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Flowers for the Individualist

Why Arguing with Egoists is Pointless

Kevin Tucker

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a simple start to a simple reality which then opens up to an exceptionally complex and complicated question: where does civilization arise and how do we undo it. My answer, much to your dismay I'm sure, we don't do it alone.

I find it comforting to know that all life is working against civilization. It is a wholly synthetic and imposed entity. I get calmness when I look up at the stars at night and feel small in their hugeness. I don't feel insignificant. I don't think about if I matter or not. I simply take solace in knowing that each one of those massive and distant forms exists. That their light guides wild beings at night and the ones that hunt without being dependent upon sight prey on some of them. I get out of my head and all my stupid ego-centric issues and just feel without thinking. That's sacred to me and I genuinely don't give a fuck how you or anyone else feels about that.

Wish I could say it was fun, but before the next tantrum, remember that it was you asking me questions, not the other way around.

For wildness, KT

In conclusion:

This just go further downhill from here and the personal banter that opens each letter (which I didn't post here) seems to come to the front. In the end, the only thing we agree on is that this discussion is pretty pointless. In my opinion, there are far more important things to discuss than this. So when you're wondering why I'm clearly being baited into discussions by and among egoists, I tend to just not even pay attention to them. I hold that truth to be self-evident.

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no way have I presented myself as the solution. Far from it. In fact, that's why I say that rewilding, like domestication, is a process. One that will take place over generations. I have access to wildness, but I will myself, most likely, never be as fully wild as I could have been had I been born in nearly any other point in that lengthy human timeline. I literally watch my daughters have a better chance and it is my fight to give that to them. Or, more appropriately, to let them retain it.

I'm speaking from my experience and then writing from a position where I find the intersection of experience, knowledge and demonstrable evidence towards that end. It rests, intentionally, upon a reliance on the fact that human nature is real and that we are all born psychologically and physically as nomadic hunter-gatherers. Which, again, is demonstrable. That is why social domestication is different than biological domestication. Biological domestication is a historical act. Social domestication has an origin point, but it is necessary to constantly adapt as civilizations grow and intensify. To answer your semi-rhetorical question, that is why people go to work: for a greater good that they are overtly told is in their self-interest. The Self, split off from the rest of the community and left stunted, seeks guidance from an authority figure. It seeks value in merits that I can presume are choices born of free will, but, as I would hope we all know, they are not. We are products of circumstance and those circumstances require constant maintenance, upkeep and renewal.

So all those issues you and every other egoist want to raise about finding some "un-duped" egoism: I can just point to a process and call it as it is. Because egoists see the Self as the means and method of liberation, nothing can be so certain. You want to say that John and I attack a strawperson? Well, it's because egoists seemingly must always be defensive. It's a statement of "this is what I am not". AP is the opposite, a statement of "this is what I am." I don't give a fuck about "spooks", I can make a statement, stand my ground and be on the offense. It's

I know what I can't express. I have called it sacred, spiritual, many things, but I have also said it is not a sentient force. It doesn't speak in English. It doesn't whisper secrets in my ear. It never told me to fuck a tree. It never handed me a living animal as a willing sacrifice. I love the Mbuti term, for "it": the breath of the forest. It is a reflection of the fact that all life impacts other life, always. Because of technology, we scale that impact greatly. The history of domestication is about pulling ourselves away from any notion of a functioning and healthy community. We are neither angels nor demons. Domestication creates a scenario where we can remove ourselves from that community and seek to dominate it. The exact same control you wish to impose on behalf of your self-interest. The world isn't going to stop for you. You die. I die. We all die. And the world lives on. That grand Self, it dies too.

Stirner was a fucking lunatic. Ego and its Own sounds like it was the tantrum of a spoiled child after he was grounded by his parents, and, I'm sure, very unjustly. It was an inward expression from a life long academic and philosopher who tried to find some liberation in a piece of his own fragmented mind that couldn't be taken away. Whatever some priest did to him, I can't say. But it's a fully modernized attempt to double down on the individual, an arising vehicle for empowerment, at the cost of the world. For all his hard work thinking and ranting, an insect laid him to rest. Tough shit.

Here's the thing: the world is bigger than you. It's bigger than me. I don't pretend to have gleaned or uphold some Truth that gives me the power to yield Its Almighty Gospel. Wildness, as bogged down as any term can be, is a reality that is accessible to all. It's grounding. And it's grounding that I can attack from. Within it, we have hundreds of thousands to millions of years of examples about what life lived without existential crisis and within that state look like. That's why I call on them. It's not an abstract, you can find it. Or not. You didn't, and, as you clearly state, you're fucking way more wild than I am. Bravo. But in

"The danger is that the self, constantly removed and made unlike the others, may become isolated. But the Pleistocene solution is the enhanced complexity of relationships."

- Paul Shepard, *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*

"After all, with lions on the same plains, with both of us following the same prey and stealing each others' kills, we became human. We have a lot in common. It's not the lions' fault if some humans later become philosophers."

- Carl Safina, *Beyond Words: How Animals Think and Feel*

For being so concerned with the Self, egoists tend to require a lot of attention and validation.

Egoism has been an infectious issue within anarchism since Max Stirner wrote *The Ego and Its Own* in 1844. Stirner, who spent the entirety of his 50 years in the academy, was a reactionary lunatic. Reading any section of the actual book makes that pretty plainly obvious, which is probably why Stirner's defenders are more likely to paraphrase or extrapolate from him than to quote him.

The basis of egoism is the idea that the Self is, or should be, the basis of all validation and perspective. In short, you can only truly know what you experience. Self-interest is the only true guiding principle in life. Sound familiar? It should, it's the articulation of the individualism that Modernity upholds. It has become the sales pitch for civilization; used by productionists to get workers into factories, used by capitalists to equate freedom with the freedom to consume, and practiced by programmers through distilling the principles of immediate gratification through social networks and personalized technology.

I wouldn't consider it my most controversial stance to think that this inflated sense of Self vs the world is, to say the least,

problematic. As a driving force of civilization, the Self is both a historical and ecological aberration as well as the basis for the domestication process: a fracturing of the maturation, a result of neoteny as Paul Shepard elaborated. The relationship of the individual to the group and within the community at large is contextualized by all animals in adolescence. Domestication requires infantilism, a literal retardation of the process of reconciling your relationship to the world. For anyone who has even a semblance of biocentric or ecological basis for understanding the world, this problem is pretty self-evident. Much like the sociobiologists, the egoist sees the world as something that is in opposition to them, a series of threats to their own over-hyped "free will". They need to be Unique. Stirner sought refuge within himself, the only thing he thought couldn't be taken away from him, because he, like so many of us, was fractured. Scarred by religion and the State, he took the cues and dove deeper inwards. That journey ended, in absolute irony, when he died after being stung by an insect.

