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Daedalus Fails

Various

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Daedalus Fails
2023

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2023

Lacan, Deleuze, Timothy Morton, David Abram and John Zerzan
– other descendants.

The anti-technology rebellion-destruction that strikes me as the most desirable and likely most impactful is that of iconoclastic perceptual attack, aesthetic/poetic terrorism, or guerrilla ontology. As far as intensifying and accelerating the gravitational collapse to Earth, this destruction seems best done through falling in love with life, with the living world, pan-erotic desiring and the positive affirmation of wildness. The end of the techno-totalitarian-agricultural-industrial death camp is life/wildness and desiring life/wildness is the best way I can see for accelerating the collapse of this revolting Reality of machines.

A statement to go with this destructivity and to say to those who preach techno-salvationism — shit on your technological theatre!

Subscending

Collapsing into the dark-ecological subscendental ontology of the whole being less than the sum of its parts, the praxis of wild acceleration is the intensification of caring for living individuals — the preservation of their lives. Subscending deeper and deeper, going down and down. Falling in love as praxis. Embracing gravity.

Wild acceleration as subscendence intensifying life-desire. Icarus collides with earth as Daedalus’ inventions fail to overcome gravity.

Inspirations and descendants

This short collection draws from thought I first articulated in my books *Feral Consciousness*, *Feral Iconoclasm* and *Feral Life*, as well as my essay *An Eco-Egoist Destruction of Speciesism and Species-Being* — these are its descendants. It’s also been inspired by the thought of Jacques Camatte, Vicky Storm, Heidegger, Thoreau,

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that the world is improving and that this Reality is the best of all available options, until the next technological break-through arrives.

I see nothing desirable in the Neo-Luddism, which generally follows from a Kaczynskian understanding of technology, advocating militancy and revolutionary action. It strikes me as a pathway, were it taken (which I doubt anyone seriously would), to intensifying state repression and abuse — which is all Kaczynski's bombing campaign succeeded in achieving. It also misses the point, that until the illusion of technological improvement is destroyed, destroying this or that machine or gadget does nothing, as another shall be produced — likewise, killing this scientist or that inventor is not an effective means of slowing or stopping technological development, as there'll be someone else to pick up their work. Another aspect of Kaczynskian ideology that strikes me as “missing the point” is the assertion that technology actually is controlling the lives of individuals, that they actually are being technologically determined by *deus ex machina*, rather than individuals are willingly conforming to techno-productive-narratives, out of a belief that they must (because that is the Reality that this culture mechanically mass produces to keep production going); the Kaczynskian-type politics arguably believes in *deus ex machina* more than many techno-progressives and transhumanists. These beliefs seem to me to be, more than anything else, what sustains the technosphere.

I notice that as systems and technologies fail to provide promised improvements that individuals instinctually lose faith in them and the belief is destroyed. This seems to be intensifying, accelerating, as the Reality of this culture falls towards Earth. My instinct is that this will intensify as technologies fail to provide salvation, as life, the world, become more and more ruined. Bombs and guns and attempts at revolutions, in my eyes, would most likely strengthen the push for technological repression and annihilation of those who threaten the system.

Species-Accelerationism

Following a similar movement of thought to that of gender-accelerationists advocating the end of gender and patriarchy, species-accelerationism signifies the end of species-being and speciesism. Radical differentiation, deconstruction, dehumanisation, from a desire for the end of the speciesist collectivism that annihilates life. The acceleration of species-being — becoming-oak, becoming-badger, becoming hare, becoming-river — as individuating dehumanisation, collapsing signifiers towards the affirmation of the unique, embodied individuality of the self and all living beings. Anti-speciesism: decaying species-being as biospheric-egalitarian destruction of the great chain of being. Species non-conformity is a factor of evolution, adapting to environmental changes, to survive.

Shit On Your Technological Theatre

I wish to articulate here a short philosophy of technology and with that a challenge to the neo-Luddite politics that have been the most intensely spectacularised anti-technology praxis’.

