

# *Species Traitor*

*An Insurrectionary Anarcho-  
Primitivist Journal*



*No. 4*

# SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

AN INSURRECTIONARY ANARCHO PRIMITIVIST JOURNAL

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UNFORTUNATELY, WE RAN OUT OF MONEY AND SPACE, MEANING THAT THE SIZE OF THIS ISSUE HAD TO BE REDUCED AND A LARGE NUMBER OF ARTICLES HAD TO BE PULLED FOR SPACE REASONS ONLY. AT THE MOMENT, WE'RE NOT SURE WHETHER THEY WILL JUST BE POSTED ONLINE OR WHETHER THEY WILL CONSTITUTE ISSUE 4.5 OR 5 SINCE WE HAVE ENOUGH TO FILL ANOTHER ISSUE WITH. IN THE MEANTIME, CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO AND UPDATES.

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## WELCOME TO THE LONG AWAITED *SPECIES TRAITOR* NO. 4.



It's customary to open a magazine with an editorial reminding us of how important the times we're living in are or how the tide is just turning in our favor. The introduction is supposed to get you over feelings of burn out and despair long enough to take everything you find within it as a sign that things are improving. No doubt I've written my fair share of these kinds of introductions, but I can't do that this time. There is no great looming movement on the horizon or a glorious day of awakening. I feel that consciousness is rising about the nature of our situation, but there is a greater trend to fall into a state of passive nihilism rather than face what can seem like insurmountable odds.

In every realm of life, the grasp of civilization is increasing and draining life. Our social and political situation has been boiling over for far too long while the misery and emptiness of daily life only further consumes us. While we breed the symptoms of social meltdown, we further the reality of ecological collapse. We are living in the end days of this global civilization, but most of us are unable to see it for what it is and even fewer of us are coping up to it.

The reality of the collapse of civilization is our reality. And that means there is a lot of work to be done.

The purpose of this zine is to try and draw attention to this situation and to try and get some serious discussion and action going to prepare for what is coming. The point is not to make light of the situation or to propose utopian alternatives, it is to understand what we are facing and to start taking this seriously.

Inside you'll find a mixture of critique and practical means of overcoming civilization as a totality and within our own lives. The opening articles deal with the nature and consequences of domestication: a kind of overview of where we've come from and where we

are heading.

For too long, anarcho-primitivist and anti-civilization critiques have had a tendency towards rhetoric over complexity leading to confusions over what primal living is or about the social life of societies clumped between gatherer-hunters and agriculturalists. Whether you are interested in turning your own life towards that of a nomadic gatherer hunters or semi-sedentary horticulturalists, the point here is talk seriously about the social and ecological consequences of our actions and the influence of subsistence. For thousands of years, humans have lived in nearly every kind of society and we are, to a certain degree, rather predictable. And there is a lot that we know about these societies, but most of us chose to ignore this for whatever ideological reason or simply because they're not interested in doing the research. And so we propose utopian ideals based off of what we think could happen in human society ignoring the real effects of our decisions.

Human society is not such a complicated thing and how we get by largely determines how a society functions. This is all very relevant for us anarchists as

there's more to living anarchistically than simply lacking authoritarian institutions: we are, in sum, talking about society. We tend to think of immediate terms, thus talking about rewilding as a personal goal rather than a long term process or we think of recreating society as something that we just do without considering the organic flow any society will follow through the generations. We need to reorient ourselves and it is here that our critique again becomes important in practical terms: the collapse of civilization is something immediate, but overcoming domestication is something much larger than our own lives.

Simply put, this is all a reminder that what we do in our own lives and what actions we take have much larger implications over the long term than the short term.

That's a way of thinking that we've split from through domestication and that's a connection we desperately need to make once again if we have any hope for rewilding in any meaningful sense.

The following sections are concerned with the more practical implications of this critique in terms of rewilding and resistance. It's been increasingly popular among anti-civilization crowds to polarize rewilding and resisting as opposite poles of action and, hence, separate ways of being.

But there is no inherent grounding for this and it's something that's really been bothering me. I can't comprehend the idea that you're solely either interested in destroying civilization or moving beyond it. How are these two things

not intrinsically linked? True enough, we face a rather daunting reality, but that means that we need to be adaptive and we need to root our resistance and be prepared to physically respond to the threats imposed by civilization upon our deepening roots.

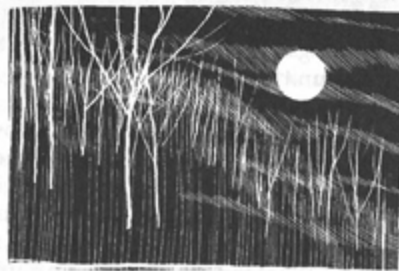
I think the real problem here is the baggage of 'movements' or the idea that everyone must follow a certain criteria or program in order for us to be 'successful'. As Derrick Jensen says, one important thing about civilization is that it's such a big target that, no matter where we turn, there's important work to be done. All of these things are interconnected on a personal level, but also on

the level of building a resistance to civilization and being able to out live it. While we don't necessarily need to be wholly accepting of the actions others might chose to take, we should take a specific in-

terest in strengthening our connections and working together where it seems fit.

Concrete examples might mean working with more urban oriented insurrectionaries who are solely interested in targeting the electrical infrastructure and working with primal communities who are less inclined to militant type action. So long as we are open and respectful, we can find with whom our solidarity and mutual interests lie and we can act more effectively.

Here to you'll find a continuation of issues brought up in past issues of *ST* surrounding the question of revolution. In the last issue, I raised a number of questions about whether revolution is in any way salvageable for the goals of destroying civilization ('Revolution and/



or Insurrection'), and came to a very reserved 'maybe' so long as the orientation of that 'revolution' was clearly laid out. Almost immediately after the issue was published I realized I was wrong in thinking that revolution can or should be in any way salvageable. I feel that it is inseparable from its historical form and its orientation as a political movement rather than a totalistic attack on civilization.

Over the past years, I've been more interested in developing 'primal war' as less of an alternative to revolution than as an embodiment of the fusion of rewilding and resisting civilization. You'll find the influence of this in the essays offered here looking for more appropriate targets for destroying civilization and new approaches alongside articles about rebuilding community.

A part of this primal war is a deeper understanding of its spiritual implications. For most anarchists, spirituality remains a bit of a taboo and is held as an inseparable religious or superstitious holdover. But that's not how it has been and that isn't how it must be. What the lived, non-ritualized and non-formalized spirituality that I talk about centers on is simply the connection that develops between an individual and the wildness of and around them. It is about deepening connections to place and purpose that come through primal living and personal experience. I think a deeper understanding and connection with wildness that replaces the self/Other split perpetuated by the domesticators can be a very powerful means of both overcoming the civilized mentality and resisting its constructs.

And this is extremely important for rebuilding community. A way of being that stems from personal experience is anti-Historical, anti-mediating, and anarchistic in nature. It undermines authority through rendering it useless and un-

thinkable, overcoming the strong hold that symbolic culture places us within as children. A part of our reorienting resistance to civilization requires that we think about the connections between all life and look towards how the domestication process continues, namely, how we treat our children. If we are talking about overcoming civilization, this needs to be a central issue, and one which unfortunately is only touched on briefly here.

The purpose here is to open up a more directed and serious debate about what the totality of civilization really is and what it means and will take to overcome it. This is one step of many, but a necessary one. And hopefully this issue will be a greater contribution towards taking those necessary steps.

In more practical matters, you'll no doubt notice that we've finally moved into the long desired book format. I find this much more fitting for both the content and presentation of ideas. This isn't really the kind of zine that dates like most periodicals might. As a result, we still lose some really important aspects like news updates, action listings, and prisoner listings. While it pains me to not have these concrete underpinnings as a part of this, you'll find no shortage among what I consider our complementing zines: *Green Anarchy* and *Green Anarchist*. If you are reading this, then you should be reading these as well for more up-to-date information about what is going on and on going discussions.

I don't want to give the impression that not having this action and prisoner orientation in any way implies that these aren't crucial issues. These are all very important to me and of course very relevant. We simply don't have the space and format for handling them appropriately.

But, of course, I can still gripe.



Over the years, green anarchist and anti-civilization perspectives have certainly picked up a lot of interest. You can see this as *Green Anarchy* grew from a small zine primarily full of reprints into the largest English anarchist publication. No longer are anarcho-primitivist or green anarchist critiques considered fringe topics or something that can easily be written off by the larger anarchist milieu. And in response to the growing sympathy, you get knee jerk reactionaries trying to ban or sideline us from 'their' debates and conferences. All the while, green anarchist presence at conferences and even the number of explicitly GA oriented events has grown drastically.

What I find odd is that while there is a growing interest in GA ideas, there seems to be a drop in the number of ELF type actions being taken. Especially as the FBI cracks down on suspects and more eco-warriors are finding themselves behind bars, a number of which because of snitches and loose lips. Perhaps it's just the very unfortunate loss of the Frontline News Service that we

don't hear about these things, but as the ELF and ALF remain the number one 'domestic terrorist' while actions have severely dropped and the theory has picked up seems rather concerning. On the other hand, maybe folks are just getting wiser about what constitute better targets and the ways of the State. As last years' impressive \$50 million ELF arson shows, maybe there is a drop in smaller attacks in lieu of larger targets. I suppose we'll have to see how things unfold.

But in the meantime, will someone please bring Frontline back?!

Along somewhat similar lines, you'll find in this issue a number of articles that are intent on rescuing animal liberation from the animal rights crowd who have taken it and run a bit too far. Hopefully there can be greater room made for an understanding of the consequences and reality of domestication as opposed to the dogmatic attempts to rule out what constitutes an important part of the human diet and an important spiritual connection. At least maybe we'll spark some worthwhile debate (though a flood of irate and misunderstanding letters is

unavoidable).

And now, a bit of business: I've spent the past two and a half years researching (also leading ultimately to what has become my book-in-progress: *Catalyst: the birth and death of civilization* which takes what I started with my domestication and collapse articles here and really elaborated on them), sitting in front of computers, begging for financial help and submissions, losing sleep and vision over what you're now holding. I owe serious thanks to everyone who has helped out and inspired me though I can only name a few. My eternal thanks goes out to Evan for his editorial assistance, Yank, John Connor and all at *Green Anarchist*, everyone at *Green Anarchy*, Fischer aka the Thin Red Line, the Bottom Feeders, Sloth and Em, everyone else who made contributions, and most of all to the Monongahela/Allegheny bioregion which drives, inspires and has fueled my rage for the past five and a half years now. Without them and their support, you wouldn't be holding this now.

Even though this has taken so long to come out and has again expanded in size, it's still been a bit hectic and plagued by every kind of set back. Money, like always, has been the biggest though not the sole culprit. So unfortunately, there have been some cuts of otherwise anticipated contributions and a lack of others do to complications (namely the interviews with Rod Coronado and Jean Liedloff). So there is some material already for the next issue though I don't want to say when it might come out. That largely depends on how much people are willing to contribute in terms of both submissions and financial contributions. Either way, I can at least expect it to take another year so I can take the time to finish the two books I've been working on. But send in your submis-

sions!

Most importantly, GIVE US SOME FEEDBACK!! We really get very little directly and I know that there are definitely critiques out there, so pass them along. I'd like to have large sections for debate in future issues, especially over issues like the question of revolution, discussion on the practicalities and realizations of rewilding and resistance, discussion on primal parenting and community building, and whether or not animal liberation can be salvaged from the animal rights crowd. I think the loss of published debate is something that has come with the internet where discussion is a week long flare with a selective audience leading ultimately to the death of great and controversial articles and debate. Save some of it for print! Other people are or would be interested in getting involved, so just write down your two cents and send it in!

A few other things: the Coalition Against Civilization is no longer in existence. It's time has come and gone, and as the name has fallen into disuse over the past years, I've decided to take my upcoming move as a chance to move on. The old website: [www.coalitionagainstcivilization.org](http://www.coalitionagainstcivilization.org) will not be renewed, but ST and all other functions have moved over to [www.primalwar.org](http://www.primalwar.org). Please make note of this in your contacts. Also, the PO Box 835, Greensburg, PA 15601 address will still be in use, but is now considered only temporary until fall of 2005 when we should have a new PO Box in a new town. Keep an eye out for this. The distro remains under Black and Green.

Mistake in issue 3: in the second paragraph of Nikto's 'Road to Revolution', a line reads: "There must be a strong development of values of the dominant classes in society..." where it should read: "There must be a strong development of values that are inconsis-

tent with the values of the dominant classes in society..." which changes the meaning around. Sorry Ted.

Radical anthropology: there has been an increased interest in 'radical anthropology' among anti-civ folks, which I naturally see as a good thing. You'll find it more applied here as opposed to being addressed as it has been in past issues. Fortunately, interest has grown and new contacts have been made, especially ones critical of missionaries, but there has been some connections made with groups like Cultural Survival, who, while doing some important and informative work, have also taken part in the death of cultures through a different form of acculturation: succumbing to the 'inevitable' onslaught of civilization. They have brought modern technology and its relationships into otherwise less impacted societies as a means of 'cultural preservation' (read: museums of culture rather than a way of being). So always be wary...

Lack of contacts: I wanted to have far more extensive contact listings here, but simply ran out of time and space. For more, see [www.blackandgreen.org](http://www.blackandgreen.org). Sorry to those projects that didn't get plugged but should have.

And with all this said and done, let's get on with the issue!

For wildness and anarchy,  
Kevin Tucker.  
July 2, 2005

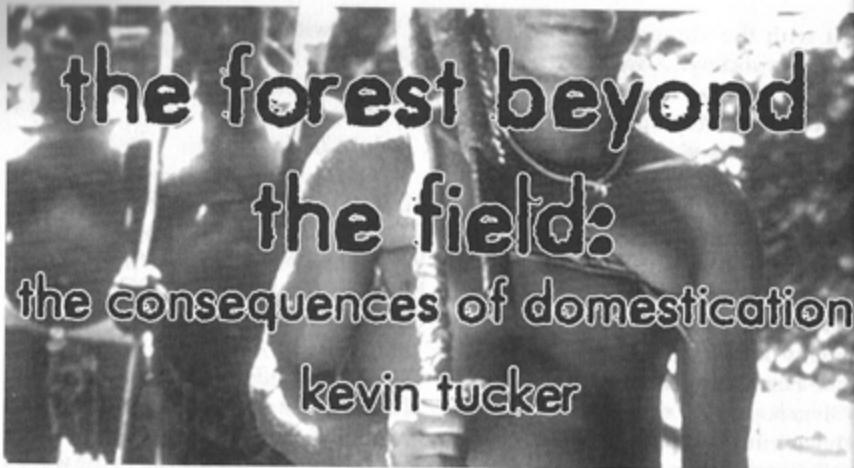
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Oh yeah, ALL INFORMATION WITHIN IS SOLELY FOR HISTORICAL, INFORMATIONAL OR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY!!



# the forest beyond the field: the consequences of domestication

kevin tucker

Humans always have been and always will be social animals. Where our food comes from and how we get it largely determines how we interact with each other.

If we are going to take ourselves seriously as anarchists, then we have to understand that anarchy is about far more than the type or presence of government. It is about social relationships. Simply not having government doesn't tell us a whole lot about a particular society. To understand what anarchy might mean, look and feel like, we have to understand human society.

As animals, the way we interact with each other is rooted in the way that we live. When we are surrounded by wilderness we will act differently than when we are surrounded by machines and concrete. When we are surrounded by domestication we act, think and feel differently. The isolated, sedated, tense, and overwhelming reality that we've created now is inseparable from the material world our elders have built and that we maintain.

It gets harder and harder to imagine a world different from the one we are born and raised into.


It gets harder to imagine that the way people interact now is not how humans have always been.

So we give in. We accept this reality as our only reality. We accept that hu-

mans have a natural inclination to take action at the expense of each other and at the expense of the world at large. We try to make the best of our time and that is that. Some of us turn to god, some turn to politics, some turn to sedatives (electronic or chemical); we turn anywhere that we can find some break from the dry, inhuman condition that drowns us.

Traditionally anarchists haven't been able to really get out of the reality that surrounded them. Rural anarchists have tried to turn the feudal farm life into an anarchist dream world. Urban anarchists have tried to turn the curse of the factory into a blessing for humanity at large. Contemporary anarchists have tried to wrestle their new savior, technology, from the capitalist hands. Downscale, decentralize, democratize, or

*While this essay stands on its own, the basic arguments are an overview of those dealt with in much greater detail in my book-in-progress, Catalyst: the birth and death of civilization. I left out citations, pull quotes, and the like to make it more readable and because there isn't enough room in this issue. So consider this an introductory overview.*



whatever it is that these anarchists and other social reformists or civil revolutionaries are aiming at doing, never gives up that reality. It mistakes hope for real potential and despair as a limitation to how deep change could or must be.

But this reality is a created reality. It has a beginning and it has an end. From our vantage point, we are able to see both. To understand what options we have and depths of where we can go from here, we need to look outside our reality, outside of our society and our machines. From here, we can understand that our reality is not as mighty as we are led to believe and that the soul of the human is not the individualistic scourge waiting for the chance to take power. We can see that the world that we've cut, plotted, paved, tamed, wasted, and mined is not dead and it is not lying passively. We can see the wildness lurking both around and within us. And, through this, we can see the end of our own reality and the community of wildness that awaits us.

This is the point of the anarcho-primitivist critique. It is not an ideology, party or basis for any platform. It is an understanding of the origins and implications of our reality. It is a window looking outside of the city, field and garden to understand both what we have lost and how.

This essay is a contribution to that critique. It is meant to shatter the idea that there is a monolithic type of society like 'hunter-gathers' or 'horticulturalist' or 'agriculturalist' because things are more complex in reality. And it is in this complexity that we can best see the origins of our own reality and better understand how we can break out of it.

But it is also important to remind ourselves that as a critique, it is only meant to inform our reality and our ac-

tions, not to define them. I am critical of domestication in any form and am working towards a life of semi-nomadic gathering and hunting myself, but this in no way limits my solidarity and sympathy for the many struggling horticultural or sedentary gatherer-hunter societies that have and will exist. My conclusions about the consequences of domestication are important for those overturning our own domestication and breaking from civilization. It is meant for those of us who are in need of someplace to go. My target is civilization, the culture of cities (with an emphasis on both the culture and the city). Noting the very early signs of coercive power and the seeds of civilization among other societies is not meant to say that those seeds will always flourish, but it is meant as both a warning and a direction for us and for future generations.

And with this said, it's time to dig at the roots of our own reality.

## HUMANITY IN THE STATELESSNESS OF NATURE

I believe in human nature.

It's not necessary that you do, but there's a lot about human society and behavior that has to be answered to either way. Put in certain situations with respect to socialization, we tend to act in similar ways. Likewise, the ongoing domestication process has always worked in the same ways, manipulating and channeling human need into dependency. Our similar reactions are part of our heritage as social animals. And that is how millions of years of evolution and social living have made us.

There's an organic nature to evolutionary change. But evolutionary change is something great that spreads out over thousands and millions of years. It is a

response to long term conditions with respect to short term changes. We survive because, as a species, we are adaptive. But that has been a kind of mixed blessing. While it helps our body store fat and water so we can cover large distances or that we are capable of taking in so many types of food, it has also made it possible for us to survive in cities and sustain ourselves off of overly processed

ordered city, the industrial bubble, the global system and the virtual reality we've seen change in terms of generations rather than thousands of years. Those who shape and benefit from these realities can only do so with a willing army, producers and reproducers. They take their short term benefit as reality and turned history into evolution. They created gods and then became them.



!Kung women gathering.

waste. What we've been capable of surviving for a short period has been seen by some as an evolutionary change in itself. It has allowed some to think that humans were intended for city and industrial life or that this way of survival and cancerous growth can continue to exist. Either by the Hand of God/s or the Knowledge of Science, we believe this way of living is natural.

Evolution has been condensed into a social reality. That is why we have racism, sexism, class or caste societies, and their realities of slavery, war, colonization, imperialism, and the like. As we stepped into the tamed countryside, the

Our knowledge, our reality, is what the domesticators have and continue to teach us about ourselves and about our world.

Evolution becomes the survival of the fittest because that is the only way to really 'make it' in our reality. Some are born to rule, some are born to serve. Or some are simply smarter and more driven than others.

The same goes for society. Some were meant to fail, some were meant to succeed. Some were meant to produce and some to consume. Those who raise the lobster for the rich to eat have to buy

## CASE FILE IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 1: A SENSE OF SECURITY

"I have attempted to evaluate the subsistence base of one contemporary hunter-gatherer society living in a marginal environment. The !Kung Bushmen have available to them some relatively abundant high-quality foods, and they do not have to walk very far or work very hard to get them. Furthermore this modest work effort provides sufficient calories to support not only the active adults, but also a large number of middle-aged and elderly people. The Bushmen do not have to press their youngsters into the service of the food quest, nor do they have to dispose of the oldsters after they have ceased to be productive.

The evidence presented assumes an added significance because this security of life was observed during the third year of one of the most severe droughts in South Africa's history. Most of the 576,000 people of Botswana are pastoralists and agriculturalists. After the crops had failed three years in succession and over 250,000 head of cattle had died on the range for lack of water, the World Food Program of the United Nations instituted a famine relief program which has grown to include 180,000 people, over 30 per cent of the population (Government of Botswana, 1966). This program barely touched the Dobe area in the isolated northwest corner of the country and the Herero and Tswana women there were able to feed their families only by joining the Bushman women to forage for wild foods. Thus the natural plant resources of the Dobe area were carrying a higher proportion of population than would be the case in years when the Bantu harvested crops. Yet this added pressure on the land did not seem to adversely affect the Bushmen.

In one sense it was unfortunate that the period of my field work happened to coincide with the drought, since I was unable to witness a "typical" annual subsistence cycle. However, in another sense, the coincidence was a lucky one, for the drought put the Bushmen and their subsistence system to the acid test and, in terms of adaptation to scarce resources, they passed with flying colors. One can postulate that their subsistence base would be even more substantial during years of higher rainfall.

What are the crucial factors that make this way of life possible? I suggest that the primary factor is the Bushmen's strong emphasis on vegetable food sources. Although hunting involves a great deal of effort and prestige, plant foods provide from 60-80 per cent of the annual diet by weight. Meat has come to be regarded as a special treat; when available, it is welcomed as a break from the routine of vegetable foods, but it is never depended upon as a special treat; when available, it is welcomed as a break from the routine of vegetable foods, but it is never depended upon as a staple. No one ever goes hungry when hunting fails."

-Richard B. Lee, 'What Hunters Do for a Living'. In Lee and Devore, *Man the Hunter*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1968. Pg. 40.

the rice that they are sold. Those whose children were sacrificed by Aztec kings bodies withered while they only had a diet of corn to eat. Those who cut the forests and carved the giant statues on Easter Island were those who could only have focused on what they were going to eat then and there. That's the nature of the civilized game: someone or someplace will always have to sacrifice for the 'benefit' of society.

These are the realities of the great myth of Progress: the pure form of social evolution. We look towards the heavens or towards our glorious Future as we sacrifice our lives and our bodies for the society that ultimately consumes us. This applies as much to the early agricultural kingdoms as it does to our own society. We move forward out of our savage state of nature or we don't.

The philosophers tell us this is an intentional act, a choice for every human born to make: Progress or regress. They tell us about the social contract where society was created and directed. They tell us about the evolution of savages to barbarians to primitive kingdoms and onto the state and, the high point of evolution, civilization. The movement was directed and intentional, the consequences were necessary, and the direction was final.

But there was never any social contract. Only recently were the directions of growth and social momentum capable of being directed in such a predetermined and controlled way. Never was the creation or change of society such an ordered and planned thing. Never did any part of humanity 'evolve' into a different being or was there any massive change over from gatherer-hunters to horticulturalists. Some societies changed, some societies grew, some stayed in a particular form, but some

other kept growing. To feed that growth they developed more tools and technologies designed to kill more people and cut more forests and dig more soil quickly. There was no Hand of God in this nor any act of evolution.

And never was there an origin of 'society' as such. No matter what we are now or have been, we have been social first and foremost. Even the most archaic form of human society flowed organically from the way our bodies and minds have evolved.

This is where our 'human nature' stems from. It flows from our needs as social animals that must think, eat, drink and sleep, our need for companionship and community (both human and non-human), our need for autonomy and the fulfillment of simply being. For over 99.99% of human history, that has looked like small and open bands of about 15-25 people who live in temporary camps throughout a given bioregion with loosely defined and larger affiliations to each other. Food was hunted, gathered, scavenged, or fished. In some people could make fire, others would keep coals, and some had none at all. Cultural knowledge was shared and all had equal access to what domesticated peoples refer to as 'resources'. Meals, hunts, and social life were collective and while men and women often did separate things, neither was seen as more valuable than the other.

This is the life of the nomadic gatherer-hunter. It is the way that we have lived for the bulk of our existence as humans and then it goes back even further. This is the world that has shaped our minds and bodies as humans.

And this is where we'll start our look at human societies.

NOMADISM AND THE SPIRIT OF

## ANARCHY

If you needed one word to sum up the nature of nomadic gatherer-hunter life, it would be that very thing that shaped our evolution: adaptivity.

Adaptivity means a number of things, but we'll keep our focus in the sense of ecological and social adaptivity. The life of the nomadic gatherer-hunter is rooted in their ecological world. It means reading the signs and movements of the animals around you. It means following the growth of plants and the lives of other beings as they follow that growth and death.

The health of the bioregion at large is inseparable from the world around you. For us, this can be understood in a purely material or rational sense: you don't shit in your own bed. That much is true, but humans are spiritual beings. Our spirit has been channeled through the soulless anti-spirit of Science, God, and an uprooted Reason. But among rooted peoples, that spirit is everything. That spirit is what connects an individual to the community and wildness around them.

There is no split between the Self and the Other. There is no way of taking yourself mentally or physical out of the bioregion/s where you live. It's as unthinkable as it would be unnecessary. The purpose and place of any individual is inseparable from their world. So what you end up with is a lived spirituality: one that is about individual connections and experience, that grows through self-discovery, that is

**c e l e b r a t e d**  
through being lived rather than through highly elaborate rituals and ceremonies (though they often still occur for primarily social reasons), and is anarchistic in essence.

That spirit of anarchy is important for a number of reasons. But I mainly bring it up because it is something we've had taken from us and something that we tend to lack an understanding of or capacity for. Spirituality for us refers to something distant and based on

belief rather than direct experience. It is dictated to us rather than coming from within. For us, spirituality equates to religion which equates to something created and spread by (typically) old men roaming in far away deserts thousands of years ago. That distance is reflected



Onge father and son



## CASE FILE IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 2: BIRTH AND BIRTH CONTROL

"!Kung siblings are likely to be about four years apart in age—an unusually long birth spacing for a population without birth control. How !Kung women maintain these long intervals between births is a question only now being answered. The !Kung claim to know of plants that cause miscarriage when properly prepared and ingested, but there is no evidence that these are effective—or even that they are used. A taboo against resuming sexual relations is also said to be in effect for about six months after a child's birth, but most couples share their blankets again immediately after a birth and do not abide by this restriction for very long. (Even if they did, it would allow the women to get pregnant soon after the end of the six months, resulting in a birth spacing of two years at most.)

Infanticide has also been suggested as an explanation. Bantu law now prohibits this practice, but even in traditional times it probably occurred only rarely—in cases of congenital deformity, of too short birth spacing, or of twins, regardless of gender. The length of the birth interval could be a life-or-death issue: if a woman had another baby too soon, either the baby or her older child—already the object of great affection—would probably die. Nursing a child requires a large daily intake of calories by the mother. Although the !Kung diet is usually adequate for this, it would be debilitating or even impossible for a woman to produce enough milk for *two* children. (The milk has been analyzed and found to be nutritionally adequate and almost comparable in composition to samples taken from Western women.) With no other sources of milk available, the older child would have to be weaned onto bush foods, which are rough and difficult to digest. To survive on such foods a child would have to be older than two years—preferably substantially older. (Today cows' milk is available for toddlers, so this problem has largely been eliminated.)

The decision in favor of infanticide was never made lightly or without anguish, but sometimes there was little choice. The woman would probably give birth alone and bury the infant immediately, preferably before it took its first breath. (The traditional !Kung did not consider a child a true person until it was brought back to the village; thus early infanticide was not seen as homicide.) Such cases, however, must have been extremely rare; even stillbirths, only a fraction of which could be concealed infanticide, accounted for only about one percent of births. Thus, only a few women had to face this choice personally and directly.

One likely explanation for the long birth intervals is the !Kung pattern of prolonged nursing. Although solid foods supplement a child's diet as early as six months of age (either pre-masticated or mashed at this early stage) nursing continues on the average of several times an hour throughout the first few years of a child's life. The constant stimulation of the nipple has been shown to suppress the levels of hormones that promote ovulation, thus making concep-

Whatever the exact cause, the resulting four-year birth interval is essential

to the !Kung way of life. !Kung women are the major providers of child care and carry young children almost everywhere they go—an estimated 1500 miles a year. Women are also the major providers of food and walk between two and twelve miles two or three times a week to go gathering. When they return they carry, along with their child, fifteen to thirty-three pounds of wild vegetables, although loads of forty pounds and more have been recorded. They also make frequent trips to villages a few miles away and take longer trips when the entire group moves camp or visits people living at distances of up to sixty miles. On these long trips women also carry their few possessions—a mortar and pestle, cooking utensils, water containers, a digging stick, various ornaments and pieces of clothing, as well as water—adding another two to four pounds to their burden.

For women who weigh an average of ninety pounds themselves, maintaining their subsistence activities would be difficult, if not impossible, were the birth interval any shorter. A four-year-old is able to keep pace walking with adults, at least on short trips, or may be willing to stay in the village while her goes gathering for the day. A younger child would be more dependent; the mother would have to carry her, as well as the new infant, wherever she went.

Perhaps they tend to experience only a few menstrual periods between pregnancies, !Kung women consider menstruation "a thing of no account." Although it is occasionally referred to as "having sickness" and although some associated physical discomfort is acknowledged (for example, cramps, breast tenderness, headaches, and backaches), menstruation is not thought to affect women's psychological state. Many !Kung women do believe, however, that if a woman sees traces of menstrual blood on another woman's leg or even is told that another woman has started her period, *she* will begin menstruating as well.

!Kung women try to conceal their menstrual blood, but this is not always possible. Leaves, pieces of leather skins, or, more recently, cloth that can be washed and saved are the only articles they have to contain their flow. They are concerned about cleanliness, but water is available only in small quantities during much of the year, making daily bathing difficult. Some women curtail their visiting when the flow is heaviest, but others carry on their normal activities. One woman explained, "When I want to visit, I go at night. Then, no one can see if there is blood on my legs." The end of menstruation is followed by bathing, even if water is scarce.

Menstruation is given minimal attention by the !Kung. Women are not set apart and couples do not cease to lie beside each other at night. Sexual activity is expected to come to a halt, but since conception is thought to result from the joining of semen with the last of the menstrual blood, the taboo may give way, especially during the last day or two, if conception is desired."

-Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: the Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. New York: Vintage, 1983. Pgs. 66-68.



in our own distance from our spirits and the place where spirits grow.

That spirituality, that connectedness, is something that we need, and, as we shall see, it is through this that the domesticators tap into our being and break us. But it is also the basis of social life. There are few mysteries to how life works together for those who live within wildness. A nomadic gatherer-hunter will grow up learning about the plants, animals, and everything else that they directly

consume, but they are not isolated in that world with only themselves and their food. They are

a part of that greater community and so they are constantly learning about the interconnections of things.

This contrasts pretty harshly against our own disconnected reality. For instance, a lot of civilized people despise insects, snakes, and rodents. We're not taught to see how all of these things interact. So we swat flies and mosquitoes away while we spray insecticides on their and our homes, we step on spiders and cockroaches, and have rats exterminated. While ignoring the health consequences of all these chemicals temporarily, we miss out on the obvious. Spiders very rarely bite in any serious way, but we're afraid of them (even though we're far more likely to die or have serious health effects from what we use to

rid them), but then complain when the flies and mosquitoes are around us more when we kill the spiders that would otherwise eat them. Or we overlook how similar rats can be to us as they live off the waste of our own society. And we definitely overlook how most rats, mosquitoes, stinging bees and the like were brought into these places through our Progress and Growth, not theirs.

But for those rooted in their bioregion, it is as impossible to see all of

these things as disconnected more than it is for us to see how they all fit together and need each

other, even as we pull the rat from the domesticated cats' mouth. That spiritual connection and rooting is one of the most important aspects for remaining adaptive: you can see the immediate and delayed consequences of any action that you take.

And this is where nomadism is most important: if you are rooted in a bioregion, but not physically stuck in a particular area, then you are capable of moving before any spot has been over foraged, over run or over hunted. Nomadism is about adaptivity. Just as having a wide ranging diet is important, so is having a wide ranging area which you are familiar with. Life tends to be predictable, but things always come up. One year might be dry, another wet, some



plants and animals might be having a harder year than normal while some might have small population bursts. These are the things that a nomadic life prepares you to deal with and help you to understand.

All of this applies equally to social life. When you move often, it only complicates the situation to have stockpiles. You own what you can carry, which is often nothing that couldn't be easily recreated by most members of society. There aren't options for trying to establish any individually owned territory. The only thing that comes close is a sense of 'belonging' that, where it does exist, usually only applies to honey and some fruit trees. But even this is nothing like private property: it refers to a particular connection to a certain person or family rather than being a right of exclusion for others. Everyone has equal access to the same places and same things.

Food is shared on principle rather than any exception. That is a foundation for mutual aid: you share when you have food, I share when I have food, and no one goes hungry. With no stockpiles, granaries or stashes, no one has anything to yield over others, at least nothing that they're just as capable of getting on their own. Everyone contributes in their own right.

This is the basis for an egalitarian society. No one in society is given more or less merit than others. Children are given the same respect and standing as others, though, like the elderly, they are not expected to make the same kind of contributions as their parents. Everyone brings something different to a society. Children have the freedom to go off with others in their age groups and create their own camps, mimicking the lives of their parents. This is how people learn to survive and how society maintains it-

self: by willing individuals who take their own steps rather than have them forced.

This is primal anarchy and this is the world that our minds and bodies have grown into.

And it can stay this way for a long period of time. The adaptivity of nomadism ends up being rather ingenious in a number of ways. Keeping on the move keeps populations down. You can only have as many children as you can carry and with a lack of processed and domesticated food sources, the primary food source for children up till the age of four is breast milk. Being rooted in a particular region, the parents will not bring a child into the world if they can not support them or offer the same world their parents gave them.

Though this decision can end in infanticide (an act of compassion as opposed to the cruelty of bringing a child into the world unwanted and unloved because of some distant morality rather than direct needs), rarely does it get this far. Producing breast milk slows ovulation. Living a nomadic and active life both slows the onset of menstruation for girls and further slows ovulation for women. There are plants that can be taken and are taken as preventatives or to induce an early miscarriage. None of this carries social taboo because everyone understands the basic needs of a child and knows that a child born without these is worse off than a child who dies at birth.

Our own morality causes us to see these things as cruel. But our lack of understanding comes from our own mediation from the world and from the needs of our own children. Even the moralistically driven Kropotkin noted the irony: "if these same Europeans were to tell a savage that people, extremely amiable,



Huaorani husband and wife hunting

fond of their own children and so impressionable that they cry when they see a misfortune simulated on the stage, are living in Europe within a stone's throw from dens in which children die from sheer want of food, the savage too, would not understand them."<sup>1</sup>

This is just a sign of how far we've gone from where we've lived. And it's one that clouds our ability to see what it is that we have lost. We look for an economic sphere, a religious sphere, a social and political sphere among these societies until we can find something and

isolate it: we reflect our own world into these different surroundings and contexts and sure enough it can be as unappealing and contrived as our own society. But this dissection leaves nothing of the original society. There are no separate spheres or dirty laundry: things simply are as they are.

You can see this in everyday life. There are no gardens to tend, there is far less in the way of ritual and ceremony to prepare for compared to village dwellers. There is no need for schedules, time or calendars. You can remain adaptive.

### CASE FILES IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 3: SOCIAL VIEWS ON NOMADISM

"...Hadza do not assert rights to the areas with which they are associated. Anyone may live, hunt and gather wherever he or she likes without restriction—both within the area with which he or she is mainly associated and anywhere else in Hadza country. The camp units in which people live are not fixed entities: there is constant movement in and out while a camp remains at one site: when the site is changed people may move together to one or more new sites or all or some may choose to move to an existing camp elsewhere. There are continuities in the composition of these local groupings but none which seriously limit individual freedom of movement.

In all these societies nomadic movements of all types, both within and outside of the local area, is apparently not seen as a burdensome necessity but positively as something healthy and desirable in itself. I have discussed elsewhere how neither the frequency nor the spatial patterning of Hadza moves can be interpreted in terms of ecological factors alone, although probably such flexible movement does, among other things, rapidly accomplish a rational distribution of people in relation to resources available at any particular time. What it also does is to allow people to segregate themselves easily from those with whom they are in conflict, without economic penalty and without sacrificing any other vital interests. Most important of all for the present discussion is the way that such arrangements are subversive for the development of authority. Individuals are not bound to fixed areas, to fixed asserts or to fixed resources. They are able to move away without difficulty and at a moment's notice from constraint which others may seek to impose on them and such possibility of movement is a powerful mechanism, positively valued like other leveling mechanisms in these societies."

-James Woodburn, 'Egalitarian Societies': *Man*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Sept. 1982). Pgs. 435-436.

Women and men will wake up and join their friends to talk and share gossip. The men might spend the morning or the day gambling over arrows, determining which folks might be going hunting the next day. They play games and joke, just as the women do as they hang around camp or while out gathering. The smaller children might be with their parents, though most often the mother until they are properly weaned. Once they are weaned they'll play together on their own with other kids their age, spending

will gather. Though there is no pressure on youths to provide all their own food, it's all become a part of their play as it remains through the rest of their life. Men gamble so they aren't relied on for hunting every time just as women aren't out gathering everyday or expected to serve their husbands who are as capable of foraging. There are few to no demands. There are always opportunities to mix things up a bit. New folks might stay with your band for months at a time, and anyone is able to go stay with an-




Batek men roasting a gibbon

their time playing games based around cooperation rather than competition and they'll create their own mock societies and marriages, even including feuds. The older children will do much of the same, though starting to play around more with the idea of sex. Parents might discourage this kind of playing, but it's in word only: they did the same, just as their parents did. They know their children are off somewhere and likely having sex, but they'll do nothing about it. Kids will just be kids.

In the mock societies of the youths, young boys will hunt and young girls

other band when they want to. Large kills turn into gorging feasts with people from far and wide. When you have no means or need for storage, the only option is to eat it then and there, which can make for some large social reunions.

Warfare is unknown, largely because there is no (quasi)political means for organizing nor any solidified group identity along which to form sides. Tensions might arise, arguments and fights might happen, but violence is never as much of an issue as when those involved have always known each other and probably have some binding connection



(even if it is relatively distant). Where there are no strangers, you lose the anonymity that frees you from the consequences of your actions. So when tensions raise and others can't cool them down, those involved can simply go with another band or a minor 'nothing fight' just gets everything out. But the greatest soother is the ability to laugh at and with each other. In such a world, there's no reason to take things more seriously than they need to be taken. I know it's hard to imagine, but we weren't always the wound up mess that we've become.

And this is where our bodies and minds are forged. This is a place where there is no authority or institutions. This is primal anarchy: a way of life that is lived rather than idealized and constructed. It is organic and flowing, and most importantly, adaptive.

This is what lurks within us.

## DOMESTICATION

No one gives up the primal anarchy of our spirit easily. But clearly something happened. Somewhere something came along and changed everything. The social contract theorists tell us we broke out of our savagery through a new collective consciousness, the social Darwinians and their followers tell us that we (or at least some of us) evolved, and some say we changed out of necessity.

Any way you put it, most tell us that what happened was a matter of inevitability. And no matter how many divisions there are about why things happened, there is no question about what that 'something' was: domestication.

Domestication can mean a number of things. In terms of plants, it refers to intentional breeding for what we consider 'desired' traits until the initial genetic structure of that plant has changed.

The same applies among domesticated animals; their wild ancestors were brought into captivity and selectively bred. The real level of genetic change is questionable, but the underlying goal is this: what is bred is what the domesticators' desire and that the plant or animal becomes dependent upon the domesticator to exist.

Domestication is, at its root, about the creation and maintenance of a synthetic order. It is about control. It reduces the fullness of the world into categories and systems of needs and resources. It turns wild communities into a sum of all parts rather than a single interconnected community.

By most definitions, domestication is about breeding something "for human use." That definition can be rather problematic. Humans too, we tend to forget, are wild animals. Like all other wild beings, use-value thinking is something foreign to our understanding and relationships with the world. A need to turn beings into something solely for human use is as unthinkable as it would be impractical. If the world were turned into something for our own use, what would happen to the rest of that world?

Unfortunately that question is being answered.

But this isn't just 'for human use'. It is for civilized human use, for domesticated human use.

In terms of humans, domestication is the civilizing process. It is about turning wild humans into something for civilized use. It turns individuals into farmers, peasants, workers, bosses, police, and soldiers just as it turns forests and wetlands into gardens and gardens into fields surrounding cities and fields into deserts.

It is about taming humans for domestic life. That is, a life of villages and

## CASE FILES IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 4: GAMES AND COOPERATION

Two pastimes illustrate the kind of education that takes place in the *bopi* [playground]. The youngest children begin to explore hanging vines. They pull themselves upward, developing their young muscles while getting to know the vines. They climb and they swing and soon they learn skipping and hoop-jumping, which, like climbing and swinging, can be done in a variety of ways and can be done alone or with others. This ultimately leads to the most difficult of all these vine pastimes, which the children will be able to indulge in only when they are youths when it is mainly a male activity. An enormous vine is strung from high up between two trees with a clear space between them. Swinging from an axis perhaps thirty feet above ground, but with the loop a bare two feet from the earth, one youth sits in the swing and swings himself higher and higher. Then the others join in. As their companion starts his backward arc one runs after him, grabs one side of the vine swing, and, when it soars upward, leaps with it, and does a somersault over the head of his companion, who jumps to the ground, allowing the other to take his place. It requires perfect coordination, as well as considerable strength and agility. There are variations that at first may look like competitiveness, but that in fact demand just the opposite. The "jumper" may swing himself right over the head of the youth sitting on the swing and land on the ground in front of him as the swing descends. If the "sitter" does not sense what is happening and also jumps, expecting the other to take his place, there is a moan from the spectators; both have failed, the perfection of the ballet has been spoiled. Alternatively, the "sitter" may decide to remain sitting and the "jumper" has to make the extra effort demanded to complete the swing over his head and land safely. There can be no question of the one trying to outdo the other, for the fun is in developing daring maneuvers spontaneously and executing them together.

Similarly, climbing leads gently and steadily from individual development to social development. The children are all adept at tree-climbing by the age of four or five, limited only by their physical size and the size of the trunk and the limbs of the tree. At first they climb alone, exploring every branch, testing every way of getting from one branch to another, one tree to another. The idea is never just to get to the top, it is to know more about the tree. The younger are constantly stopping, riveted with fascination at a tiny detail of the bark they had not seen or felt or smelled before, or to examine the movements of ants up and down the tree, or to taste some sap oozing from its side. Put your own ear to a tree one day, as they told me to do, and see if, like an Mbuti child, you can hear it sing with happiness or cry with sorrow.

...  
Little that the children do in the *bopi* is not full of value in later adult life.

While they are learning the fun and beauty of working and playing with and not against others, they are in a positive way learning by prescription rather than proscription, by being told what they should do rather than what they should not do. There is the essence of cooperative, communal life, of which competition is the antithesis. With cooperativeness in action comes community of spirit, and with community of spirit the foundation for truly social behavior is secured; social order becomes possible without law, as we know it, and without the threat of physical coercion, and without anything even approaching a penal system."

-Colin Turnbull, *The Human Cycle*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. Pgs. 43-44.

cities. These are places where we are separated physically and mentally from the bioregions we've grown in, where autonomy is gradually lost to the influence turned authority, where life is dictated rather than based on self discovery, where work is necessary, and where armies roam, both inside and out.

Anarcho-primitivists, like most social theorists, have typically focused on agriculture as that source of change and the real origin of domestication. But that doesn't explain why the walls of Jericho were built by gatherer hunters or how societies like those along the Salish Coast (northwestern United States into Canada) and some Maori of New Zealand had complex kingdoms complete with slaves while lacking agriculture. Looking at domestication as a social phenomena as well as referring to plants does help to explain this while offering a glimpse of what would (in some cases) become the cornerstone of civilization.

#### SLED DOGS, TAME HORSES, FISH RUNS AND WILD GRAINS

Domestication runs counter to the adaptivity that has helped and shaped us for millions of years. Sure enough it has 'allowed' us to expand the size of our SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

society, but never without consequence. It has given us some conveniences where we might not have had them, but, again, not without consequence.

Everything we do has consequences. Some of them are more immediate and more widely impacting than others, but they are consequences all the same. At no point was there a step into domestication that jumped right into cities and civilization or was there a leap between the small scale bands of nomadic gatherer hunters into massive scale kingdoms. Change comes with time. Only recently, with the 'helping hand' of the machine, was that change happening in terms of years rather than millennia. And you can see the bounty of such change as most past civilizations have lasted one to two thousand years whereas the American empire has been collapsing after only two centuries.

Domestication, like all change, is a gradual process. The first appearance of domestication in any society is going to be far less noticeable than any of the spectacular events that we are sold through ideas of History. Reality is never that fantastic or cut and dry. But domestication has crept into some gatherer hunter societies, and through these, we can get a clearer picture of how it is impacting.

When talking about gatherer hunter societies with domestication, we're most often referring to settled gatherer hunters. These societies, settled around fields of wild grains or along rivers with seasonal fish runs which can be caught and stored. But the best place to start is to talk about the nomadic gatherer hunters with domesticated or captive animals.

The two types of societies we're referring to here are the sled-drawn arctic hunters and the mounted hunters of the American plains (throughout North and South America) and the subarctic. We'll look first at the sled-drawn arctic hunters.

The northern arctic and subarctic are a huge place. Most peoples living there are typically considered Inuit or Inuit related, but the diversity between nearly neighboring groups can be as varying as groups on different parts of the world. But one thing that is held in common is the widespread presence of sled dogs. Domesticated dogs are a rather common thing. You'll find them among gatherer hunters just as you'll find them in horticultural societies or our own. These dogs often came into our world through a slow process of self domestication: they

liked our sloppiness and we make good companions. Eventually humans would get a hand in their breeding and lead to the breeds we're familiar with now.

The sled pulling dogs are clearly somewhat closer to their wild ancestors than many other dogs we see throughout the world. But this isn't to give the

impression that they are more recently or less intensively domesticated. Getting dogs to pull sleds is no easy task. It takes an intensive form of domestication that turns them against each other and (ab)uses their pack instincts. They are separated at an early age, have their teeth filed, and are kept hungry to near starving to keep them focused on the hand that feeds. This is domestication in the truest social sense.

The dogs offer nothing in and of themselves aside from their labor. What keeps nomadic societies from accumulating possessions and surplus is their inability to carry it. So the dogs do it. Being able to carry large quantities of meat, fat and hides leads to a social situation not too different from the more egalitarian villages and the dogs make it possible to remain a nomadic society rather than a typically settled one. The



Ache mother and child



dogs make surplus possible where it otherwise could not be.

And you get the social relationships that come along with surplus, though not in the extreme form that you'll find in sedentary societies. Surplus is really a form of property: it is a possession that, while often communally held, must be put under some kind of control for redistribution. That informal control nearly always finds its way into the hands of men (those who hunt the meat). So while the arctic gatherer hunters still have relatively egalitarian societies, you get an increasing emphasis on social compliance and structure. You get minor forms of dependency.

But the animals don't always have to be domesticated. The Caribou Inuit, for example, seasonally round up herds of wild Caribou and become mounted hunters. So while this is only seasonal, you get a micro-scale version of these kinds of relationships.

Mounted gatherer hunters, like those of the plains, are another type altogether. Those throughout the Americas were largely horticulturalists or roaming gatherer hunters before the horse was brought over (or returned as some of these societies will say) by Europeans. The horse changed their means of subsistence, but it didn't intrinsically change the ways of a once sedentary society. Even more so, it became possible to focus more on raiding and warring with surrounding and even distant societies. So rather than being a return to gatherer hunter societies, they became (to some degree) extensions of settled life. That's not to say that nomadism didn't revive older, more egalitarian, ways, but it's not to say that it was a complete throw back either.

The increased reliance on warfare and raiding tended to emphasize the

warrior spirit that carries the seed of patriarchy. With warrior societies, you get an increased interest in secret societies and men's houses at the cost of the more value free egalitarian societies. You get an increased emphasis on violence in childhood and its ritualization into social life. We'll see this developed more among when we're talking about horticulturalists. But needless to say, surplus produces a kind of property that humans had never known before and this is the birth of political life.

You see this even more where gatherer hunter societies have settled around huge, seasonal runs of fish which can be caught, dried and stored. Or where there are huge fields of storable wild grains. The latter is what laid roots for our now global civilization. Gatherer hunters settled aside the floodplains of Mesopotamia where seasonal flooding kept the soil rich and gave rise to fields of wild grains. Though technically not domesticating plants or animals till later, they turned into harvesters of these fields, or farmers without farming. Their social life was really no different than farmers. And it should come as no surprise that this was the first society to begin building huge defensive walls around its city.

There's little way of telling why these societies chose to settle. There's always theory, but considering when this happened, we'll never know.

But we do know the consequences.

It starts out on a minor scale: they come seasonally to the flood plains or runs to gather and fish respectively. They eat a lot and take some with them as they move. Not much changes at this point, especially without domesticated animals to carry their surplus for them. Slowly, seasonal stops turn into seasonal camps and seasonal camps turn into seasonal

villages. Place becomes increasingly more permanent and sedentism creeps

in. The problem with sedentism is that it goes against our adaptivity. People become attached to a place rather than a bioregion. They accumulate more possessions and you start to get an increas-

ing sense of group identity as population grows and that individual flexibility starts to hinder the new social life that is emerging. And the informal but influential roles of surplus 'manager' that we see among the mounted and dog-sled hunters turns into an increasingly important position as huge granaries and store

## CASE FILES IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 5: COMPETITION VS. ENTERTAINMENT

Among the Sherente and Kraho (horticulturalists in Brazil) races where groups run while carrying massive logs play a huge part of their ritualized festivals. Anthropologist David Maybury-Lewis was living among a band of Sherente heavily influenced by missionaries when one of these festivals took place with a far less contacted group. Though the race was heavily anticipated on both sides and they would take cheap shots at the other groups' strength and ability, what he saw was something very different than what he expected:

"The race started casually and equally casually as we loped back towards the village. There were about eight of us, four Sherente, three Kraho and an anthropologist. I forced myself to concentrate on where I planted my feet so as to effect the maximum economy of effort and to take my mind off the contest. The Kraho raced ahead as if they had every intention of disappearing from view. I shall not dwell on the discomforts of the next quarter of an hour. I passed one Kraho walking. He grinned at me, probably amused by my set face. Now we were running through slushy, porous savannah before entering the narrow trail which led into the village. There was a finely-built Sherente running easily beside me.

