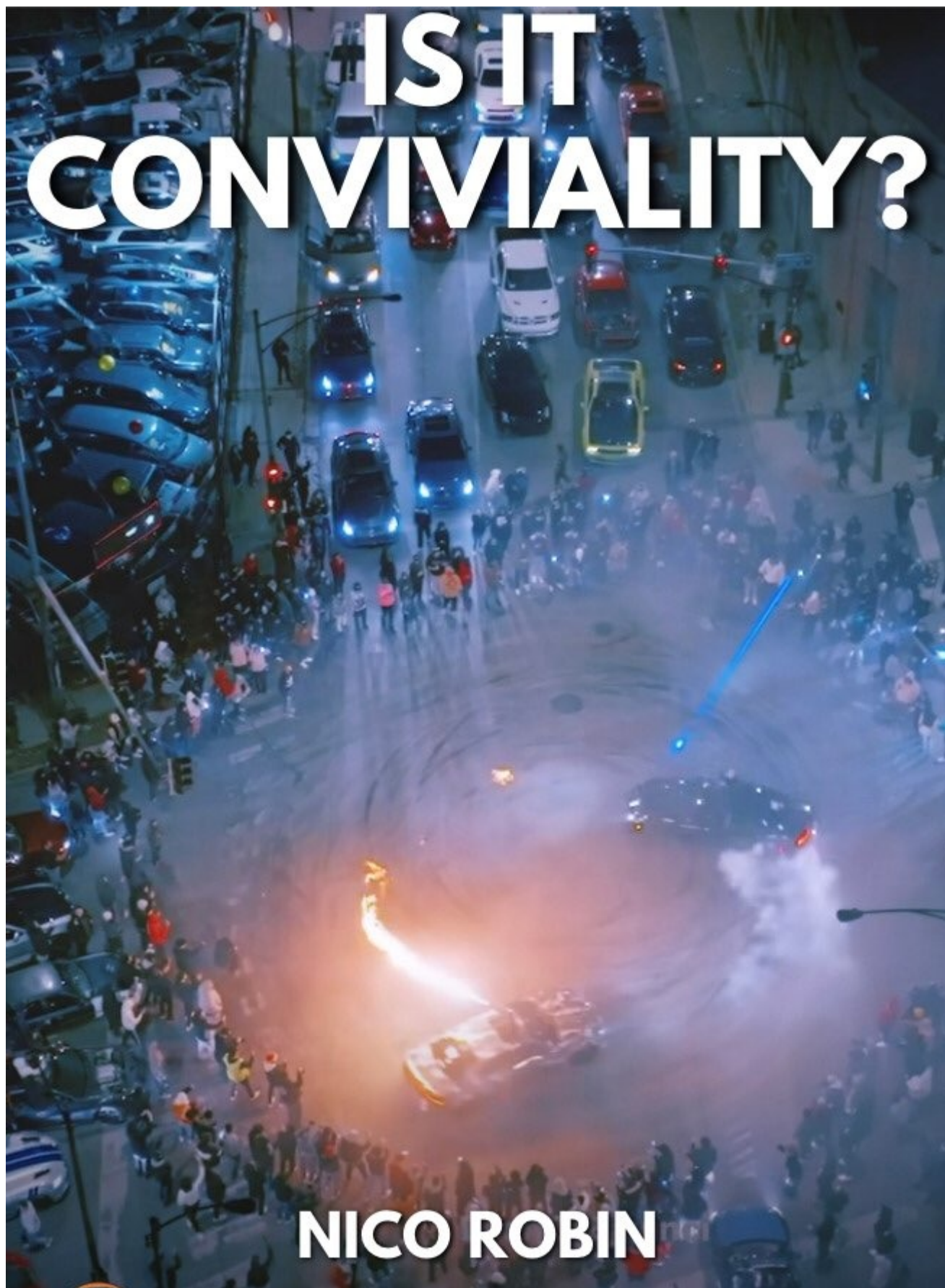


# IS IT CONVIVIALITY?

**NICO ROBIN**



# Is it Conviviality?

By Nico Robin

In many ways, sideshows/takeovers represent a temporary autonomous zone, a union of self owning ones if you will. Its all about maximizing pleasure. Everyone is involved, its temporary, it disappears and reappears when the state shows up, bourgeois values are ignored (being quiet in public, blocking traffic, leaving marks on the road, burning shit, stealing shit), no one is in charge, anyone can start sliding. Drivers do very large donuts (big circle) and a crowd forms around them. You can see the marks they leave on google earth.

## **Maximizing pleasure**

Side shows are a peak experience because its very loud which emanates not caring what other people think and isn't trying to hide that they're having a good time. People are often hooting and hollering and cheering with abandon. Its like a rave where everyone has high energy; everyone's doing exactly what they want to do. If its not intense enough people often push the boundaries. For example, they'll get closer to the person swinging to egg them on (make the circle around the car swinging smaller), they'll throw fireworks into the middle of the pit, or start doing a burnout. Egging the swinger on by making the circle smaller feels like play because its a push and pull; the swinger will react by making their donut circle bigger so that the circle of people has to quickly react and get bigger to avoid being smacked. It feels like a game.

One time we were taking a break at a parking lot and a group started shooting water guns at each other and laughing. I thought it was smart strategically because they posted the next address so everyone drove their together and naturally blocked it off on one side by creating traffic trying to get there.

## **Everyone is a participant**

Everyone is involved: the spectators form the pit, they block the road so that the swingers can swing (becoming blockers), spectators sometimes set off fireworks, and anyone can start swinging if they want to; first timers, people with four wheel drive, people with old beat up cars, anyone. People are often reminded that they're part of the event when they get smacked by a car doing donuts cause they're not paying attention. There are cases where a host suggests an intersection and the spectators decide they don't want to block it off, and no amount of chiding by the hosts (on their instagram story) convinces the spectators to block if they don't want to.

