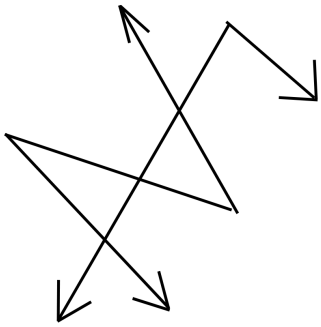
Revolting

Eco-Absurdist Rebellion

Julian Langer

By Julian Langer



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Eco-Absurdist Rebellion

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This text is dedicated to my love, Katie — I do not ask why you love me, but am joyous that you do!

Jarach's Introduction

In between reading and commenting and correcting the first draft and receiving the second, Julian asked me for an introduction to the text that now holds your attention. On one of those days my partner was doing some domestic chores and messaged me at work asking if there were some task she could do for me while she still had the energy and desire. "How about writing the introduction to Julian's manifesto?" The reply was immediate: "If I have to read it, I'll need a glass or two of wine." I thought about that for about a minute and sent her back this message: "Well, in keeping with the absurdist foundation of the text, it actually doesn't matter if you read it or not; in fact, an introduction to it might be even better if you know nothing about the content!"

Fortunately, or unfortunately (depending on how well you, the reader, feel about introductions and absurdist manifestos), I have read the text and feel like I'm in a decent position to provide a few comments and observations on it before you dive in.

Aside from the oft-quoted Camus, there are hints and echoes of – among others – Nietzsche and Stirner sprinkled throughout the text. Julian's project is not to create some Grand Synthesis of various European thinkers, however. This text is more like a product of philosophical foraging than academic rigor – and as a result is far more interesting and enjoyable.

In these post-Occupy days, when most anti-authoritarian social movements are under increased surveillance, attacks by various arms of the state (and erstwhile allies on the Left), and continue to retreat (even while acknowledging moments of irruptive and often inspiring resistance), the lure of pessimism can often lead – as it has in the past in similar situations – to nihilism or outright abandonment. A certain amount of pessimism is probably endemic to social movements anyway, especially among the more clear-headed. But it doesn't usually lead to abandoning The Struggle. Nihilism, though, even the most positive forms of it (see the Afterword for more on awkwardness and lack of clarity) often results in leaving the field of contestation. If the pessimist says, "we probably won't win, but let's try anyway," the nihilist might say, "I definitely won't win, so why bother?" Along comes Julian Langer, Eco-Absurdist, to pivot around the entire conversation and declare "we are all going to die, so let's go for it!"

The pessimist doubts that they can have much effect on larger social, political, and economic forces. The nihilist cares nothing for any particular outcome and may continue to pursue it regardless, but most likely won't. Julian shares with the pessimist the knowledge that saving badgers from culls won't end culling but knows it's still the right thing to do. He knows that the goal of ending badger culls is unattainable without the collapse of civilization, but persists, nonetheless. He knows that all badgers (Meles meles as well as Julian himself) will die no matter what anyone does but continues to help others to live. The eco-absurdist cares only that they are alive. Whether or not there might be a point to living is a discussion for another time.

Introduction, or Absurdity and Revolt

Why would anyone write a book like this? Why would anyone read a book like this? Why have I put myself to the task of writing this book? Why have you chosen to read this book? Différance and the Münchhausen trilemma render me suspicious of answers to *why?* questions. Taken seriously, causality seemingly ends with cosmological beginnings and imaginary first causes, events no living individual experienced, with uncaused causers – be they big bangs, gods or God. If there is no reason for Actuality/Being/The World/Life… then I see no reason needed for this book to be or be read, or to not be or not be read.

Yet I am alive. I have done what I have done and am doing what I am doing. I can attempt to justify my life and the choices I have made that are my freedom, with absurd reasons, but I am somewhat disinclined towards the notion of needing to justify myself, as it inspires feelings of revolt. Why write? Why read? Why not? Why fucking not? Given my choice to write or not write, I'm motivated by passions, hungers, desires, wants, and sensations that make sense to my experience, my Being and my Absurd Individuality, which I doubt any other individual can fully understand. I can look at a friend eating a sandwich that looks revolting and unappetising to me and wonder, *why are they eating that?* No doubt their absurd reasons would make sense to them, but to me they do not.

My experience of the world is that it is an unreasonable place. Rather than from any book of philosophy, I learned pessimism more through the death of my mother in my early childhood, my father's drug addiction, the abuses I experienced from family members and bullies at school, and the discovery in my late teens that I was born with a cancerous brain tumour, which very nearly was my death. I cannot make sense of the world, answer any question of "why?" nor find any reason for any of this. Camus states in *The Myth of Sisyphus* that the strangeness of the world is the absurd. To be without reason, but in absurdity and with absurd reasons, seems to me to exist in a confusing, unexplainable, and uncertain place. Shestov states in *All Things Are Possible* that the business of philosophy is to teach humans to live in uncertainty, not to reassure us, but to upset us. Thinking about the philosophy that I am attempting to communicate here, I notice that this is about space, place, environment, world, or ecology. Living-in-uncertainty-as-place and the absurd as the-strangeness-of-the-world-as-habitat are at the core of the philosophy that I am seeking to communicate here. I call this *eco-absurdism*.

While there are many well-known popular optimistic philosophies, there are few pessimistic philosophies and fewer that are very popular – Buddhism perhaps being the most popular pessimist philosophy. The main schools of pessimist philosophy, which I will be dealing with here in this introductory piece, are existentialism, Buddhism, nihilism, and absurdism. These all have various sub-schools and in all honesty, there are undoubtedly as many sub-schools as there are individuals who can be associated with the philosophies; so I will be generalising, stereotyping, and will be limited in my descriptions, in all the ways that I am limited – this is largely why writing about any-Thing is somewhat absurd, but fuck it, I'm doing this.

The pessimism that I see bringing these philosophies together begins with the affirmation of suffering: life involves pain, discomfort, disappointment, anxiety, and unpleasant experience; whatever you do, existence is not comfortable and is frequently unpleasant. Buddhism seeks to transcend this condition through non-attachment and belief in nirvana, while imposing a rational order to the world through the concept of karma – ultimately an effort to negate suffering, rendering Buddhism a form of negative hedonism.

Without an innate logical structuring to existence, the other three philosophies affirm (in varying intensities) an *irrationality* to Life, Existence, the World, Being, and virtually all that we can talk about

Existentialism seeks to transcend this irrationality through the *construction and creation of meaning* and reasoning and through human-made orderings. As with Buddhism, this effort in transcending irrationality and suffering strikes me as an effort in negativity.

Nihilism is a more honest pessimist philosophy than Buddhism and existentialism; it is *openly negative and a practice of negation.* Nihilism seeks to transcend irrationality and suffering either through the negation of self via suicide, either as ending Life or apathetic renunciation, or through the negativity of bombs and similar revolting violences.

What distinguishes *absurdism* from these other pessimisms is that there is no attempt to transcend and negate suffering and irrationality, but an *affirmation of the world as absurd* and of the choice to live here. The effort to transcend the absurd world through negation and negativity is not simply limited to the pessimist philosophies, but is *what civilisation does*: "forests precede civilisations and deserts follow them"; this is the negation of healthy habitat due to civilisation seeking to transcend the wild and untameable ecological-absurdity and environmental-unreasonableness.

Civilisation/Leviathan is a machinery of negation/annihilation, manifest in the loss of habitat and biodiversity, the erasure of cultures that do not conform to civilisation's designs, and the assimilation/annihilation of individuals who are deemed "undesirable." What is not assimilated within the totality, what does not conform to the rationality of ideology, and what does not embrace the Cause is looked upon as not having a reason to Live/Exist/Be.

I am revolted by the negativity that I see in this culture. Disgusting, nauseating, horrific, grotesque; these are all somewhat appropriate terms to describe the feeling, but *revolting* perhaps fits best. Being revolted is not a moral state, but an aesthetic encounter. I positively affirm an experience of revolt that is somewhat visceral, somewhat in the heart, and somewhat in the head – I might also notice certain muscles tensing or my breath changing its rate and depth. Being revolted by what is revolting is an experience of affect; I then choose if I revolt or not. To revolt is an existential and political activity, to rebel in affirmation of life. Revolting is to be-in-revolt; the-revolted in-revolt are revolting. Frére Dupont, in *Species Being and Other Stories*, asks "(w)hy don't people revolt against their conditions?" – as if individuals are not experiencing revolt, which is not something neither I, nor they, can know. When I read this question I feel something like boredom and disinterest. Any answer to the question would ultimately be absurd reasoning and I do not have any interest in it. Camus famously begins *The Myth of Sisyphus* by stating that the question of whether or not to commit suicide is the only real philosophical question – Camus was right, but backwards; I'd put the question as whether or not to embrace life. This question, with which we might begin this investigation of absurdist philosophy, is not a *why* question, and so does not sink into the potentially infinite abyss of causal reasoning and différance. Rather, it is "what are you doing," "what are you going to do," "what am I doing," and "what am I going to

do,"? – which are all far more interesting to me. The absurd answer is to embrace the life that is absurdity, with a passion that is equally absurd.

What am I doing? I am writing. I cannot say *why* I am writing; all reason is absurd to me and I feel revolted by the notion of needing to justify my choice to so. However, I can say something of my experience of how I got here. In saying how-I-got-here I am sharing the way I came to this place where I am now, and the means by which I navigated the absurd world I find myself living within. I have come from revolting places, into finding myself revolted, and now revolting – writing this is an act of revolt for me. Most of the autobiographical elements of this experience make their way into the pieces within this collection, but I will share something here as well.

In the months following the ending of my treatment for a pineal brain tumour and a couple of years before the ecological shift in my attention and interest, there was a period of my life where I felt (quite privately) suicidal. I was desiring transcendence. This flirtation with self-negation ended when I reread Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* and some Nietzsche that I had first read years before. The absurd life-affirmation that has been at the core of my activities since this period very much stems from that moment. Writing this book is something of re-turning and re-minding myself of/to this, which makes sense to me given the experiences I've had of late and the activities I have been engaged in. I have found myself revolted by much environmentalist, anarchist, and activist thought that I have encountered throughout my engagement with the discourse, particularly the pushes for transcendence and negation – this will come through intensely through the pieces within this collection.

I am here, amidst absurdity. I am revolted. I am revolting. I am in-revolt. I revolt, therefore the absurd is.

The Banality of Goodness and/or The Banality of Negation

1. The banality of evil – a term coined by Hannah Arendt – refers to how normal the terrible and terrifying was/is within the context of Leviathan – for Arendt, the Leviathan of post-WW2 western culture. Arendt coined the term as part of her description of observing Adolf Eichmann, who was a senior Nazi organizer of the Shoah. Rather than finding him to be a monster, she found him to be ordinary, which ultimately rendered the man more horrifying. The term could be applied to a great many terrible and terrifying machine-narratives/industrial-processes underway today. On multiple occasions, I have heard it used by anti-capitalists and leftists when recounting their experience of the horror they experience with the daily norms of Leviathan as it is now(ish). Were I inclined towards moral enframing, I could well describe the ordinariness of ecocide and speciescide, the relentlessness of too-fucking-late-crapitalism and mass-extinction machinery, as falling within the concept of the banality of evil – I certainly find this normality terrible and terrifying. But I do not have any desire to proclaim a moralising sermon about how evil all of this *is*, which would ultimately only serve as social performance, not really helping any living being and likely alienating those who do not consider themselves members of The Cause.

I have for many years, typically in face-to-face conversations, commented on the subject of *goodness* that I have little desire to be good. I will then list examples such as Nazis, Communists, Islamists, Christian colonialists and missionaries (among others), as examples of people who in all likelihood thought themselves as the good guys and doing *the good work*, but who engaged in acts that I find terribly ugly and revolting. I notice, more than anything else, how goodness can motivate some of the most hideous of abuses, which I aesthetically find repellent. The criticism of this position – that my references are not of those actually doing good or thinking that they were doing good – rests on two connected bad faith assumptions, which I do not believe: that these individuals were either passive entities caught up in narratives that they were unable to escape from, and(/or) that they knew that they were doing evil. I do not believe in villains who set out to do evil. Being socialised into morally dogmatic narratives renders most individuals inclined towards doing good; I am always suspicious and sceptical of claims of demonic figures who are out to do the bad things. Also, I do not believe in control, determinism, or causality. From an affirmation of freedom/wildness/ontological anarchy that is deeply uncomfortable to many (and myself on occasions), I do not believe that those engaged in hideous activities are entirely without choice – though of course choices can be without desirable options, deeply uncomfortable, difficult, and humiliating.

Not all acts of revolting goodness are as dramatic as the violent abuses of Marxist revolutionaries or repressive church agents. I have come to find myself increasingly revolted by the spectacle of inspirational advertising, ethical consumerist products, eco-industrialist narratives of green-technological assimilation into the machinery that is mass extinction, and the systematic sanitisation and recuperation of resistance via spectacles. This seemingly goes hand in hand

with the progressivist-ameliorist political optimism that serves as a tonic to the doomscroll spectacle of daily news media. Photos and videos of those suffering under war, alongside seemingly endless statistics regarding carbon emissions and global temperatures, soothed by the knowledge that the oat milk mocha was made with ethically sourced beans and poured into a cup made from recycled materials. State-approved protests (that in no way disrupt daily productivity and industry) enable individuals to occupy positions of having done *the good work*, because in more ways than not, *they have* – with goodness functioning as a cultural narrative that maintains normative abuse.

I am largely in agreement with Žižek in his criticisms of ethical consumerism and the notion that there is something desirably meaningful in the assimilation of anti-capitalism into productivity; though I have not yet encountered him critiquing this as fully and destructively(-as-deconstructing) as I find this spectacle of goodness to warrant. Žižek's criticism falls short in that it ultimately ends with something akin to "it is not enough to take the bad and put the good into it; we must reconstruct society so that it is fully good, without the bad" – which brings me back to the second paragraph of this piece. This amounts to an optimistic appeal for good industrialism, just simply without the badness that is capitalism. With this ideological posturing, which is little more than common Leftism, the colossally negative (in that it requires an immense amount of annihilation to manufacture) good industrialism is left unchallenged.

There is an ordinariness to the goodness of industrial annihilation and ethical consumerist spectacles, which I find horrifying, terrible, and revolting. The banality of good, with the negativity that *the good work* involves, is – within the spectacle today – arguably more dangerous than the banality of evil, though these are largely inseparable. The negativity of those actions that are approved of within socio-cultural-normative-functioning are a different-but-still-abusive form of negativity than those often classified as *evil*. I am left finding myself revolted by the entirety of this supposed dialectical dualism of good and evil. I want no part in this totalitarian presence of negativity/negation/annihilation.

