

Thoughts on Wildness and Domestication

Renzo Connors

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“If I decide to break the chains of domestication, I can only do so because I feel the chains and suffer the effects of domestication on my own skin.” – Alfredo Bonanno

I

While out walking or cycling at night, foxes can always be seen roaming the housing estate. The glow of their eyes in darkness, appearing from dark alleyways suddenly visible under the street lights, they move around without a sound, hardly noticed. These lovely magnificent creatures are the embodiment of wildness. Leviathan towers all around but yet these wild beings live on freely from domestication. The foxes at times live off the scraps and waste that civilization throws away, but long after civilization crumbles these creatures will live on.

These wild beings will live on long after civilization kills itself because they are not dependent on civilization to provide the means of life. They remain wild and undomesticated, still equipped with the knowledge and skills to find food, build shelter, and survive independently for themselves.

The vast majority of humans on the other hand are totally domesticated and dependent on civilization and the vast majority would not be able to survive without shops and machines. 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.

Domestication begins from birth, straight away an individual is given a birth certificate and social security number. These will be needed throughout life, to be recognised by whatever state an individual happens to be born into, to go to school, to work, to open a bank account and from there to get loans to buy shit, to get a passport, to register to vote, so the state knows who you are, what taxes you have paid or owe, your credit history: to be controlled and exploited. From birth, through childhood, into adulthood, an individual is moulded and taught how to behave, what is acceptable and what is not; through force and blackmail of collective and religious moralities created by the systems and institutions that make up civilization. The end result: a domesticated and a functional obedient citizen and wage slave.

Everything within the civilized culture is geared towards this. Education, children’s stories, TV shows, movies, books, games, and even songs are all exposure to the social norms and control of civilization. The soul purpose of the individual in civilization is to produce and reproduce the social structures, authoritarian institutions and daily subservience to civilized society. There is little room for escape from behind the computer screens and consumerism.

II

Tenalach

Irish – Used to describe a relationship one has with the land, air and water, a deep connection that one literally hears the Earth sing.

I’ve always felt an affinity and closeness with wild spaces. From childhood, playing in the fields and woodlands, fishing in the lake and swimming in the rivers that were close to the housing estate I grew up in. As a kid taking day trips to the Wicklow mountains seeing all the views, beauty of the trees and plants, rugged valleys, and at times what seems like inhospitable landscape of bog land and cliff drops.

Being in such spaces conjures up and stores feelings within me I wouldn't be able to adequately describe with words. Perhaps they could be described as something spiritual.

The landscape has been left scarred by civilization. Roads built long ago by the British colonists to flush out any hiding rebels, shells and ruins of buildings left over from the dawn of industrialism scattered across the landscape, electrical dams blocking up rivers, TV and radio transmitter masts, bog land robbed and left mutilated to feed industrial "progress", forests cut down and replaced by animal agriculture and monocrop Sitka tree plantations poisoning the land, and the mass graves from pogroms and genocide of the religious and imperialist conquerers. There isn't a place left on this island that civilization hasn't left its mark.

In my early 20's locked up in prison for taking part in the anti-imperialist struggle, I felt these feelings for the wild more intensely.

Not seeing any plants or trees, except the ones I could see from my cell window on the horizon. The urge to walk in grass and sand in my bare feet, wanting to roam in woodland to look up at the sky through the canopy.

For the years spent incarcerated I daydreamed about being in nature, being in the mountains, being by the sea.

After four years with eight months left I was granted temporary release for Christmas.

For the first time outside the concrete walls, iron bars and razor wire of prison there was only one thing I really wanted to do and that was to go to the ocean.

The beach was a short walk from where I was staying. To get there I'd first have to walk through a park. As I walked, even though it was winter there was still a lot of colour. A lot of the big tall trees in the park are evergreen trees so they still had their colour. Going through the park my head and eyes were darting around taking in the landscape, walking under the tall trees, their canopy blocking out the sky. It was an amazing feeling being hit in the face with so many different colours, different shades of green.

Sensory stimulation from the sounds of flowing water making its way down streams, birds chirping and singing, the wind blowing long grass and branches, colors of the landscape and the various shades of browns and greens of foliage was almost overwhelming to the senses.

When I reached the beach I walked for a little bit and then sat on a sand dune for about two hours looking out into the vast ocean of green, reflecting in my thoughts and finding some solace in my mind.

Are these feelings that rush around my mind and body urging me wildness, the inner primal anarchic instinct buried by years of domestication?

Or are they an individual desire and love within me for the wild?

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