

Deep Phytocracy: Feral Songs --- ANARCHETYPES

1. CORPOREALISTS

Backstory:

Riding the green-washing wave, corporealists and pine trees go well together. Pines growing in this region are twisted in all sorts of ways (because of wind, witches, energy flows, who knows?), so they're just a bunch of bad apples as building material and demand for paper pulp, which is what they were used for, has also been plummeting. Resurrected from market obsolescence, Curonian pine trees have now become a cheap source of alternative biofuel and as such alleviate Lithuanian dependence on foreign oil. Best of all, they seem to be growing quickly, colonizing the Spit, overgrowing the dunes and invading the beaches.

Tools and methods:

The corporealists take the wood at face value, more is more is more. The equation is simple: to calculate the value of forest, take the price of biofuel per liter minus production costs divided by seller margin multiplied by circumference of tree trunks multiplied by correlation factor between girth and height in a given forest distribution.

Instructions:

Using the precisely calibrated wearable pine value assessment tool, collect measurements from every pine tree appearing in the marked area.

Step one: Dress. The head hole should give away the appropriate orientation.

Step two: Put the thumb of one hand through the opening. Grab a marker with that hand.

Step three: To perform the measurement action, face the tree and press your torso against the tree trunk, arms stretched out. While in this position, extend the arms forward, wrapping the tree.

Step four: Mark the position where your marker-holding hand touches the value assessment tool.

Make sure you take a measurement of every pine tree in the area.

2. KURORTODOX

Backstory:

The time of mass sun-baking on the beach is over – the kurortodox require more from life, and only the best from nature. The kurortodox are well acquainted with the territorial exclusivity and world cultural-natural heritage status of the area, but what they are truly after is the psycho-emotional impact of its natural resources. They seek the collectable spectacle, a green gaze of perfect proportions; to identify its aesthetic appeal, scenic beauty and visual quality. This, after all, is what represents the quality of being.

Tools and methods:

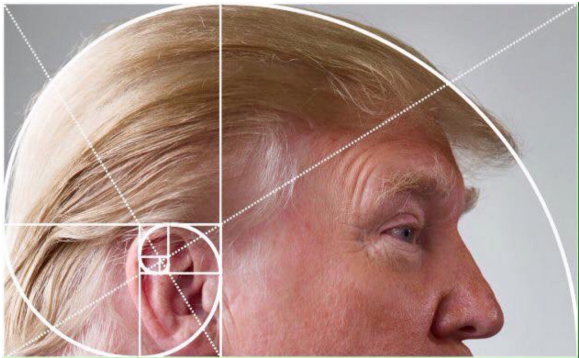
Coming from a tradition of quantified selves, they lost confidence in their own perception, and anyway, they are definitely not after subjective beauty. The tried and tested golden ratio is what ensures a high quality of their aesthetic experience.

Instructions:

Work in pairs. The frame with a fragile, thin sheet of glass depicts a carefully chosen golden ratio composition. Your task is to identify your top 5 plant compositions in the demarcated area by matching the features of plants and landscape to best fit the golden ratio composition.

Be highly selective and as precise as possible. It is absolutely necessary to find at least two compositions that can only be viewed with you head against the ground and at least one looking upward.

Remember, you cannot trust your personal judgment; your aesthetic appraisal buddy must verify any suggestion. Identify the compositions for the enjoyment of other kurortodox by placing one flag on each side of the composition to mark the view.



3. PANSEMIOLOGISTIC INVESTIGATORS

Backstory:

With the recent resurfacing of claims of plant sentience, the suspicions of pansemiologists are all but confirmed. Working for the clandestine new world order, these individuals are tasked with uncovering and deciphering the communication routes of alien entities and bringing their plots to the attention of powers that be. Cracking their code is the first necessary step of getting the upper hand in this arms race. We have narrowed the suspect mother trees, allegedly responsible for organizing trafficking on the wood wide web, down to three. Their connections must now be scrutinized and contacts revealed.

Tools and methods:

Pansemiologists are well versed in *aesthesis* – the embodied sense, a way of perceiving the world through gesture and contact with more-than-humans and opening up to the possibility of senses beyond those conventionally accepted. As they reach out gesturally to plants, appreciation is embedded in sensuous movements, leading to intimate encounters of touch, taste, smell, sound and looking closely. Their toolbox consists of their homegrown senses and appendages, supplemented only with gloves for the fragile-skinned.

Instructions:

Three suspect mother pine trees are marked with red and white tape. Your mission is to reveal the way they connect to the rest of the vegetal beings by following their roots. As you uncover the top layer of moss, digging into the thin humus, you will reach light brown, flexible tentacles. These stretch far and wide, but you must be careful not to break them. Only by following the roots to the tip of their joining with the other creatures (plant, fungi, animal...), smelling, tasting, digging, do you stand a chance to glimpse the breadth of their communication network. Mark the path of the roots with sticks before covering them again with moss.

