

The Spook of Escaping Society (Primitivism)

The Spookcast Episode 7

Recurring Paradox

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In today's episode I discuss the spook of escaping society — primitivism — and how ownness relates to a more decolonial approach of liberation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezmjQbY8cRM>

Spook of the Week: Escaping Society and its Aesthetics — Cottagecore, Dopamine Detox, Collapsecore & Eco-Fascism

30:14 — Living Ownness: Liberation as Escape in Western Thought (Greek Philosophy & the Enlightenment) & Decolonizing Liberation through Appropriation (Frantz Fanon & Examples of Decolonial Literature)

46:53 — Spotlight: Primitivist Literature (Zerzan, Kaczynski & Haraway)

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Hey friends, can we please cuddle up and connect a bit? Because I have a question. Do you ever fantasize? Because I do. I absolutely love the idea of this thing. When I'm doing it, it just overcomes my entire body with bliss and then pure calm. Honestly, it's the best feeling in the entire world.

Do you know what I'm talking about? I think you do. I think that what we both really want right now is to disappear into the fucking woods and never look back. yes friends this is the thing I want most all the time no phone oh my god no rent no responsibility other than just to survive just me and time and calm and yes this is my happy thought this is my happy place and when I think about it I feel a sense of peace But I'm also aware of the fact that it's just a coping strategy. But some people take it extremely seriously and these people see themselves as a whole ass person. Like some burly, unkempt, ruggedly handsome bro holding a handmade axe. Maybe followed by a goat. And like a deep connection to some ancient mushroom or something that understands you better than your therapist or your mom or gym teacher ever could and this is what I want to get into today so welcome back to the spook cast the only podcast that dares to ask what if your inner longing to go off grid is um well a spook this week's spook is intricate and it's complex I had many names floating around in my tiny little brain for this spook.

So I thought maybe the spook of nature. Then I thought about the spook of purity. Then I thought about the spook of survival. Then I thought about the spook of conflict. Calm or peace. But where I ended and what kind of connected all the dots in the end was the spook of escape and not like escape in a car or like the key on your keyboard,

but this deep, desperate ache we all seem to have to just kind of get the fuck out. So out of society, out of language, out of technology, and ultimately to just get out of ourselves. And man, it's seductive, isn't it? The dream of this kind of pre-modern, wild, pure existence. And I know it sucks to hear, and I really don't want to be a spookbuster here right now, but as Bill Hicks would say, I don't mean to be bitter, cold, cruel, or vicious, but that is what I am, so that's how it comes out.

Maybe your anti-civilization identity is actually more pro-civilization than you thought. Maybe your anarcho-primitivism is actually just a romantic hallucination rooted in some kind of deep yearning. Maybe you're fucking overwhelmed. Maybe this shit sucks major balls and you just don't want to do it anymore. And honestly, does it have to be more than that? And honestly, don't even listen to me because I'll admit it. I have binged the living fuck out of cottagecore TikToks at 2am. I've googled how to live in the woods legally. I've even said the words dopamine detox out loud with a straight face to my daughter of all people. So I know what it's like, man.

But I have also started to realize that these fantasies don't just promise freedom. They promise pre-subjectivity. They offer an escape that's not just from society, but also from the exhausting condition of being a self. So a self that has to show up and to speak and to symbolize and to desire. And a self that lacks something and that's what this is really about in most cases. So today we are going to dive deep. With the help of Shana, of course, as usual, we're going to look into something like pastoral dreams and survivalist nightmares. We're going to look at dopamine detox cults and eco-fascist aesthetics and we're going to look at Zerzan's lyrical nihilism and Ted Kaczynski's pathological autonomy. And then we're going to look at Donna Haraway's cyborg gospel and then we'll open our socialized little ears to something new something that offers a whole new way of looking at things because in my opinion the aesthetical grip of this absolute fucking bitch called capitalism has you by the genitals because it controls what you think freedom is so we're gonna ask the big questions what does why does nature feel like liberation Why does tech feel like a trap? And what if both are just stories that we tell ourselves? Because it's easier to run than to deconstruct. So this episode is personal because I've been seduced by this escape too, trust me. And I want it so bad, man. I really do. So let's go on this journey together and let's think as deeply as possible about this. The spook of the week is escape.

So let's talk about escape. What is escape? I'm talking about escape as identity. So the way so many of us now become someone by trying to disappear in a way. Because in 2025, escape isn't just a desire, you know? It's an aesthetic. It's a lifestyle. It's an ideology. It's a vibe, okay? It's romanticized, marketed, and ironically reproduced across social media. And in the words of my one and only true love, it's a spook. So let's break it down and look at the most prevalent examples in contemporary society. So we'll go from most obviously spooked, in my opinion, to least obviously spooked. So let's look at cottagecore.

