godhead, this means that the masculine (or, in non-patriarchal terms, predominant) subject position in the mystical post-anarchist community is oriented towards its own deconstruction through the ethics of annihilation. This transformation of the process of sexuation, or subject formation, has a direct impact on the forms of jouissance that are attainable within the political community and the nature of the libidinal economy of which they form a part. Where the mystical post-anarchist community differs from the capitalist state is in that Godhead orients the community towards its detachment from the economy of phallic jouissance via what I have described as an economy of divine love. This is an economy in which desire is replaced with the aimlessness and objectless of the divine love that emerges in the annihilation of the soul. It can therefore be understood to produce an ethico-political orientation that Eckhart and Porete describe as 'living without a why', in which the social relationships and political institutions produced within the mystical post-anarchist community emerge from the interaction between mystical post-anarchist subjects guided by divine love rather than in accordance with a fixed moral code or a pre-determined revolutionary blueprint.

The production of a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic also has implications for the social and ethical relations through which the mystical post-anarchist political community is constituted. Like Porete's 'sad souls', the members of the mystical post-anarchist political community will be united by their fundamental dissatisfaction with both their existential conditions and the more specific conditions of social life produced through the symbolic co-ordinates of the contemporary capitalist state. This do not imply that it is not possible for the 'lost souls' of the contemporary capitalist state to join the mystical post-anarchist political

community. However, for this can only be possible through a subjective shift from lost soul to sad soul (or, in Lacanian terms, from the masculine to the feminine subject position). While, among the mystical post-anarchist 'sad souls' that comprise the mystical post-anarchist political community, there will be differences in terms of how advanced each subject is on the path of detachment, the emergence of informal hierarchies based on subject's levels of spiritual accomplishment would be mitigated against through the Godhead's orientation of the community towards the ethics of annihilation. This would help ensure that subjects actively aim towards their releasement from any hierarchal ways of thinking and aim to ground their relations with and perceptions of other mystical subjects in a generalized 'love of the neighbour' in which all members of the community (and all those outside it) are loved without discrimination and regardless of their spiritual accomplishments.

271

Conclusion

The main questions I have sought to answer in this thesis have been: what theoretical response can a mystical post-anarchism provide to the problems of domination and control within the contemporary capitalist state? And what theoretical contribution can a mystical post-anarchism make to contemporary anarchist political theory? My aim, in answering these questions, has been to explore the role that mysticism can play in the contestation of political and economic sovereignty, and in the construction of alternative, anarchistic forms of sovereignty and political community as part of the post-anarchist insurrection and project of structural renewal. In answer to the first of these questions, my claim has been that a post-anarchist reading of the apophatic mysticism of Meister Eckhart and Marguerite Porete makes it possible to conceive a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics that can help counter the dominating effects of contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty through the undoing of the existing forms of subjectification and desire produced within the framework of the contemporary capitalist state, and that can contribute, on a more positive note, to the creation of an alternative, mystical post-anarchist Symbolic, oriented around the production and proliferation of liberty and equality through the annihilation of subjectivity in divine love. In answer to the second of these questions, my claim has been that a mystical post-anarchism of this type, in locating the warrant for ethical and political action in a purely immanent conception of the divine, advances on the existing academic literature by showing how mysticism can help overcome the implicit authoritarianism of existing anarchist approaches to political theology and (post)Marxist conceptualisations of revolution and reform in their recourse to transcendent sites of authority. In doing so, it has been able to elaborate the anarchistic potential of the explicitly theological dimensions of mysticism more fully than existing approaches to mystical anarchism and, through this, to place mysticism at the forefront of contemporary anarchist and (post)revolutionary theory.

I will conclude this thesis first, by briefly recapitulating the arguments I have made in each chapter and clarifying how these arguments have helped me to answer the different questions I posed in the Introduction. I will go on, after to this, to explain how my thesis contributes to the existing academic literature on political theology and revolutionary politics. I will end with some brief thoughts on how the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I have argued for can be developed further, as a theoretical framework, and with some suggestions for alternative theoretical frameworks that could be constructed as part of a broader mystical post-anarchist research agenda.

Mystical Post-anarchism

In Chapter One, I set out my argument for a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics as a response both to the problem of contemporary forms of domination and control, and as a means of addressing some of the problems with existing theoretical responses to this problem. In making my argument, I engaged first, with liberal, Marxist, and anarchist approaches to political theology and the problem of sovereignty and, second, with (post) Marxist and (post) anarchist approaches to social transformation and revolutionary politics. In the first part of the chapter, I argued that Landauer's spiritual anarchism offers an important illustration of the role that spirit can play in the formation of political communities and in understanding how an anarchist political community might succeed in avoiding the constraints on freedom imposed by appeals to transcendent authority on which the authoritarian, liberal and Marxist states are all founded. I went on to argue that Landauer's (2010) political theological transformation of Judeo-Christian conceptions of spirit into an almost entirely secular understanding of the term was problematic, however, because it jettisons the most radically transformative part of the Judeo-Christian spiritual tradition.

273

This led me to the claim that theopolitics represents a more fruitful response to the problem of contemporary forms of domination and control than Landauer's political theological approach. My argument for an anarchist theopolitics was made, primarily, with reference to Martin Buber's spiritual anarchism which, in contrast to Landauer, argues for the political value of an explicitly theological understanding of spirituality through its endorsement of an anarcho-theocracy, based on the direct rule of God without the mediation of the state, the priesthood, and their institutions (Buber 2016 [1949]). The problem I identified with Buber's account of anarcho-theocracy, however, was that, while it succeeds in bypassing the authoritarian structures of both the Church and the state, it remains trapped within the authoritarian paradigm of sovereignty to the extent that it is grounded in the authority of a transcendent, personalised deity who exercises direct power over the world through his chosen intermediaries. I suggested that one way of finding a way past the inherent authoritarianism of Buber's conception of divine sovereignty was by turning to the mystical anarchism of the twelfth century Movement of the Free Spirit (Lerner 1972; Critchley 2012). My claim was that that where, in Buber's anarcho-theocracy, God stands in a primarily transcendent relation to the political community, with whom it communicates via the mediation of the prophet or the judge, the Movement of the Free Spirit's insistence on the immediacy of the relationship between God and the soul means that there is no longer any intermediary between God and the political community. It is because of this, I suggested, that the movement represents a particularly useful resource with which to conceive a mystical approach to theopolitics based on the immanence of the divine.

I made the further argument that Newman's (2019) advocacy of political philosophy as an antidote to Schmitt's decisionistic understanding of political theology was equally problematic in its claim that philosophy is inherently more valuable than theology for politics on account of its preoccupation with free and rational enquiry into how one should live (2019: 175). I argued that there is no reason why a theopolitical approach that foregrounds theology over

politics cannot share the same interest in free and rational enquiry that Newman assigns to political philosophy, and that Newman's call for radical theology to be put to the service of political philosophy should be reversed, so that political philosophy is put to the service of radical theology through the elaboration of an anarchist theopolitics that deploys radical theology to respond to political problems.

