

Becoming Animal

My Feral Individualism

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When first considering what it is to be an anarchist, or if not to be an anarchist then to be someone embracing anarchy – which some people might call being an anarchist – my awareness is immediately drawn to my body and the space that my body occupies.

This usually begins by thinking about my feet. I find these attached to my legs. My legs are attached to my groin. After this, I find my torso, with these arms and hands attached. I cannot find my head visually until I use a mirror, and even then, I am seeing a reflected image – though of course, I can feel my head with my hands.

I have a sensually immediatist experience of being this body. My power is located in the flesh that I am, the flesh that is located here. I can use these hands to form a fist and punch anyone I wish to. My mouth can sing songs of wild beauty, or voice poetry as perception attack. These feet can stamp on badger traps – the only beautiful cages are destroyed cages.

Sartre said, “(m)an is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does”. This body that I am condemned to be – the flesh that is my immediate power – I feel as my freedom. My sensation of freedom starts somewhere within my lungs and muscles, along my skin, and throughout my brain and nervous system – though I cannot trace exactly where it starts or ends. I have felt a great sense of freedom when walking across the fields and scattered patches of woodland, across the hills on Briton where I live. With this, I have felt tremendous sorrow for how violated the world (I am immersed within and am an Extension of) is by Leviathan, as I have stared out across valleys and out into the distance. One of the most intense feelings of freedom I have ever experienced has been to remove all my clothing when accompanied only by trees, squirrels, and birds, and to dance with them, as fellow beings who are primordially free but violated by Leviathan. Kafka said “(y)ou are free, and that is why you are lost” – I agree somewhat, but I am only lost because civilisation dis-places me, as it violates the world I am.

This body, that I am condemned to, is caught though, in a perpetual paradox, which seems equally inescapable. In one desperate sense, I am alone in my unique body, singular and fundamentally me. In another sense, I am immersed within and an Extension of a multiplicity, which is the world I experience, first as the immediate body I sensually am, and second through language and the world of reified forms.

The image of this paradox is simple. I am stood naked under tree cover, unique, singular, an individual. I take a breath and the world enters into my body. I look at the sunlight as it shimmers through the leaves above me, and the world enters my Being through my visual field. The smell of the stream passes my nostrils, and as I breathe out, I become the world.

Caught in this schismatic abyss, I find myself compelled towards a practice of individualism. Why individualism, rather than collectivism? My body is often found within the machinery of Leviathan which is that collective known as society. The ultra-left collectivists and supporters of communisation would whisper in my ear that I am duty bound to the means-of-production of Leviathan and would seek to draw me into their economic-politics. But I'd say that projects, such as Tiqqun and others, which seek to synthesis communisation theory with anarchist praxis, are little more than bad faith preachers, as they locate freedom exclusively within the domain of society and deny the immediate power and freedom of their flesh.

To me society is little more than a cage seeking to cage itself within itself, building walls to keep the world out, chaining itself to these walls, masking its face to hide its ugliness, while seeking to totalise its presence. The form this cage takes is technology. Clothing, ploughs, skyscrapers, roads, televisions, computer screens and so on – all machinic totalitarian repression, as an attempt to deny the freedom of the world. To society, the beasts of the world, the rivers, the forests and even the light of the sun, must be made tame, chained to it, and (basically) collectivised.

This is all to mask a psychic-lack civilisation both preaches and attempts to hide as it tries to mask the strange schism with modes of desiring-production. We are told daily that we are cut off from God but must build icons to God to hide this. We are told that we are cut off from utopia but must seek to build utopia to hide this. We are told that the idea of what we lack is what we desire, so we must build and produce and progress, in the great meliorist sublimation of desire.

My experience of this phenomenon is that repression and sublimation of the flesh is the mode of production of the desiring-machines of Leviathan/civilisation/society. Normalisation, conformity and other forms of collectivisation are the basis of this production narrative.

Normalisation through desiring machines becomes the violation of the world, that I find my flesh in a paradoxical (non-)holism with. The wild world of tribes, beasts and forests becomes the weird, as the farm, city, politics, markets and all other aspects of the machine of Leviathan become the norm. Normalising The Earth, As The Violation Of Anarchy would seem an apt title for a history of civilisation as ecological and psychic repression.

The collective requires normalisation and for the communised machine to work, self-repression is necessary. This seems abundantly obvious to me. Freaks, homosexuals, Jews, gypsies, the mad and others who are different, all must be normalised – whether that be through brute oppression or through recuperation. Both of brute oppression and recuperation imprison the different. Spaces, social, ecological and psychic, are required to go through the totalitarian hegemonic process of forced-sameness – an obvious inevitable failure, as everything is difference and different.