Egoism remains a recurrent theme throughout the anarchist world. In many ways, I see the allure of finding comfort in focusing on liberation some Sacred Self. The smaller you make your world and struggle, the easier it is to avoid disappointment. But it is such an intrinsically different worldview to anarcho-primitivism or any biocentric perspective (and I would argue any non-human perspective), that I see no point in engaging its advocates. It happens though, as they are persistent to validate their own unarticulated views. They are critics, their own sense of Self is examined by determining what it is not. That is a platform of negation, so it's fairly hard for them to make statements of assertion about what they are after outside of their own self-interest. Yawn.

They seek, like Stirner, to chase out the "spooks". A term they seem to embrace without having any social awareness of other connotations. A move that I'm fairly positive makes for some very uncomfortable social network exchanges. Regard-

It's fucking ridiculous to me. The problem isn't depth of exploration, it's that you think you've found a non-"Answer" answer: eliminate the "spooks" and liberate the Self through embracing self-interest, which, presumably is fairly anarchistic. Probably, it might not even be far from what I'm openly and willingly referring to human nature. Oooh, scary shit right?

I'm just being honest. I'm not looking for purity. Zero interest.

"And there are plenty of folks out there that have examined this very deeply for a lot longer than you and I have. Why you despise something that embraces individuality in favor of an idea that says we should serve some higher calling and worship some spook is beyond me. I'll always reject serving something higher than me and my own interests, to do otherwise is just religious foolishness."

This is such a modernized perspective of an anarchist's take on "don't tread on me" that it's almost poetic. I worship nothing. I have no altars, I have no prayers. I don't ask the forest questions, but if I pay attention long enough, I find answers and more questions when I'm willing to be humbled by the true simplicity a complex ecology really functions on. I realize that a lot of the ideas I come up with in my head are exceptionally over-thinking simple aspects of reality. Such as, how do I get the perfect liberation of the self? The answer: Get over yourself, you can't do it alone.

At the end of the day, you're asking me to answer to your version of wildness; godly, anthropomorphic, sentient even. I have never presented it as such. But it is real. It's an imperfect term, but, I think anarcho-primitivists might have also said a thing or two about the limitations of language. As such, I'd rather make my case and get on with it. Because what you're doing isn't digging deeper, it's just reductionist purity.

It's not my job to sell you on wildness. My statements are intentionally open-ended and cognizant of the limitations of that term, much like any term. But I know what I know and

without those beings. I am my own, but without the others, I'd rather be nothing. It's not an existential crisis, that comes when I go to a city. Self-doubt, loathing, hatred. You know, that place full of self-absorbed individualists.

"Do you think that the workers want to all go to work? That we are all voluntarily in this game for our own self-interest just because people aren't possessed by wildness? I think not."

Ahh, yes. Here we go. You see, I brought up a point to exemplify the weakness of your position, not to uphold mine. I have the easy answer, people don't want to work because, drumroll please, it's human nature. We're bred and evolved for immediate return, which, as I point out often, has been redirected by modernized domesticators through immediate gratification. It's not the same, it's a replacement, but we seek it out for the same reason: our minds are triggered for foraging and hunting for our community, not for surplus, not for a boss. We help each other, like most animals, because we value the community we exist within.

So, frankly, self-interest is your selling point, not mine. I do argue that civilized life and work are unfulfilling. Which I draw towards the bigger issue: none of us are going to figure this out or move on alone. Which is your point. Ultimately though, you won't say it because it's a bunch of "spooks", but this is what you keep missing: you believe in truth. You believe no human would work out of their own self-interest, but why? How do you know? If each of us is unique and there are no standard presumptions we can make about the universality of human tendencies, preferences or anything else, then how do you make that presumption? Because the State is an artificial creation? Okay, how? When? Why? If you can't understand domestication, how do you get anywhere from this? To put it in your terms, who determines what a "spook" is and why they're innately bad and seemingly oppressive? Is it anything that dictates what your precious ego must do? In that case, why not just get down to biology?

less, as a politics of negation, their only real motivation is in arguing with what they believe they are not. As an advocate of anything, you're guilty of something. Anarcho-primitivism is a favorite of theirs. Why? I'm not really sure I care enough to even dig into it.

"Wildness", in particular, is a concept they really like having a field day with. As a completely oppositional worldview, they also aren't very capable of understanding the term as most of us mean it. In particular, how I use it. Most of these discussions seem based, without any recognition of all evidence offered, that the egoist perception of what "wildness" could be is what it must be: a stand in for God. I'm left scratching my head, which is why it's so easy to ignore it, despite being the lowest hanging fruit.

Every now and then, I'll take a swing. Usually it's because the Fan Club of the Self is so adamant about insisting that John Zerzan and I give their pithy "critiques" some acknowledgement. Twelve years ago, I responded with an essay called 'Egoicide' that was printed in *Green Anarchy*. I've had a number of arguments, all of which just became circular, and, as I state in the following exchange, clearly an argument that exists in two irreconcilable perspectives.

It's pointless because we aren't speaking the same language. The attempt to translate biocentrism to the egocentric is the epitome of impossibility.

I'm presenting as evidence an exchange I just had with Osmia of the Dis-possessed podcast (or something of that nature). I'm not going to bother linking it for the same reason I haven't bothered to listen to it. It's not my job to promote their project and I have no interest in doing so. But I recently went onto a newish web forum to battle around Bellamy Fitzpatrick a bit, stating openly and clearly that my intent was to state my position, that Bellamy's attempt to articulate it is inherently faulty and that I'm not interested in going around their philosophi-

cal circles because I really don't care and I absolutely have no respect for them.

Osmia wrote me to follow up on that. As is often the case, if people ask me a question, I will reply at length. Not always, but probably far too often. My summation of the weakness of that fragile ego-centric perspective and the inability to have a discussion with no mutual understanding is probably pretty obvious.

To sum it up, all terms are imperfect. "Wildness" as a term is, like all terms, a representation, in this case of what I call a community of wildness. To borrow, as I often do, from the Mbuti, it is "the breath that moves through all life." It is not God. It is not a god. It is not a conscious, sentient force. It is not the lion lying with the lamb. It is a term for a state of existence accessible to all and best expressed through embodiment rather than philosophy. As such, it exists far beyond words. Attempts to treat it philosophically are, at best, demanding a whole other level of reification of the concept. It makes it easy to personify it into religious dogma because that's the beast most of us were raised with.