4. IMAGOFETISHISTS (PROPHYLACTIC CLIMATONIHILISM)

Backstory:

Imagofetishists are the bastard children of anti-abortion activist groups and transhumanist geoengineers. They were raised to believe plants provide ecosystem services via sequestration of carbon, which offsets global warming caused by large-scale industrial developments. *Youth is the answer*, imagofetishists internalised. Woodland areas that regrow after forest fires, logging operations, or other disturbances can sequester huge amounts of carbon dioxide and they play an unexpectedly valuable role in mitigating climate change and allow unbridled transhumanist fantasies to prosper.

If the imagofetishists' object of desire wasn't plant life, they would be shunned as pedophiliacs, but that's double standards for you. They're especially attracted to young, fast growing birches and pines.

Tools and methods:

Imagofetishists can recognize young growth a mile away. When in doubt, they use a measuring tape, anything below 1.5 m makes them quiver with pleasure.

Instructions:

Systematically comb the designated area in search for young growth. At each encounter, discreetly perform an inappropriate sexual gesture toward the plant and sprinkle it with a few grains of fertilizer. Enjoy the encounter.

5. NEOGNOSTIC AGRARIANS

Backstory:

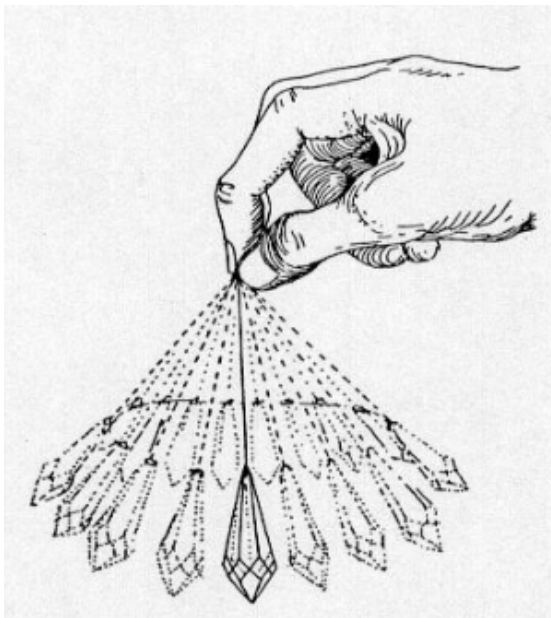
Between the two positions instructing nature conservation, agrarians believe in the value of the ethnoscape – nature that has in some way been tended to or imprinted on by humans (rather than nature having value on its own and conserving it for its own sake). The neognostic agrarians, however, interpret this “imprint” in an unusual way. In line with the resurgence of paganism, neognostic agrarians believe that after death, souls of the departed find dwelling in trees, especially birch, linden and pines. The trees which harbor human souls represent plants with universal value and must therefore be protected at any cost.

Tools and methods:

To the experienced neognostic agrarian, the presence of souls in trees can be seen at first glance, the giveaway being a particular twist in the branches (a favorite spot for souls on the Curonian Spit is the drunken forest on the Russian side). This observation can then be indisputably confirmed through a simple divination ritual.

Instructions:

Hold the chain of the soul-seeking pendulum in your hand while placing the other hand on a tree trunk. Concentrate on the question “*Is a human soul inside you?*” (or your own version of this question). The pendulum will start moving. A back-and-forth movement means the answer is “yes.” If your pendulum swings in a clockwise direction means “yes”, a counterclockwise direction means “no”. Tie a ribbon around each trunk of the tree that you have identified as harboring a soul. Check as many trees as possible.



6. STENOURBANITES

Backstory:

The agoraphobic, technophilic, precariously working-from-home stenourbanites find the raw presence of other-than-human life unbearable. The sheer ferality of the forest makes them want to hide in an office space. But we know small steps lead to big transformations – for the stenourbanite we have developed a plan to facilitate a soft confrontation with the subject of study. In fear of wilderness today – an eager investigator of phytocracy tomorrow!

Tools and methods:

Unlike the rest of the tools, this one doesn't investigate elements of phytocracy. It is the first baby step, a cotton-padded encounter with the ferality of plant life. The virtually virtual reality (VVR) helmet mediates the experience of an authentic encounter to tone it down to the much more palatable nature-simulacra aesthetic.

Instructions:

Carefully slide the helmet onto your head. Adjust the goggles and headphones to a comfortable position. Over the course of the investigation, continuously wear the VVR helmet, exploring the vegetal life. When feeling alienated, please reach out to the fellow humans working in the same area. Do not disturb them for more than a few moments. In case of discomfort, sickness bags are provided.

7. SCHIZO-XENOPHOBIC SADOMASOCHISTS

Backstory:

The schizo-xenophobic sadomasochists have a neurotically ambivalent relationship to indigeneity and autochtonicity. As a default, they are envious of plants for their rootedness, considering themselves mere vagrants in comparison, never quite connected to the ground they walk on. However, their psyche cannot consolidate the successful proliferation of invasive plant species.