Even the most autonomous of Marxist projects require normalisation for communisation to be possible. All civilisations necessitate the mechanical reproduction of the same. The collective is sameness and sameness is capital.

Buildings as far the eye can see, all built with uniformed sameness. Vast monocultures of crops infest lands, where forests of diverse communities once stood. Nations under one flag and one ideology colonise and territorialise, to bring the world under the icon of their theocracy. Markets

filled with slaves who are the same as those coins, which are all apparently identical. In the unity of the collective, normalisation is the process of becoming-the-same.

There is an unspoken authoritarian structural racism and speciesism within the majority of projects that look to promote autonomous-collectivist projects. Anglo-Americanised-European leftist moral and structural control has to be contained at all points, as they must control the narrative. All land projects must be part of the same narrative of the autonomous-revolutionary. Any groups or individuals who attempt anything else must be deemed illegitimate and cast aside. I have found this in revolutionary projects such as It's Going Down and other similar spaces.

Even non-agrarian horticulturalist and permaculture projects rely on collectivist normalisation and anthropocentric control. The appearance of polycultural diversity is kept under the hegemonic presence of repression and sublimation.

One machine. One God. One revolution. One people. One species (really). All living the same way to live.

In a world where there is good and evil, right and wrong, there can only be one right answer. As such all answers must be the same. We must all know the same answer because it is the right answer. If it is not the case that all voice the same answer then good people must correct the wrong to erase evil from the world. Even in liberal spaces that like to hold the appearance of plurality, this is only done within the goodly totalitarianism of the democratic-society – the nicest oppression is the good oppression.

The dogma of society is fundamentally that the normal answer is the good and right answer. As such, we all should be normal if we wish to be good. This keeps everything the same – or at least within the image of sameness – and keeps the machine running smoothly.

I find this continually within all politics. To the Nazi/fascist the desiring-machine of normalisation is enforced under the images of unity through flags and races. To the Communist, the desiring-machine of normalisation is enforced under the image of the proletariat worker under the image of unity in class. To the liberal, the desiring-machine of normalisation is enforced under the image of unity in rights and under the law.

All normal. All the same. Unity in identity. Identity in unity.

(While I have, for most of my life, been far closer to the identity I have attached to who I am as someone from a Jewish family, I was raised in a state of being caught between united identities – one half of my family being Catholic (but with whom I have very little connection to). When I learnt during my childhood of the ugliness of historical events, like the Holocaust, born out of nationalist identity politics, I grew to despise collectivist rhetoric more and more.)

For the sake of authenticity, and I say this from a position of anti-speciesism and rejection of species-being, it would be untrue of me to deny the connection between my disgust at the sight of Jewish people caged by the Nazis and my revulsion towards all other cages, such as farms, badger traps and zoos.)

Being good and right necessitates being perfect. If we are made in God's perfect image, as machine-made reproductions, then logically the collective and those who embrace its image are perfect. Perfection is the standard.

All the houses have to be perfect in their sameness. Everyone must have perfect manners. We must all dress perfectly. It goes on and on. Perfect normal lives in a machine that runs perfectly, so long as everyone is normal.

As cyborg culture infests our psychic space more and more, perfection becomes more and more of a cage. If it isn't perfection as a beautiful, successful, popular person, then it is perfection as

a fucked up and depressed screwup, with 2 kids, who is trying their hardest and who is oh so brave on Instagram. All must be perfect. Perfect is God's image and we must be normal, as to be perfect is to be normal. It is normal to be perfect – or at least to be bound by the image of perfection.

Whether it's through religious, political, monarchical, celebrity or wherever else within this culture you find icons to be worshipped; everywhere I look people continually seem to be bound to images of perfection. This is no less the case within radical groups and projects – probably more, if honest. Between the clashes of varying factions and projects, you find perfectionistic ideologues striving towards ideological perfection.

Really, why wouldn't they? They know the way everything ought to be. Everything ought to be perfect. Everything ought to be the same, as perfect.

This is typified by the organisationalist narrative, where all members of a group have to sing from the same perfect hymn book in cult-like unity. (I'm thinking here in particular of Marxists and Jensenites, whose plans for the world necessitate communisation and the normalisation of all life.) The organisation of radical praxis is where radicals start attempting to control the world – normalise it to their standard of perfection – and the point where personality cults and hierarchies form.

The phenomenon of normalisation, organisation, perfection, sameness, unity and the repression and sublimation that goes hand in hand with all this psychic-tyranny and ecological violation, are revolting to me. I am immediately filled with a desire to rebel when I encounter them. I experience them as attempts to cage and clothe the freedom of my flesh.