That's also overtly missing the point.

Regardless, "wildness" is a term I use accepting that it's subject to the same limitations as any term. You can read more about that in my essay, 'To Speak of Wildness' from *Black and Green Review* no 2. My positions aren't simply a negation of anything, I stand for something. That is the ground I stand on and fight from. The egoists hope that attacking my particular grounds can undo the hope to stand for something instead of just negating everything beyond their Sacred Self. In doing so, there's not much grounds for being proactive, but it can make that inward turn justifiable.

I genuinely don't get the point of that move. I can accept imperfect terms. Calling the relationship "religious" in nature is done through philosophical reductionism: an idea can only be X or Y. As such, I don't care in playing those games. Want

gesting that you read the responses that you've requested. My bad, didn't mean to slip into fascism!

You do understand that trying to use examples I provided about ecology against me to disprove ecology is just lazy, right? I appreciate your attempt to one up on me on ants. I really, genuinely do. Your sainthood of personage is so beyond questioning, right? I mean, an ant might just be an ant and it might not be doing human things with human relationships? But I'm just the one who is being silly here.

Let's have fun with you missing the point on my comments about egoism:

"One could examine how society relies upon pushing this notion of an atomized individual but also recognize that while doing that it pushes you to serve it. It's what Stirner called a duped egoism."

And I consider you to be a duped egoist.

"Your self interest is always in line with the nation, the state, god, or some other higher calling (in your case wildness). You are not your own."

The self isn't annihilated by wildness, it's contextualized. It's not the only thing that matters. Ever notice that people living within healthy communities aren't battling depression and having philosophical questions about the meaning of life? When you live it, you don't need to have this existential battle. Again, "higher calling"? Wildness asked me to kill my first born daughter, but then told me on the temple altar it was just fooling around. Those things are true only if there are innate values and morals implicit in the personification of an entity. Wildness is none of that. I am my own. I can walk into my lake right now and drown myself. As much as this "discussion" might make me want to do so, I've chosen not to. Why? Because I don't want to. I still have free will, but that won't stop a mountain lion from pouncing on me in the woods and devouring my corpse or a rattlesnake from biting me if I'm overstepping my bounds. But, I also can't and don't want to live

the universe, or "nature", or if it's just, as I state many times, a term that vaguely covers a complex relationship between all living things. Wildness isn't a fucking value, it's a recognition of things that are larger than any individual being. It's not fucking god. It's not malicious. It's not loving and caring. It just is. And bad things can happen within wildness. Tough shit for your precious ego. But it is defensible. It is also illicitly a target of civilization's campaigns. I don't need to personify it to value it and I don't need to impose a moral order on its behalf. Just stop fucking destroying it and tearing it apart. Fairly simple.

That's the thing though, is it another boogeyman for self-righteous egoists? I don't fucking care. I seriously just don't. Call me religious, call me a fundamentalist. I seriously just don't give a single fuck. Next.

Honey mushrooms destroying forests? Give me a break. The honey mushroom is the single largest living organism on earth. Your just so afraid that your anthropomorphized will of each individual living thing is afraid of parasitization. Talk about fragile.

About domestication: are you really this fucking dumb? Not only do I define domestication repeatedly in the thread this comes from but many times in writing. I know you guys get all fucked up by this really technical, scientific and hard-to-follow aspect, but I'll just point to it again: domestication has different forms, hence my use of a qualifier when differentiating them. There is biological domestication (plants and animals) and there is social domestication (humans). Social domestication has to do with sedentism and surplus, or, as I so fucking often state, delayed return societies. If you think I don't cover it, you clearly haven't read virtually anything I've written in the past, let's be modest, 15 years. Personally, I'm against both. But if I'm talking about humans, it's social domestication. Jesus. Fucking. Christ. I'm literally laughing out loud about that.

Again, is this a case of we aren't being clear, or your just so egocentric that it's simply authoritarian for me to dare sug-

to call it religious? I don't care. But even then, there's a refusal, if not inability, to engage the details of it. Again, different languages.

See how this just goes around in circles? Yeah, it's not worth it.

For the sake of avoiding wasting time in the future, I'm just posting the back and forth here. Note that these were emails in a discussion, not written with the intent of publication or posting elsewhere. It is not edited. So typos or sloppy wording might ensue, but the overarching issue remains: these are intrinsically oppositional perspectives and the argument is pointless because you can't bridge that gap. Frankly, I'm not all that interested in it. I don't care about the Sacred Self. At all.

In case anyone might have missed it, there are much bigger issues going on in the world than philosophical discussions with people afraid that their self-interests might not get the respect they preciously grant themselves.

I've left out the precursory aspects and the pithy conclusion to try and keep this at the meat of the argument:

Part one: Osmia's questions

Yes, I am an egoist, which means that the reasons I have for being against civilization rest upon the fact that it impedes upon my ability to live my life on my own terms and causes harm to the things and beings that I care about. Anyways, you say your busy, and this can quickly become way to much so I'll just throw out a few questions and if it works out, I'd love to go on from there. If domestication is a force that severs our connection to a deeper oneness and if this is unnatural (would you explain it in that way?) and not like any other species, then how do you feel about other species that tend to do similar things as humans albeit on a different scale? Is scale the defining factor? Would you consider ants to have domestication and civiliza-

tion? How does all of that work with your ideas of wildness being defined by interconnectedness? -Osmia

Part two: I respond

In regards to your clarification, I genuinely don't understand how egoist reasons for being against civilization do anything to shake the core neoteny of domestication that Shepard nails. Which, I suppose, is why egoists seem to have trouble grasping domestication.

Anyways, I can see how in your question you can't seem to separate my talk of wildness as a connection and continuity outside of a new ageish "deeper oneness". To clarify, I'm not speaking on new age fronts, this isn't a oneness like we are some happy, peaceful world where turmoil doesn't exist and the predator willingly falls before prey. Having connectedness doesn't imply a relief from turmoil, drama, stress or tension. You're quick to dismiss Tamarack, but his "dynamic tension" concept is spot on for describing, I would suppose, connectivity versus "oneness". Yes, we are all connected. Yes, we are all tied and our fates are tied. But connectedness is about mutual-ity and respectively approaching and being aware of the world around you, not just thinking that everything we're all just happy and frolicking.