One time we all met at a big intersection and everyone just parked in the parking lot and only one car was blocking (parked at a red light with hazards on). After failing to persuade anyone else to block the host posted a new intersection that was smaller and didn't have stop lights and the spectators immediately blocked it off and people quickly started doing donuts. If someones car breaks down or something spectators and other swingers immediately jump to help out. There are some hosts who state they're open to suggestions and want to do whatever the people involved want so people influence it in that way.

Even though there is a host, no one is on a bullhorn directing the event, and the hosts make it a point to remain anonymous with the goal of no one attending realizing they put out the call to meet. The anonymity of the host forces the participants to organize it themselves. Everyone voluntarily comes together to make it happen.

## **The will to power as disappearance**

Many hosts tell the spectators to stand in front of the cops long enough to stop them from chasing the swingers but most of the time when someone yells "cops" everyone runs for their cars and the host either calls for a 20 minute break or posts the next spot; dissolving and reforming elsewhere, avoiding a confrontation with the state.

## **The Kia boyz**

This group 210 kia boyz has taken side shows to the next level. They steal cars and then use them to do donuts and at their first meet lit the cars on fire when they were done. We went the following weekend and yeah the kia boyz drive reckless much more so than everyone else. Swerving on the road, etc. Reminds me of this review of stress by justice titled Negation + Electro = Negatetro by Alden W from The Anvil Review. At this big intersection we were doing only two lanes had been blocked off so half of the intersection still had traffic trying to come through hell 2/3rds. The kid in the kia would do donuts in the intersection and then drive down the open lane and turn around and go back into the intersection. A bus tried to turn through the intersection and the kia slid right in front of it, narrowly missing it. At one point he took a break and parked in the intersection at a corner and rolled down the window. Someone asked him "do you have a license?"

"No"

"Do you have insurance?"