I don't know if you've ever heard of this, but there's this thing that the kids are calling cottagecore. And cottagecore is the aesthetic of domestic nostalgia, right? It's

like frolicking in wildflower fields. It's something like embroidering by candlelight while also listening to Taylor Swift and posting reels with 35 filters on. You know what I mean? So behind this aesthetic, behind these vibes, is an extremely spooked vision of nature as something pure and uncorrupted and feminine and safe. It's a kind of feminine-coded primitivism, right? Where labor is aestheticized and hardship is turned into self-care. But no one living in an actual pre-industrial cottage was having fun, okay? I guarantee it.

There was no sunlight-drenched pottery time, okay? There were diseases and fucking outhouses. I mean, I don't know if you've ever used a fucking outhouse, but please, God, end me right now. So from a machinery and lens, cottagecore kind of reifies nature as a moral ideal.

Like it's an obvious example of how this shit is not just a lifestyle. It's actually like a should, right? It's a good way to live. You don't just bake bread, you actually become a better person through it. So that's the spook. You internalize an aesthetic as a moral truth, and then you judge yourself against that.

So essentially, you don't own the aesthetic, right? It owns you. And then we have dopamine detoxers and digital minimalists. And friends, this is one that kind of hits close to home, to be honest, because I've made a whole giant ass out of myself preaching this shit to innocent little children who just wanted to enjoy being young enough to play Minecraft without having to go to work in the morning. And I did it to myself too. I've deleted apps, I've set timers, I've bought analog notebooks, I've told myself I was healing my brain, you know? And I mean, it's what doctors say too, isn't it? I mean, I know that my daughter is constantly telling me that some teacher or doctor or therapist brought it up, so... It seems to me that this is kind of the common scientific consensus. But what even is dopamine detox? Like, what is it? So according to the internet, it's part of neuro hacking. That's the idea.

It's part of like digital puritanism. And the basic idea is that you're kind of broken because you live in a world of constant pleasure. So too much TikTok, too much Uber Eats, too many little serotonin nuggets here and there. So the solution is to strip it all away, you know? But I want to think about what Steno would ask here. And I think what he would ask is something like, who the fuck says dopamine is bad, you know? Who made pleasure immoral? Like, what are you trying to achieve here? Whose priest is living in your mind, feeding you this information? So dopamine detoxing often rests on the moral fiction of the natural mind. So the belief that there's a more authentic self that's kind of waiting beneath all the distractions. If only you could get quiet enough to hear it. But that self is just another ghost, you know? Because there is no original you.

There's only what you make your own. So essentially, digital minimalism isn't egoism when it becomes a spiritual diet plan. So, you know, own your abs. Own your abstinence. But don't be spooked by the idea that pleasure is inherently a sin, even in excess.

but let's not get too preachy or deep yet we still got some categories left so the next one is that of the off-grid survivalist and the aesthetic of collapse collapse core and here

escape is scaled up to apocalyptic levels I would say so there are these people building bunkers and learning bushcraft and growing medicinal herbs and secret gardens. So it's kind of the idea of like escape as sovereignty. And yeah, sometimes even escape as paranoia, I would say. So collapse core is often anti-tech and anti-government and unfortunately also increasingly eco-spiritual. So the fantasy is that when civilization collapses, the real human will emerge and aesthetically it will be, you know, rugged, self-reliant and untainted. And there seems to be a hunger for clarity in chaos or like for truth in the ruins of civilization. But there is, and as much as I personally absolutely love this aesthetic, there And I love making jokes about society collapsing. There's an underlying spook here. Nature as moral ideal and this isn't about living in the woods, you know. It's about belonging to an imagined moral order that kind of predates society. Where survivalism becomes a performance of truth. So the idea is that, like, I'm living how humans are supposed to live. Nature is coming back. It's taking over. It's taking what belongs to it.

But I think Shena would remind us that no way of life is supposed to be. So there is no natural order. And every version of humanity is just a version, you know, obviously. none of it is holy so if you're collecting rainwater in your metal trash can you know more power to you but if you think you're better than someone using a microwave that's your spook talking and now let's get even a little darker and often this is the place where many of the eco-spiritualists kind of end up which is the dark side of this longing for escape And it's referred to as eco-fascism.

So eco-fascism weaponizes the spook of nature to kind of justify exclusion, purity, and violence. And here it's really fucking clear. Nature is turned into a kind of racialized ideal. So the forest becomes sacred ground only for the deserving, while the rest is seen as like pollutants. So let's see what the internet says about eco-fascism.