I now find myself thrust into an awareness of the banality of negation and a feeling of deeply intense sorrow and sadness for how ordinary and normal the annihilation of living beings and wild habitats is within this too-fucking-late-crapitalist death camp. Culls, clear cuts, oceanic dead zones, factory farms, and industrial crop production – examples of normal everyday negations that come to mind. The annihilation of dissenters, rebels, and others who contradict the narratives of normal industrial productivity horrify me. Negativity in these senses strikes me as actual cancel culture, and is far more revolting than liberal political correctness; though the negativity of individuals seeking to convert others into their lifestyle from a position of "my way is the good way" revolts me too. How I respond to finding myself surrounded by techno-productive machinery and narratives of negation is by embracing a mad and absurd positivity as rebellion. This positivity is entirely different from what is often called "toxic positivity," which I'd call happy-face negativity, in that this positivity involves affirming the sadness that inspires revolt and rebellion. From this I become a weirdness amidst a normal negativity, which I thoroughly enjoy.

2. The banality of negativity is something that I see within the posturing of edgy nihilists and the those who seek to push negativity and negation as the basis of praxis for rebels, activists, and revolters. That the leftist reaction to the Kaczynski-inspired eco-extremist ideology and project Individuals Tending Towards Savagery (ITS) was one of shock and horror amazes me to this day. Bombings and indiscriminate killing are, sadly, very normal within this culture and have been

embraced often and readily by Marxist-type leftist projects. That the push by leftists was to seek to negate eco-extremism from the conversation struck me as reactive and not helpful in the revolt against the machinery of negation. The eco-extremist project is banal, boring, and unoriginal. It is little more than pernicious do-goodism; the posture of immoralism works on the same level as the Satanist "God is bad" and, like Satanists, seek to do *the good work* of boring and banal negativity.

Another example of a thoroughly boring and unoriginal nihilism can be found in the writings and praxis of Flower Bomb, whose nihilism amounts to little more than vegan ethical consumerism. In a context where veganism is being mass marketed, advertised, and spectacularised to the point of being utterly revolting, I see little to nothing of authentic and sincere rebellion in the praxis advocated by Flower Bomb. They make the claim that "vegan means attack," in their essay with that as the title, while in no way even suggesting how being vegan attacks anything. Given that dehabitation, rampant use of pesticides, and other forms of cull-negativity all still occur within the context of industrial vegan food production, I fail to see how veganism by itself signifies anything like sincere and authentic anti-speciesism, as Flower Bomb advances. Like eco-extremism, Flower Bomb's nihilism is boring, unoriginal leftism, though more liberal and less Marxian. Their puritanical moralistic appeals merely point to doing *the good work*.

3. Living amidst the banality of goodness and negation and good-negativity – and not becoming assimilated – requires a praxis of differentiation, rebellion, and response-ability. My rebellion against this banality is one of revolting-positivity, positivity-in-revolt, absurd and rebellious life-affirmation. Revolting positivity is revolting in the sense that it is disgusting, grotesque, and unappealing, and it is revolting in the sense that it is rebellious, refusing, and non-conformist. As positivity-in-revolt, this practice involves a refusal to embrace the toxic negativity that is often framed as *positive thinking* within this culture – the just-keep-smiling refusal to affirm what is deeply and painfully uncomfortable. To say that we are living in a mass extinction event and a totalitarian death camp is to positively affirm a revolting presence in the world. It is not negative to say that the situation is worsening; saying it is worsening is to say "yes, it is worsening," with yes-saying being positive affirmation. The automatic response to the revolting-positivist affirmation that the situation appears extremely dire, is frequently that of (not always in these words) "nah, it's all good"-type toxic-negativity; this is the general response of individuals who embrace politically optimistic ideologies like progressivism, Marxism, transhumanism and neo-fascism – revolting positivity is politically pessimistic, if authentic and sincere.

Anti-cull rebellion and guerrilla gardening are practices of revolting positivity. They are revolting to those who see badgers, squirrels, boar, wildflowers, and other living beings as pests and weeds that need to be annihilated/negated. They are revolting practices in that they are a rebellion that affirms the lives of the living and seeks to encourage life. Revolt, in this sense, is both political and existential. Politically, revolting positivity is a refusal to conform to the narratives of banal negativity. Existentially, revolting positivity is an affirmation of life and commitment to the preservation of life, with an awareness of the absurdity of this endeavour, as death is inevitable, like gravity is invariant. As an absurd act of life affirmation, any activity that is a refusal to conform to the systems of this death culture is revolting positivity.

Revolting positivity offers flavours that are a mixture from sad-disappointment, into bitter-anger, that in turn passes into something playful and sweet. Like eating a wild food that did not taste quite as delicious as you'd anticipated, revolting positivity is sadly disappointing at first. You then experience an anger that it does not taste as delicious as you'd have hoped and that there

are not more tasty wild foods where you live. Finally, as you're chewing and starting to enjoy the flavours in your mouth, revolting positivity becomes sweet and enjoyable. It is saddening and angering that wolves and bears and other large predators were culled to extinction on this archipelago, with badgers being the largest wild predators left. There is also a sweetness about the presence of badgers. When I think of this archipelago as having been covered in rainforest, I taste sadness and bitter anger for the deforestation and dehabitation. I experience this as revolt. Then, when I see wildflowers and plants called weeds whose lives are revolt and rebellion before this culture, I taste the sweetness of revolting-positive affirmation. The flowers and weeds are not rainforest, but are a presence of resurgent rebellion and resistance, which brings me joy. The intense heat the past few summers have rendered me tasting the sadness and anger of revolt towards the techno-industrial-agricultural machinery that has birthed global warming. I have experienced the glorious sweetness of revolting positivity over the rain that has fallen here today and over recent days, that have rendered life cooler and provided hydration to where I live. Yes, this affirmation is absurd; global warming remains. This positivity appears grotesque, disturbing, and revolting to the miserablists populating environmentalist discourse and practice. They have no appreciation for sweetness.

As revolting positivity is positivity-in-revolt and not the toxic positivity of seeking to negate aspects of ourselves so that we appear awakened, good, spiritually elevated, or whatever else; revolting positivity grows from the fertile ground of honesty and integrity. Revolting positivity starts from the honesty of "I am revolted by the abuses, ruination, and annihilation I see in the world" and into the integrity of "although it is absurd, I want to live and care for those who live." Following from Camus' claim that integrity has no need for rule, I consider revolting positivity to be somewhere beyond good and evil. It strikes me as subscending morality – being psychically underneath moralistic appeals for life affirmation, even those made by negativity fetishisers. This leaves us within the ambiguous realm of uncertainty, which is far less clear than "this is good/bad." Thrown into this ground of bewilderness, as John Moore called it, the best I can do is describe my experience of this space, my wishes and desires, and care for those I meet as best as I am able to respond. This is my response-ability, responsibility, and freedom.

My Gender Nihilism

I notice myself as a body amidst bodies. There is flesh and I am flesh. Contact with the flesh of a body I find myself in relationship with – a handshake, a hug, eye contact – I hear sounds they are making, a kiss, a punch, making love. My awareness of bodily presence is undeniable. I have a penis. Maybe they also have a penis. Maybe they do not have a penis. Does this matter? Why does it matter? I just want to play. Why, on the playground, does it matter if you're a girl or a boy?

The spectacle of woman-being and man-being is immense. Images upon images and images of images, of men-as-men and women-as-women. These are desirable. These are strong. These are weak. These are empowered. These are laughable.

This is all confusing to a child and to this adult.

What am I? What object-type is this me that I am? When looked upon, am I first seen as "man," "male," "guy"? How much importance do I place on the gaze of others for my sense of self or identity? Am I defined by biologists? Am I defined by queer theorists? Am I defined by any Other? I have a penis between my legs, but what does that organ signify beyond how I piss or achieve orgasm? Am I a "real man"? What is a "real man"? What is man-kind and what is a kind man?

I do not come from a family with masculine butch manly men. My mother's father fits the description of masculine best. He had been in the US navy and was a grumpy bullying man. I never had much relationship with my mother's extended family, but had too much relationship with her abusive parents. I experienced my father and his side of the family differently – they were the largest part of my family experience through my childhood, which still was not much. The masculine cliché of shallow and easily shattered pride was a continually noticeable trait of the men I encountered on my father's side of the family. While much of my anti-patriarchy education and study have intensified my dislike for the socially normative concept of "man," I am also aware that my experiences of men within my family were fertile soil for these feelings to grow.

Despite disliking the stereotypical cliché of "man," I do not feel anything like misandrous intolerance or rejection. Rather, like how I notice myself wounded and scarred by male socialisation, I see those trying to be men living with wounds and scars acquired through the performance of being-a-man. My general disposition is one of caring towards individuals I find myself in relationship with, and this is intensified when I notice their pains and suffering – this coming in no small part from the intense pains and terrible sufferings I have experienced throughout my life. To see these wounds and scars and respond with misandrous hatred or intolerant rejection feels utterly revolting. I feel an absurd desire to heal all men of these wounds and scars that I notice and destroy the patriarchal machinery that I see as the origins of these mutilations. This is an absurd desire, as I am aware of my limits and responsibility/response-ability/freedom. It is also absurd because it is existentially ridiculous to seek to make a decision for another, especially one

in the context of healing; I cannot presume to know the desires of others who I see as wounded by male socialisation.

My attention is drawn towards gender nihilism, what that means for me, what it does not mean to me, and what it might mean to others. Alyson Escalante's original anti-manifesto *Gender Nihilism* is a work that I greatly appreciate – their political-pessimism, anti-humanism, and desire for the abolition of gender all harmonise with my perspectives and wants. However, on every occasion I have engaged with the text I have been left wondering "what comes after the negativity?" They answered this in the follow-up piece *Beyond Negativity* with materialism, communism, and appeals to movement building, I was left in despair. The beyond-negativity of the original essay was seemingly nothing more than the banal negativity of Marxist political systematising — a great purge before a cultural revolution. I felt revolted by gender nihilism being assimilated into the Cause of totalitarianism, signifying nothing of going-beyond-negativity, but stuck in toxic negativity. This feeling of revolt towards assimilation-into-totalitarianism is a real presence within me and one that I actualise (as best I can and imperfectly) in my daily rebellions. My gender nihilism is an imperfect rebellion.

Thinking of gender as an affliction upon my body, I think of gender largely as a cancer; as a disease of civilisation within me that I am always fighting. When I was a brain tumour patient I desired the negation of the tumour that was growing inside me and had the potential to kill me; through surgeries and radiation therapy the tumour and its growth was negated. With my seeking to negate gender within my being, to end this other cancer within me I am rebelling against gender norms, gender expectations, and gender stereotypes. Like how my internal body is continually fighting cancers as best it can, I am continually rebelling against gender as best I can. Just as I am unable to rid the world of cancer and believe that no system or program can or will be able to rid the world of cancer, I am unable to rid the world of gender and am not able to envisage a system or program ridding the world of gender. The negation of the tumour was the negation of what would have negated me, which I see as a form of positive-revolt – I described negating-negativity as weird-positivity in *Feral Iconoclasm.* I know that surviving cancer was in many ways absurd, since I will eventually die anyway. Through surviving, I have embraced more of the pains and sufferings that being alive involves; I see my gender nihilism as an absurdist praxis, as I know that for all my rebelling and attempting to non-conform, I will still be gendered and experience the pains and sufferings that involves.

Continuing with gender-as-affliction, I am re-minded of my desire for beyond-negativity, that is, not toxic-negativity. When I was recovering from cancer treatment, beyond-negativity was the wonderful healing folk-anarchy of loving relationship, music, light exercise, self-empowerment-through-rewilding and, ultimately, healing. These experiences incline me towards this praxis for healing the wounds of gender. I have also found myself instinctually drawn towards ecofeminist praxis, particularly the emphasis on healing, wildness, and on the affirmation of existing wounds from seeking to survive patriarchal machinery — for many years I have considered my projects to be anti-His-story/anti-history. My healing process is not finished, nor will it ever really be; taking care of health is an activity that being-alive forces the living to embrace should they not wish to embrace being-dead. The cancer of gender exists within me and it survives, largely due to the environmental conditions of civilisation. But I rebel. As I am revolted by gender, my rebellion is absurd, life-affirming, and metaphysical. I want to heal, knowing that I will die regardless of all the healing that I do throughout my life. I want to live and live well, with feelings of wellness. While I cannot heal other individuals, I want to help others in their healing – my instinct is

drawn towards the healing experiences I encountered beyond the negativity of cancer treatment as something of medicine-practice; this is equally absurd, but still one I desire.

My gender nihilism is a praxis of revolting-positivity, and paradoxically is where I want to end this affirmation of my will-to-heal/life/power. As I articulated within my book *Feral Consciousness*, gender is not Real, but exists as a socially performed Reality. This posed a paradox that I failed to account for adequately whilst writing it. This paradox is one that I feel the Maya-paradox enframes well; gender is not Real, but exists as a Reality, which is not Real, but nevertheless exists. Thinking about this within the context of cancer, the brain tumour that existed within me existed, but was not a Real part of me, as it was a corrupted and mutated Thing, born from the environmental conditions of civilisation. Using this paradox to think about gender as a cancerous wound within my being, gender is a Reality that exists within me and that is imposed upon me by civilisation/Leviathan/Moloch. But it is not a Real aspect of me, in the same way that my eyes, hands, heart, lungs, and penis are all Real aspects of me. From this meditation, if only for the moment, I have iconoclastically destroyed gender from my being and I experience that as healing revolting positivity.

Domestication and Kafka

1. In a small collection of techno-pessimist writings that I invited a handful of friends to contribute to, called *Daedalus Fails*, there is an essay written by Artxmis Graham Thoreau (AGT), on the subject of domestication. AGT's piece is motivated by the affirmation that they begin the piece with, that "Anarcho-Primitivism has not sold the idea of domestication effectively." They then share their desire that the essay be the start of a conversation, which I am seeking to continue here with this piece of writing.