I'm fine with calling domestication "unnatural". I am more likely to describe it as historical and ongoing. I don't see it as severing anything, hence talking about human nature. The aspects of wildness and being that all humans possess are fractured and redirected by the domestication process for the purposes of socio-ecological-political control. The process can vary, but its mechanisms and targets are ultimately the same. Allegiance to individualism is our predominant sales pitch for it. The domestication process is demonstrable, that's why I focus on the minutiae of socio-ecological changes

beings that live there. People also say Jesus speaks to them. Derrick Jensen claimed that the plants and animals spoke to him (as Tamarack always has to). And yes, I've spent a great deal of time out in the "wild" world as well Kevin. You're not the only one. Again, you don't fucking know me. Anyways, this is circular, and you're right in thinking it's pointless. Osmia

Part Six: I respond

Unfortunately arguing on the defense isn't your strong suit. I wasn't even pissed when I wrote that last message and nothing in it seems to indicate that I'm saying you and Bellamy are the same person (a grave insult to an egoist, I'm sure). I mentioned my past and plentiful arguments with Bellamy and that you were echoing similar points, which you are. I do hate Bellamy, no secrets there. But I don't fucking think about that dude AT ALL unless he's brought up.

I'm not even pissed at your response. I think it's laughable, but when you double down you just show how much you're being aloof both of my actual, stated and consistent views and what I'm getting at in responding (at length mind you) to your questions. Waste of time? Absolutely.

I'm not going to waste time listening to your podcast, I really don't care. You're asking me questions, that's how this started. You have said absolutely nothing new. Again, we're not even speaking the same language. But here's the difference: I'm being honest and upfront about where I stand. Wildness is a "spook"? Good, fuck it, don't care. Not bothered in the slightest. Next. It's a "religious" notion? That's a pretty elementary notion of "religious" but if it's to imply "beyond words and logic", well it's your camp that wants to champion "reification" all of the sudden, so have fun with that word chomping kids, because all words are reifications. There's a difference between me acting like wildness is some cognizant force of justice in

is beyond me, or a cordicep mushroom straight up mind controlling an ant and forcing them to do something against their will, it's just silly. And then you have examples of Elk helping out other Elk that are injured, standing against a group of wolves to protect her friend so she doesn't get hunted despite the fact that her leg is fucked up. There is no one standard either good or bad, the world just exists as it is, sometimes it's ugly and sad, sometimes it's beautiful. And yeah, there is bird language and predator/prey language, no one has denied that, it's just your claims of some reified notion of nature that is being critiqued here. The fact that those things exist or that beavers provide habitat for salmon as well doesn't somehow prove your spiritual quest, it just proves that species interact with one another and sometimes benefit one another. And your notion about civilized people and egoism are laughable. One could examine how society relies upon pushing this notion of an atomized individual but also recognize that while doing that it pushes you to serve it. It's what Stirner called a duped egoism. Your self interest is always in line with the nation, the state, god, or some other higher calling (in your case wildness). You are not your own. Do you think that the workers want to all go to work? That we are all voluntarily in this game for our own self-interest just because people aren't possessed by wildness? I think not. And there are plenty of folks out there that have examined this very deeply for a lot longer than you and I have. Why you despise something that embraces individuality in favor of an idea that says we should serve some higher calling and worship some spook is beyond me. I'll always reject serving something higher than me and my own interests, to do otherwise is just religious foolishness. You say wildness is real and that you can feel it. This is a religious claim based upon faith and nothing demonstrable. Yes, you see wildness, you feel it, I've spoken to people who swear that they've seen mermaids, and that Mt Shasta is actually a gateway to another dimension and that they have seen or heard the Lumerian light

taken at the very onset of the process within delayed return societies. The whole process scales from there, it is as true for horticulturalists as it is for those of us born and raised in the US.

Scale is not a defining factor, but it is a factor. That's why I say civilization is the enemy, not gardeners. But the key to it is the universality, which is why scale becomes an issue and why focusing on the differences between nomadic foragers and sedentary hunter-collectors is particularly telling, amplify for scale and you have us.

I actually just had someone else ask me to respond to 'The Leaf Cutter's Tale' from Dawkins' *The Ancestor's Tale*. I'll post that below so I don't have to be redundant. But to emphasize the continuity below with my response above, domestication, by definition requires explicit and overt change, biological in nature outwardly, or social in nature inwardly (aka human domestication). Bellamy wants to brush that aside by asserting that co-evolution is domestication which, as I've said repeatedly, is just being fucking stupid. Permaculturalists and foodies are keen on promoting this "domestication is co-evolution" deal because they think gardens can save the world and us. Well, not if you look at it with open eyes. It's just the path of least resistance to simply think down-scaling civilization alleviates its problems. That's an insult to the complexity of socio-ecological relationships and evolved symbiosis. The same kind of insult that occurs when some new age urbanite thinks they can pay their respects to wildness by chanting some "oneness" incantations without getting their hands dirty and world views checked by the wild first.

Those people, like all people, have access to wildness, they too, are born of it. There's nothing exclusive about it, but it's as easy to obscure it with language as it is to stunt acceptance and understanding of it by thinking you've got it all figured out.

Seems likely that I should preemptively point out that this is why we speaking of "rewilding" and "going wild" instead of

just "be wild". You were born wild, but you've been domesticated. It is a process, likely one that will span generations, to undo that process. It is a goal and one best left by being willing to get checked along the way.

That said, wildness is a term, and like all terms, is a representation of a reality and connection. That it can be subject to the overly philosophical whims of critique doesn't alter the truth it represents: wildness is real. The universality of existence is real. All beings are alive and cognizant of their own place in the world and it is respective of the wills and wants of all other beings. That doesn't make it peaceful, but it does make it absent of war. Within the dynamic tension of wildness, there is a reassured place where the civilized need to constantly question and try to find meaning in existence is just simply lived and understood. That is a reality that has withstood centuries of biologists attempting to narrate it (a la Dawkins) and thousands of years of civilization attacking it. Having seen it, having dedicated my life to fighting for it, I have no patience for anarchists "against civilization" who want to pretend it doesn't or can't exist just because it doesn't jive with their individualist experiences.

For wildness, KT

It's a fairly common argument, I think even Green Anarchy posted some stuff before about "ant agriculture". I have to admit reading this was difficult logistically speaking, holding my computer sideways and reading text that way, but I'm not unfamiliar with the argument.