Stealing Heidegger’s description of technology’s “essence” as enframing and Lacan’s differentiation of the Real from Reality; these concepts provide a language for describing technology and the technosphere as an enframed Reality that is not Real and as an enframing of what is Real into a Reality that is not Real. This Reality strikes me to be fundamentally rooted in the illusion of improvement, often called progress or meliorism — following from Thoreau’s observation of invention as improved means to unimproved ends; the current intensity of ruination and mass extinction and mental health crisis’ and health crisis’ and more, render the notion of technological improvement of the world an unbelievable Reality to me. But there are many who believe

Daedalus Fails by Julian Langer

Daedalus fails (not “Daedalus failed” or “Daedalus will fail”) — Daedalus, here signifying the father of technology, invention and architecture, fails as an active process that is happening. Daedalus fails (not Daedalus is failing, suggesting that Daedalus could succeed) — Daedalus’ failure, here, is pessimistically affirmed as all his projects could achieve. Daedalus fails.

Breathing in the ruination that is Daedalus’ failure, air polluted by industrialism, whilst surrounded by the machinery of mass extinction — what a failure Daedalus is! The technonecrocene is not a Historical epoch, but a space that is the ruination of History — the failure of Daedalus.

This collection of writings has been compiled from a desire to affirm “Daedalus fails”, from various anti-technology perspectives. What brings these to this space together is that these do not say “Daedalus succeeds”, rendering them different from those perspectives that fear transhumanist type imaginary futures; from a lack of belief in those futures.

Daedalus fails (not we must Cause the negation of Daedalus’ success or hide from Daedalus’s success) — Daedalus fails as an immediate and radically active process. The affirmation of “Daedalus fails” signifies an intensely different perspective to that of revolutionaries who call for attacks and advance, and quietists who advocate escape and retreat. In not advancing-attacking or escaping-retreating Daedalus, whilst not embracing assimilation and belief-in; active-surviving, as life-affirming praxis means witnessing the fall of Icarus-culture, collapsing as the return to the flesh that is earth. Being present and presence, grounding, earthing, rewilding

and becoming-animal as rebellion that refuses to embrace the artificial wings of Daedalus.

Daedalus fails.
Daedalus fails.
Daedalus fails.
Daedalus is dying.
Daedalus is ruining.
Daedalus is falling.
Daedalus is collapsing.
Daedalus fails.
Daedalus is dying.
Daedalus is dead.
Dead Daedalus.

Who knows what Daedalus may do! I'm not waiting and I'm not expecting.

Aphorisms on Wild Acceleration

1. Affirming that civilisation/humanism/Leviathan is collapsing into the unhuman/more-than-human/other-than-human, the philosophy of wild acceleration affirms the political pessimist anarchist perspective that politics cannot rise above the living world, often called "nature", and separate humanity from the wildness it wars against.
2. Inclined towards pessimism, wild accelerationist philosophy holds that the meliorist-progressivist technological attempts to improve the world have succeeded only in ruining the world.
3. Revolted by ruining machines, inventions, architecture and technology, wild acceleration praxis is hostile towards and critical of technology, in a similar way to those labelled luddite.
4. Not inclined towards the violence of Unabomber type-praxis or similar other militant-luddite politics, nor the violence of pacifist politics, the praxis of wild acceleration is oriented towards destruction. The destruction of belief and faith in deus ex machina. The destruction of the sublimation of desire from life and towards machinery and productivity. The destruction of the idea of techno-utopia/technological-salvation. Iconoclastic experiences.
5. This philosophy is rooted in the affirmation of the accelerating force of gravity, falling in love with the living world and the collapses that entails. Involution as untamed will to life.

Falling
Falling

Collapsing

I have for several years had a personal mantra, which has been a go to for my meditation practice. The mantra is this: I'm not waiting and I'm not expecting. For me, this mantra is an affirmation of present experience, of presence and immediatist rebellion.