My argument, in the second part of the chapter, was that in the context of a globalised, neoliberal world order, any attempts to pursue radical alternatives to either capitalism or the state must be based on the contestation of the dominant modes of political and social life through which they are sustained. My contention was that, because of this, a contemporary anarchist theopolitics must form part of a broader, revolutionary project. In making this claim, I argued that because of their reliance on the state form, Marxist (Marx and Engels 1992 [1893]) and post-Marxist (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) approaches to revolution and reform have the effect of reinforcing the authoritarian power of the state and its hierarchical structures. This led me to suggest that the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I would be arguing for in this thesis should be situated within the broader framework of the anarchist social revolution and, more specifically, the post-anarchist insurrection (Newman 2016) and the project of structural renewal (Day 2005).

In Chapter Two I moved on to argue for the contribution that a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics can play in the conceptualisation of an anarchistic approach to sovereignty that could offer a more egalitarian alternative to the implicit authoritarianism of Buber's anarcho-theocracy and stand as a non-hierarchical alternative to existing forms of political and economic sovereignty. To do this, I drew on the mystical theologies of Meister Eckhart and Marguerite Porette to argue that, although Eckhart's account of the divine makes several important steps to avoid the inherent authoritarianism of Buber's conceptualisation of divine sovereignty, some problems persist with his reliance on the transcendent, Trinitarian

conceptualisation of divinity. My argument centred on the fundamental incompatibility of the monotheistic and pantheistic strands of Eckhart's thought. Where, in Eckhart's adoption of the neo-Platonic 'One' (1994: 259), God is represented, in pantheistic terms, as eternal being, in his adoption of the orthodox Christian imagery of the Trinity, God is represented, in (mono)theistic terms, as a triune, personalised being (Eckhart 1994: 104). I noted the conceptualisation of God as *a* being, rather than as being, is problematic, from an anarchist perspective, because it represents a fundamentally hierarchical and authoritarian understanding of the relationship between God and the human person. The representation of God in exclusively masculine terms is also problematic, from a feminist perspective, in that this represents a specifically patriarchal form of authoritarianism. One of the key problems with the Trinitarian model of divine sovereignty, from the perspective of an anarchist theopolitics, is that, when this model of sovereignty is transposed to a political theological context, it has the effect of naturalising and legitimating equally authoritarian, hierarchical, and patriarchal models of political sovereignty.

The claim I went on to make was therefore that, by foregrounding the neo-Platonic, pantheistic strand of Eckhart's theology, it is possible to develop, more fully, the latent anarchist potential of his mystical theology and to conceive a more fully immanent God that is able to overcome the problem of hierarchical authority that persists within the Movement of the Free Spirit's mystical anarchism. This led me to draw on the distinction Eckhart makes between God and the Godhead (Eckhart 1994: 182, 234) (or, in my Lacanian reading, the God of the Symbolic and the God of the Real) to argue for a sovereignty of the Godhead in which divine sovereignty resides in the immanence of the Godhead (or the God of the Real) rather than the transcendence of the anthropomorphic, Trinitarian God (or the God of the Symbolic).

The final argument I made in this chapter was that the transposition of the sovereignty of the Godhead onto the political sphere could help to produce a form of political sovereignty in

which sovereignty is immanent to each member of the political community and is therefore diffused throughout the political community instead of residing in the transcendence of the sovereign individual or state. My claim, in making this argument, was that a sovereignty of the Godhead can, consequently, form the basis for a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics that, on a theological level, avoids the authoritarian implications of a Trinitarian model of divine sovereignty and, on a political level, offers a route out of the authoritarian paradigm of political sovereignty in which existing approaches to anarchist theopolitics remain trapped. I concluded by arguing that the type of socio-political community this implies is (as in Critchley [2012] and others' readings of the Movement of the Free Spirit more broadly) a form of anarcho-communism.

In Chapter Three, I moved from the elaboration of a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics based on the sovereignty of the Godhead to ask what role mysticism can play in the elaboration of an ethico-spiritual approach to the post-anarchist insurrection (Newman 2016). My argument, in this chapter, was that, by reading Eckhart's account of the spiritual praxis of detachment (1981: 286; 1994: 61) alongside a Lacanian ethics of psychoanalysis (Lacan 2007), it becomes possible to conceive an ethics of annihilation that can contribute to the post-anarchist uprising of the self through the production of mystical subjects oriented around the experience of divine love. In making this argument, I made the claim that an ethics of annihilation is able to move beyond psychoanalysis's reconciliation of the subject to the fantasmatic quality of its desire and the impossibility of the jouissance it seeks through the traversal of fantasy (Zizek 1997: 43) by offering a route past the deadlocks of both desire and drive through their replacement with divine love (Porete 1993: 202) in the temporary annihilation of the soul (Porete 1993).

My claim was that, if a Lacanian traversal of fantasy can help bring the subject to an awareness of the fundamentally fantasmatic nature of desire, the mystical praxis of detachment

goes beyond the traversal of fantasy by enabling the subject's detachment not only from desire and, but from the drive through which desire is sustained. In making this argument, I stressed that an ethics of annihilation is able to avoid reproducing the logic of fantasy because the feminine jouissance (Lacan 1999: 76) the praxis of detachment leads towards is a product, rather than the aim of the subject's releasement from desire, and from the economy of phallic jouissance into which these are inserted, and because, paradoxically, it is, in fact, only through the renunciation of desire and the will, and the dissolution of subjectivity that this leads to, that feminine jouissance can be obtained. I went on to argue that the necessary ephemerality of the annihilation of the soul means that the mystical post-anarchist subject can never succeed in evading desire in any final, or permanent way, however, meaning that the ethics of annihilation should be understood as a continual process with no final endpoint. I made the further claim, however, that the annihilated soul's unicity with the Godhead in the modality of divine love is able to equip the mystical subject, in its return to subjectivity, with a more enduring ethical orientation that can help to ensure that its actions and relationships are guided by the immanence of a generalised, divine love with no particular object or aim, and ward against the continued temptations of desire, while moving beyond the subject's reconciliation to the drive.

The final argument that I made in this chapter was that an ethics of annihilation can contribute to the post-anarchist insurrection of the self by helping to undo the processes of subjectivation through which contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty are exercised. I argued that it can do this by providing the subject with the means to challenge the symbolic law of the capitalist state by enabling it to detach itself (albeit impermanently) from its investments in the existing institutions and structures of the contemporary capitalist state. I suggested that, in doing this, it also becomes possible for the subject to resist the operation of contemporary forms of political and economic sovereignty through the generation of negative psychic conditions, such as guilt and anxiety, produced through the processes of neoliberal

subjectification. I also suggested that the annihilated soul's unicity with divine love can provide the basis for an alternative libidinal economy that can function as a prefigurative alternative to that on which the contemporary capitalist state is based.