My intention is to respond to the subject of domestication not from a dialectical attempt to negate an anti-thesis or synthesise a contradiction within a thesis – I find the dialectical method to largely be the method of totalitarianism and have no desire to embrace it. Anarcho-primitivism, due primarily to Zerzan taking influence from Adorno, largely relies on the method of negative dialectics. My instinct is that this goes a significant way towards accounting for why I see anarcho-primitivism as limited. As a different conversational approach to that of dialectics, I am choosing to approach this with an intention of gestalt-dialogue, as a phenomenological response rather than an attempt at analysis. I write this with an awareness that my intention to be non-dialectical, and my revolt towards dialectics, will be revolting for individuals who prefer that method. Those of a socialist-revolutionary-left orientation will no doubt be particularly revolted, since Marx's Hegelianism has rendered dialectics a popular fetish amidst that ideological collective.

To respond to AGT's invitation to conversation, I revisited some writings by anarcho-primitivists on the subject of domestication. I have chosen to focus on Four Legged Human's *The Wind That Roars Ferociously*, Kevin Tucker's *Suffocating Void* and Renzo Connors' *Thoughts on Domestication and Wildness*. There were two main observations I made whilst reviewing these pieces. The first observation was that of noticing a focus on separation. The second observation was with regards to the epistemology embraced and subsequent methods of escape.

Separation is a theme that Connors applies to domesticated individuals, those he considers to be separated from wildness – "Only a tiny percentage of humans that inhabit the earth still live wild, free, and living autonomously. The rest are imprisoned within the concrete and metal structures of techno-industrial society." The theme of actual-separation in non-ecological thinking seems to extend largely from the dialectical approach employed by anarcho-primitivists.

If wildness is the thesis and civilisation is the anti-thesis that is seeking to negate the thesis, then the logic of separation works. But this idea of separation strikes me as intensely de-ecological; the main affirmation of ecological thought is that all individual living beings are, in a multiplicity of differentiating ways, connected and in relationship. In *Feral Consciousness* I sought to affirm that the Reality of Separation is an illusion, which for me fits the Maya paradox of being a Reality that exists, but is not Real. Individuals believe it is Real, as this is what this culture teaches, and they internalise this dialectic. This internalisation is something that Kevin Tucker speaks of – "the domestication process lies in its ability to be internalized" – but seems to have internalised intensely himself, as has Connors and most other within the ideology. As such,

the anarcho-primitivist conception of domestication falls for the illusion that civilisation is built upon and thus fails to adequately provide anything enabling an ability to respond to it. It is not a freeing perspective, but one of bad faith, creating a Reality tunnel where wildness has been truly lost. This is the main failure of anarcho-primitivist thought and why I have never fully embraced the tendency.

My second observation regarding the anarcho-primitivist concept of domestication is that of epistemology and how much that plays into the notion of what I see as escapism. Anarcho-primitivists continually use anthropological and historical accounts, which come largely from academic institutions, megamachines producing data for statist-corporatist purposes. This is then positioned as a means of escape, as Four Legged Human does: "Today we have the historical and anthropological knowledge to lead us out of the despair created by 10,000 years of domestication." The positioning of anthropology and history as the knowledge that enlightens "us" to what domestication is, and the pathway out is one of the weakest aspects of anarcho-primitivist thought. Anthropological and historical reconstruction follows the choreographical designs of others, which have been reverse-engineered by so-called experts. This does not inspire anything within me for desirable revolt. The practice is also largely not relevant to me, within the habitat where I live, which, after several thousand years of empire and domestication, has no indigenous culture to draw from. Perhaps in other environments, with surviving indigenous cultures, there is more value to the practice. But I would question why any individual would seek to learn from anthropologists and historical records, rather than asking indigenous individuals who are open to guiding individuals in their praxis. But even then, what does this escapism really mean when considered ecologically, as it looks like just separation mythology and all the de-ecological non-sense that goes with that.

In a way that is neither complete rejection nor embrace, I feel revolted by primitivist thought. Rather I feel revoltingly positive, as I would wish from dialogic-praxis – inspired to rebel further and able to affirm the difference in praxis, without any push to negate.

2. My attention is brought to the matter of domestication and the conversation of what it is and whether or not it is desirable. My intention is to affirm stories that are intended as stories – rather than stories that are intended as objective-truthfully true knowledge that is objective – as a means of communicating and having a conversation on the subject of domestication. Stories that I reference include Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and Quinn's *Ishmael* books and character. These are stories that I value and appreciate for being works on domestication and being-animal, which I find beautiful. Here I focus on Kafka's *A Report to an Academy* and the chimpanzee narrator, who is giving a report to a group of academics on their capture, domestication, and education in learning to speak.

The aspects of *A Report to an Academy* that I am choosing to focus on here are "(w)hatever memories I might have had closed themselves off from me more and more"; "(p)ress yourself against a bar behind you till it almost slices you in half, you won't find a reason for that either"; "(n)o, it wasn't freedom I was after. Just a way out…"; "…there were two possibilities open to me: zoo or variety theatre."

"(w)hatever memories I might have had closed themselves off from me more and more"

These words hit me with a deep and powerful affirming sadness on each occasion I read them. They bring to my mind "the great forgetting" that is a part of the philosophy that Quinn articulates in his *Ishmael* stories. The great forgetting is the no-longer (re-)membering of being-wildlife, the core wound of domestication. Kafka's chimpanzee's memories, their membering amidst the

wild world, becoming closed off to them, strikes me as utterly revolting. What I notice most intensely though is how much memory is a psychological phenomenon and how much it is about psychic-relationality. This suggests that at the core of healing the wounds of domestication, if domestication is forgetting, is remembering/(re-)membering. This brings my attention to *Metamorphosis*, Kafka's most famous work, and how well he depicts the pains and struggles of becoming-animal and being-animal that this (re-)membering has the potential to involve: the rejection experienced by family and friends, being viewed as something revolting, which has the potential to inspire hostility and violence in conformity with domesticating-negation.

"(p)ress yourself against a bar behind you till it almost slices you in half, you won't find a reason for that either"

The push for reasons is one of the biggest discomforts I've felt with explanations of why civilisation was built, why we are here as we are, the historisations of how Leviathan came to be as it is. More than the inauthenticity of claimed knowledge – given that no living individual has any experience of the events that lead to the rise of civilisation, nor most of the historical construction of Leviathan – I am mostly revolted by what strikes me as the attempt to transcend the unreasonableness of this machinery and these cages. Like Kafka's chimpanzee, I find no reason for any of this, and am revolted by the Causes used to justify the negativity, violence, and abuse. The truth of my authentic experience is that Leviathan's absurdity is an unreasonable presence. I find it revolting.

"(n)o, it wasn't freedom I was after. Just a way out …"

In this quote Kafka's chimpanzee embraces the attempted renunciation of freedom that I see as a huge part of Leviathan's humanising process, through seeking a way out: Leviathan as attempted escape from wildlife. In this context domestication means the attempt to seek a way out as separation. In becoming-humanised, the chimpanzee embraces the inside-outside illusion of separation, which is understandable, given the de-ecological context of the cage they found themselves within.

Most of the Causes and ideologies that I have encountered espouse seeking-ways-out, with little embrace of freedom. Libertarians are seeking ways out of relationship with government through systematising worlds without government, rather than embracing revolt in the context of a world where governments exist. Socialists are seeking ways out of relationship with capitalism through systematising industrial narratives without capitalism, rather than seeking to revolt within this world where capitalism exists. Greens are seeking ways out of climate change through systematising technological and legal fixes to survive global warming, rather than revolting against this Leviathan that has birthed global warming and is fuelling its growth. Desertionists, nihilists, and escapists of post-left anarchist orientations are seeking ways out of this Leviathan through all manner of different pathways, rather than revolting against Leviathan in the here and now. As with Kafka's chimpanzee, I can appreciate this effort in seeking-ways-out. But I don't believe in ways out; I see escapism as life-renouncing psychic/philosophical suicide (if not actual suicide), so I cannot embrace this praxis. I am freely choosing to embrace the absurd-freedom of revolt against what I find revolting here and now.

"… there were two possibilities open to me: zoo or variety theatre"

The zoo or variety theatre – these options, which Kafka's humanised chimpanzee considers, symbolise the possibilities offered within domestication: imprisonment or the performance of participating within Leviathan. This is one of the most severe lies of domestication. You either participate in the performance of being-human-as-participating-in-productivity-and-industry, or

you are caged, put in prison, until you are broken and willing to conform. But life includes far more potentialities than just these, many terrible and many wonderful. The horror of freedom is not that it is absent but that there are so many potential choices to make. So many undesirable options are easier, with quick rewards that require little embrace of responsibility/response-ability/freedom; desirable options, within the context of Leviathan, are frequently the harder choices. In embracing the domestication of humanisation, Kafka's chimpanzee has renounced revolt and does so by embracing variety theatre.

3. Does Kafka's story provide a full analytical account of domestication? No. But it does provide a story that is far more impactful than the majority of anarcho-primitivist writings. Storytelling is largely needed in healing from domestication – it is a huge part of the sharing of experience, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of those who do not live within Leviathan. Storytelling is a wonderful means of dialogic-practice, an alternative to dialectical-analyses that seek to negate or assimilate. The sharing of stories contains the potential for being-with-difference. This is largely what has inspired my efforts in my eco-absurdist short stories.

As I end this piece, I am wondering about the stories of domestication and anti-domestication that might live out in the world and what revolts they might inspire and how revolting they might be.

My Rebellion Against Work, and Thoreau

During the 2021 Manchester Anarchist Bookfair, when I was tabling beside my soon-to-be publisher Forged Books, I interrupted a conversation where they were encouraging the attendee to read Bob Black's *The Abolition of Work*. As a teenager I appreciated Black's writings, but without thinking and out of a lack of appreciation for what value was being affirmed in the essay, I interrupted by stating that there are other, better, anti-work Situationist and post-Situationist writings. My friend Llew combatted my interruption by stating that the essay still has its place and is worth reading for Black's humour regardless, leaving me feeling slightly embarrassed but agreeing. When I was journeying home and reflecting on that moment, I found feelings of embarrassment returning, not for the interruption, but for not including Henry David Thoreau as an example of better anti-work thought. I contemplated writing a piece on Thoreau's anti-work aesthetic, but put it to the back of my mind and largely forgot about doing it. Now, after finding myself somewhat frustrated with the work I have been engaged in in recent months and the aches and pains I have been experiencing, this unwritten piece has come back to my attention, and I find myself writing.

I will say now that my anti-work rebellion, while coming from a similar feeling of revolt towards serving industry, looks very different to that of those who embrace the practice of freeganism and/or illegalism. My choice to not embrace either of these practices comes in no small part from both seemingly requiring too much effort and ultimately being hard work, with the added lack of desire to find myself in prison. The choice is not hard for me to make. My mind now turns to friends who have used state welfare programs as a means of practicing anti-work rebellion. While I appreciate why these friends, particularly those with young children, chose this means of avoiding the banality of pointless labour and meaningless jobs, I would personally feel revolted were I to find myself in such a dependent relationship with the state.

While there are many opponents of the work-machine whose writings are valuable and worth affirming – Albert Libertad and Zo d'Axa immediately spring to mind – Thoreau is without doubt the individual whose thought on the subject I most appreciate and whose praxis was most similar to what mine is today. My first readings of Thoreau were as a teenager, done as quickly as possible and from a computer screen, meaning that I had no real appreciation of what I had read. I then reread *Walden* and *Walking* during the period of my life that led up to writing my first book, and over the years I reread *Civil Disobedience* and have read and reread several other pieces, most significantly *Life Without Principles*.

"Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life?"

"I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well." **Life Without Principles**

One of the most significant impacts of my experience being a brain tumour patient and survivor is that I have been intensely committed to not feeling like I am wasting my life experience. Creating music, organising community music events, studying, writing, publishing, exercising, defending and caring for living beings, meditation, and personal healing are amongst those ac-

tivities that I have engaged in, which have frequently involved great difficulty, but have been of intense value and are existentially satisfying. I would not call these activities *work*, despite the efforts taken to engage in them; I have done my best to keep these out of industry and productivity – though there are definite connections, in the sense that there is no escape, no separation, and all is connected.

The industriousness and productivity of individuals I have known and cared for has frequently been horrifying to witness. Several years ago, a friend of mine, to pay off debts, was working night shifts and overtime at a pharmaceutical packaging factory and during this period he was a wreck. My brother, who has lived away from this archipelago for the majority of his adult life, upon his occasional returns, would spend long hours at his laptop, fixated by his work, and unable to engage with those around him. I have managed, for the majority of my employed experiences, to avoid employment where the main activity was revolting; when working in care, not mentally well, and seeking to support houses in crisis, I ended up one month working two 80-hour weeks by doing too many back-to-back 16-hour shifts.

As a result of industry slowing down due to the global COVID pandemic and many individuals not participating in the workforce, it did not surprise me that anti-work became an increasing topic of conversations. The existential vacuum and intolerable conditions that inhere in the modern workforce became clearly revolting to many who now refuse work. A great many of these COVID-inspired anti-work advocates make claims that it is simply capitalism that is at fault and that under socialism things would be better; but given what I have learnt of the 9/9/6 working hours in China (individuals are at work from 9am to 9pm 6 days a week), and the Tangpingist rebellion against work, such claims are clearly nonsense. Individuals who propose technological developments and automation as solutions to the horrors of the work-machine strike me as equally nonsensical. Two other observations by Thoreau come to my mind: humans have become the tool of their tools, and invention is just improved means to unimproved ends.

The work-machine is such a waste of life; it is utterly revolting. The occasions when I found myself in existentially valueless employment, just to make money for the purpose of engagement with the system, were self-renouncing to a point that I look back and feel horrified by my choosing to embrace it. I am glad that these have been few and not for long, and also that I can glean some value as experience that reminds me that I find such experiences revolting. The colleagues I encountered in those settings who were most well-assimilated into the systems were amongst the most tame, boring, and uninteresting individuals. Naturally, I would seek out relationship with the more brilliant and rebellious individuals I could find for purposes of workplace solidarity and support. During the few months I worked in a call centre, I found great pleasure in the friendships I made with an anarchist parkour athlete and a queer individual from Ireland. I enjoyed intentionally irritating the office bullies and embracing the practice that Alejandro de Acosta describes as wilful incompetence. I sucked the most life I could from that experience through revolt, because, as Albert Libertad said, revolt is life! The call centre was the longest period of finding myself in such an existentially barren employment; I am committed to not returning to such revolting work.

"You must get your living by loving."