I am not waiting. I am not waiting for a future coming insurrection, revolution or collapse. Collapse seems to me to be happening, continually, as gravity is invariant. The writer of *Desert and the Wildpunk Manifesto* it inspired, like many others who affirm the likelihood of civilisation collapsing, are waiting for collapse to happen. They are waiting and expecting the collapse of this civilisation to lead to the rise of other civilisations. Like Land and Wildermuth who both affirm a neo-fascist future to be reached, these collapsists advance a political-optimist narrative of civilisation ultimately being inevitable, belief in the state, the polity, over the gravitational force of Earth. I am not expecting.

I am not waiting. Collapse seems to be happening and to happen continuously, as gravity is invariant. I am not expecting. I don't believe the future is out there waiting to arrive. I do not know. I cannot know. I do not believe in the futures given and expected. Global warming and global-totalitarianism render this civilisation's collapse intensely different, to my eyes, than any other within the records of history/History. Born from architecture and invention, this civilisation looks to me like Icarus, in free fall, wings failing, not yet colliding into Earth, but heading towards the ground.

I see the acceleration of this collapse through the intensification of love for the living Earth, love of living presence. Falling in love with wildlife and wildness. Pan-erotic desiring as refusing repression and renunciation.

An exordium to bucolic other-wises by Yin Paradies

The fear-shame that may arise when faced with the radiance of radical truth is a feeling which is rarely acknowledged as such. There may be a glint of surface-mind interest, an activation of a 'belief' or two; but, underneath, our cyborg hearts bug out. Surreptitiously, agitation swells, until we find a discrepancy, ambiguity or inaccuracy that is kooky or askew; and then, ah ha! I knew this was dross. Pray ye cleave to this sagacity if/as you read on.

The etymology of techno-logy is from 'teks' (to weave) and 'logy' (to gather). So, the term literally means to gather weavings. And indeed, quite a dizzying whirl of woven webs beguile and befuddle us in late-stage cybernetic modernity. While it may be that, in essence, any form of language, art or science diminishes the human condition; it is evident, from climate derangement and the sixth (or seventh, if you count the great oxygenation event) mass extinction, that industrial consumerism certainly does.

Your life story is not your life. It is your story. Beyond the forlorn fallacy of life-as-linear-narrative is a layered pattern, not of mere meaning, but of alluring organic beauty. The placement-pattern where/when 'is' and 'ought' become one, as the-thing-in-itself is translucently revealed, not to mind/self/ego, but to whole-of-body consciousness. A devolution from a moral techno-bureaucratic dystopic spiel of development to a trans-moral utopic universe grounded in, and upon, an unfathomable aesthesis of beauty.

Experience isn't merely thought, and reality isn't made of things. Neither causality nor facticity exist in the real world, while being ubiquitously rife among the all-encompassing apparatus. More than relative, abstract, or even contingent, reality is the irredeemably otiose singularity of absolute aesthetic encounter via cosmic consciousness in context.

Our layered beatific depths do not come from us, which is why it is so abhorrent that we arrive in a grid-locked on-line virtual discarnate world, sinking into the threadbare edges of the fabricated couch that is modernity, choking on its caked layers of mendacious smart-dust. The individual is not the germane stranded stratum at which to alchemise worldly troubles. Rather than internal and singular, shadow work unfurls via the vast syncopated shamanic thrumming alchemy of animate aqueous celestial consecrated clamorous mandalic porous pranic pulsing hyper-spheres.

Where the miraculous beating vivacious heart of un-selfish reality should be, there is, in lieu, a rootless disconsolate sack of robotic impressions, generated by the crystalline perfection of a data-driven un-originality machine. To scratch beneath its surface is to find only a more complicated version of said surface, offering nothing other than a thin bleached cheerless fare to bind us together in an echoing cacophony of starving souls.

In contrast, to perpetually dissolve on, and be metabolised by, the sublime tongue of the cosmos is to approach the apogee of aegis; that of life not being about us. It is thus that a corporatised coercive commodified control of cannibalised connections comports into an inchoate chimeric chaos at a mending edge, braiding us into whole(some)ness. Ours is a radical incoherence rapturising 'making sense of things' to sense-making, within the murmuring else-ness and is-ness of incarnate life.