"No"

"isn't that illegal"

"Nothings illegal if the cops aren't around" and sped off. Kia Souls can be started with a usb cord; this was a national trend on tik tok before the videos got taken down.

## **TEMPORARY**

Side shows are by definition temporary. Even if the cops never show up to shut it down, after a while people get bored and leave and the host posts the next spot. They're not trying to create permanence, they're simply 'taking over' time and space for a short time with the intention of dissolving back into the night. People who get permanent legal spots are frowned upon and their events are not as widely attended.

For the libertarians: Sometimes they even block free-ways to do donuts. Blocking freedom-ways you ask? How could they block freedom?! To which I say death to civilization.

Definitions: swinger: a driver who does big donuts. Spectators: the people who form a pit (circle) around the person swinging. Blockers: the people who block the road with their cars or bodies to stop traffic so the swingers can swing (note: spectators simply turn into blockers when they block an intersection, switching roles). Pit: the area inside the circle of people. Get back or get smacked: the ethical agreement among hosts is that if you get smacked by a car while its doing donuts its your fault not the drivers.

More examples of taz's: a dinner party, a summer camp, a rave, burning man when it first started

Suggested further reading: taz: the temporary autonomous zone by hakim bey and Sideshows and Wayward Lives by Jackson and Nevada

“only one other thing makes me feel as free as a sideshow and that's a riot”

# Excerpt from TAZ: The Temporary Autonomous Zone by Hakim Bey

Are we who live in the present doomed never to experience autonomy, never to stand for one moment on a bit of land ruled only by freedom? Are we reduced either to nostalgia for the past or nostalgia for the future? Must we wait until the entire world is freed of political control before even one of us can claim to know freedom? Logic and emotion unite to condemn such a supposition. Reason demands that one cannot struggle for what one does not know; and the heart revolts at a universe so cruel as to visit such injustices on *our* generation alone of humankind.

To say that “I will not be free till all humans (or all sentient creatures) are free” is simply to cave in to a kind of nirvana-stupor, to abdicate our humanity, to define ourselves as losers.

I believe that by extrapolating from past and future stories about “islands in the net” we may collect evidence to suggest that a certain kind of “free enclave” is not only possible in our time but also existent. All my research and speculation has crystallized around the concept of the TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE (hereafter abbreviated TAZ). Despite its synthesizing force for my own thinking, however, I don’t intend the TAZ to be taken as more than an essay (“attempt”), a suggestion, almost a poetic fancy. Despite the occasional Ranterish enthusiasm of my language I am not trying to construct political dogma. In fact I have deliberately refrained from defining the TAZ — I circle around the subject, firing off exploratory beams. In the end the TAZ is almost self-explanatory. If the phrase became current it would be understood without difficulty...understood in action.

## **Waiting for the Revolution**

How is it that “the world turned upside-down” always manages to *Right* itself? Why does reaction always follow revolution, like seasons in Hell?

*Uprising*, or the Latin form *insurrection*, are words used by historians to label *failed* revolutions — movements which do not match the expected curve, the consensus-approved trajectory: revolution, reaction, betrayal, the founding of a stronger and even more oppressive State — the turning of the wheel, the return of history again and again to its highest form: jackboot on the face of humanity forever.

By failing to follow this curve, the *up-rising* suggests the possibility of a movement outside and beyond the Hegelian spiral of that “progress” which is secretly nothing more than a vicious circle. *Surgo* — rise up, surge. *Insurgo* — rise up, raise oneself up. A bootstrap operation. A goodbye to that wretched parody of the karmic round, historical revolutionary futility. The slogan “Revolution!” has mutated from tocsin to toxin, a malign pseudo-Gnostic fate-trap, a nightmare where no matter how we struggle we never escape that evil Aeon, that incubus the State, one State after another, every “heaven” ruled by yet one more evil angel.