"It is remarkable that there is little or nothing to be remembered written on the subject of getting a living: how to make getting a living not merely honest and honourable, but altogether inviting and glorious; for if getting a living is not so, then living is not." **Life Without Principles**

One of the things that I have consistently appreciated about Thoreau's anti-work philosophy is how much I have found him to affirm activity to make a living. All living beings must engage in activity of some sort or another to live – I deeply appreciate Massumi's affirmation of life-as-activism/living-as-unrest. Even activities such as recovering, relaxing, sleeping, lazing, pausing, and idleness are activities, though generally ones of seeking to replenish energies for the purposes of more intense activities – I know that I need all of these to be able to make a living and live. When I was closest to death, during cancer treatment, closest to being at-rest and non-active, I engaged in as much lazing, sleeping, relaxing, and sought as much recovery as I could. I notice now, as I write this during a period of feeling frustrated with my employment and experiencing aches and pains from what my employment has been involving, I feel in need of laziness, sleep, relaxation, pausing, idleness, and recovery – so that I may continue to make a living and live well. When reading *Walden*, I noticed how much Thoreau seemed to value activities that facilitated these experiences. It is also obvious that the work-machine punishes laziness, idleness, non-approved pauses, sleeping, or relaxing on the job, and generally provides nothing for recovery – just more existential drain and the promise of rest on the weekend, or at retirement.

I am glad to be able to share here, sincerely and authentically, that for the majority of my employment have been loving, honest and honourable, whilst feeling inviting and glorious. This is due to most of my employment being within the context of caring for, supporting, and helping vulnerable young people and children with additional needs. This has meant that a great deal of my activities within these settings have been storytelling, playing, and being someone to shoulder their burdens. The existential fulfilment I have experienced from making a living in such settings has more than made bearable the moments when I have found myself thrust into the institutional structures of the employment, where it has felt like work. Still, this is not how I wish to make my living for the rest of my life.

I have for several years been training as a counsellor and an eco-therapist, which I intend to be my main activity for making a living and supporting my household. Doing the training to engage in this profession might seem to contradict the anti-work desiring that is the focus of this piece; maybe it is – I am not above breaking the law of non-contradiction and do not pretend to be without contradictions. However, I have experienced deep existential gratification and joy from moments of being empathic, congruent, and affirming with friends and loved ones when they have been struggling, as we do with experiences of rewilding. If I can earn a living that might enable me to survive Leviathan until the point that I am no longer able to live through such activities, then that is something that I intend to pursue. To rebel against the work-machine by earning a living through such loving activities strikes me as a thoroughly desirable praxis. There have been points where it has felt like work, and undoubtedly will be more in the future, particularly when coming into contact with the more industrialised aspects of the activity; but I do not believe in escape or separation and see all life as connected, and so am willing to accept these more revolting aspects of these activities.

I have one more reflection/thought. I am continually untrusting of individuals who offer systems or imaginary futures; this comes from my more Nietzschean feelings. Whether it is Marx or Bob Black, I am left somewhat revolted. Thoreau does not do this, or I have never found him to do this in any of his pieces that I have read, other than *Civil Disobedience*, which is very low-intensity systematising. Following from this, I offer nothing of a system for anyone to follow here and would not believe in any I might offer, were I inclined to do so. I have sought to provide

what I have found when reading Thoreau: perspective and experience. I know this ending will be revolting for anyone wanting a system to follow, but I am prepared to be revolting here, if being revolting means being authentic.

Poetry and Praxis

My absurd purpose and intention is to affirm poetry within the context of revolt and share something of its presence within my rebellions and to express what I have gleaned from brilliant individuals. For the sake of clarity, I have split this into two discreet sections. The focus of the first section is on the subject of art and reason, focusing on two of my earliest and profoundest inspirations, Albert Camus and Oscar Wilde. The attention of the second section is on post-Situationist thought and the practice of guerrilla ontology as a weed that grows out of the revolting soil fertilised by the works of Peter Lamborn Wilson and John Moore.

1.

"Furthermore, reason, by its very nature, hates life more than anything in the world." Shestov, **Potestas Clavium**

"Reason must 'servilely' reproduce what is 'given' to it, and it reproaches as the greatest of crimes every attempt at free creation." Shestov, **Athens and Jerusalem**

The inspiration I have taken from Wilde and Camus initially came from what I felt during my earliest interactions with anarchist and individualist philosophies. Wilde's celebration of individualism brings great joy to me, and Camus' affirmation of the struggles that individuality involves, through his novella *The Outsider* (often alternatively titled *The Stranger*,) provokes feelings of sadness and revolt. For a great many years I have considered Wilde's ideal economy of individualist-socialism(/egoist-communism, arguably) an appeal to creativity. In a society where property doesn't exist and individuals create freely – this is the only economic (anti-)system I can really affirm (though I do not feel comfortable with the assimilation into socialist/communist ideology and would rather call it individualist tribalism). Likewise, in my revolt towards machinic annihilation, systematized slaughter and industrial negativity, Camus' revolt against institutional violence is something I resonated with, even though I have not found great inspiration from Camus' activism and political engagement. Conversely, for as long as I have looked upon Wilde as a political thinker and rebel, I have found him intensely inspirational. This is largely due to his creativity and position as a homosexual public figure considered so dangerous to the British state that it felt the need to brutalise him so cruelly, and him surviving as an unrepentant individual, rebelling through continuing to write (in exile) after this revolting experience.

Camus was not fond of the philosophy that Wilde embraced and advanced, due to his understanding of Wilde's aestheticism, which I look upon as a *mis*understanding. Camus attempted a criticism of Wilde's aestheticism in his speech titled *Create Dangerously*, delivered in 1957. Camus affirms something that I thoroughly agree with, that "to create today is to create dangerously," but views this as oppositional to Wilde's affirmation of "art for art's sake." Camus' hostility towards Wilde comes from two places, both of which involve misunderstandings. The first hostile-ground is that of not seeing Wilde's position as an affirmation of absurd unreasonableness. To do art for art's sake is to do it without a reason to do so, as an absurd-reason. It is to create for the sake of creation, rather than towards some notion of direction, or out of some concept of being caused

to do so; it is an affirmation of absurd-freedom. Doing *this* for the sake of *this* strikes me as a beautifully sincere and authentic ground from which to discuss activist praxis.

When I care for badgers I am doing so for the sake of badgers. I can give absurd reasons – "we're living in a mass extinction event and I want to defend life, blah blah blah…" but at the core of it, the act is one of aestheticism: "I am doing it to do it." An individual sees a child fall over and helps them up, not for the sake of Humanity or out of hope that that child, inspired by this kindness, might grow to do great things; they helped them up to help them up, and there is nothing wrong with that unreasonableness. When Camus rejects Wilde's "art for the sake of art," he is in many ways failing to notice the absurdity of events and actions, which is at the core of the absurdist philosophy he beautifully articulates within his writings.

The second hostile-ground is that of Camus' embrace of Cause (through libertarian-socialist/anarcho-syndicalist ideology), which is a renunciation of absurdism and akin to what Camus called philosophical suicide. It feels fair to generalise Camus' rejection of Wilde as *art should be assimilated into Cause*. This throws up all the absurdities of causal reasoning (which I find no basis for accepting); there is no apparent reason for causation, unless we renounce the ground of uncertainty and agnosticism for comforting stories. It is deeply uncomfortable being-with absurdity. Camus seeking to flee from it, into some leftist Cause, is something I can sympathise with, though it strikes me as an inauthentic flight, a flight into inauthenticity. I deeply appreciate the authenticity I see in Wilde.

Camus states in his speech "(t)he greater an artist's revolt against the world's reality, the greater can be the weight of reality to balance that revolt." I read this less as a comment about the world (as earth/life) and more as a description of this culture's dialectical annihilation of challenging artists – something Wilde knew better than most. This is the danger that real creativity poses: at its most extreme is the attempt to negate/annihilate through death. That Wilde's writings and philosophy have survived after his death signifies the immense power in his creativity. Thinking about the deep absurdity of his thought, I am reminded of Wilde's words in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, that "(l)ife is too important thing to talk seriously about." The comic quality reminds me of the not-yet-funny joke of Timothy Morton's *Dark Ecology*, that, in an attempt to escape(/transcend) the impact of global warming 10,000 years ago, civilisation has succeeded in creating far worse global warming now. I half-smile as I write this, but feel sadness too. I look over the sentence I just wrote and fall into a deeper smile over the absurdity of what I just wrote, the absurdity of what I am writing and the absurdity of it all.

It is utter absurdity for Morton, Zerzan, me (or any other commenter on civilisation) to answer the question of why civilisation has been built; not just due to none of us having been there to experience the event, but the appeal to causation is an appeal to a groundless absurdity – inauthenticity and Reality-constructing, based in guesses, assumptions, and the projections of our lived experiences onto ghosts. It is utter absurdity for me to continue writing this, so why do it? I am writing this for the sake of writing it, without any possible knowledge of whether or not it will have anything amounting to a meaningful impact upon any individual's lived experience or other absurd reason to-Be. With it all being absurd, I am free to continue, with an awareness that I am doing this with revolting-integrity, that this is coming from a rebellion of absurd-caring, a refusal to be indifferent and embrace of positivity that is defiant before the negation of Moloch's consumption. Thinking of Aragorn! considering me corny, I read this and laugh again, and enjoy an internal joke about him in the afterlife continuing to be disappointed in my writings. I hope that the grumpy nihilist fucker, in the land of ghosts, is hating what I am writing; this brings

up feelings of sadness in me and a longing for many who have been lost, including that mean arsehole, who I knew as friend.

Continuing along the theme of absurd hilarity, sad jokes and/or tragicomedy, and somewhat drawing from Aragorn!'s mean humour, my mind turns to another somewhat not-yet-funny failure – though one that Aragorn! would laugh at. Here is my best attempt to articulate it: in an attempt to improve life, the world, and the human experience, the Left (revolutionaries and progressivists) have succeeded in enabling the *worsening* of life, the world, and the human experience. They have brought all of us to the point of utter ruination through small incremental improvements that amount to small and increasingly fleeting comforts which make the abusive narratives of Leviathan somewhat more tolerable (to some), and thus more sustainable. What I just wrote is absurd, but certainly not funny – and I feel somewhat revolted by the memory of my friend who lives with me as a ghost. I feel revolted, revolting, and in-revolt.

My attention turns to revolt as an absurd endeavour. Why revolt? What is revolt? In *Here at the Center of a World in Revolt*, Zlodey and Radegas position revolt as a ground for insurrection and revolution, as something transcending this world by leading into another. In *Species Being and Other Stories*, Dupont positions revolt as humanity's innate negativity towards Nature, towards what they call communism, which humanity would likely revolt against too. Transcendence and negation. Neither of these answers are my answers. They are both revolting. I feel revolted and rebellious towards the revolutionary and communist causes. I am revolted. I am revolting.

I grab a poetry collection off my bookcase and notice the beautiful absurdity of all the creativity. I hear birds singing in my garden and feel affirmation of their being-alive as revolting against the annihilation of wildlife that is domestication and Leviathan. I am not resigned and embrace no renunciation. I am revoltingly positive and Aragorn!'s ghost is revolted by me. I laugh again.

2.

"From this point of view, Order appears as death, cessation, crystallisation, alien silence." Hakim Bey, **Immediatism**

The anarchist-as-poet aims to create and recreate the world endlessly through motility and revolt." John Moore, **Anarchist Speculations**

While I am intentionally drawing from Hakim Bey/Peter Lamborn Wilson and John Moore, I certainly do not feel that either of these individuals knew the True Path or claim that they provided a system for revolters and rebels to conform to, or that such a system would be the answer to the problems that the system presents. The former's writings and thought are in places more revolting (disgusting) than they are revolt-inspiring and the later always leaves me wanting more. What I am describing here is something of how I have treated poetry as very much at the core of my breaking out of conformity to normative social expectations, alongside the influence both of these have had on this practice. I make two observations at this point. The first is that I have no way to justify this practice and that I have not been engaged in this activity for the sake of any Cause, but have very much done it for the sake of doing it. The second observation is that this has seemingly been me being-absurd and somewhat intensifying that strangeness that the world is.

I'm sat at the base of a statue near Exeter Cathedral, sharing my food with the pigeons, with birds jumping on to my knees, seeking to practice solidarity with non-human living beings and co-existence practice. The people watching me surrounded by these so-called pests all have their own perceptions and interpretations of what is happening. To some this is grotesque, and they look on in horror. To a tourist this is a beautiful moment and they take a photo. I continue hoping

that for the pigeons this is a moment of beauty, joy, and easiness amidst the urban environment of the city, which is so hostile towards wildlife. This is not a protest. This is not riotous. This is not revolutionary. This is not organising. What is this?

Hakim Bey's concept of poetic terrorism lifts poetry off the page and away from the voice towards actions and ways of engaging with others. These are acts of artistic engagement that another individual might witness and experience some level of feeling engaged, but are really done simply for the sake of doing it. I display several automatic art pieces I have created in a public toilet and leave them there, with an absurd reasoning of them being found and looked upon as something absurd by whoever finds them. Is this poetry? No, this is art! Is poetry not art? What makes something poetic? Poetry and the poetic invokes something of the non-functional, non-practical, without-utility, yet powerful, beautiful, done with desire to affect. An individual approaches me asking for help with a minor task that they could easily do themselves. I help them. It does not support any Cause or purpose, other than the absurd-poetic desire to affect this individual by their feeling helped.

I'm sat with someone and they ask me what I do. What do I say? Do I tell them my means of making a living? Do I tell them that I am a writer, knowing that they will assume that means I make money through writing and then that will lead to boring conversations about fringe philosophy and the lack of income writers get. I tell them that I wander with untameable beasts and birds between the trees that are the remaining traces of the rainforests that once covered this archipelago, eating wild garlic and trying to summon bears back. They look confused but pleased with my response. John Moore, in his essay *Lived Poetry*, advocates poetic language as a means of anarchist practice, rebelling against the systems of verbal communications that the system encourages, and subverting the social norms. A colleague says to me that the sun is beautiful today and I respond by saying "it's a giant explosion in outer space and since we stopped worshipping it with sacrificial offerings and started serving the will of capitalism, it has gotten angry and the polar ice caps are melting, so huge areas of this archipelago in the North Sea are soon going to be underwater." They laugh awkwardly and respond with "yes, Julian." This gift of poetry is dark and ecologically pessimistic. It will not cause a shift in my colleague's lifestyle, let alone impact any of their productive narratives. It was an unreasonable response. It is absurd to want it to have some impact upon their ecological awareness, but I want this.