'Kraho can't run,' he said cheerily.

It dawned on me that we had left the others behind. We entered the village together. The Sherente was jubilant.

'Talk, talk, talk,' they jeered. 'That's all the Kraho are good for. They do not work. They do not plant gardens. All they do is run log races where they come from and yet when they come here they don't know how to run.'

I lay in my hammock concealing my exhaustion and wondering why the Kraho had put up such a poor showing. It was not till later that I remembered the grinning face of the man I had passed. Of course! They had no competitive spirit. They got bored with the race and simply dropped out. They would not have understood the curious motives which had impelled me to run against all my inclinations, let alone outrun them. The Sherente on the other hand had learned the ways of the outside world. They no longer ran for pleasure but only to prove something."

-David Maybury-Lewis, *The Savage and the Innocent: second edition*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1988. Pg. 87.

houses emerge.

Informal power, with the help of arising religious institutions and shaman-priests, turns to formal power, complete with its institutions, hierarchy, and force. Storage gave birth to coercive power, ultimately in the form of the State and civilization.

The increasing reliance upon the stored foods shaped a kind of political society unseen among any other gatherer hunters and even most horticulturalists. You get complex chiefdoms and kingdoms. Though the village life of fishers typically has higher populations, those surrounding wild grains would build cities. When domestication did happen, it was less of an event than it was a need to feed a growing population. When you eliminate nomadism, you eliminate natural checks on population and the ability to see the effects of your way of living. Thus begins the perpetual cycle of growth and expansion that leads to warfare, raiding, colonization, imperialism, genocide, and omnicide.

This is the birth of civilization.

#### FROM GARDENS TO FIELDS

Looking at settled gatherers around fields of wild grains and runs of fish is taking a bit of a leap. This obviously has happened and is the heritage of our own civilization, but is a relatively rare occurrence.

The origins of domestication through many parts of the world looked far different. As I said earlier, there was nothing "natural" about the origin of domestication and certainly nothing evolutionary about it. It's something that happened. Sedentism, by its nature, makes it possible for population to grow and relatively quickly. But it didn't just expand unchecked everywhere. Far

more societies have lived as horticulturalists and in a relatively stable manner for thousands of years.

Horticultural society is really a gatherer society as opposed to field farmers. Like a garden, it is smaller scale and heavily diversified. You hear about Native American and Asian gardeners having hundreds of variations of a couple species of plant or grain: that's gardening. Plants are domesticated over a long period, starting with the selection of larger or tastier parent plants from the wild and then selectively breeding them for desired quality. This can be risky business, so it's best to diversify. So you get hundreds of domesticated species and thousands of (typically regional) variations. This is a human controlled attempt at adaptivity: we can never replicate evolution, but we have certainly tried. And this diversity is an understanding that our efforts will likely fail, at least at some point.

There are a couple types of horticultural societies, but the two polar ends are those who focus on plants and animals higher in protein and those that are lower. And you'll get a mix of the two. But this matters because those who get less protein from their gardens and domesticated animals are going to stay more rooted in a semi-nomadic gatherer hunter life way, whereas those with higher protein will turn more towards a huge growth in village life and are more prone towards an eventual growth into cities if they don't collapse first.

Those who are still rooted in their gatherer hunter life ways are those who were spread throughout the Americas and parts of Eurasia. There are more sprinkled throughout the world, but certain regions having plants and animals that are more easily domesticated and that effects how a society develops. For

a mixture of the two types, you'll get horticultural societies like those throughout the south Pacific Islands (New Guinea, Hawai'i, Trobriand Islands, etc) and some parts of Africa where tubers like sweet potatoes, taro, tapioca, and the like are a major part of the diet and you'll often find domesticated animals like pigs

playing a huge role. And for societies which focus on protein or even less nutritious, but highly abundant crops like corn, you have some mixed in the Americas (Pueblo, Cherokee, Aztec, etc) and then plenty in Africa and throughout Asia where domesticated animals like goats and cattle play an important role.

There are also pastoral societies who are semi-nomads who focus almost exclusively on their domesticated animals like cattle and goats. These societies are most often outgrowths of horticultural and agricultural societies as they make a living through trade of animal by-products for crops. They also tend to act as trader-merchants as they travel vast areas while grazing their animals and coming into contact with a number of other societies. Some of these societies (especially in central to southern Africa, like the Nuer and the Pokot) practice horticulture themselves as well, leaving them will highly developed village and politi-

cal lives carried by parts of the population on their seasonal grazing (this kind of nomadism is called transhumance).

We'll turn our attention first to the semi-nomadic horticulturalists.

#### THE SOCIAL LIFE OF GARDENERS

Life among these horticultural societies can in many ways resemble that of nomadic gatherer hunters. Things are relatively easy going. There are no schedules and few demands aside from those associated with clearing and working gardens. But even this is hard to

consider work. Though gardens are intensive and often invasive, they tend to mock the layers of growth of the forest. They're a far shot from the clean and cleared gardens we're used to. Most often, an outsider barely even recognizes that he's standing in the center of one.

This type of horticulture is called swidden gardening or slash-and-burn agriculture. Patches of the forest are burned and cut to make way for gardens. Some societies prefer old growth, while some will return to gardens left fallow for at least 25 years. The gardens merge with the forest as they are slowly moved in one direction every two years or so, keeping a good cycle of fallow to garden land. Gardens are kept in an area



Tapirape garden.

## CASE FILES IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 6: LEVELING SOCIETY THROUGH LAUGHTER

This comes from Richard B. Lee talking about his experience with the Dobe !Kung during his first round of field work. Towards the end of his research he decided to give something back to the community as an act of appreciation for their cooperation over the year. He bought the biggest ox from nearby pastoralists for a Christmas feast. Though the ox surely provided more than a large amount of meat, the !Kung responded with statements like this: "Do you expect us to eat that bag of bones?" "Everybody knows there's no meat on that old ox. What did you expect us to eat off it, the horns?" Despite the heckling, the ox was killed and a feast followed, but Lee didn't quite understand what the fuss was about. He later sought out one of the !Kung that was harshest to him, /gaugo: "Why did you tell me the black ox was worthless, when you could see that it was loaded with fat and meat?"

"It is our way," he said, smiling. "We always like to fool people about that. Say there is a Bushman who has been hunting. He must not come home and announce like a braggart, 'I have killed a big one in the bush!' He must first sit down in silence until I or someone else comes up to his fire and asks, 'What did you see today?' He replies quietly, 'Ah I'm no good for hunting. I saw nothing at all [pause] just a tiny one.' Then I smile to myself," /gaugo continued, "because I know he has killed something big.

"In the morning we make up a party of four or five people to cut up and carry the meat back to the camp. When we arrive at the kill we examine it and cry out, 'You mean to say you have dragged us all the way out here in order to make us cart home your pile of bones? Oh, if I had known it was this thin I wouldn't have come.' Another one pipes up, 'People, to think I gave up a nice day in the shade for this. At home we may be hungry, but at least we have nice cool water to drink.' If the horns are big, someone says, 'Did you think that somehow you were going to boil down the horns for soup?'

"To all this you must respond in kind. 'I agree,' you say, 'this one is not worth the effort; let's just cook the liver for strength and leave the rest for the hyenas. It is not too late to hunt today and even a duiker or a steenbok would be better than this mess.'

"But," I asked, "why insult a man after he has gone to all that trouble to track and kill an animal and when he is going to share the meat with you so that your children will have something to eat?"

"Arrogance," was his cryptic answer.

"Arrogance?"

"Yes, when a young man kills much meat he comes to think of himself as a chief or big man, and he thinks the rest of us as his servants or inferiors. We can't accept this. We refuse one who boasts, for someday his pride will make him kill somebody. So we always speak of his meat as worthless. This way we cool his heart and make him gentle."

-Richard B. Lee, 'A Naturalist at Large' in *Natural History*, December 1969.

only so long as the soil is as healthy as it was in the beginning, then they move on.

The gardens are usually within a couple hours walk of the village, though sometimes wind up a bit further. But the closer is the more ideal situation. Villages typically last about 25 years. When there is no room close left to garden, then the whole village will move closer to an area where gardens are needed. But more often than not, fallow gardens and village sites will be used again later in time.

Village types can vary from informal and campy to semi-permanent and large structures. The Yanomami live in a shabono: a large, primarily open roofed oval structure which the whole band occupies. The Tapirape, like some of the societies in the northeastern United States lived in multi-family long houses in an oval shape with the men's house in the center. The Jivaro have open walled structures in an oval surrounding the men's house. You'll have a large variation in structures, but the overall pattern is the same: an oval shape with the men's house in the center (we'll get back to the significance of this in the next section).

Whatever types of structures any given society has, the daily life is typically the same: families tend to sleep around their own fire pit (though sometimes men, adolescent boys and, occasionally, menstruating women will share their own dwelling instead of with their family) within the larger structure. In all the South American societies mentioned here, everyone sleeps in hammocks which are strung up in the structures. Throughout the day, you'll often find them there relaxing, joking, telling stories and spreading gossip, perhaps weaving cordage, baskets or nets, or fashioning some other type of hunting tool. Like the care free nomadic gatherer

hunters, they laugh, sing, sleep, eat, and are overall just very laid back and relaxed.

The talking and visiting will often go on late into the night while others sleep through the noise awaking long enough to bring the fire back to life and maybe eat at some leftovers from the days' food. They'll wake up early, bathe and meet back up. Men might clear a garden or go hunting while women might work in the garden or process foods at home. Most of this is all done by early afternoon when the lounging starts back up again.

Over time, the settled life tends to have a build up in tension or just gets overrun by heaps of scraps from food or whatever projects individuals have been working on. The response is to trek: to go out and live in the forest for a couple months as gatherer hunters again (though typically with a fair share of manioc flour). The change is always welcomed and leaves behind the tensions of village life.

But this is extremely important ecologically speaking as well. While the people are trekking, the forest re-enters the village. New life spreads in the decay of the left over waste. The social and ecological build up of village life is cleared and ready for things to start over again. The trek ties them back to that greater ecological awareness of a rooted society, reaffirming what is always kept in mind through hunting, gathering and general roaming.

There is a general coolness to these societies and they are still tied to that primal anarchy. But things are different. And in these subtleties we can see the consequences of domestication most clearly.



## WARS AND WITCHES

The semi-sedentary societies that we've been looking at are no doubt anarchistic in both their lack of politics and in their relative egalitarianism. But I want to emphasize that this is relative to the kind of egalitarianism of the nomadic gatherer hunters that we looked at earlier.

All settled societies challenge carry-

However, maintaining that relative egalitarianism does have its costs in both social and political terms.

There are certain social customs that societies develop to keep inequality from emerging. The personal belongings of the dead are either buried with them or burned after their death as a limit to the amount of 'wealth.' Most positions that are particularly influential are kept tem-



Shavante Big Men making simultaneous speeches.

ing capacity to some degree. Those who domesticate plants or animals are going to increase that more. How a society deals with this determines how sustainable it is. Horticultural societies rarely expand on such a scale that they face collapse the way that civilized societies do. That they remain small scale and that gathering and hunting still play a large part in their society and are ways to keep that higher level of autonomy.

SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

porary and often as short lived as possible. But maintaining that small scale society without strangers is likely the most important aspect and that takes some more evasive effort.

The settled life with increased access to storable food or foods that can be used to wean children earlier and places where mothers can easily raise multiple children without much concern for birth spacing leads inevitably to population

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## CASE FILES IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 7: WHAT MAKES INDIANS LAUGH

"[The Yanomami] do have a sense of humor and are quite prone to jokes. To start with, they avoid telling the truth on principle (even among themselves). They are incredible liars. As a result, a long process of verification and inspection is required to validate a piece of information. When we were in the Parima we crossed a road. When asked about its destination, the young man who was guiding us said he didn't know (he traveled this path maybe fifty times).

"Why are you lying?"

"I don't know."

When I asked the name of a bird one day, they gave me the term that signifies penis, another time, tapir. The young men are particularly droll:

"Come with us into the garden. We'll sodomize you!"

During our visit with the Patanawateri, Hebewe calls over a boy around twelve years old:

"If you let yourself be sodomized, I'll give you my rifle."


Everyone bursts into laughter. It is a very good joke. Young men are merciless with visitors their age. They are dragged into the gardens under some pretext and there, held down while the others uncup their penis, the supreme humiliation. A running joke: You're slumbering innocently in your hammock when an explosion plunges you into a nauseating cloud. An Indian has just farted two or three centimeters from your face...

Life in the *chabunos* [village, often spelled shabono] is generally monotonous. As everywhere else, ruptures in the customary order—wars, festivals, brawls, etc.—do not occur every day. The most evident activity is the preparation of food and the processes by which it is obtained (bows, arrows, ropes, cotton). Let us not think for a minute that the Indians are undernourished. Between basic farming, hunting (game is relatively abundant), fishing and harvesting, the Yanomami get along very well. An affluent society, then, from a certain perspective, in that all people's needs are met, even more than met, since there is surplus production, consumed during celebrations. But the order of needs are ascetically determined (in this sense, the missionaries create an artificial need for unnecessary clothing among certain tribes). Furthermore, fertility, infanticide and natural selection assure tribes of a demographic optimum, we might say, as much in quantity as in quality. The bulk of infant morality occurs in the first two years: the most resistant survive. Hence, the flourishing, vigorous appearance of almost everyone, men and women, young and old. All of these bodies are worthy of going naked.

It is uniformly said in South America that Indians are lazy. Indeed, they are not Christians and do not deem it necessary to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. And since, in general, they are most concerned with taking other people's bread (only then do their brows sweat), we see that for them joy and work fall outside of one another. That said, we should note that among the Yanomami, all the needs of society are covered by an average of three hours of work per person, per day (for adults). Lizot calculated this with

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chronometric rigor. This is nothing new, we already know that this is how it is in most primitive societies. Let us remember this at sixty when demanding our retirement funds.

It is a civilization of leisure since they spend twenty-one ours doing nothing. They keep themselves amused. Siestas, practical jokes, arguments, drugs, eating, taking a dip, they manage to kill time. Not to mention sex. Which is not to say that that is all they think about, but it definitely counts. *Ya peshi!* This is often heard: I feel like having sex!... One day, at Macava, a man and a woman struggle on the floor of a house. There are cries, screams, protests, laughter. The woman, who seems to know what she wants, has slipped a hand between the man's legs and grabbed a testicle. At his slightest move to flee, a slight squeeze. This must hurt, but she doesn't let go: "She wants to copulate! She feels like copulating!" And this, it seems, is indeed what happens."

-Pierre Clastres, *The Archeology of Violence*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1994. Pgs. 20-21.

growth. Nearly all horticultural societies have these conditions, but most have a very minimal level of population growth. What that translates to socially is an increased number of taboos surrounding sex, large increases in infanticide, and, most importantly, warfare.

Warfare and violence are not the same thing. All humans are prone to violence, though some conditions, like overcrowding for example, bring out the worst in us. That doesn't make us evil or bullies; it just is what it is. What separates warfare from violence is that it is one group attacking another and it is planned. When a fight breaks out, it's usually spontaneous. Most people might approach each other angry, but there's usually not a whole lot of forethought in the whole ordeal. Either way, it's typically individuals who've got no other way or interest in avoiding a circumstance that involves the two of them directly. You see this more among gatherer hunters who only take matters into their own hands.

Warfare is made possible by the settling of societies as relationships solidify around the semi permanent structures they live within. Unlike the unrestricted

band membership among nomadic gatherer-hunters, group identity begins to emerge. As society breaks away from wildness through what it eats, it develops that same distance between itself and the 'Other'. It's easy for outsiders to become enemies, especially when things start to get tougher in your own life. But warfare is a bit more complicated: it doesn't just happen and there are specific reasons. Among horticulturalists, warfare is almost always retaliation against other bands or tribes for a wrongful death or serious illness, most often at the hands of a sorcerer.

Now you have sorcerers and you have witches. A sorcerer is like a witch but attacks another village. A witch is in a village and often is not even conscious of the witching substance within them. Both of them cast spells upon others that they have serious problems with. Either position can be held by anyone regardless of gender.

Regardless of what people think of these ideas, you can't say that this is just pointless superstition. Certainly the people truly believe it, but what reason do they have for not believing it? The accused witch can either be killed or

must compensate individuals; an accused sorcerer will be killed in a raid where others might be killed as well. Nearly all deaths are retaliated, so the cycle continues.

This whole mess serves a number of functions; most notably it serves as a check on population. Warfare results in death which results in fewer people. But in social terms, an increased interest in warfare also means an increased need for warriors. And for the first time, you start to get a preference for having boys instead of girls and for that group of boys to become fighters. With that preference there is a higher rate of female infanticide leading ultimately to fewer women. Fewer women means fewer children.

This is a check how a society will check itself from growing. In doing so, it isn't as much of a threat to the carrying capacity of its home and ultimately to itself.

There is a lot more meaning to having witches as well. Ecologically speaking, the witch is a reason for staying sanitary: you can have a spell cast upon your something that was a part of you: like feces or hair. People go off into the forest to 'do their business' and bury it. As villages can last up to 25 years, you would end up with enormous heaps of waste and a rather unpleasant situation in terms of comfort and health. A witch is a solidified mixture of all the negative feelings, anger, frustration, jealousy, and irritation between people. The witch is unrestrained and anti-social. It is everything that the villager shouldn't be. Yet what the witch represents is something that everyone has felt at some point. Settling down makes us semi-permanent neighbors and throws out our ability to just leave our arguments behind and go somewhere else. Tension runs high. The threat of witch accusations is one way to

keep people from letting those tensions out and to keep the peace. No one wants to be accused of witchcraft.

This is proto-morality in a place where the group becomes more of a solid entity than a band being comprised of whoever is around at the time. There is an increasing need for some kind of social institution where people turn to rather than to take care of their own matters. Socially speaking there emerges the idea that "thou shall not kill" unless it is under socially acceptable circumstances: warfare, duels, or executions which are based on group decisions.

But there is an underlying point here: social tensions run high when a society is under stress for whatever reason: too many people, not enough food, water, or not enough places for hunting and gardening. Stress here translates to ecological stress of some sort. A witch is an indicator for something larger that is going on and warfare is the reaction. This type of retribution-raiding-warfare cycle applies to indigenous societies throughout the Americas and largely where smaller scale horticulturalists exist, but in places like the South Pacific Islands where pigs or other domesticated animals play an important role, you get this kind of warfare and a far more ritualized form surrounding the growth of a plant or arguments over village boundaries. Crowding is a bigger issue and so is the question of land availability: warfare ends up taking the shape of larger raids with a much higher death toll (wiping out all the men or an entire society is rare, but is not unheard of) or can be taken to a battlefield.

#### THE ORIGINS OF POLITICS AND ROOTS OF PATRIARCHY

Where morality begins to emerge, so

## CASE FILES OF ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 8: THE WORLD REFLECTED IN MYTH

Among more egalitarian societies, there is typically less of a drive to interpret and hand a certain view of the world to the youths. Their own reality is shaped through their own experience and the words of those around them, but nothing is handed over quite so easily. They don't need morality to tell them what is right and what is wrong. A part of myth is to help shape those kinds of ideas, but not to breed morality.

The functions of myth are simple: to give a way for people to entertain anti-social ideas, to pass on personal understandings of the world around them, and to entertain. The following myth is a classic trickster tale from the Winnebago which does all of the above. It shows the cost of arrogance, reminds us that 'plants' and 'animals' speak to us if we listen, is rooted in a particular place, and, most of all, it's funny.

Also, this is transcribed and translated as it is told. Note the difference between the way a story is told orally versus the way it is told in a predominantly literate and recorded story. When you can't rewind or turn back a page, repetition does the job.

"As [Trickster] went wandering around aimlessly he suddenly heard someone speaking. He listened very carefully and it seemed to say, 'He who chews me will defecate; he will defecate!' That was what it was saying. 'Well, why is this person talking in this manner?' said Trickster. So he walked in the direction from which he had heard the speaking and again he heard, quite near him, someone saying: 'He who chews me, he will defecate; he will defecate!' This is what was said. 'Well, why does this person talk in such fashion?' said Trickster. Then he walked to the other side. So he continued walking along. Then right at his very side, a voice seemed to say, 'He who chews me, he will defecate; he will defecate!' 'Well, I wonder who it is who is speaking. I know very well that if I chew it, I will not defecate.' But he kept looking around for the speaker and finally discovered much to his astonishment, that it was a bulb on a bush. The bulb it was that was speaking. So he seized it, put it in his mouth, chewed it, and then swallowed it. He did just this and then went on.


'Well, where is the bulb gone that talked so much? Why, indeed, should I defecate? When I feel like defecating, then I shall defecate, no sooner. How could such an object make me defecate!' Thus spoke Trickster. Even as he spoke, however, he began to break wind. 'Well this, I suppose, is what it meant. Yet the bulb said I would defecate, and I am merely expelling gas. In any case I am a great man even if I do expel a little gas!' Thus he spoke. As he was talking he again broke wind. This time it was really quite strong. 'Well, what a foolish one I am. This is why I am called Foolish One, Trickster.' Now he began to break wind again and again. 'So this is why the bulb spoke as it did, I suppose.' Once more he broke wind. This time it was very loud and his rectum began to smart. 'Well, it surely is a great thing!' Then he broke wind again, this time with so

much force, that he was propelled forward. 'Well, well, it may even make me give another push, but it won't make me defecate,' so he exclaimed defiantly. The next time he broke wind, the hind part of his body was raised up by the force of the explosion and he landed on his knees and hands. 'Well, go ahead and do it again! Go ahead and do it again!' Then, again, he broke wind. This time the force of the expulsion sent him far up in the air and he landed on the ground, on his stomach. The next time he broke wind, he had to hang on to a log, so high was he thrown. However, he raised himself up and, after a while, landed on the ground, the log on top of him. He was almost killed by the fall. The next time he broke wind, he had to hold on to a tree that stood near by. It was a poplar and he held on with all his might yet, nevertheless, even then, his feet flopped up in the air. Again, and for the second time, he held on to it when he broke wind and yet he pulled the tree up by the roots. To protect himself, the next time, he went on until he came to a large tree, a large oak tree. Around this he put both his arms. Yet, when he broke wind, he was swung up and his toes struck against the tree. However, he held on.

After that he ran to a place where people were living. When he got there, he shouted, 'Say, hurry up and take your lodge down, for a big warparty is upon you and you will surely be killed! Come let us get away!' He scared them all so much that they quickly took down their lodge, piled it on Trickster, and then got on him themselves. They likewise placed all the little dogs they had on top of Trickster. Just then he began to break wind again and the force of the expulsion scattered the things on top of him in all directions. They fell far apart from one another. Separated, the people were standing about and shouting to one another; and the dogs, scattered here and there, howled at one another. There stood Trickster laughing at all them till he ached.

Now he proceeded onward. He seemed to have gotten over his troubles. 'Well, this bulb did a lot of talking,' he said to himself, 'yet it could not make me defecate.' But even as he spoke he began to have the desire to defecate, just a very little. 'Well, I suppose this is what it meant. I certainly bragged a good deal, however.' As he spoke he defecated again. 'Well, what a braggart it was! I suppose this is why it said this.' As he spoke these last words, he began to defecate a good deal. After a while, as he was sitting down, his body would touch the excrement. Thereupon he got on top of a log and sat down there but, even then, he touched the excrement. Finally, he climbed up a log that was leaning against a tree. However, his body still touched the excrement, so he went up higher. Even then, however, he touched it so he climbed still higher up. Higher and higher he had to go. Nor was he able to stop defecating. Now he was on top of the tree. It was small and quite uncomfortable. Moreover, the excrement began to come up to him.

Even on the limb on which he was sitting he began to defecate. So he tried a different position. Since the limb, however, was very slippery he fell right down into the excrement. Down he fell, down into the dung. In fact he disappeared in it, and it was only with very great difficulty that he was able to get out of it. His raccoon-skin blanket was covered with filth, and he came out dragging it after him. The pack he was carrying on his back was covered with



dung, as was also the box containing his penis. The box he emptied and then placed it on his back again.

Then, still blinded by the filth, he started to run. He could not see anything. As he ran he knocked against a tree. The old man cried out in pain. He reached out and felt the tree and sang:

'Tree, what kind of a tree are you? Tell me something about yourself!'

And the tree answered, 'What kind of tree do you think I am? I am an oak tree. I am the forked oak tree that used to stand in the middle of the valley. I am that one,' it said. 'Oh, my, is it possible that there might be some water around here?' Trickster asked. The tree answered, 'Go straight on.' This is what it told him. As he went along he bumped up against another tree. He was knocked backwards by the collision. Again he sang:

'Tree, what kind of a tree are you? Tell me something about yourself!'

'What kind of a tree do you think I am? The red oak tree that used to stand at the edge of the valley, I am that one.' 'Oh, my, is it possible that there is water around here?' asked Trickster. Then the tree answered and said, 'Keep straight on,' and so he went again. Soon he knocked against another tree. He spoke to the tree and sang:

'Tree, what kind of a tree are you? Tell me something about yourself!'

'What kind of a tree do you think I am? The slippery elm tree that used to stand in the midst of the others, I am that one.' Then Trickster asked, 'Oh, my, is it possible that there would be some water near here?' And the tree answered and said, 'Keep right on.' On he went and soon he bumped into another tree and he touched it and sang:

'Tree, what kind of a tree are you? Tell me something about yourself!'

'What kind of a tree do you think I am? I am the basswood tree that used to stand on the edge of the water. That is the one I am.' 'Oh, my, it is good,' said Trickster. So there in the water he jumped and lay. He washed himself thoroughly.


It is said that the old man almost died that time, for it was only with the greatest difficulty that he found the water. If the trees had not spoken to him he certainly would have died. Finally, after a long time and only after great exertions, did he clean himself, for the dung had been on him a long time and had dried. After he had cleansed himself he washed his raccoon-skin blanket and his box."

-Paul Radin, *The Trickster*. New York: Schocken Books, 1971. Pgs. 25-28

does politics. As group size increases from the 25 or so of a nomadic band to the 100-150 or so of a village, it gets harder for every decision to be based on consensus. That is unless you have some kind of manipulation. Here you get Big Men (this is the common name as the position is almost always held by a man,

though it can be held by a woman in some societies), who are powerless when it comes to coercion, but they are upheld for their ability to influence people. The position is by no means permanent, and there can be more than one Big Man in a society.

Most small scale horticultural soci-



eties tend to be matrilineal. That means that group membership and property runs through the women's side of the family, not the men's. Gardens belong to a woman and are cleared by the men in her family and her husband. Yet what comes out of the garden often belongs to the man. There are no workers here and all are roughly in the same social position. But a Big Man will often take multiple wives and thus have more gardens and a larger network of kin groups. Having access to more gardens, they tend to have a larger stockpile of food which they might offer to those in need or hold large feasts with. The favors are exchanged as goods and are traded for support and social standing. The Big Man earns trust through giving and respect through their ability to speak and mediate arguments. They never possess coercive power, but influence can be powerful. Yet the autonomy of the individuals and of society as a whole can be seen in the relative powerlessness of the position: a Big Man lasts only so long as his input seems worth listening to and rarely is there a need to immediately fill the position if it's empty.

Though powerless, the position is still in the political realm: it is about influencing personal decisions into the flow of group consensus towards the will of an individual or small group. Like I said earlier, that individual is almost always a man. Take this, the higher value placed on warriors, and an emerging religious order that is preached more than rooted in self exploration and experience which is also passed down by men, and what starts to emerge is the roots of patriarchy.

No doubt about it, the men in horticultural societies have the upper hand. Or at least, they like to think so. But that thought translates to practice. Village

structures and thinking are built around the idea that men have some hold over women and society. Most villages have a separate men's house (though not necessarily where all the men live) in the center of the village. The men's house is the center for men's secret societies and a place for where boys become initiated into man-hood and are passed on the religious and quasi-political hold of the elder males. The house tends to be walled so that women can't see what is going on inside of it (or at least in theory they shouldn't be able to) but the men can see what is going on outside and in the other structures.

The position that the men grant themselves is rooted religiously as their creation myths emphasize how men came to power (even occasionally with stories about how it had to be stolen from the women). And that is something they often protect through threats of violence and gang rape upon prying or socially deviating women.

By all means, this looks like patriarchy. But in practice, things are a bit different. You have the basic elements of patriarchy on the men's side, but the difference lies with the women: they refuse to fall victim to the self-granted power of the males. They know their role in society and they know that they too have their grasp over the actions of men. Unlike most patriarchal societies, the women are not isolated in their own homes or gardens, but themselves hold strong alliances between each other. They stick together and are not afraid to take the offense against their husbands or other men.

The men have no monopoly on violence. Though they might wield it more often and gang rape can't always be defended against, the mystical rooting of their 'power' is no real mystery to the

women. That's not to say that they don't have interest or don't believe in or pass on their cultural knowledge (in fact, it is largely the mother that encourages aggression among boys), they just aren't starry eyed over or frightened by their husbands ritualized displays of power.

This is clearly where patriarchy is rooted, but its true origins lie with the pacification and isolation of individual women. The strength of women as a whole lies in their deep seeded connec-

The women in matrifocal societies have known each other all their lives and it is the men that have to earn their respect. All connections are through the women, and these are the relationships that tie men together. So if a husband does wrong to his wife, it is her family that he has to answer to.

But when society grows, so does the need for a larger structure. The control of that structure has been almost exclusively in the hands of men. Egalitarian-



Hadza women roasting roots

tions to each other. I mentioned earlier that most small scale horticultural societies are matrilineal, but most are also matrifocal. That means that not only are group identity and property passed through women, but that men come into the women's society, not the other way around (Nearly all nomadic gatherer hunters are ambilineal, who, like us, recognize paternal lineages on both their mother and their fathers side and have no set preference of moving with the husband or wives band, since they'll likely spend time with both and others).

ism is lost to the bureaucrats and their hierarchies. The mutual aid that once held society together becomes mutual dependency that eliminates difference. And this is the world of the farmers.

#### THE SOCIAL LIFE OF FARMERS

Anarchists since Kropotkin have held a deep urge for what they see as a life of simplicity yet still holding the 'benefits' of civilization. Kropotkin, the Russian Prince, yearned for something simpler and more humane than his aristocratic

## CASE FILES IN ANARCHO-ETHNOGRAPHY 9: SEX AND (HOMO)SEXUALITY


I have no interest in proving that there is some innate sexual tendency among all humans, but how societies view sexuality can be relative to their means of subsistence. Recently Ted Kaczynski has made an effort to show that nomadic gatherer hunters look down upon homosexual relationships and thus homosexuals. I found his references questionable or falsely used and the implications even more irritating.

Marriage is universal in human society. What differs is its importance. It is common knowledge that most people at some point will cheat on their spouses. For the most part, this is known and accepted so long as it is out of sight. It is not uncommon for being caught to end in divorce or fights. Most divorces, like marriages, are hardly fantastic ceremonies. Many really have no noticeable sort of commencement and begin and end when the two involved say it does.

Homosexuality is a bit more complicated. In smaller scale societies, you aren't as likely to come across a person who solely identifies as a homosexual. This does happen and almost universally that person is accepted as all others, though they'll likely take the gender roles attributed to the opposite sex and carry on all the same. But most homosexual relations are things that just happen. For example, Colin Turnbull noticed that the young Mbuti boys who slept together would occasionally 'make a mess on each other' while sleeping. Or sex play among children might just as easily take place among same sex children as it does with each other. A rare glimpse into female homosexuality comes from Marjorie Shostak's primary !Kung informant, Nisa, who talked about her homosexual encounters the same way that men might. There are little to no taboos on the subject, and it seems inevitable that groups who spend most of their time together may share these kinds of moments.

Among horticulturalists, homosexuality tends to take on a whole other level with gender roles strictly for homosexuals. Among some societies, like the Sambia, homosexuality becomes ritualized and is the primary type of sex in society with heterosexuality being a brief part of their lives.

What folks like Ted have done is take a lack of information and occasional spoken taboos or jokes as the truth without digging deeper. I came across one instance that seemed to me indicative of the real situation: missionaries and outsiders in general had been so outright discouraging of homosexuality that they simply covered it up. This comes from Clayton and Carole Robarchek living among the Huaorani who observed two men one evening who "were standing in the middle of the airstrip as the soccer game was winding down. Tuka bent over from the waist to tie his shoes, and Kogi laid across Tuka's back and put his arms around him. Tuka looked towards us with an embarrassed grin. The two spoke softly, and we caught the word "kowudi" as they straightened up. They proceeded down the airstrip, with Kogi keeping his arm around Tuka's neck." (*Waarani: the Contexts of Violence and War*, Fort Worth: Harcourt



Brace, 1998, pg. 57.) *Kowdi* translates to outsiders and this was not a sole incident. Homosexuality, like all sexuality, is something that happens about and is joked about like anything sexual tends to be. This is a far cry from the homophobia that some have argued is universal outside of our modern society.

life. In his attempt to reject his royal upbringing, he romanticized what he saw as the opposite: the rural peasant communal life.

Among the recently industrializing world, the yearning for a past golden age never went too deep. For the dreamers and revolutionaries, most could hardly see beyond the factories while others saw rows of crops as their savior, their liberators from the oppression of authority. Unfortunately, both of these ideals still hold today though we have access to a much deeper sense of human history. The golden age of the farm simply did not happen. Most of it is inseparable from aristocracies and earlier kingdoms. And that applies equally to indigenous kingdoms and proto-states.

Farms and gardens are far from being one in the same. The gardens of horticulturalists are seeded in and with the forest while the fields of farmers are the antithesis of the forest or the prairie: they are planned and meticulously controlled environments. Their social life is hardly different. All the things that we see emerge in small scale horticultural societies become daily reality: political and religious control, hierarchy, bureaucracy, warfare, and patriarchy. And there are more: you get the origins of work, the economy, social debt, a drive towards sameness, specialization, and a highly organized division of labor. Most importantly, growing villages turn into emerging cities and the full time military is turned inwards with police. We should never forget that the walls of Jericho and of all empires since were to keep civil-

ians in as much as to keep outsiders out.

These societies have to have this kind of force and the reason is simple: the life of the worker and the peasant is hard. Villages grow larger and the heavy work falls onto a separate class of peasants. Among indigenous kingdoms, the elites are a typically small group of people who also control distribution. The position of farmers is held by the majority of the society and most of who serve as the army are not exempted from this drudgery. And this has its costs as well: the larger a society becomes, the more specialized its crops which means less options you have for food. Health takes a dive as larger more permanent villages with domesticated animals and issues of sanitation breed diseases.

Work in the gardens or with domesticated animals becomes the work of both men and women. The overall role of the woman takes a turn towards domesticity. Their job becomes more devoted to the reproduction of society literally through making and processing foods and turn into child producers rather than the highly valued role of the mother in smaller scale societies. Children are born as field hands and future soldiers, bred as servants of society rather than individuals worthy in their own rite. Exchange is taken to a new level as the many specialists create markets to peddle their goods.

These societies can start out small like the Cahokians, Mayans or Anasazi who settled as gatherer hunters and incorporated gardens into their lives. Their growing populations were not kept in the ways that the small scale

horticulturalists worldwide had done successfully. Among the Classic Maya, they were able to support large religious centers and cities off of large gardens before they made the quick change to agricultural fields with drainages only to collapse 200 years later.

Agricultural societies are far more ecologically and socially exhausting than horticultural ones. As society grows and becomes more politically complex, so does the need for workers and soldiers to get their jobs done right and efficiently. There is a drive towards sameness that comes through a more solidified religion with angry and vengeful gods and the ability of the political leaders to coerce workers and peasants into doing their work at the risk of death or enslavement.

You can see this among the early cities of our civilization's own past, or you can see this among the indigenous civilizations and empires that have and do exist. These societies are defined by their political and religious order. Among the many African empires, like the Zulu or the Bantu, there are established and powerful kings. The role of the king is a step above the chief. Though some small scale horticultural societies do have chiefs, they tend to be closer to Big Men and the position hardly more solidified. But there are exceptions, among the Trobriand Islanders and among the Maori, chiefs are upheld like kings: commoners must stand lower than them, often cannot make eye contact, and among the Maori, they are often held to be so powerful in a religious sense that they become taboo themselves and have to be fed with tools to avoid impurity.

These chiefs, like kings, inherit their status, but earn their positions through the image of power that they uphold. But they never have as much power as they

do in times of war. And here is where we have the birth of the State.

## ETERNAL WAR AND THE BIRTH OF THE STATE

In nearly all horticultural societies, the only time that a chief holds any solid power is during warfare. As I said earlier, chiefs in these kinds of societies and kings inherit their status but must earn their position. Unlike the Big Men, they must be more than just influential: they must be prominent and skilled warriors. The old western ideal of the esteemed hunter or warrior taking the lead roles in society doesn't emerge until here. In earlier societies, that kind of status was made impossible through ridicule because they know everyone has their abilities and their streaks of bad luck.

What starts out as a circumstantial position and power can only lead to more. As soon as the battle or raid is over, the war chief has lost all of his (this is a role almost exclusively held by men) control. The only way that they can expand that control is by increasing warfare. It's no mystery that positions of power only come with a larger society. Agricultural societies eliminate the taboo and customs that keep population in check because they need more people. They need more bodies as part of the emerging Megamachine of human bodies, more bodies that can be lost on the frontier of an expanding empire or can colonize the smaller scale bands of gatherer hunters and horticulturalists that surround 'their territory'.

When those checks are lifted, massive population explosions are a matter of inevitability. The domestication of plants and animals brought a 975 percent increase in human population bringing a total global population of 8 million



by 8000 BC barreling on to a billion by 1800 AD and now over 6 billion. More people, means more food which means more land which means warfare and expansion. As the population grows, so does the presence of war. It doesn't necessarily take the emerging power of the king to continue to wage war: war becomes an increasingly felt necessity. That applies to our civilization as much as it has to the empires of the Zulu, Bantu, Maya, Aztec, Cahokia, Hopewell, Anasazi, Chaco, Mesopotamia, Indochina, and so on.

The State, with its permanent and imposed order of coercive power, is born through eternal war. That's not just war against outsiders, but a war against looming wildness, war against treason and disloyalty, a war waged as much on civilians as the would be conquerors or even those living more egalitarian and autonomous lives on the outside that threaten the existence of a willing work force by their existence.

The spirituality that once tied us to the world at large is turned against us as the wholeness of the world turns to the oneness of god/s. No longer is our spiritual awareness a way of connecting with the life and wildness that flows between living beings, but it is turned upwards into the sky or deep into scattered places, but it is always external and always distant. We come to fear the created 'Other' as our idea of Self merges with our civilization. Just as horticulturalists begin to fear the world outside their gardens as they become dependent and hunt predators as trophies to their own courage, we fear the wildness that we're born into. Our escape from such a savage, primal state becomes the earmark of our evolution. And our fears haunt us and allow the State to come in and manipulate them so that we will rightfully give up our

autonomy for their protection.

There never has been a social contract; we never willingly and knowingly gave up our wildness for a civilized life: the domesticators have only tricked us from birth.

And this is where civilization emerges: from within the city and its countryside, from the order that is necessary to make both possible. The solidified control of the State is what civilization needed to become complete as we know it now. That is where all its roots come to fruition.

This is where we step into the world we know: the world of control and manipulation. The idea is put in place through cosmology and then actualized by emerging technology. Morality was the eyes and ears of the State before we created the technology to do the same. Steel tools were crafted to ease the chopping of forests and bodies. Guns, railroads, and ships simplified expansion and conquest. Having long ago buried our adaptivity, civilizations just keep on growing and expanding. They don't have the will or the way to stop.

There are no ways to downscale this beast or prolong it for long. Just as the Russian Revolution couldn't change the fact that a millennia of over farming the same area meant a decreasing amount of crops for the peasantry. They brought in machines and chemicals, but those could only prolong for so long before they could rejoin the global economy or die. But even this option is fading quickly as global collapse becomes our reality.

And that makes it even more important that we start paying attention to these things now.

THE FUTURE PRIMITIVE AND A QUESTION OF SUSTAINABILITY



As we rapidly approach the inevitable collapse of our own civilization, the implications of this critique becomes all the more important. We need to ask what does it mean in terms of our own future and how does that influence our decisions and directions now.

I think the most important conclusion to draw from this is that domestication is not some monolithic and irreversible event in the past, but a constant reality that we recreate daily through our own lives. Realizing that we are agents of our own reality rather than passive actors or victims is the most important thing. For me, the logical conclusion is to act on this through rewilding and resisting (see my 'Agents of Change: Primal War and the Collapse of Civilization' later in this issue).

But the question must be raised, how applicable are these lessons to our own lives?

When I say that I want to live as a

nomadic gatherer hunter, the most common reaction is that it's simply not doable at this point. The biggest issue is population. The only thing six billion people can do is die. My hope is that the planet doesn't go with us. But assuming we take some agency and bring the collapse while working to bring people back into their own wildness, then the much talked about 'die off' might be avoidable. Honestly though, I don't see the massive die off being as much of an issue unless the civilizers have their way and take their empires to the logical conclusion: complete destruction of all life.

Most likely, I think we're going to see a larger decrease in births than the often proposed number of deaths. But there is no question that a lot of people will die in the process. As any challenge to carrying capacity, this is an unfortunate matter of inevitability and the impact of which we can only work to lessen. Most people take this as an argument for reforming civilization, but even if that





were possible, it only makes a larger die off inevitable.

How civilization collapses isn't the topic right here, what life might be like after the collapse is. We can expect that the population over the first hundred years will drop drastically and likely stabilize. So the question is how people might live. The life way of the nomadic gatherer hunter is no doubt the most sustainable way of living. As we've seen it is the most adaptive and most egalitarian way of being. For both social and ecological reasons, it is important. The idea that there isn't enough wildness left for this way of living is actually more of an argument for it. If wildness is running thin, then it is all the more important to adapt a nomadic way of life. That keeps any particular area from being overrun even further and requires more social fluidity to challenge the social hold-overs of our own civilization. The more active effort we take now to help rewind places or let them grow back over, the better things look for human society in the future.

A lot of anarchists and folks who are skeptical of how much longer this civilization can last talk about the importance of gardening. I'm a bit reserved about this not necessarily because of theoretical reasons but because of practical issues. The one message that I hope people can learn from the history of domestication is that humans, like any other animal, aren't meant to control the world around it and dictate its relationships. No doubt a horticultural society is largely sustainable and far more in touch with wildness than any of us, but the amount of effort it takes to learn about gardening and the effort taken to plant them seems far more research and work than it would take to spread native seeds. Native plants grow with their

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bioregions: they come together with a number of other species to function together as a whole. There is no question about their ability to sustain themselves.

A garden is invasive. Especially a garden that takes the plants that we know now. The gardens of horticulturalists work with the forest, they are built around the importance of not abusing the soil. You can't simply take the plants that we know and plant them in these types of gardens. Tomatoes, corn, beans, grains and the like need certain environments to grow. Some native species exist in some places, but most of what we have needs gardens that look more like mini-fields: they are weeded, planted in rows, and the like. So I think the real question is how much effort is needed to plant and maintain this kind of garden versus the amount of effort taken to spread native seeds and let the forest grow on its own.

I think there is also an issue about whether or not this kind of society is going to be more vulnerable to raids than a nomadic one. While I have a personal preference for the life and wildness of a nomadic gathering and hunting life way, I don't have any flat out opposition to gardener societies. I have no intent of preaching to the horticulturalists and trying to convert them to gatherer hunters. My critique is not aimed at them, it is meant for those of us who are living within civilization and are facing the oncoming collapse. If we're looking to go anywhere, I wonder why we wouldn't want to go for the most egalitarian and sustainable way of living.

True, this takes a number of changes in our own lives and that'll take more than turning to the garden instead. But we need to think in the long term. What kind of societies do we want our children and the future primitives to be living in?



We would be arrogant to think that the organic flow of society wouldn't take the turn that nearly every other horticulturalist society has: towards warfare, increased infanticide, and the like. Of course, they're all fine with these things, but that's a cost of challenging carrying capacity. And these things will no doubt arise again if growth is to be checked. If we are talking about the societies we want to create or live in, then the least we can do is to talk honestly about them.

Agriculture is no longer really an option. It is highly degrading socially and ecologically and one of the primary reason past civilizations have collapsed and likely the reason our own will collapse. Forests are cut, taking their interlocking relationships with them, the soil is dug deep, and lies exposed in the sun, drainages are cut causing the remaining bits of healthy soil rain to run off into the diverted and drying rivers. The only reason it has lasted this long is that there have been new places to move to and chemicals to delay the inevitable. The vast fields that feed this civilization are running dry and simply cannot support the fields they once did. There is not the room for recreating this kind of living even on a micro-scale. Nor would I hope many people would want to.

There is still some time to react to what we know about civilization and about wildness. There is time to work to apply some of these implications in our own lives and on the large scale.

What keeps us from getting from here to there is the rooting of their domestication. When we see it for what it is and we have the ability to undo it. We have the ability to attack. That is something that cannot be taken from us, we only believe it has. What we do with this understanding is in our own hands.

<sup>1</sup> Kropotkin, Petr, *Mutual Aid: a factor of evolution*. Boston: Extending Horizons, undated [1902]. Pgs. 104-5. Note that when Kropotkin was writing this, 'savage' was a schematic definition of gatherer/hunters and some horticulturalists rather than the derogatory one it is now.

*I Don't Believe in Machines*

-Sky Hiatt

I believe in the lost times. I believe in memory and sensation.  
 I believe in calling out. I believe in dreams. I believe in sudden hope that does not die, that cannot die. I believe in courage. And sacrifice.  
 And the humility of one species among many. I believe all dams will burst, all rivers will run free. I believe in the wild heart. I believe tomorrow will be different than today. I believe in the mind of thunder and the sound of rain. I believe the Earth knows what we are thinking. I believe in the plunge of waterfalls. And the knowledge stored in trees and I believe they remember everything they've seen. I believe the wind is speaking. I believe in vision.  
 I believe in utter beauty. I believe small stones are polished by a patient sea. I believe things can change suddenly.  
 Unexpectedly. I believe we were meant to be wild.  
 I believe so many things.

I don't believe machines will ever understand me.



# A WAR OF WORDS: A CLOSER EXAMINATION OF LITERACY

Sky Hiatt

Literacy, the light saber of the technological era, and the lo-tech tool of progress, has won the wide world's avid adoration. It's like an over-arching religion—a Mecca to which rich and poor alike pilgrimage relentlessly. To acquire this precious skill, sacrifices are made, years of study, money set aside. Literacy is the avowed salvation of the third world, the poor, the middle class. The civilized world piously prizes the written word as an unqualified treasure scarcely less sacred than the relics of the dead. It is the mystical component of the alchemy that will spin all the gold to straw, solve everything cure everything, for everyone.

But there are problems. The deep shadow of literacy eclipses not only its own past, but also the avenging tax levied on a modern population too bonded to the written word to comprehend the cost. What went wrong? Imagine you are living in a traditional tribal life in a stable egalitarian society, in a natural world, a beautiful world providing everything to you freely, and you are happy and healthy and wild and free. Why would you invent writing? If you wanted your world to remain unchanged forever and your way of life to continue on down through the generations, what would induce you to give up your primary relationships to other people and to the world, and substitute for that, as an interface between you and all stimuli, a coded hieroglyphic version of the world, which from then on would interpret things for you as you studied alone and in silence?

It was not an accident of idiocy that written language did not evolve everywhere. It was not a craving of primal times or even historic times. The roots of writ-

ing needed a very different social dynamic as a spawning ground. It needed a definite hierarchical society. It needed a ruling class and those born to be ruled. It needed commerce, economic interchange, social bondage. It needed strangers at close quarters and a decay of trust. It needed a breakdown of tribes and the rise of secular cities populated by independent legal agents overseen by the state. It needed a breakdown of tribes and the rise of secular cities populated by independent legal agents overseen by the state. It required change and upheaval, uprootedness, a decay of community and removal from the land.

"It is historical synergy that the rise of the industrial system occurred when literacy was spreading...our mechanization is tied to literacy."

—Lionel Tiger: *The Manufacture of Evil*.

Writing was never neutral nor was it the result of a quest for intellectual excellence. It evolved 6,000 years ago to solidify hi-

erarchies of power, codify laws, establish notated record keeping for things bought and sold, services provided, and for taxes. It was needed to communicate impersonally on a mass scale. The evolution of literacy coincided with the congregation of human numbers beyond the levels of familiar cadence, into urban centers, ultimately industrialized energy sinks, where the well-nurtured brotherhoods and sisterhoods of former times were dissolved with a literate solvent.

But this was only a minor accomplish-

ized, limited by text. Values shift. Libraries become museums of codified, rigidified ideas that anchor thought.


This is all accomplished by slight of hand, so deftly we may not even notice what is missing from the text. It's so much easier to focus on the artificial gains of modernity and yearn to own a complete Oxford English Dictionary. The print-media PR machine trains us to see so little. Literacy has been such an electrifying social phenomena, its praises are sung in unison like



ment. It's the inevitable force of accumulated abstract thought that it will excavate the core of the atom and explore the depths of space, while the world decays beneath the weight of telescopes and particle accelerators. This is symptomatic of the inverted achievements of writing, always taking more than it gives back. Today we can study distant galaxies but can't name the trees in the back yard. Facts isolated from the organic strata into the granite grip of print subsequently affect judgment and values. Parallels are delinked or ignored. Objectivity falters and becomes random-

a mantra, so few notice that the stunning statistics have been set forth in isolation, surgically removed from encumbering connections to real things. We submissively praise the dissected victories of science and literature so we often don't understand what they really mean. Any species gains achieved in this way cannot stand the test of time.

Powered by a wealth of words in print cities continue an inexorable expansion of influence furiously depopulating the countryside in an unyielding cycle of dominance over every other form of social or-



ganization. Urban life asphyxiated familial and inherited intimacies and exchanged them for interaction with strangers, criminals, bosses, store clerks. And the displaced uprooted urbanites of the present have accepted it all. The rules of literacy now dictate to them the form their life will take. And like the early immigrants fresh from the farm or the field, present day populations are needy and dependent. They are not wild and they are not free.

The mental plateau of the literate present predestines us to an increasingly psychological connection to physicality. Reading confirms the detached, ordered habits of modern life. It is an abstract, one-dimensional substitute for living. It's a mental virus that corrupts perceptual abilities. Judgment atrophies. Cause and effect become baffling mysteries. Gutenberg's press standardized the world, translated it into textual format, divided and subdivided it, reduced it and bled it of strength and primacy. Now we live in a syntactical world, a world in which wild humans could never live. For books cast a world in their own image and create a new order. They make an offer no one can refuse. It is not optional. It is a cognitive mandate, a manifesto and it is ordered accordingly.

