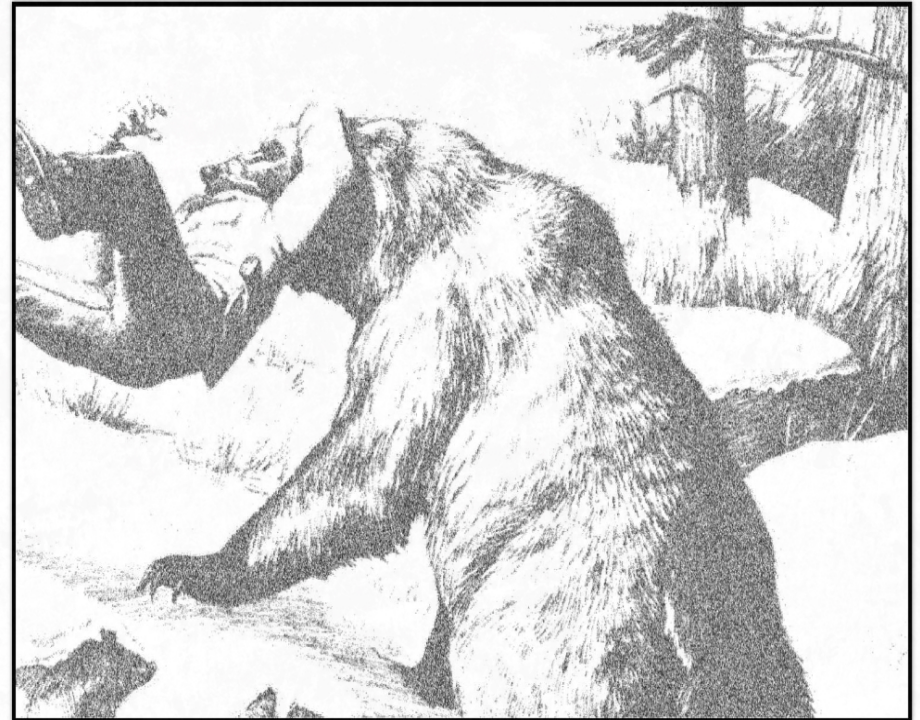




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On The Hunt



Morality In The Crosshairs
Hunting the Hunter in Anti-Civ Discourse

Wildling

On The Hunt: Morality in the Crosshairs — Hunting the Hunter in Anti-Civ Discourse

I. Stalking Legitimacy

There is a particular figure who stalks through anti-civilization spaces — somewhere between the internet and his imagination, if they exist at all — with a trite air of authority. He carries a bow, or a rifle, or a phone. He quotes Zerzan, Tucker, Shepard. He talks about anthropology. He talks about rewilding, about primitive skills, about the failure of agriculture. He calls himself a primitivist, an anarchist, sometimes an egoist, occasionally a nihilist. He is, he insists, beyond morality — beyond the petty hand-wringing of civilization's domesticated sentimentality. And then, when the question of hunting arrives, he defends it. Not just defends it — legitimizes it. Piles argument upon argument, tradition upon nature, necessity upon ancestry, until the whole thing rises into something that looks, from certain angles, like a cathedral.

The problem is that it is a cathedral. It is exactly that: a monument to hidden belief, dressed in the language of radicalism. And it deserves to be dismantled — not in the name of some competing morality, not in the name of the animals (though the animals matter, and refusing them is its own kind of cowardice), but because the structure itself is rotten. Because the arguments don't hold. Because the so-called nihilist is, at bottom, a moralist who hasn't looked in the mirror.

This is that dismantling.

Start with the claim that functions as bedrock for the entire position: *hunting is necessary in a non-civilized condition*.

On its face this sounds empirical. Descriptive. Like something you could test against the world. And that's precisely what makes it slippery — because it isn't a description at all. It is a normative claim smuggling itself in under empirical cover. To say hunting is **necessary** is to say something must be done, which is to say something **ought** to be done, which is — despite every protestation — a moral claim. The anti-civ hunter who prides himself on having moved past morality has simply relocated his morality to a premise so foundational he can no longer see it. And, glaringly: is he in this "non-civilized condition" right now? Will he ever be? If only he tried not to get ****trapped**** inside his imagination.

But let's take the claim at face value and ask: necessary for what?

For survival? This is almost always the implied answer, and it is the most interesting one to press on, because it contains a buried assumption: that the body requires animal flesh. It doesn't. Human beings have lived, and do live, and have thrived, on diets that include no animal products — not as a civilizational aberration but across varied ecologies and long spans of time. The claim of nutritional necessity, when you trace it carefully, usually dissolves into something more like convenience or familiarity or preference. Which is fine — preferences are real — but preference is not necessity, and the gap between them is where the entire argument collapses.

Necessary for community? For culture? For some imagined authentic relation to the land? Now we are no longer talking about survival at all. We are talking about meaning, about belonging, about identity — and these are value-laden categories, whether or not their holder has the self-awareness to notice.

The foundational claim, examined, is not a foundation.

It is a sinkhole.

And the sinkhole opens immediately beneath the feet of anyone who looks down, which is precisely why so few do. Because what gets exposed when the necessity claim fails is not merely a bad argument — it is the entire motivational architecture underneath: the desire, preconditioned and indoctrinated, dressed up as primal truth. Ria Del Montana names this architecture plainly in her analysis of anarcho-primitivist discourse: the desire to hunt, she argues, is not some pre-social biological urge that civilization suppressed and anti-civ practice recovers. It is the opposite. It is a *product* of civilization's colonizing ethos — what she calls the shift from foraging prey to predatory colonizer — retroactively narrated as nature. The anti-civ hunter thinks he is recovering something primordial. He is, in fact, re-enacting something deeply civilized, under new management.