Within Organisational Activism there is often a distinction made between aboveground and underground actions and groups. I do not consider my activities to fall within this framework of praxis and feel somewhat revolted by the binary, and a lot of what goes with it. Taking inspiration from Peter Lamborn Wilson's concept of endarkenment and Moore's concept of the psychogeographical space of bewilderness, I have engaged in activities largely with a desire to leave in a state of uncertainty why a situation or space is not why it is. I have termed this practice nonlocalisable-localism; nonlocalisable in that no one can find who did it or why; localism in that it is geographically local to where I live. This involves my anti-cull and guerrilla gardening activities, which I share from a desire to be an example of these activisms being done as individualist praxis – I am not entirely open about them simply because I do not want the Machine to be aware of what I have done and where. I include these nonlocalisable-localism activities here because I see them being deeply connected to endarkenment and bewilderness praxes; both are examples of the poetic in ontological anarchist/guerrilla ontologist rebellion. Ontological-anarchist/guerrilla-ontologist rebellion, while it has the potential to be assimilated within Causes (as totalities seek to totalise), is not inherently oriented towards Cause. This renders it revolting to those

who seek to systematise and who ultimately feel only tolerant of the existence of the presence of what they see as being able to be granted some reason to justify the existence of some-Thing, under some utilitarian logic. To such individuals, and to end this piece on poetry and praxis, I offer this poem.

> Bom pom
> Smash
> Dash dash dash
> Scurrying little feet
> Knock knock knock
> Tweet
> Tweet tweet
> Gumph
> Plop
> Stop
> Run stop
> Avocados are not friend
> To men who are mice
> Or mice who are men
> Humpfily
> FLY
> Quick, live - don't die!
> Plop plop plop plop plop

Death Camp Resistance

I feel physically uncomfortable. I begin to tense with awareness of the subject matter. Thoughts of "you're a Jew," "remember why your great grandparents had to flee Poland and took refuge in two lands that were far from their home," "remember that there are Nazis who are alive today who would want you dead simply for how you are categorised by racists." Then there is pressure *to do justice* to the subject matter – what the fuck does doing justice mean in this context? I feel my heart beneath my skin: stress. I sit back and look at the page before me wondering what to write. I take two sips of water and notice the feel of the sun on my skin and the crossroads blues music playing through my headphones. None of that is here. There are no Nazis here and I am not fleeing my home. I am sitting. I look outside of my window and think about the agricultural annihilation of wildlife and all those lives lost due to industrial productivity and all those dedicating their lives to serving the planetary work machine, the death and horror that maintains this settlement. It is not the same as what the Nazis did. To suggest it is would be dishonest. Yet there are similar aspects and, as I am by Nazism, I am revolted by this industrial death machine, this systematic-slaughter normality, and I am not sure if I can *do justice*. The words fail and will always fail, so why bother writing? What is the point in writing about this? Why? Why? Beckett's words of "I can't go on. I'll go on" come to my mind as I feel revolted and choose to embrace the absurd freedom to write.

In his book *Endgame*, in a section titled "We Are Going To Win," Derrick Jensen states "(w)e are those who will never forget that the Jews who participated in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising had a higher rate of survival than those who went along." This is a revolting appeal towards optimism that appeals to the absurd win-lose dichotomy that accepts the bullshit of us-them collectivist de-ecological thought; all living individuals are connected and no one wins at this, because we all die. "(T)he Jews who participated," separated from "those who went along"; winners separated from losers; those who participated and survived won and those who died lost; this is a game where some win and some lose; the Warsaw Ghetto was a competition that participants grouped as Uprisers won and others grouped as non-Uprisers lost. There is a revolting moralist superiority complex among collectivists who push for participation with the Cause, joining-the-Struggle, becoming-part-of-the-organisation, etc. I have encountered this in discussions with those seeking to assimilate individuals into organisations such as Extinction Rebellion and various unions – those who do not join are frequently positioned as in some way or another on the side of the abusers. In this context that would mean that the Jews who did not participate in the uprising were Nazi supporters, which is fucking ridiculous.

Those who participated in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising are morally superior to those who did not – why? Because their rebellions were assimilated into documentation through spectacle and historical recording, apparently. But there is no knowing the rebellions of those who did not participate. Opting to not participate in an action is a choice and there is no way of knowing any of the individual's reasons for not participating. Maybe they wanted to care for an elderly relative or a child. Perhaps they longed to evade the violence to be with a lover who lived far away. They

could simply have been frightened or otherwise simply disinclined towards joining the uprising. These reasons I have given are all absurd fantasies. Any reason any non-participator had for not participating were absurd, since they did not survive. It is revolting to consider those who did not participate as lesser than those who did, when they were individuals seeking to survive amidst such revoltingly dreadful conditions. In the aftermath of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprisings, the Nazi state constructed the Warsaw concentration camp. To state that the concentration camp was constructed because of the uprising would be revolting. I see no possible cause for such construction, other than the revolting Cause of Nazism and the absurd reasoning of those who, in bad faith, seek to deny freedom, agency, and choice.

There is something beautiful in the revolts of individuals banding together, as friends, tribe, revolting-folk – I am keen to not use the term *collective* or *community*, given how intensely I see these assimilated into the languages of totalitarianism, organisation, industrial productivity and repressive social norms. Accounts of the Trebllinka and Sobibor revolts/rebellions/uprisings, which occurred within the context of the concentration camps, where individuals banded together in revolt towards the negativity, inspire huge feelings of affirmation in me. Not having been there, it would be absurd of me to claim to know why these individuals revolted, given what I imagine were seemingly impossible odds. Equally, had I been there, I'd only have absurd reasons as to *why*. Any attempt to assimilate these actions into a Cause would be revolting to me and it is enough to me to imagine that these individuals came together in revolt from feelings of revoltedness due to the machinery of annihilation/death/negation that they witnessed and experienced. This is an example of absurdism subscending hope and hopelessness. I cannot imagine that the revolters experienced anything like hope, but there also appears to be some feeling laying deeper than hopelessness: an absurd and irrational and beautiful will-to-life, which strikes me as utterly heroic.

In his book *Blessed is the Flame*, Serafinski seeks to affirm concentration camp resistance through the lens, language, and ideology of anarcho-nihilism. It is a truly inspiring and harrowing work, which I would encourage anyone interested in the subject to read, though I do have a different perspective. Serafinski views the revolts within concentration camps as negation, in particular where those revolts led to the individuals revolting to be killed by the Nazis. According to Serafinski, this rendered their actions suicidal. In my eyes these rebellions are examples of positivist-life-affirmation; refusals to embrace renunciation or to conform to the narratives of industrial slaughter – negating the negation not as negativity, but being revolting-positivity. Serafinski's critique of positivity and embrace of pure negation is largely based in a revolt towards positive-programming.

I would hope it is clear that I am not advocating that here, or anywhere in this book. I see programming/systematising/organisation as intensely negative practices and am reminded of Dupont's statement, "organisation appears only where existence is thwarted," and "also existence appears where organisation is thwarted." There is intense positivity in the refusal to accept Nazi programming as an affirmation of existence. The absurdity of the actions that were followed by death does not lessen the beauty of the revolt.

As part of my studies in psychotherapy I read, and have since the first reading, reread and found great inspiration from, Viktor Frankl's work *Man's Search For Meaning*. It is an autobiographical account of his experience of living within concentration camps and describes the therapeutic approach of logotherapy that he created following those experiences. Frankl's rebellion against Nazism was not that of revolution, organization, or negation, but a refusal to renounce

himself, his creativity; rather, to care for others, as a doctor, whilst within the environment of the camp. The absurdity of his rebellion, given that I cannot imagine there being any hope and yet see nothing of hopelessness within him, is profound. Frankl's rebellion against the Nazi concentration camp machinery harmonises with my attempts to care for others, to create, and my refusal to renounce my life within the context of this industrial mass-extinction camp. And, while there are definite differences in our respective politics, I find a similarity between Frankl's tragic-optimism and my revolting-positivity. I feel a strange love when thinking about Frankl and other individuals who lived lives of rebellion within the context of Nazi death camps, a love I also feel for individuals who are alive and live revoltingly within the context of this industrial death camp. This reminds me of Camus' affirmation in *The Rebel* that "rebellion cannot exist without a strange form of love." Frankl states that "(b)y his love he is enabled to see the essential traits and features in the beloved person; and even more, he sees that which is potential in him, which is not yet actualized but yet ought to be actualized. Furthermore, by his love, the loving person enables the beloved person to actualize these potentialities." I can see no greater rebellion within a death camp than to love, so as to liberate and encourage the actualisation of life-potential within the individual loving and whoever they love. This might well be revolting-positivity, but I see no other basis for rebellion and death camp resistance.

How Did I Get Here?

1. Here I am, in the tiny stone walled barn-conversion bungalow I call home, in the tiny village where my house was built over a hundred years ago, a comfortable distance from the two nearest towns in the North Devon countryside, with the rain pouring outside, feeding my thoroughly rewilded garden and herb patch, birds song coming in through the window, four different woods short distances from my home and one copse, and the question of "how did I get here?" before me. The question is not really what I am seeking to address here and is intended as something of a light entry to the dark subject matter. The journey it took for me to get here began in London, where I was born and lived on the outskirts of until I moved to Devon when I was 14. I moved out of the houses I had lived in with my family and my wife's family into this house when the opportunity arose to do so – there is of course far more detail and far more I could say, but that is not what I want to write about here. The matter I intend to write about here is that of my being-Jew-here. This has been an increasingly significant part of my thinking over the last year or so, as I've been thinking about myself in the context of diaspora and colonialism.

My being-Jew is, arguably, questionable. To orthodox Jews, I am not-Jew; my identity of Jew is negated due to my Jewish heritage being from my father's side of the family. To white supremacists and other racists who desire the erasure of Jews, I am Jew and therefore worthy of negation. David Baddiel, in his book *Jews Don't Count*, describes a condition of Schrödinger's Jews, where Jews are both white and non-white whenever it suits racists – the condition seems to fit here, with my being-Jew being a subject of being-in-boxes-for-racists. I largely see race as only meaningful in a context where racism exists. My Jewish family came to this archipelago through a series of displacements/de-placements/re-placements/dis-settling/de-settling/re-settling, from Poland to Palestine, then to South Africa and then to these isles in the North Sea, a process that began with the racism of they-are-worthy-of-negating-for-being-Jews. While it is revolting to say, I am here, somewhat, because of racism and displacement. While it is revolting to say, I am a Jew and embrace this racial categorisation, because I live in a context that includes racism and it feels revoltingly absurd to try and pretend otherwise. Racism exists. That racism exists is revolting. Diaspora exists. That diaspora exists is revolting. How did I get here, feeling and being revolted? Racism and diaspora.

I notice within myself a longing for indigeneity and becoming-of-this place. But where I live has no real indigenous culture or population. The first peoples have long since disappeared, leaving few traces for historisation and reconstruction. There remain small traces of enduring Celtic presence, but Romanisation has largely Christianised and Leviathanised that through the establishment of Britain. Britain today is intensely dehabited, domesticated, industrialised, developed, and urbanised. The culture is dominated by workerism and distraction, collectivised bigotries, and history-as-authority. Feeling revolted, it strikes me as absurd to seek indigeneity upon this archipelago. Still, I am seeking. In seeking indigeneity, I am also seeking a means of discussing the decolonisation of Britain, as becoming-indigenous.

To describe something of this absurd-seeking I am using four Yiddish terms as concepts for my activities. In an absurd attempt to avoid being misunderstood as seeking-to-construct-system, I am bringing these terms and descriptions as poems. The four terms are *mishigas, schlep, oy gevalt*, and *l'chaim.*

Mishigas
it is
in a sense
senseless
to speak of
decolonising here
ever the fool
I choose to embrace
maddening folly
revolting foolishness
and here I am
seeking and speaking
The Schlep
diasporic individuality
dragging roots
unrooted
seeking to delve
into soil
but the soil is covered
by tarmac and concrete
or hyper-exploited
by agriculture
Oy Gevalt
oh what violence
inspiring flights from home
oh what violence
there lies here
L'Chaim
the revolting-diasporic
living as
refusal to be negated
affirming life-here
to life
absurd affirmation
of the irrational
will to survive/power
of the more-than-civilised world
here I am
I am here
here am I

out of dark clouds
a thunderous sound erupts
preceded by lightning
this is revolting
I am revolting

2. Thinking about myself in the context of diaspora has brought my attention to the matter of potential diasporas, as global warming and mass extinction intensify and ecological and societal collapses worsen. Floods, heatwaves, droughts, rising sea levels, war, and wildfires are already proving to be ecological and social conditions that are inspiring individuals to migrate away from their homes. Likewise, the prospect of further environmentally friendly corporate-colonialist settlerism (in the form of green-industrial projects) poses the threat of negation to many indigenous individuals and cultures, should they not embrace displacement and diaspora. While I am generally averse to historicising futures – as I generally find that an absurd activity with little appreciation for the limits of the understanding and awareness of the individuals engaged in this divining of what-will-be – I worry about the potential for neo-colonialism and intensified nationalism being the ideal conditions for the negation of displaced peoples. This worry is not strictly anthropocentric, as the potential for conservationist violence towards diasporic-migrating non-human living beings is an equally revolting potential.

I feel an absurd desire to offer a system for avoiding these prospects; some means of transcending the negation. If I could plan something for other individuals to conform to, then it would only take them seeing the brilliance of my plan, right? I could design a pathway to a revolution that would end the struggle and solve these problems and, and, and, and, and I just don't fucking know and am aware that I would be revolted by any plan given by another individual pretending to have the answers. If I were to attempt the absurd task of designing a system for others to follow, to transcend whatever struggles arise over the coming years, I am incapable of finding any reason for them to follow the plan, just as I am unable to find any reason to put faith in the systems devised by authorities or revolutionary theorists.

I can imagine an individual who has travelled across the Channel, across Europe, from somewhere like Iraq, Turkey, or Syria (where drought is presently making life intensely difficult for many), arriving here on this archipelago, having endured all the struggles that refugees and migrants experience. They might find themselves stood upon a hill, looking out at a landscape dominated by industrialism and agriculture, with wildlife seeking to survive amidst the carnage. They ask themselves "how did I get here?" and hear no answer spoken back to them. I imagine myself stumbling across them. Neither of us know why the other is there, what reason we have for being where we are. I might say "oy gevalt" and if they ask, tell them that it means "oh violence" and they may respond with "yes." We might discuss the mishigas and the schlep. I imagine myself taking out a bottle of water, taking a sip and then passing it to them while saying "l'chaim." In that moment of friendship, they might experience something like finding a home here.