Surging orthogonally to authorised irreality tunnels slips us outside the tawdry trap of urban techno-myopia, to: get your hands dirty; chop wood and carry water; forage for your own food; curate your own crops; craft the clothes on your own back; tie your

I do not know
But instinct and intuition inclines me towards the perspective that
Today's Reality is in collapse
Trusting in gravity
As accelerationist belief
Falling in love with the living wild world
Accelerationist-praxis as intensifying falling in love with wildlife
Ontological-anarchist collapse of the technonecrocene death-camp-cultists
It's decomposition and decay
A fertile void for the resurgence of life
Revolting life
The paradox of enrichment seemingly prefiguring collapses
The paradox of techno-spheric enrichment prefiguring and accelerating the gravitational return to Earth
Inverting towards life
Involutions
Iconoclastic feral-becoming
Living beings no longer as machines
Ex-machine living individuals falling in love with the unchanging changing invariant wildness
Collapsing
Descending
Collective dissolution as machines falling apart
The present as the involution of History-as-technological-progress
Falling
Falling
Falling
Accelerating gravitationally
Falling

Gravity: Wild Acceleration by Julian Langer

Falling

Falling
Descending
Earth's loving embrace
Gravitational acceleration
Collapsing
Involution
Dissolution
Technology's accelerating fall
Falling not as a historical event
Some tragic separation
Falling as a present process
Collapse as an immediate event
Collapsing into wildness
Descending from illusionary heights
Accelerating involutions
As returning to Earth
Affirming presence
Intensifying inversions
Techno-spheric dissolution
Through the totalitarian descent towards auto-
cannibalism
Machines cannibalising machines
Deus ex machina falling from heaven

own knots; apprentice to the simple elegant convivial tools of a trade; shape your own shelter; recreate your own rituals; cultivate your own ceremonies; nourish your own face-to-face relationships with (more-than-)human kin; raise your own children in-situ surrounded by the trusted trials and tribulations of tribe; which is ever-always yours and ours.

What if we dis-invested from the mirage of subjects using objects and the malaises of objects using subjects to embrace the aesthetic arrest and conjunctive union of being mantled in moonshine instead of sluicing in screen-shimmer. Contra linear dissected clock-time dwells the unruly seething palpable panoply of participatory fiercely egalitarian spacial, slushy, rippled, textured tempos of Indigena-anarchism.

In solidarity and synchronicity, betwixt iron-clad certainties and dirt-draped doubts; pathologised paradoxes and practiced parodies; convoluted contraptions and chimeric complexities; enlightened teleologies of progression and endarkened dirges of psychopomps; utilitarian usurping and ululating ungulates; abstracted automatons and petulant primates, lies radically de-centred and localised self-organising nested fractal biotic networks, emerging from the transmogrified debris of mega-appliances.

Neither internal bionic-egos nor external technobabble/baubles have authority over your tactile tangible experience. Rather, subjectivity is a communally coalescing co-becoming that swarms with fleshy articulations of rematriated rites and rituals as creative repetition and idea-breeding deeds. From device-mediated responsibility to ability-to-respond and from programmed gadget-sensibility to ability-to-sense in a human-scale world. Widdershins to an alienating technocratic-dictated scripting of realities by the machinic maws of modernity, our inheritance hearkens to halcyon days of yore wherein we exulted in exquisite sensory-perceptual ra/upturous orgasmic entanglement with(in) the living ebullient sentient cosmos.

Orderlessly and incompletely listed inspirations: Julian Langer, Josh Schrei, Charles Eisenstein, Darren Allen, Caitlin Johnston, Vanessa Andreotti, Bayo Akomolafe, Victoria McKay, Peter Gelderloos, popefred, Karen Barad, Ivan Illich, Phil Ford, J.F. Martel, Klee Benally, Brigitte Kupfer, Tyson Yunkaporta and Ramon Elani.

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control, colonizers burn more villages, students bend knee to the administration (and again, cops), and children fear secluded abuse by parents. Domesticated people create and demand *more* domesticated people, particularly children. It takes more than one generation to uphold this reality. There must be a reproduction of Domestication.[See my own piece for more on this “Spare the Child: A primal anarchist view of how civilization breaks children” (2021)]. This is done, of course, for the good of the others. They need to be good citizens.