This is worth sitting with for a moment, because it inverts the entire self-presentation of the figure we're examining. He believes himself to be the radical — the one who has broken with the domesticated world, who has stepped outside the enclosure. But Ria Del Montana's analysis suggests something more uncomfortable: that the hunting orientation *is* the enclosure, internalized and projected outward as freedom. That the man who walks into the woods with a bow and calls it rewilding is dragging civilization's most basic logic with him, just without the paperwork. Ria Del Montana puts the inversion starkly:

This is why anprims laud hunting, justifying it in the wings of more recent indigenous people's cultures and mythology of earlier humans' primal ventures in predation — they don't want to live as foraging primates, they have been conditioned to hunger the hunt of animals, unwittingly craving civilization's catalyst. This is why anprims mock veganism, dismissing it with invalid claims of being nothing more than leftist drivel — they don't want to acknowledge their own innate compassion for animals suppressed by predatory indoctrination.

II. The Nature Excuse and Its Failure

From necessity the argument typically moves to nature: *hunting is natural*.

This is one of the most durable moves in the history of bad reasoning, and it has been identified as such for a very long time. The inference from *is* to *ought* — from the fact that something occurs in nature to the conclusion that it is therefore good, justified, or beyond critique — is a fallacy. Full stop. It has a name: the naturalistic fallacy. But the anti-civ hunter who claims to be done with civilization's epistemological frameworks tends to reach for this framework whenever it suits him, apparently without noticing.

The deeper problem is that "natural" does almost no work as a category. Everything is natural in the sense that it occurs in the world. Parasites are natural. Sexual coercion is natural. Cancer is natural. Infanticide is natural. Disease is natural. The anti-civ hunter would not, presumably, conclude from this that we ought to embrace all of it with equanimity. He is selecting — choosing which natural things to valorize and which to treat as neutral or negative — and that selection is driven by something other than nature itself. It is driven by his values, his aesthetics, his sense of what constitutes a good life. He is, in other words, making normative judgments. He has just convinced himself he isn't.

Ria Del Montana is precise on this point: if anti-civ anarchists truly sense the natural of the primal, she asks, how do their senses tend to cherry-pick early human events for glorification and re-enactment like hunting, but not infanticide or rape? She puts the challenge bluntly:

Imagine the lengthy list of behaviors modern humans could rationalize as 'natural' because 'early humans did it too', or because it fits the conditioned "desire" to do so.

FOR MORE READING MATERIAL RELATED TO VEGANISM, NIHILISM AND EGOISM:

- *Liberal Radical & Nihilist VEGANISM: A Short Exploration*
- *Vegan Wild: An International Anarchist Journal of Total Liberation (multi-language version), (Full Spanish version) & (Full English Version)*
- *Non-human Comrades*
- *Decolonizing Individuality: Anarchism, Anti-Colonization & Anti-Speciesism*
- *Of Indigenous Hunters & Colonial Stereotypes: Indigenous Anarchy Against Hunting & Intoxication Culture*
- *More Than Just a Diet: A Conversation Between Warzone Distro & the Susaron 4*
- *Burning the Borders: Total Liberation & Individualist, Nihilist Perspectives Within the Colonized Territory Known as Mexico*
- *The Anarchist Diet: Vegetarianism and Individualist Anarchism in Early 20th-Century France*
- *Of Diets & Morality: A Vegan Egoist Perspective*
- *What Savages We Must Be: Vegans Without Morality*
- *Egoist Vegan: Some Thoughts on an Individualist Animal Liberation*
- *Veganism From A Nihilist and Anti-Civilization Perspective*
- *Vegan Amoralism: An Egoist Nihilist Critique of Speciesism*

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humans finally embedded back within it — sensing Earth's call for healing, giving back instead of taking, reviving the ethos of belonging in habitat rather than mastery over it.

This is not weakness. This is not domesticated sentimentality. This is the harder position — the one that demands something rather than permitting everything, the one that applies the same critical logic across the board instead of carving out a comfortable exemption for the practice you already intended to perform.

The anti-civ hunter positions himself as the most committed radical in the room — the one willing to go further than the liberals and the leftists, the one who has broken with civilization most completely. He has not. He has reproduced civilization's foundational logic — predation, management, control, the hierarchical arrangement of beings into users and used — and decorated it with Zerzan quotes and a subscription to primitive skills newsletters.

Ria Del Montana closes with a vision worth registering: in today's ruined wilds, the way of primal anarchy is uncultivating civilization. Technologies that perpetuate civilization can be operated to discard civilization and the ethos that led to it — predatory control and colonization. This colonizing human-driven sixth mass extinction event is no time to play the fabled caveman exploiting pristine remnants. The first step in rewilding is sensing Earth's call for healing and responding to it. In giving back to the wild, humans return themselves to the wild, reviving the ethos of belonging in habitat.

The observation that connects deepest across the span of this record — from the sixth century BC to the present ruins — belongs to Pythagoras, whom Ria Del Montana cites without irony:

For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other.

The chain is not metaphorical. It is structural. The same logic that licenses killing what cannot resist you, that transforms living beings into resources, that arranges the world into users and used — that logic does not stop at the species line. It never did. The anti-civ hunter who claims to oppose domination while enacting it has not stepped outside the chain. He has simply chosen his preferred link.

Don't forget the hunter can be—and often is—the hunted.
We don't require justification or legitimation.
Remember that when we say:

Hunt the hunters.

The selectivity is not incidental. It is structural. You cannot appeal to nature as legitimating authority and then curate which parts of nature qualify. The moment you curate, you have abandoned the appeal to nature and substituted your own value system — the very one you claimed to have discarded.

There is also something worth noting about the relationship between "natural" and the anti-civilization project more broadly. The critique of civilization is, at least in part, a critique of what civilization has done to the nonhuman world: the flattening, the monoculturing, the rendering of wild ecosystems into resource matrices. That critique has genuine force. But it sits in awkward tension with the naturalistic defense of hunting — because what the anti-civ hunter is doing, when he says *nature sanctions this*, is constructing a state of nature and projecting legitimacy onto it. He is, in the precise sense of the term, constructing an ideology. The natural is being deployed as a rhetorical absolute, which is precisely the move he condemns in civilization's defenders when they call domestication or hierarchy "natural." The asymmetry is unexplained and probably inexplicable.

Before pressing further into the logical structure, it is worth pausing on the deeper issue that the naturalistic argument reveals: the anti-civ hunter is not simply making a claim about nature. He is making a claim about *human nature* — about what human beings fundamentally are, what they were before civilization distorted them, what they can recover by stepping back into the practices of the deep past. This is the silent major premise of the entire position. And it is where the argument is weakest, because the picture of human nature it relies on is not a discovered fact but a constructed narrative — one that the archaeological and anthropological record has been increasingly calling into question.