In terms of the argument, there's on main counterpoint: if ants do indeed "garden" and "domesticate," then it means nothing for us. As far as we might know it, ant "agriculture" is an evolved trait, ostensibly one they could have always have had (likewise, it could be recent). Domestication by/of humans is

that you've had go out the door and you say that sedentary hunter gatherers who by no definition you've ever presented have any domesticated plants or animals but gather salmon are domesticated. And then we can into a whole new territory where you treat domestication as something entirely different that becomes even more vague. So now it's no longer about a relationship, it's just about humans becoming domesticated by...well, I don't know. Themselves? Sounds more like a religious narrative where evil crept in. Maybe someone ate the forbidden Salmon or something. I've then gone on to point out how your wonderfully romantic notions of wildness are perfectly flawed and don't match up with the real world in terms of some disney version of interconnectedness and individual species' relationships with each other and I quote:

"I would suppose, connectivity versus "oneness". Yes, we are all connected. Yes, we are all tied and our fates are tied. But connectedness is about mutuality and respectively approaching and being aware of the world around you, not just thinking that everything we're all just happy and frolicking." "All beings are alive and cognizant of their own place in the world and it is respective of the wills and wants of all other beings. That doesn't make it peaceful, but it does make it absent of war. Within the dynamic tension of wildness, there is a reassured place where the civilized need to constantly question and try to find meaning in existence is just simply lived and understood."

Balance, connectedness, mutuality, respect. You're not the only one who learned things outside of books and it's clear to me that that's complete bullshit from my own observation as well as critically thinking about what I've learned from what I've read. That shit exists but it also doesn't so to try to pass your idea of wildness off as something real, you at least need to have an honest observation about real ecological relationships. How you get the nutty notion that Wolves are exhibiting respect and mutuality while destroying coyotes for the hell of it

powerful sermons, it actually doesn't do anything to persuade me of your religious claims. This isn't a matter of the merits of or worthwhile nature of "wildness" or the "evils" of "domestication", it's about claims that you push that treat these as real concepts and some of us pointing out the slippery definitions that you are utilizing and how when analyzed, they actually make no sense. Different world views? Well, yeah, we can go down that road to, we definitely have different world views, and I can criticize the hell out of your concept of wildness as a spook (and I actually have, you can listen to my podcast if you want to hear it in detail, I haven't the patience to write it all out here, dispossess.tk) and tear apart other shitty things that primitivism reinforces, but that wasn't what this was about. I was questioning your definition of domestication though which is where this began. It's a slippery definition and one that once probed deeper doesn't actually have any substance to it. You claim one that it is a relationship between humans and another organism where humans benefit. With that there is enough to go off of, whether it be your continual insistence on treating humans as distinct from every other species to the point where weirdly enough you'll justify ant domestication (which you're wrong on btw, if you actually understood ants, you'd understand that this is very much a system of submission and force where individual ants are conscious, this just reveals your own ignorance on the subject) and other species' relationships that for humans you'd cast into the evils of domestication. And then you act like I'm the moron for not understanding that ecology is about more than individual relationships cause I highlight the flaws in your crusade. So which is it, is it about individual relationships or the totality of an ecosystem? If honey mushrooms destroy a forest that's chill cause that's wildness, and an ecosystem is bigger than one species, if humans do it, it's domestication and bad. Maybe we can just chalk that one up to some cognitive dissonance, I don't know. And then two, you take it into the realm of a social situation where all definitions

historical, it represents a change in subsistence strategy and evolutionary trajectory. We aren't ants. That they might do something doesn't mean it's justifies (as the permaculturalists would argue) what we do nor that it's the same thing (next point). A black widow female decapitates and cannibalizes the male after mating. I don't see anyone using that to defend Dahmer.

In terms of this article, I'm not getting domestication from the first part. If they're saying that gardens and underground networks are the "domestic," shall we say, situation for ants, well, that's not true: their social and habitual living is an ecological and biological adaptation. To assert that it's domestication would require that it be a historical change, which isn't what they're arguing. If you are a tiny colony dwelling insect that lives in vast underground tunnels, you aren't domesticated because you live in something that could arguably be considered a "city," that's just their wild state. It's not only anthropomorphization, it's anthropomorphization of a historical circumstance that we propagate. If sedentism is in a species DNA, then you can't say it's been altered, which is what is required for domestication.

The other side of this argument is that ants are parasitized themselves by fungi in other circumstances. It causes them to alter their behavior, die and host new fungi growth. A number of stinging insects do the same. On an individual basis, that's actually a better argument for domestication than "fungi cropping" in the first half of this. But it's a short sighted attempt to make the argument, considering ants are exemplified here for propagating fungi with benefits to themselves, when taken in whole with fungi parasitizing ants that this is a symbiotic relationship.

Which gets to the second argument. They state that the aphid relationship is not symbiotic, but then claim the ants offer them protection to the point where aphids have evolved a different pattern on their rear ends that is more likely to draw

the ants in. How is that not symbiotic? They both gain. For it to be domestication, it would have to, at the very least, favor one over the other.

Long story short, I think domestication is a straight forward concept, and neither argument presented here seems to make it sufficiently.

Part three: Osmia responds

For the record, I was a primmie and am well familiar with the critiques that have been presented and know it in and out. GA and AP critiques expanded upon an anti-civ critique that I first found through Jensen's work. Your writings in particular as well as John's used to be of a lot of value to me. Still are to an extent but after years of being into it and finding myself hostile to nihilist and egoist critiques I explored the latter more to expand my understanding to have an informed critique and ended up coming out of it having more of a critique of AP and GA. So again, it's not out of ignorance, it's out of I'm genuinely baffled by some of the ideas that are thrown about once they are explored deeper and find it of interest to challenge them deeper. Part of the reason why I'm interested to engage with you is because I haven't actually seen any responses beyond just simple dismissal or statements that just reaffirm things as if they are obvious such as "wildness is real", "domestication is real", and so am genuinely actually interested in what the response would be. And Tamarack, anyone who wants to hold a "shamanic event" is automatically going to make me skeptical. The more I see from that guy the more it reinforces so much of my original suspicions that I felt when I was at teaching drum of him and the whole place. It's weird new age ideas blended with primitivism and trying to be Ojibwa.

"In regards to your clarification, I genuinely don't understand how egoist reasons for being against civilization do any-

more immediate and detrimental manner. So why would the egoist oppose? Because that's a false liberation? What's truly their self-interest? Maybe it is staring at a screen all day and popping pills. Who is the egoist to argue that?