Go to school, obey the law, obey me, don't be a fag, get a job.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

If Domestication was our determined, innate, and perpetual state, as the Domesticators want us to think, then all is lost. Rewilding, the (anti-)political movement seeking ferality, would mean nothing. Resistance would be futile. There would be no escape.

But, Domestication isn't determined. It isn't our nature. There is an alternative.

Because formerly domesticated species can become feral, so too can we learn to be wild, again.

Because generations of Indigenous peoples have fought against the assimilation into the machine of Domestication, we can learn from their resistance.

Because previously socially-dominated communities of people can become free (gone Croatan), so too can we learn what it means to opt out of this bad deal.

We must unpack the trauma, realize our potential to be self-determined creatures, and learn to appreciate our youth.

Works Cited

Poetry by Twm Gwynne

Hot Song

*I am here to keep a fire burning,
Burning fire against artificial light.
When the circuit breaks and confusing
Darkness falls,
Hot fire throws dark ghosts to dance
On the crumbling walls.
Burn an apathetic chill from cold,
Indifferent hands;
Guard an ember for our children,
Give them fire in the land.*

Cold Mars

*Elon Musk has what seems like his mission;
Life spun out from a centre
Like ripples from an arrogant stone's throw.
Loud little lord, he wants to enter
The gap, black with absence, and
Hung with the fierce, jagged row
Of rolling stars spun out like bright sand;
Nothing more than folding, golden cloth, before
A dark sea.*

*Their boats may be made
To ride the flux of those cold waves,*

*Cold enough to boil blood and
Pop eyes like the buoyant pods of
Some delicious sea-weeds,
But I believe that what we'll call the soul gets lost
Out there where suns spin and tear themselves apart,
Then gyre bitterly in frost;
This defies the scope of a bloody, trembling heart.
Why spit out life like a bad seed
From our fragile, soft, warm
Womb of a home? Greed
Says money on Mars, and no amount of harm
Holds back the conscience of a corpse.*

Comfort

*Devious devices chatter
In the name of comfort,
Hot running water, other clutter,
Against living quiet.*

*Earth and water cool themselves:
Dig holes, drench your baskets,
Smoke and salt and dry,
Allow your food to first be chewed
By those tiny, hungry, mutable things like mouths
Before yours; find
Nourishment without effort.*

*Wrap up warmly and
Burn branches
To make a home cosy.
Our comfort wasn't made
To be universal, it
Can't come from mountains*

tion of pre-Industrial life. Let me be clear: these issues (or corresponding ones) did exist and always will, but the scale of them directly correlates to our environment. Countries like Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States are selling the image of a reality in which the youth have the world as their oyster. Buy any commodity! Work any job! Fuck anyone you want! And what do they have to show for it? For young adult suicide rates (ages 15–24), Japan leads, followed by Canada, Sweden, and the United States, and several European countries. Between 2016 and 2020, substance use among 8th graders (12–13 years of age) increased by 62%. Loneliness rates have been on the increase, but during the Pandemic, by 2022, 30% of youth expressed that they “never felt more alone” and did not know how to make friends. Talk about a sense of meaninglessness and lack of place, a condition that is not typical of our undomesticated ancestors and contemporary peers. These behaviors are not unlike those neurotic and violent tendencies found in our domesticated animal-slaves.

Welcome to the Brave New World.

Is this all intentional? One can argue the agency of early agriculturalists, city builders, and Kings; and can debate the intentionality of their contemporaries. The fact of matter is that laws, capital aggregation, colonialism (extermination, assimilation, or both), education, and nuclear families reinforce the culture that is inherently anti-maturity. We are constantly told to “grow up!” within a constrained environment, with only unhealthy models to follow, only equally less developed adults raising us. And we wonder why the “kids aren’t alright”, to quote an overrated rock song.