If History IS “Time,” as it claims to be, then the uprising is a moment that springs up and out of Time, violates the “law” of History. If the State IS History, as it claims to be, then the insurrection is the forbidden moment, an unforgivable denial of the dialectic — shimmying up the pole and out of the smokehole, a shaman’s maneuver carried out at an “impossible angle” to the universe. History says the Revolution attains “permanence,” or at least duration, while the uprising is “temporary.” In this sense an uprising is like a “peak experience” as opposed to the standard of “ordinary” consciousness and experience. Like festivals, uprisings cannot happen every day — otherwise they would not be “nonordinary.” But such moments of intensity give shape and meaning to the entirety of a life. The shaman returns — you can’t stay up on the roof forever — but things have changed, shifts and integrations have occurred — a *difference* is made.

You will argue that this is a counsel of despair. What of the anarchist dream, the Stateless state, the Commune, the autonomous zone with *duration*, a free society, a free *culture*? Are we to abandon that hope in

return for some existentialist *acte gratuit*? The point is not to change consciousness but to change the world.

I accept this as a fair criticism. I'd make two rejoinders nevertheless; first, *revolution* has never yet resulted in achieving this dream. The vision comes to life in the moment of uprising — but as soon as “the Revolution” triumphs and the State returns, the dream and the ideal are *already* betrayed. I have not given up hope or even expectation of change — but I distrust the word *Revolution*. Second, even if we replace the revolutionary approach with a concept of *insurrection blossoming spontaneously into anarchist culture*, our own particular historical situation is not propitious for such a vast undertaking. Absolutely nothing but a futile martyrdom could possibly result now from a head-on collision with the terminal State, the megacorporate information State, the empire of Spectacle and Simulation. Its guns are all pointed at us, while our meager weaponry finds nothing to aim at but a hysteresis, a rigid vacuity, a Spook capable of smothering every spark in an ectoplasm of information, a society of capitulation ruled by the image of the Cop and the absorbant eye of the TV screen.

In short, we're not touting the TAZ as an exclusive end in itself, replacing all other forms of organization, tactics, and goals. We recommend it because it can provide the quality of enhancement associated with the uprising without necessarily leading to violence and martyrdom. The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it. Because the State is concerned primarily with Simulation rather than substance, the TAZ can “occupy” these areas clandestinely and carry on its festal purposes for quite a while in relative peace. Perhaps certain small TAZs have lasted whole lifetimes because they went unnoticed, like hillbilly enclaves — because they never intersected with the Spectacle, never appeared outside that real life which is invisible to the agents of Simulation.

Babylon takes its abstractions for realities; precisely *within* this margin



of error the TAZ can come into existence. Getting the TAZ started may involve tactics of violence and defense, but its greatest strength lies in its invisibility — the State cannot recognize it because History has no definition of it. As soon as the TAZ is named (represented, mediated), it must vanish, it *will* vanish, leaving behind it an empty husk, only to spring up again somewhere else, once again invisible because undefinable in terms of the Spectacle. The TAZ is thus a perfect tactic for an era in which the State is omnipresent and all-powerful and yet simultaneously riddled with cracks and vacancies. And because the TAZ is a microcosm of that “anarchist dream” of a free culture, I can think of no better tactic by which to work toward that goal while at the same time experiencing some of its benefits here and now.

In sum, realism demands not only that we give up *waiting* for “the Revolution” but also that we give up *wanting* it. “Uprising,” yes — as often as possible and even at the risk of violence. The *spasming* of the Simulated State will be “spectacular,” but in most cases the best and most radical tactic will be to refuse to engage in spectacular violence, to *withdraw* from the area of simulation, to disappear.