In Chapter Four, my focus moved from the role that mysticism might play in the post-anarchist uprising of the self to the question of how mysticism can contribute to the production of an anarchistic alternative to the patriarchal Symbolic around which the contemporary capitalist state is configured as part of the post-anarchist project of structural renewal. To make this argument, I suggested that it is possible to draw an analytical distinction between the Symbolic as a linguistic order and the Symbolic as a social order, and that where the Symbolic law as it relates to the linguistic order is (for the most part) fixed, the Symbolic law as it relates to the social order is contingent and therefore subject to contestation. To explain how the Symbolic order can be transformed, I argued that, because the subject and the Symbolic are mutually constitutive, not only is the subject produced through the Symbolic; the Symbolic is produced through the subjects who operate within it (Zizek 2006: 80-81). The claim that I therefore made was that the mystical subjects produced through an ethics of annihilation have the potential to combine to produce an alternative, mystical post-anarchist Symbolic that then goes on to re-shape the subject in line with the alternative laws, customs, and beliefs on which the Symbolic law of the reconfigured Symbolic is based.

My more specific claim was that this mystical post-anarchist alternative to the patriarchal Symbolic of the contemporary capitalist state could be produced through the institution of the Godhead as master signifier for the political community. I suggested that the Godhead performs a fundamentally apophatic function in that it aims not only at the deconstruction of the Symbolic God, but at the deconstruction of the Symbolic order, as such. I argued that, in performing this apophatic function, the Godhead points to the Real of the divine as eternal being that the mediation of the signifier occludes, and that it can therefore

279

contribute to the production of alternative, mystical post-anarchist political communities as part of the post-anarchist project of structural renewal by providing an ethico-spiritual point of orientation for the political community. I suggested that, in doing this, it could help forestall the emergence of the authoritarian relations on which both liberal and authoritarian states are based, and encourage the political community to pursue a sovereignty of the Godhead in which the warrant for political action is located in the immanence of divine love rather than the transcendent authority of the leader and the phallic authority the leader represents, and in which political leadership is therefore distributed horizontally throughout the group.

I also argued that the positioning of the Godhead as master signifier within the post-anarchist political community has important implications for the process of subject formation within the community. I argued that, if the phallus is replaced by the Godhead as the principal master signifier for the political community, then the mystical post-anarchist subject's accession to the social order implies a commitment to the undoing of the Symbolic law (understood in relation to both the social order and the order of language) and the process of signification through which the Real is barred. I suggested that the processes of subjectification the Godhead, as master signifier, orients the mystical post-anarchist subject towards can therefore be understood as an ethics of annihilation that actively explores and challenges the limits of the symbolic law through the (temporary) evasion of its castrating effects produced through the annihilation of the soul / subject in divine love. I argued that the mystical post-anarchist political community can therefore be understood to operate through an economy of divine love that, in aiming towards the subject's releasement from desire, is animated by the objectlessness of divine love. I concluded by suggesting that the positioning of the Godhead as master signifier has the effect of producing mystical post-anarchist political communities analogous to Porete's (1993) 'Holy Church the Great', comprised of mystical post-anarchist 'sad souls' who share a fundamental dissatisfaction with both their existential alienation and

the alienating conditions of the contemporary capitalist state, and are committed to the production of alternative forms of community based on the economy of divine love.

Mystical Post-anarchism and Contemporary Political Theory

My thesis has made several contributions to contemporary political theory. In arguing for a mystical post-anarchist theopolitics based on the sovereignty of the Godhead, I have been able to avoid the reliance of Marxist and post-Marxist responses to the problem of contemporary forms of domination and control on the transcendent authority of the state to effect social transformation. By locating sovereignty in the immanence of the Godhead, the mystical post-anarchism I have argued for is able to contribute to the production of social relationships, based on the ethico-spiritual direction of the Godhead, that succeeds in finding a way past the various reconfigurations of the hierarchical relation between the political subject and the state offered by Marxists (Marx and Engels 1998 [1893]) and post-Marxists, such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985). This mystical post-anarchist theopolitics has been able to avoid the totalizing tendency of Hardt's and Negri's (2009) autonomist Marxist 'exodus' strategy through its situation of mystical post-anarchism within the framework of a non-hegemonizing, post-anarchist logic of affinity. It has also been able to avoid the determinism of Hardt and Negri's (2009) understanding of subjectification (as it relates both to the processes of domination and of resistance) as a natural, historical product of material, economic relations, through the emphasis it places on the ethico-spiritual dimensions of the processes of subjectification and its argument that the alternative forms of subjectivity produced through an ethics of annihilation can, in turn, transform the material conditions of the social world.

In terms of its contribution to anarchist political theology, my thesis has built on Landauer's spiritual anarchist approach to political theology by developing a version of spiritual anarchism that understands mysticism in explicitly theological terms. Where I have

diverged from Landauer has been in arguing that a mystical post-anarchism can be understood, primarily, as a theopolitical, as opposed to political theological approach to spiritual anarchism in that, (following Buber [2016 {1949}]), instead of trying to secularise the theological category of mysticism, as Landauer (2010) does, I have applied an explicitly theological understanding of mysticism to the political problem of the exercise of political and economic sovereignty within the context of the contemporary capitalist state. In adopting a theopolitical approach to anarchism, the mystical post-anarchist theopolitics I have argued for has, by engaging with the mystical theologies of Meister Eckhart and Marguerite Porete, been able to overcome not only the authoritarianism (whether implicit or explicit) of liberal, conservative, and Marxist conceptualisations of political sovereignty, but the residual authoritarianism inherent in Buber's replacement of a transcendent political sovereign with an equally transcendent divine sovereign. It has done this through the elaboration of a sovereignty of the Godhead derived from a post-anarchist reading of Eckhart's and Porete's conceptualisations of God that drew out the latent anarchism of their theologies by focussing on their conceptualisations of divine immanence. This, in turn, has enabled me to demonstrate the theopolitical potential of an ethics of annihilation in terms of the ethical and social relationships that a sovereignty of the Godhead might produce.

My thesis has also made a contribution to mystical anarchism. It has followed anarchist theorists like Hakim Bey (1985, 1994) and Simon Critchley (2009, 2012) in attempting to draw out the ethico-political implications of mysticism in the neoliberal era. It has done this by engaging with the mystical anarchism of the movement of the free spirit. In contrast to existing engagements with the movement of the free spirit (most notably Raoul Vaneigem's [1986] anarchistic account of the movement and Simon Critchley's *Faith of the Faithless* [2012]), which have argued for the political theological transposition of mystical concepts and categories onto the political field, I have taken mysticism seriously, on its own terms, to argue

for the political potential and utility of Eckhart's and Porete's mystical theologies in the specific context of the contemporary capitalist state.

Finally, my thesis has contributed to post-anarchist theory through its exploration of the role of mysticism in post-anarchist conceptualisations of revolution as insurrection or uprising. It has contributed to the insurrection of the self (Newman 2016) through its argument for the role that the production of mystical subjects can play in undoing the processes of subjectification through which contemporary forms of economic and political sovereignty are reproduced, and through its argument for the role that mysticism can play in the construction of prefigurative alternatives to them. My thesis has also contributed to the post-anarchist project of structural renewal (Day 2005) by sketching out the broad contours of a mystical post-anarchist Symbolic that can serve as the foundation for some of the prefigurative, anarchistic political communities that might operate as alternatives and eventual replacements for the contemporary capitalist state.