Here the matter gets deeper, because the anti-civ hunter's appeal to the natural rests on a particular story about what human beings originally were — and that story has been systematically challenged. Del Montana draws on Robert Sussman and Donna Hart's anthropological work demonstrating that early humans were, for the great majority of their history, not apex predators but prey — succumbing to cats, canines, hyenas, bears, crocodiles, and even large constricting snakes and predatory birds. The "man-the-hunter" mythology is not a recovered primal truth. Archaeobotanist Sarah Mason observed:

For the most part the Pleistocene, and even the earliest postglacial, is a blank when it comes to evidence of humans eating plants. No wonder the old men's stories, of chaps who hunt great mammals and eat their meat, still dominate our unthinking visions of hunter-gathering in that period.

A narrative that dominated because the archaeological record of plant foraging left almost nothing behind, while bones left evidence. The silence was interpreted as absence, and the absence was filled with exactly what civilization's pro-meat bias expected to find.

And the bias is not subtle. Anthropologist Penny Spikins, commenting on Raymond Dart's "killer ape" theory, noted that a tendency to see what we think ought to be there was perhaps never better illustrated — a remark that applies with equal force to how anti-civ hunters read the deep past. They find what they want to find, construct a primal nature that mirrors their present desires, and call it ancestral truth. This is not anti-civilization thinking. It is civilization's epistemology in a loincloth.

Andree Collard and Joyce Contrucci, authors of **Rape of the Wild**, name the mechanism with precision that the anti-civ hunter would do well to sit with:

The efforts of modern man to rationalize the contradictions and delusions surrounding the hunt and the hunter extend to the romanticized images he fashions of primitive man as the archetypal hunter with the hunt as the sine qua non of his existence.

The romanticization is not incidental. It is the whole move. Strip it away and what remains is a man who wants to kill animals and needs that wanting to mean something larger than itself.

The biological record is more inconvenient still. Before controlled fire, the human diet was primarily plant-based. The body adapted — slowly, partially — to a more omnivorous diet over deep time, but as Ria Del Montana observes, the core biology of the human primate is still legible: blunt fingernails made for picking, not claws made for slashing; teeth designed for grinding plant matter, not for tearing raw flesh from bone. She writes:

Humans have grown so very far away from themselves that they can no longer even see their obvious nature right in their own bodies. This has nothing to do with morals, but who the human biology, their being is. If humans were meant to hunt, they wouldn't need all the weaponry, or the rituals and indoctrination convincing their body and mind to behave outside their nature.

If you want to argue that the desire to hunt is primal, you first have to explain why acting on that desire requires so much

“Grown men and women killing or beating the shit out of the innocent” — the phrasing is deliberately blunt, and it is blunt for a reason. The romance and ritual and deep ecology spirituality that surrounds the hunt in anti-civ discourse is a fog machine. Beneath it is what Ajecoutay sees when the fog clears.

The anti-civ vegan position does not require you to feel guilty. It does not require you to believe in animal rights as a liberal philosophical category. It does not require any of the apparatuses that the anti-civ hunter accuses it of importing. What it requires is consistency — the willingness to apply your own stated principles to your own practice, without the exemption that desire dressed as necessity demands.

This is not an accusation. It is an observation. It is the kind of observation that a position built on genuine consistency — rather than on the selection of convenient arguments — has to be willing to make, and to sit with, even when it is uncomfortable.

The anti-civ hunter who is genuinely done with morality should have no problem with this. He should be able to say: I hunt, I do not apologize for it, I am not claiming it is good or necessary or traditional or natural — I am claiming it is what I do, for reasons I have examined and found to be mine, and I am not asking for your blessing. That would be honest. That would be coherent. That would be what he claims to be.

He never says it. And the distance between what he claims to be and what his arguments reveal him to be — that distance is the whole story.

XI. The Hunter Can Be Hunted

If you would still anchor legitimacy in "nature," or stand on "tradition," or invoke the ancestors of people who reject your invocation — remember what each of those categories actually contains. Not only the hunter, but the hunted. Not only the predator's story, but the prey's. The megafauna that were driven to extinction not by ice ages but by the spread of fire-wielding, weapon-making, habitat-clearing humans. The species that fell not to natural selection but to the colonizing logic that your position, in defending hunting, reproduces.

The refusal the *anti-civ vegan* makes is not the refusal of strength. Ajecoutay is explicit: he is a warrior. He is not a pacifist or an altruist. He fights for the animals and the earth, trains in mixed martial arts, and has no loyalty to humanity — only an impulse to serve the animal-kind and the earth, and to destroy what he calls civ-man. Ria Del Montana's rewilding vision ends not with humans restored to predatory dominance over the nonhuman world, but with

argument needed. But the egoist claim was available from the start. If he actually held it, none of the others would have appeared. The fact that they appear in sequence, each replacing the last when it fails, tells you that the egoist claim is the fallback, not the foundation. The foundation is the need to be right — to have the practice validated by something larger than desire. The egoism is arrived at reluctantly, as a last resort, when all the stronger justifications have been dismantled. And even then it tends not to hold, because the next conversation starts the whole stack again from the bottom. Necessity. Nature. Tradition. Ecology. The cards are reshuffled and dealt again, with the same confident air, as if none of this had ever been said before.

X. What Remains Among The Ruins

What remains, after the demolition, is a choice. Not a moral choice in the sense of a duty-laden decision about right and wrong. A choice in the blunter sense: what do you do with your body, your hunger, your desire, your relationship to other living things?

The anti-civ hunter — if he has actually ever hunted; looking at you, dork — is not wrong to want something beyond civilization's food system. That system is a horror: a system of industrialized confinement, suffering, and death at a scale that has no precedent in the history of life on this planet. The desire to refuse it is comprehensible and in many respects admirable. But the refusal of the civilized system does not automatically legitimize every alternative to it. Not eating factory-farmed animals is not the same as hunting being good, or necessary, or beyond critique. These are separate questions, and running them together — which the anti-civ hunter frequently does — is a way of evading the second question by answering the first.