In this way, literacy qualifies as a form of mind-training. The trained minds now dominate civilization. And civilization dominates the globe. We accept the mental climate of categories, and categorical units of thought and we are unaware that the mind is no longer a jungle of sensation. It is an optical scanner of words in print.

"We have never known an alternative to literate habits of thought and now we know more than we can understand."


-C. Nystrom: *Literacy as Deviance*

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The euphoric emanation from books of shelves, and the wafting expectancy of the printed page placidly obscure this rift between people and nature, between reader and others. It corrodes time spent exploring the real world, especially the natural world. In a duet of mutual substantiation literacy is now intensified by our ongoing isolation from real things, which we learn to fear. We are losing our familiarity with the wild world and its chaotic appetites of weather and multitudes of living things uncontrolled by print.

In the doorway of the bookstore, the simmering enthusiasm you may feel is merely an enthusiasm for ideas. It's a world of ideas and not of things. And they impress upon former warriors the strict dictums of solitude and quiet isolation. "Sh-h-h-h-h." Their many skills would not be needed here, only one. Because reading demands little of us. It is clean, easy comfortable, almost effortless. The perfect pastime for the captive masses. The library is a sequestered world commanding all other stimuli into remission. It succeeds so well that readers may fail to register a quiver of concern and come to prefer the safety of reading to the pungent organic world rich with expectancy, touch, pain, heat sight, sound, smell, movement, physical emersion, wind, rain.

Children raised on books easily develop patterns of thought honed into chapters dominated by idea fragments scattered erratically in the neural mechanisms of the modern mind. Thoughts become habituated to the rigors of lines on the page as the body adjusts to inactivity. It's the perfect match. Some educators may already be there. They burden youngsters with summer reading lists as though intimate interaction with life were already taboo.



The modern learning experience is, after all, modern and maybe a computer-learning module would be better yet.

"[Writing] separated thought from sensation, knowledge from experience, utterance from context, speech from the speaker...reading and writing were radical departures from the ways of knowing for which we are all biologically suited."

-C. Nystrom: *Literacy as Deviance*

All our unfulfilled dreams and our adventures are increasingly imaginary, like a scene from a futuristic movie where false memory implants replace the actual vacation experience. So much cheaper, so much more accessible. Just have the information implanted and you really can't tell the difference. The science of the written word makes such things possible, perhaps preferable. In this way, books lead us inexorably to virtual travel, virtual sensation, television and video-games, movies, phones, pagers. It is in this way that literacy defines the future of the world.

Facts distort when the printed page stands between reality and passive reader. These factoids are amalgamated into collectives of randomness later accessed by keywords and stored in individualized, attenuated treasuries of data confetti shredded by the digital maw. These scavenged scraps of reconstituted info are a lot like miniaturized versions of the original panorama of authenticity. The superconductors have transmitted the digitalized data

in an alphabetic form to the user who bravely sets forth on a mission of purpose, never to succeed, programmed to fail.

The roots of writing were never neutral and certainly not humanitarian. From the beginning writing commanded the civilized millions who willingly, even humbly, complied to escape the lowliest social levels, and to gain some power themselves over others and over life and death. For it was evident from the beginning that literacy could defeat destitution, hunger, social failure, even death.

But such gains will prove temporary. Literacy allowed the economic consolidation of power in capital acquisition and the ungainly procession of weapons and technology formerly unknown to humankind, and unleashed other forces of centralization and consolidation that have produced an era in which localized famine was replaced by world hunger, rootedness by homelessness, bows and arrows by weapons of mass destruction. The ultimate achievements of literacy replace the temporal vagaries of the past with the modern versions- chronic, intensifying, worldwide, permanent.

"The literate are so immersed in writing, they begin to use text as a primary metaphor for the world."

-Ivan Illich

It was this way that writing was spread. Literacy takes the credit but not the blame for the stultifying estrangements of the modern world. If it were a panacea, the



planet would be cured of all ills. The print-imprinted mind has applied its robotic isolationism to build bombs that mere orality, the spoken word, may never be able to control. The advances of industry and the thunder of progress and the space race would falter without print media and the cities would wither and loom as ghostly reminders of an implausible past. But literacy continues claiming new minds at a devastating pace. Few question the literate paradigm or wonder where it might be taking us, how it will affect the future of life itself. Literacy craves everything and creates a hunger in the reader that reading can never satisfy.

A gap is forming. Humans are falling behind themselves. The words simply cannot be contained. The tower of babble has generated a culture too complex to sustain or maintain, understand or care about. When it is gone, real knowledge will take its place again. For literacy carries within it the alphabet of its own destruction. The syllables mature into bits and bytes of binary seeking literate DNA spiraling unconsciously beyond us toward an infinite point in time and space. Yes, it is almost certain that the written word will be displaced by what it has created. Because modern knowledge is just the one million names technology has given itself, beneath the ever-shifting façade of which real knowledge is slipping silently away.

One person in a lab, 500 at a conference in Brazil – these are not knowledge. They are symptoms of a crisis of learning that has infected the planet and cast a pall over the future. Real knowledge is cultural. It is too intricate, subtle, ambitious, ambiguous and exotic for machines or measurements. It is accumulated over hundreds of years or thousands of lineages connected by the generations, absorbed

non-selectively from the Earth to the people. It is more than one mind can perceive, more than one discipline can decipher. It is learned through all the senses over lifetimes and is stored in the vast, awesome chamber of social thought and safeguarded there.

Flickering computers and galvanizing T.V. screens allow us to shift further into obsequious recession and complacency of spirit- the hallmark of our age. Trust, trust, trust, until the Rubik's cube of the moment pushes mass communication into a mass grave. The divine decadence of our time and its limitless avarice for things written will submerge in its own glory and drown in its temptations. We are too proud. We are the clinical model. What is to come will come to us.

The ossifying supremacy of the written word will shatter soundlessly, mutely. And humans will then be freed from the digitalized, nano-tech abstractions charading as life. The positive and negative ions of modernity are falling beyond the pull of parallel gravities. The visceral rupture, when it comes, will save the spirit and restore the planet's natural grace. It is this way that literacy will die.

And what will replace it? The thing that it replaced. Not *illiteracy*, but orality, the true name of the spoken word ethos. Oral cultures do not define themselves as 'not having writing.' They pass on history and learning culturally where it is stored in the human collective. Thousands of years of information readily and organically at hand. A return to orality is not a guarantee of social and planetary success. It is not a guarantee of salvation. It will not be easy and there are no guarantees. It is, however the only known alternative to literacy and its unyielding war of words.

# AGENTS OF CHANGE: PRIMAL WAR AND THE COLLAPSE OF GLOBAL CIVILIZATION

KEVIN TUCKER

"Civilization has emerged only recently...and it may yet prove to be an unsuccessful experiment."

-anthropologist Roy Rappaport

I have to be honest. I fear the collapse of civilization. Things are going to get much worse before they get better. There will be no happy ending for civilization and no glorious day when we all chose to abandon it. The realization that we've passed the point of no return will be a shock when it finally hits us. And that time is coming. Very soon.

I fear the collapse of civilization, but I work to make it happen as quickly as possible. Though I want to live without civilization, I know there is a large chance that I won't survive the collapse. But I know one thing: the longer we wait to bring this down; the worse off things are going to get. The one thing I fear more than the peak of the collapse is the state of the world if civilization does not collapse soon.

We need to talk honestly about the collapse of civilization because it is something that affects us. And even more so, it will be the basis for the coming generations.

Coming to terms with the collapse means we have to remember that life is about something bigger than ourselves. We are a part of the world around us and are inseparable from it. That is something that the civiliziers know we must not remember. That is why we can make decisions that seriously threaten life in order to keep short term comforts. We simply don't care about what happens out-

side the very limited being that encompasses 'me'.

The consequences of this way of thinking and being are quickly becoming more apparent. Because of this, we're seeing a lot more talk about collapse in the mainstream. There's a flood of books and media about the collapse of civilizations and our ecological crisis. But they're there because they're filtered. They carry a harsh critique of civilization, but the implicit warning is turned into a boast of our own ingenuity and ability to outsmart the natural world and past civilizations. We are heirs to a mighty empire that shall not suffer the past.

If only we can recycle more, consume less, become less dependent upon oil, and be nicer to each other. If only we drove hybrids and researched hydrogen, sun light and wind as power. If only we could save the civilization we've worked so hard to achieve. If only we could hold onto Mozart, Picasso, wine and cheese and not the bomb. We're full of hope. But



the past. Hope alone, never will.

We miss the basic message: what goes up must come down. Civilization is built and maintained by the domestication of wildness. That is, by turning full ecosystems into a synthetic power source for the supposed benefit of one section of one species. We've ignored something important: the ecological reality that we call carrying capacity and the consequence of ignoring it: collapse.

Carrying capacity is, in the crudest sense, how much life an ecosystem can sustainably support. That's something that comes from thousands and millions of years of evolutionary trial and error. Every bit of life in a given ecosystem has its part to play. Everything does. Fulfilling that place, or niche, is a part of the being of that life form. We shape each others' reality through all of our actions. That includes humans.

Being a part of community is important. But we've forgotten that. Hiding behind locked doors, afraid of everyone around us and spending the bulk of our lives within boxes keeps us from remembering this. Living off of fields of crops and in closed off villages helps us forget just the same.

Few animals forget this, but occasionally they overstep their place in a community. What happens is what sociologist William Catton calls overshoot. What that means is that a given species or society takes more than it gives: it oversteps carrying capacity. This leads to an imbalance, albeit a temporary one. An ecological imbalance is nothing minor. In a tight knit community, stress in one area sends stress through the entire community. But since carrying capacity is not a concept or a chart or a theory, but a narrow concept for ecological real-

ity, you can only step beyond it so far. What these moments are is a brief flare up of one species expanding at the cost of another until it can no longer support itself. At that point, there is no choice or other option: the situation normalizes itself and things go on as they were.

What goes up must come down.

Civilization is different. Societies didn't just extend carrying capacity in a brief flare. They found a loop hole: the rearranged the community. The reality is the same. Domesticated plants and animals replace wildness. The settled villages replace the wild communities they clear. The community is stressed. Things are no different, but domestication offered a chance to challenge carrying capacity for a longer period.

I say longer intentionally. As much as we've tried to convince ourselves that large brains and god/s have given us some great ability or predetermined destiny, we are not outside of the wildness we are a part of. That is true on individual, community and nation levels. We are born to be wild. But we've stopped acting this way. And like all things, there are consequences.

On a longer timeline, our overshoot will still be a flare. But the further we go, the larger our flare, the harsher the fall will be. This is something larger than a flare. This is collapse.

Though it's become more popular to talk about collapse these days, there isn't really a clear understanding of what collapse means. Most people have the idea that one day we'll wake up and the power won't be on. To them that is collapse: an instant transformation. But there is no reality to that idea. Though we'll likely wake up one day with no electricity or on and off over a period of months: the true collapse will be far less



fantastic.

Collapse is a process, not a moment or event. It can drag on or it can happen relatively quickly. The speed is directly relative to the speed a society has overstepped its place. In social terms, collapse refers to a massive reduction or simplification of society. Stratification, specialization, bureaucracy, methods of statist control, the arts, economic coordination and organization, population, and networks of distribution will all be significantly simplified. Large scale society breaks down into smaller, more self-sufficient ones. In ecological terms, the environment that a society is maintained off will simply no longer support it any more. In individual terms, the benefits of supporting and working for a society aren't worth the costs.

Collapse affects every part of society. It is social, ecological, psychological, political, economical, and theological in nature. On the periphery of society, it looks like days spent tilling fields where the soil is so thinned and damaged that it washes away, clogging the waterways in the process. It looks like increasing demands to feed a distant population. It looks like the youth being pulled into armies to raid and conquer on the forefront of a desperate and starving society and moved into the towns, villages or cities to keep order among the desperate and starving.

In the periphery and the towns it may look like a massive turn to god/s for help. In the towns, the politicians scramble to try and squeeze their grasp on power. It may look like a looming revolution or a totalitarian iron fist or both. The gap between the elites and the commoners becomes clearer. The health costs of having food that is more filler than nutritious and having even less of

it increase. It looks like diseases and epidemics and pointed fingers. The 'Others' are to blame or the anti-social individuals. It may be the height of war or mob type 'justice'.

Or it might look like the height of empire. The worldview of the elites will always refuse to recognize its own end. The literate elites of fallen civilizations rarely record their own demise. Not necessarily because they don't want it to be known, but because they are incapable of seeing it. In the linear world, progress always moves forward. Societies flourish, not fall. That is what they think until the very end.

And we are no different. The environment is no longer willing to support the society that will destroy it given the chance. Collapse is not something that is going to happen to us. Collapse is something that is happening. Collapse is something that has been happening.

What we are seeing now is the peak.

That we don't see the reality that we've created and sustained collapsing doesn't mean it's not happening. Things are different now. Every civilization that has existed has collapsed into ours. Every collapse is relatively similar. But ours is different.

For the Anasazi/Chacoan civilizations of the American southwest, the peak of collapse followed the refusal of the farmers to tolerate the tightening grasp of the elites. The same happened from site to site as the classic Mayan civilizations died off. The temples that have captured the imagination of our modern society have failed to see that the once mighty thrones of kings were later used as toilets by Mayan descendants passing through. No doubt, we tend to miss the humor in it. In North America, you can



see this happening over and over again: Cahokia, Hopewell, Hohokam, Inca, throughout the Eastern Woodlands and the Mississippi Valley. You see a society that settles down and over the centuries gardens turn to fields, the forests are cleared as waterways and roads are built, great mounds and temples are built.

And every time, it catches back up. Society pushes too far and collapses. The closer the people are to the earth and their own wildness, the easier it is to return. Sometimes societies try civilization again. So you have small and large flares.

Sooner or later it always catches back up.

This isn't what collapse has always looked like. Our now global civilization has its roots in what is now a part of the Middle East, but once was called Mesopotamia. What once was considered the 'Fertile Crescent.' Here you get the same thing: settlements, growth, deforestation, warfare, expansion, and collapse. But collapse here was different. Here civilization is not such an isolated thing, but a place of multiple civilizations and a wider range of lands and people to take over. The collapse and complete reduction of one civilization was at the expense of another.

The collapse of the Ottoman, Roman, Egyptian, Mesopotamian and other early Eurasian civilizations was the conquering of one empire by another. Civi-

lizations swallowed each other with their past, present and futures. Warfare, conquest and colonization are as vital to this momentum as fields and forests.

Just the same, globalization has been its savior. Without the 'discovery' of central to southern Africa, the Americas, and the South Pacific Islands, this beast would have consumed itself long ago. Instead it has moved from Eurasia across the planet.

Our planet.  
Our home.

But to the civilizers, our planet is a dead place. To them, it is our resources. The survival of this civilization comes at the cost of all other life. Linear vision has a hard time understanding the true meaning of long term loss. What has happened is that this civilization has spread itself across the entire planet. Now there is no where left to turn. There are no discoveries left. There are no

civilizations left. Only one civilization: spread across the planet, organized and run by electronic surveillance, distribution, production, communication and control. As fields worked for centuries turned to deserts, new forests and plains were cleared. As trees were cut, people started digging for new sources of fuel. As that started to run low and be less useful, the civilizers started cutting apart the building blocks of life making both energy sources and bombs. As wildness runs slim, the synthetic landscape and



the desert  
follows  
the plow



society takes its place.

We've spread ourselves far and wide. We've spread ourselves thin.

It may be one of the greatest ironies that the most powerful civilizations to have ever existed is also the most vulnerable. The civilizations that it is comprised of were saved by places to expand and exploit. Ours, fortunately, is not so lucky.

The consequences of a 10,000 year legacy of destruction are catching up.

And those consequences are catching up quickly. Very quickly. Since the Mesopotamians first expanded their own reach, this civilization has been on borrowed time. It has been saved time and time again by new methods of expanding and toying with carrying capacity. Unlike isolated places like Easter Island where civilization grew slowly and died off rapidly, this civilization had somewhere new to move. Each time, there was some place new to exploit.

That is what has built this civilization and its worldview. The civilizers with their shallow history have mistaken luck for normality. As new places on this planet run out, they've turned more literally than ever before to what was once considered the heavens. The civilizers are no more prepared now than those before them to recognize the reality that they continue to recreate.

We know that the civilizations that left written records weren't seeing the end of their days. We know that even when there was no question that the unending warfare and civil unrest and scapegoat persecutions was all a part of an unraveling empire, those in power refused to see it.

They could not see it.

They could not think that everything

they had worked for was coming undone before their eyes. They could not see that their perpetual growth and progression was impossible. They could not see it when it was happening.

Just the same, we aren't seeing it happening. We can't even think of it.

I often wonder how the non-elites viewed collapse. It seems that most often the farmers who were feeding the growing settlements simply didn't see the benefit anymore and the elite could no longer force them. They simply left. Those closest to the earth, the tillers of the earth's flesh, could see what was happening. There was no question that they weren't getting as much out as they put in. They saw the layers of top soil wash off into water ways. They saw the sun drying up the earth exposed after the forests were cut. They saw that the storage houses weren't being filled while they worked harder and faced harsher treatment. They could see a catastrophe that was coming from either the natural world or a spiritual one.

But either way, they could see the end days of that civilization.

They saw this and they walked away. And with this, the fragile house of cards came falling down.

There are always those who could see from the start what was happening. There are always those who could see that the environment was changing. There are those who could see that relationships were changing. There are those who realized this as a result of a synthetic society and those who could only see it as the result of specific consequences of that society. So you get witch hunts, you get persecution, you get genocide, you get warfare, and you get new legislation and powers. The grasp of power always tightens the most when it is the weak-



est. they could do this forever.

But we can't see the true irony here. We get used to looking forward, looking towards the sky, we create god and then we spend the rest of our time trying to become it. We don't look down. We don't look inward.

Look back at the origins and spread of civilization. You start with settlements where populations expand. Wild seeds are brought into domesticated gardens. Domesticated gardens turn to fields of crops. Wild animals are herded and bred into stock animals. Villages turn to cities. Shamans turn to priests. Chiefs turn to kings. Open settlements turn into forts. You get cores, you get peripheries. You get elites and producers. You get those in between. You get armies and police. You expand and colonize. You get slaves and masters, workers and bosses.

It doesn't always happen like this. Many societies are content to stick with gardens, villages, shamans, chiefs, and a certain level of warfare. This way of living can remain relatively egalitarian and relatively sustainable for some time. But it has happened like this. Our reality is testament to this. Growth, left unchecked, leads only to more growth. And growth is an endemic disease.

At first only a small number of these societies existed. But they grew. They ran into each other violently and swallowed each other. They spread throughout the world. They became one. They became us. They grew so they could no longer sustain themselves. They needed food, fuel, water, and labor. They cut the forests, they pulled up the coal, they cut open atoms, they pulled up oil and natural gases, they tapped underground reservoirs, and they dammed rivers, and took the rays of the sun. They act like

We act like we can do this forever. Those who have always seen the problems with this anti-life of growth have always resisted it. They fought and were fought against. They still fight. They have nothing to lose because without their world, they are nothing. They are those who never forgot what it means to be human. Those who never forgot what it means to be an animal. And for this, they are ignored and slaughtered. I don't doubt that they ever saw the plague and fall of past civilizations any less than they do now. I don't doubt that these 'savages' were ignored any less before than they are now.

I'm left wondering how many of those past civilizations had people like M. King Hubbert. Technocrats and composers of a synthetic reality who saw a fatal flaw and could point it out in the only way technocrats can understand it: the language of efficiency. In 1949, Hubbert realized that the world peak in oil production was coming rather quickly. He wasn't the first to notice, but one of the first to be taken seriously.

At least to be taken somewhat seriously. Hubbert knew that his findings weren't just a figure, but potentially the looming end of the world as we've made it over the last few centuries. The global civilization, carried and maintained by an extensive technological and industrial framework, could not survive without a major source of energy. And probably could not survive if that source of energy wasn't cheap enough.

Perhaps in the 1950's, it was easier to think that this would simply disable the last few centuries of progress and growth. The continued progress and growth have only amplified the outcome: we have torn down and replaced



the earlier stages of our civilization. They've become obsolete. We are no longer adding to past technological progress: we are replacing and erasing both the tools and the knowledge necessary to downscale. The future of civilization is dependent upon one thing: another source of cheap energy.

It is looking far less likely that a knight in shining armor will come to the rescue. There isn't much time. Contem-

next decade for this system to survive. Of course this begs the question: is this survival or just more borrowed time? It is inevitable that civilizations will continually outgrow themselves. Perhaps the only relevant question left is what will be left when they can't carry on? What has gone up even farther can only look forward to a harsher fall.

As the end of cheap oil flies back at us, the question that is being asked is if



Mayan Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque

poraries of Hubbert have continued both his work and his search for an alternative. One in particular, Colin Campbell, gave a timeline. By his findings, the best case scenario is a sharp peak in world oil production around 2015-2020. The worst case scenario is that the peak happened nearly ten years ago. So even under the best case scenario, there would have to be a massive change over in the

we should draw down our technology and downscale society or what the alternative energy will be. Not many people are really jumping ship. At least not yet. It's not talked about that neither of those choices is really a realistic option or that they are desirable ones. Hubbert and his followers point towards nuclear power as one of the best prospects for alternatives. It may be the only realistic one, but



I'd hope more people are able to recognize that it also amplifies the worst case scenario of civil crash by the hundreds.

The civilizers have yet to come to terms with the fact that civilization is and will continue to outgrow itself. Any alternative will eventually run out as all the past ones have. There will be more people, fields will continue to produce less, the quality of crops will continue to decrease, the overcrowding of cities will continue, the need for more and more energy will not end. This is what our glorious future has to offer: more of the same, but always worse than before.

And we've yet learned to distrust the technocrats. They said DDT was safe. They said lead paint was safe. They say work and growth are good. They say pesticides and insecticides are not harmful. They say nuclear power is safe. They say technology is safe when handled correctly. They say technology can be used correctly. They say massive arms build up will keep us safe. They say an offensive defense is better than a defensive offense.

And what have we gained? Physical and emotional disease, social upheaval, psychologically unfulfilling lives, and a bunch of self-depleting junk just to name a few. Perhaps we should start asking what we've lost.

And more importantly, we should be asking what we have to gain.

The peak in world oil production, though extremely significant, does not alone cause collapse. Hitting the peak in world oil production does not mean that global civilization will immediately fall apart and be done with. As I said earlier, collapse is about a process. The peak in oil production is only a factor in that timeline. The end of this society is much

more complicated than this.

What the end of the era of cheap and widely available oil does mean is that society has become more vulnerable. I say more vulnerable intentionally. The nomadic gatherer/hunter life that we are born for is successful for one primary reason: it is adaptable. The more options you have and the less baggage you have to keep you from moving on or working with others, the better your chances of 'success'. All the same, horticultural (gardening societies) are more 'successful' than agricultural (field farming societies) because of their relative diversity and ability to trek when necessary.

Disaster, as we know it, is a direct consequence of settlements. Droughts happen. Other plants and animals have high and low points. Hunting isn't always successful. There are plenty of ways that the day to day life of a nomadic gatherer/hunter can be inconvenienced, but none of them are so tragic. You can always move or join up with other bands or eat different foods. If you see early warning signs of severe weather, you can respond quicker. As the recent tsunamis throughout Indochina left a death toll of over a quarter of a million, the gathering and hunting peoples of the Andaman Islands, like all wild beings, knew what was coming ahead of time and responded appropriately.

These same peoples, who have evaded expanding Indian rule for centuries now, were capable of understanding the world around them and accepting what they saw. They were capable of responding. The would-be and current colonizing forces, like their entire kind, have always said that the rule of civilization is inevitable. They're probably not noticing the irony that this kind of event offers.



Weather like this is something that has always happened. It has toppled civilizations before, but not by itself. Settlements make society more vulnerable. Being dependent on certain crops makes society more vulnerable. Having a large population that is not directly involved in basic subsistence activity makes a society vulnerable. A society having overused a great deal of farm land and running low on sources of fuel makes a society vulnerable. All of these things, taken on their own, are very serious in their implications for a society.

A civilization is likely to endure hardship in any one of these areas. Politicians can maneuver their way through drought and maintain order. Just the same, they can handle a large population that has no idea of how to feed themselves. A great loss of lives to a 'natural disaster' or great deal of structural damage can be dealt with.

But when they are combined, any one of these could simply be a trigger.

This is what we need to understand: our global civilization is spreading itself out thinly across the planet. Because of its ultra-exploitative nature, it is vulnerable in nearly every conceivable aspect. We can't see that now. We look out to a world ordered and driven by civilized and technological manipulation. We see a world where politicians can see and hear everything we say, do, and, possibly, think. While power has never been so strong and so consolidated, it has also never been so weak in so many places and so completely susceptible to disabling if only we were to exploit those weaknesses.

In reality, civilization has bred the conditions for its own demise.

The same technology that makes it possible to create a global economy and

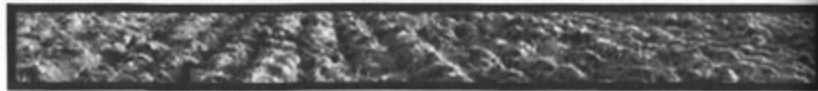
spread production throughout the world makes it weak. Only a handful of crops serve as the bulk of the world's food supply. As we've seen in the last few years, such selective breeding and expansive trade networks makes them vulnerable. We almost lost the banana last year to a single blight. The Irish potato famine may prove to be a tiny version of things to come.

All major and minor crops are at risk, just as major and minor fuel sources are. Now, we can overlook these things because it wouldn't be hard for most of us to live without bananas. So we think it wouldn't impact us so much. But the people who make our world possible throughout the global production network aren't so fortunate. And when they lose, we lose. The precious empire of crap will fall when no one is there to carry it forward. I know it's hard, but let's not overlook the sheer loss of life that comes with this sort of thing.

This is just one example. Anywhere we look, we will find more.

Fish and other ocean life are a staple food for a vast chunk of the world's population. Over-fishing and waste from selective fishing have caused some of the most significant loss of life on the planet. By now we should all be at least somewhat aware of the consequences of deforestation. With no trees and no healthy ecosystems, the soil dries up in the sun and washes into rivers, lakes and oceans carrying all the synthetic fertilizers that were supposed to cover up the loss with it. We lose plants, we lose oxygen. We lose oxygen, we can't breathe.

We have to start noticing this because trees share land with us. What we aren't seeing is the loss of life in the oceans that is just as absolutely necessary to life on this planet as the forests.



The bulk of the world's coral reef is dying or very close to it. Our economic vision doesn't understand ecological reality. Ecosystems don't work like markets: you can't lose in one area and make up for it in another. You can't lose coral reef and replace it with something new, something farmed or something entirely synthetic. Healthy ecosystems need a real balance: one that cannot be easily or materially reproduced.

And, unlike the markets, running one business dry doesn't lead to an immediate crash. The earth doesn't work like that. By our standards, it happens



Monk's Mound, Cahokia

slowly. So we can go on ignoring it, just like we ignored cancer from DDT, nuclear waste, lead, and the like. By the time we notice, it's too late to do anything about it.

That is, too late to do anything but to stop destroying life and try to learn how to live again. Unfortunately, the stubbornness and determination that we're so proud of keeps us from learning lessons. We're too proud to look to coral reef to see what we are doing wrong.

Like past civilizations, we will one day learn that lament and regret won't redeem us. Only action will.

Learning that we can't live without forests, without coral reef, without wild fish populations, or that we can't live with lead, oil and coal mining, electricity, and DDT doesn't mean that we can find a way out of this mess without changing to the core. Understanding these things and the fragility of the world we create and maintain daily can only lead to a completely different approach to how we live, see and think about the world around us. Faced with a world of

diseases, of destruction continually amplified by technological progress, of depression and deprivation, we must come to understand that civilization, with all of its concrete and mental institutions, cannot continue.

The collapse of our global civilization is inevitable. Theories point out that we've passed the peak or are going to very soon and argue for a long and dragging demise or a quick one. But even the most pessimistic rarely accounts for the fact



that the greatest shake ups typically come from those vulnerable areas that we least expect.

And most of us forget that one of those vulnerable areas is: ourselves, the civilized, the humans. Our own self domestication has not changed who we are. What we eat, the way we live, the chemicals we've been breathing, eating, and wrapping ourselves in have all affected us seriously, but, for the most part, our bodies and minds have not changed. Every child is born ready for the 'stone age world'.

We are still animals. We are still a part of the natural world. We are still apart of natural ecosystems. That psychological split that has been instilled in us, the human 'us' versus the wild 'them', keeps us from realizing this, but it is no less true that when talking about ecological reasons for collapse we're still talking about ourselves. This is the part we've forgotten.

Past civilizations have gone through the long drawn out process of collapse. They have been stressed, have warred, have turned against each other, have sacrificed themselves, have prayed and preyed, or simply ignored the end of the world they created.

But the death of civilization is not some wholly external thing. Yet that's the only way we're usually allowed to imagine it, and it's a popular way. We see the end of our world as a battle between God and Satan over human souls and a division between heaven and hell. Nearly every society that has challenged carrying capacity and faces an inevitable collapse of their new system has to create two new myths: their origins and their demise. Both always come at the hands of the gods.

These are important stories/reali-

ties. Not only do they set the tone for seeing humans and even particular societies as removed from the rest of life, they set the tone for that progressing worldview. They set the cornerstone for linear and historical thought. For the first time, there is a beginning and an end. This is life, spread out on a line and isolated. History and heritage become important. Sacrifice, most often taking the form of work, becomes a virtue.

What is most important for us here, is the realization that the more a society becomes distanced from the natural world, the more distant their god/s become. The more distant their god/s become, the more external their reality. What you end with is simple: change is out of our hands, the most we can do is pay taxes/tribute and live moral lives. We look to our own legacy in the space of theirs: History. The line replaces the circle in reality and in thought.

When we accept that the creators and controllers of our lives and our reality are out of our reach, we surrender our responsibility and our agency. We can no longer change things. Civilization becomes just as external as the god/s who crafted it. It is something happening to us rather than something that we create and maintain. Something that will end, but not something we can end. Here the domesticators really know what they're doing: they've instilled helplessness into our pathology.

We can except the end of our world, so long as it is god/s taking back what they started. We can say and do nothing, but live in a moral manner. We concern ourselves with our personal and isolated lives while ignoring the death of the natural world and the decay of our being. We ignore our own agency in the collapse of civilization.





No matter what we do, no matter how much we're trying to save civilization or drag out the process of collapse, we are contributing to the collapse of civilization. But not always in a very preferable way. We do it by living as a part of this self-destructive system and continually denying our own wildness, or we give into our animality, our wildness, and do something about it. I consider this taking part in the primal war: the refusal and resistance to domestication wherever and whenever it has im-

tion, starvation, and just about everything else we see as social ills. The gap between the socio-political have and have nots is at a peak. And in this peak of despair, through the war, bloodshed and finger pointing, those that have not killed each other simply walk away.

At some point people recognize that civilization is not something external to their reality. The hegemonic grasp of the elites erodes in the face of hunger and intolerable oppression. Like the old saying goes: the boss needs us, we don't



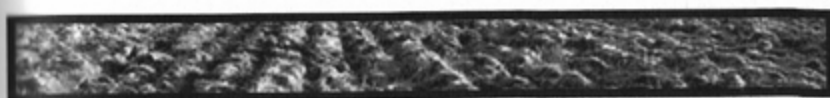
Mayan Pyramid Ruins

posed itself on life and the world.

No matter what our choice is, we are destroying civilization. Our choice is really about whether that role is active or passive. Our choice is about the world we live in and the world we want to live in. Our choice is about how and when we're going to get there.

When civilizations collapsed in the past. There were most often periods of horrible blight. People tend to tolerate a lot when they're incapable of seeing what direction they are heading. Like I've said, you get famine, war, despera-

need the boss. But we can apply that more widely: replace boss with machine, fields, work, god/s, economy, politics, or civilization. We've lived without all of these things and we don't need them. They are killing us. The city and the countryside stand between us and a society that can support the next generations. Work stands between us and life. Progress stands between a healthy livable world and a suffocating one. Those who built the temples of god-kings, those who filled the granaries, those who worked in the fields, those who built



roads, cut forests, those who crushed opposition, all of them hit a point when it was painfully obvious that they were putting far more into the system than they were getting in return.

Most of them always knew this. Just like most of us still know this. But what is different is that they realized they could do something about it. Tired of waiting for god, they stopped civilization. Whether it was through killing elites, sabotaging tools, burning granaries, homes and temples, symbolic destruction, ignoring or torching the fields, or simply stopping production through walking away: they took back their agency. They stopped believing that they needed the system like it needed them. They resisted and hit power where it hurts: they rendered it useless.

I think the last point is the most important one. There has never been a revolution against civilization, and if there were, it's not likely that it would be successful. Revolutions are limiting. They seek to make great changes, but both in historical and practical senses they take a certain shape, form and target. To take on the system, revolutionaries take up that same form not necessarily of will, but because it is the only thing that they know and because the only way they know how to attack is on the systems' terms.

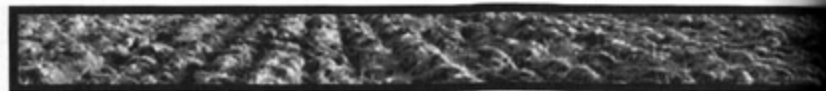
In short, revolutions always become political rather than anti-political. Politics are messy. You can't talk about politics without using the political-legalese and logic. It is a worldview that takes hierarchy, power, and bureaucracy as a fact of life. And the revolutionaries end up taking it in. You get specialists, divisions, leadership (in the form of positions of power or influence), and you get armies. That is because revolutions aim

at overtaking a certain system or source of power. They need something simple to get people to join their ranks, to throw their lives on the line, and to get people to come together for one target and many offenses. If you want to take power on, you need a revolution.

But if you want to take power out, then you need something different.

I talk about the war being waged against domestication since it first came about. This is another part of the primal war. It's a war without magnificent battlefields and victories, but a war that is waged through the existence of an imposing order. This war is based not off of ideals about how things could be, but an understanding of how things are. Specifically, it is about an understanding of the wildness within and around us. It is about understanding what the domesticators fear so much and have tried to take from us. It is about taking that wildness back.

Primal war takes resistance and rewilding to be one in the same. There is no platform or proper path; there is no set goal that each individual must achieve. There is no organization, politics, economics, and the like. It looks like people breaking mediation and connecting on their own terms. It can look like a group of people recreating community in the original sense. It can look like people digging up fiber optic cables or derauling trains carrying coal. Or it looks like bulldozers, earth movers, strip malls, luxury homes, and logging equipment in flames. Or it looks like people learning about wild foods and primal lifeways and breaking their own dependency on civilization. Or it looks like the replanting of wild and native species with an understanding of what a healthy ecosystem is. And it is all of these things.



All of this is a part of taking our lives back. It is about breaking our dependency and taking back our agency. It is about understanding our role in a destructive and self-consuming civilization. It is about understanding the inevitable end that we are only making worse. It is about taking action and becoming agents of collapse in an active way.

This is something that is something different than revolution by its very nature. It is anti-political in practice. Rather than attempting to take on civilization in its own terms, it takes an understanding of civilization and how it works and uses it against it. It is about exploiting the weaknesses of the global empire. It is about dismantling power rather than seizing it. That may look like insurrections or it may look like people walking away from civilization. Or it may look like ELF type arsons or armed attacks on key points on the electrical power grid that is the lifeblood of civilization. It takes active confrontation on every level and a refusal to passively sit back as civilization continues to destroy this planet, our home.

Revolutions have typically centered on a nihilistic urge to simply destroy the old system. More often than not, they've failed on this point. But the nihilistic urge to start over from nothing never goes deep enough. Rejecting 'everything' never goes deep enough. It never leaves that individualism and egoistic worldview that the domesticators created to keep us as concerned tax payers rather than conscious of the scale of our daily lives.

It doesn't break that self/Other split that the domesticators create. It tells us that we are external to the world. It's opposite, biocentrism, does the same thing. It reminds us that we are separate

from a world and a wildness which is external to our being and far more important. In attacking that self/Other split, primal war is really about an understanding and love of life and wildness. It is for something rather than simply against something. It is about something you can feel, see and breathe, not just something that sounds nice. It's something that has worked for millions of years.

Primal war spreads from the rage that only a deep love creates. It is about a totalistic and relentless attack on the system that is killing us and our world for all that we can be separated. It demands action, but that is action that comes from within, not from leaders and platforms. It demands that we take the collapse of civilization seriously and take action to bring it on quicker while softening the impact of the crash.

I said from the start that I fear the collapse but I know it is something that is happening, something that must happen. But I don't want to give the impression that primal war is any kind of panacea or that it will make life easier or simply a safe place of refuge. There is no simple solution.

With a deep understanding of wildness comes a return to responsibility. Civilized living is about distancing ourselves from the consequences of our actions. We don't have to see where our trash goes, where our clothes and other crap is made, where our food and fuel comes from. But a world without civilization and without a global technological network is a world where consequence is not something distant. We have to readjust our thought and action to the community level in ecological and social terms.



That takes some serious work. Walking away doesn't erase the impact of any civilization. It never has. Some have permanently changed the regional ecosystems in negative ways far more than others, but on a long enough time line, this is always temporary. Waterways, protective/offensive walls, homes and temples will be grown over. Even the huge temples of the classic Maya were so overgrown that the first colonizing Europeans hardly noticed them.

or million years from now. Is there some way to more safely shut off nuclear power and keep it shut off?

The concrete, steel and glass will always be an issue, but it's one I'm actually a bit less concerned about. The bulk of civilized work is busy work. I'd say even with our proud and 'ingenious' civilization, nearly all work done is maintenance work. The roads always have to be redone, cracks have to be filled, walls needed painted, fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides need spread, the lawn

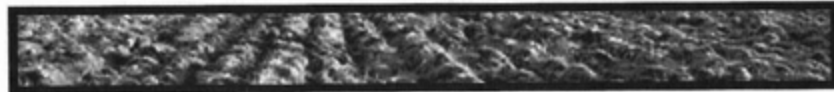


However, no past civilization had concrete, machines and nuclear power anymore than they had electronic surveillance and guns. There is no historical precedent for collapse on the scale of our own. Our own collapse is like all the past ones, but amplified to scale. We will, in time, readjust as a species. We're adaptive and, hopefully, capable of learning from our past.

The immediate period requires a lot more consciousness raising and a lot of concrete razing. There is work to be done everywhere. We should be conscious of what areas of civilization are going to affect us the most a hundred, thousand

needs mowed and the leaves raked. Pushing aside wildness is a daily chore. It's weeding the garden. The willingness of life and wildness to continue existing will always be stronger than the ability of concrete to hold itself together. It has no life and no purpose aside from what we give it. It will fade in time. The frailty of the world that domestication has built is something we can see daily.

There is a concern over the sheer loss of wild life and wild places. There are far less places for us to return to, that much is true. This is usually taken as an argument against collapse and for either reforming civilization or taking steps



through civilization for a 'soft landing' rather than a crash. The books flooding the public consciousness on collapse all push for the latter, but there is very little reality to back up such a pipe dream were it even socially possible. What it would look like is more of the same, but with an even larger gap between the rich and the poor. Look at the life of 'luxury' that the rich have built, you think they'll give up golf courses and mansions out of good will for the earth or even their children?

But the earth is strong. Wildness is strong. The only thing holding it back is us. Left untended, healthy ecosystems will return. Granted it will take some time and readjustment, but probably far less than what we would be led to believe. If you look at fields left fallow, you can see how quickly new life emerges. The forests that are left are always trying to spread beyond the lines we place before and around them. Invasive species drown them out, but those invasive species are only a piece of a larger picture. Invasive species are like the civilizations that breed them. They are plants and animals that feed off of disturbed areas. They are the invited guests of the first gardens and have spread through a world were once healthy ecosystems are torn apart and left in shambles. When the disturbance ends, the wildness will creep back in. The earth may not be able to fully endure another 10, 20, 100 years of industrial civilization, but it is strong enough for this.

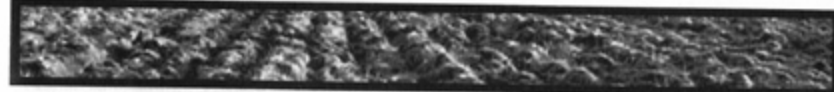
And it can always use help. We can learn about the native ecosystems and their interconnections. While we can and should never think we are capable of re-doing what the earth shaped over millions of years. We can do our best to try and reintroduce and spread native seeds

back into their niche.

This demands a trust and respect for life that we have lost to short term vision. And this is where the critique of domestication really hits home: what does this all mean in terms of personal action? We've never really had a hard time understanding that the wild animals around us rarely have a hard time seeking out food in the forest. But when it comes to us, it's almost impossible to imagine. We're incapable of seeing beyond the garden. So we beg the question: is a nomadic gatherer/hunter life preferable or feasible over a return to small scale horticulture? To both, I'd say yes.

Nomadism is what has shaped our reality. It is what a lived ecology looks like. Horticultural societies, compared to agricultural and, especially, industrial agricultural societies, are relatively sustainable. I have no innate opposition to them and no lack of solidarity with such struggling peoples. But if we're talking about the steps we are to take in our own lives, I see a nomadic or semi-nomadic gathering and hunting life as the most ideal. Considering the kind of transitional stages that wild and feral places are going to have to go through, sedentism would amount to suicide. It lacks the adaptivity that a nomadic life carries. It keeps us from over running areas or depleting all life in any particular area. It keeps our social life moving and allows us to split off to keep tensions low. It breaks the possibility for our obsession with property, possessions and nationalism. It is and always has been a breeding ground for anarchy.

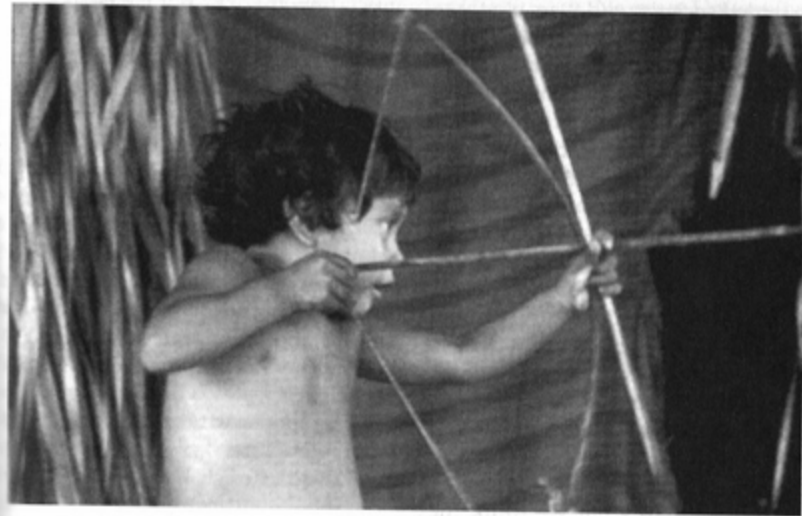
And it places wildness over the domesticated. It places the forest before the garden. That requires more knowledge and more effort on our own part, but,



most of all, it requires us to once again trust wildness and learn to live without fear of a dark and looming Future and without the need to meet the expectations of History. It requires a return to the moment so that there may be a future. The garden is a short term solution. It keeps us settled and better protected from the changes that come with the seasons.

It keeps us tamed. While not every wild plant or animal serves us the same as crops like tomatoes, potatoes and beans, we have to understand the importance of an entire ecosystem versus se-

eties and things they are all more than happy to have in their lives. At the same time, they are almost all identifying aspects of horticultural life. While many of us might not see them as preferable, we'd be arrogant to think these wouldn't arise again in the societies we ourselves may begin to shape. That comes back to our short term thinking. In our lives, and our children's lives these may not be an issue, but societies are organic and tend to follow the same flow in the same circumstances. Either way, a horticultural society that we create now, by its nature, will either be far stricter socially and less

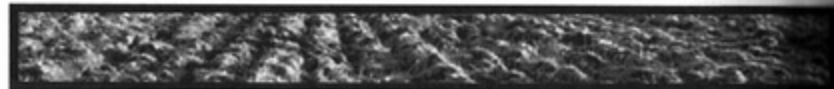


lected plants solely for our own good. Gardens make us more vulnerable. And vulnerability has always led to the ills of horticultural societies: a tendency towards patriarchy, warfare, the roots of coercive power, stricter social regulation, the potential for poverty and catastrophe, and less social flexibility.

Of course, these are things that have become core parts of horticultural soci-

prone to individual expression and discovery, or it will look like nearly every other horticultural society to have existed.

Or the opposite is true. The short term future will be the true tragedy. Those who benefit from keeping us afraid of each other and our own human nature have always told that without their power and control we would return



to our savage nature and return to a world of murder, rape, and pillaging. There is no real grounding for this, but there is always the fear that some have actually instilled this Machiavellian drive for power. So there is the fear of the Mad Max post-collapse society. I have to be honest, it is possible. But in a world of nomadic gatherer/hunters, there is little left for these roaming bandits to loot and little to take over. With no basis for power and nothing left to exploit, they'll fade with the civilization that breeds them.

But where there are gardens there are settled societies and there is a threat. When societies have settled, raids have always been a threat and a reality. The granary and the storage house are still new to humanity. They're not things we're accustomed to and they can be corrupting. We were never meant to deal with property and personal possessions as we've created with settled society. So long as these things exist, that created side of ourselves that our own psyches are incapable of predicting or controlling may arise.

I could always be very wrong. But our own history makes us far less predictable than some of us would like to believe. How future generations live will be based more upon how our societies exist rather than what we think they should look like. That is something we need to consider.

And that is also a practical concern. We need to be thinking about change in terms of generations rather than just ourselves. On a personal level, we could all go feral, but the true 'test' of rewilding doesn't lie within ourselves and our lives, but with the next generations. Some of the questions we need to be asking are about what we will teach them.

How will they grow up? This is possibly where we have the most to learn from indigenous societies. It means, at base, a return to wildness and a return to our own instincts. For the next generations, it becomes even clearer that a primary concern ought to be about rebuilding community and bringing civilization down sooner than later.

For any action we take, there will be consequences. If we remain passive or active, there will be consequences. There may not be much time to respond and there may be no real way of telling how much time there is. But we need to understand the reality that has been created, the reality that we continually recreate.

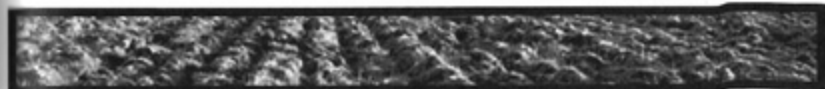
We need to understand what it is we've lost and what it is we are losing. We need to do all of this, and we need to act. Whether or not we ever wanted to be in this position, whether or not we acknowledge it, this is our reality.

There is no promise of greatness. There is no delusion of a perfect world beyond 'the collapse'. There is easy solution. There is only us and the world we help to create.

The sooner we realize this, the better off we all are.

Rewild. Resist.

NO WAR BUT THE PRIMAL WAR!



## SOME USEFUL SOURCES

This is a bit of a preview of topics and work in my upcoming book, tentatively titled *Catalyst: the birth and death of civilization*. Here these ideas will be flushed out and dealt with much more thoroughly and with more documentation. In the meantime, these are some good sources, though none are any where near anarchist or anti-civilization in their orientation.

\*John Bodley, *the Power of Scale: A Global History Approach*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003. Excellent global overview of the connection between population size and political and ecological consequence. Like all of Bodley's books, focuses on the real impacts of growth in an accessible manner.

\*William Catton, *Overshoot: the Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982. This is a brilliant and unfortunately overlooked evaluation of the relationship between carrying capacity and the inevitable collapse of civilizations.

\*Tom Dale and Vernon Gill Carter, *Topsoil and Civilization*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955. Though long out of print, the influence of this book has been profound. It looks at the ecological impact of civilizations and how the growth of society ends in the abuse and overuse of the land base it grows from leading to collapse.

\*Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: the Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. Very popular book looking at various human societies and what caused them to either 'succeed' or 'fail'.

\*Brian Fagan, *Floods, Famines and Emperors: El Nino and the Fate of Civilizations*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. Comparable to Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel*, but focuses on the relationship between natural weather patterns and their relationship to the collapse of civilizations.

\*Richard Heinberg, *The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2003. A recent overview of collapse and our social and ecological reality with some good coverage of theories on collapse with a realistic review of just what alternatives exist and if their inability to sustain technological, industrial civilization. Unfortunately, the real conclusions have been brushed aside by his far more reformist and passive follow up: *Drawdown*.

\*David Stuart, *Anasazi America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000. An archeologist and anthropologist in career, Stuart offers an extremely readable and human understanding of Anasazi society and its collapse with constant connections to our own current situation.

\*Joseph Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. This is a very dense archeological overview of collapse and collapse theory, but a textbook on the subject. It has most of the shortcomings of specialized academic approaches and can be frustrating in its look at single cause theories regarding collapse, but Tainter's basic: marginal returns can be widely understood holistically in ecological, social, psychological, political, spiritual, and economic terms.

# Dismantle Globally Renew Locally

Derrick Jensen

[NOTE: This is taken from Derrick's upcoming book, *Endgame*, which will be out this fall on Seven Stories Press.]

What do we do with the fact that no matter what we do, we're involved in mass murder?

For now, I've got an answer. If you've gotten this far in this book or if you're simply anything other than entirely in the sense that we probably agree that civilization is going to crash, whether or not we help bring this about. If you don't agree with this, we probably have nothing to say to each other (How 'bout them Cubbies!). We probably also agree that this crash will be messy. We agree further that since industrial civilization is systematically dismantling the ecological infrastructure of the planet, the sooner civilization comes down (whether or not we help it crash) the more life will remain afterwards to support both humans and nonhumans.

If you agree with all this, and if you don't want to dirty your spirituality and conscience with the physical work of helping to bring down civilization, and if your primary concern really is for the well-being of those (humans) who will be alive during and immediately after the crash (as opposed to simply raising this issue because you're too scared to talk about the crash or to allow anyone else to do so either), then, given, and I repeat this point to emphasize it, that civilization is going to come down anyway, you need to start preparing people for the crash. Instead of coming to my shows and attacking me for stating the

obvious, go rip up asphalt in vacant parking lots to convert them to neighborhood gardens, go teach people how to identify local edible plants, even in the city (especially in the city) so these people won't starve when the proverbial shit hits the fan and they can no longer head off to Albertson's for groceries. Set up committees to eliminate or if appropriate channel the (additional) violence that might break out.