Mystical Post-anarchism: what next?

There is more theoretical work that could be done to develop the mystical post-anarchism I have been arguing for further. In terms of the further development of some of the topics I did include, it would be useful, for example to explore, more fully, the relationship between Marguerite Porete's (1993) ethical framework and her conceptualisation of Holy Church the Great as a way of further developing a fuller account of the ethical constitution of the mystical post-anarchist political community. One way of doing this might be to look at where my mystical post-anarchism diverges from Porete's advocacy of the internalisation of the virtues through the annihilation of the soul via a discussion of the dialectic between (divine) love and the law in both mysticism and psychoanalysis. This would also be likely to require a discussion of the implications of the economy of divine love for Christianity's central ethical

injunction to love your neighbour, and the political theological implications of this. This could be done via a critical engagement with other key theorists who have explored the concept of 'loving your neighbour' such as Zizek (1997), Agamben (2005), Hardt and Negri (2009), Badiou (2012), Santner (2013), and Reinhard (2013).

It might also be useful to explore the broader implications of a mystical post-anarchism for international and global relations in terms of what practical opportunities for and barriers to the construction and proliferation of mystical post-anarchist political communities there are within the context of the contemporary capitalist state, the neoliberal global economy, and the international state system. While I was able to touch on some of these questions in Chapter Four, they can be pursued in much greater depth than I was able to provide given the scope of my thesis and the space available to me. To answer these questions, it would be necessary to explore, more precisely, how the mystical post-anarchist political community relates to other prefigurative communities; how far, given the totalising ambitions and effects of neoliberal globalization and the state form, mystical post-anarchist forms of community can prosper and proliferate at the interstices of, and/or as alternatives to, the state; how the mystical post-anarchist community relates to other anarchistic groups and movements, such as Rojava (Knapp, Flach and Ayboga 2016), the Zapatistas (Khasnabish 2010), anarchist social centres (Eisenstadt 2019), the recuperated factory movement in Argentina (Thorpe, Cannon, and Emili 2019), and Indigenous communities practicing non-hierarchical politics outside the state in the Americas and elsewhere (Day 2005); and how the mystical post-anarchist community can combine with these groups and communities as part of the broader post-anarchist insurrection.

The mystical post-anarchism I have been elaborating in this thesis has drawn, primarily, from Marguerite Porete's and Meister Eckhart's apophatic Christian mysticism, Martin Buber's theopolitics, and Lacanian psychoanalysis. These sources have provided me with a broad theopolitical framework through which to explore the roles of desire, will, and (divine)

love in the production of political subjectivity and the symbolic foundations of the political community. By drawing on and combining different theorists, philosophical traditions, and concepts from anarchism, poststructuralism / post-humanism, and mysticism, it is possible to construct alternative approaches to mystical post-anarchism, as part of wider, mystical post-anarchist research agenda that can be used to cast a different light on the same sort of problems I have dealt with here.

One example of an alternative approach to mystical post-anarchism might, for example, be one that draws on Buddhism instead of the apophatic Christian mystical tradition that I made use of in this thesis. Buddhism shares many of the theoretical assumptions, conceptual tools, and concerns as Eckhartian and Poretean mysticism, such as the problems of the ego and desire, and its assertion of the importance of detachment (Moncayo 2018). Key concepts, approaches, and techniques from Buddhism such as 'the no-self', consciousness, awareness, the mind, and meditation could therefore be integrated into an alternative mystical post-anarchist framework that combines Buddhism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and post-anarchism. A Lacanian reading of Buddhism could strengthen both Buddhism and psychoanalysis conceptually by, for example, providing a more sophisticated conceptualisation of the operation of the mind, consciousness, and subjectivity than either approach, on their own, can do. This would then make it possible to tackle the same sort of questions and problems I have been responding to in this thesis from slightly different points of entry and a slightly different set of conceptual tools. By doing this, it would then be possible to explore, more precisely, the role that these concepts might play in the processes of political transformation with which a mystical post-anarchism is most fundamentally concerned, and to find different or additional answers and insights to those that the theoretical framework I have set out in this thesis has been able to provide.

An approach to mystical post-anarchism that departs more substantively from my own could come from an engagement with Deleuze and Guattari's poststructuralism and Carlos Castaneda's account of shamanism / sorcery. The further development of Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) relatively brief engagement with Castaneda in *A Thousand Plateaus* offers an alternative means of exploring many of the same problems I have tackled in my thesis with a different set of conceptual tools capable of yielding different insights and providing different solutions to those that my approach has been able to offer. Castaneda's (1972, 1974, 1984) and Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) focus on perception, in particular, offers a means of elucidating different dimensions of subjectivity and consciousness to the mystical and psychoanalytical concepts I have worked with in this thesis. Castaneda's conceptualisation of "the assemblage point" (1984: 106), for example, could help to elucidate the role of perception in the subject's experience of reality and, more specifically, its movement (through what Deleuze and Guattari [1988] describe as processes of becoming) between the nagual and the tonal (or between mystical and non-mystical states). In doing so, it could also help to demonstrate the importance of perception to what Deleuze and Guattari (1988) describe as the processes of de- and re-territorialization through which both the subject and the social order are (re-)semioticized and, through this, to both the reproduction of the contemporary capitalist state and the production of anarchistic alternatives to it.

Castaneda also offers an alternative set of concepts through which to talk about the nature of mystical subjectivity and of the mystical practices that both lead to and emanate from mystical experience to those provided by Eckhart and Porete, which could help to elucidate different dimensions of mystical subjectivity and different aspects of the transformative processes that mysticism entails. These could include erasing personal history; losing self-importance; disrupting the routines of life; not-doing; breaking the barrier of perception; and stopping the world. In Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Castaneda, 'stopping the world,' as

the culmination of the processes and practices described above, is what enables the subject to bypass the symbolic mechanisms of interpretation that characterise 'the tonal' to initiate a process of subjective deterritorialization through which the subject can undo the processes of subjectification produced by the existing Symbolic order and create new "lines of flight" and territorialities derived from the "presignifying semiotic" of 'the nagual' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 161). It might therefore be useful to explore how the spiritual practices Castaneda describes can contribute, on a political level, to the processes of de- and re-territorialization with which Deleuze and Guattari are concerned at the levels of both the subject and the symbolic configuration of the wider social world. It might then be useful to explore how these processes of de- and re-territorialization can, in turn, effect material transformations that could contribute the post-anarchist insurrection through the production of alternative, anarchistic modes of subjectivity and semioticizations of the social order derived from the subject's encounter with the nagual.

References

Agamben, G. (2005). *State of Exception.* London: University of Chicago Press.