Eco-fascism is an authoritarian and far-right political ideology that merges environmental concerns with fascist principles. At its core, it holds the belief that drastic, often violent measures are necessary to protect the environment, but it does so through exclusionary, racist, or nationalist framework. Instead of promoting sustainability for all, eco-fascists argue that certain groups, often immigrants, minorities, or those deemed unfit, are to blame for environmental degradation. They may call for population control, rigid social hierarchies, or return to a mythical, pure connection between the specific ethnic group and the land. Key characteristics include anti-humanism, which often prioritizes nature over human life, especially the lives of marginalized groups. Ethnonationalism, which frames ecological protection as a duty of a specific ethnic group or nation, rejecting multiculturalism. Authoritarianism, which advocates for strict top-down control to enforce environmental protection. And Malthusianism, which promotes the idea that overpopulation, especially in the global south, is the primary ecological threat. It has roots in some early fascist movements like Nazi Germany, which intertwined the ideas of blood and soil with environmental preservation. There's actually a joke here in Germany that Hitler would really love the Green Party. In modern context, eco-fascism can be found in extremist rhetoric blaming migrants for climate change or advocating

for environmental purity through xenophobic policies. So yeah, this is escape turned genocidal, but essentially it's just another spook, which went to an extreme. So when nature becomes an external authority, it can justify pretty much anything. That is the point I'm trying to make. So each of these lifestyles kind of romanticizes a return to something before society, a kind of regression or, you know, something before language, before symbols, before contradiction and they idealize the outside, right? But I want to analyze this because Derrida and Lacan would tell us that there is no outside. There is no pure state. There is no such thing as a pre-symbolic self. And there is no such thing as a natural identity. And from a Schenierian perspective, escape is just another form of internalized authority where you create an ideal version of life and then you enslave yourself to it. But Shena also takes this and he offers an alternative. He offers a way out, which is creation through appropriation. And real liberation isn't returning to some mythical origin.

It's creating your own world from the ruins of whatever you have personally destroyed. So let's look further into this and ask, if escape is a spook, then what's underneath it? And why do we feel so trapped that we actually end up romanticizing collapse? Why does the fantasy of freedom so often look like disappearing to us instead of appropriation? So let's go.

16:45 — Dissecting the Spook: Escaping the Dividedness (Lacan), Escaping Language (Derrida), Escaping Power (Foucault) & New Forms of Escape (Deleuze and Guattari)

Friends, we've just peeked behind the curated aesthetics of cottagecore, dopamine detoxing, and collapsecore. And all of these movements seem to gesture toward one thing. Escape. But escape to what? To where? What if the desire to escape isn't about nature at all? What if it's about something more fundamental, like less earthy and more existential, something embedded in the very structure of our subjectivity? I would say the best way to go would be to do some psychoanalyzing. Jacques Lacan, the post-Freudian psychoanalyst who brought structuralism into the unconscious, offers a pretty brutal insight here. So desire is born from lack, which means that we're not whole beings and that we're kind of all split. And this split, this division, isn't something personal, not a personal wound. It's actually a structural wound. It happens the moment that we enter what Lacan calls the symbolic order.

which is the world of language, laws, and social meaning. So once we're kind of named into existence, once we're spoken into being by others, like parents and teachers in society, we're kind of forever alienated from the real, which is something that is ours.

It's personal. And this is the raw pre-linguistic immediacy of existence, according to Lacan.

But this is also a place you can never go back to. So it's not a garden or a cabin or a field of mushrooms, okay? It's a lost horizon. that never actually existed. But what we can do is we can fantasize that it did. So we can project a mythical kind of wholeness, which is something like a return to a time before language and before fragmentation. So in Lacan's terms, this is like a fantasy, right? Primitivism is a fantasy of the pre-symbolic real. It's the fantasy of the mother's body. And we imagine it feels like unity, like warmth, and like something that is unspoken and kind of full, essentially full.

There's a fullness there. So in my humble opinion, it's not nature that we want. It's actually undividedness. So we don't want to be in the woods. We want to be unalienated. We want to be part of the mother, part of mother nature. part of the womb, the wholeness.

So the real true idea behind this is that we don't want to be a subject, but this fantasy is the fuel of ideology and it's the spook of wholeness. So Egoism here would be to own your splitness, right? Your contradiction and your lack, not the return to wholeness, but the creative play of fragmentation.

But let's go further and into a slightly different direction with Jacques Derrida. So if Lacan tells you that language alienates, then Derrida comes in with a fucking mic drop because he says that there literally is no outside of language, bro. So even the idea of escaping to nature is structured by language.

So essentially, you're not just dreaming of a forest, right? You're dreaming in metaphors, in signs, in aesthetic codes. So you're already caught in what Derrida calls textuality, which is the endless play of signs that are kind of referencing other signs. So take the idea of the simple life.