We need it all. We need people to take out dams, and we need people to knock out electrical infrastructures. We need people to protest and to chain themselves to trees. We also need people working to ensure that as many people as possible are equipped to deal with the fall-out when the collapse comes. We need people working to teach others what wild plants to eat, what plants are natural antibiotics. We need people teaching others how to purify water, how to build shelters. All of this can look like supporting traditional, local knowledge, it can look like starting roof-top gardens, it can look like planting local varieties of medicinal herbs, and it can look like teaching people how to sing.

The truth is that although I do not believe that designing groovy eco-villages will help bring down civilization, when the crash comes, I'm sure to be first



in line knocking on their doors asking for food.

People taking out dams do not have a responsibility to ensure that people in homes previously powered by hydro know how to cook over a fire. They do however have a responsibility to support the people doing that work.

Similarly, those people growing medicinal plants (in preparation for the end of civilization) do not have a responsibility to take out dams. They do however have a responsibility *at the very least* to not condemn those people who have chosen that work. In fact they have a responsibility to support them. They especially have a responsibility to not report them to the cops.

It's the same old story: the good thing about everything being so fucked up is that no matter where you look, there is great work to be done. Do what you love. Do what you can. Do what best serves your land base. We need it all.

This doesn't mean that everyone taking out dams and everyone working to cultivate medicinal plants are working toward the same goals. It does mean that if they are, each should see the importance of the other's work.

Further, resistance needs to be global. Acts of resistance are more effective

when they're large-scale and coordinated. The infrastructure is monolithic and centralized, so common tools and techniques can be used to dismantle it in many different places, simultaneously if possible.

By contrast, the work of renewal must be local. To be truly effective (and to avoid reproducing the industrial infrastructure) acts of survival and livelihood need to grow from particular land bases where they will thrive. People need to enter into conversation with each piece of earth and all its (human and nonhuman) inhabitants. This doesn't mean of course that we can't share ideas, or that one water purification technique won't be useful in many different locations. It does mean that people in those places need to decide for themselves what will

work. Most important of all, the water in each place needs to be asked and allowed to decide for itself.

I've been thinking a lot again about the cell phone tower behind Safeway, and I see now how these different approaches

manifest in this one small place. The cell phone tower needs to come down. It is contiguous on two sides with abandoned parking lots. Those lots need to come up. Gardens can bloom in their place. We can even do our work side by side.

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*Prepare for the best,  
train for the worst*

*Kevin Tucker*

*getting ready for the collapse*

If there was a primal warrior ethos, it would be: prepare for the best and train for the worst.

We know civilization is collapsing. We know that it is only a matter of time before it becomes clear that we're well past the point of no return. We know things are changing quickly, and those changes will become more apparent sooner than later. We know this, but we do not and can not know exactly how the process of collapse will meet its conclusion. We all have our ideas and our ideals, but none of us know.

So if civilization is collapsing, then we need to be doing more than just talking about it.

Most of us hope that there will be conscious turn away from civilization. We hope there will be a quick and easy transition where we all act according to what our bioregions dictate. We hope that the population will stabilize through choice rather than necessity.

And these things might happen. In some places, these things are happening.

But this is only on a micro-scale.

The large scale is a much more complicated picture. And whatever happy ending might finally arise may be a long time in the making. I think there is no doubt that things will be getting far worse before they get better. It is because of this that I emphasize the importance of recognizing and acting on our own roles within the collapse of this global civilization. It is because of this that I say we need to ready ourselves for the best and worst case scenario while being psychologically prepared to deal with either.

The primal war is about undomesticating our lives. It is about

going feral and removing the barriers. There is no distinction between rewilding and resisting, because the two are intertwined with the fate of our world, the fate of our communities, and our own fate. It is about connecting with our world while understanding the reality that we're born into. It is about understanding the interconnectivity of all life and the threats posed by the civilizing machine.

There is no set program or movement. It flows around self exploration and momentum, around the fulfillment of being as opposed to those who fulfill orders. So what the primal war might look like in effect for you will always be different than what it might look like for me or anyone else. But the primary goal is the same: to rewild our lives and our world. For some, that might mean far more physical resistance while others focus on more mental resistance. Some might focus more on rebuilding community while others might focus on undermining the civilized anti-community. Some will spread awareness while others will tear down powerlines. And some



will do all of the above or any mixture of them.

Where your energy flows isn't necessarily the issue. All of these things are necessary and all are intertwined. And while the lived war against domestication might mean something different for all of us, there are certain areas where we could all benefit.

Whether we seek nothing less than a full life beyond civilization or focus more explicitly on the destruction of civilization, domestication has taken certain primary aspects of our lives from us. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain through working towards these. I'm interested here in laying out what I see as some of the more heavily effected areas of our lives and some concrete things we can do about it:

#### OUR LOSS OF AWARENESS

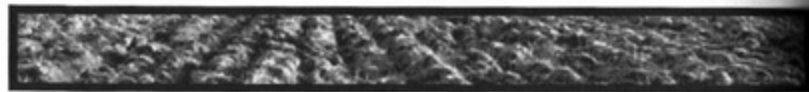
We're used to living and thinking in cities. While we're constantly at a high risk of everything from being hit by cars, electrocuted, chemical spills, having things drop on us, or what have you, we are surrounded by the structure of convenience: we are involved with only as much as we have to be and physical and mental mediation keeps us from being aware of our surroundings. We've got high tech shoes, smooth concrete, lines to follow, linear paths left by buildings and roads, and traffic lights. The efficiency of a convenient and contrived place simply requires that you eliminate thinking and here the structure of the city has been most successful.

Existing in wildness, or simply being at all, means that you have to start thinking for yourself. You have to be aware of your surroundings and learn how to take them in without having

them blown up and framed for you. It means recognizing subtlety, distance, and being open to the way other life communicates and reacts to your presence. You have to expand your general awareness. That serves practical purposes as much as it does spiritual ones.

Now, you can read so much about how to start thinking for yourself, and there are some excellent books out there (Tamarack Song touches on this subject in nearly everything he writes and has some excellent books on the subject with suggested ways to open your awareness. Check out [teachingdrum.org](http://teachingdrum.org) for more on that.), but general awareness is something that can't be taught, only learned. Just the same as you can take someone to the woods, but you can't make them love them. Nor should you really try, genuine experience can only come from within. But this takes time and it takes some effort. And it's not the kind of thing you can really do in the city (Being aware in a city is a talent of sorts, and can be beneficial for more clandestine reasons, but honestly I find cities and controlled environments to just cause a sensory overload and shut down. One of the few decent Tom Brown Jr. books actually deals with awareness and evasion in and out of the city.).

With all this said, I do have some suggestions for spreading your awareness. All of them require being in wild or rewilding places, preferably as far from the noise and pollution of cities as you can and where there are more non-human animals than humans. When you walk around, pay less attention to what is right in front of you and see if you can expand your vision and awareness to your peripheral vision. As you walk, take your time and leave behind your schedules. Follow trails and ditch the



map and compass. If you see a deer trail, take it for a while and try to squeeze under the brush as they do. See what they've been chewing on and what else lies around.

Tracking, I believe, is the best way to really expand your awareness. That is tracking as the art as opposed to the science. That requires that you look at the whole picture rather than just read and compare tracks, scat and gait. If you want to expand your awareness, don't

simply process and store the information you see, you have to take it in and put yourself in the position of the animal you've been tracking. It teaches you about the animals around us by walking through their life. You learn a lot this way, and typically see far

more than you could any other way. I've learned a lot about the complexity and beauty of life after being tricked by the intentionally confusing trails of red fox. There's a lot on tracking out there, but I really identify most with the way that Paul Rezendes, his student Mark Elbroch, and Tamarack approach it: as awareness (look in the reviews section for recommendations). The point is rarely to find an animal as opposed to simply understanding its life.

Tracking is just one way to understand the world around you. And it breaks the naturalists' position as observer by making you a participant in the world. This is a vital step. Simply enjoying the ambiance of the forest or the scen-



ery is nice, but isn't exactly a direct path to reintegrating yourself into wildness. Take the initiative, get some field guides, and learn about the plants and animals. Become rooted in your bioregion. Again this takes time, but it is an important step. Watch the growth, flowering, seeding, death, and regrowth of the plants. Learn when and where you can find certain plants. Challenge yourself and look for how life interconnects. Play in the mud, sit silently for hours, be ready to

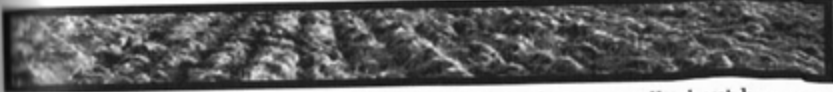
cancel your plans when you stumble upon another animal that's allowing you to see it, learn how to see, smell and feel the world around you and enjoy it. That's how life was meant to be.

Now, the strict revolutionaries or insurrectionaries

might see this as mindless play that isn't destroying civilization. In a sense, they're right. It doesn't have the same effect as toppling power lines, but it does something just as important: it builds the deep connections to the world where a true hatred of civilization and urgency to destroy it and pull people out of its grasp comes from. Simply put: if we don't learn about life, then we'll never be able to defeat what is threatening it and even less likely will we be able to live without it.

#### YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Our health is wretched. That should be nothing shocking or new, but that



doesn't make it any less important. We are meant to eat a diet rooted in our way of living. That means a diet with a lot of variation, seasonal changes, periods of plenty and periods of less, and adaptivity. That's a diet that matches the nomadic life that our bodies evolved for and flourish in.

The food we eat mirrors our convenient and efficient reality: we strip down nutrition to the bare bones of necessity and assume that what we put together through artificial and isolated vitamins, minerals, and so on is just as good as what they're simulating. We're slowly learning that we're dead wrong. Bleached grains, factory farmed meats, genetically engineered crops, sugars, the whole lot of our diet is about making us full and giving us only enough energy to go through the mindless motions of work, leaving us feeling powerless and unmotivated to do anything about our situation and to spend more money than we make.

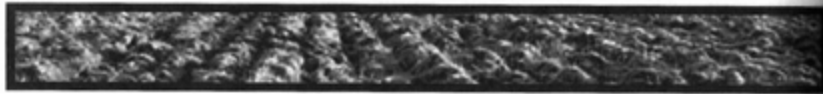
Our bodies are starving even when our stomachs are full. We're given filler to keep us running. Mumford long ago noticed that the original machine was comprised of human bodies long before the tools and machinery that they produced. Modern food and medicine is our equivalent of oil: it keeps us running and temporarily fixes our problems, but no machine is ever expected to run for very long. We're easily replaced, so maintenance is kept to a minimum.

To undo our domestication, we have to start eating differently. That means incorporating wild foods and learning about wild medicinals. We need to think differently about wild foods. There tends to be an (often times satirical) emphasis solely on wild greens and plants like dandelions. Sure enough, they are im-

portant and easy to talk about because they grow over so much of the world. But greens are almost always seasonal and only a part of a larger diet. If we are living as wild peoples, we're going to be eating a larger mix of foods: from a huge number of animal and insect life to the many (highly nutritious) mushrooms that grow, but also we need to be thinking about 'hidden' food sources like tubers that play a large part in most indigenous diets and nuts.

A part of changing the type of food we eat also means changing the way we think about food. We think 3 meals a day, usually dinner being the largest. While a lot of indigenous diets have cooked food, the more nomadic the society the far less you're likely to find processed foods. Simple stews are universal, but most food is eaten raw or roasted. While there are meals and often feasts, the bulk of what is eaten is eaten like we eat snacks: a bit here and there. It's an adaptive way of eating: eat when you're hungry and there's food around or go out and find something when you're hungry. That's not to say most indigenous peoples necessarily eat less: they tend to eat as much or more, but they eat differently. And someday, hopefully, so will we.

Diet means everything for health. Nearly all diseases that we face now are the products of domesticated living and, more recently, industry. Diseases require a large sedentary population so that what starts as a minor virus can be passed back and forth through one population until it mutates into something threatening. Nomads leave their waste behind them and cut out a number of potential sources for would be disease. Our bodies, over time, adapt to our surroundings. For example, what would



cause sickle cell anemia among descendants of uprooted Africans is what kept their ancestors from catching malaria which spread even further through globalization and the cutting of forests where soil and above ground water supplies sat in the sun creating breeding grounds for the mosquitoes that carry malaria.

A number of diseases are similar to malaria: they only became real issues when massive populations became exposed to them and spread through globalization and expansion. That's not to give the impression that people are isolated, but most of these conditions can't keep up with a walking pace over a far enough distance to really spread. What starts out small only increases with population. Cities breed disease and create something far more potent than anything ever imaginable beforehand. That is why the diseases brought upon indigenous peoples over the last five centuries have been so deadly.

Cities have always been focused on efficiency. The diet of the peasants was always worse than that of the elites and the diet of the urban poor was even worse. You get a whole lot of filler: wheat in Europe, rice in Asia, corn in the Americas. Poor diets wreck the body. I'm often amazed at how the human body can function in such horrid conditions, but the effects have largely been hidden from us and barely covered by synthetics. But when you look at the health of peasants and urban poor among the classic Maya, you find high rates of anemia, rickets, weak bones, tooth decay, and birth defects. These are the same diseases that plagued the industrial working class and now the producers of our mounds of crap. That's the by-product of an efficient diet.

In our society, these side effects are held at bay by medications which cover up any direct effects temporarily. The cause behind our diseases are little mystery: chicken pox, the common cold, measles, and the like are gifts of domesticated animals (though not their fault); heart disease and obesity are the generous side effects of sedentary lifestyles with fat laden diets; obesity, malnutrition, and diabetes are certainly not made better by their lack of money and social standing, but, again, come with efficient diets rather than healthy ones; and the biggest killer of all, cancer, comes from our synthetic environment. All of what we consider hereditary diseases come through the womb or being raised in the same situation (for example, my two brothers, though neither is at all blood related, and I all developed the exact same illnesses).

All of these diseases are directly related to sedentism. But they are all furthered by weakened immune systems. The 'sum of all parts' approach to health is failing: our diets, like our lives in general, simply cannot be isolated and pieced back together like nothing happened. When we don't get what we need, things start to go wrong. Whereas wild medicinals aid the immune system, medications synthesize their functions: they make our bodies dependent rather than healthy and independent.

In sum, eating better means living better which means all around being healthier. What to eat means understanding what life exists around you and when. Like I said earlier, that means looking at more than greens and animals for other important sources of nutrition. There is no universal diet plan to follow: this takes some research and some experience with the area you live in.



There are some good books for reference, though you have to take into consideration that in being marketable they can't simply follow through with their natural conclusions: to eat a healthy primal diet, you can't live within civilization. Instead you get diet plans that include things like store bought meats and fish, and even occasionally dairy which is impossible to consume without domestication. So these are some good

sources, but take them with a grain of salt: S. Boyd Eaton, Marjorie Shostak, and Melvin Konner's *The Paleolithic Prescription* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), Ray Audette's *Neanderthin*

(New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 1999), and Loren Cordain's *The Paleo Diet* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2002). A couple of suggestions for the overall health effects of domestication; Mark Nathan Cohen's *Health and the Rise of Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and Weston Price's *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* (La Mesa, CA: Price-Pottenger Foundation, 2000 [orig. 1939]).

#### THE SEDENTARY LIFE AND THE NOMADIC BODY

As mentioned above, diet, health and lifestyle go hand in hand. Primal living,

while carefree and playful, can be physically demanding. It takes a lot of walking, a threshold for some physical pain, ability to lift heavy objects and carry them for long distances and times, strength for hunting, fishing, and chopping (the pull on an average Kung bow was recorded at 110 lbs!), and a high endurance for sporadic running or longer treks. These are all things that come through living and something that children



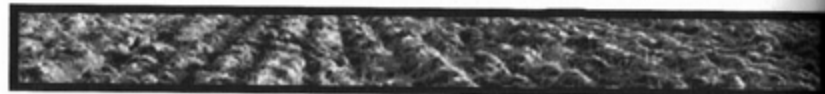
grow into through their own play of climbing, swimming and following their parents.

Most of us, however, aren't so fortunate to grow up this way. So rewinding will take some de-

gree of physical rebuilding. There are a lot of muscles that we don't need to use and our high tech society certainly requires very little in the way of endurance or strength with rare exception. When strength does come into play, it's usually as an exhibitionist ordeal rather than a practical one: ask a power lifter to chase a wounded animal for a day or two and you'll see a greater failure than when they try to wipe their own ass!

Preparing for primal living means fitness. Most of this comes from endurance type exercise which can take the form of running, jogging, walking, swimming, climbing, and jumping rope. The more wild the terrain, the better





sued your body will be and the more likely you are to be building up the right muscles. When doing this, it's important to remember that your body needs to prepare and get accustomed to the changes that occur. So don't stress yourself out too much and pace yourself! Stretch before and after exercise and focus on pulling yourself just beyond a point of discomfort and holding it (bouncing while stretching only does damage!). Having a partner helps too.

When exercising, you should always keep your focus moving: endurance one day, upper body the next, lower body the next, and then repeat. This gives your body a few days to adapt to changes and allows muscles to grow rather than simply become accustomed to certain movements. Push processed and condensed drinks out of your diet and drink lots of water.

You don't need to buy into the whole exercise market to get in shape: it always helps to wear lightweight and comfortable clothing when working out (unless you're doing more clandestine training of course). Expensive running shoes are only important if you're going to be running on concrete which has no give and can cause a lot of joint damage. All the same, expensive hiking shoes are just another way to keep you from having to pay attention to your surroundings.

Weight training can be important for building up core muscles to the point where you can be comfortable taking care of whatever might come up when living a primal life. This doesn't mean you have to buy into the whole gym scene or power lifting cliques. Power lifting is of little use. If you want to get to a certain level that you'll maintain, it will definitely help, but if you don't keep it

up or take cautions as you go, then you'll likely do more damage than good.

Pure muscle mass doesn't necessarily give you strength. I've met plenty of people who have lots of muscle but no strength: keep your focus practical and push yourself with heavier objects other than steel and bars. Strength comes from endurance and the willingness to get something done that comes along with independence.

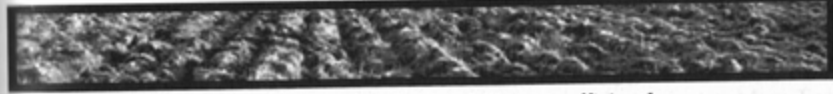
Weight training is best when reserved: you can almost always find decent weight benches cheap locally in free ads but lightweight dumbbells are also cheaper and far more useful if used right than your average gym equipment. Toning and fitness over bulk was a focus of Bruce Lee who remains a great source for more reading, particularly *The Art of Expressing the Human Body* (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1998).

But the best things in life are always free: fitness is no exception. You'll never do wrong with the basics like crunches, push ups, pull ups, leg ups, and the like. These are some of the most important exercises, and when done right, are extremely effective. There is a whole field of exercise done without weights that requires a great focus and level of balance. A widely available and cheap, but very effective book is Harry Wong's *Dynamic Strength* (Burbank, CA: Unique Publications, 1990).

And then there are the martial arts, which are rooted in endurance and balance, but require a great deal of strength and conditioning. But this also bleeds into our next area of focus: the need to train for the worst case scenario.

#### TRAINING FOR THE WORST

Fortunately the adaptivity and daily



needs of a nomadic gatherer-hunter life also tend to be beneficial for more resistance oriented needs. As we learn and prepare for primal living, we are indirectly preparing ourselves for a way of being that can blend in with its surroundings, move gracefully and unnoticed through the environment, be aware of change, read track and sign, use the elements to its advantage, and make and use deadly weapons of what can only be seen as rocks and sticks by a potential threat. That is why small nomadic groups, like the Apache for example could take on such tremendously larger armies successfully: though often psychologically unprepared for the pure destructiveness of the would-be colonizers, able to use their way of living as a defense mechanism.

Had the colonizing forces not had indigenous trackers and machines on their side, no doubt the expansion of this civilization would have never gone on as it had. But the sedentary life that is ultimately leading to our own demise and enslavement to an external reality must expand or it cannot continue to exist. It grows, leaving a larger population available as mere cannon fodder on the frontlines and there are more positions available for specialists to devote their lives to the production of machinery that

can kill more efficiently.

Unfortunately, civilization leaves a lot of baggage. While we may hope that the fall of civilization will be as quick and painless as possible, it's doubtful that this will happen. That is why it is important to train for the worst and to take an offensive stand while we reconnect to our home and target key points of the civilized infrastructure to bring it down



quicker. The ideal soft crash is extremely unlikely and while it is extremely doubtful that another civilization (local or not) can rise from the ashes of an exhausted and burnt out global empire, there will be those who might be unable to loosen the grasp of a tooth-and-nail reality or those who might try to hold onto what was lost.

No matter how it plays out or what role we take, living outside of civilization means that we will have to learn how to fight, offensively and defensively. Undertaking this requires

getting rid of moral and philosophical baggage in the form of pathological pacifism or ideological blocks to learning how to use machines made only for killing. Granted, we all hope to never have to use any of this, and such knowledge should always be kept grounded and balanced, but it never hurts to know about guns and their usage, how a bulldozer operates, how the electrical grid



works, how the economy carries itself, or how to physically disarm or overcome another human. You'll find a fair share of introductory information on a number of these topics throughout this issue, so my focus will close with a look at the nature of guerrilla warfare and a look at martial arts.

The basic principle of guerrilla warfare, like that of the nomadic gatherer-hunter lifestyle, is to remain adaptive. It requires a deep understanding of how it is that your enemy functions in terms of sustenance, bureaucracy, the ways that it maintains its power, and the like.

In this case, the target is civilization. Now, I talk about guerrilla warfare not to romanticize it, but because it is the most fitting form of resistance for taking on such an enemy. There simply is not an option to go to war with civilization. It's not practical in any way, nor is it likely. I don't see any revolution against civilization being likely, but I don't see revolution as ideal because revolutions, political in nature, aim only to overthrow power through ceasing it. While guerrilla warfare has historically been a part of a larger revolution, it doesn't need to be. It is a method of combat rather than a whole process itself. It isn't about overcoming an enemy so much as it is to undercut their ranks and their ability to exist: it defeats its enemy by rendering them useless.

I see this as a practical and preferable approach. That's especially true since the function of civilization relies on machines more than individuals. So in this case, guerrilla warfare is waged against the electrical infrastructure itself rather than the killing beings. Though this is likely to happen as the machine must kill in order to continue functioning, it can be severely minimized

SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

through a more careful and thorough understanding of the system and how it functions.

I say the electronic infrastructure is the primary target, not because it is the sole representative of everything civilized, but because that is how civilization exists on a day to day basis. The ongoing domestication process is fed by an industrial and consumer reality where our mediation is complete and constant. Our ideological blinders are maintained by the media and the imposed reality of economics. The only way people are going to see beyond this contrived reality is to have it shaken up and removed. That is the only way for most people to see beyond the despairing, passive nihilism that our society dwells in. And that is the only way to keep this society from consuming all life at the expense of dragging on the existence of the presence: the only way to keep the world from drowning in our self-perpetuated misery.

The electrical infrastructure is not the origin or necessity of a civilization. In fact, it has only existed within our own. But that electronic infrastructure has incorporated the functions of social, military, economic, cosmological and psychological forms of control that had to be woven and constantly employed by earlier domesticators. And, unable to see the futility of its own existence and the myth of progress, this newer system has buried all the other means of domestication so far beneath our (anti)cultural heritage that few are able to replicate them.

Simply put, without electricity, this now global civilization and all that have created it are gone. And it is extremely vulnerable, both in terms of its dependency upon machines as it is dependent upon circumstance: we assume that our



mass crops won't go extinct or face severe threats while we create the conditions for disaster. Global exchange and monoculture are anti-adaptive, and it takes only a slight change in the larger conditions for something hugely catastrophic to happen. At the same time, the by-products of our electronic addiction create and welcome great changes.

We have yet to see the huge consequences of dragging on for thousands of years what should have never been more than a temporary test of carrying capacity. And our continued arrogance is only making things worse.

The fate of human society is in our hands one way or the other, we are simply left to choose which side we will be on and take a stance. I'll risk guerrilla warfare over the slow, lifeless drudgery of a work-consume world. But this takes work. Finding targets takes research, synchronizing attacks takes effort, security culture is a matter of life and imprisonment, and we need a great deal of tactical understanding.

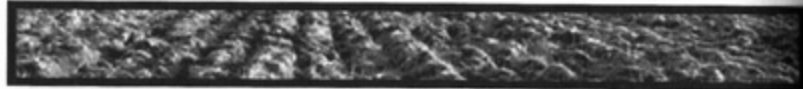
In this, there is a lot of work available. Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare* is a useful source, though it is clearly limited in its actualizations as he died trying to apply it to another revolutionary situation. He died because he lacked adaptivity, both in tactics and in goals. An understanding of primal life ways and being able to merge this day to day living with a tactical approach makes up for what is clearly lacking both Che's approach and his overall vision.

I must say that I found Mao Tse-Tung's equally referenced book, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, to be almost completely useless. Considering the historical context of colonized China and his writing the book under the cover of a nationalistic army seeking to use and work with the Chinese Army, the book lacked most of the edge that might otherwise expose and exploit the weaknesses of the colonizers. But with the basic message, I find little really applicable that couldn't be taken from the principles of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, primarily the most important principle: 'draw attention to the west, attack in the east'.

The best source I've found for tactics is from Swedish General H. Von Dach's *Total Resistance* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1992). And a close second would have to be Bob Newman's *Guerrillas in the Mist* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1997). The U.S. Army field manuals on the subject are of little use. Though well applied through the Contras in Nicaragua, most of the focus is useful given a full army still exists whereas other approaches are meant for small detachments. Most of what the U.S. Army did there was really no different than what the typically Marxist revolutionaries throughout Central and South America had been doing for years prior, and that's far more in line with Dach and Guevara than the U.S. manuals.

I'll close with a brief look at martial arts. When taken out of a competitive or exhibitionist context, most martial arts





revolve around the principles of balance and a greater deal of control and understanding of both the human body and the energy that flows through all life. Whether you apply it through fighting (which is always ideal) or not, there's plenty to be learned here. It is a healthy and highly effective way of exercising, and one that involves other people.

But it can be a bit more complicated than other forms as it is far more effective when you are taught than when you learn or experience on your own. The books that exist help (like those by Bruce Lee, John Little, the Gracie family, and the like), they are more useful for technical information like joints, pressure points and some scenarios for practice than they are for form and method. That is information that can be extremely important. If you don't learn how to punch, kick or lock joints and muscles properly, you can do some serious damage. Not to forget that messing with some techniques can lead to serious injury or even accidental deaths. So there's a lot to be wary of.

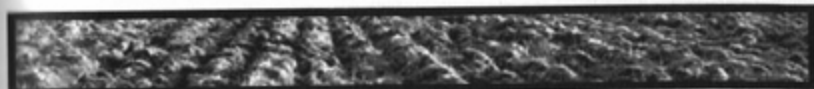
When looking for a potential school, you're likely going to have to push aside anarchistic tendencies and hatred for authority and custom since the better schools are often the most traditional or strict. Just take it as part of the process of learning and apply what you will in your own life. Some places have free or cheap schools while others might be a bit more costly. But even if you are interested in learning on your own, it is best to start learning the basics with someone who can guide and correct you early on.

Martial arts are a hard thing to start out with: there are a lot of schools and approaches, and most places will tell you that their style is the best. These are a

few basic types: Ninjitsu can use a number of weapons but is more about sneaking by undetected and being able to kill or injure easily and definitely not a good starting point for learning. Tae Kwon Do is what most police and military are trained in, but is sloppier in form and potentially less damaging as its more structured cousin, Tang Soo Do. These two styles, Tae Kwon Do and Tang Soo Do are often mixed (sparring will always be more Tae Kwon Do) and some of the most common in the U.S. Kung Fu can be similar in its basic training to the forms of Karate just mentioned though stricter in form like Tang Soo Do. Shaolin influences can come in quickly and they emphasize lower stances and focus on more circular, organic movements. Aikido is also common in cities and places all its emphasis on the flow of energy and redirecting unlike the more block then attack approach of Karate.

There are other approaches too like Brazilian Jiu Jitsu which is meant for one-on-one submission rather than straight blows. Or there is Capoeira, which was developed by African slaves in Brazil who were outlawed from practicing any kind of defense and responded by creating a dance-like martial art that could be done without being noticeably defensive though effective. And you have Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do, which may be the most anarchistic in nature, being anti-form in nature. However, it is largely applicable only after having been schooled in a number of different approaches, though extremely effective.

So there's a lot of room for individual preference and application, but starting somewhere is better than not getting started at all. So check out some local schools and classes.



These are just a few notable areas that I see could be easily worked on while we prepare and bring on the collapse of civilization. All of this can be done alongside outreach, research, community building, and direct action and no where do we lose out from having this knowl-

edge and ability. Considering what we are up against and where we are now, we have nothing to lose, but plenty that can be done. This is something we all need (especially myself!). So let's start putting our bodies where our rhetoric is!

## We are the Swarm.

*If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a closed room with a mosquito. - Ethiopian proverb.  
(A prologue of sorts...)*

We closed the window to keep any more from coming in. I had been listening closely for long enough to be sure that there was only one in the room. I had realised that sleep was impossible while it was in the room with us, and so I had turned the lamp on and begun the waiting - and listening - game. I knew I could catch it. I had caught many before. It was just a matter of waiting and listening and staying very still until I could see it, and then striking - quickly and mercilessly.

I waited patiently, listening intently. After a while my ears became attuned to the frequency of the mosquito, and I could hear it constantly, even when it was on the other side of the room. I stayed very still and let it come to me...

It was 5:45am when I finally gave up. The mosquito had beaten me - no matter how still I lay, no matter how long I waited, no matter how many of its relatives I had previously caught and killed - I couldn't even see it, let alone kill it. All that was left to do was turn off the lamp, get comfortable, and wait to be eaten alive.

xxx

This is what we must do with our rage. Be patient. Be stealthy. Be swift. Strike hard. Yes, we are small, but that makes us quick and hard to see. Our enemy is clumsy and slow. And we are many. We can act together, in packs, with those we can trust with our lives. We can act alone, safe in the knowledge that others are acting too, and that our enemy cannot even see us all, let alone kill us all. Yes, we must be careful. Cautious. Keep our distance when our enemy looks poised to strike. Be sure the enemy is unaware when we approach, and sleeping when we strike. If we plan our escape, we can strike so hard as to bring the enemy roaring out of his slumber, baying for blood. We will not be there. In order to be invisible, we need not be meek. In order to be effective, we need not be 'organized'. We are going fucking *wild*. We are encircling our prey. We are preparing to rip the Leviathan limb from limb. Because we know it is a matter of life and death. And we are not ready to die.

Swarm. Destroy.

# PYRAMID OF VULNERABILITY

Here is an informational outline of key vulnerabilities of the American infrastructure. This is taken from Robert David Steele's talk, "Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can America Be Defeated?" This talk was given at the Ninth Annual Strategy Conference at the U.S. Army War College on March 31 through April 2, 1998.\*

Robert David Steele is a former intelligence officer and President of Open Source Solutions, Inc. A self proclaimed leader in the development and propagation of "private enterprise intelligence." There are four distinct 'kinds' of vulnerability;

1. The vulnerability of major physical infrastructure elements, such as:
  - Bridges, Levees, and Dams—such as the 2800 readily mapped for the public of which 200 of so are of strategic consequence in isolation.
  - Canals—such as the Panama Canal, with very vulnerable locks
  - Pipelines—such as the Alaska Pipeline
  - Critical railway switching points
2. The vulnerability of obvious military Achilles' heels, as well as obvious civilian infrastructure, such as:
  - AWACS and Aerial Tankers (anti-tank missiles, or plastique on landing gear—tend to be concentrated in one place)
  - Submarine communications antennas (eg. Annapolis golf course)
  - Charleston channel (major sealift departure area)
  - Civilian power and communications nodes supporting command centers and key facilities (Falcon AFB Study, Kansas City payroll)
  - Major power grid nodes (both transfer and generation)
3. The vulnerability of core data streams vital to national security and national competitiveness, such as:
  - Major telecommunications nodes, including microwave towers
  - Historical environmental and other critical planning data
  - Civilian fuel stock data
  - Military logistics stock data
  - Transportation status data (induce rail crashes, cripple airports)
  - Financial accounts data (incapacitate procurement, induce panic, impose costs of alternative accounting)
  - Financial transfers data (corrupt transfers, place international and regional transfers into grid-lock, induce panic)
4. The vulnerability of our Intelligence Community (IC) to both external attacks against its systems as well as its perceptions, and internally-perpetuated misperceptions and gaps in understanding, such as:
  - Attacks against down-links (Area 58, NSA, CIA, Suitland, Bolling)



-Attacks against Joint Intelligence Centers

## TOP TEN TARGETS

1. *Bridges, Levees & Dams.*  
In the United States, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, natural wonders in their own right, are also natural obstacles of monumental proportions. There are exactly six mainstream railway bridges across these great rivers, across the vast majority of the grains must go from the plains to the East Coast cities, and the vast majority of the goods must in return from the Northeast and the South. As the natural flooding in 1993 demonstrated, when these bridges are closed, whether by accident or intent, there are severe repercussions for trade, and especially for the stockage of food and fuel. Recent breaks in levees in the south have demonstrated our vulnerability to the assumption that man can contain nature without regard to human attack. This bears emphasis: all insurance and risk calculations today assume natural causes of disaster. There are no calculations for risk and damage associated with deliberate human attack of any normal civil structure—Dams, in contrast, present computer controlled physical infrastructures which can be taken over to either release flood waters, or to avoid the release of flood waters with the intent of weakening if not destroying the dam.
2. *Alaska Pipeline.*  
This pipeline, going across vast stretches of unoccupied territory, carries ten per cent of the domestic oil for the U.S.
3. *Cincinnati Rail Yards.*

still today, the entire East-West railway architecture depended on exactly one major turnstile for redirecting railcars. It is located in the Three Rivers area, and represents a significant vulnerability.

4. *Culpepper Switch.*  
A popular target, this simply represents the kind of critical communications node (voice and data, especially financial and logistics data) which can be attacked in both physical and electronic ways. The Internet has various equivalent nodes, two of which merit special attention—MAYEAST and MAYWEST. Taking out MAYEAST disconnects the U.S. government from the rest of the Internet world, and not incidentally does terrible things to all of the Wall Street capitalists who are "tunneling" their Intranets across the larger Internet.
5. *Power Generators.*  
Power generators and the grids they support can be browned out, burned out, and confused. Altering the computer readings can cause them to draw more power than they can handle, or less power than they need. Burning out the generators or melting core lines creates the interesting challenge of replacement in the absence of mainstream power. There are exactly eighteen main power transformers that tie together the entire U.S. grid, and we have only one—perhaps two—generators in storage. Interestingly, all of these come from Germany, where there is a six to eighteen month waiting period for filling orders—assuming the Germany generators have not been burned out at the same time by someone attacking the Western powers in a transatlantic cyber-war.
6. *Data Computers.*

As of three years ago, and very likely



Any computer holding large quantities of critical data, especially parts inventories and data associated with either the transfer of funds or the operational effectiveness of critical equipment, is vulnerable to data distortion—this is a far more insidious and dangerous problem than the more obvious denial and destruction attacks.

#### 7. Fuel Stock Data.

Fuel stock data is isolated because of its implications in terms of overloading large tanks, with the fire storm hazards of large spillage, or of failing to channel fuels because of false readings.

#### 8. Federal Reserve.

Until a couple of years ago there were twelve regional computing centers, one for each of the Federal Reserve regions. Then we went to a single national system which a single hot back-up computing system and an additional cold back-up alternative.

#### 9. IC Downlinks.

Past surveys have focused on buildings, but the more capable attackers will focus on downlinks. All of the main satellite downlinks—for NSA, CIA, Area 58, key other government departments,

are out in public sight and reachable with a hand-held anti-tank missile fired from outside the fence line.

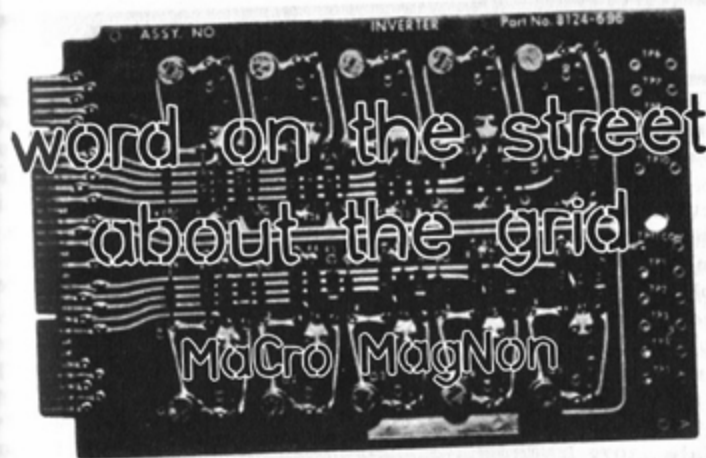
#### 10. Human Decisions.

"We have met the enemy, and he is us." This often quoted line from Pogo is complemented by another observation, this one anonymous, to wit, "a Nation's best defense is an educated citizenry". This "target" is listed to bring out both a vulnerability and an opportunity for "hardening" our national defense. Just as "commander's intent" is used in planning for complex operations where communications may be lost, it is essential that there be a larger national decision-making architecture in which there are few secrets and the public is fully engaged. In this way, when disasters do happen and many communications channels do break down, the public will be less likely to panic and more likely to use common sense and good will to see the crisis through. A thorough public understanding of our vulnerabilities and our plans for dealing with those vulnerabilities is essential to our progress. This "target" is also intended to make the point that the weakest link in all systems is not the system itself, but the humans associated with the system.

### DON'T FORGET THE DOCKS!

A global civilization is nothing without a global trade network. Nearly anything that comes through the market comes through one dock or another. High technology hasn't created a cheaper or more efficient type of international transportation than ships. Dock worker strikes have always left the system extremely vulnerable (as would trucker strikes), just as traditional forms of 'everyday resistance' (such as foot dragging, calling in sick, fucking off, internal loss, etc) have.

What modern technology has done is replace as many of those dock and shipping workers with machines. So while replacing the less reliable and potentially threatening humans with machines, the entire network of global trade is open to new threats: hackers, downed servers, pulled lines, and the like.



Do you still notice the substations all around you? Look into them next time you have the chance and see if you can spot the transformer. It is the big gray square with spring like nodes coming out of its top or side. You can't miss it.

They are near the end of the line for our electrified society.

They are temples from which totems lead directly to our homes and then into our minds.


The grid is quite public. If you live in a suburban or rural area, chances are it is right out in the open for all to see. It is so public, in fact, that you probably don't even notice it anymore. Your brain likely ignores all of the power lines and outlets because it has seen them so often. But where does this all come from? And why are there whispers on the wild Grape vine about this grid and the implications it has for a world free of hierarchy?

Although it is not widely known, this country has a history of electrical sabotage. In Colorado in 1980, wooden poles were cut bringing down a 115-kv line. The damage was repeated later in the year. Total costs were about \$200,000 each time. Two Florida substations were heavily damaged by simultaneous dynamite explosions in 1981 through one of the most expensive incidents. Damage totaled about \$3 million. No arrests have ever been made.

In 1985, various transformers were

shot in Virginia and Kentucky. In 1986, three 500-kv lines from the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating station were grounded simultaneously over a 30 mile stretch. It happened at a time while none of the nuclear reactors were running; otherwise they would have had to shut down. No arrests.

Other incidents include the cutting of guy wires and subsequent toppling of a tower on the 1800-mw, 1000-kv DC intertie in California in 1987. No arrests. In 1987-88, power line poles and substations were bombed or shot out on the Wyoming-Montana border. Later in 1988, similar attacks were experienced in West Virginia. In July 1989, a tower on a 765-kv line owned by Kentucky Power Company was bombed, no arrests have been made. In 1989, several EarthFirst'ers were arrested in the act of cutting down a tower line from a nuclear power plant in Arizona. The Department of Energy records a total of 386 attacks on US energy assets from 1980 through



1989. That's an average of 39 per year, the bulk of which being aimed at the grid, mostly transmission lines and towers.

Several cascading failures have brought attention to the US power grid. November 1965, a cascaded system collapse blackout in 10 northeastern states affected 30 million people. 1967, the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland blackout occurred. May 1977, 15,000 square miles and 1 million customers in Miami lost electricity. July 1978, throughout New York's suburbs, lightning caused over voltages, which overwhelmed NY's system already running at its peak, resulting in 10 million people losing



power for 24 hours, widespread looting, 4000 arrests and the ousting of the mayor. January 1981, 1.5 million customers in Idaho, Utah and Wyoming were without power. March 1982, over 900,000 lost power due to high voltage line failure. December 1994, 2 million customers from Arizona to Washington lost power. July 1996, a high voltage line touched a tree in Idaho and fell. The resulting short circuit caused blackouts for 2 million people in 14 states. August 1996, following the 2 July blackout, two high voltage lines in Oregon fell and caused cascading outages affecting over 7 million people in 11 western states and two Canadian provinces. January 1998, ice storms caused over 3 million people to lose power in eastern Canada, New York and New England. December 1998, Bay Area blackouts. July 1999, NYC

SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

blackout, over 300,000 lost power for 19 hours. 1998-2001, summer price spikes affect customers. Western states suffered rolling blackouts and energy crisis in 2001 and aftermath. Eastern US and Canada face cascading outages in August 2003 while 50 million people are left without power.


The North American power grids represent 15,000 generators in 10,000 power plants and hundreds of thousands of miles of transmission lines and distribution networks. It is estimated at over \$800 billion and it is the largest, meanest, and most complicated monster in existence. There is a growing momentum towards attacking this very real infest-structure of civilization.

Step one is to become empowered: that is, to turn the fucking power off.

Our modern life would be impossible without electricity. We are with electricity from the ultrasounds of the womb, the incubators at birth to the iron lung and life supports systems of death. This type of power starts and stops our lives, but how does it get there?

Electrical power starts at the power plant. In almost all cases, the power plant consists of a spinning electrical generator. Something has to spin that generator — it might be a water wheel in a hydroelectric dam, a large diesel engine or a gas turbine. But in most cases, the thing spinning the generator is a steam turbine. The steam might be created by burning coal, oil or natural gas. Or the steam may come from a nuclear reactor. From these

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generators comes our civilization and with it, its death glance, the IV that pumps electrons into our blood. These plants are the biggest targets but not very safe or practical.

Power leaves the generator and enters a transmission substation at the power plant. This substation uses large transformers to convert the generator's voltage (which is at the thousands of volts level) up to extremely high voltages for long-distance transmission on the transmission grid. For power to be used, it comes off the transmission grid and is stepped-down to the distribution grid. This may happen in several phases.

The place where the conversion from "transmission" to "distribution" occurs is in a power substation. A power substation typically does two or three things: [1] It has transformers that step transmission voltages (in the tens or hundreds of thousands of volts range) down to distribution voltages (typically less than 10,000 volts). [2] It has a "bus" that can split the distribution power off in multiple directions. [3] It often has circuit breakers and switches so that the substation can be disconnected from the transmission grid or separate distribution lines can be disconnected from the substation when necessary or in the event of a disaster. From the bus the lines are taken into your neighborhood and here we arrive at the light poles we all (don't) see everyday.

You can tell if a power line has high or low voltage by the size of its lines. Really high voltage lines have thick black lines and you can follow them to the substation or to the generator. Although power lines are everywhere they are not that important to the electrical system and are easily replaceable unless they are the high voltage lines leaving a power

SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

generation facility. Transformers on the other hand are unique to every substation, have minimum replacements in stock, and have to be special ordered from Germany.

High-voltage electrical transmission lines in the United States are divided into three separate grids that make up what is often called the national power grid. The three grids cover the contiguous 48 states and parts of Canada and Mexico are known as the Western Interconnection, the Eastern Interconnection, and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) Interconnection. The three grids operate independently for the most part but are connected in a few places by direct-current lines. All United States power utilities, except those in the states of Alaska and Hawaii, are connected to other power utilities through the national power grid. Dispatch centers maintain and control the flow of electricity over the grid, supplying electricity to meet the demand.

A grid works as a power distribution system because it allows a lot of sharing. If a power company needs to take a power plant or a transmission tower off line for maintenance, the other parts of the grid can pick up the slack. The power grid cannot store any power anywhere in the system. At any moment, you have millions of consumers feeding off megawatts of power. At that same moment you have dozens of power plants producing exactly the right amount of power to enslave their spirits. And you have all the transmission and distribution lines sending the power from the power plants to the consumers.

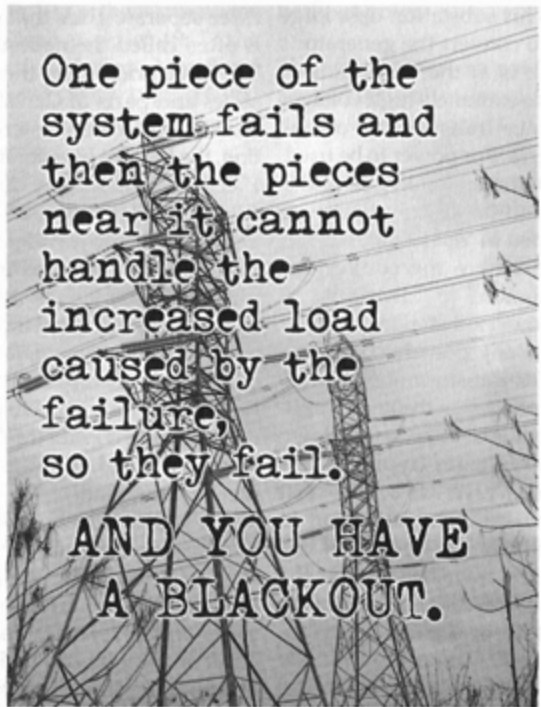
Let's say that the grid is running pretty close to its maximum capacity. Something causes a power plant to suddenly trip off line. The "something"

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might be anything from a serious lightning strike to a bearing failure and subsequent fire in a generator to a stick of dynamite in a turbine. When that plant disconnects from the grid, the other plants connected to it have to spin up to meet the demand. If they are all near their maximum capacity, then they cannot handle the extra load. To prevent themselves from overloading and failing, they will disconnect from the grid as well. That only makes the problem worse as dozens of plants eventually disconnect, leaving millions of people without power.

ment or repair. These factors vary. For example, generating stations can be destroyed by saboteurs willing to enter the plant, but the presence of employees is a deterrent to most. But a calculated attack on the transmission grid is less likely to meet personnel, but more transformers or lines will have to be attacked. Take transformers for example. They come in all different voltages and have to be special ordered. One is 35 volts, while one is 40 volts, etc. This provides a significant problem for multiple attacks, because the county



One piece of the system fails and then the pieces near it cannot handle the increased load caused by the failure, so they fail.

AND YOU HAVE A BLACKOUT.

The same thing can happen if a big transmission line fails or if a few transformers are disabled. One piece of the system fails and then the pieces near it cannot handle the increased load caused by the failure, so they fail.

only stocks a few replacements, typically only three. So four targets and they are shit out of luck. With six damaged, there is a major crisis. At least until a month or more later when they get and install the new transformers.

A transformer can be smashed, shot with a high powered rifle or shotgun, blown up, dismantled or otherwise impaired. Word on the street is that if you throw a conductive piece of metal like an aluminum foil ball, aluminum balloon

or a piece of chain link fence (that may have just been cut away to gain entry) on top of the transformer where the lines meet the nodes (called the insulators), it will short circuit and explode. Many facilities are equipped to deal with natural disasters and can recover from a small overload and ride out the turbulence, but sabotage could cause the more devastating of blackouts because many key facilities can be targeted.

Substations present the most vulnerable arena. The transmission lines themselves are an easier target but they are also much easier to repair and taking 30 of them out is equivalent to one transformer unless it is a high voltage transmission line way out in the desert somewhere, in which case it is more important to the system. Generating stations are somewhat more difficult because they are staffed and often guarded. Substations are used at generating plants to raise the low voltage of the generator to the transmission system and near load centers to reduce voltage for the distribution network. The former are partially protected by the routine activity at power plants, but few of the latter have any more protection than a chain link fence. In some cases an attack can be carried out without even entering the facility.

The sabotage of 3 or more substations could cause a substantial blackout. Although the grid would hardly be affected, after the power is restored, rolling blackouts will sweep the area during peak hours. And the effect will be felt by businesses and residents alike (and law enforcement attention of course). But 6 or 10 attacks is a different story entirely.

Many industrial processes are highly sensitive to power disruptions.

An interruption of less than 1 second can shut down plant equipment for several hours, spoil raw materials, work-in-progress and finished goods. Spoilage is a significant problem in chemical processes, steel manufacturing, food products and other industries. In the commercial sector the biggest impact will be to their computer and communications systems. They will lose control, lose data, possibly damage equipment, lose business, and fail to perform critical functions. Loss of payroll, sales records, register control alarm systems and electric locks will all go out.

There is also significant damage towards agriculture during small-scale blackouts. Sensitive processes include incubation, milking, pumping, heating and air conditioning, refrigeration, heat lamps, plumbing timers, etc. Many farmers will have generators. But the residential sector will be hardest hit. There will be no air conditioning or heat or hot water. In high rise buildings, people must use stairwells and candles. Consumers will be without lights, refrigerators and freezers, stoves, microwaves and toasters, dishwashers, intercoms, phones, televisions, clocks, radios, computers, elevators, escalators, door bells, hair driers, heated blankets, garage door openers, and few will have batteries to last more than a few hours.

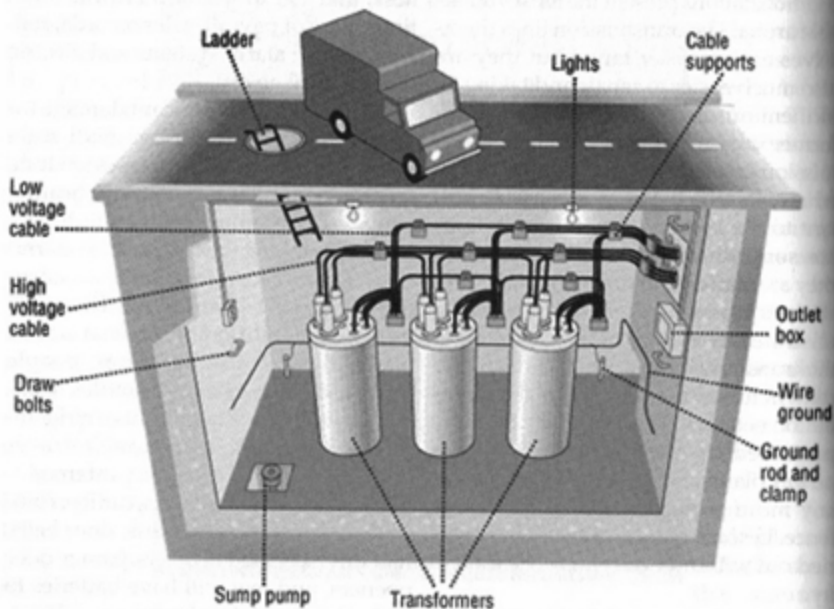
Blackouts affect every aspect of transportation. Subways, elevators, trams stop running, corridor and stairwell lights go out. Street traffic stops, gasoline pumps no longer work. Airports have generators but are delayed and in an emergency state. Without power to run the telecommunications industry all business and government functions cease. And the market suffers. Many big industries are entirely comput-



erized and these will suffer the worst economic damage. Many urban centers are highly sensitive to attack, but smaller communities seem that they would be able to recover fairly quickly if they experienced any major change whatsoever. And many facilities will have back up power supplies and small scale generators. The long term effectiveness will be qualitatively multiplied based upon how long the blackout lasts, which relies on

how many targets are hit.