Agamben, G. (1993). *The Coming Community.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Agamben, G. (2005). *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Andreescu, B. (2019). "Donald Trump's Appeal: A Socio-Psychoanalytic Analysis." *Journal for Cultural Research,* (23)4, 348-364.

Arsel, M., Adaman, F., and Saad-Filho, A. (2021). "Authoritarian Developmentalism: The Latest Stage of Neoliberalism?" *Geoforum,* (124), 261-266.

Babinsky, E.L. (2003) "Christological Transformation in *The Mirror of Simple Souls,* by Marguerite Porete." *Theology Today,* (60)1, 34-48.

Badiou, A. (2012). *In Praise of Love.* London: Serpent's Tail.

Bakunin, M. (1970 [1882]). *God and the State*. New York: Dover.

Bakunin, M. (2020 [1872]). *Marxism, Freedom and the State.* London: SFK. Publishing.

Barnard, S. (2002). "Tongues of Angels: Feminine Structure and Other Jouissance." In *Reading Seminar XX: Lacan's Major Work on Love, Knowledge, and Feminine Sexuality,* edited by S. Barnard and B. Fink, 171-185. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Bar Nes, A. (2022). *Psychoanalysis, Mysticism, and the Problem of Epistemology: Defining the Indefinable.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Bartelsen, J. (2014). *Sovereignty as Symbolic Form.* London: Routledge.

Basile, L., and Mazzoleni, O. (2020). "Sovereignist Wine in Populist Bottles? An Introduction." *European Politics and Society,* (21)2, 151-162.

Becker, J.C., Hartwich, L., and Haslam, A.S. "Neoliberalism can Reduce Well-being by Promoting a sense of Social Disconnection, Competition, and Loneliness." *British Journal of Social Psychology*, (60)3, 947-965.

Bernstein, R.J. (2013). "Is Politics 'Practicable' without Religion." *Social Research,* (80)1, 33-56.

Bey, H. (1994). *Immediatism.* New York: Autonomedia.

Bey, H. (1996). *Millennium.* New York: Autonomedia.

Bey, H. (1991). *The Temporary Autonomous Zone: Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism.* New York: Autonomedia.

Bloom, P. (2016). "Cutting off the King's Head: The Self Disciplining Fantasy of Neoliberal Sovereignty." *New Formations,* (88), 8-29.

Bourg, J. (2017). *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Braidotti, R. (2019). *Posthuman Knowledge.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Briken, K., and Eick, V. (2017). "Commodified Pacification: Police, Commercial Security and the State." In *States of Discipline: Authoritarian Neoliberalism and the Contested Reproduction of Capitalist Order*, edited by C.B. Tansel, 47-66. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Brody, S. H. (2018). *Martin Buber's Theopolitics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Brousse, M-H. (2021). *The Feminine: A Mode of Jouissance.* New York: Lacanian Press.

Brown, W. (2015). *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution.* New York: Zone Books.

Buber, M. (2016 [1958]). *Hasidism and Modern Man.* Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Buber, M. (2013 [1958]). *I and Thou.* London: Bloomsbury.

Buber, M. (1996 [1949]). *Paths in Utopia.* New York: Syracuse University Press.

Buber, M. (2016 [1949]). *The Prophetic Faith*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Bull, B. (2013). "Social Movements and the 'Pink Tide' Governments in Latin America: Transformation, Inclusion and Rejection." In *Democratization in the Global South,* edited by K. Stokke, and O. Tornquist, 75-99. Palgrave MacMillan: London.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex.* London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender.* Abington: Routledge.

Cafard, M. (2006). *Zen Anarchy.* Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/max-cafard-zen-anarchy [Accessed on 8 July 2018].

Call, L. (2002). *Postmodern Anarchism.* Oxford: Lexington Books.

Campbell, K. (2004). *Jacques Lacan and Feminist Epistemology.* London: Routledge.

Carusi, R.M. (2021). *Lacan and Critical Feminism: Subjectivity, Sexuation, and Discourse.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Castaneda, C. (1972). *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan.* New York: Washington Square Press.

Castaneda, C. (1974). *Tales of Power.* New York: Washington Square Press.

Castaneda, C. (1984). *The Fire from Within.* London: Simon and Schuster Ltd.

Chiesa, L. (2007). *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan.* Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Chiesa, L. (2014). "Woman and the Number of God." In *Theology after Lacan: The Passion for the Real,* edited by C.Davis, M. Pound and C. Crockett, 166-191. Eugene: Cascade Books.

Clua-Losada, M., and Rebera-Almancoz, O. (2017). "Authoritarian Neoliberalism and the Disciplining of Labour." In *States of Discipline: Authoritarian Neoliberalism and the Contested Reproduction of Capitalist Order*, edited by C.B. Tansel, 29-45. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Critchley, S. (2009). "Mystical Anarchism." *Critical Horizons.* (10)2, 272-306.

Critchley, S. (2012). *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology.* London: Verso Books.

Crockett. C. (2011). *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics after Liberalism.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Crockett. C. (2014). "The Triumph of Theology". In *Theology after Lacan: The Passion for the Real,* edited by C. Davis, M. Pound, and C. Crockett, 250-266. Eugene: Cascade Books.

Crotty, P. (2019). "Structural Causes of the Global Financial Crisis: a critical assessment of the 'New Financial Architecture'." *Cambridge Journal of Economics,* (33)4, 563-580.

Dahlberg, L. (2011). "Discourse Theory *as* Critical Media Politics? Five Questions." In *Discourse Theory and Critical Media Politics,* edited by L. Dahlberg and S. Phelan, 41-63. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Davies, W. (2017). *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty, and the Logic of Competition*. London: Sage.

Day, R.J.F. (2005). *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements.* London: Pluto Press.

Day, R.J.F. (2011). "Hegemony, Affinity and the Newest Social Movements at the End of the 00s." In *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, edited by D. Rousselle and S. Evren, 95-116. London: Pluto Press.

Day, R.J.F., and Montgomery, T. (2011). "Letter to a Greek Anarchist: On Multitudes, Peoples, and New Empires." In *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today: The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People,* 45-71. London: Routledge.

De Smet, B., and Bogaert, K. (2017). "Resistance and Passive Revolution in Egypt and Morocco." In *States of Discipline: Authoritarian Neoliberalism and the Contested Reproduction of Capitalist Order*, edited by C.B. Tansel, 211-233. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Dean, J. (2009). *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics.* London: Duke University Press.

Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1988). *A Thousand Plateaus*. London: Bloomsbury.

della Porta, D., Fernandez, J., Kouki, H., and Mosca, L. (2017). *Movement Parties Against Austerity.* Cambridge: Polity.

Dent, C. (2020). "Brexit, Trump and Trade: Back to the Late 19th Century Future?" *Competition and Change,* (24)3-4, 338-357.

Dourley, J. (2011). "Jung's Equation of the Ground of Being with the Ground of Psyche." *J. Anal. Psychol,* (56)4, 514-31.

Drolet, J., and Williams, M. (2018). "Radical Conservatism and Global Order: International Theory and the New Right." *International Theory*, (10)3, 285-313.