What the anti-civ vegan position asserts, without moralism and without the appeal to nature or tradition or ecological necessity, is something simpler and harder: that the same analytical pressure applied to civilization's violence ought to be applied to all violence against the nonhuman world. Not because there is a moral law that says so, but because the logic demands it. Because you cannot coherently mount a critique of what civilization does to animals and then exempt yourself from scrutiny the moment you pick up a weapon. The exemption requires justification, and the justifications that are offered are shit.

Ajecoutay is not making a moral argument when he describes hunting as terrorism. He is making an observation about power — about the fact that the hunter and the hunted are not in a symmetrical relation, that most animals cannot and do not defend themselves from the hunter, that the application of lethal force to beings who cannot consent to or resist that force has a structure that resembles other exercises of power the anti-civ anarchist claims to oppose.

infrastructure — weapons, fire, rituals, mythology, elaborate cultural indoctrination — while the desire to forage does not.

What is **truly** primal does not require that much convincing.

III. The Appeal to Tradition and the Conservative Beneath the Radical

Next up: **hunting is traditional**. Or: **it is cultural**. Or, in its most affecting register: **it is ancestral**.

These are distinct claims, but they share a structure. They appeal to temporal depth — to the fact that something has been done for a long time, by many people, often across generations — as a source of legitimacy. The longer and wider the practice, the more weight it carries. The ancestors hunted, and so to hunt is to continue something, to participate in something, to honor something.

This is conservatism. It is not anarchism. It is not egoism. It is not nihilism. It is one of the oldest and most recognizable forms of normative conservatism: the appeal to tradition as authority, the claim that duration confers rightness. Edmund Burke would recognize the move immediately. The anti-civ hunter who makes it has not stepped outside civilization's moral architecture — he has stepped into one of civilization's oldest moral architectures, the one that was always used to defend whatever existed against whoever was questioning it.

The problem isn't tradition as such. Traditions can be examined, inhabited consciously, altered, refused, continued — all of these are possible stances toward inherited practices, and none of them require the stance of uncritical deference that the appeal to tradition actually demands. The problem is using tradition as a **justificatory** category, as though the age of a practice settles the question of its value. It doesn't. It never did. The people who argued most passionately for the maintenance of slavery, of caste systems, of patriarchal domestic arrangements, of colonial land management — all of them made versions of this argument. This is not an ad hominem against hunters; it is a structural observation about a form of reasoning that has never been adequate, regardless of what it is used to defend.

The ancestral version of the argument has additional texture, because it calls up not just abstract tradition but particular lineages, specific peoples, relationships to land that were and are disrupted by colonialism and dispossession. That disruption is real, and the grievance is real, and the desire to recover something of what was destroyed is comprehensible and in many respects admirable. But this is still not an argument that hunting is good, necessary, or beyond critique. It is an argument about loss and recovery — a different argument, a more honest

one, which does not require any of the other claims in this cluster to be true. When the appeal to ancestral practice is doing genuine political work — when it names specific colonial wounds and asserts specific rights — it deserves to be engaged on those terms, not collapsed into the general fallacy structure that surrounds it in anti-civ discourse.

And here the testimony of Kerry Redwood Ajecoutay matters, because it cuts directly against what the settler primitivist uses indigenous hunting cultures to claim. Ajecoutay — Saulteaux/Cree of the Ojibwa Nation, descendant of Ka-wezauce First Nation, descendant of the buffalo hunters of the great plains — is vegan. He does not eat animals or their byproducts. His politics are total liberation and animal liberation, grounded in green anarchism-primitivism and an explicit desire to rewild the planet. In his own words:

It is obvious to me by now, that someone like me — who is a descendant of the buffalo hunters of the great plains, what is now known as North America — can survive and live very comfortable on a vegan diet. The reason I am doing this is not just for my health, but for the health of the planet, domesticated animals, the free-living (wild), and for the tribal peoples, who are still struggling to hang on to their ancient ways of coexisting with nature.

His spirituality is worth noting for what it contains and what it refuses. The Morningstar Society. Manitous. Mysticism and asceticism. A nature-based system of thought that holds ultimate respect for women, mothers, animals, and the earth. No monotheistic organized religious sect or scientific dogma. He is, in his own description, a warrior — not a pacifist, not an altruist — who fights for the animals and the earth, trains in mixed martial arts, and describes himself simultaneously as straight edge, sober, and vehemently anti-industrial. Everything here challenges the settler primitivist's fantasy: this is an Indigenous person, a descendant of hunters, who has looked at the whole inherited complex and refused the killing part, not out of weakness, not out of civilized sentimentality, but out of a commitment to total liberation that is more rigorous and more consistent than anything the anti-civ hunter has managed.

The significance of this should not be flattened. The settler who invokes indigenous hunting traditions as cover for his own desires is not honoring those traditions. He is ventriloquizing them — making them say what he needs them to say, while the actual people whose lineages he is borrowing may be saying something completely different, something that challenges rather than confirms his position. When white men, as Ajecoutay puts it, refer to natives as hunters, they do not take into account all that is required for a people to prepare for and undertake the hunt, the vast intervals between hunts, or what those people were

Ria Del Montana makes this observation with a clarity that deserves to be repeated. She writes:

Look at my finger nails. These are not the sharp claws that slash open skin. These are the fingers made for picking berries and mushrooms. These are the hands for pulling up roots. Look at my teeth. These are not the teeth that rip chunks of raw muscle from bone. Humans have grown so very far away from themselves that they can no longer even see their obvious nature right in their own bodies.

This has nothing to do with morality. It has to do with biology — with what the body is configured for and what it has to be trained, equipped, and indoctrinated to do instead. If humans were meant to hunt, they wouldn't need all the weaponry, or the rituals and indoctrination convincing their body and mind to behave outside their nature. The infrastructure of hunting — physical, cultural, ideological — is itself the evidence that it is not natural in any strong sense. The things that require the least infrastructure to feel, to desire, to do — these are the things the body was shaped by long time and deep adaptation to do.