If the idea is that pure thinking and action only comes from what is ultimately self-interest then those same presumptions about the universal value of the Self underpin each individual. That's the egoist version of not just human nature, but all nature. That the parasitized wasp might be considered the subject of overwhelming force due to the loss of will is a universalization of civilized human values. That is anthropomorphization and an implication of values.

Anarchism itself is a statement about human nature, like it or not: we are better off without government and without overarching institutions, we won't just kill and destroy each other. Terms be damned, the reality remains. I don't want to pretend that anyone or anything can be value free. I just chose to put my values up front. And upholding wildness and human nature as it exists within it is how I do so.

For wildness,
KT

Part five: Osmia responds

For the record, I'm not Bellamy. He's a friend of mine, but that doesn't mean that I agree with him on everything and vice versa. I'm actually not obsessed with him, and your complete hostility towards him is weird. I think you need to smoke some weed and calm down about all of this (I'm only half joking).. I'd also remind you that you actually don't know shit about me but seem to assume a lot which is actually pretty annoying. There was a lot to your email and plenty of little digs so don't blame me if I follow your lead and abandon attempts at keeping it friendly. Despite your tendency for delivering very

by turning the garden into "natural" which is something that seems to have laid into Bellamy's head pretty seriously. I think that's where this whole question about "but what is domestication really?" is coming from and I've also been clear that that's a huge issue I have with permaculture. I don't say "hand's off", I say trust in wildness and encourage wildness. The only planting I've ever done was to encourage native pollinators personally and I've seen massive changes from it. They know better than we do. But the problem is that civilization is creating the circumstances that cause and perpetuate the damage. Your case of serviceberries is a case in point: that's not an argument that humans need to be starting fires, but that humans need to stop intervening when wildfires would be coming through. It's a gardener and innately religious-stewardship notion that we need to control that situation. Which isn't even to say fires are the problem, they've been in our "toolkit" for upwards of 2.5 million years, that's significant.

That said, if this can't move beyond applying egoist perspectives to how you or Bellamy or whoever imagines anarcho-primitivists see the world, then that's where this whole discussion ends. And I see that through this back-and-forth as much as any other. Which, again, is why I see it as being a circular argument and why it can be a waste of time. You want me to dictate my world view into your terms, but it doesn't work that way. It's a bigger issue here, it's a way of seeing the world and it's not one that I'm going to be able to share solely through writing.

And the whole AP "strawman" argument about egoism... When we stop being right about this, we'll stop doing it. These are innately different world views. I see no liberation in doubling down on the self when it is a civilized construct. The individualist has already won its crusade. If it was liberating, then Americans would be liberated. They've just been given the technological tools to seek gratification for their egos in a

thing to shake the core neoteny of domestication that Shepard nails. Which, I suppose, is why egoists seem to have trouble grasping domestication."

Can I take the opportunity to actually ask why it is that you seem to have such disdain for egoism when its combined with an anti-civilization critique? I do remember at one time on the B&G book recommendation list that was up on one of the versions of that site that you included Stirner which I assume means you've read him and I think it's a safe bet to assume you're familiar with others like Wolfi and Jason McQuinn, why is it that you have such a disdain for people having their own motivations for being against civilization and not resting that upon some greater thing outside of them?

" Having seen it, having dedicated my life to fighting for it, I have no patience for anarchists "against civilization" who want to pretend it doesn't or can't exist just because it doesn't jive with their individualist experiences."

I can't speak for others on this (nor do I want to) but as far as I'm concerned I wouldn't say that wildness doesn't exist because it doesn't jive with my individualist experiences. I'd question it based upon what it is said to be and how that upon deeper exploring seems to actually not line up with the reality of the situation. So when you in particular speak of wildness you throw all of these values and relations that it embodies-particularly as they exist outside of humans who are as you put it domesticated-as defining it, things such as interconnectedness, mutualism, being absent of war, having respect of the wills and wants of other beings, being aware of the world around you, respect, connection, etc. And on top of that also some sort of communication network that can convey messages across the world to anyone. And then you counter that with its opposite domestication which essentially is the opposite of all of those things and say we need to strive for the former in order to find our place again so that we can fall back into some sort of continuum and greater whole and step away from

the latter which is stepping outside of the way that every other species exists in the world. This is my interpretation and you can correct me if I've somehow misunderstood where you are getting at. So that's fine until you start to examine it deeper and then questions start to appear that aren't really taken into account. So that if there is this greater whole that embodies these values that are thrown at it then what about species that actually don't share those same values that aren't human. What about ants, and termites and others that farm and have warfare, slavery, competitiveness? And outside of even those examples, what about parasites? The latter we can go down the road of predator prey relations sure, but when it comes to shit like parasitic wasps and mind control that doesn't seem like it's taking much into consideration for the other that they are fucking with. And then we can go down the road of exploring species individual relations with the environment around them that aren't even that extreme of examples and I'd ask about wolves that kill coyotes for no apparent reason other than hatred? What about coyotes that kill foxes for the same reason? What about Elk that without Wolves present to keep them on the move and their population in check will denude a stream bank in the same way that domesticated cows will do? Are these species stupid, apathetic, unaware, or malicious? Or even rabbits that tend to breed way too much and overshoot their carrying capacity and then take the Lynx down with them because their population also grew with them? So it's examples like these that are interesting to take into account with that and then we can move on to creatures that very deliberately take on the task of manipulating the world around them like a gardener does which arguably could be said to be every species. So when humans manipulation of the world and shaping of it tends to become a negative thing, it's worth exploring why there is a difference between them and others? What about a beaver? I can continue throwing examples at you but that's overkill and you get the point. So I don't know what wildness is if it embod-

well, but we've buried that ability as a weapon so it's hard to see it objectively. There's no value being placed on habitat creation or change. That's this aloof attempt to undermine the definition of domestication by attempting to seek it everywhere, which isn't the real world. You're asking me to play your game, but I'm not interested. I think very few people are trying to dissect and seek ego-based intention in all acts of change the way you, Bellamy and your posse have. I don't see the end point in what is a semantic search to justify the self. I think I've been pretty clear on this. And that's why I think it goes nowhere.

In regards to the ants, if you have to dig back 12-50 million years, I think it's safe grandfather that into "natural". And I object to the idea of anthropomorphizing insects and attributing military and industrial personas and positions to them. That is pure anthropomorphization. In terms of ant biology, they are connected on a neuron level as a whole. It has been argued that ants a colony of ants are itself a biological entity. That a single hive mind is actually a collective. "Personhood" is non-existent. Everything I've already said about holistic relationships and balance applies to parasitization. It's an attack on the individual only if you're an egoist and imposing the values of self-worth as virtue. Same applies to referring to everything as planting and farming. A squirrel plants a forest by being neurotically obsessive about burying nuts, but that doesn't make it farming. A hunter-gatherer shits the seeds of berries they pick, that doesn't make them farmers.