Dubilet, A. (2018). *The Self-Emptying Subject: Kenosis and Immanence, Medieval to Modern.* New York: Fordham University Press.

Dzalto, D. (2021). *Anarchy and the Kingdom of God: From Eschatology to Orthodox Political Theology and Back.* New York: Fordham University Press.

Eckhart, M. (1981). *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*. Mahwah: Paulist Press.

Eckhart, M. (1994). *Selected Writings.* London: Penguin.

Eisenstadt, N. (2019). "Sacrifice or Solipsism: Paradoxes of Freedom in Two Anarchist Social Centres." In *Anarchist Studies,* (27)1, 7-32.

Ellul, J. (1991). *Anarchy and Christianity.* Eugene: Wipf and Stock.

Ellul, J. ([1948]1989). *The Presence of the Kingdom.* Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard.

Ericson, R. (2008). "The State of Preemption: Managing Terrorism through Counter Law." In *Risk and the War on Terror,* edited by I. Amoore, and M. De Goede. 57-76. London Routledge.

Elden, S. (2013). "How Should we do the History of Territory?" *Territory, Politics, Governance,* (1)1: 5-20.

Elshtain, J. (2008). *Sovereignty: God, State and Self.* New York: Basic Books.

Esposito, L., and Perez, F.M. (2014). "Neoliberalism and the Commodification of Mental Health." *Humanity and Society*, (38)4, 414-442.

Esposito, R. *Two: the Machine of Political Theology and the Place of Thought.* New York: Fordham University Press.

Eyers, T. (2012). *Lacan and the Concept of the 'Real'.* London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Fagge, M., and Jackson, G. (2016). "The Godhead Beyond God and Proclus's Henads: A Reading of Eckhart's Trinity." *Medieval Mystical Theology,* (25)1, 57-68.

Featherstone, M. (2020). "Psychoanalysing the 21st Century: Introduction." *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law,* 33, 403-408.

Federici, S. (2019). *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Common.* Oakland: PM Press.

Feuerbach, L. (2008 [1881]). *The Essence of Christianity.* New York: Dover.

Fink, B. (2002). "Knowledge and Jouissance." In *Reading Seminar XX: Lacan's Major Work on Love, Knowledge, and Feminine Sexuality,* edited by S. Barnard and B. Fink, 21-45. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Fink, B. (1995). *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France 1977-1978.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Foucault, M. (2008). *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-1979.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Franks, B. (2007). "Post-Anarchism: A Critical Assessment." *Journal of Political Ideologies,* (12)2, 127-145.

Franks, B. (2011). "Post-Anarchism: A Partial Account." In *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, edited by D. Rousselle and S. Evren, 168-180. London: Pluto Press.

Freud, S. (1939). *Moses and Monotheism.* New York: Vintage Books.

Freud, S. (2008 [1927]). *The Future of an Illusion.* London: Penguin.

Freud, S. (2001 [1913]). *Totem and Taboo.* London: Routledge.

Friberg, J.H., and Sterri, E.B. (2021). "Decline, Revival, Change? Religious Adaptations among Muslim and Non-Muslim Immigrant Origin Youth in Norway." *International Migration Review,* (55)3, 718-745.

Galvan-Alvarez, E. (2017). "Why Anarchists Like Zen: A Libertarian Reading of Shinran (1173-1263)." In *Essays in Anarchism and Religion Volume I, edited by A. Christoyannopoulos and M. Adams,* 78-123. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press.

Gammon, E. (2010). "Oedipal Authority and Capitalist Sovereignty: A Deleuzoguattarian Reading of IR theory." *Journal of International Relations and Development,* (13), 354-377.

George, S. (2022). "The Lacanian Subject of Race: Sexuation, the Drive, and Racial Subjectivity." In *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory,* edited by S. George and D. Hook, 241-262. Abingdon: Routledge.

Glynos, J. (2001). "The Grip of Ideology: A Lacanian Approach to the Theory of Ideology." *Journal of Political Ideologies,* (6)2, 191-214.

Glynos, J., and Stavrakakis, Y. (2008). "Lacan and Political Subjectivity: Fantasy and Enjoyment in Psychoanalysis and Political Theory." *Subjectivity,* (24), 256-274.

Gonzalez, M. (2018). *The Ebb of the Pink Tide: The Decline of the Left in Latin America.* London: Pluto Press.

Grevatt, W.K. (2016). "Meister Eckhart and C.G. Jung: Mysticism, Individuation and the Transformation of the God-Image." *Psychological Perspectives,* (59)3, 391-401.

Grosz, E. (1990). *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction.* London: Routledge.

Grundmann, H. (1995). *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages.* Notre Dame: the University of Notre Dame.

Gullatz, S. (2010). "Constructing the Collective Unconscious." *J. Anal. Psychol,* (55)5, 691-714.

Halikiopoulou, D., and Vlandas, T. (2019). "What is New and What is Nationalist about Europe's New Nationalism? Explaining the Rise of the Far Right in Europe." *Nations and Nationalism,* (25)2, 409-434.

Hardt, M., and Negri, A. (2017). *Assembly.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hardt, M., and Negri, A. (2011). *Commonwealth.* London: Harvard University Press.

Hellstrom, A., Norocel, O. C., and Jorgensen, M. B. (2020). "Nostalgia and Hope: Narrative Master Frames across Contemporary Europe." In *Nostalgia and Hope: Intersections between Politics of Culture, Welfare, and Migration in Europe,* edited by O.C. Norocel, A. Hellstrom, and M.B. Jorgensen, 1-16. Cham: Springer.

Hobbes, T. (2017 [1651]). *Leviathan.* London: Penguin Books.

Hollywood, A. (2001). "Eckhart's Apophatic Ethics." *Eckhart Review,* (10)1, 35-46.

Hollywood, A. (2002). *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History.* London: University of Chicago Press.

Hollywood, A. (1995). *The Soul as Virgin Wife.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Hook, D. (2022). "Pilfered Pleasure: On Racism as 'the Theft of Enjoyment." In *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory,* edited by S. George and D. Hook, 35-48. Abingdon: Routledge.

Hunter, J.D. (1992). *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Control the Family, Art, Education, Law, and Politics in America.* New York: Basic Books.

Irigaray, L. (1985). *This Sex which is not One.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Jessop, B. (2016). *The State: Past, Present, Future.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Johnstone, S., Saridakis, G., and Wilkinson, A. (2019). "The Global Financial Crisis, Work and Employment: Ten Years on." *Economic and Industrial Democracy,* (40)3, 455-468.

Kangas, D. (2011). "Dangerous Joy: Marguerite Porete's Good-bye to the Virtues." *The Journal of Religion,* (3), 299-319.

Kapoor, I. (2014). "Psychoanalysis and Development: Contributions, Examples, Limits." *Third World Quarterly,* (35)7, 1120-1143.

Karamustafa, A. (1994). *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups 1200-1500.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

Khasnabish, A. (2010). *Zapatistas: Rebellion from the Grassroots to the Global.* London: Zed Books.