That simplicity of the simple life is already coded, you know? It's like linen clothes and beeswax candles and sourdough bread and analog photography, right? It's not raw nature. It's a science system pretending to be raw. So it's a fucking simulation. And this is where Derrida's idea of difference really comes into play.

so difference means that meaning is never present in itself so it's always deferred right it's always somewhere else and you never arrive you have to constantly chase authenticity but the signifiers just kind of loop you back into more signifiers and this means that your escape fantasy is itself nothing more than a text it's a pre-scripted narrative And you inherited that narrative kind of like a meme, you know? So actually, it's less a desire for life than for a signified life. But the signified never actually arrives. So the question isn't, do I want to live simply or do I want to live in nature? But Where did that desire come from? What chain of signs taught me that simplicity equals salvation? Because I would confidently make the claim that you did not invent this fantasy. It's more like you inhaled it. And now I think we should look at Michel Foucault. So Michel Foucault flips the script on freedom. He tells us that power, which is something that we kind of inherently think is something really bad and evil and horrible. Well, he says that power doesn't actually necessarily restrict anything. Power

isn't just something that holds you down. It also produces something. So what he's trying to say is that power creates identities. It manufactures truth.

So it doesn't just say no, no, no, no, no. It tells you who to be. One of my favorite quotes, I have it on a t-shirt, actually, by Michel Foucault. Actually, most of my favorite quotes are by Michel Foucault for some reason. But anyways, this quote goes like this.

All that you consider natural has taken years to build. And it's so true. What you think of natural might be one of the most disciplined things of all. He describes this in his work. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, he shows how power kind of evolved from direct control, like through kings and prisons and such, into what he calls biopower. So this is the management of life itself. So this is done through norms, medicine, education, industry, institution, you know, self-help discourse, all that shit. And this is kind of what sculpts a person into a functional subject. so when you see like an off-grid influencer that's kind of grinding their own oats or whatever while you know looking really pretty for instagram just try to remember that this is not the collapse of discipline it's just a new discipline you're still expected to be productive and clean and morally coherent and emotionally regulated and aesthetically pleasing So this means that even in your rebellion, you're kind of watched, right? You're monitored, not like by cops or anything, but by the algorithm and by proxy also, by your own inner superego, which is constantly criticizing you because of what you're consuming. So Foucault would ask, what power structures are shaping your escape? Who decided that natural living looks like, you know, goat cheese and not like, I don't know, trash fires and I think that this is an important question to ask but let's get a little spicy okay let's get wild and freaky with two edgy philosophers from France Deleuze and Guattari Because they actually get really close to our favorite edgy philosopher from Germany.

So Deleuze and Guattari, much like Schenna, would be like, wait, why is escape inherently bad? What about different forms of escape? And this is where their idea of lines of flight comes into the picture. So lines of flight is a core concept in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In simple terms, a line of flight is a path of escape, transformation, or becoming away from the structures of normativity, which is what they call assemblages. So rather than just fleeing, a line of flight does something that they call deterritorialization. So it destabilizes fixed arrangements and it kind of opens up the possibility for becoming something else, whether that be, you know, becoming animal, becoming woman, becoming imperceptible, whatever.

It's the force that cuts across boundaries and breaks open closed systems. And it kind of introduces movement or change or fluidity, which is kind of the same as like the creative nothing that Shena talks about. So it adds like a creative potential into otherwise static formations. So lines of flight are not linear or predictable.

They spread and they leak and they morph, which is why they are represented in their philosophy as rhizomes. They're central to processes of experimentation and resistance and the invention of like new modes of life. But it's also important to talk

about the catch here, which is something that Stena was best at, right? Catching the catch.

Because even these lines of flight and their forms of escape can lead back to the same trap. So you flee the city for the countryside only to re-establish hierarchies. So this is what they would call re-territorialization. So the point isn't to move from here to there. The point is to kind of melt the coordinates.

So that means that a true line of flight doesn't land anywhere. It just flows. It refuses capture and it doesn't replicate identity because it's too busy constantly mutating it. But let's do what always should be done, in my opinion, before we go into any kind of revolutionary ideals. Let's return to Freud. Let's go back to the psyche.

Because honestly, above all, we have to face it. The fantasy of escape is not about trees, okay? It's not about nature. It's about not being alone. It's about not being split. It's about not being a subject or a self. And we have this insane idea that escaping civilization is utopia. It's what we need.

Because, you know, the self is weird. Like we talked about last week, the concept of the absurd. It's strange. It feels off. It doesn't feel right. It wants things it doesn't understand, you know? It's haunted by others. It performs and it fails and it contradicts itself.

So it makes sense that we dream of becoming something like whole or like just a body or just an animal or just a creature. No name, no structure, just being, right? But this is the ultimate spook. The idea that you cannot be a subject, that you can erase lack and delete contradiction or purify yourself into peace.