So it's confusing to think that AP "implies a hand's off approach" when the opposition is saying it's all-or-nothing: if you plant, it's domestication. Once again, we don't see the world in the same way and I don't see propagating wild, native species as gardening or forest gardening. The practice is upholding and fighting for the wild. But this isn't some environmentalist's trip. The point is integration into wildness, to stop being outsiders and stop acting like them. Permaculturalists want to short cut the process and not ditch control

only in practice, not in word. It's a big picture thing, not a microcosm. And it's exceptionally hard to put into words. To a large degree, I have stories that relate to what I've written and touched on that I would never tell another person. They're not open for interpretation for me. It took me over ten years to find a way of talking about the messengers that I spoke of in 'To Speak of Wildness' in a way I felt wasn't compromising what I got from them. I'm not trying to pull some shamanic magic, I'm speaking of experiences that happen to all of us and messages that are mixed.

What I'm getting at here is that you're trying to hold "wildness" as you believe I see it under the "exploration" from your egoist lens. In that regard, yes, wildness is not real. It can't exist. And that is why it's my argument that wildness, and its realness, undo the egoist perspective, which is an argument that I've made repeatedly.

And I would argue that's why your counterpoints have to do with what can only be perceived as a violation of that "connectedness" from the ego's perspective. That a wolf or coyote would die seems to violate some sacred trust. That's because it doesn't work that way. It's not about rights and equality because it's not about the individual. On the level of the individual, bad things certainly happen to wild individuals by wild individuals. That doesn't negate the big picture. That is why species that have a predator-prey relationship still send signals back and forth to each other. An elk knows the difference between a wolf on the hunt and one simply passing by. Hawks will tolerate human presence until they see that they've been acknowledged directly. Songbirds know the difference between the unaware jogger and the aloof hunter. All of this is passed through interspecies communication that rests on the principle that wildness is not a state of war and that life is about more than survival.

In that regard, all species also play a part. Beavers and elephants are habitat creators. It's arguable that humans are as

ies all of this stuff and then others don't actually do it. Is this the wildness for humans alone? And if so then are you not in danger of reinforcing the same human/nature dichotomy that you are opposed to? So when you say that "wildness is real" and that it's something that you feel, it feels similar as a lot of spiritual and religious claims that I don't know how to address. If we're talking about a generalized name for something that exists outside of civilization that isn't directly influenced by it as wildness, sure, I know what you're talking about and I value those places. But to posit one set of relations for that place and to say there is some spirit flowing through it all or that it's more than just a metaphor, that it's a naming for something real, no. I think that I'd say that in a typical ecosystem that are going to be extremely mixed interactions and there is no one given way to describe any of them other than chaos. Some will act to shape the environment around them in more significant ways than others and others will have to respond in kind. It's a constant process of every species shaping the world to their benefit and some go overkill with that as humans have done to the extent that there isn't an ability for anyone to respond or really adapt which is problematic. If you want to call that domestication, sure. But it wouldn't be unique to humans and I think that the definition needs to be nailed down more solidly than it has been. Too often domestication comes to be conflated with an idea of purity and of humans existing in this sort of vacuum where we don't shape or influence the world around us in any way other than the simple things required for survival and the minute we stop doing that it's negative and can never be mutualistic and always "unnatural" meaning that it's not as other species do it. (And at this point, I want to clarify that this is my interpretation and hopefully you'll take this as not an attack but as a conversation that I'm actually willing to engage in about all of this). And I think that that's making things way too simple. I would agree again that yes, humans can go overboard and if you want to call that domestication and

nail it down further, sure, but I also see that folks such as the natives of California actually shaped the environment there to significant lengths which I would assume that based upon your statement of sedentary foragers being domesticated while not having domestication would also include them. I also see that service berry trees suffer in a lot of places because of the fact that they have the rust (some type of fungus) which completely fucks with the berries and so far as I can tell renders them inedible for non-humans as well. The native Californians burned the trees which took care of it and helped the trees as I assume others would have done as well. I don't think that was unique to them but I don't think we can see how far back that actually goes nor things like burning. Maybe you have more information on this given the fact that you dive further into the anthro stuff than I ever have or will. So yeah, that's where I get lost in all of this. And I think where you have a problem with Bellamy is actually worth exploring (not in the personal relationship sense) because the ideas that I see him presenting and have discussed with him actually have more to do with understanding every species shapes the world around them and taking that into consideration for humans as well. A hands off approach seems to be what primitivism implies (am I wrong?), which is a difficult thing to swallow especially when we're talking about throwing humans back into some sort of original state of being that everyone else is still in. The question then becomes how to figure out the differences between shaping the world around us in a mutualistic way that doesn't treat the world as if we are in a vacuum and the way of agrarian societies and civilization that treats the world in exactly that manner. Now, I've definitely put down a lot and been a bit long winded, so apologies for that, I'm going to try to wrap this up so it's not too much, but I wanted to say as far as ants go, you're missing some key points. I don't know about the Dawkins article but apparently he also missed the point. Leafcutter ants' ancestors didn't always farm fungi, they started about 50 million years

the environment that permit overshoot, but it is the nature of carrying capacity that overshoot is a correctable problem. And that looks like bloody because it is. But stasis does and can exist.

However, stasis doesn't mean stagnancy. I'm not sure why you would think that being against domestication means being against change. And, again, that seems to come from your lack of understanding of the concept that you're trying to universalize instead of accepting the term as it is and has been. It's not a contested discussion for the rest of society. There's a definition and it's a very simple term in practice: was there intentional manipulation of the genetics of an individual species that befits the groomer over the groomed. Now there's difference in terms of how that process is seen, a la Pollan who tries to say domestication benefits the domesticated. A position stated from someone who's clearly never worked on a farm. But the term itself is fairly universal in its understanding and acceptance. That's why I find this "discussion" frustrating, it's overtly philosophical in this "well let's dig deeper on the meaning of all these terms" but in a completely inward and disconnected manner. And I hate philosophy. These terms, concepts and realities are demonstrable. This endless word salad and the whole drive to prove merit from the position of the sacred Self? I'm just not interested. Which is why I have limitations on getting involved in it at all, I see it the same way as people wanting to discuss aliens. I just don't care.