Now friends it is time to do some homework and some exploring, some infiltration and some daring escape. Is this approach a formidable enemy to the Megamachine? Is this one of civilizations weakest links? Can 50 or less decentralized acts really bring this motherfucker down? Only time will tell. Let's get this party started. "Who turned the lights out?"



### SOME ECO-FACTS:

-Painted Turtle Hatchlings have to wait until spring to see the light of day if there is a chill in the ground. During cold snaps they literally turn into turtlecicles. Ice crystals form in their blood, their hearts slow down to less than a beat per minute, and breathing stops altogether. Their temperature can drop to 18 degrees Fahrenheit and up to 58% of their body fluids freeze without harming them.

-Ferns are descendants of ancient tropical trees. 300 million years ago trees were giant sized ferns and horsetails.

-Fischer was born with out eyelids.

## word on the street about fiber optic cables and networks

macro magnon

Do you really think that this country is invincible? Do you really think that Wall Street, the Pentagon and our whole way of life is held together by more than a few threads? Actually by Fiber Optic cables and the trunk lines which bear the burden of being the most vulnerable and likely of targets. Well maybe not the MOST vulnerable but still easily accessible, follow your nose to where there is a sign that says 'danger do not dig, fiber optic cables underground' or basically 'dig here', where you can get to a high traffic cable and feel the pulse of the information age up close. And if you were so inclined you could set down your pick axe and pick up your axe and slash the vein open. But we will get to that more a little bit later.

Have you heard of fiber optics?

Those are lenses and lasers and cables or something right? Well, have you ever used the internet? Fiber Optics networks form the backbone of the US communications infrastructure. They are taking over satellite and copper's roles in the telecommunications market. 90% of their installation has occurred since 1996! And everyone is hip to their cheaper, faster, wider connection capacity—the US military, intelligence, law enforcement, University, financial services information, and anyone (business or person) that uses a broadband, T1/T3 or DSL run on fiber, and are thus exposed to any calculated attack that might single out this particular medium. And this is in the medium of everything, everywhere. There are over 80-90 million miles of single-mode fiber in the US alone. Most are to be found around gov-

ernment buildings, near railroads, around universities and libraries, and on utility towers. Maps of their exact location can actually be found on the internet, yippee!

But what are these strange contraptions and why are they so vulnerable?

Basically, Fiber optic lines are strands of optically pure glass as thin as a human hair that carry light signals and digital information over long distances without RF interference and amplification. One drawback to fiber optic cabling is that it takes a long time to repair if it is cut. Part of the reason that fiber takes so long to repair is the fact that the glass strand often is insulated with Teflon. Whilst providing very good electrical, chemical and mechanical insulation, this also lets the fiber slide around on the inside. So when a backhoe goes to work





digging out the cable, the fiber might snap more than a mile away from the spot where the backhoe is. This then requires the entire length of cable to be excavated and/or replaced, a time-consuming work done by ... that's right: a Backhoe! And since it is so hard to pinpoint the exact location of the split, the amount of hours before repair grows exponentially with the amount of splits made. How long the outage lasts for depends on how long it takes to locate the fiber break, how long it takes to get repair crews to the fiber break, then how long to fix that one and finally how many those maniacs attacked. Single fiber breaks can usually be located fairly quickly, so the other two factors are more variable. An intelligent attacker could be expected to cut fibers a far drive out, requiring a long time to reach the location (giving them a better chance of escape).

The relationship between an individual cable and the greater scheme of things is a bit complicated. Let me try my best to summarize how these fragile underground arteries contain the lifeblood of our computerized network of domination and how that relates to the interweb, I mean the cybernet, anyways.

Most large communications companies have their own backbones connecting various regions. In each region, the company has a Point of Presence (POP), and high-level networks connect to each other through Network Access Points (NAP). The POP in each city is a rack full of modems that the ISP's customers dial into. A company leases fiber optic lines from the phone company to connect the POPs together, companies like Sprint, PSI, UUNET, Espire, Qwest, Genuity, and Global Crossing. Dozens of large Internet providers interconnect at NAPs in various cities, and trillions of bytes of

data flow between the individual networks at these points. The Internet is a collection of huge corporate networks that agree to all intercommunicate with each other at the NAPs. And your data goes from your network-> T1 -> POP -> T3 -> NAP -> through the backbone and into the world of cyberspace.

Backbones are typically fiber optic trunk lines. The trunk line has multiple fiber optic cables combined together to increase the capacity. Today there are many companies that operate their own high-capacity backbones, and all of them interconnect at various NAPs around the world.

Wide-area fiber optic networks face several unique challenges to their health. They rely on large expanses of minimally to moderately protected fiber infrastructure. They are subject to signal monitoring and/or insertion at many points in this infrastructure, which may include optical repeater nodes, switching nodes, operation and management nodes, and fiber itself. They typically carry large volumes of data making even short duration outages very costly. And outside of major cities fewer links are doing more work. Among the nations critical infrastructures (electrical power grids, communications networks, air traffic/ freight / coastal import control systems and water distribution) long haul, high rate fiber systems are most vulnerable to physical layer attacks.

Fiber optics are rapidly dominating the information world and becoming capable of holding more and more information daily. Through technologies like SONET transmission and wavelength division multiplexing (WDM), huge amounts of data can be aggregated into a single fiber bundle or even a single fiber. Jamming, cutting, or otherwise dis-



turbing traffic on a single fiber for any period of time can cause the loss of large amounts of data. Unless the network can be reconfigured around the missing link using Automatic Protection Switching (APS).

APS can quickly reconfigure around single points of failure, except when the protection channels use the same cable as the damaged line, which is all too often the case. These self-healing rings are widely used for high-rate fiber transmission. However an intelligent attacker is likely to disrupt communications on two or more separate paths simultaneously, thereby nulling the protection of self-healing rings. Here is what happens. If the fiber is carrying packetized data, routers will detect a failed path and attempt to reroute around it. But when a high-rate backbone fails, other networks are likely to become severely congested as routers attempt to reroute large numbers of packets over to lower rate links, or over the remaining high-rate links that may be already heavily loaded. So essentially cutting a fiber optic cable (which all government and business, schools and law enforcement use) will throw all of the broadband traffic onto lower level connections like dial up modems, which will mean busy signals and

no more business as usual. Disrupting a high-rate backbone link can cause serious disruption for a whole network of users, even those not using the backbone in question.

While many types of network attacks require a high level of expertise, most physical layer attacks can be easily accomplished with few resources, little expertise, and a high degree of coyness. Most of the fiber infrastructure in the US is buried within a few feet of the

surface. What is not buried is usually mounted on utility towers. The difficulty of digging up and severing the fibers is not great, and happens regularly by accident (an average of 59 times per year in the 90s). One determined person or two with a shovel and pick axe or cutting equipment can feasibly dig up and sever a fiber carrying SONET class data. Since wide area fiber backbones tend to



be relatively sparse topologically, coordinated attacks severing fibers in just a few geographic locations could completely disconnect segments of a typically high rate backbone network. AND, the large geographic extent of many fiber optic backbones gives attackers a relatively high probability of mounting such an attack covertly (until after the fibers are severed) and escaping into the



night. Additional attacks could be mounted in sections of fiber that have been disconnected by a primary attack to prolong the blackout.

This means that the attacker will have to locate the fibers they want to cut, which may take a little research but anyone with even a casual interest in the network can make use of several resources to find maps, pictures and even directions (but beware of surveillance in this stage) and cut it. The locations of high rate fibers can be obtained for free from published maps of the telecommunications industry. Most locations are well known to help contractors to avoid accidentally digging them up. It is not hard to imagine that a few individuals might be able to locate individual vulnerable fibers and choose attacks to maximize network

disruption. And it is also imaginable that a group of individuals would also choose the time of a geopolitical gathering or important trading date or a time with military significance and systematically strike key trunk lines holding the US economy together and, even if only temporarily, bring the country to its knees.

Some sources;  
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### A SLIVER OF HOPE

"The Blackout of 2003 upset a lot of routines, but Lackson Marafu of the University of Maryland was thrilled to divert his scheduled air quality monitoring flight over eastern Maryland. He relocated to Selinsgrove, PA, a town in the middle of the blackout area, which happens to be downwind of more than 100 power plants in the Ohio River valley. 'It was a unique opportunity to quantify directly, and for the first time, the contribution of these power plants to regional air quality' and what it would be like without them after one day.

Marafu's samples show that these coal-burning power plants produce a much bigger-than-reported share of the chemical cocktail that people in the Northeast inhale everyday. Within 24 hours of the blackout, sulfur dioxide levels dropped 90 percent, and ozone declined by 50 percent. Both chemicals are linked to global climate change, lung disease and increased mortality rates. Daytime visibility in the region during the blackout increased by nearly 25 miles due to the 70 percent decrease in light scattering particles. Tall smokestacks, built to alleviate pollution close to power plants, may contribute to the regional air problem by causing emissions to stay suspended long enough to react and produce other, more harmful pollutants. At least Marafu sees a silver lining in his smoggy data. 'If these plants were shut down, results would be immediate.'"

-excerpted from *Scientific American*

# TRAINWRECK!

## A BRIEF SABOTEUR'S HISTORY

Revolutionaries, insurrectionaries, and warriors throughout past centuries have recognized one thing: the best way to stop your enemy is to cut them off. As society becomes increasingly dependent upon electricity, targeting becomes even easier. Without electricity, those in power are fighting with both arms tied behind their back if they're able to fight at all. What past saboteurs have figured out is that the electronic tentacles are extremely vulnerable.

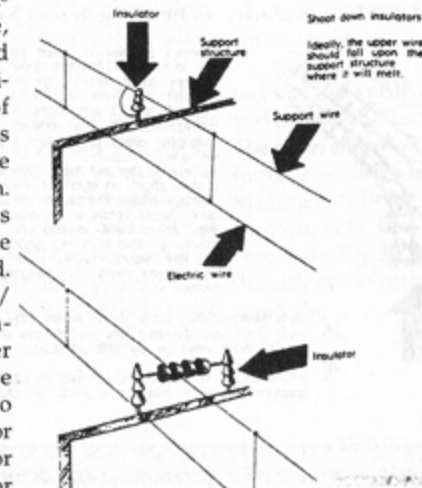
If taking out power has been the primary objective, power plants are natural targets. Your typical power plant is one of three types: nuclear powered, coal powered or hydroelectric (dams). Dams are rather straightforward: they make power by controlling the flow of rivers. In the process, ecosystems are destroyed, native fish runs are blocked which threaten, if not entirely annihilate, those species and whatever other animals feed off of them. Explosives have always done the job fine enough.

Power plants themselves can be rather complicated. Smaller power/transformer stations are simpler targets that have been attacked to take out power for a smaller area for bank robberies or hits. The stations are more widely spread out and far less guarded. A transformer is the necessary element for a functioning station and it could be disabled with armor piercing ammunition which does as good a job as explosives with the benefit of distance. The number of transformers is relative to the station size. A

larger station is more likely to be guarded, but saboteurs have dealt with them in a similar manner or by quick and destructive raids. The effect has just as easily been strengthened by taking out insulators and the cooling elements next to the transformers.

Nuclear and coal powered plants are a bit of a different situation (and often enough one plant may be both nuclear and coal-powered). Nuclear is an extremely risky business and therefore approached cautiously if at all. Nuclear power may well be the most frightening of all technologies. The power of destruction that leaks from it during normal operation is lethal enough, but a complete core meltdown is likely catastrophic.

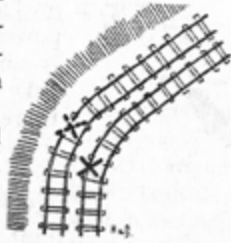
The nuclear core must be kept cooled by a number of chemicals and liquids piped into the plant through long tunnels. Some saboteurs (hopefully only the arm chair type) have talked about the weakness created by these extended arteries and their increased susceptibility





to being wrecked. Whether or not the contents of the pipe itself are toxic (which is most likely the case), the threat of draining coolant may not be the best of ideas. But this would require a much greater understanding of nuclear plants and their functioning. The plant will always have a number of fail safes (which clearly are far from perfect) in the event of core meltdown, but the more time between recognition of a problem and meltdown, the better the chances that the worst case scenario won't happen. So in this instance, like we'll see with the coal powered plants below, have been saboteurs would prefer to attack the necessary and incoming resources than those making the plant more vulnerable to immediate meltdown. The hypothetical/historical point has been to shut down the plant instead of taking the region out with it.

Coal powered plants are a bit simpler. In order to run, they need a constant supply of, you guessed it,



- ✗ Secondary blast. Only blast when you have sufficient explosives. The outer tracks will be blocked anyhow by the derailed train.
- ✗ Main blast. If you have limited amounts of explosives, only blast the inner tracks.

coal. That coal is transported by railroad. It might be easy for us to forget the role that the railroad has had in the shaping of the last few centuries since they are rarely the choice for individual transportation anymore. But the opening of the network of railroads through nations has been the primary means for spreading empire and fueling it. While globalization has turned industry outwards to

imported resources, railways are still vital tools of industry. Nearly all industrial and fuel related railroads have their own tracks which can be distinguished through prolonged observation.

For historical saboteurs, the advantage would be clear. Railroads go through too vast of an area to be under constant guard or checkpoint. Any given railway is likely to go through a number of regions or bioregions and coal powered railways are even more likely to go through mountainous or forested areas carrying miles and miles of the lifeblood of technological civilization. In short, they are extremely open and accessible to sabotage.

This can be done in a number of different ways. Explosives have been used to blow the tracks for a number of desired effects.

**Destroy tracks on open stretch.**  
On an open stretch you must always blast tracks at a curve for the following two reasons:  
Bent tracks are more difficult to replace by the enemy than straight ones of which he has an ample supply.  
Trains derail more easily in curves than on straight stretches. Always blast the outer rail. The centrifugal force of an approaching train will derail it more easily at the blasting point and, at the same time, will throw the debris onto the neighboring tracks.

Blowing tracks can be done either to render the railways useless or to be triggered by a train. So they are used to either derail a train, destroy the bulk of it, or to keep it

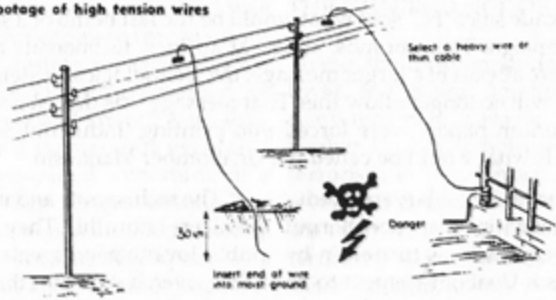
from passing. The end result depends on positioning and detonators used.

The sheer length and stretch of tracks means that a number of different points on the same track or different points on separate tracks are likely to be placed without having been noticed, even in urban areas. Hitting different points on a track at different times has kept tracks out of commission for a



longer period. With enough people or through enough space tracks could be destroyed or threatened long enough to keep the plant itself vulnerable or require that it be shut down temporarily, again further increasing the system's vulnerability and the amount of area that would be without electricity.

Sabotage of high tension wires



Sabotage to the tracks themselves has typically been only part of the plan. For a track to be used it requires that the accompanying high tension wires work. The wires run along the top of the railway above the train or alongside tracks as something very similar to telephone poles. The two can be distinguished by the positioning of the insulators which connect the wires to the poles (see picture below). On telephone poles the insulators run parallel as opposed to the staggered insulators of high tension

wires. The wires have been targeted in three ways: taking the poles down with explosives at the base/s, pulling the wires down (with extreme caution as the wires are extremely high voltage) or taking out the insulators as would be done on the transformers. Location

of insulators for poles and above rail positions: insert pics.

The wires can be taken down by attaching one end of a wire to an object and preferably stuck into moist ground. The other end is wrapped around something heavy like a rock or piece of metal. Making sure to let go of the wire as it is thrown over the high tension wires causes the line to short though running the risk of electrocution if not handled carefully.

**SOME ECO-FACTS:**

- Porcupines can't shoot their quills. But upon contact, the porcupine will release hundreds at a time.
- Red foxes can jump 15 feet.
- A skunk can spray 10-13 feet with accuracy.
- Spotted skunks can carry the rabies virus without being affected. They are uncommon because they are killed off due to the fact that they could be infected.
- Deer have been observed eating birds that had been caught in nets.



# The message and the messenger FC, Ted Kaczynski, and Resisting the Technological System

-Kevin Tucker

It's been a decade since 'FC' sent what would be the last bomb of a seventeen year bombing campaign. These bombs, aimed at airlines, technocrats and computer engineers, were all part of a larger message: the technological system is killing the earth and we will no longer allow this. That message was driven home when two national American papers were forced into printing 'Industrial Society and Its Future'. This is what would be called the Unabomber Manifesto.

A year later in 1996, Harvard graduate and mathematician turned hermit Theodore Kaczynski was turned in by his brother as a Unabom suspect to be later convicted and given two life sentences. In every aspect of his life, Ted was demonized by the media as a deranged and meticulous serial killer. His life was torn apart and recreated by his brother and mother to fit the media profile.

Every step was taken to shoot the messenger.

But the message would inevitably slip through the cracks. It found solace among anti-civilization anarchists, neo-Luddites, ecologists, and those chewed up and left behind by the dehumanizing technological system. For some it was a confirmation that something was very wrong about our way of living. Even more so, it was a message that something drastic needed to happen to change that.

It was a message that something drastic *could* happen.

For those within the technological system, that is a frightening message. That is why it is buried far beneath an obsession with the messenger. Buried to a place where most are not interested or willing to dig. Buried to a place where many would-be sympathizers have little interest in digging.

The technocrats and its media sympathizers know this. They know that the public loves a good spectacle. They love a face, even if it's a face that they love to hate. In the case of FC, that face is Ted Kaczynski. The mad mathematician turned hermit-bomber. They say he molested his bombs. They say that he bombed because of his mental instabilities and his failure to connect with other people. They say anything that will sell their story. And that is the story that sells. But it is not just *their* story: the corporate media has and needs no monopoly. Many would-be sympathizers are just as eager to push FC aside.

Of course that's understandable, it's easier to play along and stay on the safe side. FC was, in fact, a terrorist group. Bombing is a violent act. For those eager to sell their own ideology and prove their moral purity, these are tough issues. They think that only lunatics kill, that violence is never justified while they ignore the violence that is inseparable from everyday life within the technological system, within civilization. They stick to the drama surrounding Ted, who still has never willingly claimed to be FC. As they see it, FC remains the product of a warped mind and we can move along.

And the reverse happens as well:



Ted becomes romanticized. He becomes an icon of resistance to the technological system. A Ned Ludd for the Twentieth Century. Like any other icon, martyr or media star, the messenger becomes the message. They can do no wrong.

I know this from experience. I was drawn to Ted for apparent reasons: both of us wish to destroy the technological system and are open to any method for achieving that goal. I know I was never searching for a martyr, but even as a friend, Ted remained something of a media star. When I began writing Ted in early 2001, it was with a combination of eagerness and curiosity about who this person was and what they were trying to say. Our correspondence grew heavily, ending rather abruptly in 2004.

Through that period, my idea of who Ted is changed greatly, but took with it my whole understanding of what it means to be critical and the limits of solidarity. I've come to a greater understanding of the significance of the Unabomber campaign, the subsequent trial, Ted Kaczynski and resisting civilization. The entire Unabomber ordeal is extremely important. Far too important to not give it a more critical and complex approach than the simple characterized look at the Unabomber as Ted Kaczynski: demon or saint.

The message and the messenger need to be understood in their own right and the link between the two needs to be contextualized. Whether we agree or not with the tactics, we have to recognize that FC raised the bar for the momentum against the technological system. This is what I'm interested in looking at. I'm not interested in the ridiculous debate over violence and non-violence. To me it is just another philosophical abstraction to keep us mediated from

action and bound to rigid moralistic thinking: another barrier to action. This is a critical evaluation for those who are open to 'all the tools in the toolbox' to beat a cliché senseless.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FC

To me, the most important issue raised by FC is a tactical question: how effective is terrorism as a tactic. Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, even the word terrorism can be terrorizing. Due to a worsened political climate, it's become the norm to step as far away from the term and what it stands for. To a degree, this is understandable. But let's not blur facts. The Unabom campaign was terrorism: certain individuals were targeted because of their positions. They weren't necessarily targeted because their deaths would have ended the technological system, but because they were replaceable technocrats.

I want to emphasize this point. In terms of directly ending or threatening the technological system, FC would be a complete failure. 3 deaths and 29 injuries will not break the system, no matter who those targets are. The individuals were chosen carefully (though not always the victims), but what they represented to the system was a huge part of the message: *engineers of the technological system will be held personally accountable for their contributions.*

FC was, of course, not doing anything new or original. Campaigns of political assassinations, another form of terrorism, do the same thing. A technocrat is no different from a politician: though symbolic they are easily replaceable. *It is the position, not the individual, which is targeted.* Terrorism of this sort is as old as dissent. And it can be very effective.

History shows us as much. It is a tactic of guerrillas and of empires. Revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries alike have always used it. What usually determines the effect is the scale. During revolutionary periods throughout Latin America, it would be a norm to see hundreds or even thousands of bureaucrats assassinated between regimes. The US government uses it as much throughout the world as it has on radical groups like the Black Panther.

But it doesn't always have to be about murder. It is a tactical approach.

One example a little closer to home is the animal liberation campaign Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC). Over the past few years, SHAC has grown to an international campaign with one goal: shut down Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), one of the largest vivisectors in the world. The idea is simple: you start with the largest operation and shut them down, shaking the whole field up in the process and then picking off the others. In concrete terms, this means raiding and torching HLS labs, protesting and otherwise disrupting financial backers, and holding the individual vivisectors and corporate bureaucrats accountable by holding protests outside their homes.

A large portion of the animal liberation contingency has distanced themselves from those involved with SHAC. They are constrained by moralistic blinders and a fear of losing their mass appeal. In doing so, they overlook that this tactic is effective. HLS is being cut off and is well on the way to shutting down. Those involved are learning a lesson about accountability. And they are learning this without direct violence.

I'm not saying that the SHAC campaign is perfect or such tactics will end vivisection. Neither is true, but this is the same tactic at work on another level. A level that *Industrial Society and its Future* reminds us will not end animal exploitation any more than the FC campaign would have ended the technological system. HLS can be shut down, but vivisection will not be stopped. This kind of tactic is only applicable on a small enough scale or with a massive momentum. Unfortunately, the anti-civilization and anti-technological momentums lack the latter.

But what FC lacked in quantity was compensated for in quality. Revolutionary violence is largely a thing of the past in the US. While there is an excess of surveillance and security technology, there's not a whole lot of violence directed at technocrats and politicians to really justify it. Their security is preemptive and it gives the impression of being untouchable. In the US climate, this comfort level

becomes pathological: the ultra specialized bureaucracy becomes anonymous. Had the reason for the targets been given more attention, the FC campaign could have been far more effective in shaking things up. The engineers of the technological system could have been exposed as the Eichmann's of the late Twentieth Century. FC offered a mail-order Nuremberg.

Because of the media, this didn't happen. Accountability may have found its way into the larger psychological landscape, but coming right at the beginning of a massive growth in technocratic positions, the message was saturated.

And it's doubtful that this could have happened. The technological system is strong enough to have endured the loss of 3 technocrats and could take the loss of many more. While I have no real sympathy for technocrats and politicians, I have serious doubts about how effective this approach really is or could be. Fortunately, I think the weaknesses of the technological system are far easier to attack. And those targets are not human, which we'll return to.

But no matter what we think about these kinds of attacks, we have to realize that this has happened. FC has taken lives and the idea is out there.

Like it or not, the bar is raised. The primary contribution of FC remains the essay *Industrial Society and its Future*. I think the essay really speaks for itself, so I won't give it as much attention here. But I do want to emphasize a few points.

From my reading, the manifesto really drives home two major points: the technological system must be destroyed and that any anti-technological movement must sharply break from the left. Tactically I agree completely with the

first and I agree as much with the second point, but what that means for me differs greatly from what Ted has in mind and likely FC had intended. Perhaps this is the area where Ted has become inseparable from FC because of his steadfast grasp on the idea of a movement dedicated solely to the destruction of the technological system.

And this is the area where I split from Ted the most. That is because of two primary differences: 1) I don't see a revolution against technology or civilization as being any more likely than preferable and 2) that stems from a distrust of mass movements and the kind of organizations that revolutions require. A revolution, especially the kind that Ted and FC envision, needs a mass ideology and program. A revolution against the technological system will not look like a couple hundred FC's mailing bombs, but like any other revolution. That is a certain structure and pattern that has always failed.

Perhaps it is because I'm interested in destroying civilization in a totalistic sense rather than just the concrete technological infrastructure that I have such sharp differences with Ted and FC. It is in terms of tactics and targets that we are largely on the same level, but where I'm interested in going, revolution cannot go.

This all comes back to what Ted has written since his arrest. I see what Ted has written as extremely important, but at the same time, somewhat distinguishable from what FC put on the table. Perhaps this is where words and action split. But I see those actions made by FC alone as something worthy in their own right. Though they are within the greater context of Ted Kaczynski and the media, I hope that guilt by association will never result in such a significant campaign be-



Overall view of a transformer station

s a me tactic at work on another level. A level that *Industrial Society and its Future* re -



ing tossed entirely aside.

We have FC to thank for not only reminding us that reform is worthless, but that the system is vulnerable. FC reminds us that behind the machine are human names and faces. FC reminds them that they are not untouchable.

Most importantly, FC reminds us that we can do something about the destruction of life.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TED KACZYNSKI

Over the years that I wrote Ted, I got a much clearer idea of who Ted is and what he wants. I don't think that anyone can question his absolute conviction and devotion to the cause of destroying the technological system. He has certainly gained my respect, but he has not earned my trust.

Ted is a revolutionary. If he indeed is FC, then that campaign, like his post-arrest writings, are a contribution to that movement. A movement which Ted seems to see himself as at least partial engineer: he's somewhat of a self-appointed vanguard. Like any vanguard, they must recruit followers for their ultimate cause. Though not necessarily lying, they aren't afraid to bend the truth to suit their needs, use things like flattery and deceit to brew their following and create like-minded engineers. I was always conscious of this and could see it in action. Ted no doubt has his agenda and will do what it takes to push it. This much is expected of a revolutionary. He has said the same about me. But a central part of our break was his inability to sell me on his agenda.

I do want to be fair to Ted. I'm not interested in trashing him and certainly not in discounting what he has done. I

raise these issues because I think Ted has put something significant on the table, even if he is not FC, and that it deserves respectful attention, but must be approached critically. Far too many folks involved in the momentum against civilization would too easily toss aside the work of anyone they found questionable.

There are a few major points that I found most significant in our letters and in Ted's writing in general. All of those points and discussions ultimately surrounded what it will take to destroy the technological system. Here Ted and I were largely in agreement, but there are differences.

As far as central agreements go, Ted does claim to be "anti-civilization":

"I fully agree that civilization is an evil to be eliminated if possible. But the problem of civilization is part of the technology problem. Civilization, in fact, resulted from a technological advance, namely, the development of agricultural techniques that made large-scale, sedentary, intensive agriculture possible. ... So the problem of getting rid of civilization is essentially identical with the problem of getting rid of a certain body of agricultural technology."<sup>1</sup>

However, that certain body of agricultural technology, Ted claims, is not a feasible target. And in concrete terms he's right. You can't blow up cultural knowledge unless you destroy the people carrying it. Neither Ted nor I is really interested in that. I argue that the possibility for the survival of a large-scale agricultural society is highly unlikely after the collapse of our global civilization because of a severe loss in both knowledge and craft required and the erosion of lands that would have other-



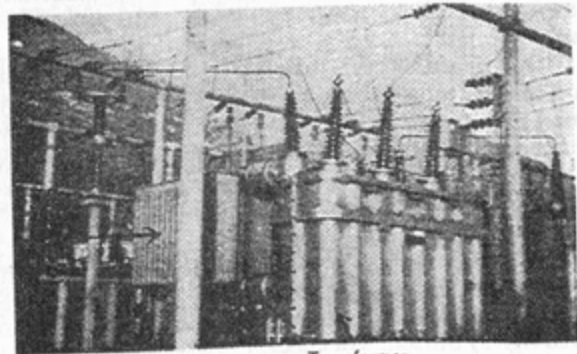
wise been farmed. If we can barely survive on a global system of monocropping, I have doubts about that system being resurrected on a large scale. I'm sure that it will happen on a micro-scale, but that's far beyond any reach I would or should have.

But there's something more here.

Ted and I share the same target: the modern technological infrastructure. It's

a practical target. As Ted puts it, "I concentrate on industrial-age technology simply from

Cooling element



Transformer

considerations of feasibility. Once the System has broken down people will have to give up most industrial-age technology, because that technology can't be used without the aid of the System."<sup>2</sup>

But for me, that target is a feasible concrete aspect of civilization, but it is not the only one. I'm interested in taking on the totality of civilization which surpasses that infrastructure. That is why I talk about rewilding and resisting as two parts of the same thing. I think resistance against civilization must reach into all the places that civilization does. That goes deeper than the technological system to the domestication process itself. That is a significant difference between Ted and I. Though we both agree on the face of things about this, it turns

out to be different in practice.

I am interested in talking about tearing apart civilized concepts of community, but also looking at what anarchistic, post-civilization societies may look like. I'm interested in talking about how people have lived and how we can live. Not to form a blue print for the consolidation of the anti-civilization revolution, but as something to put out there, to get

people thinking: to unleash the primal war of body and soul.

That means having a deeper

understanding of the origins of civilization. A deeper understanding of how the domestication process works. It entails discussion, action and unmediated connection. But the room for this kind of thing in Ted's revolution is minimal. There is one target, one focus: destroy the technological infrastructure.

Ted's conviction and devotion to this point has been a major point of contention between Ted and other anti-civilization anarchists. In 'Ship of Fools', one of Ted's most infamous and perhaps his best essay, Ted was offering a glimpse of this, but I'm not sure the extent of what he envisioned really came out. That message, like the message of *ISAIF*, is the need "to build a movement that will be intensively and exclusively focused on



the goal of eliminating technology and civilization." "But" he continues,

"we can't build such a movement unless we steer clear of the people (let's call them "victimization activists") who are obsessed with victimization issues.<sup>3</sup> (That is, racism, sexism, homophobia, animal abuse, etc., etc.) These people are extremely numerous in our society, and they come swarming to any rebel movement that is halfway congenial to them."<sup>4</sup>

To a large degree, he's right. Any battle against racism, sexism, homophobia, animal abuse, and, he mentions in another letter, colonialism and imperialism<sup>5</sup>, in and of itself will not destroy civilization. Even more so, the vast majority of folks involved in any of those battles are not interested in destroying civilization. Those fighting for 'right's issues' are indeed fighting for civilization, as Ted rightly puts it: "The concept of 'rights' presupposes an organized social structure that has the power to tell people what they have a right to and what they do not have a right to. In other words, the concepts of 'rights' presupposes civilization." Furthermore, we "need a movement that will be completely independent of the leftists, the reformers, the pacifists, the 'rights' people, and that whole bucket of shit."<sup>6</sup>

Though I'm not interested in a revolutionary movement, I completely agree with Ted about the need for anti-civilization folks to make a clear break with the left, reformists, and that "whole bucket of shit". But what that entails for Ted is different than how I see it. Considering that Ted has put friends of mine and fellow unabashedly anti-civilization anarchists such as John Zerzan, John Connor, and Derrick Jensen in that cat-

egory, I had to ask if our definitions of leftism and reformists was really the same. To which Ted replied:

"Actually we may not be too far apart in our understanding of what leftists and reformists are. Our disagreements may revolve more around a point that I have not yet clearly expressed: that certain viewpoints that are not in themselves leftist may attract large numbers of leftists to movements that hold those viewpoints."<sup>7</sup>

So by merely raising issues like racism, sexism, homophobia, animal enslavement, colonialism, imperialism, and all the other 'isms', we are guilty by association. These are deviations from our focus: destroying the technological system or civilization as the case may be. For those of us who have fallen under severe criticism from Ted for being leftist by association to certain causes see this as a significant difference.

All of these 'isms' are products of civilization and clearly are worth bringing up. Ted is wary of attracting leftists and their baggage, which certainly does happen, but this is no reason to shy away from the issues. Actually it works to the opposite: it contextualizes these struggles. Leftists and reformists will take note and most will prove that they are in fact the enemies that Ted considers them. But I can never understand why that's a reason for not bringing up what I see as completely relevant issues. I don't think there is any hierarchy of causes, but I know that all 'isms' are an intrinsic part of civilization: they cannot and will not go away until civilization does. But if our resistance is going to be as statist as civilization, then these are issues that we need to be aware of.

But the revolutionary movement



Ted sees has no room for this. Perhaps the greatest reason why is that he does not see all of these 'isms' as part of civilization, but as a part of humanity. Ted and I have argued these points to the ground, but at base, Ted views homophobia, sexism, and the like as being something nearly all human societies

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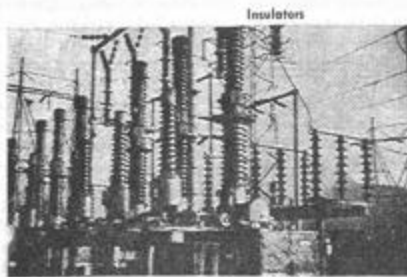
phasizes that he would prefer societies would be, but insists that no societies are egalitarian despite what many of us see as mounds of evidence to the contrary.

His naturalization of homophobia and sexism have rightfully put some pressure on him. I don't intend on really laboring the point here any further. But with this in mind, it becomes a bit more understandable why Ted would see these issues as intrinsically reformist/leftist leaning. And, even more so, it becomes a bit more understandable why Ted's revolution isn't picking up a lot of constituents among anti-civilization anarchists.

It is important to understand that part of the reason that Ted seems hell bent on pointing out the lack of 'true' egalitarianism among other human so-

cieties is to avoid over idealizing them. In this sense, he puts the problem of over idealization in the same context of his concerns about talking of the inevitability of collapse. He fears, and rather rightfully, that if someone believed what was said, but later found a counterpoint, they would reject everything they've realized

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Insulators

Circuit breaker

Switch

is inevitable people will "be tempted to relax, sit on our hands, and just wait for the collapse."<sup>8</sup>

His concerns are valid. But what I draw from this is not what Ted draws. I see it as reason to not only be honest in our critique, action and motivations, but to not fear complexity. Too often revolutionaries are afraid that their audience understands critique better as rhetoric than those who could draw on something much larger and not always the most accessible. In this case, people will drop revolutionary thinking as quickly as they picked it up; because it was never internalized, their interactions and opinions are never given room. There's a difference between presenting your critique and opinions and presenting the right party line. Revolutionaries stick to party



lines, but that's no reason why any one else should.

There's a difference between understanding how other societies work and making them into utopias. Just as there's a difference between the conviction that civilization will collapse and the understanding that we are active agents in that process, one way or another, and that role is extremely important which Ted argues as well. What Ted is saying is far from new: his framework is the framework is revolutionary thinking.

As far as I can see it, revolution will never be able to overcome civilization. We need something different. We need something that can handle more complexity and move beyond rhetoric and party lines. For me, that is primal war: a physical, spiritual and psychological war waged against civilization and the domestication process itself. It is about the world we live in and the world we want to live in.

This is something Ted knows about, but would never have made a part of his manifesto. In the interview with Theresa Kintz and through our letters, Ted talked about the relationships that he developed with the region where he lived, the animals he hunted and watched. He talked about how he was pushed over the edge when the place he had come to love was being threatened by developers. When he realized that you cannot escape the technological system. That is what drove him to action.

It is that spiritual connection that inspires me and demands some respect. It was that spiritual connection that threw aside any philosophical quibbles about what would be the best action was needed and what morality limits certain types of action. Ted knew that something

needed to be done and did something. Was it the most efficient or best action? Hardly, but it was significant (assuming again that Ted and FC are the same). But hindsight is always best. And with that hindsight, Ted offered one of his most important and controversial essays, 'Hit Where it Hurts'.

The article has its setbacks, but too often those have stood in the way of seeing what Ted put on the table: an open discussion about what the most efficient targets might be for any group seeking to destroy the technological infrastructure. And again, his rather hard-line stance on a strictly anti-technological movement comes through. He mentions that acts like smashing up chain stores and liberating animals are not revolutionary activities since they aren't threatening to the existence of the system. That much is true. Smashing chain stores and liberating animals won't bring about the collapse of civilization, but I would hardly consider them "pointless". I elaborated on this in another essay<sup>10</sup>, but these are valid acts of rage and resistance. I don't think anyone would say that they would destroy civilization in and of themselves, but they do undermine the grasp of the domesticators and the order that they have imposed upon us. They are significant.

And, of anyone, Ted should be aware of this. If we only consider actions that seriously threaten the technological system to be revolutionary then FC's bombs and manifesto wouldn't be considered revolutionary either. I don't know if FC thought that the technological system would have come to its knees through that bombing campaign from the start but clearly 'they' realized that wouldn't happen in 1995 when the manifesto was sent out as an end to the bomb-



ing. The action was more powerful in what it represented than what it accomplished. It brought the message that something can be done.

And 'Hit Where it Hurts' carries that message further. Five primary targets are proposed: the electric-power grid, the communications industry, the computer industry, the propaganda industry, and the biotechnology industry. Without these, we are told, the system will collapse. For the first three, that is absolutely correct. The system cannot survive without electricity, and with disruptions in the communications and computer industry, it can be assured that the system will not be able to get back online in the relatively short time span between civilization and a post-civilized world.

The propaganda industry and biotechnology industry need a bit more attention. I can understand the grudge Ted would hold towards the propaganda industry, but fighting it has *always* been an excessively uphill battle. As its own target, it is far too large. Granted, I wish it would be destroyed, but I don't see it as a more viable target than the other ones mentioned in the article. Without electricity, the propaganda industry will be done, but I see little reason to believe it will happen before hand.

The biotechnology industry makes much more sense. Biotechnology and

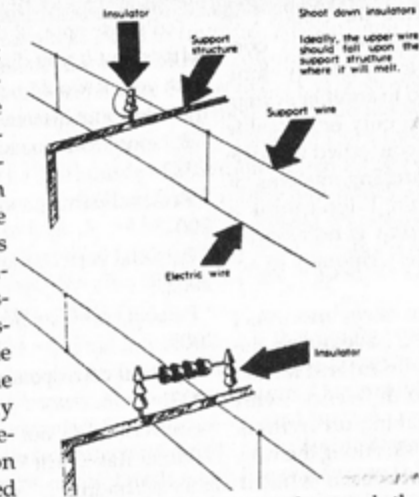
nanotechnology are both vital frontiers to the advancement and continued existence of civilization. That makes them rather clear targets. But it makes sense as a frontier of civilization. In the same article, Ted considers the timber industry to be a "side issue", and logically not a primary target. No doubt, most anti-civilization leaning folks involved one way or another with the timber industry

are well aware that they are not gaining ground.

But gaining ground is not necessarily the point. Maintaining ground is. The timber industry and a number of animal enslavers, like the biotechnology industry, all stand at the frontier between civilization and remaining wildness. If one is a viable target,

why is action directed towards the others not part of that revolution? It comes back to the single track attack and the difference between what an anti-technological movement and an anti-civilization momentum may look like. Desires will always determine action.

I think that is the essential difference between Ted and I, which is why I keep pointing it out. He wants a strictly anti-technological revolution and I want to see the destruction of civilization coming through an aware and active momentum. More to the point, I'd like to see a revolt against domestication in the sense of a primal war.







That is definitely reflected in our different views and critiques. But that doesn't mean there aren't major points of agreement and solidarity. In his personal views, the world Ted wants to live in isn't all that different from the world I envision. But I can't see his revolution, or any revolution for that matter, taking us there.

I wouldn't question for a second that Ted's revolution is an anarchist revolution. He is wary of all the issues I've mentioned because he's rightly concerned that attempts to completely eliminate them would lead to another system where equality is the only enforceable law. He is ultimately concerned with the elimination of overarching systems of domination. But, again, I don't think a strictly destructive front is necessarily the only one available. Critique and action can coexist.

We do have much in common. As I see it, what Ted and FC have put on the table is extremely important and far too important to lose it to differences with Ted's perspectives. Taking on civilization is a tremendous task. Along the way we're going to have to learn what it means to be critical and we're going to

have to look everywhere for something to help us along the way.

And for raising the bar and bringing important tactical issues up, we owe FC and Ted enough credit to take what is most relevant from their contributions seriously and act on it.

<sup>1</sup> Personal correspondence. January 18, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ted's side note: "I call these people leftists, but if you disagree I won't argue with you. It would be a waste of time to quibble about a semantic point."

<sup>4</sup> Personal correspondence. January 18, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Personal correspondence. August 5, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Personal correspondence. November 4, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Personal correspondence. January 7, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Personal correspondence. August 23, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> *Green Anarchy* no. 8, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Primal Rage, 'Hit Where it Hurts, But in the Meantime...'. *Green Anarchy* no. 9, 2002.

#### SOME ECO-FACTS:

- Females of some species of fireflies are able to fake the flash of smaller species. Once seduced, the duped male fireflies are eaten.
- Ravens play by flying upside down and frolick together in the sky, play tag and drop sticks and other objects for each other to catch.
- Black Bear babies are a little bigger than a chipmunk when born.
- There are about 319-338 species of Hummingbirds in the Americas and 0 species in the rest of the world.
- Sphagnum Moss was used as diapers by some Native Americans.
- Neither Brook Trout or Lake Trout are Trout but are Char. Early settlers named them for their resemblance to European Brook Trout.
- Walleyes are gargantuan perch, the biggest members of the family.
- It takes a beaver 3 minutes to cut a tree that is 5 inches thick.
- The name 'moose' is derived from the Algonkian word 'moosee' meaning "bark or twig eater."



The Earth lives, speaks and plays in rhythms. All too often I meet people who thoroughly enjoy the outdoors and know considerable survival skills, yet are ignorant of these rhythms. Be they bird watchers, goal-oriented wreckreationalists or even survivalists, their hearts do not soar at the morning's birdsongs, their day hikes do not stray or pause to learn from a plant growing in obvious defiance of a field guide's limitations. Even if their ears are cocked for the primordial call of sandhill cranes, it is only as a hobby and not a way of life - or rather the Way of Life. A gardener, after killing off nearly all the neighboring hornets, asked me what they were "good for" and was shocked when I showed them fertilizing his flowers. Rewilding is more than skills and know-how; it is an attitude, an understanding.

The song of the seasons is written on the wind and can still be heard and taught through openness, selflessness and patience. For escaping the murderous grip of our culture, patterning one's life after the patterns of the Land is essential. Adopting a bioregional diet is extremely important, but even this can be a limiting and narrow pursuit without the ability to listen to the Land. One can over-harvest, as was done with the once abundant wild ginseng, or it can be turned into a mere "healthy outdoor activity," not only too goal-focused, but also rather selfish; for living with the Earth means living in an interdependent community, absent of individualism and "evolutionary" domination. Learning to recognize the mating, birthing and migrating seasons of different plants, animals and insects is a lesson in the lives and rhythms outside oneself.

Last night I called my neighbors out into the street to see the huge rising moon. One neighbor said she was surprised the moon was so low this late at night and it dawned on me that no one here knew anything about the lunar or celestial patterns, something so simple it was how our months were divided. When did we lose this intimate connection to the stars? I'm beginning to think it was our most recent connection lost, for it is in the sky where our curiosity is still held, our imagination still fueled. Stargazing with friends and strangers is one of our most honest moments, and even when I'm alone with the night sky I find myself open as if I were among old friends, and through a Barred owl's call and falling stars, I realize that I am.

When one's life changes and shifts with the natural flows of the Land and moods of the Earth, something remark-



able happens, absent of words or whispers of logic. Here in the North, with the spring thaw, the sap gushes from the maple trees, and as it boils down in my kettle day after day, I watch great changes wash over the Land. Many birds return for half frozen bugs and mating, the skunks are awake and the night breezes tell their sad story of sluggish awakenings and fast cars. Steelhead trout will soon run fierce from the Great Lakes to fight dams and spawn in the shallows. Then comes the month of dandelion sun and morel mushrooms, lilacs, feisty bluegill and hungry bass. Soon black cherries will follow elderflowers and all the season's cycles will burst forth with color and fragrance yet remain as unpredictable as the morning flight of swallows. But there is always more, more than what we can see, more to learn. Time is the only thing needed, and luckily the only thing we really have.

One can learn to survive in the wild, yet still not know the Way of Life. Primitive skills are a necessity, but the essence of rewilding cannot be taught by humans to humans. It can only be heard in brooks and birdsong, seen in the eyes of the undomesticated and felt through immeasurable amounts of time spent watching, listening, conversing and reflecting in the wild.

So awake with the sun and breathe the morning air, track animals for days on end, camp in the snow, play games with the stars, make love in the rain, ignore trails and hike in creeks and marshes instead, speak to oaks and muskrats, (but don't be surprised when they respond), get dirty, be childlike and remember no one was born civilized. Only then will the Earth open itself up to you like a field in bloom or a development in flames.

"...there is...music in these hills, by no means audible to all. To hear even a few notes of it you must first live here for a long time, and you must know the speech of hills and rivers. Then on a still night, when the campfire is low and the Pleiades have climbed over rimrocks, sit quietly and listen for a wolf to howl, and think hard of everything you have seen and tried to understand. Then you may hear it- a vast pulsing harmony- its score inscribed on a thousand hills, its notes the lives and deaths of plants and animals, its rhythms spanning the seconds and the centuries."

-Aldo Leopold

### Healing through Resistance

When the ebb and flow of the Land are mirrored in the life of a person, once the changing moons and tides become the movements of one's own life, the suffering of the Earth is obvious. Your personal shifts and seasons are disrupted when the Earth is also, its pain is finally heard, understood and internalized. It becomes your pain and when the Earth heals you, it is only natural to do everything in your power to heal the Earth.

But it is one thing to understand the Earth is suffering and another to realize the severity of what this means. Some live completely primitive, focusing on personal healing instead of spreading wildness to every oppressed being. They ignore civilization by retreating to the sanctuary of wilderness and can only wait until civilization comes to them. On



the other hand, most ignore their wildness and continue the pain by supporting the modern world with their very lives, but either way they are both ignoring something deep and either way they cannot fully realize the simple truth the whole world is screaming out. When I was young I saw this truth in my father's cancer and the chemical warning signs that lined the rivers I fished. I felt it later in the sting of tear-gassed streets and heard it echoed in the voices of so-called friends blaming the violence on me for simply defending myself. And now I feel it everywhere, m o w e d lawns, streetlights blotting out stars, the carcasses of pregnant deer left to rot, ears still flicking in the wake of passing cars. The truth is simple: This is War, and until we realize that, we are useless.

Before I began the life-long recovery process that is rewilding or ever even heard of anarchy, I would wonder why I was born into this all-consuming culture of death and destruction and forced to participate. From as far back as I can remember family members

joked that I was born in the wrong century, the life I wanted to live belonged only to the past. I would secretly curse highways and the billboards that lined them and sometimes cry at the sight of powerlines and radio towers. My life was swallowed by the hopelessness this culture feeds off of. So when I came across instances of powerline sabotage like the Bolt Weevil farmers of Montana and more recent actions popping up all over Italy, my desperation became empowerment and I knew then why I was

born into civilization. And now when I see those towers and feel the destructive reach of the civilized world, instead of crying I have to laugh because I know that living roots will break the pavement, I know what is responsible for the continuation of ecocide and we cannot let it continue.

With wildness as the foundation of our

lives, the core of our being, our resistance will be as instinctual as that which drives spawning fish to charge the concrete that blocks their rivers. It will be as natural as rockslides taking out roads, as un-





yielding as wildfires swallowing condos. But, ironically enough, it is our domesticated upbringing that empowers us as well. That is our opponent's greatest fear, and rightly so, for we know the inner workings of civilization, we lived the civilized mindset and know that no dialogue can get us out. No protest permits, cardboard signs or sit-in chants can achieve our goals or attain our world we once shared with the eastern wood bison, Michigan grayling, blue pike, among others. We have more power to undo this horror than any other being since. Civilization has trained us and we will be its downfall. If activists do nothing to stop this machine with their reformist, pacifist tactics or techno-utopian dreams (the nightmare of the Earth) then we are also to blame for our endless arguing and debating with such people. By *living* against civilization, we act against them and their spectatorship of the natural world. It is their belief in "conservation" rather than complete immersion into a direct relationship that prevents any connection on an interpersonal level. Direct action comes from direct experience and those opposed to it in any form lack the intimacy and kinship with those they are supposedly defending. Condemning beautiful and powerful acts of wild defiance and self-defense in favor of a festive non-action aimed at anything less than complete collapse is a failure from the start, an insult to the Land and the depth of emotion that forced someone to act with the night. Ecological direct action is a full mind-body-soul reaction to a personally violent attack. It is a just and emphatic

SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

response by those whose life is the Earth, whose friends and relatives are the displaced and dying.

In late spring a small group of us walked through an ancient Appalachian forest soon to be logged. We sat quietly under old hemlocks and cooled ourselves with the spring water that trickled softly through dark rhododendrons. We lived with these woods for many days now, some of us for countless



moons and others their whole lives. We learned the ways of these woods as best we could in the amount of time we had. We laughed in the rain while others fled, and played with the foxfire and glowing insects no one there had ever seen before. As we sat and listened to the breeze touch the tulip poplars, there was nothing to talk about anymore. We had an understanding with this forest and we knew what we were there to do. Soft waterfall mist filled our lungs and cooled our skin as I opened a book at random and read where my eyes fell: "This, I thought, is . . . the feel of a home worth dying for—at the heart of it love of the earth with all its challenges and re-wards."

Ecological resistance begins with personal healing, breaking the lie of anthropocentrism to begin an understanding of the Earth, a relationship with the wind and the water. It is hearing the Land laugh and cry; it is knowing, without statistics, the destructive power of dams, governments, and cities. It is knowing that it ends only when they fall.



"How does a social human being forsake the culture they were raised by, the culture they know and otherwise live in, for a lifestyle they were neither prepared for nor taught to value???"