So Freud and Lacan and all the other homies say, there is no cure for desire. You will never be whole. And you know what Shina says? He says, okay, that's great news because you don't need to be whole. You don't need to be cured. You don't need to kill your fantasy. You just need to own it, okay? Like a tool, like a costume. So let's think through the brain of Mark Sterner. You are not nature. You are not language. You are not a dream of wholeness. You are a creative appropriator. The problem with the spook of escape is not that it's childish or romantic. It's that it turns you into a role.

It makes you a vessel for a fantasy that you did not write. It colonizes. And that is exactly what I want to think about now. Colonization and decolonization. And how that relates to appropriation and Shina's concept of ownness. Which, in my opinion, offers a fascinating and necessary way of looking at all of this.

So let's talk to Franz Fanon. Let's look into semiotics and let's think about how to subvert society without exiling yourself from yourself. And to do that, we need to ask one question. What version of you are you trying to return to? And who convinced you that that version was actually real? Let's use Frantz Fanon's colonization and decolonization as a way to look at this.

30:14 — Living Ownness: Liberation as Escape in Western Thought (Greek Philosophy & the Enlightenment) & Decolonizing Liberation through Appropriation (Frantz Fanon & Examples of Decolonial Literature)

So let's start with a really bitter pill. In the Western imagination, freedom has been hijacked by the fantasy of escape. And what do I mean by that? Well, let's take a brief detour into the concept of freedom and how it's conceptualized in different cultures.

So the Western notion of freedom is escape from trap is deeply rooted in a narrative of liberation from constraints, whether political, religious, social, or even metaphysical. And freedom in this frame is often conceived negatively, right? So to be free is to no longer be subject to domination or limitations.

So the trap is bondage, whether to kings or gods or institutions or instincts. And freedom is kind of imagined as like transcendence or revolt. So let's look at some examples. In Athens, freedom was always contrasted with slavery. So to be free meant self-rule, both individually and collectively.

So the Athenian citizen was free because he was not subject to a tyrant and their autonomy was both political and existential. And the slave, by contrast, was someone without control over their own life. And this set up freedom as liberation from external rule, but it also made it deeply hierarchical in a sense.

Then there's Christianity, where we have freedom from sin and the flesh. So Christianity reframed freedom in spiritual terms. So it was freedom from sin and freedom from the devil and freedom from worldly temptation. So the body became a kind of prison. In Augustine's or later Calvinist thought, salvation was freedom from the fallen condition, right? It wasn't achieved through politics, but through divine grace. So the world was a trap and heaven was the release. And then the Enlightenment era kind of secularized this logic, right? So thinkers like Rousseau, Locke, and Kant saw freedom as the ability to reason and govern oneself.

So to be free was to escape ignorance and tradition and superstition and to be self-legislating and autonomous. Kant even described Enlightenment as man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. So once again, we see the motif of liberation from an internal or external trap. Then in modernity, this turned into political revolutions.

So the American Revolution saw freedom as liberation from British colonial control and the French from monarchy and feudal hierarchy. So in a way, the citizen was reimagined as sovereign and the old order as kind of a cage. So in any case, freedom, we're told, is always elsewhere.

It's in the woods, it's in the past, it's in the afterlife or in some mythic clean slate, right? Where the true self lives kind of untouched, right? And this vision, you know,

kind of whispers in our ear, right? Liberation is a threshold. So you walk far enough and fast enough and you'll cross into it.

But that is not freedom. That is semiotic manipulation. So let's bring in semiotics. In Caesarian linguistics, meaning doesn't exist inherently in things. So it's constructed through differences within a system, right? So a tree is only a tree because it's not a bush or a table or a cloud or an orange or a microphone.

Now apply that to Western concepts of freedom. What is freedom? Freedom isn't a state, but actually a signifier defined by its opposition to unfreedom. So its opposition being control, civilization, structure, authority, routine, whatever. So then the recurring myth is that freedom demands departure and escape is framed as the path to authenticity or to like a true self and the archetype is something that Jordan Peterson cries about on the daily. The hero's journey. It's a narrative structure that's outlined by Joseph Campbell, which is rooted in Indo-European mythologies, where the subject departs from the known and enters liminality completely. faces trials and returns transformed and even here freedom is spatialized and it's ritualized as an external journey so like from eden in genesis to exodus with moses to walden with thorough to the off-grid prepper commune So the West turns freedom into a narrative of exile. And this structure is essentially theological. Christian metaphysics posits salvation as something elsewhere, right? The garden is lost, the world is fallen, and heaven is something that lies beyond. So we're taught to distrust the body and the now and the imminent and to place hope in some transcendental ideal. And that, my friends, is a spook in Shina's terms. It's nothing but a moral abstraction that's externalized and sacralized and held above you.