The TAZ is an encampment of guerilla ontologists: strike and run away. Keep moving the entire tribe, even if it’s only data in the Web. The TAZ must be capable of defense; but both the “strike” and the “defense” should, if possible, evade the violence of the State, which is no longer a *meaningful* violence. The strike is made at structures of control, essentially at ideas; the defense is “invisibility,” a *martial art*, and “invulnerability” — an “occult” art within the martial arts. The “nomadic war machine” conquers without being noticed and moves on before the map can be adjusted. As to the future — Only the autonomous can *plan* autonomy, organize for it, create it. It’s a bootstrap operation. The first step is somewhat akin to *satori* — the realization that the TAZ begins with a simple act of realization.

# Excerpt from Feral Revolution by Feral Faun

The attempt to make a moral principle of anarchy distorts its real significance. Anarchy describes a particular type of situation, one in which either authority does not exist or its power to control is negated. Such a situation guarantees nothing--not even the continued existence of that situation, but it does open up the possibility for each of us to start creating our lives for ourselves in terms of our own desires and passions rather than in terms of social roles and the demands of social order. Anarchy is not the goal of revolution; it is the situation which makes the only type of revolution that interests me possible --an uprising of individuals to create their lives for themselves and destroy what stands in their way. It is a situation free of any moral implications, presenting to each of us the amoral challenge to live our lives without constraints.

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...anarchic situations don't just pop out of nowhere--they spring from the activities of people frustrated with their lives. It is possible for each of us at any moment to create such a situation. Often this would be tactically foolish, but the possibility is there. Yet we all seem to wait patiently for anarchic situations to drop from the sky-- and when they do explode forth, we can't keep them going. Even those of us who have consciously rejected morality find ourselves hesitating, stopping to examine each action, fearing the cops even when there are no external cops around. Morality, guilt and fear of condemnation act as cops in our heads, destroying our spontaneity, our wildness, our ability to live our lives to the full.

The cops in our heads will continue to suppress our rebelliousness until we learn to take risks. I don't mean that we have to be stupid--jail is not an anarchic or liberatory situation, but without risk, there is no adventure, no life. Self-motivated activity--activity that springs from our passions and desires, not from attempts to conform to certain principles and ideals or to blend in to any group (including "anarchists") -is what can create a situation of anarchy, what can open

up a world of possibilities limited only by our capabilities. To learn to freely express our passions--a skill earned only by doing it--is essential. When we feel disgust, anger, joy, desire, sadness, love, hatred, we need to express them. It isn't easy. More often than not, I find myself falling into the appropriate social role in situations where I want to express something different. I'll go into a store feeling disgust for the whole process of economic relationships, and yet politely thank the clerk for putting me through just that process. Were I doing this consciously, as a cover for shoplifting; it would be fun, using my wits to get what I want; but it is an ingrained social response--a cop in my head. I am improving; but I have a hell of a long way to go.

Increasingly, I try to act on my whims, my spontaneous urges without caring about what others think of me. This is a self-motivated activity--the activity that springs from our passions and desires, from our suppressed imaginations, our unique creativity. Sure, following our subjectivity this way, living our lives for ourselves, can lead us to make mistakes, but never mistakes comparable to the mistake of accepting the zombie existence that obedience to authority, morality, rules or higher powers creates. Life without risks, without the possibility of mistakes, is no life at all. Only by taking the risk of defying all authority and living for ourselves will we ever live life to the full.

I want no constraints on my life; I want the opening of all possibilities so that I can create my life for myself--at every moment. This means breaking down all social roles and destroying all morality. When an anarchist or any other radical starts preaching their moral principles at me--whether non-coercion, deep ecology, communism, militantism or even ideologically-required "pleasure"--I hear a cop or a priest, and I have no desire to deal with people as cops or priests, except to defy them. I am struggling to create a situation in which I can live freely, being all that I desire to be, in a world of free individuals with whom I can relate in terms of our desires without constraints. I have enough cops in my head --as well as those out on the streets--to deal with without having to deal with the cops of "anarchist" or radical morality as well. Anarchy and morality are opposed to each other, and any effective opposition to authority will need to oppose morality and eradicate the cops in our heads.

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and that's a riot”

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