Kidwell, J.H. (2019). "Re-enchanting Political Theology." *Religions,* 10(10): 550-564.

Kinnvall, C., and Svensson, T. (2018). "Exploring the Populist 'Mind': Anxiety, Fantasy, and Everyday Populism." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations,* (24)3, 526-542.

Knapp, M., Flach, A., and Ayboga, E. (2016). *Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan.* London: Pluto Press.

Knapp, M., and Jongerden, J. (2014). "Communal Democracy: The Social Contract and Federalism in Rojava." *Comparative Islamic Studies,* (10)1, 87-109.

Kolbert, E. (2014). *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History.* London: Bloomsbury.

Kreitmeyer, N. (2019). "Neoliberal Co-optation and Authoritarian Renewal: Social Entrepreneurship Networks in Jordan and Morocco." *Globalizations,* (16)3, 289-303.

Kropotkin, P. (2014). *Direct Struggle Against Capital: A Peter Kropotkin Anthology,* edited by McKay, I. Edinburgh: AK Press.

Lacan, J. (1999). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge (Encore) Book XX.* New York: Norton.

Lacan, J. (1992). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis Book VII.* London: Routledge.

Lacan, J. (2007). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis Book XVII.* London: Norton.

Lacan, J. (1997). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Psychoses 1955-1956 Book III.* London: Norton.

Lacan, J. (2016). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Sinthome Book XXIII.* Cambridge: Polity.

Lacan, J. (2013). *The Triumph of Religion (Preceded by Discourse to the Catholics).* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Laclau, E., and Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics.* London: Version.

Landauer, G. (1983 [1911]). *For Socialism.* St Louis: Telos Press.

Landauer, G. (2010). *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader,* edited by G. Kuhn. Oakland: PM Press.

Lazzarato, M. (2017). *Experimental Politics: Work, Welfare, and Creativity in the Neoliberal Age.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Lazzarato, M. (2015). *Governing by Debt.* South Pasadena: Semiotext(e).

Lemke, T. (2016). *Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique.* London: Routledge.

Lerner, R. (2007 [1972]). *The Heresy of the* Free Spirit *in the Later Middle Ages.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Little, B. and Winch, A. (2021). *The New Patriarchs of Digital Capitalism: Celebrity Tech Founders and Networks of Power.* London: Routledge.

Locke, J. (2016 [1689]). *Second Treatise of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lugo-Ocando, J. (2020). *Foreign Aid and Journalism in the Global South: A Mouthpiece for Truth.* Oxford: Lexington Books.

MacDonald, E., (2018). "Integrative and Responsive Desires: Resources for an Alternative Political Economy." In *Psychoanalysis and the Global,* edited by I. Kapoor. 70-94. London: University of Nebraska Press.

MacCannell, J.F. (2016). "Lacan's Imaginary: A Practical Guide." In *Jacques Lacan: Between Psychoanalysis and Politics,* edited by S. Tomsic and A.Zevnik, 72-85. London: Routledge.

Maltz, D. (2011). "Living by Design: C.R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft and two English Tolstoyan Communities 1897-1907." *Victorian Literature and Culture,* (39)2, 409-426.

Mandelbaum, M. (2020). "'Making our Country Great Again': The Politics of Subjectivity in an Age of National-Populism." *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law,* (33), 451-476.

Marshall, P. (2011). "Introduction." In *Religious Anarchism: New Perspectives,* edited by A. Christoyannopoulos, xiii-xxii. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Marx. K., and Engels, F. (1998 [1893]). *The Communist Manifesto.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

May, T. (1994). *The Political Philosophy of Post-structuralist Anarchism.* University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

McGinn, B. (2001). *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart: The Man from Whom God Hid Nothing.* New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.

McGowan, T. (2016). *Capitalism and Desire: The Psychic Cost of Free Markets.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Mendes-Flohr, P. (2015). "Messianic Radicals: Gustav Landauer and Other German-Jewish Revolutionaries." In *Gustav Landauer: Anarchist and Jew,* edited by P. Mendes-Flohr and A. Mali, 14-44. Berlin: DeGruyter.

Moncayo, R. (2018). *The Signifier Pointing at the Moon: Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Muhammad Knight, M. (2013). *Tripping with Allah: Islam, Drugs, and Writing.* Berkeley: Soft Skull Press.

Nail, T. (2012). *Returning to Revolution: Deleuze, Guattari, and Zapatismo.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

New Revised Standard Version Bible. (2021).

Newman, S. (2004). "Interrogating the Master: Lacan and Radical Politics." Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/kerry-thornley-zenarchy [Accessed 5 July 2018].

Newman, S. (2014). "Occupy and Autonomous Political Life." In *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today: The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People,* 93-109. London: Routledge.

Newman, S. (2010). *The Politics of Postanarchism.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Newman, S. (2016). *Postanarchism.* Cambridge: Polity.

Newman, S. (2019). *Political Theology: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity.

Nyyssonen, H., and Metsala, J. (2020). "Liberal Democracy and its Current Illiberal Critique: The Emperor's new Clothes?" *Europe-Asia Studies,* (2), 273-290.

Orellana, P., and Michelsen, N. (2019). "Reactionary Internationalism: The Philosophy of the New Right." *Review of International Studies,* (45)5, 748-767.

O'Sullivan, R. A. (2006). "The School of Love: Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*." *Journal of Medieval History,* (32)2, 143-162.

Papais, V. (2019). "Introduction: Political Theologies of the International – the Continued Relevance of Theology in International Relations." *Journal of International Relations and Development,* (22), 269-277.

Parker, I. (2011). *Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Revolutions in Subjectivity.* London: Routledge.

Pauli, B. J. (2017). "The Catholic Worker, Dorothy Day, and Exemplary Anarchism." In *Essays in Anarchism and Religion: Volume I,* edited by A. Christoyannopoulos and M. Adams, 18-50. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press.

Peterson, E. (2011). *Theological Tractates.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Peterson, M. A., Feldes, S., and Sacha Cova, V. (2022). "Ayahuasca Calling: Sacredness and the Emergence of Shamanic Vocations in Peru and Denmark." *Anthropology of Consciousness*. (33)2: 255-278.

Pin, A. (2019). "The Transnational Drivers of Populist Backlash in Europe: The Role of Courts," *German Law Journal,* (20)2, 225-244.

Porete, M. (1993). *The Mirror of Simple Souls.* New York: Paulist Press.

Pound, M. (2008). *Zizek: A (Very) Critical Introduction.* Cambridge: Eerdmans.

Prentoulis, M. (2021). *Left Populism in Europe: Lessons from Jeremy Corbyn to Podemos.* London: Pluto Press.

Prichard, A. (2021). "Taking the State back out: Bringing Anarchism back in," *International Politics Reviews,* (9), 25-31.

Proudhon, P. J. (1989 [1851]). *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century.* London: Pluto Press.

