

# (Dis)solution

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## Wilding as a Decolonial Future for

# (Dis)topia Australis *Yin Paradises*

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Amongst a multiplicity of possible worlds, the hierarchical societal paradigm of modernity has dominated for the past ten millennia. Despite this being only a fraction of the approximately 200,000 years of human history, we tend to assume that many aspects of our society are the only way they have ever been or can possibly be. <sup>1</sup> Our social conditioning leads us to implicitly accept this taken-for-grantedness, to be hushed, straight-jacketed, shut-down, ashamed and terrified to become our abundant selves. Although in modern cultures we are allowed a certain degree of surface-level diversity and ‘freedoms’, stimulation and satisfaction; to deeply question foundational values, tenets and approaches is to be perceived, labelled, and responded to, as threatening and dangerous. <sup>2</sup> This includes, for example, questioning the legitimacy, wisdom and sanity of nation-states, such as Australia, and the radical decolonisation that we are summoned to as response, resistance and refusal.

Yet, what could be more perilous than a small proportion of humans within modernity wreaking untold destruction on a global scale while we all gnaw away at ourselves in fear, anxiety, guilt and shame? The modern cultural assumptions—that humans are somehow separate from, and superior to, other life; should hold hierarchical power over others; are untethered from natural systems; and lack the felt beauty of all life—have developed into systems of control, domination, trauma and exploitation that we are now experiencing as Earth’s sixth mass extinction. In the millennia of modern culture epitomised by debt, private property, institutions and nation-states, we became domesticated—tamed, lost, entranced and unconscious. Tameness and domestication are experienced as a

disembodied, disconnected, disempowered 'auto-pilot', what Francis Weller calls 'premature death' <sup>3</sup> or Martin Shaw names 'moribund living'.

Wilding is a radical shift away from the tameness of civilisation and bumbling obliviousness, towards listening with our eyes and watching with our ears, embracing our promiscuous animal essence, leaping headfirst into the carnal palpable flow of life, living within natural lore, being stilled, silenced and seized, cracking open to feel everything, bathing in the dusty intricate messiness succulence of corporeal reality, walking through the inside of the world, and understanding that we do not move through Country, rather Country flows through us. Wilding is not a sentimental romantic (re)turn to an idyllic, bucolic, care-free delusion. Rather, it is a jolting awake from the modernist nightmare of artificial scarcity, entitlement, exceptionalism, unrestrained growth and immediate gratification. To re-wild is to attune to direct delectable action-participation-experience, to re-establish ourselves as enmeshed aspects of the web of existence; so as to flourish, thrive and prosper via enlivened, enriched, empowered and entwined becomings which care for, love, and contribute to the majestic joy of naked existence.

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The term 'wild' can be traced to the early German for 'will', pertaining to places or beings outside of human control and dominion. Will-doer-ness is a place of self-willed creatures who exercise their own relational autonomy within communities of life subject to networks of species interaction and the forces of nature, rather than being aligned only with the needs of one species—humans. <sup>5</sup> Wilding is about connecting with the world as kin, feeling into the tendencies, inclinations, predilections, capacities, quirks and habits of other, and all, life. It means sensing larger patterns of both time and place, re-membering Country, and foregrounding the world beyond the membranic edge of our

seemingly bounded selves. Wilding is about being present, aware, embodied, connected, conscious, alive, timeless, and sinking your teeth into the kaleidoscopic flow. It is understanding that we are not merely individuals trapped within the boundaries of our own skin, but intermingled suffused blended aspects of the living cosmos, deeply experiencing the myriad aspects of ourselves, passionately embracing life in all its poignancy, rapture, awe, intensity, vitality and saudade, while free-falling into the unfathomable depths of existence. Beyond fitting in, shrinking to be digestible, the comfort of smallness or drudgery, wilding is about metabolising our assumptions, aversions, disguises, triggers, complicities, projections, traumas, idealisations and, instead, growing into too-muchness, epiphany, revelation, catharsis and transformation.

To be wild is to embrace that which is attuned, attached, unruly, uncanny, incorrigible, impure, imperfect, deviant, wayward, spontaneous, free, mischievous, unmoored, chaotic, emotional, passionate, intense, fecund, vast, vivid, visceral, tactile, messy, feeble, sacred, sensuous, plural, vulnerable, interdependent, unfurled, flowing, erring, self-organised, self-willed and living-dying (i.e., animate). Conversely, to be tame is to be amnesic, anaesthetised, captive, controlled, commanded, domestic, obedient, docile, muffled, submissive, ruled, correct, pure, perfect, complete, bounded, blunted, diminished, aligned, set, tethered, regular, bland, well-behaved, dull, standard, composed, neat, tidy, leashed, rationale, logical, (in)dependent, mundane, formed, ordered, top-down and dead-alive (i.e., zombified).