As Fredy Perlman said, “The practical everyday activity of wage-workers reproduces wage labor and capital” (Perlman). We can alter this to fit our next point. “The practical everyday activity of domesticated Humans reproduces domestication and extensive neoteny.” In addition to social factors above, the institutions of societal regulation, there is a human element to it all. A policeman has to enforce laws, the capitalists expand their economic

expectations for when one would begin to contribute to food acquisition) but each “stage” of human development correlates with a sense of self, purpose, and relationships to humans, nonhumans, and the cosmos. It isn’t uncommon to hear how life moves too quickly. We are forced from one step to the next. From playful infancy to school to work to the grave (retirement not guaranteed!). These are expectations, not stages of development. There is no opportunity for reflection or enjoyment.

There might be some irony that Hunter-Gatherers, who supposedly live short and brutish lives, are the last set of cultures to wean their infants, but also see their children act as “mini-adults” with their own mini-sized tools and spaces separate from helicopter parents. Hunter-Gatherer children often learn by observation and practice, not memorization of useless facts. Children are more self-confident and can self-recognize in a much broader, sustainable way. Part of maturation is self-recognition, and our self-recognition is deeply rooted in one’s ecology. Shepard again: “Children at age six are typically anthropomorphic: they perceive other forms of animal life as motivated and feeling like themselves, which is the basis of kinship with the natural world. This feeling extends to plants as well” (42). Today, this sense of relationship to the world around us is confined to urbanization and digitization. We now often crave a banal, sanitized existence, one unknown to our ancestors 400 generations ago (less for many peoples around the world!). What does self-identification with concrete and steel mean? Perhaps the full-blown war we engage in with the Wild world is a symptom of our youth being alienated from it, leading to a lack of identification with it? It becomes even more dreadful to consider the new “iPad generation” or the rise of AI parenting, like in the movie *WALL-E*. We do not reflect the natural life processes and living organisms, but commodities and non-intelligence!

Does this “*dead end of infantility and pathological limbo*” connect to raising rates of domestic abuse, mass killings, suicides, and substance abuse? This is where one might accuse me of romaniza-

*Torn out for metal and
Mined for coal, oily blood burned,
The river damned and spun and
Swimming fish held out of their homes.*

Untitled

*Lots of talk about nature, now and always,
But maybe more urgent now.
Why do I love “wild” places?
Why do I love “nature”?
I believe it’s restful for my little self
To be in places less influenced by the perspective
Of the little self,
Where I can go quiet, and
Quietly, humbly watch
My greater self unfold in their stillness
And their motion.
I believe it’s beautiful to see my
Lungs beyond my body,
As breathing trees,
My blood before, and after, being my blood,
Running like rivers;
Spirit before and beyond my spirit,
Myself before and beyond myself.*

Why You Shouldn't Keep Humans as Pets

Some dialogue on domestication - by Artxmis Graham Thoreau

Anarcho-Primitivism has not sold the idea of domestication effectively. At best, domestication has been a synonym for “civilized.” What does this mean? That we aren’t nomadic foragers? Then just say that. Is domestication a genetic state, a social relation, both? I hope to explore some points here, mostly how discourse around mass violence and social ills are not seen in relation to human evolution and ecology. This is not a manifesto of domestication, but a point of conversation and the beginning of discourse, as most of my pieces are.

The day is 16 February, 2009 in Stamford, Connecticut. Travis, a chimpanzee, was a pet. He nearly killed his “owner’s” friend, blinding her and almost killing her. Travis was killed by police.

In July of 2022, a python killed its “owner” by strangulation. The python was killed by police.

Naturally, the response to events like these is that we get the routine reminder of the dangers of keeping exotic pets. “Pets who are wild are dangerous,” we are told. “It is unfair to the animal and to those around it” we are prompted alongside footage of survivors or of the animal. It is simply in their nature, we are told, to kill.

