Metaphysical Anarchism

Ton Haarmans · Wide Open Windows



Almost every attempt to understand reality begins by looking for a ground. A first cause. A basic substance. A final law. Something that explains everything else without itself needing explanation.

Physics searches for fundamental forces. Philosophy searches for ultimate principles. Religion speaks of a creator, a source, a divine intelligence. Even everyday thinking quietly assumes that somewhere, beneath appearances, there must be something in charge.

Metaphysical anarchism names what becomes visible when that assumption no longer holds. Not as a belief, and not as a doctrine, but as a recognition: no first principle ever stabilizes as final. No ground remains ground. No explanation closes the field.

The word “anarchy” comes from the Greek anarkhia: without ruler, without first principle. In this sense, metaphysical anarchism does not argue that there is no order. It points to something subtler: that every order that appears does so without ultimate authorization.

Structures form. Laws operate. Worlds stabilize. But none of them carries its own foundation. Every principle that seems to explain everything else turns out to belong to the very world it was meant to ground.

This is not a new worldview replacing older ones. It is what becomes apparent when the search for a final worldview exhausts itself.

Not chaos, but groundlessness.

Metaphysics traditionally seeks what is most fundamental. Metaphysical anarchism points instead to the absence of anything that can occupy that role without remainder.

From this perspective, “first principles” are not discoveries of what ultimately is. They are tools of stabilization. They allow worlds to function, sciences to proceed, identities to cohere. They are effective. They are necessary. But they are never final.

Even causality, meaning, and purpose appear only within already-formed worlds. Reasons operate inside frames. Explanations presuppose what they explain. There is no place from which the whole can be secured.

In this sense, anarchy is not a future state and not a philosophical position. It is the existing condition of appearance itself. The fact that no frame can step outside the fact that it is a frame.

> “Questioning authority is the beginning of freedom of thought.”
>
> Robert Saltzman

Metaphysical anarchism does not tell us how to live. It removes the promise that life can ever be finally grounded. What remains is not despair, but intimacy:

worlds forming without warrant, meanings arising without mandate, explanations working without ultimate backing.

Order still appears. Knowledge still functions. Choices are still made. But none of it rests on a last foundation. Nothing is in charge of the whole. And no story can close what remains open.

Question everything. Including the frame in which that question appears.