When I say I am an anarchist, I simply mean that, to the extent that I have the power, I refuse to let anyone or anything dominate me. In other words, I refuse to accept the power of any authority, any institution, any existing or would-be ruler, any ruler, etc., over me. This is why I also refuse to choose between potential rulers and rules. Doing so would express a willingness to give up my power to create my life, a willingness to surrender this power to others, and I am not willing to do this. I also am not willing to even temporarily hand my power over to any authority or institution to act for me. This is why I won’t turn to cops or courts to deal with any problem or conflict in my life. To the extent of my power, I avoid dealing with these institutions altogether.

When I say I am an outlaw, I don’t mean that I am some great, heroic bandit (such a claim would make my friends laugh their asses off). I mean simply that, to the extent of my power, I live alegally, that is, without regard for the law. I don’t let the law determine my choices and my actions. Rather I use all my powers – my skills, my tools, my wits, my relationships – to create my life on my own terms without getting caught. This alegal-
ity reinforces my refusal to ever voluntarily deal with cops or courts.

I speak of alegality and not illegalism, not because I am opposed to illegalism, but because I want to be precise. Originally, the term “illegalism” had a specific meaning. An illegalist was an anarchist who chose to use illegal means as the way to make her living rather than begging or taking a job. So “illegalism” referred specifically to robbery, burglary, theft, counterfeiting, etc., not to propaganda of the deed, attentat, and the like, nor to such things as the refusal of military service, taxes, etc. The original debates over illegalism were therefore not about whether anarchists should take illegal actions – it was assumed that all anarchists did – but about whether individual reappropriation was a legitimate tactic – and for an egoist this is not even a question; the only question is: “What can I get away with?” In any case, anarchists, and for that matter, all free-spirited, unsubmissive individuals, will inevitably break laws. When laws exist, my choice to live on my own terms will make me an outlaw, because I will ignore law except as an obstacle to avoid.

A person could look upon these refusals – not voting, not turning to the cops, not using the courts, etc. – as a set of principles, an ethic, that I choose to live by. But I won’t let them become a power over me, because I want them to remain my principles, my ethic. So I don’t set them as rules to follow, but choose them in each moment, because I consider them to be the tools best suited for creating my life as I see fit. I want to live my life on my own terms immediately, here and now, not put it off to a future that is always a fiction. And every time I give my power over to another, I lose my life here and now, which is to say more simple: I lose my life. So, for me, this so-called set of principles, this so-called ethic, is simply my practice of making my life my own here and now.

\footnote{This practice is also called reprise individuelle – individual reappropriation.}