This is why I take an individualist approach to my activities. But my individualism is not reductive.

As I am caught in that strange schism, where I cannot locate entirely at one point I stop and the world begins with each passing breath, I have come to a position some might wish to frame as "spiritual" – though I'd describe it more as mystical, as I feel more drawn towards fleshy physicalist ontological pictures, which are somewhat paradoxical and that language never seems an adequate tool for articulating. This mystical experience is that which I mentioned earlier – of being a lonely singular individual within a plurality of beings and processes while being equally inescapably immersed within, connected to and an Extension of a monist Being and process. This mystical experience of life as an individual is why I find my individualism most when I abandon the collective, which seeks to renounce Life, in favour of desiring-production, and embrace Life, as the world I am immersed within. It is a horrifying, awe-inspiring and beautiful experience that is undeniably absurd, but I'd be lying if I claimed anything different.

In both of my two published books, I have sought to articulate some of this, as well as in other publishing projects. Whenever I do though I instantly find that this medium of written word fails. I am convinced that this is something that cannot be taught or shown but has to be lived. As such, when I write I am ultimately wishing to encourage whoever is reading to live.

The question I arrive at now though is – what does it mean to live at the end of History? What is life on a seemingly dying planet, which might succeed in destroying the cancerous body that occupies it, or might die of civilisation (taking the cancer with it)? How can I talk about individualism in a space where individualism largely means collectivism, by the standards of society, and where collectivism means mass-suicide?

When confronted by these questions, I am instantly reminded of how tiny I am. When I look up at the stars at night, I am confronted by so much wonder and mystery and beauty, and find

myself as a bizarre mammal, at the edge of the anthropocene. Cultivating any answer is largely an utterly absurd endeavour. But as all point of reason for any living being to continue living appears absurd, when all Life ultimately leads to death, decay and rebirth as some other singular individual being within this colossal monist process, which hasn't stopped anyone else, I figure fuck it – I'll keep on going.

Where to begin though? My instinct, when starting to think about my individualism, is, to begin with the flesh that I individually am; my arms, legs, back, chest, genitals, head, mind, and all that encompasses my body. This is the place where I initially locate my freedom, from where my power emerges.

I describe it as my body, though it is not really 'my body', as a body that I am in possession of outside of me the owner. This would be the way that anarcho-capitalists and libertarians would frame their relationship to the bodies they are – as self-owned vessels for use within the market. From this enframing, their concept of the self and individuality is reductively tied to that organ of the Leviathan that Diogenes would masturbate in. It is not necessary to comment on that area of thought here – I only mention it to state that this is not what I will be in any way aligning myself with before I go on.

From my feet, the body I am takes exquisite joy in feeling the ground underneath me. I have stood barefoot and felt the eros of gravity as my body has found itself firmly supported by the earth. This singular sensation of primordial love, where the earth is both pulling me towards it and supporting me so that I may stand with firm footing, is one where my individuality within the world is affirmed as pure presence. I know that I am stood here; this is where I stand, and the earth which I love, and which loves me, can support the weight of me. From this, I can grow and be strong, and fierce, and powerful, and feral.

As I walk through woodlands, across lands claimed by agriculture, over the roads which scar the surface of the land I find myself upon, by the edges of cliffs that signify to me the edge of my world, and through concrete expanses where the practice of wage slavery is most prevalent; my legs with my feet are the centre of my power and freedom, while walking, running and jumping. My legs have run across rocks by the coast, and have been used to climb trees. The legs and feet below my torso have, on occasion, found that they are stamping down upon badger traps, so as to destroy the revolting cages. The power I find in these aspects of my being enables me to be move, to dance, to smash, and so much more.

Then there is the core of this body that is the flesh I individually am – my torso, shoulders, arms and hands. From this core my will/Life/power manifests. If anyone were to try to attack me, here is where they would likely strike. From here, my arms can muster the power to strike back. I can take rocks in my hands, and from the power that flows through this body, propel them at any enemy I choose. My torso, arms and hands are the centre of my power when I pick up a guitar and attempt to emulate great flamenco and blues musicians. My hands are the centre of my power when I write my experience of the world for those who find that they are reading words I have written. This space is the location of so much of my creativity and destructiveness.

My head, my eyes, ears, mouth, nose, the brain that amplifies the mindedness of my body, my hair and teeth; from this space I take the world I am immersed in into the singular individual I am. I think. I breathe. I sing. I have screamed to trees whose tops could not hear me, hoping they would scream back and I would hear.