I am revolted by the lack of answers. The existential uncertainty is horrifying. While it is definitely an absurd response, perhaps all I am able to do, right now, is envisage friendship, as folk that there is nowt as queer as. In the strange queerness of making friends amidst the absurdity of the world, maybe there can be healing from the wounds of diaspora, of displacement. These are imaginings for me. Right now, I am not involved in any refugee or migrant support activities, so I am not in a position to really engage in this process. Perhaps it will be revolting for others

to read this writing on this subject, now with the understanding that this is not currently part of my activism. I do not know the future. I am revolting. I am revolted.

Desiring Tribe/Seeking Folk Anarchy

Here I am, living upon land with no indigenous culture, with barely a trace of what indigenous culture there once was. Here I am, thinking about diaspora and tribes and folk and friends and loved ones and individuality and collectivist-assimilation and the word *why* creeps into my mind again. Why? For the sake of it. It is a revolting answer. I smile at the absurdity and feel glad to begin with revolt.

I'm midway through a conversation with Llew, my publisher at Forged Books, about the subject of our tribes and how we each consider the other part of our tribe. There is a soberness to the conversation. We both live amidst environments that we wish could be intensely different: de-industrialised, rewilded, without the presence of violent political machines. We are also both pessimistically oriented and do not have faith in The Coming Insurrection and/or The Revolution. We are both folk oriented inasmuch as we both experience feelings of being revolted by the popular — popular as the uniform and normal that is produced through urban culture — and feel aesthetically drawn to the wild, strange and absurd that is often found within folk culture. We are revolting-folk. Most of the individuals I consider within my tribe are revolting-folk. I desire a tribe of revolting-folk.

Whenever I use terms like *tribe* or *folk* in conversations, there is often assumed negativity towards them on the part of others. This is generally due to associations with ethnically motivated violence and the Nazi *volk*. The Curious George Brigade, in *Anarchy in the Age of the Dinosaurs*, when articulating what folk-anarchy means to them, make a specific effort to differentiate their meaning of *folk* from that of nazism and fascism – as if there was any possibility that their post-left anarchist writings could be associated with far-right statism (despite left anarchists saying so from the most ridiculous bad faith). My use of *folk* and *tribe* is intentionally positive and I use them in good faith, trusting in any individual's ability to intuitively gauge that I am not advocating anything akin to the politics of negation/annihilation/etc.

When seeking materials on tribalism and folk-anarchy I was re-minded of Daniel Quinn's idea of the new-tribal-revolution and the idea of bolos imagined by P.M. (Han Widmer) in their book *Bolo'bolo*. My feelings towards both are mixed in similar ways – they both feel too systematising for my desires, one working within the system (Quinn) and the other trying to construct a new system for individuals to follow (P.M./Widmer). Both are brave, but unsatisfying, attempts to affirm the potential for an extremely different way of living to this totalitarian death machine.

I feel revolted. There is so little as I search. I then remember that it was my now-deceased former publisher Aragorn! who first encouraged me to read *Bolo'bolo*, and I begin to look through his writings, hoping to find something befitting an appeal towards tribalism and folk-anarchy, which I could use to help me ground these thoughts. Aragorn!'s beautiful collection *Stories of the Bear and Raccoon People* springs at me, and as I glance over the stories again I am re-minded that my friend is now dead, that – unlike him – I am non-indigenous to where I live, with no indigenous culture remaining, and that I live on an archipelago where no raccoons or bears live in the wild. I am revolted. I am neither raccoon nor bear. I am revolting. Perhaps I am of the

badger people, as I live in lands where badgers live. Perhaps the tribalism I am desiring is that of a tribe-called-badger and perhaps it is my responsibility to write a story of the tribe-called-badger.

How will I write my story of a tribe-called-badger? I will begin with poetry.

Folk Rebellion: the tribe-called-badger is comprised of rebellious folk, revolting-folk. Many, though not all, of these revolting-folk are engaged in the fine task of anti-cull rebellion. There are other rebellions for these revolting-folk. Their rebellions all spring from an absurd desire to affirm life, which is absolutely unreasonable within the context of this industrial death camp, yet they go on.

Folk Medicine: the tribe-called-badger is revolted by the industrial health machine and revolts as medicine person practice, caring for the living out of a desire for real healing. Preferring teas, soups, and talking to pharmacological treatments, the tribe-called-badger is oriented towards village witchcraft and other magical approaches to the tending of illness and wounds.

Folk Music: the music festival seems the perfect example of tribal being-together. Individuals in union, not for Cause – regardless of what socialists with acoustic guitars might say as they announce the revolution – being-together away from the populous and the popular, with music for the sake of being-together with music, families, clans, bands, as *tribe*. I have experienced intense joy from sharing songs with punks, crusties, and hippies being-together in folk anarchy. This seems the ideal gathering space for the tribe-called-badger.

Folk Dancing: following the advice of Nietzsche, in the awareness of the medicinal value of the act and just out of a desire to move to the music of the gathering, the tribe-called-badger dances absurd and revolting dances. Somewhere between dervish-like whirling, mosh pit bodies-in-collision, and a ceileigh with no caller, there is no logic or choreography to these dances. But they live on.

Folk Dialect: inclined towards lexical nonconformity, the tribe-called-badger prefers creative, confusing, poetic, and unique dialects. Everyday-speak is revoltingly dull and words that evoke feeling and the imagination are far more desirable.

Folk Religion: the tribe-called-badger enjoys creating shrines to local forest, river, and sea guardians, to wild gods we encounter not through historical reconstruction of ancient pagan churches, but with our senses and awareness that they are alive with us now. Not the philosophical suicide of dogma, but a wild and living mysticism, being awestruck by the awesomeness of life and death – affirming absurd and unreasonable creative forces.

Folk Stories: myth, lore, stories, parables, fables. Why value these? Why not? The tribe-called-badger desires these; they are how tribal bonds are held strong. Stories of heroism and adventure and tragedy and loss. Tales of absurdity and horror and life willing through. I have written my *Mesodma*, *Bretannike Rebellion* and *On The Nameless* as gifts to the tribe-called-badger, meeting this desire.

Folk Art: fond of homemade quilts and crocheted gloves, handmade wooden carvings, books written by friends, the music our partners make, and cooking dinners for loved ones to enjoy; the tribe-called-badger appreciates the spirit of the crafter, the artist, and the creator with intense joy. Such acts of revolting positivity are rebellious delights amidst the negating machines of this culture.

Freakfolk: the tribe-called-badger is fond of the folks who are often looked upon as revolting freaks, strangers – the freaky folks. The uniqueness and individuality of these folk is beautiful to the tribe-called-badger.

Wildlife Love: there is an intense love for living wildlings, weeds and pests, the untamed, not negated, undomesticated, within the tribe-called-badger. The preservation of wildlings, defending them from the annihilating machines of Leviathan, and nurturing conditions where they might live and survive, is at the core of this revolt.

Rewilding: to create and nurture the growth of living presences that might survive this mass extinction machine. This is the absurd and revoltingly positive desire of the tribe-called-badger. Tamed beings becoming feral is a beautiful sight. Why? Why bother, when there is no guarantee that they will survive this apocalypse and even if they and offspring and their offspring's offspring and so on, survive Leviathanic negation? Eventually the sun will annihilate life on this planet regardless. To this questioning, I answer: Why not? Life for the sake of life. Rewilding for the sake of rewilding. Fuck systematizing-purpose and the utilitarian logic of demanding justification for existing.

I have outlined here pictures of what this poem already contains within the tribe I already live within; the lived rebellions of those revolting-folk I know and may be one of. There is also a desire for the presence of this tribe to become more intense, more vibrant, and to gather more often. Now to write this poem. My desire is that this poem, its myths, stories, fables, tales, lore, parables, verses, and stanzas be written in the lived poetry of poetic actions and oral storytelling, so that it may remain non-localisable, endarkened, and live within the ground of bewilderness. That remaining my desire, I will write an invitational verse here.

> An Invitation -
> If ye be
> Revolting and freak folk
> If ye be
> Loving towards wildlings
> and love rewilding
> If ye be
> Artistic, story telling,
> dancing and fond of festival gathering
> If ye be
> Inclined towards speaking
> with stranger voices and weird words
> and praising absurd wild gods
> If ye be
> Seeking healing and to heal
> If ye be
> Living rebellion
> Ye be welcome
> To be with
> the tribe-called-badger

I am not with many of those within my tribe as often as I would like. We do not gather as frequently as I would like. Significant geographical and psychological distances can make being-together difficult. There is an intensely diasporic quality to this, rendered still worse by those technologies that seek to simulate connection and being-with. Nevertheless, I live with the love

of those of my tribe I am close to, with great joy, and feelings of intense love for those within my tribe who live further away, with the memory of their beautiful presence, as I re-member them within my tribal experience.

Revolution and Revolt

"La sommossa non è rivoluzione" Errico Malatesta
(*"revolt is no revolution."*)

It seems that the conversation regarding rebellion and rebel-praxis has all but entirely been assimilated within the historicising dialectic of revolutionary-reactionary/progressive-traditionalist/advancist-retreatist politics. The revolutionaries and progressivists who advocate *advance* seek to negate what was, to construct a future of their design but that does not exist. The reactionaries and traditionalists who advocate *retreat* seek to negate what is in order to reconstitute a past that no longer exists.

There is little need to critique the reactionary wing of the dialectic here. While this is arguably absurd reasoning, plenty of adequate writings already exists, and my experience is that most individuals are already aware of the intense revolting negativity within the political machines of those ideologies – conservatism, nationalism, fascism, nazism, etc. It could be asked of me "why not write a challenge to reactionary politics?" My answer would be "why bother, when there are already adequate challenges written within rebel discourses and I am already living a rebellion towards those political machines?" Instead, I offer a challenge to the revolutionary political machine with my integrity and desire for authentic rebellion against the annihilation of life, which will likely revolt most who read it.

Revolutionary Negativity

"The nihilists today are seated on thrones. Methods of thought which claim to give the lead to our world in the name of revolution have become, in reality, ideologies of consent and not of rebellion." Camus, **The Rebel**

While I deeply appreciate Camus' efforts to provide a positive and life affirming philosophy of metaphysical rebellion, his attempts fall short with his choosing assimilation within the revolutionary socialism of anarcho-syndicalism. I write this with nothing but absurd affection for him; he was absurd and, as he states in *The Myth of Sisyphus*,"(t)he absurd is lucid reason noting its limits." I notice my limits and the absurdity of my efforts here. But The Revolution is an entirely negative narrative.

While I do not embrace and seek to rebel against the narrative, I agree with the Marxist historical-materialist description of the historicizing production of civilisation being a dialectical narrative – with theses seeking to negate anti-theses and assimilate what cannot be negated within the totality(/totalitarianism) of the thesis, starting with the revolutionary thesis of the agricultural revolution. All life not assimilated within this thesis – that is, any living presence that contradicts the narrative of totalitarian-agriculture – either productive or nature-as-spectacle, is annihilated. Scientific, industrial, and political revolutions, which were not negated, survive only due to their assimilation within the totality and utility as negating narratives. I see this negativity

in Mao's revolutionary annihilation of pests. I see this negativity in Nechayev's positioning of the Cause as superior to friends. I see this negativity in Kaczynski's bombing-as-revolutionary-praxis. I see this negativity in Monsieur Dupont's transcendence as Nihilist Communism. I feel revolted. I am revolting. I am in-revolt.

My feelings of revolt bring my attention to my friends and loved ones who see The Revolution as a desirable narrative. I am reminded of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and find myself becoming-insect. How revolting they will find this writing? For those friends, the revolutionary narrative is largely seen as positive potential, mostly for how they affirm collectivist-assimilation-politics. My mind turns to old friends of revolutionary orientation, who have seen my rejection of revolution as an embrace of reaction – all they see is the dialectic. They have sought to negate our friendships due to feeling revolted by my rebellion against The Revolution, but I still hold them in loving affirmation.

I am horrified by how many beautiful rebellions I see being assimilated into revolutionary negativity, into organisation and systematisation. I am reminded of a conversation I had with Llew, about Extinction Rebellion assimilating local rebellions within its totality. Many of the individuals I know who are favourably oriented towards Extinction Rebellion see it as a revolutionary force; I am somewhat inclined towards agreeing, as it strikes me as largely an effort to assimilate what is called sustainable technology into the totalitarian-agriculture revolution, to delay the revolution and extend Leviathan's annihilation further into the future. I feel revolted. I think about my friend Simon Bramwell, an important elder within my tribe, a beautiful revolting individual, who co-founded Extinction Rebellion with the original members, who is now very much assimilated within the Cause. This feels revolting. I think of all the individuals who I know who are, to varying intensities, captured within the machinery of Extinction Rebellion or other organisations that are generally positioned as revolutionary forces (and I generally agree). I am re-minded of the incredibly negative impact the Cause has on their health and wellbeing, with it largely being an additional existential vacuum on top of the work-machine. This is revolting. I want liberation and wellness for these individuals, which feels absurd to affirm, but is true. I am revolted by the negation, by negativity, and feel need to affirm difference.

Revolting Positivity

"Our task will be to examine what becomes of this positive content of rebellion in the actions that claim to originate from it and to explain where the fidelity or infidelity of the rebel to the origins of his revolt finally leads him." Camus, **The Rebel**

The rebellion of revolting positivity lives outside the dialectical politics of revolution-reaction, ecologically connected to them as relationally different. Rather than as a historising machine, I see revolting positivity as a presentist/immediatist affirmation of life. Much like Deleuzean positivity, this activism of life affirmation is aggressive, destructive, and antagonistic. Intensifying differentiation as involutions that manifest becoming-animal as becoming-the-animal-you-are, which is the eco-egoism and feral individualism as I have described it in previous essays.

It would be fair to say that my teenage readings of Emile Armand fertilised the ground from which my anti-revolutionary individualism and positivist revolt has grown out of. His affirmations of life, experience, nakedness, and freedom, alongside his refusal to wait for revolutions or be assimilated within the collective, were inspirational to me. Despite liminal associations with

organisations, most of which ended years ago, my revolting positivity has remained individualist in praxis, much to the revulsion of those who would wish me to associate with organisations and join their Causes.

Affirming individualism is generally revolting to those who see rebellion existing within the confines of collectivism, revolution, and Cause. This is due to the belief that individualism is a symptom of capitalism and the foundation from which neoliberalism is built. This reasoning is absurd and makes no sense to me; I see capitalism and neoliberalism as modes of organising the industrial-agricultural productivity of the polity, rendering them inherently collectivist. They are dependent upon the capture/assimilation of individuals into the collectivist forces of productivity and the annihilation of living beings who do not conform to this effort. Authentic individualism, on the other hand, is entirely antagonistic towards productive machinery and aggressively positive in affirming life and caring for living individuals; this starts with self-care, as it is impossible to care for others fully if you are not caring for yourself, and caring for others, as you and others are ecologically non-separate – individualist holism.