Prugl, E. (2015). "Neoliberalising Feminism." *New Political Economy,* (20)4, 614-631.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Ratner, C. (2015). "Neoliberal Co-optation of Leading Co-Op Organisations, and a Socialist Counter-Politics of Cooperation." *Monthly Review,* (66)9, 18-30.

Regilme Jr. S. (2019). "The Decline of American Power and Donald Trump: Reflections on Human Rights, Neoliberalism, and the World Order." *Geoforum,* (102): 157-166.

Reinhard, K. (2014). "There is Something of One (God): Lacan and Political Theology." In *Theology after Lacan: The Passion for the Real,* edited by C. Davis, M. Pound, and C. Crockett, 150-165. Eugene: Cascade Books.

Reinhard, K. (2013). "Toward a Political Theology of the Neighbor." In *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*, edited by K. Reinhard, E.L. Santner, and S. Zizek, 76-133. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rewizorski, M. (2021). "Between Hyperglobalization and National Policy. Is there a way to Mitigate Populist Risks for Global Economic Governance in the Post-Covid-19 World?" *International Organizations Research Journal,* (16)2, 132-156.

Rioux, S. (2017). "The Right to Starve: Hunger, Discipline and Labour Market Restructuring under Authoritarian Neoliberalism." In *States of Discipline: Authoritarian Neoliberalism and the Contested Reproduction of Capitalist Order*, edited by C.B. Tansel, 87-106. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Rose, M. (2019). *A Theology of Failure: Zizek against Christian Innocence.* New York: Fordham University Press.

Rothenberg, M.A. (2022). "Raced Group Pathologies and Cultural Sublimation." In *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory,* edited by S. George and D. Hook, 146-162. Abingdon: Routledge.

Rousseau, J. (2004 [1762]). *The Social Contract.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rousselle, D. (2012). *After Post-Anarchism.* Berkeley: LBC Books.

Rousselle, D. (2017). *Lacanian Realism: Political and Clinical Psychoanalysis.* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Santner, E.L. (2013). "Miracles Happen: Benjamin, Rosenzweig, Freud, and the Matter of the Neighbor." In *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*, edited by K. Reinhard, E.L. Santner, and S. Zizek, 76-133. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schmitt, C. (2006 [1934]). *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Scholem, G. (1995 [1961]). *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism.* New York: Schocken Books.

Schurmann, R. (1973). "Heidegger and Meister Eckhart on Releasement." *Research in Phenomenology*, 3, 95-119.

Schurmann, R. (2001). *Wandering Joy: Meister Eckhart's Mystical Philosophy.* Great Barrington: Lindisfarne Books.

Sherry, P. (2009). "Disenchantment, Re-enchantment and Enchantment." *Modern Theology,* (25)3, 369-386.

Shooter, S. (2014). "How Feminine Participation in the Divine might Renew the Church and its Leadership." *Feminist Theology,* (22)2, 173-185.

Smith, B. (2019). "Citizenship without States: Rehabilitating Citizenship Discourse among the Anarchist Left." *Citizenship Studies,* (23)5, 424-441.

Snyder, G. (1961). *Buddhist Anarchism.* Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/gary-snyder-buddhist-anarchism [Accessed 5 June 2018].

Sparke, M. (2008). "Fast Capitalism/Slow Terror: Cushy Cosmopolitanism and ite Extraordinary Others." In *Risk and the War on Terror,* edited by L. Amoore, and M. De Goede. 133-157. London Routledge.

Stavrakakis, Y. (1999). *Lacan and the Political.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Stiegler, B. (2014). *The Re-Enchantment of the World: the Value of Spirit against Industrial Populism.* London: Bloomsbury.

Stirner, M. (2014 [1844]). *The Ego and His Own: The Case of the Individual Against Authority.* London: Verso.

Stuckler, D., Reeves, A., Loopstra, R., Karanikolos, M., and McKee, M. (2017). "Austerity and Health: The Impact in the UK and Europe." *European Journal of Public Health,* (27)4, 18-21.

Tansel, C. B. (2016). *States of Discipline: Authoritarian Neoliberalism and the Contested Reproduction of Capitalist Order.* London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Tejerina, B., Perugorria, I., Benski, T., and Langman, L. (2013). "From Indignation to Occupation: A New Wave of Global Mobilization." *Current Sociology,* (61)4, 377-392.

Thornley, K. (1991). *Zenarchy.* Available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/kerry-thornley-zenarchy [Accessed 5 July 2018].

Thorpe, J., Cannon, M., and Emili, S. (2019). "Empresas Recuperadas': Argentina's Recovered Factory Movement." *Case Summary 4, International Development Studies.* Brighton.

Tolstoy, L. ([1894] 2006). *The Kingdom of God is Within You.* New York: Dover.

Tormey, S. (2015). *The End of Representative Politics.* Cambrige: Polity.

Tsatsanis, E., and Teperoglou, E. (2016). "Realignment under Stress: The July 2015 Referendum and the September Parliamentary Election in Greece." *South European Society and Politics,* (21)4, 427-450.

Valdes, A. (2022). *Toward a Feminist Lacanian Left: Psychoanalytic Theory and Intersectional Politics.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Vaneigem, R. (1986). *The Movement of the Free Spirit.* New York: Zone Books.

Verhaeghe, P. (2002). "Lacan's Answer to the Classical Mind/Body Deadlock: Retracing Freud's *Beyond.*" In *Reading Seminar XX: Lacan's Major Work on Love, Knowledge, and Feminine Sexuality,* edited by S. Barnard and B. Fink, 109-139. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Verhaeghe, P. (1999). *Love in a Time of Loneliness: Three Essays on Drive and Desire.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Wapeemukwa, W. (2022). "Oedipal Empire: Psychoanalysis, Indigenous Peoples, and the Oedipus Complex in Colonial Context." In *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity and Psychoanalytic Theory,* edited by S. George and D. Hook, 83-102. Abingdon: Routledge.

Weber, M. ([1905] 2002). *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism and Other Writings.* London: Penguin.

Williams, D. (2019). "Eckhart's why and Heidegger's what: beyond subjectivistic thought to groundless ground." In *Mystical Theology and Continental Philosophy: Interchange in the Wake of God*, edited by D. Lewin, S.D. Podmore, and D. Williams, 147-163.

Wilson, J., (2018). "Anamorphosis of Capital: Black Holes, Gothic Monsters, and the Will of God." In *Psychoanalysis and the Global,* edited by I. Kapoor. 164-185. London: University of Nebraska Press.

Wixwat, M., and Saucier, G. (2021). "Being Spiritual but not Religious." *Curr Opin Psychol,* 40: 121-125.

Zizek, S. (2006). *How to Read Lacan.* London: Granta Books.

Zizek, S. (2001). *On Belief.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Zizek, S. (2012). *Organs without Bodies*. London: Routledge.

Zizek, S. (2017). *The Incontinence of the Void: Economico-Philosophical Spandrels.* London: the MIT Press.

Zizek, S. (1997). *The Plague of Fantasies.* London: Verso.

Zizek, S. (2003). *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Zizek, S. (1989). *The Sublime Object of Ideology.* London: Verso.