-Meadow Bejarno, *Subsist/Resist* Zine #2

*Culture: the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought typical of a population or community at a given time.*

-Webster's International Dictionary

Rewilding cannot be fully achieved in social isolation. We have evolved to reach our fullest expression of humanness within the context of other people. The freedom of the independent individual is a myth. The trauma of Civilization blinds us to our interdependence to the land & to each other. Gathering as tribes is a crucial component to our collective healing.

**We can't do this alone & we don't have to.**

When I first began the process of understanding the destructive nature of the culture I was being indoctrinated into, I lashed out & rejected it completely. It soon became apparent that I didn't have many other options. Part of my despair was the sinking feeling that what I was being offered wasn't mine. My inheritance as a white American of European ancestry is a privilege built on a bloody foundation of conquest. I sought refuge in sub-culture, but nothing seemed to fill the void left by being raised without knowledge of my heritage in a white suburban neighborhood that never quite felt like home. I hungered for elders to tell me stories, for rights of passage and traditions that would celebrate my con-

nections to people & place. Although my parents were kind & did their honest best to make sense of the world for me, they themselves were just as ill equipped to deal with the demands of modern industrial civilization. My upbringing, with few examples of effective methods for creating healthy relationships & respectfully interacting with my environment, left me with little to work with.

The history of my distant ancestors, the foraging tribes of ancient Europe, has been almost entirely exterminated by the same alien force homogenizing the planet to this day. Civilization consumes all that it touches, taking & incorporating what it finds profitable & eliminating the rest. Many of us are left adrift & thirsting for meaning, our roots to our ancestors severed & hidden.



A combination of a desperate desire for meaningful cultural grounding & a history of taking without giving can have destructive consequences. Learning from the successes of peoples who live or have lived in balance with their environments is one thing. Adopting that peoples cultural ways as your own is entirely another. Cultural tradition, spirituality and ceremony are reflective of a deeply personal relationship with the land. Mimicking this is like taking someone else's love letter to their sweetheart & giving it to your own lover. It is symptomatic of a deeply seated need that for many has not been met, but its inherent shallowness both dishonors the host culture & circumvents the process of getting to know one's self & reconnecting with the land on a personal level.

### Cultural Treason

If we are going to fill the vacuum left by rejecting what we've been given, we need to nourish the seeds of a new culture that acknowledges the changes that have taken place over the last several generations. We have many complications to consider: private property, loss of traditional knowledge, law enforcement, wildfire suppression, depletion of key subsistence resources, ecological degradation, wildlife management, human domestication, habitat loss, alienation, tainted water, human population imbalance, cultural genocide & so on. Our current global reality is very different from the one in which past foraging cultures developed. The adoption of traditional foraging strategies used by pre-contact peoples is no longer possible

(or legal) in many places, but by drawing inspiration from the teachings of the past we can adapt to the present. The earth will still provide for all of our needs if we learn how to ask.

As modern industrial age humans with generations of domestication to overcome, healing needs to be at the center of any efforts to build healthy communities.

**It would be all too easy to inadvertently perpetuate the mistakes & neurosis of the culture we've all been patterned with.**

If we can learn to listen, we have the same sources of wisdom available to us that has guided all successful groups of hunter-gatherers: the land itself (including all of our non-human relations) & the collective memory of thousands of generations of our ancestors burned into our genes. In many ways it's true that we can't "go back"—as poisoned fish & game wardens will attest to—but we can move forward with the knowledge of where we've been & what we want. As small communities committed to rewilding together we gain the collective strength to walk two worlds in search of our dreams. We can relearn the ways of gathering to honor the land in a way that has meaning to us.

"Life outside a person is an extension of the life within him. This compels him to be part of it and accept responsibility for all creatures great and small. Life becomes harder when we live for others, but it becomes richer and happier."

-Albert Schweitzer

*We're forming a hunter-gatherer community focused on rewilding in Alaska. This article is a preview of our next zine "Reclaim/Rewild #2" coming soon. For more information or to order our first zine (Reclaim/Rewild #1) check out our website: [www.rewild.org](http://www.rewild.org) or email us at: [feralhuman@ziplip.com](mailto:feralhuman@ziplip.com).*



*It's Friday afternoon and I'm doing paperwork in my cubicle—filling out the dozens of forms needed by my boss to prove to the administration that I'm doing the job they pay me for. In reality, all the papers prove is that I spent most of Friday doing paperwork in my cubicle. Glancing at the clock on the wall, I notice that the workday is nearly over—another week has passed and it's time for the weekend. On the bus ride back to my apartment, I think about my plans for tomorrow. I fantasize about getting out of the city and maybe going camping. My thoughts carry me away from the bump & jerk of the bus and its faint mix of diesel-fumes and people-smells to the last time I sat around a fire with friends, breathed fresh air & woodsmoke, slept out under the stars, and awoke to a sunrise heralded by birdsong. My fantasy ends with the memory that I promised my best friend & his wife that I would help them move this Saturday. They have a big apartment and lots of stuff, so it will take awhile. On the walk from the bus stop to my apartment, I stop at the grocery store and buy a frozen pizza and a six-pack of beer. Later, the slight twinge of empty discomfort I experience in the silence of my studio is quickly subsumed by the flickering light and canned laughter coming from my TV and the slight buzz entering my brain as I finish my third beer. During a commercial break I hit mute on the remote control and stare blankly out the window and into the distance. I find myself thinking...just what is Reality? What is the Truth of my Life?*

*It's years from that particular Friday (though I have no idea what day of the week and no reason to care). I'm fishing along the shore of a glassy lake surrounded by deep green forest. The sun is tracking low across the western half of the sky and I'm starting to feel a slight hunger which tells me that it's nearly time to rejoin my people for our evening meal. My willow gathering basket contains five good-sized panfish caught today, one for each of us. On the way back to camp, I stop on the edge of an open meadow and gather some wild greens (milkweed, nettles & burdock) to accompany the fish. I notice tracks in the soil telling me that Black Bear has passed by this meadow today. My senses heighten in response to this new awareness, and I notice more signs that tell me what Black Bear was eating today. Other signs in the trees lead me to spot Porcupine lounging in a nearby Hemlock, lazily munching on a branch. In the distance, I hear the call of the Loon. A bit later, As I approach our lean-to shelter the smell of woodsmoke*



and sound of spontaneous laughter tells me that my campmates are already back from their day's activities. I sit with them in a circle around the fire where we share food as well as stories of our day's adventures, joys and hardships. Shortly after dinner, we bed down for the night and my thoughts slowly fade into Dream-time...

I am sometimes asked—what is the main difference between civilization and wildness? My most succinct answer borrows a bit from the words of Bob Black in his essay "The Abolition of Work". To put it bluntly—civilizing is serious work. Wilding is serious play.

The ramifications of this are profound and far-reaching.

Doing work (i.e. "forced labor") requires that we subdue our deepest inclinations—that we act contrary to our own innate will. Every moment that we spend working, one part of our psyche must maintain control over all the other parts who wish that we were playing instead. In fact, one of the most prevalent desires in our society is to either escape work—say by winning the lottery or retiring, or to somehow reconcile work and play—to get paid for doing what we love and feel is deeply important. Some in our society are able to realize such dreams, but most are never able to do so—instead, they struggle with the various yokes placed upon them by societies numerous bosses' until their spirits finally succumb and lose vital essence.

The same principle is found in the dynamics between us and every other creature drawn in to the civilizing process. Every moment that we labor to subdue the earth, one part of the ecosystem (us) must maintain control over all the other parts (animals, plants, insects,

bacteria, as well as various powers and forces of nature) who wish that we were all playing together instead. If we cease (or even just slacken) our constant effort to maintain control over our environment, then life goes back to playing. It is only through constant inputs of massive amounts of energy that civilization is able to keep the natural tendencies of life on planet earth subdued.

What this all means for the big picture is that the civilizing process is akin to rowing upstream, whereas the rewilding process is akin to flowing downstream. Just like water, nature flows into open space—and civilization destroys far more than it creates, which is to say, it opens space. So, just as water always naturally flows downstream, rewilding is always happening—even if at only the most subtle levels. Ants, cockroaches, mice and rats begin re-invading suburban homes almost as soon as the exterminator leaves. Weeds (most of them edible) spring up in lawns immediately once herbicides and lawnmowers are no longer applied. Agricultural fields sprout weeds just as quickly as do suburban lawns and attract "vermin" even quicker than suburban houses. Clear-cut forests re-grow themselves with equal tenacity—in fact, the five small wilderness areas of east Texas (where I sit as I write this) were all clear-cut less than 100 years ago. And the North Woods of Wisconsin (where I spent a year living in a primitive camp in the wilderness) was almost completely devastated to build the city of Chicago just over a century ago. At this moment, wild animals are continuing to invade farms and cities—North America's white-tail deer, cottontail rabbit, raccoon, red-fox and coyote populations have been on the rise during the past cen-



tury—I've encountered many of them along the edges of and within the confines of farm fields, towns and even major urban areas. I've seen red foxes slip through the streets of Denver in the late evening hunting for housecats and stealing from dog-food dishes. I've hunted feral hogs (once domesticated pigs brought over by Russian settlers) and gathered wild figs on abandoned homesteads in northern California (from trees planted by the same pioneers who were responsible for exterminating Ishi's people). During the past four decades Buffalo have been returning to various areas of the plains with help from their American Indian allies. Grey wolves are now returning to areas from which they were once exterminated—new sightings are occurring in both northern Colorado and northern Wisconsin as wild populations extend their ranges further and further south. Red Wolves are returning to small enclaves in the south-eastern forests after enduring more than two decades when their only surviving members were doing so in captivity.

Now my point is obviously not to say that all is fine and well here on planet Earth—because of course, it isn't. The environmental devastation wrought by modern industrial civilization is readily observable and should be obvious to anyone who has honestly looked into the matter. My point here is merely that *despite* the industrial machine's relentless holocaust, wildness has not surrendered nor is it on the retreat—in fact, it has never been on the retreat (being

beaten back is not the same thing as retreating). Wild-Life continually springs from the cracks and fills every void available to it because it is essentially *at play*. And so similarly, human re-wilding can, and should be an essentially pro-active, playful and joyful process. While nearly all leftists and most anarchists tend to react to every crime perpetrated by those in power, Wild-Life *Lives*.

Wildness returns because it is the way of Joy, the way of Kinship, and the way of Spirit. Wildness returns because it *IS* the Circle of Life and death—it is life worth living and death worth dying—and more life springing from each death. In a land of domesticated, stagnant & wasting spirits, wildness returns because it is Life at its most essential and vital—it is *Life in the Raw*. It returns because in a land dominated by make-believe and illusion, it is *Real*. It returns because it is *always here* and it is *always now*.

And I believe the signs of the times are that wildness is getting ready to return *BIG TIME* and *IN FORCE*. The Mayan calendar indicates that the age of corn will come to an end in 2012. What is the age of corn in the Mayan version of history? The age of corn is the age in which the Mayans live by agriculture—cultivating their primary food source, which is maize. What could bring an end to the age of Mayan agriculture? Two words—climate change. The Mayans have already experienced significant civilized collapse due to climate change—the end of their classical period of powerful kings and city-state build-





ing collapsed during one of the more significant abnormalities in the climate record of the last 10,000 years. It would stand to reason then, that the old Mayan sages may have had particularly good insight into how climate is capable of undermining civilization. And while a relatively minor climatic blip during the last 10,000 years was successful in undermining Mayan imperial developments, it did not prevent them from cultivating their primary agricultural staple. What is on the horizon just might, however. Recent developments in the field of paleoclimatology have given scientists a radically new picture of our Earth's climate history. The orthodox view of the last hundred years was that the Earth's climate has been and will continue to be characterized by stability. This was based on the outdated understanding that past climatic change had happened slowly, with minor blips taking hundreds if not thousands of years and major changes taking tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of years. Discoveries in the last decade have revealed that stability has actually only characterized the last 10,000 or so years of Earth's history (the period in which agriculture developed). For the 100,000 years prior to that, the Earth's climate continually underwent wild swings, often on a time scale of mere decades (for more on this, read Richard B. Alley's "The Two-mile Time Machine"). Such a climate made the development of agriculture impossible, and a return to such a climate would seriously undermine the practice of agriculture worldwide (for more on this, read Brian Fagan's "The Long Summer" and "Floods, Famines, & Emperors"). In other words, the last 10,000 years of Mother Earth's "domesticity" have been a relatively brief inter-

lude in the life of *THE* archetypal "wild woman". If the Earth's climate goes wild again, it will very likely take us with it.

In fact, the Mayan practice of farming is far more stable and climate-resilient (due to the use of a diverse blend of hardy heirloom varieties of corn) than what is being practiced by countries dominated by modern industrial agribusiness. Modern hybridization and mono-cropping have seriously undermined the genetic diversity of mainstream global food crops to the extent that all of our core agricultural staples are essentially endangered species from a genetic diversity perspective (see chapter seven of "Earth in the Balance" by Al Gore for more on this). Since it is the genetic diversity of a species' population that enables it to adapt to and survive changes in its environment, modern mono-crop farming practices are a sure recipe for disaster when set against the possibility of an unstable future climate. In addition, we are already beginning to see diminished returns in terms of our agricultural technocrat's ability to control disease through antibiotics, their ability to control bugs with chemical insecticide, their herbicide's ability to control weeds, and their chemical fertilizer's ability to restore the soil. Soil depletion as well as plagues of resistant weeds, bugs, and disease are all on the near horizon for modern agriculture, just as they have plagued farmers in the late stages of every civilization throughout history. Genetic engineering and chemicals can only forestall the inevitable and will ultimately make the return to balance that much more violent & traumatic for all those involved. In other words, if Mayan agriculture goes down, you can bet Con-Agra™ is going down.

On top of this, we add the looming



problem of peak oil. The modern industrial economy basically turns oil into food—in fact, it turns oil into nearly everything we need for life—food, transportation, clothing, shelter, heat, etc.. The growth of our global economy is contingent on pumping more and more cheap oil out of the ground year after year. However, such growth does not continue forever when it is based on the availability of a non-renewable resource. Global oil production is near the verge of peaking, and once that happens the growth of the global industrial economy will begin to reverse itself into precipitous decline (see [www.hubbertpeak.com](http://www.hubbertpeak.com), [www.peakoil.org](http://www.peakoil.org), and read "The Party's Over: Oil, War, and the Fate of Industrial Societies" by Richard Heinberg for more on this).

Put together the three factors of; #1 the onset once again of a radically unstable climate, #2 industrial mono-crop agriculture's precarious lack of genetic diversity and inherent unsustainability relative to soils, disease, insects, and weeds, and #3 peak oil, and you get a recipe for not only the end of the "age of corn", but the end of modern industrial agriculture worldwide. Certainly such a collapse is not going to happen overnight—in fact it will likely take decades, perhaps even a century, to fully play itself out. However, the beginning of such an end is certain to be right around the corner—and if any credence is given to prophetic Mayan sages, the date for entering that turn may very well

be 2012.

So what do we do with the knowledge that civilization cannot deliver on the future it tells us we must sell our present for? Quite simply, we opt out of the rat-race and its false 401K-promises and start living our wildest dreams now. We get together, cut out the middle-man (i.e. work-for-pay) and learn to live directly from the land. We begin to align ourselves with the playful forces of nature and the returning flow of wildness. We enable this wildness to return in ourselves, in our communities, and throughout the earth—both in small cracks within civilization and in larger tracks on the edge of civilization. We then create opportunities for others to follow with us as the spirit of our authenticity and wildness becomes contagious.

How do we do this? First of all, we need to begin opening space for

people to come together & learn how to live in direct, unmediated, and neo-primitive ways. People need to be given the chance to re-acquire a taste for the experience of an authentic, intimate & sharing relationship with each other, the Land, and it's Wild Life. And since breaking free from domestication can be a highly challenging long-term process, we need relatively safe, supportive places where we can come together and share both the joy of our successes as well as the heartbreak of our failures. Failures and setbacks will inevitably come from engagement in any serious adventure of spirit, but they can be transformed





into valuable lessons when properly received. We can begin opening space for this by purchasing small plots of land near national forest and wilderness, or by living nomadic lives while squatting on national forest land. If the Land is purchased, it can be opened up for fellow primitives to stay there long-term or as they pass through the area. People can hunt, fish, gather, trap, & camp on public land, while being loosely based on private land as needed. If a squatter's camp is erected in the national forest, its location can be made known through informal networks so that hospitality can be extended to those who might like to come & live there as well. If we had a network of these safe-havens around North America, an informal circuit of nomadic or semi-nomadic bands could form & learn to live in neo-primitive ways with active support from each other. Such support would then tend to build strong bonds of spiritual kinship that could be counted on in a crisis. (For examples of people already forming communities and/or engaging in holistic primitive-living activities see: [www.teachingdrum.org](http://www.teachingdrum.org), [www.rewild.org](http://www.rewild.org), [www.wildroots.org](http://www.wildroots.org), [www.dancinghawk.com](http://www.dancinghawk.com), and [www.hollowtop.com/lynx\\_shepherd.htm](http://www.hollowtop.com/lynx_shepherd.htm))

One additional idea for neo-primitive living that I think is worth playing with is the possibility of using small primitive sailboats and squatting up and down the coastline and on offshore islands (Umiak skin-boats are one type of boat that could be used, see [www.skinboats.com/umiak.html](http://www.skinboats.com/umiak.html), and [www.skinboats.com/umiak\\_adventures.html](http://www.skinboats.com/umiak_adventures.html)). The coastline of the Pacific Northwest from northern California to Alaska seems particularly

well suited to such an endeavor. The Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the coastline of the Baja of Mexico may offer serious possibilities as well.

Also, these ideas are not just for those of us living in "first world" North America. While traveling in Guatemala and Belize this past winter I found a number of areas where these ideas could be put into practice. I also encountered people who had been working on communal permaculture sites in Costa Rica (permaculture is another potentially good area for neo-primitive experimentation, see [www.permacultureactivist.net](http://www.permacultureactivist.net) for more info). "Forest Gardening" appears to have good potential for those interested in neo-primitive living in areas where land is tight, see the books "Forest Gardening" by Robert Hart and "How to Make a Forest Garden" by Patrick Whitefield).

Once established, these safe-havens can hopefully become a place where we respectfully ask the Spirits of the Land to re-create our character as people once again. Our primary teachers need to be our Wild Relations and Mother Earth herself. However, we can also respectfully follow the lead of many American Indians who are re-connecting & re-viving their Old-Ways, though we should be cautious & sensitive to the risks of cultural expropriation while venturing into this area. Hopefully, we want to get in touch with our own hearts enough to honestly re-create OUR OWN authentic Earth-based cultures, not just steal from Indigenous Peoples as civilization has always done. The operative principles here need to be respect and reciprocity—give back to native peoples & build bonds of solidarity based on common struggles and needs. Don't just



take, give back. (For a few examples of points-of-entry when it comes to possible connections with indigenous peoples see:

- [www.nanish.org](http://www.nanish.org),
- [www.treatyland.com/index.html](http://www.treatyland.com/index.html),
- [www.ienearth.org](http://www.ienearth.org), [www.survival-international.org](http://www.survival-international.org),
- [www.fpcn-global.org](http://www.fpcn-global.org),
- [www.americanmovement.org](http://www.americanmovement.org))

In addition, we can help to facilitate the same process on the Land itself through support for visions like the Wildlands Project (see [www.twp.org](http://www.twp.org), pick up the magazine "Wild Earth", and read the book "Rewilding North America" written by Dave Foreman). Then as more wild land opens up, more space is created for more neo-primitive safe-havens. In this way, rewilding the People will support rewilding the Land and rewilding the Land will support rewilding the People.

Lastly, I'd just like to emphasize that the way I see it rewilding is not about what we think or what opinions we hold. It is about re-learning both playful and respectful *ways of seeing* and *ways of being* within our most basic relationships—*right now*. It is about re-orienting ourselves to the ever-present reality of our wild Earth Mother and our deepest intuitive selves—rather than continu-

ing to orient ourselves to the pseudo-reality of the technological regime and the various lies society tells us about who we are. Now is the time for us "working people" to learn to play again—to learn how to play with our fellow humans and all our Wild Relations. Right now wildness is playfully returning everywhere...will you come outside and play?



*Generations have seen centuries pass, perhaps millennia, since the particular & peculiar Friday that opened this story. The People live wild as they seem always to have done—indeed, as all Life seems always to have done. But the elders occasionally tell stories (usually when a youth is about to embark on the passage into adulthood) of how some of the ancestors once got caught in a trap set by their own minds and briefly fell from balance. They tell of how much suffering and confusion this all caused, and how Mother Earth scolded them harshly and then lovingly led those first few seekers—those who were truthful & humble enough to accept Her scolding—back into the Circle of their Relations.*

Anyone inspired by these thoughts can email me at: [redwolfreturns@hotmail.com](mailto:redwolfreturns@hotmail.com)

**SOME ECO-FACTS:**

- Woodchucks dig quickly, excavating up to 700 lbs. of soil for a burrow.
- The sound level of a Spring Peeper call at 4-8 inches is 110-120 decibels. The sound level of a Jet engine at 70 yards is 120 decibels. The sound level of an average conversation is 60 decibels.
- Coral mushrooms do not grow under water.

# sticks, stones and nursing homes

kevin tucker

"I wonder what it would feel like to kill mommy."

This came from the mouth of a four year old child. Not something I pulled from the newspaper, but the child of a friend's friend. Your completely average four year old American child. Smiling pictures, piles of toys, and loves fast food. A child I've seen off and on since he was born.

And he's hardly alone.

The same day I heard about that line (which I later found out wasn't a single thought or bad mood but an everyday topic), I heard about another friend of a friend's child. This one is nine years old and duct taped a butcher knife to his hand and ran around trying to slash everyone. His parents hide food and drinks because he shits and pisses in them. Another otherwise average American kid.

True enough thoughts alone don't kill. But the line between thought and action is becoming easier to cross. It's becoming easier to kill. But the issue isn't about being more psychologically prepared to kill. It's about being psychologically separated from life and reality.

If these four and nine year olds aren't convincing, you probably don't have to look very far for much more of the same. Two years ago, in this area, a sixteen year old boy killed his brother with a hammer and went to a school dance. Now he's a child in an adult prison who is considered hopeless.

If those stories make the local news anymore it can be surprising.

Let's face it this sort of thing is SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

hardly shocking anymore. Everyone wonders what's wrong with kids these days. Most people have their theories: lack of strong morals, weak education system, or hell bent right wing parents, bleeding heart liberal parents, not enough good ol' fashioned ass whippin', not enough therapy, lack of attention, too much T.V., too spoiled, and so on.

It's become an all too familiar topic and rarely do people have enough time or attention to actually try to change things (short of violence or anger). Opinions, of course, don't always have a lot of meaning. Unfortunately sedatives do, and they're much easier to come by. But no matter how the problem is or is not dealt with, we all know that there's a problem. But it's always 'their kids' or 'those kids'. We all know how to look the other way.

We all know how miserable modern life can be. Knowing this is a full time job, literally. We can talk about the problems of civilized, highly technological living and safely fall back into the passive nihilism that things aren't going to get better so we just have to make the best of it.



We could always improve things for ourselves if we really tried. Or we could win the lottery.

But when we look at ourselves, it can be really easy to just stop thinking about it all. Life's just too short and it's easier to go with the flow. Young adult to middle age, we just deal with what we're given. Let's step outside of that for a moment and think about the other parts of life where we're not just out to get 'what's ours': being young and being old.

All of us have been young. Most of us will probably be old. As Future obsessed as our rationally defined reality is, its just as much about eternally living in that mid-range of twenties and thirties. Or at least looking like it. Not many of us look forward to going 'over the hill'. We spend billions of dollars and thousands of hours to keep ourselves looking 'young and sexy'. We become very high maintenance.

But part of the dream of a better tomorrow is that we'll be there to live it. Happy, healthy, synthetically balanced us. We'll be slaves to the technological Future so long as it's to our benefit. We can ignore the consequences of Progress and the wonders of chemistry when it gives us stuff. We don't want to die, but we certainly don't want to grow older.

Either way, we're happy to report that modern technology allows us to live longer than ever before. This much may very well be true. More often than not though, a long life is really just a very slow death. Alzheimer's may be less of a physical condition than a psychological escape from the reality that things didn't get better.

In the First World, one of the fastest growing areas of population is the percentage of elderly people: a major sell-

ing point for Progress. But in a society that changes as quickly as ours, the elderly are quickly outdated. We keep them around for sentimental value and they're stored in tall, cheaply built filing cabinets called nursing homes where they receive the best babying and prolonged misery that money and social security can buy. Or is that tender loving care?

Once upon a time, people lived in egalitarian societies. There wasn't equality in the sense that we know it, but in the sense that there was no system of rank or worth. People were just people, young, old or in between. That can be hard to imagine. Damn hard really.

But for those of us basking in the wonders of modernity, it's hard because Progress and evolution make it unthinkable. We've naturalized hierarchy so much that we can't think of anything without it. An infant is without strength and knowledge and has no leverage or economic viability. An elderly person has knowledge but less strength. Might makes right and the strong and knowledgeable take control and determine all the rest. Any reality based off of this kind of thinking can't help but apply it everywhere. Our bosses make us feel inferior, our parents establish authority and we learn to trust experts rather than ourselves.

Somewhere something went horribly wrong.

The complete depravity of modernity is only the most obvious proof of that.

Economies breed economic thinking. We learn what is utilitarian or useful to carrying civilization forward. It's all about efficiency. When our lives are run like machines it should be no wonder that they must start and end that





way, from sonograms to oxygen tanks.

All animals are born with a will to survive. Humans are no exception. Most infants will not crawl off a cliff unless everyone is convinced (and has convinced them) that they don't know better. Likewise, a baby isn't likely to cry unless it needs something. That something is not 'tough love'; it is a cry for attention. This is something most people know, but civilization teaches us differently.

This is something Jean Liedloff learned when she lived among the Yequana and Sanema, indigenous societies in the Amazon. Children



were always touched and always treated with complete confidence, but were never pampered. They got what they needed without ever being told what to do and parents never expressed anger towards them. Every step children took was of their own will and motivation. She refers to this as instinctual parenting. That is something primal. Her realizations are rather universal. Should it be any surprise that few children raised this way ever thought about killing their mothers?

But civilized living is anti-primal. Children must be broken and must learn to obey orders from the start or they may never be of use. To become a part of the machine, we must start from birth. We must learn very early the need for efficiency. And what's more efficient than complete standardization?

Liedloff saw that a baby is taken immediately from the womb into the

arms of its mother. She's the first thing the child will see. It hears the familiar heart beat and feels the heat of bodies. She saw births in the hospital where children are taken in sterile hands, measured, weighed, and set alone to learn the most central message of civilization: infinite need. What it eventually gets is a pathetic substitute for being held:

bottles of formula, mechanical love, noise, and the loneliness and boredom of the crib. It cries for distant parents who are eager to ensure their independence and gets more attention from soft fabric than warm skin. It learns the impor-

ance of compromise.

Confident and fulfilled children are not efficient machines. Everything must be done to undermine them.

But the psychological pain goes deeper than this. It begins at conception. It takes in the anger, hate, love and fear of its mother in a world of compromise and the misery of not being efficient enough. We are assured that children are not thinking even if the religious say that they are full beings crafted by god. They're just lower on the social ladder.

We are told not to listen to the senses. Words are more important. Science can prove it.

With this divine knowledge, we can continue to inflict the original trauma without consequence. And even better, we can take no fault for children with homicidal and suicidal tendencies.

Chemical imbalances, chemical solutions. We breed the killers and they are



increasingly efficient.

We stock pile the elderly because it is our badge of success. We hide them because then we don't have to see how miserable life is when you can no longer control your body. We don't have to think about what it would be like to feel physically numb (we're actually experts at numbing our minds), to have someone help you to the bathroom, to be completely frail and not be able to do anything about it.

We visit. We bring sedatives. We do our good deed.

We think that will never be us.

Senility becomes a retreat for the elderly left with nothing. The Future that they spent their lives building leaves them in a cookie-cutter room and with a TV they often can't see or hear: another pathetic substitute. The original trauma comes full circle.

A life lived for the machine is not a life lived at all. Threats of going to hell for not working or threats of poverty were enough to make someone sell their days rather than live them. When that realization starts to set in and you're left alone to think about it, you can become bitter, sentimental, or your mind can shut down. There's not too much you can do about it at that point and when we can shove that reality away, it's something we don't have to think about either.

The problem with confident children is that they won't allow themselves to be sold. They can live in horribly inefficient ways and they can be happy. They don't need stuff. The purpose of life is something known and enacted rather than an interesting philosophical question. Or a basis for dissecting, measuring and

weighing the world.

Someone raised to be confident and happy doesn't wait for the Future. They won't make that compromise. When they feel their life can no longer be lived to its fullest, they don't fear death. They know that living in fear of death is not living at all. They know that they have lived well. They are ready to move on.

In our wonderful modernity, suicide is a crime. It cuts a wonderful, mechanically reproduced life short of the bounty of Progress. It's called a pathetic and desperate act. Morality tells us that life is sacred because our bodies are the property of god. Dependent, domesticated people aren't even allowed control over themselves.

But elderly suicide is an act of confidence. It is faced with glory and seals a life well lived.

By civilized values, this is unthinkable. Death cannot be accepted any more than life can be lived. We can never give up our faith and our blind hope that technology will make us young and vibrant again. We can never give up on the Future. When our last days are drawn out by the iron lung, we have nothing but incomplete lives to think about and we aren't able to give up.

As we listen to our heartbeats mechanical reproduced and amplified, all we can do is hope for a miracle. A cybernetic fountain of youth and another day to fight off the reality that we are animals and like all living beings we will die.

But this is not the suicide of our modernity. Everyday suicides are tragic. They are tragic because the passive nihilism of our reality allows only for confidence to mean an end to a life not lived, rather than the confidence to refuse compromise and fight. It is the last and bold-



est act of defeat. And sadly, it is often seen as the only possibility.

Our efficiency is destroying the earth just as it turns beings into dependents. Our hope for the Future relies on ghost resources, of finding more fuel for the machine. We will kill to maintain this civilization rather than ask if its end wouldn't be the best thing for us and for the earth.

Carrying capacity, human impact analysis, and human ecological footprint, all names for studies that show us this reality is running on finite sources: that maintaining the great escape from death is running the planet dry. We've been warned that the search is running out of fuel and its end is a matter of time. As William Catton pointed out, the inevitable 'tomorrow' was yesterday. We've peaked and the bright Future of hope is fading, and quickly. If we have anything to learn about collapse from past civilizations it is that no crash landing is a good one. And most of us won't even notice till it all comes crashing down.

And all of this is for a way of existing that cannot be fulfilling. A way of being that always looks to the Future and never just is. A way of life that we create, maintain and reproduce daily.

We have to play dumb when kids talk about killing.

We say they are desensitized.

What they are is efficient.

Most often we look towards technology. That's a search in the right direction, but rarely does it go all the way. TV and video games are efficient ways of keeping kids from thinking. It makes them passive while causing sensory overload and fills in for sensory deprivation. It's a cheap and constant thrill, a

fast paced adventure without any involvement.

System overload, system crash.

Children have almost always known how to kill. In gatherer/hunter societies, this is something they start at early. But they learn how about the connectivity of life: about the link between us all and the importance of not abusing it.

Zygmunt Bauman writes: "It has been perhaps the unique achievement of modern civilization to enable ordinary folks, "just good workers," to contribute to the killing—and to make that killing cleaner, morally antiseptic and efficient as never before." It is true that video games have been a virtual target practice and glamorized killing has numbed children. But these efficient killers are not full of blood lust. In fact, they have no lust, no passion, no being. They are becoming more mechanical daily.

This is not science and technology gone wrong. This is where Progress must go. This is how the Future must be. The end product of domestication is efficient dependents. As our technology becomes more advanced and creeps into every bit of life, this is how it looks.

This is the Future.

We hide animality and nature from the children. We hide everything that makes us human. We deny touch from birth. We deny confidence.

For millions of years people lived closely and without secrets. People would have sex by the fire at night and children knew and accepted it. Sexuality and curiosity were never sins nor outlawed. Children could play and experiment. They could be confident about their bodies and desires.

There was respect: the kind that exists between beings, the kind that comes together for mutual desire and not vio-



lent rage. The kind that is cooperative and not competitive.

No might, no right. No rape, murdering rampages, and death came with dignity. Life was lived and there was no compromise.

This is how things were and can be.

What separates this reality and ours is the willingness to compromise. A compromise that means our complicity to efficiency and blind faith in the Future that is killing our home and our being. A complicity that makes us do unto our children what has been done to us.

Chellis Glendinning wrote that the

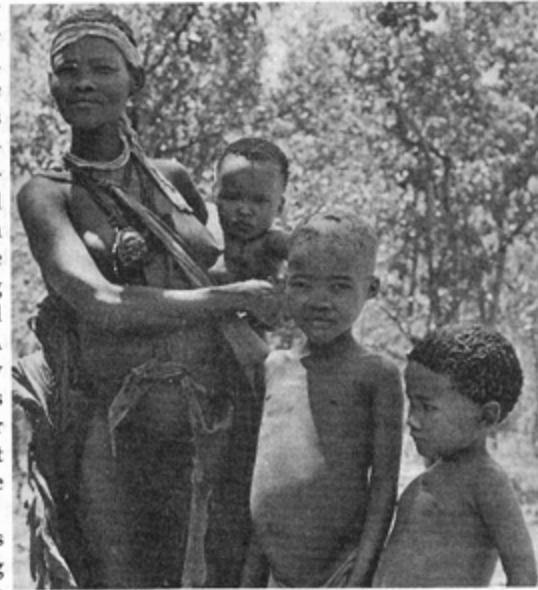
original trauma is domestication. It creates rage within us, but is given no safe outlet in society. It ends in battered children, relationships based on domination, dead classmates, and children born knowing that they are not wanted.

The reality that we reproduce daily is inflicted upon the planet. And each child that is born is given this burden. Part of ending this cycle of domination and submission means not inflicting that original trauma: it means refusing domestication for ourselves and refusing complacency. Most of all, it means break-

ing a blind faith in the Future. Breaking the morality that denies what our bodies tell us and what the earth tells us.

It means being confident. It means no compromise. It means passionate love and hate instead of an emotionless, efficient void.

The hallmarks of modernity and Progress are the nursery where babies



learn the harsh lessons of civilized life: that nothing comes easily and infinite want. It ends in the nursing home where lives of devotion to blind faith drag out our last days and ensure that we never stand on our own. When we are finally ready to do so, we are no longer physi-

cally or mentally capable.

We are told that this must be better than where we were: a savage place with only sticks and stones. Where we didn't have a greater purpose in life and children and elderly were killed madly.

We think this as the empire of Progress takes over the planet, predators feeding off life so that they may one day live forever. Our fear of death is pathological. It breeds an efficient world without love. It creates morality that says we have no right to end a life that we can not give the most absolute care for in the



world. A choice that carries the promise that no child will exist unless it can be given everything it needs to be confident and live fully. Or that we can end our life when we are satisfied and know that things cannot go on forever. That we can leave this world with dignity and pride.

The only thing 6 billion predatory people can do is die slowly and take the planet with them. It was announced recently that the world population will be 9 billion by 2050. The inevitability of the Future goes unquestioned. We have faith in our illusion. But our illusion has no reality.

A child recently asked me if I would kill someone if it would save the planet. He is eleven years old.

I thought, "if only it was that easy", but you can never know how an answer might be taken anymore.

I've thought about that a lot though. I found myself asking if I really care enough that I might kill an infant that I could not offer everything they needed to be full. If I could break the morality, the little god in my head that said all life is gods' property and only she/he/they could make that choice.

I was reminded of the supposed glory of Progress. Of the long life we've been given.

#### SOME ECO-FACTS:

- The Crane Fly is not a mosquito and does not bite.
- Black Bears have what we call a "Bear Cork": that is a mixture of dry leaves, grass, pine needles, and hair which forms into a wad that seals up their anus for the six months spent sleeping during the winter. We also consider it feral equivalent of the holy grail.
- A Little Brown Bat's penis is almost an inch, nearly a quarter the span of its body.
- After slightly cutting his hand while skinning a roadkill raccoon, Ryan worried that he may have acquired rabies and got a series of 10-17 rabies shots in his ass. Without insurance, the shots would cost over \$5000.

I had to wonder if I loved an elderly person enough to help them die with dignity or if I could leave them behind when they asked for it.

I think of the love these 'savage acts' must take. The love of the world and the love of life.

And, most of all, the confidence and passion behind them.

The Future of Progress need not be inevitable.

The original trauma, once confronted, can be challenged. We need not be victims. We can be survivors. We can be active. We can live on our own terms.

But it requires a lot from us. It requires us to stop compromising.

It requires us to stop being efficient.

We've seen a glimpse of where this is heading and what the consequences are beyond the daily reality that we can choose to confront or to ignore.

The question I'm left wondering is whether I would destroy the machine (the engine and lifeblood of civilization) that is killing, dominating and subjugating life.

What I've discovered is that I still have a whole lot of very inefficient passion and an unspeakable will to live without compromise.



"Now there is a model that will lead to the child's becoming a truly social being throughout his life, a model of mutuality. And as the model was enlarged, the same theme was repeated in just about everything the child did and experienced, including all activities and all human relationships, as the model steadily expanded. The Mbuti child was offered no challenges that it could not meet, but at the same time was offered new challenges to meet its growing abilities. The model I was given to follow, however different in detail, is not all that different from models found in most other Western cultures, but almost totally different from that of the Mbuti. It is a model that establishes division rather than unity, segmentation rather than integration, competition rather than cooperation. The focus is upon a number of discreet, separated individuals rather than on a single corporate group. The cooperation that emerges later in life—and in our modern society cooperation is every bit as necessary as it is in all societies—is mechanical, rather than organic, because it was learned by imposition rather than felt through reciprocation.

I think we see the consequences of this when we recognize what the plain facts tell us, that unlike the Mbuti we continue in adult life to have to be coerced to behave in a social manner. Order has to be imposed or enforced by violence or threat of violence, it lacks that inner drive that makes such external compulsion unnecessary or minimal. And there, finally, we come back to Spirit, which for the Mbuti is where life beings and where it ends. For them, at least, it is that awareness of Spirit that enables them to accept differences of manner, custom, speech, behavior, even of belief, while steel feeling an underlying unity. It is awareness of Spirit that enables them to avoid the conflict and hostility that arise so easily from such differences, not by sweeping them under the carpet or by eternal compromise, but by systematic opposition and ritualization.

By Spirit I do not mean God, though if there is a God it may well be Spirit. I

mean that essence of life which cannot be learned except through direct awareness, which is total, not merely rational. The awareness can be helped along by a system of natural symbols, such as that employed by the Mbuti, who live in a natural world. Earth, water, air, and fire; the forest itself. Through these symbols the Mbuti are constantly reminded of Spirit, for wherever they are, whatever they are doing, those symbols surround them and even permeate their whole being. In the more artificial world we have built for ourselves we are not so fortunate; such effective symbols are harder to come by, particularly if we have never learned to employ our whole being as a tool of awareness. But that does not mean that Spirit is inaccessible to us. I am sure that many like myself groped their way through childhood and found their own Great-uncle Willie, their own Rule Water, their own Arthur Poyser, and their own counterpart of

what music was for me. All I am saying is that our form of social organization merely allows it to happen as an accident, if at all, whereas that of the Mbuti writes it into the charter from the outset at conception.”

-Colin Turnbull, *The Human Cycle*.

## who is the guardian warrior?

-tamarack song

I'm sometimes asked whether or not I am a Guardian Warrior. I usually hesitate with an answer because I have yet to come up with a short and easy one. That is the primary reason for this book; it is an attempted answer to the question, though it is neither short nor easy.

In actuality, the Guardian as we know him is a mythical figure contrived out of our incomplete and filtered perceptions of Native Lifeway. In light of that, I would have to answer, "No," to my being a Guardian Warrior. If I had time to explain who the Guardian Warrior actually is, however, as I am doing in this book, then I would answer, "Yes."

In my life I see myself as a Guardian Warrior in Training.

### The Calling

We, of Civilized cultures are of a general misunderstanding as to how a Guardian comes to be. We see our various occupations as "professions," identifying categories, which we choose based upon our interest. Our considerations might include interest, skill, income earning potential, demand, family tradition. So we tend to view the roles of the Native in the same light - as professions of choice.

On both counts—identification and self-selection—we are mistaken.

A Native person does not have a profession; that is, she does not have one specific job which she performs every day, year in, year out, in exchange for money or livelihood. A Native person has no need of such a thing, as her means of sustenance are provided by the Earth, and her daily life is centered on those acts directly necessary to the survival of her community.

A Native person does not identify her or himself as a Healer, or a

Bowmaker, or a Guardian, as we would identify ourselves by profession - as a hairdresser, or an architect, or a teacher, for example. If you asked a Native his profession he might well answer that it is to serve his people. In doing so, he demonstrates a variety of skills and interests depending upon need and circumstance. For example, a woman with midwifery skills would not identify herself as a midwife because there are times when she may go for moons without being called upon to help birth a child. In the interim she might be hidetanning, making fishnets, drying food, or any of a number of other endeavors.

Further, unlike in the Civilized way, a Native Guardian does not choose the special ways he serves his People. He is chosen. He may be selected by another who sees his unfolding role, or he may receive direct guidance from the Spirit World. An Elder Guardian might recognize another of his kind in a newborn,



or someone may be given a prophetic dream of a youngster's destiny to be a Guardian. More often than not, the young adolescent discovers his calling through personal revelation. This may occur by way of a sign, a Vision, a near-death experience, or he may be given it on his fast to receive his Life Dream (what we commonly refer to as the Vision Quest).

### Roles of the Guardian

The Guardian plays multiple roles in the service of her people. She is emissary and scout, protector and provider, healer and advisor, mediator and mentor. These roles are introduced briefly below in order to give you a sense of what to expect as you progress through various chapters. In the course of the book I will elaborate upon each of these roles, discussing the qualities of character, training and maturity necessary to the Guardian.

### Guardian as Emissary

The Guardian is sent to councils, feasts, and ceremonies to represent his people or sometimes a particular individual. Because of his training which carries him beyond himself and into the consciousness of his people, he is trusted by them to represent, speak, and negotiate for them. They know that he will represent them honorably and wisely. They know the Guardian will be courteous as a guest, and that he will listen, and objectively and accurately transmit to them what he observes and is given to bring back to them. Those to whom he comes know the same and trust in his words, because they know that every Guardian, no matter of what people, upholds the

integrity of all people and expresses himself with the integrity of a truthspeaker.

### Guardian as Tracker

We humans are natural trackers. The renowned tracking abilities of the Native Guardian are merely the result of his maturation, and are commonly exhibited by many rather than being rare and phenomenal feats. The Native hears the song of the track, which is composed of a chorus of voices that speak to him, that are carrying on a conversation amongst themselves, about who passed by and when and why. They are not speaking to him as much as he is eavesdropping on the on-going gossip. He knows the impulses of the one he is tracking - her hungers and fears and drives. In this way he moves within the movement of She whom he is tracking, often knowing where She is going, he will speed ahead of her and wait for her arrival. This is an ability that transcends that of the tracker, as he is no more tracking than you and I are when we go to meet a friend at a park. Having a good hunch that he or she will be there, and therefore, having little need to retrace his or her footsteps.

The technical approach to Tracking of Civilized Peoples is their attempt to compensate for their diminished innate ability to hear the song of the track. When necessary, the Guardian can literally "read" a track as do Civilized Trackers, though he does not have the same repertoire of technical terms to describe what he sees. The Native Tracker will use skill as well as the reading of other sign the track has left behind (broken twigs, disturbed spider webs and so on) as an adjunct to his tracking when needed rather than relying primarily



upon it.

### Guardian as Scout

A master of the skills of stealth, observation, and tracking, the Guardian is relied upon to gather useful information outside of the normal physical realm of their people. Normally this involves the spotting of Native plant, animal, or Earthen goods, or the locating of an advantageous trail or crossing. When his people are on the move he scouts ahead of them to ensure their safe passage. He warns them of any environmental dangers, and guides them on the best and most advantageous route, which he may not do directly, but more often through a series of elaborate but well-disguised signs which he leaves in his wake.

When passing through land inhabited by other people the Guardian guides his people on a route that will not infringe upon those people. As emissary he may arrange with those people for the passage of his own. Sometimes he will arrange for their meeting, which usually results in trade, the exchange of skills, amorous connections, and of course, feasting.

### Guardian As Protector

We as a people need protection in a variety of ways. Sometimes from the weather or other natural disaster, sometimes from an "enemy," sometimes from a Sorcerer's doings, sometimes from the burdens of clan and family, and some-

times from ourselves. The Guardian is trained to serve as protector in all these various ways. He knows the moods of the Mother. He is able to predict her changes and is capable of responding in an instant to move his people out of harm's way. His training for the hunt has equipped him with the skills needed to defend his people from human threats if necessary. As with the hunt, he knows how to practice the skills of diversion and deception which are his first line of



defense. To choose confrontation would imperil him and risk his being unavailable to continue to protect his people. And because like begets like, if he engaged in confrontation it could also lead to confrontation for his people. Confrontation is chosen only as a last resort.

In many ways he protects the state of being of his people, helping to assure a low level of stress and a high level of personal satisfaction in life. He will fill in when parents need a helping hand. He will protect and defend someone who is being persecuted or falsely accused. He will stand-up for the exploited and disadvantaged.

He will protect people from their own folly, from their short-sightedness and errors of judgement. Functioning from a place of greater perspective, he is sometimes able to foresee what peril looms ahead.

### Training

If I can outrun someone it's not necessarily because I am faster than they are



or stronger or younger, it's because I can draw upon the energy of the spirit wind and because I know how to pace myself and because I know how to breathe and place my feet to conserve energy. It is because I have trained myself to function well for long periods of time without food and water, and because I have learned to sleep in the way that gives me the sustained, the deep rest to carry on sustained activity.

Such is the focus of actual Guardian training in Old Way cultures. It is not to make you bigger, stronger, faster, older, and braver, but to make you successful. In real life, this training is void of the glamorous skills depicted by Hollywood movies, popular books, and mystery-en-shrouded teachers. The skills that will empower you will not inflate your ego; in fact, they will do the opposite. Far from making you feel good, they will make you feel sick. They will not give you a sense of power, they will give you a sense of humility. They will give you quickness, cunning, and energy that is actually useful, they will give you a strength that your muscles are not even capable of, the ability to see well beyond the reach of your eyes and a way to know another's thoughts and feelings as nearly as well as your own.

Believe it or not, these are innate skills and abilities that each of us already has, they have just atrophied from lack of use or are not honed because of lack of training. The purpose of the training you will encounter in this book is to rectify that.

For those of us called to be Guardians, it is important to understand that our training is never complete. The Way to becoming a Guardian is continuous, without respite. There is no ideal "Guardian" which one becomes upon achieving

some plateau of development. The process of becoming is more like a continuous paddle up river with ever more springs and feeder streams to discover and explore.

The Path of the Guardian is similar. Even when there is no specific task at hand there is constant attention to the flow, the constant directing of energy in the most conservative, efficient, respectful and purposeful way. For the Guardian knows that the flow, the process, is all that there is, and he continually honors it.

The Guardian lives on the edge, ever inquisitive, exploring, challenging the self, finding ways to give Thanks. She is continually testing her limits, honing her skills, expanding her awareness and growing in Attunement. When there is no challenge, no service, she challenges herself for the sake of the challenge. She conducts herself with integrity always. Each action is carried out as though it were her last, as though her entire reason for being was for that act, i.e., for the moment.

The Guardian does not quest for battle, as in the stereotypical image of the Warrior. Rather, she seeks to befriend anger, envy and loneliness, that they may assist, rather than impede, the seeking of her essential self. As the Guardian becomes more empowered she becomes more gentle. The more she comes to know herself the more selfless she becomes. The more she involves herself in seeming chaos the more she becomes immersed in Balance.

### The Guardian in Her Circle

It is important to stress that, in a Native community every person's role is valued for it's essential contribution to the well-



being of the group. Because of the circular nature of Native Peoples' lives, no person's role is more or less important than another's. The Civilized way, on the other hand, is structured as a pyramid, with those perceived to be most important at the top, and individuals and groups farther down the pyramid considered more expendable, nameless, faceless. Ironically, the strength of the pyramid is dependent upon the conformity of the person below to those above; without the conformity of those considered expendable, the structure crumbles.

In the Old Way, the reverse is true. The Old Way is circular, rather than hierarchical, recognizing the inherent worth of all. The Circle is only as strong as its weakest link. The independence, creativity, and initiative of each individual is encouraged, as each individual's skills and perspectives are needed in order for the Circle to thrive.

The people are as organs within an organism — the liver, heart, and lungs, etc.— each contribute their unique gifts to the well-being of the whole. In the Circular way, as with the human body, the mutually beneficial results of this interdependence are synergistic. Each

individual's contribution is magnified by the group such that the group's well-being, and what the group contributes back to the individual, are greater than what the individual could provide for him or herself.

Thus, in a Native community all individuals are esteemed, and all individuals are encouraged to follow their personal calling and develop their unique talents to their fullest. There are interdependent relationships, based upon mutual trust, respect and honoring, as opposed to the dependent and oppressive relationships which support the Civilized pyramid. Those relationships are based on obedience, conformity, and a reward-sanction system to demand support of the pyramid.

There is a misperception in the dominant culture that the Guardian holds a special place of honor in a Native community. He holds a place of honor, yet so does everyone in the community. Each person is honored and valued for the roles each fulfills in service to the people. In actuality the Guardian role is no more or less honored than any other.

where Wilderness is the classroom,  
Ancient Voices are the teachers, knowing self  
and Balance are the quests.

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## OPEN CAGES AND CLOSED MINDS: VEGANISM AS ULTRADOMESTICATION

Kevin Tucker

There are no animals that choose a diet for ethical or moral reasons. That is, there are no wild animals that chose a diet for ethical or moral reasons.

That's not to say that other animals are savage, self-gratifying and blood thirsty beasts: you'll have a hard time finding anything like that in the non-spectacularized wild. On the contrary, ethics are as unthinkable as they are useless in the wild. The reason is simple: you don't shit in the bed you sleep in. You can apply that ecologically, psychologically, scientifically, and, as I want to emphasize, spiritually, but, again, you'll be hard-pressed to find any of those distinctions among wildness either. What you do find is a cyclical and flowing wholeness: not in some spoken or otherwise mediated sense, but in the lived sense.

This can get a little tough here. Wildness is a hard concept for us to comprehend and even harder for us to embody. Everything about wildness runs against the way we live and think as domesticated beings. That is, as civilized beings. Domestication, the process of taming wildness to the domesticity of village, city, and country life, is what makes civilization possible. That is as true for the first gatherer/hunter societies who settled into villages as it is for the first domesticators of cultivated wild grains and herder of animals as it is for each and every one of us.