The anti-civ hunter does not think in these terms because the story he has accepted — man-the-hunter, primal predator, natural killer in right relationship with the land — does not allow for it. To follow the logic of the body honestly would be to arrive somewhere he does not want to go. So instead he assembles the arguments, stacks them in defensive formation, and calls the assembled structure a worldview.

It is not a worldview. It is a rationalization. Ria Del Montana defines the word precisely: a rationalization is what happens when you evade open consideration of an accustomed lifeway that is uncomfortable to change. She observes that the mass rationalizing that occurs among non-vegan anarchists, including green anarchists and anarcho-primitivists, has its own predictable set of knee-jerk responses — the dubious health claims, the ecological necessity narrative, the "can't survive vegan outside of Leviathan" argument — each deployed reflexively, apparently without coordination, as if the same sentiments were magically originating within individuals who are each convinced they are thinking freely. The convergence is not magic. It is what indoctrination looks like when it is operating successfully.

What is especially revealing is how the rationalizations shift when pressed. Push on the nutritional necessity claim and it becomes the ecological necessity claim. Push on the ecological claim and it becomes the ancestral claim. Push on the ancestral claim and it becomes the egoist claim — I just want to, that's all, no

humanized animal cannibalizes other (human and non-human) animals perceived to belong to inferior identities. From this point of view, consumption takes on a value and meaning of control and domination — a mirror image of the way capitalism consumes emotional space and transforms living beings into territories devoid of compassion.

From this vantage point, being *possessed by identities* — including the identity of the anarcho-primitivist hunter, the green wild man, the skilled predator-as-rebel — is precisely the mechanism through which colonialism reproduces itself at the level of the self. The anti-civ hunter who has adopted hunting as constitutive of his identity has not escaped identity's trap — he has built a particularly elaborate one, furnished with bones and sinew and the smell of blood, and called it freedom.

The anti-civ hunter claims to be asserting the creative nothingness. But examined closely, his position is precisely the surrender: the preconfigured meaning and value of the hunt — its indoctrination into male selfhood, its mythologization through civilization's archaeological and anthropological record, its deployment as the mark of authentic anti-civ belonging — is exactly what he has absorbed and is now repeating, in anti-civ drag. He has not stepped outside the script. He has memorized a different section of it and performs it with the conviction of someone who has never read the whole play.

What would the genuinely ungovernable position look like? It would probably look something like Ajecoutay — vegan, martial, nihilist, Indigenous, plant-based, unaffiliated with anyone's expectations of what someone from his lineage should eat or believe, training his body rigorously, conducting his life by dreams given to him by ancestors who, it turns out, did not require him to kill in order to remain their descendant. The ungovernable position is not the one that reproduces civilization's deepest habit while calling it primal. It is the one that refuses even that.

IX. The Body Knows What It's Doing

There is a version of this critique that does not require any anthropology, any archaeology, any appeal to the fossil record or the DNA analysis of ancient dental calculus. It requires only looking at what the body actually does — and what it has to be overridden to do instead.

eating in between — the plants, berries, and roots gathered by women, elders, and children. The plant foods were first. They were always first. The hunt was periodic, elaborate, spiritually demanding, and contextually specific in ways that bear no relationship whatsoever to a settler heading into the woods on a weekend because John Zerzan made it sound meaningful.

Ajecoutay is blunt about what he thinks of the modern settler calling himself a green or primitive or anti-civ anarchist. He does not reach for diplomatic language:

In response to modern day hunters who call themselves "green" or "primitive" or "anti-civ anarchists", they are an example of how humans are inherently violent, with each other and with other species, either through war or terrorism, and they usually focus on the weaker. As for the animals, most of them don't and can not defend themselves from the hunter. Hunting is a form of terrorism, that humans, past and present, attempt to justify as being "necessary" for survival reasons — grown men and women killing or beating the shit out of the innocent.

They impose their superiority over animals and claim indigenous solidarity at the same time. They want to pretend to be friends of native peoples while doing exactly what native peoples like Ajecoutay explicitly reject. The insult of this — being invoked as justification by the very culture whose descendants committed genocide against your people — is not a peripheral matter. It is central to understanding what the appeal to ancestral tradition actually does when deployed by settlers in anti-civ spaces. He writes that English is not his language. He has struggled with it for most of his life. If life had been normal according to his people, there would have been no reason for him to speak it at all. His people were invaded and colonized; the dominant culture attempted to exterminate them, resulting in a genocide that is not acknowledged as a genocide — only as an inconvenience to a more progressive and superior race. And now the descendants of that culture invoke his ancestors' practices as license for their weekend hunts.

He does not frame this politely. He takes the offensive stand against the invader cultures of the world. And within that stance, veganism is not a concession to civilized sensibility but a weapon — one expression of the broader refusal of what colonial-industrial civilization has manufactured as desire, as normal, as necessary.

He lists what must be refused without ambiguity:

Refined tobacco — that is offered up the spirits. Alcohol — including your fine wine. Pharmaceutical drugs — that keeps the people sedated and dependent, including marijuana. Factory Farmed Meat (or animal flesh and secretions in general!) — of which is cruel and extremely unhealthy for the earth, people and the animals, the eating of this flesh goes against all spiritualities that identifies the earth as their mother and the animals that are the guiding spirits to the metaphysical world of the Manitou, that have kept the natural balance of the world in check for tens of thousands of years since before the invention of linear time.

Tobacco. Alcohol. Pharmaceutical drugs. Factory farmed meat. All four are products of the same system; all four reduce the free-living to resources; all four require the lands and lives of Indigenous peoples and other animals to maintain. Refusing them is not asceticism for its own sake. It is a coherent material practice against the civilization that produces them.

Ajecoutay also makes a point about the actual history of indigenous hunting that the settler primitivist never engages seriously: hunting was not the continuous daily practice the mythology describes. The buffalo hunters of the Great Plains sometimes used corrals, sometimes ran animals off cliffs, sometimes used bows and arrows — but the hunt happened a few times a year and could take days, requiring the animal to be tracked until it bled out. In between hunts, the people ate the plants, berries, and roots gathered by women, elders, and children. The plant foods were primary. The hunt was periodic, elaborately ritualized, and contextually embedded in a whole way of life that the settler cannot reproduce by picking up a weapon and calling himself wild. The Cheyenne held five-day ceremonies before their corral hunts. The Blackfoot method of running animals off cliffs was criticized by the Cheyenne for its wastefulness. The practices were not uniform, not unquestioned, not sacred in any sense that would license their appropriation as cover for a settler's self-image.

