For years now I've maintained a correspondence with Peter Lamborn Wilson. He is one of the most adventurous thinkers I know of and it is a shame that more people - especially within "the poetry community" - are not aware of his work. His long poem, *riverpeople*, about the communities along the Esopus River in Ulster Co, New York, is extraordinary. But for right now I want to bring folks' attention to his newest collection of essays, *The New Nihilism*, which was published by Bottle of Smoke Press. Instead of a traditional review, I simply would like to pull some passages from the text, and let the reader allow for themselves if more investigation is needed. It is my hope that these quotes reveal PLW’s dark humor / biting satire and anarchistic critique of contemporary society.

1. "Humans could have remained in a condition of 'primeval anarchy' without the State, and yet still possessed a true science. The shamans might have presided over a body of knowledge devoted to Humanity and Nature rather than power and wealth. Society might have retained its non-authoritarian structure and yet still increased in wisdom - in good medicine - in harmonious reciprocity with forests and animals - in psychological health and spiritual realization. 'Progress' was never written into our genes, it was never evolutionarily determined, it was not inevitable. In fact, Progress stopped our real evolution dead in its tracks - it prevented us from becoming what we are (to paraphrase Nietzsche) and instead reduced us to Masters and Slaves. And science served as the midwife of this abortion. We learned how to build pyramids rather than...what? We'll never know what we might have created, if the State had never emerged. It's too late." (pages 60-61)
2. "Consciousness appears to be more than or different from awareness. Possibly (as the Romantic scientists and Hermeticists believed) even rocks posses awareness, although in another dimension of time practically inaccessible to us - except possibly through alchemy, which would then consist of a means for accelerating the awareness of (the) Stone to the visionary level of consciousness. Certainly plants and animals have awareness; we can, for sake of our discussion, dismiss the Cartesian view of matter as 'dead' and animals as insensate machines. The universe, so to speak, is aware. Perhaps the nature of consciousness involves awareness of that awareness." (page 102)

3. "Nietzsche says that when humans have nothing left to will or express, they become obsessed with self-preservation. The Care (and the Cure) of the self becomes the defining characteristic of the universal bourgeoisie. The 'world out there' is seen primarily in terms of its potential threats against our 'safety,' our comfort and convenience. Our children are too precious to be allowed to - for instance - go outside and indulge in unsupervised play. Cars, disease, predators, the world is nothing but threats. They must stay indoors at their 'play stations,' their screens - they must be trained to live as prostheses of their technology, as consumers, as debtors." (page 78)

4. "Depression we may have to accept, impotent rage we may have to accept, revolutionary pessimism we may have to accept. But as e.e. cummings (anarchist poet) said, 'there is some shit we will not eat' lest we simply become the enemy by default. Can't go on, must go on. Cultivate rosebuds, even selfish pleasures, as long as a few birds & flowers still remain. Even love may not be impossible." (page 18)