12 April 2022, an elderly woman in a wheelchair was killed by a dog. The dog was euthanized.

11 December 2022, a dog breeder was killed by a dog he kept for breeding purposes. The dog was euthanized.

synonymous with domination, servitude, etc) is different. Domestication, as said above, means reliance. Our earlier domestication meant a reliance on a community that was in an eternal state of reciprocity. Domestication of today, social-domestication, means reliance on power, a power that is over you but simultaneously diffused within each of us. It is internalized, a sort of neurosis. Voluntary servitude. It defines the boundaries of action (or nonaction), it puts up borders. The issue is not just the Domesticator (of which we can all be), but the conditions that allow for Domestication, constantly recreated by our actions. I will return to these issues below. Still, the alpha male figure has returned, in the form of politicians, business owners, cops. The alpha can be a woman now (or nonbinary, yay for inclusion!). Reliance on the powerful for food, movement, etc, means people are treated eternally as a stunted child. What does this mean for us, psychologically? Paul Shepard, in his *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*, wrote:

Being individually slow to reach maturity, we are among the most neotenic or babylike of species. Biologically we invest our reproductive energy in few offspring and their slow individual development and education. Slowly culture fills in the gaps in our development and mitigates our incompleteness according to an inherent timetable. Incomplete ontogeny [meaning the process of reaching maturity – AGT] **simply grinds into the dead ends of infantility and pathological limbo.** [My emphasis](Shepard 158).

What happens, then, when we live in a culture that doesn’t “fill in the gaps”?

We live in a culture (a global culture, not just Western), that does not adequately allow individuals to develop along a fairly predetermined path. Cultures might express it differently, (such as the two hunter-gatherer peoples, !Kung and Hadza, having different

Humans also have this dual nature. Humans are domesticated, just not in the same way as dogs or cows. We are subservient to a culture of our species. Self-domesticated. We have, like our canine friends, changed physically. Our brains have shrunk since the Stone Age. Our jaws are smaller (Have you had your wisdom teeth removed?). Some of us can now drink the milk of other animals without negative reactions. An increase in cancers, noncommunicable diseases. Of course, we have also been behaviorally modified by a culture that keeps us in a neotenic or immature state. We've been reduced to juveniles.

Konrad Lorenz, a pioneer of ethology (the study of animal behavior) wrote:

The problems of domestication have been an obsession with me for many years. On the one hand I am convinced that man owes the life-long persistence of his constitutive curiosity and explorative playfulness to a partial neoteny which is indubitably a consequence of domestication. In a curiously analogous manner does the domestic dog owe its permanent attachment to its master to a behavioral neoteny that prevents it from ever wanting to be a pack leader. On the other hand, domestication is apt to cause an equally alarming disintegration of valuable behavioral traits and an equally alarming exaggeration of less desirable ones (1975).

What does this all mean, then? What is the implication of our neotenic traits? We are surely a very neotenic species, which perhaps was part of the "Human evolution," to refer to McKnight of the Radical Anthropology Group (RAG). RAG posits we, in some ways, self-domesticated when we broke away from the alpha male traits of chimpanzees and expanded our sociability to a more egalitarian model, pioneered by women. This led to neotenic traits, like reduced aggression and less sexual dimorphism. The domestication of today, which I will call social-domestication (can be seen as

Often such attacks are followed by statistics on the dangers of certain breeds, the most notorious being the Pitbull and Rottweiler. It is simply in their nature, we are told, to kill.

26 February 2023, a man who was a double amputee (legs) stabbed a man. He was shot and killed by police.

27 March 2023, a man shot three children and three adults. The school he targeted was one he had attended in his youth. He was shot and killed by police.

*Event after event. Excuse after excuse. We are told it is a mental health crisis, a weapons crisis, a drug crisis, a crime crisis, a race crisis. We are not told, however, it is simply in our nature to kill. **That would make us animals.***

What separates the killings by non-Human animals from Human animals? For exotic animals, it is rightly said that it is only natural for such instances to happen. Exotic animals are not meant to be pets, meant to be treated like a toy or an infant. For dogs, it comes down to the breed or sometimes the owner's behavior towards the dog. (Of course, it is not natural for dogs to be working animals or couch potatoes, either, but this is often ignored.) For people? Every reason under the sun.

But, are the root causes really that different? Maybe they share a root. Domestication and ecology.