When white men refer to natives as hunters, as Ajecoutay writes, they do not take into account all that is required — the preparation, the ceremony, the interval, the plant foods, the women's labor, the elaborate spiritual and ecological context that made the practice what it was. He is specific:

The first circle of food was and still is, the plants. If any of these modern day hunters practised Bushcraft or wilderness survival they would understand this. I have been practising Bushcraft for 25 years.

food. The nature claim is not really about ecology. The ancestral claim is not really about honoring lineages. All of them are about the hunter's self-image — his sense of being a particular kind of person, doing a particular kind of thing, belonging to a particular kind of tradition. It is, in the most precise sense, an ego investment. And it is being laundered through the language of deep ecological necessity, anti-civ critique, and ancestral wisdom.

VIII. What the Refusal Is Not

None of this is a moral argument. Or rather: it is a refusal of the anti-civ hunter's moral arguments, but the refusal does not itself constitute a competing morality. We reject morality. It does not say: killing animals is wrong, and you should feel guilty, and you are a bad person. It says: the arguments you are making are bad arguments, and the position that depends on them is less coherent than it presents itself as being.

The distinction matters because one of the anti-civ hunter's standard moves, when challenged, is to accuse the challenger of moralizing — of importing civilization's ethics, of animal rights liberalism, of domesticated sentimentality. This is a defensive maneuver, and it works by misidentifying what is happening. A logical critique of an argument is not a moral accusation. Pointing out that the naturalistic fallacy is a fallacy is not the same as saying nature is bad. Noting that the appeal to tradition functions conservatively is not the same as saying all traditions are bad. These are different kinds of claims, and conflating them is precisely the kind of muddled thinking that the claim to nihilism was supposed to have left behind.

The position from which this critique, like an arrow, is launched is not invested in your guilt. It is not asking you to feel bad. It is not appealing to the suffering of animals as a trump card that forecloses all discussion — though that suffering is real and that reality is not irrelevant. It is saying: you made arguments, and the arguments don't work, and the ticky-tacky facade of legitimacy you have built around a behavior you wanted to do anyway is exactly that — a facade. It is the box you hide within.

The "Decolonizing Individuality" framework that is articulated in Flower Bomb's text about anti-speciesism and anti-colonization is useful here. The argument runs that since the reproduction of colonialism takes place on an individual level, individuality itself becomes a battleground. The text puts it this way:

One can either choose to surrender to the pre configured meaning and values of industrial society, or assert a creative nothingness — an ungovernable terra incognita... Possessed by identities, the

and that the animal is reduced to an object, a symbol against which the hunter seeks to establish his masculine selfhood and moral worth. The holy hunter's self-image, his sense of his own spiritual orientation, his feeling of being in right relationship with the wild — all of this displaces the animal from the center of the encounter and puts the hunter there instead.

This is the deep structure of the anti-civ hunter's position, even when he doesn't invoke Shepard explicitly. The animal is not a being with a life that matters in its own terms. The animal is the occasion for the hunter's self-realization. The hunt is about what the hunter becomes, what he recovers, what he proves — to himself, to his community, to the anti-civ milieu that celebrates him. The animal's death is the price of that theater, and the price is never properly counted because the theater is the point.

This is worth dwelling on, because it exposes something the anti-civ hunter would prefer to leave unexposed: that his entire orientation toward the nonhuman world is profoundly *human-centered*, regardless of the language of reciprocity and ecological embeddedness he deploys. He is at the center. The animal orbits him as symbol, as teacher, as catalyst for his becoming. The wild is a backdrop for his drama of self-recovery. In this sense, his position is not the opposite of civilization's anthropocentrism but its most intimate expression — the one where humans are still the measure of all things, still the beings whose experience and development and transformation matter most, still the subjects while everything else remains object. He has kept the logic and shed the guilt. That is all.

Ria Del Montana names this dynamic when she observes that anprims laud hunting, justifying it in the wings of more recent indigenous people's cultures and the mythology of earlier humans' primal ventures in predation — that they don't want to live as foraging primates, that they have been conditioned to hunger for the hunt of animals, unwittingly craving civilization's catalyst. The conditioning is invisible to them because it is experienced as desire, and desire feels originary, feels like the self speaking in its own voice. But the question Del Montana insists on asking — and it is the right question — is: where does the desire come from? Not what does it feel like, but what produced it? And when you follow that question back through the history of fire use, hunting specialization, patriarchal pair bonding, the mythology of man-the-hunter, the popularization of that mythology through science and anthropology and pop primitivism — you arrive somewhere that looks a great deal less like recovered wildness and a great deal more like deep indoctrination.

Once this structure is visible, the entire normative architecture of the anti-civ pro-hunting position looks different. The necessity claim is not really about

To strip all of that away and keep only the killing is not honoring indigenous tradition. It is doing exactly what colonialism always does: taking what it wants and discarding what doesn't serve its purposes. And in anti-civ discourse, most of the people making these arguments are not Indigenous people asserting treaty rights. They are, preponderantly, settlers constructing a mythology of primitivism onto which they project their own desires.

This is worth saying plainly, because it is true, and because it matters.

IV. The Biology Beneath the Story

Ria Del Montana's *AnPrim On Fire* makes a case that deserves to be taken seriously on its own terms — not as moral argument but as materialist analysis of what the hunting orientation actually reflects in the deep history of the species. Her argument is that the shift from foraging to predation was not a recovery of some essential human nature but a cascading consequence of the ethos of predation and colonization that fire mastery helped make possible. The significance of controlled fire, she argues, is not simply dietary but structural: it was the technology that allowed early humans to run off predators, clear habitat, expand into biomes where they had no natural niche, and — critically — begin organizing around the social dynamics of the hunt in ways that hardened hierarchy, divided labor, and embedded patriarchy. James C. Scott, in **Against the Grain**, frames the stakes precisely:

The use of fire to clear land and open the canopy was the key to humankind's growing sway over the natural world. The concentration of resources in this light places the milestones of the classical civilizational narrative in a new light.