Like all living beings: we are born wild. Even more to the point, we are born into wildness. In wildness, all things are connected in a figurative and literal

sense. Here decay fertilizes, birth is inseparable from death, there are no boundaries, and purpose is lived through the moment. There is no Future and there is no need for distant or looming gods. This is the world that all beings are born to be a part of, humans included.

Our situation has changed, but not our reality. The reality of wildness is still there and it forever refuses to end. How we see the world around us has changed, though our minds and bodies have not. Sioux poet and resistor John Trudell put it best when he said that the being part of our spirit has been mined. That mining process, the domestication process itself, flips the world entirely upside down: wildness is circular and flowing, the domesticated world is linear, planned, and ordered, wildness encourages self-discovery and the domesticators have created criteria and meticulously crafted programs of required learning. Most importantly, wild beings are an integral part of wildness while domesticated beings are slashed down to an isolated core which will only ever be a fragment of the Megamachine.

This is the basis for both our physical and mental reality: a fragmented, hierarchical and highly categorized world. Domestication splits the self from the Other and turns life into a battle for survival. It's no large mystery why TV shows about wild animals focus on the



predator and the prey, fight for mates and reproduction. Our own reality of consumption, mating, spawning and dying is naturalized.

I want to emphasize that domestication is a process and not an event. Wildness can simply never be fully tamed. Our need for something, for the comfort of community and that lived purpose, must be constantly diverted or filled with more meaningless garbage to keep us from realizing it. The domesticators need flashy technology, credit card debt, sedatives, and pop psychology to keep us from looking at what is really missing in our own lives. We need distractions because that lurking emptiness will only ever end when the wildness begins to flow back in. When we return to the world we were born into.

Rewilding, the process of undomestication, is no easy thing. There are, of course, the physical barriers, but it is the mental barriers that may be the hardest to overcome. Our isolated nothingness is a far cry from the world of wildness that we are trained to fear. Getting there never will be easy. But we all start somewhere. But I'm stepping ahead of myself a bit here.

Like every other domesticated being, I have always been reaching. Out of sheer desperation, I've grasped onto anything that felt like it might bring that needed fulfillment, like it might be the antidote to that lurking emptiness. In hindsight I see these as partial steps, though often necessary. What they lacked in a spiritual fulfillment they made up for in action. The one that I'm concerned with here is veganism.

For me, veganism has turned out to be one of many steps I've taken and without regret. But my concern, which isn't

unique to veganism at all, is about how those half-steps can so easily become the full picture. While full of good intentions and often positive action, they aren't a challenge to the entire 'unjust' system which produces them: civilization. Instead they become a rigid morality that not only doesn't challenge that domesticated worldview, but completely flows from it and reinforces it. I'm referring to veganism here as a bit of a catch all for animal rights ideology and the animal liberation movement at large. I want to emphasize that my problem is not with people who eat a vegan diet or all vegan individuals, but with the ideology that is more ultra-domestication than it is anti-domestication.

Knowing the kinds of reactions I'm likely to get for this, let me repeat this point: *this is about vegan and animal rights ideologies, morality, and so on. Not all people who eat a vegan diet fall under this category, but either way, I'm interested with ideas and not every single individual!*

I'm concerned with veganism as one of many impediments to wildness and as one of many fronts for civilization. What I'm concerned with, ultimately, is veganism as a force for domestication that open cages but never breaks the bond with the reality that it seeks to oppose.

#### HAVING YOUR PRINCIPLE AND EATING IT TOO

There are fine points that separate ideology and morality, but in effect they are pretty indistinguishable. Both of them offer a complete worldview that a person may take part in or they must abide by respectively. An ideologue may have a long and elaborate set of defenses for what has happened, what must happen



and how you must act while a moralist will just tell you what is right and wrong. You can have one or both or any combination, but a prescribed (that is taught not experienced) worldview needs something to serve as a basis for justification.

Like any domesticating worldview, veganism can be either ideological or moral. What is important is that either way, there is an unshakeable foundation for all ensuing belief, action and judgment. There is a right and a wrong way which will almost always be applied. It is universal. I want to emphasize this last point because the idea of something being applicable always and forever and under any circumstance may be the cornerstone of civilization, and most definitely our global civilization. It is the peak of an ordered worldview. It is anti-adaptive in nature and runs against the flow that keeps wildness wild.

What we're interested in here is that both ideology and morality make it possible to say something like 'the killing of and/or consumption of animals is *always* wrong'. No matter what, this must be seen as an unshakeable principle. There's a lot of ways that you can get there, but in the end this unshakeable principle becomes a blinder. Put simply: it puts limits on your action and your thinking.

In the end, this principle is the final word. What it lacks in common sense, can be backed up by stubbornness and a little bit of tricky wording.

How so? You might be asking. Let's take a look.

A vegan is a person who does not consume or use any animal product or by-product. They do so ostensibly because they are convinced that the killing of and/or consumption of animals is unethical or immoral or just plain wrong. That's easy enough to understand right?

Well understanding isn't the problem, application is. Veganism is a lifestyle issue, a set of choices based on the aforementioned principle about what someone will buy, eat, use, dumpster, steal, or whatever. Its appeal is that it is a daily kind of protest or righteousness (depending on where your principle is rooted) against a system that enslaves and slaughters millions of animals daily for

food, entertainment, clothing and the like. Not many people really want to take part in an omniscidal system, so this is an alternative based on things you would do anyway, like shop...

Veganism is applicable in the here and now. Even better, we are told it is a statement. That statement can be amplified by buying products that are 'cruelty free' or with the vegan symbol of





proval. Here's where things get tricky. We buy these things because they contain no animal products or by-products and are not animal tested. Here's the kicker: at least, not *directly* contributing to the death and enslavement of animals. So here's the one big problem: you consume because you live in civilization which requires the mass production of everything. So by taking part in the system of consumption, you are still involved in the system of production and distribution, which means that soy beans and wheat are grown in fields that were once forests where wild animals once lived and are either fertilized by animal shit from mass produced and enslaved animals or chemicals that kill just about everything which is transported through roads made of uprooted, crushed and processed stone and rock transported by vehicles of synthetic and horribly toxic plastics along with 'natural resources' that are processed to leave out even more toxins to help in the construction and movement of these vehicles which are taken on roads and highways which cut through wild lands and crush wild animals while they try to live our their lives as trucks go to stores, again being concrete and steel over once wild areas, where they are bought with money you get from taking part in the economy which is the core of the one and only omniscient system to exist on the earth. Not quite so simple, but here's my point: if you live off of an omniscient system, then you are a part of it.

That is a point that I can recognize. I can accept it as our reality, but not as the reality that must be. I know that no consumption will address that problem and that whatever choices I make at the market are not going to stop that system. At the same time, it doesn't mean what I do

doesn't matter, but it means that change has to come from somewhere else. I can accept that trying to destroy civilization requires what would be considered hypocrisy. But that's because I have no morality or ideology or platform for how things must be and how I must act.

Veganism, being rooted in personal choices, isn't so fortunate. So what does the moralist or ideologue do when pushed in a corner? Since their principle is closed and universal, they can either further simplify the application of their principles to the beloved isolated individual of our civilization or they can just get angry or a bit of both as things so often go.

The first choice is where we get 'directly' from. The world is simply too big, you just have to do what you can while things work themselves out or the master plan while a peaceful vegan world is under way. Here you'll get to hear things like: 'the world is a messed up place, but at least I didn't put the bolt gun to the cows head.' Or 'at least I didn't pay the person directly for doing it.' Inevitably taking no account for the distribution and transportation of the killed animals is beyond the scope of ethics or morality.

The second choice is a blinder in effect. Granted we all get angry, and for perfectly good reasons, but because there are flaws in your ideology and morality are pretty weak ones. But it does happen to the best of us doesn't it?

So this is how a blinder works and we'll definitely be running back into this again. So let's look at how it is rooted and then to how it works out and ultimately what it overlooks.

BLINDED BY THE HYPE



The vegan principle that killing animals directly is always wrong is typically based on a number of different perspectives. I'd say that the main three would be that it is just wrong to kill animals (this includes the topic of sentience which deserves its own section), that meat is unnecessary for humans (which also includes health issues), and that the industry is inhumane. Like most vegans, I incorporated a bit of all three.

The idea that meat/animal products are unnecessary for humans is just plain wrong. That is, it isn't true for wild humans. It is possible to be a relatively healthy vegan in modern society, just as it is possible to get tomatoes all year round and tofu can be found in far more places than soy would ever be found. You can take artificial supplements, though this often leads to an imbalance of other nutrients. It is possible to do all of these things, but this comes back to that system and the artificial life that it requires and maintains.

But there are mounds of 'evidence' to the contrary. At least on the surface there is. There are science reports about the health problems associated with eating meat, but they look at the heavily processed food that is no healthier than the heavily processed vegan foods. That slips past the blinders and couples with the arguments against factory farming which builds complete but sloppy arguments. The evidence that a vegan diet is healthier than a non-vegan one comes from the same science that has argued for and against just about everything relating to meat consumption, disease, and the worth of animal lives. Scientists have confirmed just about any ludicrous idea from genetics to the health benefits of smoking to the benefits of civilized life, I just wonder why we would believe

them at all. The truth is much more common sense than anything: we're omnivorous animals that are meant to be wild. Vegans don't need morality to disagree with this, but the mounds of evidence probably wouldn't have existed without the morality that made such denial possible. That morality spreads from the Hindu believe in ahimsa.

Hindus are agriculturalists living in a land that requires a lot of work to farm. What they do get from farming may fill the stomach, but it doesn't give everything that someone needs to stay healthy. Here, like among all pastoralists, animals such as cows are vital for a number of reasons. Harnessed to plows, they ease the workload in tilling the fields and their dung is a great source of fuel. The fact that they give dairy products that are comparable in nutrients to meat, has meant they're worth a lot more alive than dead. The problem is that while this may make sense, it doesn't keep the starving poor from killing and eating them. Throughout the history of civilization, law never worked so well as when it was coming straight from the divine. Hence we get ahimsa, the belief that it is morally wrong to kill animals.

It doesn't take long for the religious and philosophical side of any practice to take off on its own. You can be relatively healthy eating dairy, but the utility can fade to the divine purity that arises. Veganism may be the natural morphed end product of ahimsa. Over hundreds of years, it has taken off on its own and though ahimsa tends to be upheld by non-Hindu vegans, you don't need to hear the name or be a Hindu to take part in its aftermath. But Hindu vegans in India were also healthier than their ideological descendants in the West. Still eat-





ing predominantly local foods from smaller scale farms, there was not the mediated need to have a final clean product. Their vegan foods carried the nutrients of insects and animal dung serving as fertilizer making them healthier in the end, but not vegan in the purified Western sense.

Whether or not the connection is direct, this is the hype that made the later scientific evidence thinkable and then available. What ensued was an entirely different version of human history that became the ideological backing for Western vegans. The basic belief is that humans don't need to eat meat. This is approached a number of ways.

The first way this works is to revise biology. One highlight that is thrown around the most is that carnivores have much longer intestines than herbivores. Since our intestines are closer to herbivores on this, we aren't meant to eat meat. The obvious counterpoint is that we do eat meat and we do digest it. In fact we've been doing this for quite a long time. The evidence that we don't is that the average meat eater may have up to ten pounds of undigested meat in their stomachs by the time they die.

So who is being cut apart here? Other civilized people. The problem isn't that we can't digest meat, but that processed and domesticated foods simply

are not healthy and/or digestible. That applies to meat as much as it does soy, wheat, and most vegetables and fruits. But meat is arguably the worst. Animals are pumped full of chemicals, extra fatty from a sedentary life, the meat is preserved, overcooked, overeaten, and they eat the same nasty grain that we do. That adds up to a pretty nasty end product. Combined with a diet and lifestyle that doesn't get the proper exercise or develop right from birth, it's not really any surprise that we can't digest it or that



heart disease is one of the major killers in the West.

If this was a major issue, it wouldn't make sense for us to have eaten meat for millions of years. People like the arctic hunter/gatherers would probably have the worst health. They do have some of the highest concentrations of diabetes among other numerous diet related diseases, but that is only after they were forced to settle by the government and only having a diet of canned vegetables and

processed grains with the occasional supplement of wild meat. When their diet was an average of 80-90% meat, they were far healthier than any farmer could ever have been.

Vegans will argue otherwise. The argument goes that we've come up from a form of savagery and through civilization we're attaining a higher and more moral and ethical reality than through-



out all of human history. We're reaching the peak of morality and humanity and it is part of the synthetic superior world that we are creating. Groups like PETA really have no problem embodying this ridiculous notion. But you can hardly give them credit for it; I think the engineers of Progress came up with this as a justification for imperialism, colonization and genocide. The central message is as old as domestication: nature needs improvement. I hope I don't have to draw out the obvious problems with this further.

Other biological points refer to our body. We don't have the same teeth as most carnivores that much is true, but we also have hands with opposable thumbs that can do the same job as teeth to tear. We lack talons, beaks, and claws, but like many animals, we are tool users. Many vegans will argue that tools for hunting are relatively new and that much may be true: but it represents our own allegiance to a science that is ever changing and our own inability to look at the obvious: there are more ways to get meat than bows and atlatls. Things like rabbit sticks, nets, crude clubs and traps are all far easier to make and use and the chance of them showing up in the archeological record is remote. But they are only likely to show up if the archeologists were looking for them, but so long as we associate stone tools with hunting, that's not likely to happen. But even if we weren't hunting, we're still rather adaptive: we can scavenge. Whatever way you cut it, we've been eating meat successfully for some time.

The whole biological comparisons rarely hold up. Often there is a chart of strict carnivores and herbivores with human running down the middle. The problem is that we're neither of them.

You are as likely to see us grazing and chewing cud as you are going to hunt like a jaguar. So what is that middle column? Omnivore. This should be fairly obvious. We are fully capable of eating fruits and vegetables and we have attributes of other hunters such as forward looking vision and a natural tendency to run straight rather than from side to side like most typical 'prey'.

The biological trend leads to a look at the rest of the primate family. Like most primates, we do hunt. Vegans simply look beyond this and attribute it to a habit of primates in captivity. That's something that most who have observed primates in the wild have noted. Even if we were to push that aside, we can't ignore something even more significant: the primate subgroup that all modern primates (including humans) are said to evolve from were insectivores. That's something that has never left us and can be seen in our wild counterparts as much as among other primates. Beetles, grubs and grasshoppers are all high in protein and, though I can't personally back this up at the moment, supposedly delicious.

Coming close to the biological arguments are revisions of our entire history. More recent vegan 'naturalists', especially the raw food enthusiasts, claim that not only were we originally strict vegans, but that fire was our downfall. True enough, fire did change things to a certain degree. We've been able to move into colder climates and in some areas, we might not have survived the ice age. It has made foods that would otherwise be inedible open to us. This is all true, but we can't forget that the domestication of fire was a spotty thing and not nearly as significant as Greek myths would likely have us believe. One thing



is certainly true though, it didn't take fire to make meat edible or hunting possible.

Raw food purists like San Diego's Nature's First Law group have taken things to such an extreme. Not only are we pure vegans, but eating cooked food is the cause of war and social injustice, eating bread is the 'cause' of homosexuality and sexual deviance, and, best yet, eating cooked food causes balding and a shrunken penis! While certainly a bit of an extreme end of a fringe, the new raw purists have taken the entire Progress/evolutionary view to a major extreme: fire enabled us to leave the tropical areas where we supposedly evolved and lived. The idea is as ridiculous as it is frightening in whatever the practical application would be: either a flooding of humans into the tropical regions or a misanthropic purge of fire-using, cooked-food eating heathens.

Unfortunately the idea is spreading a bit. How it does is a bit of a morbid curiosity for me. People do live in the tropics, but they are far from vegan. While they, like most people on the planet, don't eat nearly as much meat as the arctic nomads, they are no where near being vegan. The Mbuti, nomadic gatherer hunters in the rain forests of the Congo only learned how to make fire relatively recently, but it hasn't increased or decreased the amount of meat they eat. And all coastal societies in the tropics eat far more fish than anything.

Living in the tropics does have its benefits from having largely ideal weather to having a year round growing season with a larger assortment of fruits and vegetables, but there is no excess amount of wild sources of vegan protein among other things. Wild veganism is possible, but I would hardly say preferable. In the end it only carries on

that evolutionary ideal of some kind of purity and I'm doubting the bountiful tropical fruits and vegetables will be as grateful as the vegans would like them to be for being eaten instead of 'sentient' beings.

Along the lines of historical revision is the idea that vegetarianism has happened in large populations. That much is true, but rarely is it by choice. The diet of peasants is typically lacking in meat and is dependent upon grains, rice, or corn. It is also the lifestyle inflicted by a larger exploitative system, and the same one that puts them in a position where meat is rarely an option. The result is a typically vegan diet, but with it comes the problems of an imposed and improper diet: physical deformity, increased retardation and diseases, increased miscarriages, diseases like rickets from lack of calcium, and bones that never develop fully. That applies to the peasants of indigenous civilizations in Latin America, throughout Europe and Asia. The Hindus are an exception, though they weren't vegan as we've already seen.

For the vegan, it doesn't matter if a number of these points are true or not, what matters is that there are a number of different approaches available. If one doesn't work, then try another, and sooner or later you'll win the argument. That is morality and ideology at work. That is those blinders put into work. But it is powerful, that is how it works. I'm no exception to this, my own blinders kept me from noticing all the physical consequences of seven years of veganism from anemia to a weakened immune system and weaker stomach to a severe lack in all around energy and a worsening of what was originally a mild case of hypoglycemia.



That is ideology at work.

## SENTIENCY AND OTHER STUPID IDEAS

Arguments for animal rights and many of the arguments for veganism revolve around the issue of sentience. The arguments goes that if an animal is capable of feeling and perceiving then they, like us, are sentient and worthy of the same respect. Likewise, they shouldn't be eaten or enslaved. Honestly, I think this is one of the most dangerous ideas. Not because I think we have some natural domination or there is something innately different between all beings, but because of its context.

The basis for deciding what is and isn't sentient is based upon the only thing we really know: ourselves. What is capable of feeling and perceiving is based on what we know about feeling and perceiving. Most notably this is a central nervous system like ours or observable reactions. So animals like cows, goats, sheep, horses, members of the canine, feline and primate families fit the bill. Things get a bit tougher and more scientific when it comes to fish and insects. Insects, of course, are very typically given the slight of hand when it comes to animal rights.

So what is the prize? We want them to have the same rights that humans are expected to have. The problem with rights is that they take government as a standard and, in the good liberal tradition, seek to improve it. That is a historical problem, and one that the animal rights advocates typically uphold without seeing the obvious irony.

In the West, white males were the standard for rights, then white women, then non-white men, then non-white

women, and so on. Rights have always been both a system of exclusion and a systematic means of exploitation and inequality. The government guarantees you this much, that is what rights offer, and even in the rare cases where governments are holding up their end of the deal, it is still in their hands. All governments exploit, all civilizations exploit, that is how they exist, that is what they must do to exist. What rights do is try to raise the bar of exploitation to an acceptable standard. I'm not sure that was ever a good idea and even less of something worth fighting for.

If we assume that rights are a good thing (a major stretch of the imagination), we still have to account for the reality that getting animal rights is a long and drawn out road. What might the steps be? Better conditions in factory farms, quicker and more efficient means of killing, more pasture land? Those are the obvious first steps in what would be a long battle and a far call from what any animal really wants: to be wild and free.

So who is speaking for whom and why are they speaking at all? What does a self-righteous ultra-domesticated human know about what a cow might want? If our void is full and we carry the weight of trying to fix civilization even though 10,000 years have shown that domestication has no real benefit, what can we do for the animals without eliminating the system that put them in cages in the first place? What you get is an ideological battle ground for a morally superior identity and a call for action that in effect does little or nothing to actually improve the lot of 'sentient life'.

That's not even the most dangerous part about the idea of sentience though. It may be the dumbest, but the worst is the implications of dealing with a sys-



tem of exclusion: when a new standard is set, old standards are given new strength. When you declare that some animals are sentient and others are not, you're not coming closer to the idea that all life (animal or not) is sacred or worthy of respect, you're just adding more to one side. Giving new rights to certain animals reinforces the idea that animal life is different and more worthy than plant life or the entirety of an ecosystem. If it takes a long battle to show that certain life is more worthy of our respect, it's going to be even more to argue that all life is worthy of that same respect.

Simply put, when you play on the terms of the domesticators, you are going to lose. The reality of wildness runs completely contrary and is totally incapable of coexisting with civilization and even more so with modernized technological civilization.

The presumption of the animal rights movement is that a better world can come through civilization and that we can play on their terms. Even more ridiculously, there is the assumption that the animals and earth might benefit from this. The real solution is all the more obvious: only wildness benefits wild beings, and that will only come through the destruction of civilization.

#### MAD COWBOYS AND EVEN MADDER COWBOYS

The only time that vegan ideology tends to have a deeper critique is of the modern food industry. But that only goes so far. The conditions of factory farms and slaughterhouses, like the meat markets and fast food restaurants, are appalling. All of the above are rather grotesque monuments to efficiency and production that really typify where our globalized

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civilization is now. We produce a lot of crap and disrupt and destroy natural communities to maintain this way of living.

This may be one of the greater areas for outreach among vegans. Not many people know where their meat, dairy and other animal products come from or the conditions that the animals live under, which are truly horrid. Domestication is bad enough, but the rows of crowded cages are based on the same assembly lines used to make any other mass product. Keeping animals locked up, away from light and unable to stand, spread their wings, or stretch should be opposed.

The same can be said about animals kept for testing medications for diseases related to civilized living and for totally frivolous crap like make up and perfumes. No animal should ever be caged and tortured like that. The Animal Liberation Front is both necessary and commendable. But this tends to be where the messages are mixed. On the one hand you have the call for complete liberation, but on the other hand you have an attempt to modify the system of exploitation as we've seen.

Animal liberation can never be a part of civilization. And so long as it is based on vegan dogma and animal rights thinking, it will never be complete. We come back to domestication and the failure to really move beyond it.

A part of the vegan lifestyle is the promotion of 'animal friendly' and 'cruelty free' businesses. What that means is that the idea of animal liberation tends to go hand in hand with the promotion of businesses, even though the producers and distributors of vegan foods are often some of the worst animal exploiters around. That goes for huge dairy cor-



porations buying out soy milk companies, cigarette companies buying out organic food companies, and large businesses behind the bulk of the meat industry owning meat free burger companies. Mainstream groups like PETA and animal rights gurus like Eric Marcus have actually gone out of their way to hold rallies in support of Burger King in support of their veggie burger, which isn't even vegan.

What is the message here? What is the goal? Is it liberation, or is it another business venture like any other?

These might be the extreme examples, but perhaps they're also the most honest. The world envisioned by vegans where animals are liberated and everyone is vegan is a pipe dream, and a bad one at that. It simply is not possible. And I think most animals would agree, it is not at all preferable.

It is in this pipe dream that animal rights folks put out their environmental image and try to show why anyone concerned with the fate of the earth should be vegan. It is also here that the criticism of the modern food industry comes forward, albeit briefly. A huge target here is the mass production of cattle. Cows, being fed a strict diet of little to nothing that their counterparts would eat, become one of the larger sources of pollution because of their indigestion. Huge areas of forest are cleared throughout the world to grow grains and corn for their consumption and more often than not, this is a magnet for bioengineered crops.

It takes twelve pounds of grain to 'produce' one pound of beef. Simply put, a bare minimum of twelve times more domestication goes into animals over crops. Animals like coyotes and wolves know where that extra domestication comes from: land that was once wild.

SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

They've been waging their own war on the domesticating menace by taking out herds of cattle, sheep and other herding animals taking over where they once lived, rarely is any of the meat actually eaten. That is a war against civilization in the literal sense. The ethical question should be coming a bit clearer, at least in terms of supporting domestication.

Animal rights arguments draw these points out to offer an alternative: in a vegan world, animals would not be reared for food, so all of this waste would not exist. But there's a problem here. On the one hand is an extremely valid problem: domesticated animals are eating the world. But on the other hand is that ahimsa based principle that all life is sacred. So should the animal industry end, where would these animals go? Probably the same place vegans are putting them now: sanctuaries.

Now these sanctuaries are supposed to be a safe haven, a place where animals can go to live out the rest of their lives safely and securely. They are supposed to be freed. I worked at one of these sanctuaries and can honestly say that there is little to nothing that has improved about their lives, with only a few exceptions. In reality they are moved from one fenced in area to another, being given more room only when those animals come from a factory farm or extreme abuse case. They are fed the same food that they would be getting in a factory farm, producing the same methane, and their lives are still dictated by human desires. Except this time around, those humans are bringing them into more of a petting zoo for the vegan ego than a place where they are given proper respect.

Instead they serve as a living monument to lifestyle choices. Where they do



room, they do no less damage than any other farm. I've seen this happen. Even a small herd of cattle can complete destroy streams, contaminate soil and just generally wreck an area very quickly. The only difference is that they tend to get a wider area to destroy and since they're not being killed, more time to do it in. And I don't think I'm overstepping my boundaries to say they're not much happier. They spend just as much time trying to get out and not be enclosed as they can.

What we are seeing is the domesticator mindset in action. This is the downfall of rights and dogooder movements: they are self gratifying rather than proactive. The question of domestication is never raised, at least not with any seriousness. A significant part of that is a refusal to question the basic lessons of the domesticators; the vision of a glorious and ethically bound Future, the end product of millions of years of slow progression and building upon humanity.

And wildness falls behind again. The slaughterhouse becomes the symbol of exploitation and the point is missed, but the civilized may never see it fully. The central issue is a fear of death. The vegans carry the message that it is better to live a long life engaged than a short one that ends in systematized murder. That is the burden of civilization: that we would rather prolong life than live it.

No doubt, the slaughterhouse is never a great thing, but it is feared because it represents death. It is the farm that is the problem. It is the farm that has always been the problem. It enslaves humans to a life of work building wealth for others just as the work animals of the Hindu spend their lives building the world that the Hindu chose to live in. That is the world of domestication: that

is the problem.

But this cannot be questioned. The vegan world requires domestication. It may well be the peak of domesticated society. Staples of the vegan diet like rice, beans, soy, and grains require plots and rows of crops. They are all the most intensive and detrimental crops to the earth. The plowed fields and necessary transportation systems tear up the earth and as the soil washes away the only options for continued farming are chemical fertilizers or, once again, using animal dung. Delusions of a global organic and vegan horticulture are simply unattainable with this population as they are unlikely. A vegan world is still a globalized technological, industrial civilization: little different than ours now.

All the while, the 'liberated' animals living in sanctuaries become all the more like us: captives to a distant Future, enclosed, fed and bred for a world that can never replace the innate being of wildness.

We feel its loss while the hand of the domesticator shoves it further away and leaves a gaping void in its wake.

#### OPENING THE CAGES: THEIRS AND OURS

I opened this essay with a statement that no other animal chooses their diet, especially for ethical and moral reasons. Perhaps that statement is a bit unfair because no other animal has created factory farms or civilization and enslaved the mass of life on this earth either. But my point is not that nothing matters or that we would all be better off buying meat and dairy as we would buying vegan foods. My point is that while veganism is an understandable response to the world now and remains a possible step



towards rewilding, vegan ideology and morality are all too often taken as the goal in themselves. In the end, vegans take domestication to another step and continue to carry the mantle of civilization.

For many vegans, like those involved with PETA and similar groups, that may not be a problem. The association of meat eating as savagery is a part of their civilizing mission. The drunken, gossipy inner circle of vegan and sanctuary elites can sit back and soak up the empire that they've built for themselves in highly paid positions. They can push for their dogma to be spread by supermodels and celebrities, because that is part of the flashy, spectacularized world that they don't want to break from.

Being anti-wildness is no mystery: domesticated animals are given emphasis over wild ones. I can imagine that Ingrid Newkirk, founder of PETA, had no real ethical dilemma when she pushed for a PETA policy of gassing feral cats. The idea that there "aren't enough homes for them all" says plainly that they need homes, they need humans. For her domestication is the goal. I say better dead than domesticated. What kind of life is it that we are living that is so worth maintaining? What world are these enslaved animals being "released" into?

To the point: what does animal liberation really mean? Does it mean freedom from being killed by humans, stuck in new farms where they are protected against wild predators and fed the same crap they were getting in the industry farms? Does it mean the continuation of mass, global agriculture to feed the world a new moral diet? All of these things are what we can see in happen-

ing in practice. And I have a really hard time trying to understand how insane you have to be to really call this liberation.

All animals need one thing: wildness. We are no exception. That flow of life, that questionless existence, that feeling of an entirely interconnected community is what we are all born for. It is the world that our bodies work with. But those changes call for more than a diet change.

Rewilding, as I see it, means a total life of resistance and reconnection. It means breaking down that self/Other barrier that domestication builds and maintains. It means we need to stop seeing ourselves as outside of the community of life and to stop seeing things like non-animal foods as any less worthy than animals. We need to break the grasp of sentiency and other ideas that put humans and our closer relatives on a pedestal over wildness.

A part of this process is recognizing that we are hunters and gatherers. That doesn't mean that animals we may hunt became our natural enemies or that we have any different connection with them. That's not entirely correct: that relationship will change. It would no longer be a domineering sort of stewardship like veganism pushes, but a relationship among equals: the only relationship that should ever happen. That is a relationship that is forever deepened when you begin to read the tracks of animals around you, when you spend hours and days watching how animals interact and begin to see life as they would live it. It is about breaking mediation and breaking down the alienating technology that reinforces our domesticating relationship.

Rewilding is a great process of



checking our domesticating behavior and thinking. In the process we are free to find our own animality, to seek out our own wildness. It means becoming self sufficient and no longer taking part in a system that exploits globally and locally by its nature. In that self sufficiency we are free to develop relationships with others that are not about using each other.

So what does this mean in terms of day to day life? I'm not interested in outlining some program or creating a new ideology or morality for how we must be. I don't really care what personal decisions people make, because that is not my main problem. I can deal with people on a one to one basis as things go, but my target is civilization. Liberation will only come through its destruction and an end to the domestication process.

In practice that means opening cages and crippling the system of enslavement the only way that seems to work: bolt cutters and incendiaries. What the ALF and ELF have been doing for decades has been fighting on the forefront of domestication and trying to keep wildness wild. It means targeting the system at its central points. It means getting a deeper understanding of how civilization works so that we can target it more effectively. It means taking our lives into our own hands and not being afraid to act on it.

As far as diets go, the most I can recommend is to be aware of the foods that you would be eating without domestication: wild foods such as nuts, berries, plants, mushrooms, perhaps the occasional egg, and, yes, fish and meat. The ideal diet is the one that we've grown to: one that is foraged, scavenged and hunted. For me, that hunting means hunting in the ancient sense: simple tools and all the relationships that come with

it. Not the mediated macho hunting crap.

Eating this way doesn't necessarily throw out any kind of ethical consideration for the consequences of our actions. I won't buy any animal product, but I'm also very weary of buying things like soy. But this isn't based on ideological or moral grounds: more practical than anything. I have no more desire to eat domesticated animals than I do to domesticate them myself. One of the most obvious short term solutions is to eat road kill, an idea that becoming far more acceptable than the most ideological of vegans care to acknowledge. From road kill you can get skins for clothing, bones for tools, muscles and organs for meat, and knowing that this animal's death is not entirely in vain.

These deaths are the inescapable consequence of a system that can produce such massive and impersonal technology: complete with disconnected users. An ancient hunting rite is the promise to the animal that is killed to ensure that it will never be domesticated or taken without reason. That is a promise to look over its future generations and ensuring that they will grow up and live in the same wildness that all life should live in. It is a unifying tie and assurance that all things wild should be wild.

This is what we've lost through domestication. In taking road kill or any animal, I feel a promise to do everything I can to come back to that original relationship: a promise to destroy the civilization that binds both of us to a life of captivity and exile in our own homes.

That is a step back into our own wildness, into complete liberation. And that is a step that vegan and animal rights ideology remain a barrier to.

# THE UNBROKEN CIRCLE FROM MILITANT VEGAN TO PRIMITIVE HUNTER



-Dreaming Mountain

*The concrete is warped and uneven beneath my feet as I take a deep stance and thrust the placard above me with both arms. Around me, the crowd roars and chants, fists pumping skyward. At the head of the throng, a twenty-something man with a goatee and baseball cap shouts unintelligibly into a bullhorn, and the mass of young women and men around me responds in kind, with a feral, rhythmic bellow. Cars slow as they pass the gathering, families craning their necks in an effort to find out what the commotion is all about. Men in pick up trucks honk angrily and shout obscenities as they spy one of the many hand made signs proclaiming ANIMAL LIBERATION NOW!!*

*The sign I hold above me bears a grainy, overblown photograph of two men in camouflage fatigues armed with rifles. Lying at their feet is the carcass of a slain elk. The creature's head and shoulders have been stripped of its body in preparation for mounting. Gore pools at the hunter's feet. The men are grinning into the camera as one makes the "thumbs up" sign with the hand not holding his firearm. Both are splattered with small droplets of blood and their hands are smeared with it. "Ain't Murder Grand?" screams the caption in bold, red letters anchored above the photo.*

*The crowd, gathered outside a sporting goods store in suburban Pennsylvania, begins to break into smaller groups, the most vocally militant gathering by the entrance to the shop and the one, lone security guard who is looking more nervous by the moment. I immediately make my way toward the group as a new chant, lower, more discernable (and menacing) by the fact that fewer are willing to give voice to it's rhyme is struck up. "What goes around, comes around, plant a hunter in the ground!" Roaring my approval, I thrust the placard even higher...*

## Animal Liberation

For nearly a decade I observed a strict vegetarian diet, consuming no meat, fish, fowl, eggs, milk or cheese deriving from an animal source. Likewise, I did not utilize any animal by-products, be they leather, wool or fur. My clothing was derived from synthetic materials and any consumption I engaged in was lacking, to the best of my knowledge and ability, the stain of animal slaughter.

My initial emersion in a vegetarian lifestyle stemmed from my studies of Eastern spirituality, then gradually expanded to include the concept of "animal liberation", a Western ideal first given voice by Australian philosopher Peter Singer in the 1970's, from which the so-called animal rights movement has sprung.

As my belief system solidified around the concept that all life is equal and worthy not only of "rights" in the limited human sense, but complete lib-



eration from artificial enslavement and human design, my dietary philosophy began to shift yet again. Through the study of natural hygiene and diet, I became convinced that humans are by the dictates of evolution, not omnivorous, but rather natural herbivores that have strayed from the intent of natural law.

Spiritually, ethically, and now biologically, I was convinced that non-vegetarian life ways were completely out of balance, a detriment not only to the animals being slaughtered, but to the very Earth itself; the environmental consequences generated by the mass confinement of animals solely for the value of their flesh, damning.

The focus of my activism became more militant the more firmly convinced I became of these beliefs. From protest and boycott to more underground actions, the dimensions of my life solidified around a self-perceived role as savior of the innocent and judge of those humans living in defiance to the natural order of life. And yet, not content with simple dogma, I continued to study, explore, and educate myself on issues I found vitally important. Deep ecology, indigenous issues, bioregionalism, and eventually primitive living skills piqued my interest as I delved deeper into naturalism. Likewise, my study of mysticism and spirituality grew, expanding from a strong focus on esoteric Eastern traditions to one rooted in Earth based thought.

It was my study of these topics, particularly primitive living skills, which at last forced me to reevaluate my strict



dietary views. I had met several teachers—whom I deeply respected—which held the Earth as a sacred entity and possessed the skills to live beyond the dictates of the modern technological world. Yet these same individuals viewed my strict vegetarianism as lacking balance and spiritual foresight. More so, while they respected my sincerity and the drive that fueled my dietary practices, they also viewed them as simply unrealistic beyond the boundaries of “civilization”. The more I learned, the more I began to

suspect they might be right.

### In Search of Balance

By this point, I had been practicing vegetarianism for over eight years. What had begun as a revolt against anthropocentric arrogance and cruelty had deepened into a search for the sacred, a connection with the forces that brought humanity into existence and have sustained us the millions of years since. This search had led in a widening circle and was now returning me to its point of origin, wiser, and more knowledgeable than when I had originally embarked upon the journey.

I began to take a close look at my health. While seemingly robust, I had to admit that I was too pale and thinner than I liked, despite having engaged in vigorous exercise and weight training for several years. I was also prone to skin blemishes and brief periods of vertigo. Yet my diet was impeccable. I did not consume refined or processed foods, white sugar or artificial sweeteners. I



existed on copious amounts of steamed and raw vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. From the standpoint of vegan nutrition, there was simply no reason why I should not have been in peak physical condition.

Yet I was not experiencing optimal health. I had developed seborrhea (a skin condition similar to psoriasis which is often caused by malnutrition or malabsorption of nutrients) and in the summer of 2001, began to experience brief episodes of tunnel vision.

My studies of indigenous diet had placed me in contact with dozens of former vegetarians, several of whom had suffered physical problems very similar to my own. Thoroughly disillusioned, I decided that ideology was a poor excuse to sustain physical imbalance. Besides that, my worldview had shifted to a point where intellectually, I no longer believed strict veganism to be either natural or the dictate of evolution. Slowly, I began to reintroduce eggs into my diet, and a year later, free-range, organic chicken as well.

### Spirit Reborn

The hierarchy of life that I had created in my mind led to a distorted spiritual belief in which the lives of those creatures that speak more strongly to modern humanity take precedence over the life of less evolved creatures such as plants and herbs. This was no longer acceptable to me. If I were to truly recognize the equality of all living entities, there could be no hierarchy among them. My studies of anthropology and indigenous diet had led me to discount the view that human beings were by nature, strictly herbivorous, and lacking any solid anchor beyond emotional condi-


tioning, the foundation of my vegetarianism collapsed.

At this time I relocated from Pennsylvania to Colorado and began a more in-depth study of primitivism and natural living skills. Slowly, I began to consume wild venison and buffalo. My skin cleared, the tunnel vision and vertigo faded and I began to hold onto lean muscle mass.

My studies turned to the concept of the sacred hunt as practiced by primitive humanity for millions of years. Over a period of months I sat with the concepts I was exposed to, meditating on their relevance with my overall search and the way of life I sought to live. All that I had come to realize as true fell into place. In the pure spirit of the Old Ways, I found a relationship with all living beings that transcended modern ideological dogma. I began to grasp humankind's connection to the Earth, not only mentally, but also in the deepest fibers of my being.

*The spruce pines are heavy with dew. Aspen trees glisten in the dawning light. Through bending foliage I can see the silver trace of water bursting from a spring no more than fifteen yards from the natural blind I am crouched behind. My senses are sharpened by hunger as I have fasted for the previous four days in preparation for this dawn. I have shed the covering of civilization and wear only simple cotton shorts and doe skin moccasins. My body is camouflaged, covered in clay and soil. Duff and fragrant mosses are entwined throughout my hair and beard. My scent is that of the Earth.*

*I offer up a silent prayer of gratitude for the warmth of the sun illuminating the forest around me, and slowly stretch the muscles of my neck and back. At my feet are six broad head arrows, their points buried in the duff.*



*Cradled in my left hand is a simple wooden recurve bow, it's mellow hue brought to life by the sunlight now dappled across it.*

*The sound of movement and breaking twigs draws my attention to the spring and immediately my body falls motionless. A doe mule deer and two fawns are entering the clearing to drink from the spring. My breath stops for a moment as I take in their beauty. The mother glances about protectively, yet fails to note my presence. The fawn clustered around her bend their heads to drink. One is vigorous and well fed, the gentle chocolate of her coat ripples as it moves closer to the source of water. Her brother, however, is slightly less stout. A bit thinner, a bit more frail, this fawn limps slightly as it walks.*

*This is the animal I have tracked for the past two days. Whether hit by a car or suffering some other accident, this rear leg of this fawn is slightly twisted. By simply watching the creature drink, it is obvious that he will slow his mother and sibling down as winter approaches. I inch my right hand forward and very slowly draw an arrow, placing it in the cradle of the bow with exaggerated, slow motion gestures.*

*I breathe deeply and slowly from the pit of my stomach, silently giving thanks for the gift that I have been presented with, the chance to take part in the cycle of life. I treasure the opportunity to transcend the alienation of modern man, if only for a moment and truly merge with the great web of existence.*

*Exhaling, I rise from the blind and draw back. The doe immediately breaks for the cover of the trees, her stouter offspring at her*

*heels. The fawn I seek starts, then gives the briefest of pauses, looking over his shoulder at my form. Our eyes lock as the arrow releases and then he is in motion, bounding after his mother and sibling.*

*Holding my position, my eyes comb the brush for the arrow I have sent. It is not hard to find, having imbedded itself in an aspen on the edge of the clearing, just beyond the spring. It is bloodied up to the feather fletching which marks the end of the shaft. I drop back down into the blind and immediately give thanks. I offer a silent blessing for the spirit of the fawn and my greatest respect for the sacrifice that has been made.*

*The sun rises higher. I seat myself and concentrate on my breath. Some*

*thirty minutes after taking my shot, I rise once again from the blind and move across the clearing, past the spring to where my arrow is imbedded in the tree. The blood trail left by the fawn takes only a moment to pick up. Pushing through the stand of trees that mark the edge of the spring, the ground rises sharply and then falls. No more than a hundred yards away, at the base of a pine tree, the fawn has gone to ground. I approach the body slowly. The chest is not rising or falling. The spirit has left the body. I offer tobacco to the four directions, a gesture drawn from the land I inhabit if not the blood coursing through my veins, and again give thanks. This meat will serve me well and forward my life. The fawn and I will be joined, just as I recognize that some day I too will fall, my body joining the Earth and nourishing that from which it came...*



## Born Anew

This is my truth, hard won through experience, trial and error. Many of my former compatriots will doubtless look to me as fallen, a dupe, a "sell out" for daring to question what I once held as true. Yet I have always held the search for truth as paramount. It was this search that led me to militant vegetarianism, which I do not regret, for if it were not for the knowledge that I gained in my decade spent with the animal liberation community, I would not have reached the point I am at today. My endeavor to transcend the alienation and sickness of our culture led me to reject the anthropocentric dogma it rests upon. My efforts at reaching a state of wholeness rather than reactivity took me beyond the alienated dogma of the animal liberation counter-culture, which often rests on subtle but equally anthropocentric grounds.

Eric Fromm wrote, "*The quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning*". My path has continuously led me in the direction of truth sought, rather than certainty possessed. In an effort to share a bit of what I have learned in that still ongoing search, I would like to explore what I consider to be the foundation view of many within the animal liberation movement and how my immersion in primitivist thought and Earth based spirituality has allowed me to disavow it.

## The Unbroken Circle

The most common criticism of hunting is that it is cruel and inhumane, lacking respect for the sanctity of life and serving as an expression of violent aggression and barbarism.

It is true that hunting can be all of the charges listed above. I harbor the same disdain of the "good old boys" getting drunk in the woods and mindlessly killing anything that moves that the average urban based animal rights activist holds. Perhaps more. Such activity is not in balance with nature, holds no respect for the gift of life given in the sacrifice of the hunt and serves only to augment our alienation from the natural world rather than transcend it.

Yet that is not what primitive hunting is based on. I engage in the hunt as much to immerse myself in the primal forces of life as to gain sustenance. In the search for prey, I become that which I seek as it becomes me. If the hunt is to be held sacred, a means to connect to our non-alienated, non-reified primal nature, the goal must be to thin the sick, the weak and lame, those that would draw the rest down in harsh winter climes.

This returns humanity to the cycle of life, a revolution whereby each species becomes a support system for all others. When engaged in the sacred hunt, we are at our most vital, our most human, and our least alienated. The true hunter, because of the genuine respect and reverence that he holds for his prey, is sensitive to the suffering of his quarry and will make every effort to ensure that the kill is quick and as painless as possible.

Death is a part of the cycle of life, a turning of the great wheel of existence that our society is profoundly uncomfortable with. Due to humanities extreme exploitation of natural bioregions and the removal of non-human predatorial animals, the carrying capacity of many regions is profoundly out of balance. In the natural world, a lack of balance, more often than not, leads to the



death—the great equalizer.

Death due to starvation, or road kill—which increases as overcrowding forces more animals to range farther for food—are hardly heart warming or painless means of extinction. Yet stripped of predatorial controls, the scales of balance are set on such terms. The vegan who shuns hunting, in effect condemns non-human wildlife to this bitter end with little thought or understanding of the suffering that will surely result.

Yet through the sacred hunt, humanity may re-immense itself in the web of life, once again becoming a control factor that, through the application of natural reasoning and spiritual understanding, may serve Nature in maintaining balance through a method which inflicts the least amount of suffering that such maintenance will allow.

For the animal liberationist, equality, respect, reverence and awe is granted to only a few creatures, often mammals, in whose beauty, strength, and charisma we see a reflection of ourselves. Plants and other “lower” life forms may be given lip service as living entities, but are readily and often remorselessly utilized as foodstuffs suitable to the modern, “enlightened” human palate. There is a disconnect between the life that crawls, swims or flies and that which grows, which I no longer find acceptable.

For primal peoples, the universe includes all living entities—animal, vegetable and mineral. All life is considered sacred and equal. All life is worthy of gratitude and respect. It is understood that life feeds upon life and that as surely as there is birth, there shall be death. This is the beauty of the natural cycle. In taking life, be it plant or animal, we continue our existence with the knowledge that one day we too will embrace death,

our physical shells feeding the earth and future generations through emersion in the great web. There is no need to create a false hierarchy. There is no need to single one group out for salvation and condemn all else to destruction or the whims of capricious human desire. To the primitivist, every organism, animate and inanimate is a relation worthy of our deepest gratitude, honor and respect.

The anti-hunting movement, rather than striving toward greater unity with nature and the non-human world, places greater distance between humanity and Nature, in spite of it's noble intentions. This places human beings in an increasingly fragmented, mechanized, urban construct that denies biological reality while fostering alienation and anthropocentrism. Such a path can only end in the annihilation of our species.

#### \* A Point of Clarification

I am aware that domestication is not natural. I am not advocating or excusing the horrors perpetuated by corporate agribusiness or factory farming. There is no justification for the viciousness we inflict upon non-human animal life, or the imbalances we create upon the Earth. Nor am I am not advocating the consumption of conventional animal products, which, in addition to being laden with hormones and other chemicals, are the end process of confinement, cruelty and suffering. What I *am* advocating is the emersion of those humans interested in the process of rewilding in the ritual of the sacred hunt, which is engaged in with the utmost respect and sensitivity for the cycle of life for the purpose of sustenance.

# Letters

## WILD LOVE AGAINST CIVILIZATION

There's a quote credited to Che Guevara something along the lines of, “At the risk of sounding ridiculous, I would like to propose that the true revolutionary is motivated by feelings of deep love.” I have no particular interest in or respect for Che himself, but I think that the concept in the quote itself deserves examination by green anarchists, regardless of its source.

Despite sharing ideas and ideals with the writers and editors of publications like *Green Anarchy* or *Species Traitor*, I sometimes find myself on a really different wavelength. For example, when I picked up the Winter 2004 issue of *Green Anarchy* and saw the title on the inside back page “Act Your Rage! (before your rage becomes an act!)” it just didn't resonate with me. The idea of acting, or more accurately reacting, to the world around me out of pure rage, anger, fear or hatred, does not appeal to me. I understand why people do it, and I certainly have done it myself, since we live in a world where cycles of violence and misunderstanding are not only maintained but basically worshipped by the majority. But I don't want to validate these mainstream violent obsessions by acting on them myself. Reacting in unthinking violence to other people's unthinking violent actions (which is all that civilization basically amounts to — the staggeringly violent actions of those around me) doesn't make me feel more wild and free, because I know that such knee jerk reactions usually come from a space of fear, an internal emotional and psychic prison which, like any prison, I want to see broken down and demolished.

Towards that end, when any kind

of action by others around me inspires a feeling of anger, and a desire to react rage-fully, I attempt to stop myself, examine the sources of that emotion, explore what fears are active in me, try my best to apply some compassion and understanding to those around me whose actions inspire my rage, and finally attempt to internally heal the rage and fears as best I can, so that when I do react to violent actions around me I can do so in a way that most effectively stops them with a minimum of further violence, and hopefully creates an example of an alternative way of acting and interacting.

Now don't get me wrong — I'm certainly not proposing a path of navel-gazing new age self help apathy. It seems fully possible to me that green anarchists who are actively applying this kind of deep self introspection and outer compassion would still want to employ all forms of direct action to directly and effectively stop the violent human actions actualizing mass extinction. What I am proposing is not so much a change in action but a change in outlook: from ecological and other direct actions spawned fearfully out of rage and hatred of the oppressor, to ones based more solidly in love of wild nature (and the wild, cooperative, loving aspects of humanity) and compassion towards those whose horrible misguided ignorance or painful internal psychological hell causes them to lash out and attempt to murder and enslave all life.

Perhaps my outlook is different from other green anarchists because I have a spiritual, possibly religious, belief that in the end, chaotic wildness, and loving interwoven cooperation, will always prevail over brutally violent hierarchical regimented authoritarian order.



# Letters

Some might argue that my beliefs are irrational, an outlook that I would agree with because my faith in wildness goes beyond arguments and reason, and lies in deep intuition and an understanding that I feel is beyond words. Perhaps it is this faith that gives me the emotional space I need to act and react to global eco-genocide without being blinded by fear and rage, as I see some of my comrades doing.

To further elucidate where I am coming from, I would like to explain my inspiration for writing this letter/piece. I recently had a dream in which I was at a social gathering with a large number of people, including two friendly acquaintances of mine who are active and vocal green anarchists. In the dream I looked at them, and at first experienced a feeling of fear that they were going to deride me as a reformist sell-out because of an ecologically oriented project I had recently, briefly, been involved with which was not explicitly revolutionary in its rhetoric or practice. This feeling of fear and embarrassment was followed by something completely different, an affection which I can only identify as familial love towards my two friends, whose deeply held beliefs and strong, beautiful ideals I highly respect. But it was a love which was at the same time tempered with deep sadness. The sadness came from the fact that I felt that my green anarchist friends were in deep pain. I saw their pain reflected in their general speech and behavior, which constantly centered around the intense anger and hatred they feel towards the mindless obedient violence of civilization, so that I would rarely get to see their intense love for the playful, cooperative chaos of wild nature. In my dream the wistfulness of this love was something

like one might feel for a brother or sister or close friend who you think has become stuck and hung up trying to work through an experience of great pain, to the point of developing an identity around that pain which makes it even harder for them to let it go. And yet inside the dream I also had a strong feeling that my friends would not always be stuck in the same trap of rage, beating angrily at the walls of civilization, and that they would eventually find the love necessary for internal emotional peace, even as their outer lives might still be filled with intense struggle working to heal the last 10,000 years of civilization's wounding.