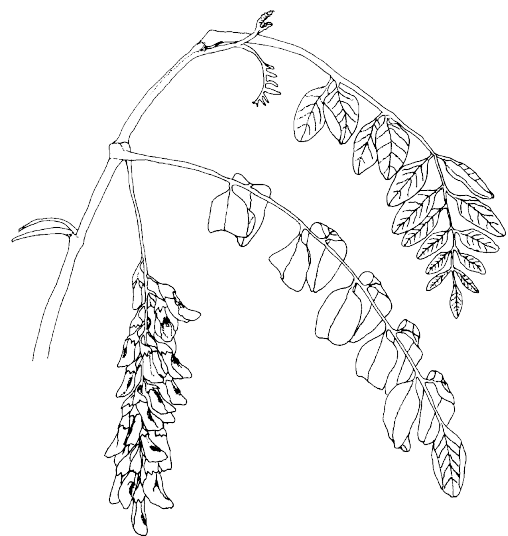
A prime example of a highly irritating species is the black locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*. Her name says it all, she's a poser through and through (she's not even a *real* acacia). She is one of the few plant species that is considered invasive even on the continent to which she is native. The more you cut her, the more she grows.

Tools and methods:

Keeping true to their SM nature, the schizo-xenophobic sadomasochists approach every robinia, which they can spot a mile away, with the same passion and fury, literally lashing out their frustration in a affectionate interchange of self- and rooted foreigner flagellation.

Instructions:

Get acquainted with the flagellation tool that has been provided for you. Symbolically woven from the finest birch tree branches, the most authentically Lithuanian tree (aside from oak, linden and spruce), it represents both a rejection and embrace. With the green leaved tip, whip each robinia tree you encounter thrice, letting out sigh of love and hate with each strike. After this action, strike a chosen part of your own body with the back end of the whip.



8. VEGETARIAT MARTYRS

Backstory:

Though inconspicuous, the vegetariat martyrs are in fact protagonists of the vegetable-human alliance. Employing their full heteronomic, phutonic potential as the mode of resistance to commodity-driven societies, they are the thorn in every civilized thigh. Their bodies are biological computers and from the point of birth they have been taking in information, processing, calculating. Like the vegetal beings, they practice redundancy, pattern, exteriority and dividuality. When the phase of exponential exploitation transitions into the inevitable plateau, they will be ready to organize. Like animal like plant.

Tools and methods:

Between introspection and absolute mindless presence, the vegetariat stays still, growing, ruminating, gestating.

Instructions:

Put on the shirt. If you have any undergarments, remove them. Find a position within the marked area. Stand or sit still for the duration of the investigations. The martyrdom will reveal itself in the amount of bites you will have collected during this period. The repulsion of the plant habitat correlates with the number of bites. Report the number.

9. NON-CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY HOARDERS

Backstory:

Global nature is the name of the game and biodiversity is its ultimate expression. Closely following the ever-gloomier severity of the 6th extinction (happening now), non-critical biodiversity hoarders have taken it upon themselves to collect plant species and conserve them for posterity. They also suffer from a common consumerist affliction, namely hoarding - a pathological compulsion to excessively acquire specimens and an inability to discard large quantities of plant material, which is covering their living areas and causing significant distress and impairment.

Tools and methods:

Armed with their keen eye and a large jar with alcohol, non-critical biodiversity hoarders pick leaves, stems and flowers with a complete disregard for botany or classification. If they (think) they don't have it in their collection yet - in the jar it goes.

Instructions:

Comb the area, collecting samples of any new plants you come across. Place them into the alcohol solution for conservation.

10. HISTRIO-ADMINISTRATORS

Backstory:

Between governmental bodies and the lay public, the histrio-administrators maintain the steady state between nature and culture, law and order, life and death. The pressure of constantly changing, often conflicting legislation, instructions, jurisdictions and stakeholder interests have lead them to systemically develop a mild hysteria which allows them to dissociate from the emotional drain of their jobs while keeping the public face of authority.

Tools and methods:

Aided by the indispensable disciplining horn and marked by the affective orange jacket, their presence and panoptical capabilities instill a high work ethic amongst the volunteers.

Instructions:

You must stay alert and vigilant during the 30-minute investigation. Whenever you observe slacking, boredom or chitchat, gently remind the volunteers that the task at hand is serious by honking the horn and asking them to focus. If they disregard your suggestion, take a more militant approach, going into a frenzy of honking and hysterical yelling. It is OK to interject this action with apologies and complaints about how much you hate your job and that it's really not your fault.

HERE IS A LIST OF PROPER BEHAVIOUR (deviation is sanctioned):

CORPOREALISTS: wearing sleeves, hugging trees

KUROTRODOX: in pairs, looking through frames, marking views with flags

PANSEMIOLOGISTIC INVESTIGATORS: digging and following tree roots

IMAGOFETISHISTS: looking for young growth, performing sexual gestures, sprinkling with fertilizer

NEOGNOSTIC AGRARIANS: touching trees while reading the pendulum, tying ribbons around them

STENOURBANITES: wearing VVR helmets and wandering through the forest

SCHIZO-XENOPHOBIC SADOMASOCHISTS: flagellation of the black locust and self

VEGETARIAT MARTYRS: sitting or standing still; you can recognize them by the yellow headdress

NON-CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY HOARDERS: carrying a large jar and collecting plants

HISTRIO-ADMINISTRATORS: honking and yelling at people who are not working