I could deconstruct this body further into various organs and would probably start to sound like I was quoting sections of Fight Club (again) – "I am Julian's lungs. Without me Julian would

not be able to breathe” or “I am Julian’s ability to care about economics. I exist only in as much as Julian is revolted by what economics is used for”. But as far as this simple schizoanalytic complexification goes, this is as far as I’m willing to describe here.

But as much as I describe it, the description is not the body. This is my body. I am my body. I am here, and you are entirely there. So how the fuck am I going to give you any meaningful sense of the individuality that is here, when you are there?!

I have caught glimpses of great individualists through the histories that surround them. Renegades, artists, rebels, writers, poets, philosophers, pirates, mystics and others whom society might call mad. While my awareness of their individuality might be through the collectivist usurpation of their creativities and destructivities, I find myself aesthetically and instinctively drawn towards the idea of these individuals. The madness they signify resonates and harmonises where my desire feels drawn to. Thoreau, Wilde, Jeffers, Novatore, Armand, Camus, Masson, Bey, Stirner and others whom I find beauty in are heroes whom I have no real connection to. All I have of their power and presence is faint images upon the backdrop of History – the ugliest narrative I am yet to come across.

I could tell you of my artistic attacks and of lone-wolf hunt sabotaging. I could tell you about the every-day acts of psychological warfare I regularly conduct around domesticated humans. I could tell you about my writings and publishing projects. I could tell you about my music and the inability to go for sustained periods without singing. I could tell you about my day job, and of driving along the roads I hate that scar the land I love and that I feel loves me.

As the collective dominates the space that surrounds me, I find the anarchic freedom of my individuality in moments where time ceases to hold any relevance or meaning. This is when every-Thing slips away, and I am immersed within the primordial now. But I would be lying if I said that I do not ever find myself caught in the cage that is the Reality of Leviathan – when I find myself trapped in time and History/progress/civilisation. Like the land I love, am an Extension of, and are immersed in, I am violated by Leviathan, and this is why I find myself engaged in mad and absurd rebellion.

Every time I breathe, I take in polluted air. The food manufactured by the industries of this culture has to be treated through all different types of alchemy to be desirable. The anthroponic sounds of the urban-space machine are all but intolerable. The agriculture and industry that violates the earth. The monetary system that seeks to chain me to the collective and its markets. The disgust and revulsion this inspires in me is a sensation that worlds will never reflect. I feel a desire to break the chains of normalisation, to not be manufactured into some object that is the same as others within its category.

If my body is the first place I find my individuality manifesting from; my revulsion for society – the herd, as Nietzsche (rightly) described – is the second place I find this sensation. My hatred for society sits beside my love for the earth, wild-Being, the land, all ecological processes and other terms that basically mean the flesh of the world.

I am saddened that nationalists, patriots and others who idolise Leviathan, and so hate that which is wild, have made it such a taboo to discuss the notion of loving the land you live upon within radical discourse. The wounds that fascism and Nazism have inflicted, as those realities sought to violate the earth with their progression, are ones that are not yet really healed. Regardless though, while I have been accused of being a reactionary eco-fascist by collectivists who cannot see past their prejudices, I feel a great love for the land underneath my feet and I apologise to no one for this.

With my love for the land, rather than agriculture, or even well-intentioned horticulture and permaculture, I desire the emergence of feralculture, that opens spaces for wild-Being. This earth that I am is screaming for it. The trees, birds, hurricanes, and countless others, whose individuality defies communisation, are screaming for the destruction of Leviathan.

As I come back to my love of the land, I find my mind turning towards the untamed, the wild and the inhuman. This is a space of dark mystical experience, where Stirner's notion of unman and Nietzsche's ubermensch feel equally relevant. The abhuman is an immediately accessible means of rebelling against the repression of normalisation and sublimation. The sensation of being an anarchist, an individualist, a rebel, feral, from this, is a weird space of becoming-animal, where freedom and individuality are untamed spaces. Like the Lycan, who is part man and part wolf, in this way, I am best suited neither to the forest nor the city but find myself drawn to, and caught between, both of them.

This is where my individualist anarchy finds itself in the now that I am here. It might be mad, absurd, or paradoxical, but this is where I am and the Where I am. I have likely, again, failed at my attempt to articulate a sensation whose immediacy to my being is ineffable. Perhaps if I had written this as a poem, or had attempted to paint it, or compose a musical arrangement, maybe then I would have succeeded – I doubt it. If you haven't experienced this – though you obviously could only experience something similar at best (not experience being the same) – I doubt any of this will resonate with you. If you have found this utter nonsense, please just disregard me as one of those mad individuals whom you pay little notice to.

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