I imagine this affirmation of individualism will be revolting to non-individualists who might read this. That is fine. I am revolting. I am revolted. I am in-revolt.

"... we will love each other with a different love!" Renzo Novatore

An Attempt at Self-Criticism, or Why I Have Written Such Excellent Writings

This is obviously a parody of Nietzsche. That being said, I have approached this with a serious and very sincere desire to provide a reflective account of how I feel towards my writings, thus far. There is a degree of cathartic intention here, as well as this serving as a means for me to take notice of how much I have grown as a writer, thinker, philosopher, rebel, crackpot theorist, absurd-individual-seeking-to-find-meaning-in-their-activities, or however else anyone might describe me.

Self-Criticism

My Feral Books

My three *Feral* books were written initially as an experiment, using Apollonian reasoning that would collapse into Dionysian instinct. This was more intense in the first two and far less so in the last, which is why the final of the three is the best. This meant that the books were written as literary theatre of cruelty, where I was not as kind to the reader as I would want to be today. That the first two books are as awkward, dense, and uncomfortable to read is a deep disappointment to me now. Looking back at the experiment, I consider it as not entirely a success, but not entirely a failure.

I can see that I wrote the first two *Feral* books while holding an energy of existential crisis and ecological panic. This is entirely understandable, given how soon I wrote them following my experience of cancer treatment and how intensely I was looking at information regarding global warming and mass-extinction during that period. With the awareness that I have of myself now, which is more intense but certainly not absolute, I would have sought to have approached them both from a calmer place.

I am somewhat pained to find myself feeling this way, because despite finding them corny, Aragorn! showed a deep appreciation for my writing. Today, I do find myself regretting the choice to have the books published through Little Black Cart (LBC). Less because of Aragorn! or any dramas associated with LBC, but because collaborating with the other individuals who I was in contact with was so unnecessarily painful and unfriendly – learning about how some of the individuals treated others involved in the project utterly revolted me. While I made sure to not internalise their unkindness as much as I could, I would be lying if I denied that this experience sucked some of the joy from the process of editing drafts, to the point that I engaged in the process far less favourably. I do not know if, were I to do it again, I'd collaborate with LBC. It is unlikely to happen again, given that last I heard they had decided to call it quits. If I were to do so, I would not take as much shit as I did. I feel sad for how this might have lessened the quality of the books.

My Other Writings

The main reflection I have towards my other writings, particularly my earlier writings, is how much my writing was fuelled by a keenness and enthusiasm to create and a passion that occasionally was careless. Collaborating with publishing projects left me feeling oriented towards supporting those projects in ways that were not entirely responsible or done with the self-awareness that I am seeking to write from today. There are pieces on my blog where I defend LBC, Derrick Jensen, and others; today I look back at and wish I hadn't written them. It's not that I entirely disagree with what I wrote in seeking to challenge the leftist push towards totalitarianism, but that I regret not seeing the context of that critique being in arguably some of the worst settings. Those I was defending didn't need or deserve my defence and I was writing from crisis and panic. This crisis and panic was intensified by internet dramas and offline dramas too, during which I was not taking care of my health and wellbeing to the degree that I am today, which is still not perfect. I am aware that those writings were revolting to many who read them and are largely why I have become-Kafka's-insect to many, which is particularly saddening when thinking about the friendships that have been lost. I do still retain a feeling of revolt towards leftist totalitarianism and moralism, though I am better able to articulate this with appreciation for the individuals I might be critiquing. If I could go back to that point in my life and change it, it is difficult to imagine what I would do; I look upon these misjudgements with a feeling of *amor fati*, given how much I can affirm where I am now and who I am today – other than me emotionally and psychologically, no one was harmed through my careless writing, and for the most part I'm far stronger for the experience.

The Excellence

Risks

One of the most excellent qualities of my writings is that I have always been prepared to take risks and be transparent. When in critical conversation, this has more often than not involved me punching above my weight, without much in the way of me getting knocked on my arse in response. The daring with which I have written comes largely from the awareness I have had that I can survive shit – and I have survived much. Even while there were parts of me in panic and crisis, and there are still parts of me that feel panic and existential crisis, there have been parts of me and are still parts of me that know that I have had the strength to overcome every challenge that I survived thus far. This revolting self-confidence has provided a ground for me to be daring in my writing, as I am doing now, writing with the sense that many will read this with feelings of revolt – I remember Camus' affirmation that to create today is to create dangerously. And I find myself smiling.

Sincerity

Another of the most excellent qualities of my writings is the sincerity with which I have written. With a commitment to being authentic, I have not hidden myself in my writings. I have not sought to deny my subjectivity. There's been little to no posturing or trying to impress. I have shared myself as absurd and ridiculous and brilliant and creative. I feel pride for being able to write this with the insight to say that this is not arrogance, but an honest reflection of how I have written and the writer I have been, throughout my writings.

Pain

Like many of the most excellent writers, I have delved deeply into my personal pain, a deep well of experience, and brought that into my writings. I have written with blood and the passion that great suffering inspires. The transformation of my pain into fertile ground for creative potential is the Nietzschean quality of my praxis of absurd/mad/positivity towards life, which

is possibly the most excellent aspect of my writings. This has rendered them real and raw, not merely ideological or dream-like fantasies. Having suffered throughout my life is not something that I affirm with an appeal for pity, nor do I share with any pose of carrying-a-great-weight. While I am still affected by wounds, some of which may never heal entirely, I am very much (to use Nietzsche's term) a *free spirit* and can attribute this to the pains I have endured and overcome. This is why I have been able to take risks and write from a place of sincerity; or at least, these are my absurd reasons.

Absurd Love

Love is a strange and unreasonable force. Utterly absurd. Why? Why love that individual? Why care for them? Why place any particular value on anyone? It is unjustifiable. There is seemingly no reason for love. But still, love remains one of the most powerful presences in life. Why does my love love me? What reason could she have to love me? I can see that she does, and this renders her all the more strange to me. She loves me? Why? What draws her to me, and what is she seeking in me? I know I love her. If you ask me to justify it, I will give absurd reasons, but the reasons don't really matter. I love her because I love her – I love her for the sake of loving her. When I am in the presence of her love it is a primal truth, more real than any logic. It is visceral and raw. The realness of this love has been experienced in the struggles we have shared together, the pains, joys, and all the rest.

To speak of love is to speak absurdly and absurdity is the ground from which love grows. To act lovingly is to embrace absurdity, to commit to an unreasonable action.

Love is revolting. Love is a rebellion against the renunciation of life. When we love we affirm our lives from the ground of caring for those we love. The abandonment of love is when the renunciation of life takes ground, opening space for negation and annihilation; reason becomes master and existence must be justified based on utility; logic must render the process rational, so it may be systematised. Love is revolting. Love is such a powerful force that its repression has brought states to employ brutal acts of violence to quench it – my mind turns to Oscar Wilde and those around the world who face similar cruelty today. Unable to negate love, the system seeks to assimilate love within the totality. But love is revolting. Love is revolting just as the system is negating, and love is utterly positive. I know no one, no individual, no living being who loves intensely and passionately, who is not revolted by this culture, this system, this machine. And while I can offer no reasoning or justification for this affirmation, I feel utterly, positively, convinced that the revolt against the annihilation of the living on this Earth can achieve nothing without love for the living Earth, regardless of how absurd that may seem.

Conclusion/Revolting-Life

1. *"It is not without reason that it has been said of the sun that it gives light and joy to others but for itself is dark."* Shestov, **Potestas Clavium**

"*Let future generations reject us, let history stigmatise our names, as the names of traitors to the human cause—still we will compose hymns to deformity, destruction, madness, chaos, darkness. And after that—let the grass grow.*" Shestov, **All Things Are Possible**

The world is absurd and the strangeness of the world is the absurd. Ecologically absurd; it is strange that there is life here at all. Why is there life here? Why do living beings will their lives and fight to survive? Why did they and why do they and why will they? Answers and reasons are all absurdities – no one knows the answer, or even if there is an answer.

The world is strange. The folks we are in close relationship with and love more intensely are strange, confusing ,and utterly absurd. Why are they here? Why did they do that? Why are they doing that? Whatever answers they might give to these questions, accepting their answers involves accepting the absurd limits of their ability to reason and the absurdity of reasoning – acceptance of them begins with being-with them for the sake of being-with, rather than Cause or utility or any reason requiring justification. Most individuals are strangers to us. We do not know them. How they might have arrived upon our paths is a darkness that we cannot entirely see through. Human, non-human, it does not matter; there is an absurdity to strangers that for those of us who love, care, and revolt intensely, inspires curiosity, intrigue, affection, and love. I meet a stranger walking down the street who has dropped something. I pick up the item and hand it to them. I cannot entirely fathom any reason for this to be dropped, but look upon them with a desire to help, which is entirely absurd, as I do not know what might occur to them after we part. Later, I am walking through woods and a hedgehog comes across my path. I stop, asking "who are you?" with the awareness that they will likely not answer me. I look upon them with curiosity, intrigue, and a desire for them to live well and be well. These strangers both thrust me into an awareness of my absurdity, through the strangeness of these encounters. Why did they drop that? Why are you here hedgehog? I cannot know. No reason which is not absurd comes to me. I walk on, revolted by the awareness that the hedgehog will likely come across less kind individuals and possibly vehicles that annihilate wildlife around here frequently; revolted by the awareness that the individual on the street may be taken advantage of by abusive individuals. My actions are absurd, but that it just it and I accept that, as I do not believe I can cause anything else.

The world is absurd and living beings are the strangeness of the world and strange; this is an ecological affirmation. It pertains to the conditions of this habitat that is Earth, as the world in all meaningful experiential sense of lived-encountering Being. Eco-absurdism is both an affirmation of the strangeness of this habitat and those who live here, and an affirmation of the absurdity of resisting the machinery of annihilation from a position of revolting-positivity. Without the belief in causation, causality, and Cause, from a position of not committing philosophical suicide – eco-absurdist revolting-positivity affirms rebellion for the sake of rebellion, without appeals to

justification, utility, or reason. Rather, it comes out of a desire for life and the living. Nihilists seek to negate the absurdity of the world and life, and others – existentialists, Buddhists, socialists, capitalists, fascists, Christians, scientists and basically every other system of belief, ideology and thought – seek to transcend the absurd (through less honest modes of negation than nihilists). Eco-absurdism, however, is not a system of belief or ideology, but is an attitude, a feeling, and an experience – that individuals affirm in moments of sincerity and honesty. Eco-absurdism affirms the absurd, the absurdity of the world, and the strangeness of the living. This attitude and feeling enables revolting-positivity to emerge without being sucked into the negativity of Cause, and might be the ground from which we – revolting-folk – can take sincere responsibility for those we love and care for, in ways that are actually helpful without seeking to provide salvation, bullshit hope, or dishonest optimism, whilst equally not despairing, giving up, or renouncing life. I don't know. I cannot know. I live amidst uncertainty. All I am sharing here is a feeling, a sense, a perspective. These are not answers, but affirmations.

2. It should be clear from these essays that a large part of the intention behind this project has been to respond to certain matters within anarchist and environmentalist conversations. This has been done with a general assumption that this will be read with feelings of revolt, either as inspiration-to-revolt or as this-is-revolting rejection. I have been revolted by anarchist and environmentalist praxis, in both of these senses of revolt, and feel positively about both of these experiences, as they both fuel fires of creative and life-affirming desires in me.

If this has been a dialogic response to one particular aspect of these conversations, then it would be the nihilist voices that I have been somewhat close to, from a liminal-boundary position, through my friendship with Aragorn! and inclusion within projects he was associated with. The response I have articulated here, through these writings, is that negativity might not be negating the negation, but more negation, and that negating the negation might just be revolting-positivity. This is not to reject the affirmation of rebellion and resistance that individuals like Aragorn! and Serafinski have beautifully articulated, but to seek to situate this will-to-life upon the strange ground of absurdity and positivist-life desire, whilst rejecting the totalitarianism of systematising programs, ideology, collectivism, and Cause. What response there might be to this I cannot know. Maybe it is absurd to wish for a response.

3. I think of Libertad's statement that revolt is life and thinking about life-as-revolt. I remember all those living wildlings whose lives are a revolt against the machinery of negation, industrial totalitarian-agricultural annihilation and mass-extinction culture. I remember those individuals in my tribe who live their lives today due to their having been revolted and their revolting as revolting-folk. I remember my life as one of revolting against my annihilation, as positive affirmation of life. Life is revolting, living for the sake of living, without Cause or Reason or Justification. Life is a rebellion against negation. Life is revolting.

I am revolting. I am revolted. I am in-revolt. I am alive. I am revolting-life. Why am I? There is no Reason, Cause or Justification for my existence. I am, as absurdity is. This is revoltingly positive, revolting positivity and positive revolt. Now, revolt! The absurd is.

Aftermath

"His life had changed and he didn't quite know what he was going to do." Camus, **The Stranger**

Responding to Responses

After writing the first draft of this book, I sent it to individuals with the hope that they might look it over and provide critical feedback. Out of a desire to practice reflective and dialogic discourse, my intention within this essay is to respond to several of the points fed back to me. As the comments are not published, I have not included any names here; I have thanked the individuals in the first pages of this book.

"Our approaches could not be farther apart, writing-wise. You use 'I' in most sentences; I pretty much never do. Your style may well connect with folks but I would wonder why my readers would be interested in my personal emotional turmoil. I'd be afraid of being called a narcissist no doubt."

It is true that I do not hide myself in my approach to writing and frequently share autobiographical aspects of the-animal-that-I-am — i.e. my individual life experiences — in ways that largely do not conform to the ideological or aesthetic preferences of many. This may well render my writings unappealing and might have the potential to come across as narcissistic, though I'd expect such claims to be coming from individuals reading in bad faith – something I cannot take responsibility for. I do not believe that many, if any, individuals have an intellectual interest in my personal experience, be it emotional, psychological, relational, ecological, etc. But my instinct is that sharing such experiences has the potential to create empathic connections that are more valuable than intellectual interest. The social concern of being misunderstood as a narcissist might be a frightening prospect, but the courage to make connections and, in Camus' words, "create dangerously" is of the utmost value today. How can I desire this courage in others if I am not prepared to do it myself? I am re-minded of my desire for folk stories of heroic individualism and that individuals might write and tell stories of heroic individuals, who rebel and live and revolt.