It's a bullshit holy grail of identity that only reveals itself once you've cleansed yourself of worldliness. This is how we return to the idea of primitivism. So let's ask the question, what is freedom if it's not flight? Let's switch lenses here. Because there are so many worldviews outside of Western ideology that do not define liberation in terms of removal, but actually in terms of appropriation, refusal, and mutation. So let's look at freedom as a consistent transformation with one of my favorite philosophers ever, Frantz Fanon. So Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*, which was published in 1952, explores how colonialism kind of rewired not only geopolitics, but also the psyche, right? So the colonized subject internalized the colonizer's gaze, which essentially made them turn themselves into an object within their language and their values and their symbolic world. So Fanon argues that the colonized subject begins to see themselves So this is what he calls epidermalization of inferiority.

So the idea is that this is where blackness is not just seen as different, but is like deficient and shameful and less than. So the black subject is no longer a subject in their own right, but they are actually an object. They are objectified by the white gaze. And worse, they begin to objectify themselves and he describes this as ontological violence, where the black person is denied full being. So their body is read and interpreted and named by colonial language, values, and ideology. And because language is not

neutral, the colonized subject adopts the colonizer's words, values, and ideas, right, as the standard of humanity.

So in his case, whiteness becomes the measure of personhood. And this is how he starts judging himself. But interestingly enough, freedom for Fanon is not a return to pre-colonial innocence because that would be a nostalgic spook. It's about relentless and violent destruction of the image created by the gays.

It's about deconstructing the imposed self-image and speaking back to the dominant semiotic order. In a quote, he even says, the oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves. So in a way, Fanon is proto-Shtunarian, right? He doesn't seek a pure identity. He actually kind of aims to dissolve the imposed one. And this is the main focus.

He shows how identity is a battleground of signs and liberation that has to involve burning down those signs and not escaping them. And this is the central idea behind decolonization, and I want to give a few more examples. So let's look at a Kenyan novelist whose name is really difficult to say. Nguugi wa Tiango.

Okay, I'm only saying that once. So this Kenyan novelist and theorist wrote a text called *Decolonizing the Mind*. It was published in 1986, which essentially argues that language was the most effective tool of colonialism. So by forcing colonized children to write and think in English, the colonizer was essentially training them to perceive reality through a kind of alien semiotic structure. So English didn't just replace Gikuyu, which is the language that was spoken. It actually replaced how one related to the world. So the revolt that's described in this book wasn't to reject language but to actually take it back. So what he did was to start writing novels and plays in the original traditional language which created a new symbolic field where his community could recognize itself again. And this was a big deal. And I would claim that this is oneness, right? This is the kind of appropriation that Shin is referring to. It's not a utopian return, but a refusal to be a slave to inherited signs and not by abandoning the symbolic altogether by fleeing into the woods, but by actually weaponizing the symbolic. Then I want to also briefly talk about hybridity. So Gloria and Zeldwa's *Borderlands* was a text that was published in 1987, which kind of maps the psychic, sexual and linguistic terrain between multiple worlds. So it's a it's a wild book.

It's a mix of English and Spanish, Catholic and indigenous, female and queer. OK, so hers is not a narrative of escape, but of like radical integration. And it's actually fascinating. So she states in her book that, quote, I am a turtle. Wherever I go, I carry home on my back. So she writes of the Mestiza consciousness, which is like a being made from contradiction, right? Contradiction not as flaw, but as creative force. And she doesn't idealize purity in the slightest. So in a really interesting way, she kind of embraces the contamination of society or of colonization as agency. So in this conceptualization, to be free is to create within the cracks and not to smooth them over. So this is an egoist, right? This is an egoist refusal to serve a single identity or language. So she doesn't long for a purified essence.

She actually says, I will just simply cut my own path in between and I'm going to make it mine. So structurally, Western metaphysics approaches freedom as a form of escape. So salvation is imagined elsewhere and wholeness is a return to like lost purity. And the self is conceived as a pure essence waiting to be uncovered.

Language is experienced as alienation. Morality is like a rigid structure. And freedom is flight from entrapment. And in contrast, decolonial and egoist frameworks treat liberation as something forged within the ruins. Right within the wreckage itself. So here wholeness isn't a return to anything. It's a reinvention. So the self isn't hidden in some core, but a collage or like a patchwork assembled through appropriation. So language becomes a weapon or a tool rather than a site of alienation, right? Morality kind of dissolves into the unstructured assertion of oneness and freedom isn't flight but the creative act of appropriation. So how does any of this relate to oneness, right? Well, oneness is a posture of radical appropriation. So, Shanna said this, I do not step shyly back from what is yours, but look upon it always as my property, in which I respect nothing. Do I still hold the cathedral sacred? I, the egoist, shall shatter it with my fist, if it is my will to do so.