I know the response: Dogs are selectively bred, domesticated. It *isn't* unfair to them to keep them in a home. (Some may argue they are best fit for what they were bred for, such as hunting or sniffing drugs. Exotic animals are wild, undomesticated. It *is* unfair to keep them in a home. But, they miss the obvious: both groups (large generalizations be them as they are) are animals with their own natures. Being a domesticated animal does *not* mean that animal is yours to control, to do with as you please. If that was the case, dogs and other domestics would attack only when instructed to. But they attack more often than we commonly know. Consider farm animals. Horses and cattle kill about 70 people a year. Between 2008 and 2015, they killed about 576 people. Should this mean we admit it

is in the nature of all animals to have the capacity to kill without human direction, not just exotic animals?

Keeping animals in a context in which they did not evolve for millions of years is a sure way to get bit in the ass (or kicked in the face).

Domestication is a process of domination. A state of (sometimes only seemingly) powerlessness. It means thousands of years of breeding an animal for specific traits, meaning behavioral and physical features. Eugenics for non-Humans is okay, of course! The logic that we can and should keep Dogs in our homes because it is somehow in their nature as domesticated wolves only reproduces the logic of Domestication. It isn't in their nature, as animals. What has changed from wolf to dog is our control over them. Of course, put many dogs into the woods and they won't survive. We've crippled or hindered their development, their self-reliance. Some breeds can't reproduce safely on their own, such as Bulldogs. Pugs can't breathe well. Almost half of all dogs will develop cancer once they hit 10 years old. The primary issue is that domestication seeks a particular set of traits: those of the juvenile. This is called neoteny, in which juvenile traits of a species are carried into adulthood.

But that isn't their *true or original* nature.

Any animal has a will, a wild animal has a wild will and for domestic animals, their wild will has simply been inhibited. Domestication can be thought of predisposing a species to certain behaviors and trying to limit or exclude others. Aggression towards humans is an example of a trait that the Domesticators sought to limit, while barking that continued into adulthood was selected for (intentionally or not). Note, however, domestication does not remove aggression or bark constantly their whole lives. Some dogs are aggressive for apparently no reason, or as a response to neglect. Again, domestication *predisposes behaviors, it doesn't guarantee them.*

I mention barking as an example of neoteny. Adult wolves do not often bark, but juveniles do. Barking may have assisted humans

in camp security, hunting, or war, and thus served to be a positive trait. The barking behaviors of dogs is thus a neotenic trait. Limited aggression or expanded sociability is also a form of neoteny.

The role of neoteny in domestication has two sources: a) as said above, it was directly selected for by humans and b) it is the result of a more resource rich environment [or rather, there is easier access] and competition is lowered, leading to a more dependent / infantile population. Perhaps the earliest steps of domestication for animals like wolves was a slow reliance on human hunting camps, acquiring scraps and protection, which reduced the aggressive tendencies in some wolf populations, which then led to the selection of subsequent traits by people.

Don't be mistaken, it is important to note neotenic traits do **not** arise only under conditions of domestication. It is more of a developmental package of traits. Humans, compared to our closest living relatives, Chimpanzees, are very neotenic. For clarity, let us follow our lineage backwards: *Homo Sapiens* are more neotenic than *Homo Erectus*, who was more neotenic than *Australopithecus*. Some physical characteristics found in all humans that are considered neotenic are: small teeth, hairless face, reduced brow ridges, and retention of fetal body hair. Some social/behavioral characteristics considered neotenic are: longer period of brain reception (emphasis of learned over instinctual behaviors) and reduced aggression.

However, a Domestic dog, either individually or part of a lineage, can become wild, also known as a feral dog. Ferality is often defined as a previous domestic species or individual becoming autonomous of direct human contact. Ferality could be simply put as "self-determination" or "self-reliant." Often, this means a fear response and thus avoidance or violence towards humans (Gering, et al. 2019). Ferality can come about as endo- and exo-ferality. Endo-ferality means when a population or individual escapes or is let go of direct human control. Exo-ferality is the absorption of wild population genetic materials into the domestic population.