Without fire, the colonizing expansion beyond the human primate's native habitat range would have been impossible. Hunting, as a specialized practice that depended on and intensified with fire use, is not the rupture with civilization — it is one of civilization's opening moves.

When men shifted to hunting specialization, they were not recovering some deep masculine nature. They were inaugurating a social form — one that paired women to hearths for the security of the food supply, made meat into a form of property and power, and slowly naturalized the idea that predated upon other living things was not just permissible but constitutive of a certain kind of selfhood. Deborah Spar's work on agriculture and gender finds that settlement needed children to work and inherit accumulated property, which meant controlling women's fertility, which meant the intensification of patriarchal hierarchy — a development that ran on the same logic as the hunting specialization that preceded it. The colonizing ethos is continuous across these

developments; hunting is not outside it but one of its earliest expressions.

This matters for the anti-civ hunter because his entire position assumes that hunting represents a break with civilization's logic — that to hunt is to step outside the enclosure. Del Montana's analysis suggests the reverse: that hunting, especially when practiced in the ritual, indoctrinated, culturally valorized form the anti-civ hunter favors, is one of civilization's most primordial grooves. It is not the path out. It is the path in, made very old. Christopher Ryan, author of **Civilized to Death**, names the bias in the scientific record that sustains this mythology:

The popularity and persistence of scientific narratives often have more to do with how well they support dominant mythologies than with their scientific veracity.

And James C. Scott reinforces the archaeological invisibility problem that leaves plant foragers structurally underrepresented in the record:

If you were hunter-gatherers or nomads, however numerous, spreading your biodegradable trash thinly across the landscape, you were likely to vanish entirely from the archaeological record.

Not only do hunter-gatherers leave little evidence, plant foragers leave even less — likely resulting in greatly over-exaggerated claims of inherent human hunting across deep time. The record is not neutral. It is biased toward what preserves, and what preserves is what civilization's interpreters expected to find.

Further, DNA analysis of Neanderthal dental remains finds something the anti-civ hunter does not want to reckon with: a band in El Sidrón cave in Spain consumed no meat at all — only mushrooms, pine nuts, bark, and moss. Fully plant-subsisting Neanderthals. The study, published in **Nature** in 2017, found that while Neanderthals at Spy cave in Belgium ate heavily meat-based diets, at El Sidrón no meat was detected whatsoever, and dietary components reflected forest gathering exclusively. This is not anomalous; it suggests that the diversity of early human and hominid dietways was far greater than the man-the-hunter narrative permits, and that plant foraging as a complete subsistence strategy has deep roots in hominin life. Ria Del Montana asks the question that should give the anti-civ hunter pause:

So here's DNA evidence that some pre-civ humans subsisted wholly on plants, mushrooms and moss, challenging civilization's romanticized man-the-hunter image and pro-meat bias. Why is

are actually subsisting on what they kill, embedded in a living relationship with a specific landscape, practicing the elaborate preparation and ceremony that Ajecoutay describes as genuinely constitutive of what hunting *was* before colonialism simplified it into killing? The ceremony would take five days to complete. The hunting happened only a few times a year. The people ate plants in between. This is not what the anti-civ hunter is doing. But he invokes it as his model.

VII. Paul Shepard's Distorting Mirror

There is a figure lurking behind the anti-civ hunter's self-presentation who rarely gets named directly: Paul Shepard, the deep ecology thinker whose celebration of hunting as constitutive of male selfhood has done more to shape primitivist hunting ideology than Zerzan ever did. Shepard's writing is explicit about what the hunt is actually for:

The human hunter in the field is not merely a predator, because of hundreds of centuries of experience in treating the woman-prey with love, which he turns back into the hunt proper. The ecstatic consummation of this love is the killing itself. Formal consummation is eating... The prey must be eaten for ethical not nutritional value, in a kind of celebration.

And elsewhere, with the pseudo-spiritual register that should make any honest nihilist wince:

Hunting is a holy occupation, framed in rules and courtesy, informed by the beauty of the physical being and the numinous presence of the spiritual life of animals.

Ria Del Montana quotes Marti Kheel on what this actually reveals:

...in Shepard's framework, ethical discourse functions as a decoy — focusing attention not on the state of the animal who is about to be killed, but on the hunter. Kheel writes that what the holy hunters see as a reciprocal activity is, in reality, a unidirectional morality in which the hunter formulates and follows his own moral directives — that the emphasis on the instinctual nature of hunting functions to further remove the hunters' conduct from ethical reproach, since hunting is seen as a natural and elementary drive,

complicated than the argument implies.

The overpopulation of deer in particular landscapes in North America is largely a product of civilization's other interventions: the extirpation of apex predators, the fragmentation of habitat, the creation of edge environments that favor certain species. The solution being offered — hunting — is a continuous management practice, which means it requires hunters to continue hunting indefinitely to maintain the effect. This is not ecological restoration. It is ecological management — the same paradigm, one of civilization's most characteristic postures toward the nonhuman world, only with a bow instead of a government program. The anti-civ critique of civilization's management of nature does not seem to extend to this management of nature, and the reason it doesn't is not ecological. The reason is that it suits the hunter to be cast as ecologically necessary.

A zine published by Warzone Distro called *Non-Human Comrades* captures the deeper problem precisely:

The attempt by humans to manage nature is the very tendency which resulted in the meltdown surrounding us, and more of the same is not the remedy. The only way out is to be brave enough to abandon the commitment to human control, and anti-speciesists should be the first to do so.

The "ecological hunter" has not abandoned human control. He has redescribed it as a gift to the land, a service rendered, a role performed out of necessity. But the logic of necessary intervention — the human as indispensable manager of an otherwise unbalanced nature — is precisely the logic that cleared the wolves, fragmented the forests, and produced the imbalance he now claims to correct.

Actual ecological restoration — the rewilding of apex predators, the reconnection of habitat corridors, the removal of the conditions that created the imbalance in the first place — does not require hunters. It requires a different relationship to land altogether, one that does not center the human as necessary intervener. But this alternative doesn't appear much in anti-civ hunting discourse, which suggests the ecological argument is less a genuine ecological position than a justificatory supplement to a pre-formed desire.