So this is the Schenerian ethos, right? Not destruction for purity's sake, but for liberation's sake. It's not about leaving the symbolic order. It's about appropriating it. It's about twisting it and repossessing it and turning its weapons inward until it becomes your plaything. But let's also relate it back to the ideology of primitivism.

So the dopamine detoxer no longer seeks to purify their pleasure, but bends their habits like code. So hacking pleasure to make it a personal art form, not a reaction to external triggers. And the eco-primitivist doesn't escape into the woods to worship nature. They just kind of remix fire, stone, forest and the city or whatever else they want.

Their freedom isn't natural. It's just simply intentional. And it's stolen from both civilization and wilderness. That is the point of appropriation. And it's okay. You don't need a moral reason to do anything. You don't need a rationalization or an ideology or even a fucking reason, honestly.

Just do what you want to do and you automatically avoid the spook of purity and practice contamination as creation. So, I know this was a little bit complex. Let's try to conclude. Freedom is not the negation of structure, okay? It's the seizure of structure. It's a decolonization. It's re-authoring. It's inversion.

So the egoist doesn't ask, where's the real me hiding? They ask, what can I claim, twist, use, break, and make mine today? So they're not escaping. They're appropriating. Not out of hope and not out of guilt, but simply because they fucking want to. And for the next segment, I want to contrast three radical voices within the realm of primitivism who, in my opinion, make the perfect trilogy to kind of illuminate the evolution of thought that I see in primitivism. And I want to say from dumb to not dumb.

46:53 — Spotlight: Primitivist Literature (Zerzan, Kaczynski & Haraway)

Alright, so we're gonna discuss three radical minds, okay? Three wildly different versions of liberation and this is my very personal opinion, okay? I'm gonna go from the ones that I find the most stupid to the one that I like the most. First we have John Zerzan. And I'll start with a quote. Before symbolic culture, time was not an external force, separate from life. Language did not stand between self and world.

There was no alienation, only presence. So Zerzan's prose is very, I don't know, mournful. It kind of feels like a funeral dirge for the symbolic. So his texts are structured as refusals. He constructs a narrative arc of decline from like primitive wholeness to modern fragmentation where the turning point is language itself.

So the key concepts in his text are pre-symbolic unity, time as alienation, and technology and representation as rupture. But this is where I'm going to get all Lacanian again. Language is not the fall, it's the frame, okay? Yes, it introduces lack, but this lack, it gives birth to something, you know? It gives birth to this very fundamental thing, which is desire and then subjectivity and even the unconscious. So to be split by language is not to be broken, as he tries to kind of claim in his text, but to become, right? It's to, it's honestly to exist. And I mean, let's get real.

Zerzan's longing for a world before words is literally ironically spoken through words, okay? Okay. So it's the symbolic pining for its own undoing, which is a fantasy of return that's only intelligible within the very system it rejects. So in my opinion, which is often, you know, very much informed by Stenna, because, you know, soulmates think alike, what can I say? Zerzan's pre-alienated human is not in any sense the unique that Stenna talks about. It's an idol. It's an idol of wholeness and like a spook of origin. It kind of moves within the realm of a spook of origin. And this Eden that Zerzan worships was never his, right? It was always already a myth.

So his rejection of language and mediation is itself a form of mediation that's haunted by a morality of innocence. Right? And then we got the man, the myth, the legend, Ted Kaczynski and his industrial society and its future, which I have to say, I like a little bit more than Sir Zan's book and yeah, it's a manifesto written like a mathematical proof kind of. So let's talk about it. So what he does is he defines core terms, okay? So his key concepts are the power process, which means like goal turns into effort, effort turns into achievement, achievement turns into autonomy and then he talks about something that he calls surrogate activities, which means like artificial substitutes for real challenges, which he considers like bad problems. And then he comes to the conclusion that natural life equals authentic struggle. So that's that's where you can find like authenticity and authentic struggle.

So what kind of animates his critique is a moral vision, right? It's the idea of a natural order that has been disrupted, kind of like a healthy subject that's been like

mutilated by the machine. But the problem through the egoist lens isn't the mutilation. It's the ideal of health in the first place.

So Kaczynski's power is something to be restored, like a structure to be re-entered. But for Stjana, power isn't like discovered, right? It's seized. It doesn't exist in nature or in struggle. It exists when you appropriate the conditions of your existence. So the power process is another spook. It's an externalized structure of achievement that's essentially coded in the righteousness of effort. But I feel that egoism would mock this effort and call it moralized because it wouldn't ask, are you fulfilling your potential, right? It would just simply ask, is it mine? Okay. So where Kaczynski moralizes struggle, the egoist kind of plays with power.