Ecological stasis, sustained carrying capacity, wild communities: none of this is to imply in any way, shape or form, that there is no change. Evolution is the example. It isn't about implying or trying to seek out innate values. I believe nearly all wild beings do act with intention and can communicate those intentions with their own group and transmit them beyond themselves. That takes many forms. But it isn't meant to imply some kind of adherence to an ideology of "wildness". It's a connection, a term for an overarching realization that is implemented

mestication, but there are patterns for humanity that repeat in every single society. That is how I came to understand human nature. We are drawn to advertisements the same way our eyes evolved to spot movement in dense forests and subtle movements in open grasslands. It comes down to redirection.

So while I was an absolute atheist in every sense of the world, I realized that my hatred of religion paved right over all spirituality and the probability of connections beyond the physical self and its expressions. And I was wrong. You can paint this as religious shit, but I'm telling you and everyone else that these things exist all around us and it's our conditioning that keeps us from seeing it. And there are universals in sign and language. When you learn and come to understand the role of bird song in dictating how the entire forest reacts to incoming and oncoming entities, it's clear that there's an underpinning understanding that comes from fully developed individuals that aren't stuck in this egocentric blinder that we are. They learn and exist knowing each other being has a place and a role.

From what you've posited, that notion is threatened by the reality that these beings will kill each other, sometimes beyond mere subsistence. It's not that simple, you have to break down symbiosis away from the notions of ego-driven motives. That gets further complicated by the fact that the biologists doing most of the studying are coming from that same "selfish gene" perspective. And they get it wrong. Your examples are a buckshot of scenarios that override the changes implicit in holistic ecology. It is the elk that has the benefit of being hunted by wolves so that they aren't overpopulating and decimating landscapes. It requires not only anthropomorphization to think that elk were simply dumb, but the application of machinist-technological imperatives to think that they would always be thinking on such a grand and scheming scale. That is a historical invention. Balance works in ecology on a whole, but not piecemeal. The details can be downright nasty. It is changes in

ago and I think it's around 10-15 million that they started to have a much different relationship in actually becoming leaf-cutters for the full scale civilized relationship. I don't know if you could call it mutualism or not what they've got going but it's certainly a strange relationship and I think by no stretch of the imagination to call it civilization unless one is to ignore any similarities and say only humans can. To have division of labor, specialization, caste systems, warfare, hierarchy, agriculture, among a myriad of other things that you could point out as being emblematic of civilized life seems case in point enough. I wouldn't argue that they are natural but I also wouldn't say they are unnatural. This is a point I've made. I think those concepts become useless the deeper we explore relationships that different species have within different ecosystems and we see that that language can be used to justify a whole host of things that we could find value out of from an anti-civ perspective as well as a whole host of things that we would both agree we're completely opposed to. That same point could be applied for weaver ants who farm plants, and termites who also farm fungus among other species that similarly farm. For none of them are these things that they have always done, it's something that somewhere along the point their species somehow fell into doing. There is a deeper question as to whether for ants in particular they are all willing participants or not. It's certainly easy enough to figure out that it's not something that is some sort of ingrained behavior in some stupid species that can't think for themselves when shit like laziness has been observed (unfortunately this also leads to genital mutilation if their caught). The same could be pointed out with the other species as said that can be seen to conflict with AP notions of what is typical for wildness. And I've gotten long winded so will leave it for now. Feel free to keep the conversation going if you are interested in doing so. For me and my own -Osmia

Part four: I respond

In a nutshell, I'm not unaware of Bellamy's arguments nor the fact that he's a piece of shit. You're echoing the same arguments here and I find them exceptionally confusing. I think it's ironic that my "view" of wildness is described as "anthropomorphization" and yet that's what all of your counter examples are based on, which I will get to. As I said to Bellamy, we have absolutely different world views, we literally see things differently. That's the difference between egocentric and biocentric perspectives. I see no point in arguing on this because everything has to be translated effectively in between, nothing makes sense to an egoist beyond the perspective of the self, which I find as repugnant as I find foreign. It's like translating into Latin.

Here's the thing, I could spend time trying to argue why wildness has virtue and merit in its own right on egoist terms, but I have zero interest in it. I'd rather speak to people who haven't gotten bogged down in that kind of baggage. While most civilized (if not all) see things from an egoist perspective, they haven't articulated it, so it's more likely that they'll shed it.

You asked about my disdain for egoists being anti-civ. I have absolute disdain for egoism. I have absolute confusion how you can posit all of the responses you have here about "domestication" but then think "civilization" is a term that works. If I were to take you on your terms and definitions, one must be as arbitrary as the next. That's a blinder that Bellamy is unable to address and I see the same issue with what you've written here.

I had Stirner on the B&G list because it was meant to represent influences on green anarchism as a whole. I don't consider Stirner to be anywhere near a green anarchist nor do I see an ounce of merit in his work. I think his life story is hilarious, up to and including his death by a stinging insect. His writing is batshit crazy. But it was clearly hyper-influential for post-

left anarchism, Feral Faun and Vanneigem which all impacted green anarchist thinking. I wouldn't include it as an influence for AP.

And I don't care about being skeptical of Tamarack. I'm not some blind follower, but I'm not defending everything he does, just pointing out that his "dynamic tension" concept is awesome and would be particularly good for your understanding of wildness. I'm not asking you to defend Stirner's anti-semitism.

In terms of the last whole section, this is what I'm talking about. If you're an egoist, then the world must be seen on anthropomorphic terms. I'm absolutely opposed to that. In that regard, it is the value of the individual and individual will that must be upheld. And that's what you're arguing for. Reality is more complicated than that. There is a distinction that civilization makes implicit whereby our sense of self/other is destroyed by the domestication process, rendering us incomplete. All of which I take directly from Paul Shepard and have always stood by. It's not that I believe the self doesn't exist for healthy, wild beings and communities, but that it's not based off this innately combative sense of survivalism, which is effectively where the ego exists.

The problem is that you're applying your world view to how you interpret my views, which is disingenuous, even if its impossible to avoid. My world view doesn't come from books. It came from thinking I had it figured out and getting my ass checked by reality. It went from going into the forest with a survivalist mentality and finding that it was no different from my days as a syndicalist fighting for unionizing labor: it's an imposed central value that simply doesn't work in the wild. What I have found along the way is echoes of that reality in both how wild beings interact and their symbiosis and how humans, in every society, need basic things and have basic emotional and social needs. When the circumstances don't give equal access to that, then those needs are torn apart and sold back through the social institutions that arise in their place. That is social do-