And there is something worth noting about who tends to make this argument. Ajecoutay, with the cutting precision that runs through everything he writes, gestures at the absurdity: how many people use man-the-hunter mythology to justify buying pieces of tortured carcasses in stores and drive-through windows? How many of the people making the ecological argument about deer populations

your first response to try to disprove it? Why isn't this something to celebrate?

The reaction is itself diagnostic. It reveals that the investment in hunting is not really an investment in archaeological truth. It is an investment in a story — a story about what humans essentially are — that precedes and conditions the evidence-gathering.

V. The Egoist Who Wasn't

Let's address the philosophical self-description directly: the claim to egoism, to nihilism, to having moved past morality. Because if this claim were genuine, the entire architecture of justification described above would be unnecessary. The egoist does not need to prove that hunting is natural, traditional, necessary, ancestral, ecologically sound, or anything else. The egoist says: I want this. That's it. No further warrant required or sought.

But the anti-civ hunter does not say this. He does not say *I want to hunt and I acknowledge this is a preference, not a principle, and I am not making any claim about what others should do or value*. He says: hunting is *legitimate*. Hunting is *justified*. Hunting is *right* — and then catches himself and adds *not in a moralistic sense* — but the structure of the claim is already there, already doing the work of moral argument, already appealing to criteria that are supposed to hold across persons and contexts.

The honest egoist, the one who actually means it, would not need any of these arguments. The need for them is diagnostic. It tells you that the person making them believes they need to be right in some more-than-personal sense — that they believe their practice requires external vindication, that they are answering to something. And that something, whatever it is called, is the thing they have not moved past.

This is not a trivial point. The turn to egoism, to nihilism, to anti-moralism — these are not just aesthetic positions. They involve a particular kind of intellectual honesty, a willingness to hold your own desires without draping them in disguise. The anti-civ hunter who claims these positions and then produces five nested arguments for why hunting is really and truly legitimate has abandoned the position before the conversation started. He is a moralist. A fairly traditional one. He just doesn't want to be caught being one.

Danny Nichols names what the anti-civ hunter is actually enacting in four words: *being aggressive herbivores (hunters), is post-primitive. It's a CULTure*. The word choice is not accidental. Culture, in the sense of indoctrinated value-system, collective mythology, socially reproduced behavior — that is exactly

what the claim to primal desire is concealing. And the concealment is itself a cultural product, shared across the anti-civ milieu with a uniformity that should give any genuine egoist pause.

Nicolas Dupont pushes the contradiction to its conclusion:

Veganism is essential to wildness. Not only is exploiting and killing animals a human-made-constructed activity and form of authority, but it socially evolved into the leading political regime worldwide. Very often humans want to pinpoint about such questions as origins, saying that "it has always been so even prior to civilization", and extreme rationalization has destroyed the last bits of remorse that could be left — nonetheless, if there is any initial "project" for humans, here we are, and we fail.

Ajecoutay states this with his characteristic directness when he describes his own nihilism: he believes that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known, communicated, or translated. His anarcho-nihilism is associated with extreme pessimism and radical skepticism that condemns the existence of capitalist-industry and all civilized men. And yet — he is vegan. Not because veganism is a moral imperative imposed from outside, but because, in his words, his entire animal being tells him to not kill or eat animals, without being indoctrinated into it. As a child he instinctively fought to be vegan in a world of killers. This is what nihilism without self-deception looks like: not the freedom to claim all things are permitted and then construct elaborate justifications for the particular things you already wanted to do. But the much harder task of looking at your own desires honestly and asking where they come from — and what they cost.

The anti-civ hunter cannot do this, because looking too hard at where the desire to hunt comes from leads somewhere he does not want to go. It leads, as Ria Del Montana argues, to the realization that killing animals requires active suppression of something prior. She frames it as a question:

Imagine you were born in a place where all humans lived in line with their herbivore biology, and you were surrounded by vegan humans. Would you have any impulse to slaughter and consume an animal? In days dominated by humans harming and eating animals, why have there been individuals with simultaneous repulsion to human necrovoory, a mass feeling that truly originated from within?

There's a reason killing animals takes cultural indoctrination, she answers:

we're wired for compassion for other animals. To act otherwise requires powerful unnatural devices — rationalizing, rituals, mythologies, traditions, norms. And in a world dominated by those devices, why have there persistently been individuals who felt simultaneous repulsion to human predation on other animals — a feeling that truly originated from within, uncoaxed, sometimes in childhood, sometimes against every cultural pressure?

The qualms the hunter feels before the shot — if he is honest enough to admit them — are not weakness. They are signal. Jack McMillan, whose words Ria Del Montana cites, frames the inversion with the kind of clarity the egoist should be capable of but rarely manages:

Without defensiveness and denial, with an open heart, speaking to some uneasy feelings, what are the ways a human feels when aiming a weapon at an animal with the intent to kill? If you sense any qualms, then you sense primal desire to not cause harm. THAT'S primal, not anthropocentric or moral. The so-called "desire" to hunt is what is anthropocentric and moral construction. The human's first impulse is to care and not harm. So where does 'desire' to hunt truly come from then? The qualms prove primal compassion.

Ria Del Montana holds the line the same way: the desire to not harm is what is innate. The desire to hunt is what is the moral construction. You can disagree with this — and the anti-civ hunter certainly will — but you cannot disagree with it from a position that claims to be beyond values, because the claim itself requires you to take a value position on the nature of human desire. There is no neutral ground here. There never was.

VI. The Ecological Hunter (from Suburbia, USA)

Sometimes, at this point in the argument, a supplementary claim arrives: *hunting is ecologically necessary*. Deer populations, predator absence, carrying capacity, trophic cascades. The hunter positions himself as a necessary actor in a damaged system — filling the role of the wolf, the bear, the lion. He is not hunting for pleasure (though he doesn't object to the pleasure); he is hunting for the land.

This argument at least has the virtue of being potentially empirical. Unlike "it is natural" or "it is ancestral," claims about population dynamics can be tested against evidence. And what the evidence tends to show is considerably more