"This is awkward and unclear."

There are aspects of this book that are incredibly awkward to read, most of which were painful to write. There are also parts of me that wishes this were a more comfortable book, and that the world were a more comfortable and comforting place. While I do not wish to hurt or be cruel to any individual reading this book, I also find the push to make these subject matters easier, more comfortable, and/or less awkward to do a disservice to the subject matter and unhelpful to those I wish to help in my writings. This is not a justification of my wilful refusal to be less awkward — something I would not try to provide, as I am revolted by the notion of needing to justify my choices — and is most definitely an absurd reason to be awkward and remain awkward, in much the same way that all reasons and reasoning is absurd and unreasonable. This is, though, the response which authenticity, sincerity, and integrity bring me to sharing. Yes, I am awkward. Yes, this is awkward. I am not responsible for how any individual reacts or responds to this awkwardness, but am certainly willing and open to being-with individuals in the awkwardness.

My response to the subject of clarity is one that I notice I feel anxiety towards sharing, as I am aware that many will be revolted by the obvious influence of Heidegger in my thought and language. How a matter, a space, a subject, etc., becomes clear I see as occurring through the process of *clearing*; in Heidegger's writings this is sometimes translated as "lighting." The process of clearing is a key aspect of industrial and academic projects. To better understand the history of an area, archaeologists clear away soil and habitat, and kill many living beings in the process. This is intensely similar to agro-foresters clearcutting forests, which are habitat and living beings themselves, though usually differ in intensity. Clearing happens as part of the progressive advancement of technology, which is a Cause that both the academy and industrialism are key aspects of. Clearing is an intensely negative process, with industrialism involving continuing practices of negation and the academy working largely to negate uncertainty and the unknowable. There are of course processes of clearing which indigenous, tribal, and folk cultures have engaged in healthily, which do not fit my description here. But in the context of this place local to me and as a global habitat, where clearing is largely the mass annihilation and extinction of living beings, I desire confusion, incomprehensibility and *un*clearing. My rebellious embrace of endarkenment praxis is largely my revolt against clearing/lighting. There is an intentionality to my being unclear and not seeking to clarify.

"you are using your own understanding/meaning/practice of these philosophies and not so much a doctrinaire adherence to the classic texts."

The above quote sums up the vast majority of the critical responses to this book. As well as this being the main criticism, it is also my response to the criticism.

When I discuss Buddhism, Existentialism, dialectics and other subjects that I have brought into these writings, I am only doing so from the vantage point of my understanding, my perspective, my interpretation, my meaning, my practice, my view; I am entirely limited and absurd in my speaking about them. This is something that I made part of the introduction of this work. For any individual to claim to be able to do differently would be inauthenticity and lacking integrity. I do not doubt that there are examples that differ from, and/or contradict, the perspective that I share throughout this work. This does not negate my perspective though, but places it within the ecological context of a world that is strange and that I experience with the limits of my Being.

Revolting Gaming Clubs

"*But why? For no reason at all."* Dostoyevsky, **The Meek One**

My desire here is to speak to the matter of friendship and being-with-another, and how it may be possible to do so in such a way as to avoid the trappings of comradeship whilst retaining qualities of rebellion and revolt. This is largely intended as a dialogic response to Aragorn!'s short piece *Against Friendship*. The awareness I have that the deceased will not speak back to me is an uncomfortable one. Perhaps another friend might respond, though it is absurd to hope for.

Aragorn! describes feeling suspicious of the friend-comrade indistinction. This seems entirely healthy to me, given how comradeship amounts to being-with-another as objects existing towards the Cause. Rather than being-with as authentic encounter and the joyful positive affirmation of the presence of another individual, comradeship seeks to invite the spectre of a transcendental entity, which the relationship must serve. Post-left and post-Situationist conversations have thoroughly critiqued Organisation and noted the trappings found within organisational systems, whilst upholding a concept of friendship that is largely the same as comradeship. This concept is bound to the practice of affinity groups, which individuals like Bonanno and projects like CrimethInc have advocated for decades. What I notice within affinity groups, due to their

smaller numbers, is how intensely the trappings and abuses of Organisational praxis can be replicated and intensified to horrifying degrees, often with micro-tyrannies forming. I feel suspicious of the affinity group as a praxis of rebellious relationship and being-with.

When thinking about activities done for the immediatist and absurd aestheticism of done-to-do-it, rather than reason, justification, Cause, productivity, or work, I find myself intensely attracted to games and play. That children instinctively seek relationship through play and the creation of games speaks to its value. The idea of friendships engaged in gaming clubs, where individuals are playing together for the sake of playing together, as absurd rebellions against reason, Cause, work, and productivity, is intensely attractive to me. As a means of being-with-others in friendship, whilst actively refusing comradeship as assimilation into the totality, gaming clubs strike me as spaces where connections and relationships may be made and strengthened, in the same way that children become better friends through play.

Given that playing a game is not salvation from any of the struggles and abuses occurring in the world, this suggestion of gaming clubs as revolt could well be responded to with the question of "why?" Playing chess, or an imaginative game, or hide and seek, or whatever game is an individual's preference, is not a means of stopping the industrial machinery that is mass-extinction culture. This much is obvious. With absurd reasoning I could say – and do feel – that games present ways of surviving our lives, in relationship with other individuals. But given the inevitability of death, there is an obvious absurdity in surviving, so this is really no reason at all. Why are you playing? Why are you not playing? Reasons given for playing and not playing being absurd, it ultimately comes down to choice and desire. Do you want to play? Are you choosing to play? I know that I want to play, and I take great joy from playing games with friends and loved ones.

I've continually seen revolutionaries and insurrectionaries recite the rhetoric of "if everyone just rose up, rioted, engaged in strikes, took up arms, etc., then we'd win". It could be said that if the entire population engaged in a giant game of hide-and-seek or tag or some other game, then the system would be brought to a halt and nothing could be done about it. Of course I know that a game of such size is not going to happen, just like how the collective actions desired by revolutionaries and insurrectionaries are not going to happen at the scales they dream of. That is not the point of the game, though. Revolutionaries and insurrectionaries are seeking a Cause, generally seeking to transcend and be saved from the absurdity of the world as it is. The idea of revolting gaming clubs is not to transcend or be saved, but to be-with in relationship, as revolted individuals embracing their lives, relationships, or fun for the sake of not renouncing any of these experiences.

Sobriety and Intoxication

"*Everything that exalts life at the same time increases its absurdity.*" Camus, **Summer in Algiers**

The matters of sobriety and intoxication speak to subjects and experiences that have been part of my life from early childhood, with my father's addiction to narcotics. This was intensified through meeting many of his friends who were also involved in 12-step programs. I have friends and loved ones who embrace intoxication cultures and praxis, such as psychedelia and pub scenes, as well as radical sobriety cultures and praxis, such as straight edge. While I was more inclined towards radical sobriety before my experiences as a cancer patient, the experience of needing opiates as part of the process of my surviving the brain tumour rendered radical sobriety an impossible option for me.

When thinking about the subjects of sobriety and intoxication, I am re-minded of the philosophies of Nietzsche and Camus, and their concepts of the *übermensch* and absurd man. Nietzsche is often claimed to have hated alcohol, comparing it to Christianity, and championing the sobriety of only drinking water; his writings in *Ecce Homo* and *Twilight of the Idols* are often understood as an absolute rejection of intoxication. Were this all Nietzsche said on the matter it would suggest that the *übermensch* is an entirely sober individual. But this is not the case. Throughout Nietzsche's writings he uses the figure of Dionysus, the god of wine making, festivals, madness, and fertility as embodying much of his philosophy. In his book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, one of the final chapters is called *The Drunken Song* , where the prophet Zarathustra and his followers are drunk.

The distinction lies between intoxication as like-Christianity, which for Nietzsche meant a form of numbing no-saying to life and experience, and intoxication as Dionysian pessimism, as a celebratory yes-saying to life — Nietzsche's yes-saying as a positivism that is a revolt against the negativity of no-saying. This interpretation of Nietzsche opens up his philosophy to a conclusion where it is not that intoxication is good or evil, but that there are desirable and undesirable qualities about the relationships individuals might come to have with intoxication.

With regards to Camus's philosophy and the presence of alcohol within it, two of his fictional characters representing qualities of his absurd man come to mind: Don Juan, used in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and Jean-Baptiste Clamence, from *The Fall*. As examples of the absurd man, neither of these characters seek transcendence or salvation from their lives or the world, embracing their freedom and choice to live with an integrity that does not need rules. While I find the shallowness of their desires and choosing to live as libertine (Juan) and judge penitent (Clamence), aesthetically revolting; I appreciate the characters as figures embodying Camus' concept of the absurd man. Their relevance for me is that neither of them are sober characters. It is not that Camus positions alcohol as a requirement for the absurd man, but that he does not exclude alcohol and intoxication from his concept of an individual who exalts life. In his novel *A Happy Death* there is the famous line: "(s)hould I kill myself, or have a cup of coffee?" which speaks to consumption as part of a life-affirming anti-suicide praxis, which I would describe as revolting positivity.

I know that in my life the consumption of substances like morphine, codeine, coffee, alcohol, CBD, cannabis, valerian, mint, lavender, and others, have all been aspects of my survival and exaltation of life, my yes-saying. I also know that I have needed and taken great joys and meaning from sober experiences. Memories come to me of days climbing mountains in the Lake District, with my partner, done sober — perhaps comparable to Zarathustra's assent up mountains and Sisyphus' return down, as self-empowering absurd experiences — and then enjoying a glass of wine or whisky in the evening after, as celebration of the day.

I feel reluctant to be negative towards either sobriety or intoxication, though feel disinclined towards the absolutism of praxis that place one state as better than the other. Were I to make a ruling and no-say to one, then I would squander many a desirable experience. Had I had no painkillers during my brain surgeries I may not have survived them, but I find the notion of a lifetime of continual opiate consumption revoltingly undesirable. I find myself living a praxis that is not *yes or no* in absolutes, but *yes now and not now*, dependent on context, environment, situation, and my desires in the moment.

Surviving

"Oh, it's absurd, absurd! Incomprehensible! Improbability! Impossibility!" Dostoyevsky, **The Meek One**

I am surviving. I have survived every experience I have lived through and am alive. I survived cancer, abuses and bullies, grief, a major car crash, nearly getting shot whilst sabbing, and other experiences that could have left me wanting to renounce life. I have survived and that is absurd, since I will die regardless, without reason or justification beyond my absurdity and desires. I am alive as I am surviving.

I am surviving with others who are surviving. Orcas are surviving. Badgers are surviving. Corvids are surviving. Rhinos are surviving. Jaguars are surviving. Bats are surviving. Stingrays are surviving. Elephants are surviving. Deer are surviving. Wild boars are surviving. Individuals living in shanty towns and on the streets in cities across the world are surviving. The forests that are still presences upon the earth are surviving. The basic ecological thought is that living beings are in some way or another connected and not separate. In other words, co-existing. We are surviving and co-existing and survival requires an ability to co-exist well.

Marx is famous for having stated that philosophers have merely interpreted the world and that the point is to change it. Due to all the clearing and annihilation left in their wake, it seems clear to me that those who have sought to change the world have succeeded primarily in ruining it. Absurdism is a means of considering how individuals may live in the uncertainty of not having a why, a reason, or a Cause. In absurdity the answer to how an individual might live is: by the absurdity of their life, in passionate embrace of their life. With the task of Eco-Absurdism not being to change the world, the question is how do we live together? How might I co-exist with other living beings and embrace my life and relationship with them, with absurd and unreasonable passion?

In the context of a mass extinction event that is driven by industry and totalitarian agriculture, the matter of co-existence is not an easy one. This mass extinction event has the potential to be utterly devastating, to the point of potentially becoming comparable to the Permian-Triassic extinction event, where approximately 90% of living organisms were lost. There is a big difference between that mass extinction event and this one. That one took approximately 60,000 years to fully arrive, meaning that potentially some of those who survived had the ability to adapt and evolve as the changes occurred. With regards to this current mass extinction event, which seemingly began about 10,000 years ago and has accelerated with the industrial and technological revolutions of the past few centuries, there is another that it is arguably more comparable to. This other is the K-T extinction event, famous for being the end of the Cretaceous era, where a meteorite collided with the earth and in an instant rendered the world fundamentally different. The similarity is the speed and intensity, which is closer to this event, though definitely more sudden and severe in its immediacy. All those who lived during those extinction events co-existed, lived, survived, and died as absurd beings, as did their offspring and their offspring and their offspring, which continues until we reach this moment, and doesn't it all seem a little bit absurd? What was the point? Why bother, when they all died anyway and the absurd embrace of life means living amidst mass extinction again? It would be inauthentic of me to claim to be able to give any of their reasons for living as they did, and I do not see a need to justify or find reasons for them to have done so.

How we might co-exist with other living beings amidst mass extinction strikes me as the metaphysical rebellion that Camus affirms in his refusal to embrace the politics of mass slaughter. Expanded from his narrow leftism, I affirm a rebel praxis that is ecologically holistic. What I mean by this is to live with revolting positivity and integrity. It might be absurd to care for any

particular living being, but that does not negate the beauty and desirability of freely choosing to be responsive and responsible towards others who are seeking to survive.

Eventually the badger setts I check and care for will be abandoned or lose their inhabitants and eventually there will be a day where badgers go extinct. Every plant I have ever planted will one day die and return to the soil, destroyed, with their searches for sunlight rendered absurd. No individual, human or non-human, flora or fauna, I love or have loved will survive forever. One day I will die and all my efforts to survive will be rendered absurd, as I will be no more. Is this reason for me to stop? Does this render my actions and desires unjustified and therefore worthy of negation? No! Imagining myself at the point of my death, considering how revolted I would feel were I to renounce myself and not care for those I co-exist with, and how happy I would feel to know that, despite the absurdity of my attempts, I had attempted to care for them instead; my preference is to imagine myself as happy.

"The knowledge that certain nights of prolonged gentleness will return to the earth and sea when we have gone can indeed help us in our death. Vast sea, forever virgin and forever ploughed, my religion with the night! It washes and feeds us in its sterile furrows, frees us and holds us upright. Each wave brings us its promise, always the same, What does the wave say? If I were to die in the midst of unknown to the world, cast off by my own people, my strength at last exhausted, the sea would at the final moment flood into my cell, come to raise me above myself and help me die without hatred." Camus, **The Sea Close By**

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Julian Langer
Revolting
Eco-Absurdist Rebellion
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