Wilding is about attending, sensing, responding and anticipating our surroundings, discerning, attuning to, and grounding in, the tone, timbre, cadence, pitch, intonation and rhythm of ourselves, others and our environments, resonating with elseness and the other-wise, experiencing and embodying our entire diffuse, diffracted, distributed, dizzying, expansive, encompassing, spacious, capacious

selves. Rather than a disconnected and disembodied hedonism, wilding is the shameless, playful, senseful, meaningful pleasure of presence, vivacity and intimacy, with the whole of ourselves and the teeming prismatic profusion of all life. Wilding grants us the exiled gifts of affirming anything that arises, forgetting who we think we are, and disavowing what we assume to be the finite borders of ourselves. Wilding is an invitation to accept the menagerie of beings that constitute us as intrinsically worthy, while we remain radically receptive to the tumultuous, metamorphic, cacophonous journey of change that re-creates us each day in joy and sorrow, grief and gratitude, pain and ecstasy, sickness and health, love and rage, laughter and weeping, exuberance and exhaustion. Rather than trying to change ourselves or the world, wildness behoves us to do what coaxes us to live, what makes us feel alive, because what the world needs most is people who have come to life. **6**

From an Indigenous perspective, Country includes land, water, air, people, animals, plants, stories, songs, feelings, and more; as they exist in mixing, merging waves of time-place. **7** Wilding happens when we are grounded and flowing, engaging and caring for Country, following its lore, seeking its acceptance and respecting its refusals, when we embody the divine in material and matter in the spiritual; inviting subsistence **8** rather than seeking transcendence.

From Western perspectives, wildness may be something 'out there' which is without rules, egoistic, life-threatening, emotionally detached, sublimely enlightening, unknown, strange, opaque to human understanding, better off without humans and requiring control. From Indigenous perspectives, however, wildness is both within us and our familiar kin, based on lore, devoted to mutuality, life-giving, profuse with feeling, nourishing, specific (rather than sentimentalised), embodied, transparent to thinking, sensing, feeling and intuition, welcoming of humans-as-'nature' and inviting gratitude. **9**

Wilding is to digest our thoughts, feelings, emotions, moods, desires, sensations, longings, yieldings, callings, instincts, hunches, inklings and needs, desires, dreams and aspirations in a respectful, joyful, grateful, humble, generous, creative, transmogrifying dance with all that is around, in, and of us. Wilding is an ongoing journey to the glorious, sensuous, manifold forms that we truly are. Wilding is integrating mind and body, action and effect, as well as form and flow. To use all of our senses—smell, taste, touch, sight, hearing, balance, heat, pain, pressure, heart, instinct, intuition and more to express our vast capability to perceive, relate and become. To be wild is to inhabit and dwell within our own beings and becomings as one of the most potent political acts possible. **10** It is to:

- understand that nothing is complete, perfect or enduring, but all is alive, sentient, communicative, profoundly relational and deeply sacred;
- acknowledge that we are immersed in intrinsically mysterious worlds, which we can learn to perceive, inhabit, co-mingle and grow with; develop ways to outgrow the often unquestioned need to obey, conform, judge and repress, which stunts our ability to express, create, connect and play;
- explore and embrace what we can authentically become outside the constricting, domesticating strictures of modern civilised societies, which are creating immense suffering in the process of murdering our living planet; and
- enable the emergence of humanity into tender, conscious, embodied, loving-reverent co-liberation with ourselves, each other and the living cosmos.

To be wild is to offer yourself in full to the world *as it is*, without demanding acceptance; to act interdependently in ways that nourish your and our life, while being attentive to your limits and capacity within any given time-place. To meet others with curiosity, courage,

vulnerability, love, honesty and humility; sense visceral needs behind actions; learn and grow with gratitude, connection and cultivation while minimising correction/contraction; attend to beauty even in dire and deeply violated situations. **11**

Wilding is to accept ourselves unconditionally, exactly as we are; living with dignity, love, courage and truth, while inviting growth and opening our hearts to those whose views and actions we profoundly object to. Wilding is to ask: what would happen if we stopped trying to solve global problems by scaling-up standardised solutions?; how we could invite material conditions and social relations which are conducive to life, beauty and thriving?; and is it possible to enjoy life's resonances, vibrations, textures, essences and emanations as we deepen our vulnerability to the suffering in, and of, the world? **12**

To decolonise the carceral horror that is so-called Australia, we are invited to slow, pause, breathe, rest, sleep, idle, lull, catalyse, channel, doula, delve, guide, receive the unknowable, unexpected, uncomfortable, uncertain, unthinkable and imperceptible. We are asked to make unique mistakes in doing what is needed with maturity, sobriety, discernment, wisdom and serenity, **13** beyond consumption (of materials, knowledge, experiences or sensations), comfort, convenience, choice, conviction or complaint.

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Yin Paradies is a Wakaya man who is Chair in Race Relations at Deakin university. He conducts research on the health, social and economic effects of racism, anti-racism theory, policy and practice as

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