So not to redeem it and not to return to it, but to enjoy it and bend it and own it. And now I want to talk about an essay that I actually really love. And this is Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*. So Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* is structured kind of like a data bomb, right? It works with collage and irony and disjunction. It's very difficult to read and you have to read it a million times before you get everything out of it. So it refuses linearity, but it does it for a reason. So it kind of leans into like glitching and stuttering and hybridizing.

So in a way, its form is the method, right? It's anti-binary, it's anti-essentialist, and it's kind of pro-fusion. So she states in her text that the cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world. It has no origin in the Western sense. It's oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence.

So the key concepts of her texts are the cyborg, which is a hybrid of machine and organism. But let me explain that a little bit more. So this is a being that blurs the lines between human and non-human and natural and artificial. And it symbolizes a postmodern, post-gender identity that refuses to be pinned down by traditional categories like male, female, human, animal identity. human, machine, whatever. So the cyborg is both a metaphor and a political figure for resisting boundaries and hierarchies that define Western thought. Then she talks about affinity politics over identity politics.

So affinity politics over identity politics means that instead of organizing around fixed identities like race, gender, sexuality, and so forth, She kind of proposes building political alliances based on affinity. So shared goals, struggles and commitments, which, you know, what does that remind you of? So the idea is like without needing to essentialize who people are.

So it's a more flexible and tactical approach to solidarity that recognizes how identities are multiple and shifting and constructed and not pure or natural. And then we have her approach, right? Irony as a method, which again, who does that remind you of? So Haraway uses irony, not just as humor, but as a critical tool.

So by speaking in exaggerated and playful and paradoxical ways, she kind of shows how the very categories and systems she critiques are actually unstable. So irony kind of lets her inhabit the contradictions of her time without trying to resolve them. There's no coherence. It's a way to undermine authority while still communicating serious

political and philosophical ideas and then I would say the last thing that I get out of her text is that she views contradiction as kind of prosthesis. So contradiction is not seen as weakness or a problem to be fixed. Instead, she kind of treats them like prosthetics. OK, so extensions that make new movements and possibilities available. Contradictions aren't defects.

They're functional additions that allow hybrid identities like the cyborg. to navigate and survive within really complex and fragmented worlds. So essentially, Haraway's cyborg explicitly rejects primitivism. And maybe that's why I like it, I don't know. So where primitivism, especially in Western thought, imagines a return to some pure, natural, or original human state before technology and civilization corrupted it, Haraway's cyborg refuses any dream of origin. So the cyborg doesn't seek to escape machines of modernity to find authentic human life. It actually embraces the like messy artificial hybrid conditions of the present. And similarly, primitivism is tied to nostalgia for wholeness or purity or nature, while Haraway sees wholeness as a really dangerous myth. And the cyborg accepts contradiction and irony and fragmentation as real and empowering. So instead of longing for a pre-technological Eden, the cyborg makes peace with the ruins of history. And builds affinities from them. So again, this cyborg doesn't seek escape, it seeks appropriation and that is essentially the difference that I'm trying to talk about here. It takes what it needs, be it fucking meat or metal or metaphor, okay? So like Shena, Haraway laughs at the idea of wholeness. She doesn't long for the garden or the struggle. She makes a nest in the glitch. So it's like a sovereign montage, right? Her irony is not detachment. It's like a radical intimacy with contradiction. So the conclusion to me is that what primitivism really is about is the ideal of wholeness. And this is the essential goal of this escape. And that ideal is a spook because language is a paradox.

Because using it or refusing to use it will cause you to be stuck either way. It's like the epitome of the true existential source, which is just simply part of consciousness. So there's no escape to wholeness, right? There's no return to anything pre-division, pre-split. And that's something that we have to accept and that's exactly where Shena's ownness starts. It starts with the... deterioration or the destruction of spooks to understand what point you're actually at to begin on this so freedom is what happens when you realize the fall itself is your material and your weapon in your art form and primitivism when it clings to nostalgia for an untainted origin becomes another spook that's held above your own creative power So when primitivism is seized and hacked and rewritten, like when forest and fire and stone are stolen and reauthored, like in the sense of decolonization or in the decolonization approach, that's when it ceases to be ideology and becomes play.

So it's not a return. It's not a flight. It's not a mourning, but a sovereign act of creation that started with the ruins of spooks.

Okay, friends, this is it for me for today. Please have a look at all the links in the description. This project really needs your help. That's all I'm going to say. Have a wonderful week and remember not to let the spooks get you.

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Haraway's 'The Cyborg Manifesto': www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduates/modules/fictionnownarrativemediaandtheoryinthe21stcentury/manifestly_haraway_-_a_cyborg_manifesto_science_technology_and_socialist-feminism_in_the_...pdf

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