This dream, and the reflection I went through upon waking, was disconcerting, and at the same time deeply exciting for me. To feel such deep love for these acquaintances, who I rarely see anymore, and with whom I often find my interactions extremely dissatisfying, was wonderfully uplifting. And to have that same love combined with such a clear understanding of why our interactions disappoint me, and why I find it so hard to really feel, express or share my love with these people in person, was an amazing breakthrough for me.

And so I wrote this, to inspire love and to soften rage, so that we might go forward and smash civilization and run wild without vengeful wrath, but in a spirit of frivolity and cooperation.

Love Rage, [ecoloverage@hotmail.com](mailto:ecoloverage@hotmail.com)

## REVOLUTION?

[Note: the opening quote is from me, KT, and this is from a series of letters between us. From the former Yugoslavia, Aleksa has been in the midst of leftist and

# Letters

revolutionary backwash as the past revolutions have failed.]

"I've come to terms since then that the idea of revolution is completely unsalvageable. I think I realized that at the time, but thought it was still worth trying. I guess I just hadn't been able to give up hope completely. But the more I realize about the reality and possibilities for collapse, the more I see it as a direct path to destroying power without the possibilities for a new organization to take over the state/civilized structure."

Revolution is a stronghold of our hopes but it's also the last stronghold of so many leftist illusions. In their interpretation Revolution remains firmly in vanguardist, rationalists and organizational trenches. It's methodology/technology for social change. It will lead us toward new life in a systematic and organized way. After taking some risks – or even better, without them – the landing in new life will be painless and safe. Everything will be just fine. It is an empty promise: that notion ignores the whole capitalist dynamic that affects and mutates humans preventing any serious and radical break with the system. That dynamic is so successful that today we have only confusion in the place of any "revolutionary consciousness". Even leftist revolutionaries don't know what "revolution" is supposed to mean. It's something too abstract and uncomfortable even for them. Nobody knows what we are talking about when we talk about revolution. And yet we can talk about it.

So what is Revolution?

Just people who 1) start to live differently – without commodity, any sort of political power and any mass/world/

global system instead of present ones (core propositions whose practical implications should be discussed immediately) – and 2) to remove all obstacles (that we are particularly weak).

It's a transition toward new life but without any guarantees. We know what we want and what we don't want but we don't know what is waiting on us. And yet the task of dismantling and stopping this Machine is so urgent that we cannot hesitate just because we cannot see all consequences in advance. And that uncertainty is what leftists try to prevent with their cunning master plans. But it always remains too abstract and out of touch, ineffective.

Leftists fight against capitalism in a strange way: by preventing its collapse by all means necessary. But capitalism must collapse if we want to get rid of it. It's an obstacle. Its collapse would have some consequences. Those are consequences we should joy for and not to be afraid of them. But we are afraid and we are trying to surpass that fear with all kinds of rationalizations and illusions. We are afraid, like many other people (particularly in most "advanced" regions, where individual is particularly weak, incompetent and passive), how this or that aspect of the system necessary for basic survival would work without present power and production support/relations. If fear is our only response to that paradox we are trapped in, we can only stay in it. That fear lies behind all present confusion, mystifications and hesitations. Revolutionaries are afraid of Revolution. They expect guarantees. They are afraid of cold feet and less fatted buttocks. They are afraid for their computers and free software. And for many other fine things. Just like all

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the other happy users.

(How can such people fight against this system? If there are so many good things, why should we risk so much? That's the main problem with "realists": they are not motivated enough; more precisely, they are domesticated, absorbed, processed.)

The rationalization of that fear is classic Marxist concept about "social (common) character of (mass) production" and "private appropriation" as the main problem. The potentials and products that could have been developed and produced ONLY by capital are seen as "achievements" or "common" possession of humankind. (That idea has been recently revitalized through "creative commons", "free software", GNU and similar techno-optimist shit.) That's why they don't want the collapse of this system. They are its children, its happy users. They cannot live and act in accordance with the basic insight about that paradox: we cannot get rid of capitalism and keep the way of "life" that only capital could afford to us. Even if we get rid of mercantile layer of capitalism and reorganize the relations in the realm of production and distribution, as long as we insist on the same way life ("needs", solutions, procedures, etc), we will reorganize only capital not our lives. In that way we prolong the same enslaving and destructive dynamic. It's a win-win situation but for capital not for us or for totality of life.

Mao talked about Great Leap Forward. But we need a Great Leap into Unknown. Big Friendly Unknown. We shouldn't be afraid of anything. It's less dangerous than the present dynamic and it's immensely more promising.

In conclusion of this brief sketch I'll SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

just repeat a question that any decent leftist will not avoid any longer: how can we get rid of capitalism without its total collapse and without all predictable and unpredictable consequences of such collapse?

-Aleksa

## Destroying the Creators of Destruction

Global warming, natural resource depletion, toxic waste, air and water pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, indigicide, homogenization, corporatization...the problems are as overwhelming as the solutions. In fact, the problems seem irreversible, especially as we, as a species, are moving towards a more rigid, totalitarian, disregarding world order. The problems are real...very real, and if we look hard enough, we can see them. Some don't have to look at all...the problems stare at them in the face, choke them in their sleep, and mutate their DNA on a daily basis. But nonetheless, each and every problem affects every human, plant, and animal on this planet in some way.

There are apparent root causes to these problems stemming from a mechanistic worldview of nature; a profit-driven, individualistic economy and state; belief in the human domination of nature; general apathy; and the concept of "civilization" that has opposed humanity to nature and doomed the planet.

I can go on and on about the problems civilization, the state, capitalism, domination, etc. have caused; the ill effects of our "progress" and our 10,000 year old mistake; the different real world examples of our destructive potential; and the realistic apocalypse see

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nario -- however, this brings us back to the hampering philosophical debates that lead us in circles, infighting, and disunion. Like a person shot with an arrow, what's more important? Removing the arrow, or finding out who shot it?

The Earth has been shot with a very large, very jagged, and lethal arrow, and we can no longer wait to pull it out.

What are the solutions? Solar power? Wind power? Intentional communities? Hydrogen cells? We can't make these things happen, and the State will do everything to maximize their interests in the current infrastructure before things like these become mainstreamed, decentralized, and available to the public. When it comes to "sustainable development" and renewable energies, we have absolutely no power. They are not an immediate solution but a futuristic utopian dream. It seems like the only solution is to stop. Stop polluting, stop toxifying, stop corporatizing, stop civilizing. How do we stop these

things? Things that create the forces of destruction shall be destroyed themselves. It's that simple. The car factories and dealerships, the power plants, the corporations, the looters and polluters of the Earth, the factory farms, the golf courses -- all must be destroyed. People must not be allowed to destroy the Earth any more. We can no longer wait to educate them -- they will learn themselves. (As an open community we can teach others the alternate pathways of life while simultaneously destroying those other pathways which have repressed "the primary human potential".)

Mikhail Bakunin once wrote that "The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too". Let's be creative and passionate about our destruction, the final destruction, the destruction of the destroyers, so that harmony and anarchy can be (re)created on Earth, in our communities, and in our lives.

L(a)rk

NoGodsNoMasters@hotmail.com  
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## BLACK AND GREEN FIRST ANNUAL 2004 LAME ASS LIBERAL AWARDS

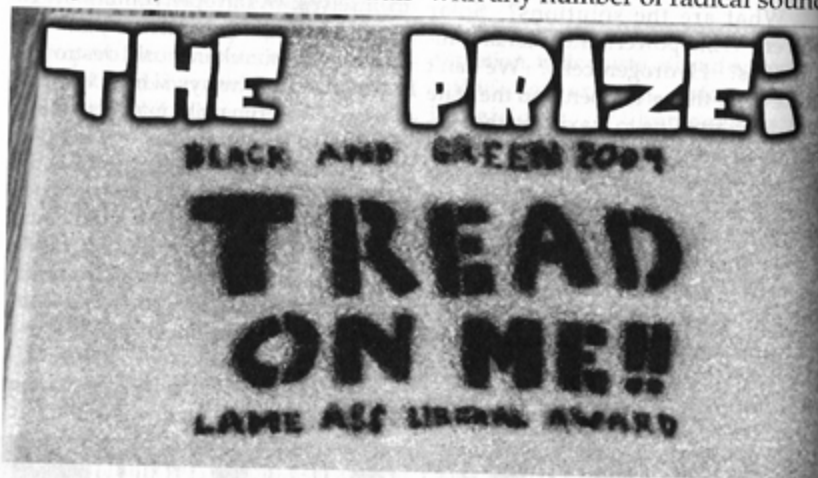
Throughout 2004, liberal and leftist groups have been pulling out all the stops to achieve the most. Though each has their own very, very specific goal, each marketing team has really had their eye on the prize. That prize, the much coveted Black and Green Lame Ass Liberal Award™: a hefty doormat spray painted gold with the clearly applicable saying: TREAD ON ME.

2004 was a really tough year. If any group was going to be a winner, they surely had to pull out some of the big guns. As you know, the Black and Green Lame Ass Liberal Award™ does come from militantly anti-political anarchists who are always willing to smite a lame campaign or reformist effort with their cunning wit, but only the best

of campaigns were able to avoid the worst of it to receive this standing ovation for their excellency in a hands down, stupefied show of respect for their complete and utter lack of spine.

The Black and Green Lame Ass Liberal Award™ comes only to those who have shown that they really have no edge at all, and giving up any real aspiration for change, they've taken their dull

been offering glossy, hard hitting photojournalism with some of the dulllest political commentary leaving the readers in a state of awe over what is most often a complete mismatch, but a stunning one. The magazine skims the top of nearly every facet of resistance movements and throws them into their own patented melting pot of meaning and 'action': leaving the reader with any number of radical sound



edge to some of the most frivolous of wrongdoings and set themselves on the path to righteousness in an uphill battle for table scraps. In an election year, that truly means the lowest of the low.

So without further ado, onto the winner's circle:

The Black and Green Lame Ass Liberal Award™ DUMB AND DUMBER category award goes to: ADBUSTERS' MEDIA FOUNDATION

For years, Adbusters magazine has SPECIES TRAITOR NO. 4

bites to spew forth with a slightest trace of coherency and a hard dash of contradiction. We're often left wondering if this is a forum, or if all this Un-Cool really is just Cool?

The magazine is only one front for this impressive mish mash of Un-Cool. Beyond the magazine is a number of equally pathetic campaigns from the attempts to revoke the charter of mass media to airing expensive ads that in effect say nothing, but there is a hair that broke the liberal's back, thus winning the coveted award. That cam-

paign/product is THE BLACKSPOT SNEAKER.

No longer content to just parody corporations or mildly subvert the corporate stranglehold, they finally said, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em...and make more crap. The Blackspot Sneaker is primarily an effort to 'kick Nike C.E.O. Phil Knights' ass' as we're constantly reminded in their many ads and website. In fact, the sneaker has a red spot on the tip of each pair so that you can properly line your Un-Cool shoe up to his yuppie ass. Though that may never actually happen, it does create quite the ice breaker for those tense social moments where you can achieve proper Un-Coolness in the midst of adversity. I can hear it now: "Yeah, Bush sucks and all, but did you check out that totally Un-Cool guy over there in the BLACKSPOT SNEAKER!?" Now there's someone who's not afraid to wear their commitment to The Cause."

More than just a printed shirt or shoe, the sneaker is an entire campaign...and corporation. In fact, every pair of BLACKSPOT SNEAKERS that you buy gives you one vote in the BLACKSPOT ANTICORPORATION! That's right; it's a whole new deal: ANTICORPORATION. Which is like a corporation, but totally Un-Cool...which is actually Cool. The shoe, which is vegan friendly, union made, 100% organic hemp, and features a hand drawn ANTI-LOGO (retailing for \$57.50 [Canada

dian dollars]), is only the beginning. We've been forewarned:

"Just imagine: a blackspot music label that is truly independent; a chain of blackspot restaurants that kicks McDonalds' ass by serving only locally-produced food; a network of individually-owned biodiesel outlets that cuts deeply into Big Oil's market share. The possibilities are limited only by the desire for change."

Stop right there, they won my heart at imagine. Not really, they just won my vote for The Black and Green Lame Ass Liberal Award™ DUMB AND DUMBER category! Congratulations!!

The Black and Green Lame Ass Liberal Award™ HAHAHA...OH SHIT, THEY'RE ACTUALLY SERIOUS category award goes to: FTHEVOTE.COM

FTHEVOTE.COM is one of the campaigns coming from the Pittsburgh based Hactivist Tactical Media Network which is, in their words, "a collection of tactical media artists, activists, engineers, and programmers attempting to regain autonomy for themselves and others through communication system reclamation." It is an outgrowth of the Carbon Defense League and its technical hardcore musical counterpart Creation is Crucifixion.

For those who don't know, CDL really burst on the scene in 1998 and 1999 with their 'Child as Audience' campaign (turned book/CD which was published by

AK Press in 2001). The campaign centered on the fact that video games are one of the leading time wasters for a disgruntled and bored youth, especially boys. So they tried to subvert the dominant paradigm by recoding Gameboy games and putting them back in circulation with a 'libratory' game focused on 'unleashing' the child from mass culture and consciousness and set them on the path to self discovery and liberation.

Sounds good right? Let's look at the final product. The game is called 'Super Kid Fighter' and the libratory story line goes like this: "a teenage boy must escape from school, steal from police, slingshot churchgoers, help out prostitutes, and smoke crack (among a multitude of other atypical game activities) to reach the end of the game - a free brothel for children of all ages." Liberation through objectification via mediation, very interesting idea, but it would only be a matter of time before things escalated.

And in the 2004 voting season, that is just what we got. Hactivist, at least once self-proclaimed anarchists, unleashed their newest endeavor: FTTHEVOTE.COM. So what is FTTHEVOTE.COM? Well it's a wonderful place where the truly dedicated activist can really

put their bodies on the line, or the bed as the case may be. It's a site dedicated to people who are willing to have sex with conservatives so that they will vote against Bush in 2004! Now that's sticking it to em!

Of course, political prostitution is hardly nothing new. But this may be the first time it has so literally been applied by a grassroots campaign. Even more mind blowing is the open question: do they really think that this would sway voters or just be another excuse for sex with liberals, who the site boldly proclaims are 'truly hotter'.

I was blown away by what I thought was going to be a hilarious fringe joke, but turns out to be a page where you can browse through hundreds of naked men and women to see who any conservative interested in serious debate can vow to sway their vote for some guilt free liberal loving!

This may, however, be proof that reformism is also a sexually transmitted disease. For those conservatives that missed the chance at some 'hotter liberals', they may be rearing up for the next election already. In the meantime, just keep an eye out for their documentary DVD on the way to some seedy porn shop and AK Press now! Way to go (w)hactivists!

**BLACK AND GREEN NETWORK**  
LARGEST ONLINE SOURCE FOR GREEN ANARCHIST INFO,  
RESOURCES, AND WRITINGS. LARGE BOOK AND SHIRT DISTRO  
WILL BE BACK IN THE FALL. **BLACKANDGREEN.ORG**

# REVIEWS

NOTE: Of all sections, the reviews got some of the most cuts. Check out the website: primalwar.org for more.

## PRIMITIVE SKILLS/PRIMAL LIVING BOOKS

Here are some reviews/suggestions for those interested in getting started or looking for more in the way of primitive skills or primal living. The bulk of the books I deal with are North American in origin and focus. So a chunk of information that deals with specific species is probably not going to be relevant, but the skills still are.

Most of the best field guides for plants, animals, etc. are local ones, so it's pointless for me to really elaborate on any of them here. But these are some of the most important things you can have. Audubon and Peterson field guides are definitely the most accessible and widely available. Both are excellent sources, though the Audubon books are typically laid out in an easier to use format, though I don't care as much for the actual design. I highly recommend using more than one source. There are good internet sites, but again, most are local. One pretty widely available book for plants is *Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Plants in Wild (and Not so Wild) Places* by "Wildman" Steve Brill (New York: Quill Books, 1994). That's a good book for identifying and learning about various plants that are common in North America and likely other places in the world.

One final note, these books tend to be a bit pricier than the average anarchist publication and that turns some people off. However these books are extremely important and being often self-published

tends to raise the costs. Some are available in larger chain stores though or occasionally in used book stores.

Onto the reviews...books are organized by type.

## GENERAL SKILLS/AWARENESS

Introductory books are really taking on a huge task: trying to touch on just about every skill and aspect of life in a short yet detailed way to get as much out there as they possibly can. Because of this, they'll almost always be missing something out of necessity. Some do a better job than others of covering more or opening more doors, but they are what they are. You'll almost always get far more info from more specialized books or materials on any particular subject, but that's no reason for skipping over or ignoring what can be really great books. For those getting into everything, these books are extremely helpful and even those with plenty of dirt time will still find something new or beneficial in each.

There are a number of introductory type books out there. They range from the excellent to the completely wretched, with little discretion to their availability. The most commonly available book may be pretty worthless, but individual opinion comes into play here as well. For example, Tom Brown has a number of field guide like books out there and there are plenty of 'Brownies' around to boost them, but I really don't care for them much at all. You get a lot of ego and I've found much of the info to be very circumstantial. Of course there is a lot in

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there; you just have to dig beneath Tom's image of himself to really find it. But I think there are some much better options out there, Evan disagrees strongly. Here are a few notables:

*"Naked into the Wilderness": Primitive Living and Survival Skills* by John and Geri McPherson. (Randolph, KS: Prairie Wolf, 1993. \$25. 408 pages, paper.)

This book is actually a compilation of ten pamphlets put out (primarily) by John McPherson over 6 years and is easily the most important primitive skills book I've come across and have met few who disagree. For being an introductory book, this really blows most other books of its type out of the water. All the skills are explained well and are easy to follow with tons of photographs of the steps taken. It covers brain tanning, fire, cordage, hunting and trapping tools, wilderness cooking, skinning and butchering, containers, basic tools, flint knapping, and shelters.

The book, like the pamphlets, is self published by John and Geri who have always been quick and helpful with any further questions that I've had. They've also produced a number of videos on the same subjects. I was a bit wary of the

seeing the two on flint knapping I realized how much more you can actually get from them. This book is often available from ST, but you can also get it through Prairie Wolf directly at [www.prairiewolf.net](http://www.prairiewolf.net) or PO Box 96 Randolph, KS 66554. They produced a

follow up to *Naked...* in 1996 subtitled *Primitive Wilderness Skills, Applied and Advanced* (\$25. 294 pages, paper.) which has some useful tips and writings, though it doesn't really stand up to the first book.

*Participating in Nature* by Thomas J. Elpel (HOPS Press, 12 Quartz St. Pony, MT 59747. 1<sup>st</sup> edition: 1992, 5<sup>th</sup> edition: 2002. \$25. 202 oversized pages, paper.) and *Earth Knack: Stone Age*

*Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Gibbs-Smith PO Box 667 Layton, UT 84041. 1996, \$15.95. 192 pages, paper.)

I group these books together because they are somewhat similar in nature though both have something to offer in their own right yet different from the Prairie Wolf stuff. They have a bit more of a social side, carrying more reflections from experience and some philosophical aspects as well as core skills. I would consider both of them equally useful and definitely above many other standard



# REVIEWS

introductory skills books.

Both deal with a broader range of topics, though there is certainly a lot of overlap from the Prairie Wolf books and with each other, but not necessarily in a negative way. They both deal with edible and medicinal plants (a specialty of Elpel who has also written the classic *Botany in a Day*). There is significant difference in the material presented, but the overall difference is the focus/aim: *Earth Knack* tends to focus more on community and social based life whereas Elpel comes more from his own philosophical knowledge and experience. In this he's talking about concrete practicality and applicability of skills on a day to day basis in a straightforward and honest fashion (aside from this and his other books/videos, he's a webmaster for [primitive.org](http://primitive.org) and [hollowtop.com](http://hollowtop.com) and founder/teacher at Hollowtop skills school and has written some really helpful articles for those of hardcore interest, like charting spindle/base board compatibility for hand drills and bow drills.). They both have their merits and directions which are especially useful for those in need of a starting point.

*Primitive Technology I & II: Book of Earth Skills* from the Society of Primitive Technology and edited by David Wescott (Gibbs-Smith [see above for address], 1998 and 2001 respectively, each \$24.95, 250 oversized pages, paper.)

These two books are far more general skills for the hardcore primal living enthusiast than introductory, though they can be that as well. Both books are from the pages of *Bulletin of Primitive Technology* (see below) which is a journal by primitive tool/skills enthusiasts and based in experimental archeology. So they are far more technical, but this is

their strength. You get articles dealing with specific problems, techniques, and applications that you'll not likely get anywhere else.

If you've got some of the introductory and general knowledge or are really interested in technical details and learning from other's experience, then this is where to look. The articles are typically well written and don't require a lot of technical knowledge or academic background, so they are approachable and highly recommended for those with serious interest.

*Practicing Primitive: a Handbook of Aboriginal Skills* by Steven Watts. (Layton, UT: Gibbs-Smith, 2004. \$24.95, 226 oversized pages, paper.)

Anyone familiar with the Bulletin of Primitive Technology will likely be familiar with Steve Watts (president of the Society of Primitive Technology). For over 20 years his amazing art and expertise has been gracing the pages of the Bulletin and has really offered an aesthetically pleasing and clear companion to the field of experimental archeology. This book takes all that art, articles and his collective hand outs over the years and brings them all together.

The art has always amazed me, but the simple clarity is what really stands out. This is really a how-to book based on how societies have lived for thousands of years and logically has a lot of information for those who are concerned with practical applicability and use. What stands out most to me is the extensive look at different types of structures, hunting and fishing tools, and especially a rare look at working with bones. If you're looking for something a bit more advanced, but approachable or even just clear and precise illustrations

you'll definitely find it here!

The writings of Tamarack Song are extremely useful for just about every angle of general and specific awareness and knowledge/thoughts for living. In the last issue I mentioned the follow ups to his great book *Journey to the Ancestral Self*, but much of what would be those other books has been streamlined into a series of pamphlets on topics from sacred speech to finding a spiritual guide to death, health and much more. All of these are available from Teaching Drum Outdoor School 7124 Military Road Three Lakes, WI 54562-9333 or online at [teachingdrum.org](http://teachingdrum.org). Be sure to check out his essay on community in this issue and check out the programs that Teaching Drum has to offer from Guardian Warrior to the intensive year long program.

Journals: *Wilderness Ways* (PO Box 621 Bellaire, TX 77402, [wwmag.net](http://wwmag.net). \$4.50/issue or 1 year/4 issue sub for \$16) and *Primitive Archer* (PO Box 79306 Houston, TX 77279, [primitivearcher.com](http://primitivearcher.com). \$5.95/issue or 1 year/5 issue sub for \$24) are two similar and seemingly connected publications that are also the most widely available primitive skills magazines. Both cover a number of different topics, but are almost all popularly written and accessible. *WW* has a more broad focus on general primitive skills, but there is definitely bleed over as *PA* (the larger magazine of the two) tends to cover far more topics than strictly those relating to bow making and hunting.

*Bulletin of Primitive Technology* (PO Box 905 Rexburg, ID 83440, [primitive.org](http://primitive.org). \$16/issue or \$25-30 year/2 issue membership) is more advanced and often more in depth than the more popular magazines. It's not as widely available;

hence the cost, but you generally get what you pay for. See the review of *Primitive Technology I & II* above.

## TRACKING/STALKING

*Tracking and the Art of Seeing* by Paul Rezendes (New York: Quill, 1999. \$28. 336 oversized pages, paper.)

Tracking may well be one of the most important aspects of primal living. It's not just about hunting and trailing for a kill, it's about awareness of the other animals that surround you and their presence. Following in their footsteps is perhaps one of the greatest ways of observation that we have available to us. Not to forget it's a direct connection to the 'universal language' of wildness. The better we can understand the lives of those around us, the better we can understand our relationship and purpose within the world at large.

Now tracking, sign and scat books are by no means hard to come by. What is different about Rezendes is his holistic and really common sense approach to tracking. He has the technical information, experience, stories and plenty of excellent photos, but his understanding of tracking as an art rather than a science is what really sets him apart. By far the best tracking book I've seen. He also has a more philosophical/awareness based book that complements this book entirely called *the Wildness Within* (New York: Putnam, 1999).

*Mammal Tracks & Sign* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003. \$44.95, 785 pages, glossy/paper.) and *Bird Tracks & Sign* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001. \$34.95, 456 pages, glossy/paper.) by Mark Elbroch with Eleanor Marks for *BT&S*.

Both are costly, heavy and extremely dense books, but these are quickly becoming the standard encyclopedia for any serious tracker. Again, you really get what you pay for with these. The information and easy to use guides have just about any information you'll need when you come across scat, signs, tracks, nests, kills, and anything else that any animal might leave behind (in the bird book, this also includes great chapters on feathers and skulls). There are so much information and so many photos in these books that it can almost be overwhelming, but again, for those serious about tracking, you'll find yourself toting these monsters out with you whenever you go outside. As a student of Rezendes, you'll find a very similar approach, but the main thrust is just hitting you with whatever information you might possibly need and plenty more.

## HIDE TANNING:

*Blue Mountain Buckskin* by Jim Riggs (Cave Junction, OR: Backcountry Publishing, 2003 [2<sup>nd</sup> edition]. \$14.95, 138 pages, paper.) and *Deerskins into Buckskins* by Matt Richards (Backcountry Publishing, 1997. \$14.95, 160 pages, paper. A newer expanded edition is now available) are the two primary sources for primitive hide tanning. Both are extremely accessible and detailed for anyone who has no experience in work-

ing with animal hides to those just looking for pointers or different techniques. Though there is natural cross over, both have their particular focuses: *Blue Mountain Buckskin* is the textbook for dry scrape methods and *Deer skins into Buckskins* really focuses more on wet scrape methods.

Despite personal preferences, I think both are really useful. Jim Riggs' book, originally published in 1979, really set the standard for primitive methods of hide tanning and remains a constant read and guide to this day. Richards' (who incidentally has taken on publishing and distributing both books) book is becoming more and more popular, especially with a newer expanded edition and now a corresponding DVD/video. Unfortunately I have yet to see either the new edition or the video, but have every reason to think they'd be even more help-

ful than anything I've come across. Richards also runs the largest online source for hide tanning technique, skills and products where you can get these books as well: [braintan.com](http://braintan.com).

## FLINTKNAPPING:

There are a lot of sources for flint knapping books, videos, etc., but the best introduction that I've found is from John and Geri

McPherson in *Naked into the Wilderness*. As I mentioned above, they have also produced 3 hours of video about the sub-



ject. Though it can be a bit draining and I wouldn't take it in one sitting, it is by far one of the best technical introductions that I could've asked for and I highly recommend it.

Flint knapping can be a tough subject though. We give it far more weight than it can likely have on future societies as there are alternatives for primitive tool making and use (primarily bone and wood) as knappable stones are not nearly as widespread as the humans that would likely be using them. But, if you have the sources available, it's a challenging but great skill to have.

I haven't gone through a lot of the books here simply because there are so many, but few that I've really got a chance to go through. One of the best overall introductions and guides is John Whittaker's *Flintknapping: making and understanding stone tools* (Austin: University of Texas, 1994. 341 pages, paper).

## MUSHROOMS!

I have to admit that I consider myself a bit of an anarcho-mycologist: I'm obsessed with wild mushrooms. Most folks who've gotten a taste of the hunt and the bounty will probably tell you much of the same (especially those who've DIS-

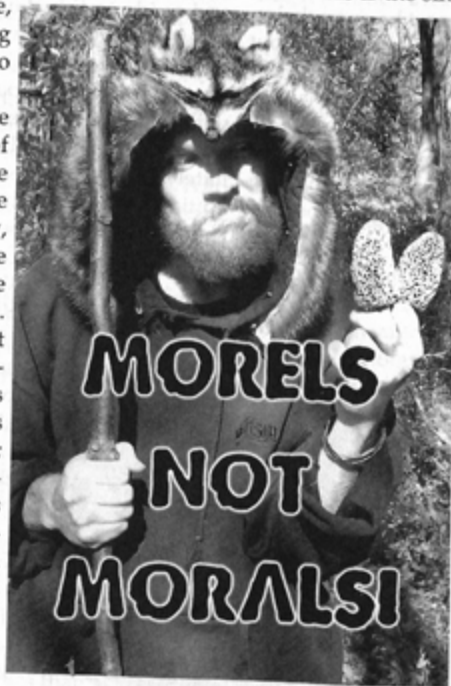
covered the joys that only morels can bring). I hope anyone interested in primal living will discover their very much overlooked greatness and highly nutritious existence.

Standard field guides are good, but the serious mushroom hunter will have to be familiar with David Arora's *Mushrooms Demystified* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1979/1986. \$39.95, 959 pages, paper). Another fat and expensive book, and yet another one that is worth the costs. This is the single most important

book ever written and published about wild mushrooms. The amount of information is just fantastic and will help anyone in seeking out whatever mushrooms they might dream of. It's full of technical details but also written in a humorous and approachable manner. The most comprehensive field guide for North American mushrooms, need I say more?

## ETCETERA

So these are some basic suggestions, though not in any way conclusive, of my own favorites and most often recommended. There are plenty more books out there on particular skills or tools that are important (traps, atlatls, basketry, clothing, shelters, and so on), but I can



only include so much here.

If you're just starting out and looking for a core group of books, I'd say the most important would be at least one field guide for wild edible plants and one for wild medicinal plants, *Naked in the Wilderness*, and *Tracking and the Art of Seeing*. That covers your core skills/knowledge. To expand on that slightly I'd include at least one field guide to wildflowers, mammals, birds, reptiles and insects, and aquatic life, mushrooms, wildflowers in winter, and trees. Not to forget, of course, all of the above titles.

There are some excellent quick and easy guide books available as well that I wouldn't shy away from. Nature Study Guild Publishers has published a number of cheap quick find type pocketbooks on such things as ferns, flowers, berries, trees and the like. Audubon Society has similar books on mammals, tracks, flowers, and so on. Peterson has printed up a number of folded quick reference sheets as well. These tend to be less informative, but have the essentials pretty well covered and are much easier to take out than a dozen or so field guides.

For those interested in butchering and eating animals, I think a field dressing or game guide/cookbook is very useful. Not everything of every animal can be eaten and some animals are easier to butcher in certain ways. These are easy enough to find and especially helpful for those who are curious enough to pick up anything. And butchering isn't nearly as complicated as it might seem. You'll find the knife naturally follows connective tissue and limbs after a few experiences. It can be hard to break that distance between ourselves and the animals we eat at first, but any break in mediation becomes easier over time and through experience. It's a lot easier than you might

think.

The one thing I would like to see more of is a book/s that combine/s animal life, behavior and birth cycles with information on hunting and trapping. Most of what I've seen that deals with traps is along the lines of set it up and see what winds up in it, whereas I'm a bit more reserved about the types of animals I'd be actively hunting or trapping. These things come with living among other wild animals, but that is a whole lot of knowledge that we have to learn. I hope to have something of this sort available over the next few years, but in the meantime, the National Trapper's Association manual/field guide actually has some pretty good information for starters though I don't care any more for steel traps than I do for going hunting with guns.

## ZINES AND PAMPHLETS:

*Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* #59. POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703. 82 pages, \$4.95. [www.anarchymag.org](http://www.anarchymag.org)

This is the first issue by the new editorial collective, and though I know they're prone towards pretentiousness, I hoped they might still breathe new life into one of the most widely distributed anarchist mags. All I can say is that I really hope this is just them getting a feel for the mag, 'cause this issue really sucks. It's almost all reviews with a few columns and only two essays, including the conclusion of what might be a eulogy for AJODA as we knew it. The layout is pretty bad, but considering how unrelenting the collective is when it comes to reviews, they really have not put anything nearly remarkable on the table here, especially taking ludicrous cheap shots like saying that *The Day Philosophy Dies* should pos-

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sibly not be good because it's published by Derrick Jensen who "is too much of a golden boy in some circles"!

Now I clearly have no problem with lots of reviews, but what ever happened to content? Let's just hope this is the 'training wheels' version. If anything though, I guess it couldn't get much worse for all it's worth.

*Arson* #1. anonymous. 72 pages, available from Beating Hearts Distro, POB 716, Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006, Australia for \$3.

A new and very explicitly anti-civ, cut and paste zine from some anonymous folks in Australia. Uncompromisingly militant and definitely interested in bringing civilization down. Excerpt from Derrick Jensen's upcoming *Endgame*, personal rants, reprints, and some feminist and anti-rape bits. Always good to see anti-civ theory showing up in more DIY zines like this, taking on a different format and approach than *ST*, *GA-UK* & *US*. Of these types, *Arson* is definitely a stand out, looking forward to seeing more. Rumor has it that another issue is currently in the works. Keep an eye out for it!



This particular issue is the 'arson' issue and is particularly impressive with it's completely no compromise approach to the ALF, especially relevant as folks fade with starry eyes into support of unmasked 'rescues' instead of the free and torch 'em approach clearly pushed here. Great work, should be required reading!

*Cracks in the Wall* #4. 28 pages, no price or address. Email: andy\_939@hotmail.com.

Now for something completely different: *CITW* is a personal zine, but a bit different: you get comics, rants, Gonzo saying 'work blows', and the bulk of the zine is a story about 'Ozo' battling with the totality of civilization. Funny, entertaining and with its share of anti-civ critique makes this an

odd ball, but interesting addition to anti-civ zines.

*Fifth Estate* #365. POB 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220. 64 pages, \$3.

No doubt we have our differences with the *FE* folks, but I thought I'd give their 'Reconsidering Primitivism' issue a chance. The Wildroots collective seems to have had a hand in this issue, so perhaps I was expecting more of an anarcho-primitivist focus than what we got. Opens with an intro from them and then an excellent excerpt from Derrick Jensen's upcoming book, *Endgame*. This is followed by a really disappointing bit from Richard Heinberg who seems to have reversed on his past sympathies for AP to sell books about softening the col-

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lapse and how little agency we really have with our destiny. You have some of your *FE* regulars, Peter Lamborn Wilson, Bonobo. Walker Lane, an always great excerpt from Fredy Perlman, and, of course, David Watson. Watson just recycled his old 'Swamp Fever' essay, ironically stealing a title from John Zerzan, but definitely didn't do anything to further it.

A bit of a mish mash of articles that are more sympathetic than pro-AP with your cons. Would've been nicer to have a bit of a debate, but maybe that wasn't the point. Has its highs and lows, but the worst is the image on the inside back cover of Judi Bari with 'environmentalists and loggers unite' coming out of her bullhorn. I would've hoped she had something more memorable to say.

*Foreign Acephalous World*. 40 pages, free. Email: ludditeirony@yahoo.ca.

Here's another DIY, cut-and-paste zine with a bit of a punk-ish feel to it with a personal approach and anti-civ rooting. Again, I'm glad to see this kind of zine popping up out of the run of the mill mish-mash of anarcho-punk 'politics'. It's something different from what you're getting with *ST*, *GA-US* & *UK* and often more appealing for those who want something quick, emotional and clearly an outright response to just being disgusted with the way things are.

*Go Light: thoughts on primal parenting and the wild child* #1. 62 pages. Email: primalparent@hotmail.com

Definitely one of the more important zines that I've seen come out in some time as it deals with what I see as possibly the most important topic of any rewilding discussion: what do we teach the kids? This is a cut and paste zine with

some original writing, but primarily clips lots of useful clips from ethnographies, field guides, Bulletin of Primitive Technology and more. Interesting as it's not only about kids, it deals a great deal with books and activities for kids. Anyone serious about rewilding and rebuilding community needs to take these issues seriously, and I can't think of a better place to start than here.

*Green Anarchist* # 75-76. BCM 1715, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. 5 issue sub for \$15. www.greenanarchist.org

The original and the best for over 20 years now! Each issue has a theme, and, not intentionally, this issue focuses on spirituality, as well as *GA-US*. Different articles, different approach, but typical in depth look at a number of issues and not afraid to take detail over rhetoric. Action listings and news updates. If you're reading this, you should be reading *GA-UK*, especially the US folks!

*Green Anarchy* #20. POB 11331, Eugene, OR 97440. 84 pages, \$4.

*GA* has been going with themes lately which have helped bring in some more in depth articles alongside the usual critique and very extensive action reports. This one focuses on spirituality, the last one indigenous resistance, and class before that. Usual high quality, but if you're reading this, then you should (and likely do) check out *GA* for up-to-date info on what's going on in the world and general anti-civ theory.

*Land and Liberty: toward an organically self-organized subsistence movement*. 9 pages, no price. Email: entirerhorizon@hotmail.com

Looks like a photocopied article to me, but no idea of what it was copied from.



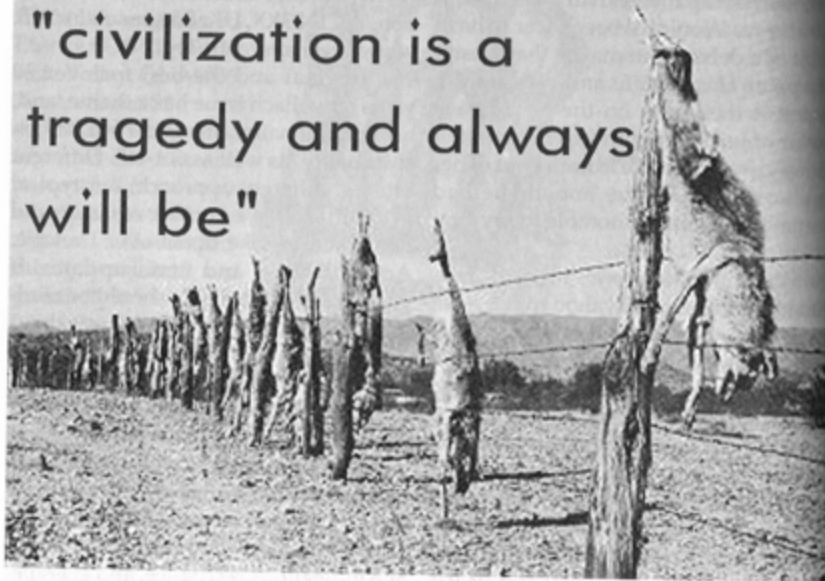
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Anyways, this is an article from Sea Weed that is focused on the implications of habitat and community for a greater green anarchist 'movement'. Sea Weed is interested in building anarchist communities and emphasizes the need to reclaim territories through which anarchist communities can be built. I definitely share the interest and need in building community, which he later re-

*Life or Civilization*. POB 4027, 10210, Athens, Greece. 1.5 Euros.

Unfortunately I can't read Greek, but if you can and have anti-civ tendencies, then this is definitely worth looking into. Smaller issues, but looks like a few articles each with some translations and some originals with an emphasis on theory, rewilding and resistance. Like *ST*, but smaller and Greek.

"civilization is a tragedy and always will be"



fers to as a base for community defense based action. I'm not sure I agree as much with what could be the side effects of such a territory and settled village focus, though I can understand that how an ideal society might be will always vary and, especially in this case, be a response to the larger social situation where such territory would likely dwell outside of. Email the author and take a look.

*La Mauvaise Herbe*, vol. 2, #4. ASE, Local A-2480, CP 8888, Succ. Centre Ville, Montreal, Quebec H3C 3P8, Canada. No price, unpaginated.

Local eco-anarchist/anti-civ zine in French with a Spanish article from the *Llavor d' anarquia* folks in Spain. Has a number of articles dealing with the local anarchist scene, some critiques, action reports and more.

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*Reclaim/Rewild* #1. 48 pages, free from rewild.org.

This zine comes from some folks who are currently trying to bring together a rewilding, gatherer-hunter community and the zine is both a form of outreach for their project and for their ideas. Some familiar names here: Tamarack, Redwolfreturns, Laurel Luddite and Skunkly Monkly, some bits from Tom Brown and other books, as well as their own *Sky and Griffin*. There's a good essay on the reality of returning to primal living and an overall great addition to the arising literature surrounding rewilding in theory and practice. If you're interested or involved in rewilding, then you can't go wrong here.

*Uncivilized: a primer on Civilization, Domestication, and Anarchy*. No price, 44 pages. Email: [uncivilized@riseup.net](mailto:uncivilized@riseup.net).

This DIY primer of all primers is definitely a much needed introduction from someone other than the usual crowd. It's accessible and easy to read, merging bits of various primers and the *GA-US* 'back to basics' series with bits from the author/s and a couple things from *ST*. Some nice quick and poetic pieces with a fusion of defining articles. "Civilization is a tragedy and always will be."

## BOOKS/PAMPHLETS

*Against the Grain: How Agriculture has Hijacked Civilization* By Richard Manning.

New York: North Point Press, 2004. 232 pages, hardback. \$24.00.

This book is one of the latest of any number of journalistic or academic books that makes grounded and valid arguments about the consequences of agriculture, but refuses to take that to its logical con-

clusion. Of them, Manning's book will stand out because it's well written and generally makes strong arguments though rather lacking in terms of sources (which aren't really 'his style', as he so boldly states).

Be that as it may, his look into the origins of agriculture makes sure to point out that the problem really goes deeper: that we are really looking at the consequences of sedentism and surplus. He points out how the production of surplus is about producing wealth rather than food. He dwells on the movement from food to commodity and the consequences of it. What he highlights, and often explicitly, is that civilization (as in our usage of the concept, not his apparently) is intrinsically unsustainable and based off of conquering, exploitation, and the destruction of the earth and wild communities.

In this respect, his analysis (which makes up the bulk of the book) is great. But there are some early shades of where he is going. He refers to the following of herds as "proto-domestication" without any good reason why. Though he confers Stanley Diamond's observations that civilization is grounded in conquest and repression, comprised of conscripts rather than volunteers, this is apparently something we have to live with. Possibly his talk of "proto-domestication" and the like show some slide into inevitability. He uncritically buys into mega fauna overkill theories and other common tendencies.

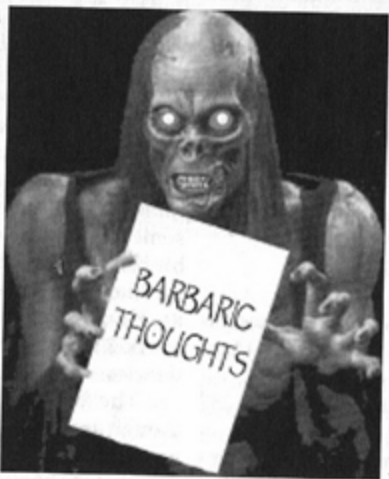
The book makes a rather quick, though graceful slide from the origins of agriculture to industrial agriculture. It is here that the book takes an unstated turn. He focuses on Archer Daniels Midland and exposes the driving force of corporate agriculture: commodities and glo-

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bal markets. Granted the analysis is important and linking of the two is necessary, it almost seems like an easier way towards his shallow vision of what should happen.

He embraces organic agriculture while bashing surplus production, though somehow maintaining a relatively similar means of food production. He sidesteps population issues though he regards that 6 billion people can only be doomed. He talks about the "slow food" movement and delicately talks about the sensuality of foods and importance of exotics and variation. All fine and true though when mixed with his deep felt and rather pompously 'authentic' love of music he exposes some his rather high class love for civilization. Though this is totally unspoken, it is clearly there and perhaps that 'reading between the lines' makes the title of the book make a little more sense.

The book talks of cultural revolution in terms of change and hints of immediacy, though it seems that direct action is a far cry and presumably not of interest. Subtle and scattered bits make anyone interested in *making* change happen seem just immature. So while he says that organics and slow food are far from enough, they seem to be the only forms of conceivable praxis. He



*Barbaric Thoughts: On a Revolutionary Critique of Civilization*  
Venomous Butterfly  
818 SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.,  
PMB 1237 Portland,  
OR 97217, USA 20  
pages, pamphlet.  
2004.

This short pamphlet is really a concise version of all the usual arguments against the anarcho-primitivist critique. I was hoping it would

permaculture, but these things get about the same amount of attention as his perceived support for the laboratory possibilities of genetic engineering when not done in corporate interests (seriously, he has actually written journal articles on the matter). Very, very weak.

I point this book out though it is far from unique. Like the owner of the three thousand acre organic farm mentioned in here, he recognizes what that farmer called the 'original sin', domestication, yet is compelled to only fight corporate greed because it's the immediate and pressing issue. A problem that admittedly will never go away, but one we can feel content about making lifestyle changes to accommodate rather than possibly put our lives on the line to fight.

These kinds of books are almost a dime a dozen, but should only reaffirm the need to always be able to take from anything and everything what is relevant and always be critical.

be worthwhile and original, but it makes the same misstatements and straw person attacks that have just become the

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norm. The tone is horribly self-righteous and presumptuous, making patently absurd attacks. In this case, the most overarching one is that for some reason green anarchists and anarcho-primitivists are not concerned with social relationships and that somehow the bulk of us are really just insincere about our approaches (sorry folks, apparently the communist, egoist perspective is the *one truth*, and also the most "fundamentally anarchist"?).

If I try to think about where these 'attacks' are going or what they are really pointing towards, I just get really irritated at best. What is being argued is just so counterintuitive to what I *feel* and *know*: There's more to life than billions of individuals acting on their own behalf with no greater connection. You can call it biocentrism, paganism, whatever you want, but I know there is something greater to life that connects all beings. According to this pamphlet, that is somehow moralistic. According to this pamphlet and its author, nearly everything that isn't coming from that communist, egoist *truth* is moralistic. How or why this is so is beyond me and the pamphlet and all other Venomous Butterfly publications have yet to convince me. But what I have learned is that morality is an easy label to place, but when used so easily, should we be surprised when it no longer has meaning?

There is a post-modernist angle that goes against anarcho-primitivist critiques: that we have no roots, or at least none worth pursuing with any real meaning, and even more so, there is no 'we'. Any concept of primordial selves or human nature is forbidden, because apparently they can only be used to naturalize and legitimate a power dynamic or morality wielded against others. This

is a leap that would make sprinters jealous. Anyways, the denial of roots is nothing new, but that doesn't make this usage any less obnoxious. Apparently we can't look at other societies without reifying and further romanticizing them. But even if we could (somehow this is all only hypothetical), they aren't worth seriously looking at.

Now this point really bothers me, probably for reasons that should be fairly obvious considering the contents of this zine. But I don't understand this point. It doesn't matter whether you think nomadic gatherer/hunters are or are not an image of humanity in the state of nature. It doesn't matter whether or not you think there's anything 'primal' about our being or not. What does matter is that there are living examples of anarchy in action. Not theory, not speculation, nothing but real beings. That doesn't mean we need to recreate their every day lives, but it's something that anyone seriously interested in destroying the state (especially those wanting to destroy civilization) should, at the very least, take serious notice of.

All of this is completely pushed aside or thrown out. What is pushed is the importance of "something different". It's all about this one true path to revolution and about freeing ourselves from all of our limits (though rather rigid guidelines as to how this ought to be done are clearly elaborated), but at some point something positive needs to be done to create and not just destroy whatever it is that oppresses us at the level of the self, whatever that may be.

But for all the pushing aside of anarcho-primitivist and green anarchist critique, and all the talk of going to that 'nebulous' "somewhere different", it's clear that the proper steps to a *revolution-*

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ary project of destroying civilization aren't so open. It's all about class struggle and class struggle exclusively. The pamphlet really labors this point without clearly explaining why the only valid egoist struggle against civilization is through class. But it seems apparent that for all the word mincing, the communist, class struggle orientation is hardly such an unknown rather than an unspoken image of what the outcome of this illustrious revolution may really be.

The *revolutionary* wears no clothes, comrade.

There's enough in this pamphlet to make me want to dissect and tear it apart piece by piece, but really I just don't think it's worth the time and effort. I'd like to say I found something useful here and on certain levels there are, but the amount of groundless straw person attacks taken to get to rather well covered topics such as the problems of utopia or ideology or morality doesn't merit the effort it takes to find the needles in the haystack. Perhaps it's of use to others, but the one thing blatantly clear to me after reading this is that I have little to nothing in common with its author and its approach. That is probably the only thing the author and I have agreed upon.

All my problems aside, we all should and do have our own approaches and visions. Such is extremely important. But in the end I only hope that we can find more productive ways of articulating those visions without having to misrepresent each other. There are enough differences that we don't have to make up new, straw ones!

*Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon.* By Patrick Tierney. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001. 431 pages, paperback.

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\$14.95.

This is a rather frightening book. It's a story about science and power, about civilization and colonization. Tierney, an environmental activist and journalist, was like many a student interested in anthropology and Latin America. Like millions of people, his introduction to the 'savage' was the classic works of anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon on the Yanomamo, a number of horticulturalist bands living in a region of the Amazon that was not heavily invaded by the Brazilian state until the mid-twentieth century.

Upon being 'discovered', there was a frenzy of media, governments, militaries and scientists who wanted to get a glimpse of true 'savages'. Chagnon and geneticist James Neel would lead a number of crews through the Amazon to do what it is civilized people do best: measure, inject, weigh, uproot, study, attempt to destroy, and exploit the Yanomamo. Chagnon, driven by sociobiology (breeding ground for genetics, scientific racism, and so much more), sought to prove the Hobbesian view of life before civilization as "nasty, brutish, and short". What ensued was in no way different than the reality of colonialism, the way of life was ravaged and the introduction of metal tools and outside agitation resulted in periods of violent warfare. Granted warfare was hardly created by invasion, but tied to horticultural life, the dynamics had changed completely.

The outcome, the Yanomamo became the notorious "Fierce People" thanks to Chagnon's ethnography of the same name. An image which has only reaffirmed the importance of being civilized and further justified the treatment of indigenous or 'uncivilized' people

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world wide (heavily reminiscent of Richard Drinnon's classic *Facing West: the Metaphysics of Indian Hating and Empire Building*). Part of this process, as Tierney shows, is that Chagnon and Neel were responsible for the spread of endemic diseases, prompting warfare on unprecedented levels, and using the Yanomamo as test subjects for nuclear and genetic research (their work was funded by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission).

Yet, the book is not about Chagnon and some other random scientists, but about the connection between science, media, and colonization. About how we perceive the 'Other' and how that perception justifies our realities. These are the ways in which civilization destroys and uproots life. His account will make you angry, but it is sorely needed. His book is not a first on the subject, but its non-academic grounding and approach make it more widely appreciable. It is not without faults; most notably it gives no attention to the amount of damage caused by missionaries (namely New Tribal Missions). A short account of which is in Jacques Lizot's *The Yanomami in the Face of Ethnocide* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1976) and much more elaborated (along with the points against anthropologists and geneticists) in R. Brian Ferguson's thick but excellent *Yanomami Warfare: A Political History* (Santa Fe: SARS, 1995).

Tierney's book has been a source of major argument, arising well before the book was even published. The greatest fear was notably coming from sociobiologists and anthropologists who likely

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had something to fear about opening the anthropological closets. What is even more telling (especially for those who have, like us, taken a serious interest in anthropology though much reserved) is



the follow up to the book on behalf of the American Anthropological Association: apparently the ethical considerations merit only further recognition when put in the public, but ultimately Chagnon was doing

worthwhile anthropology! Just goes to show how far we've come in treatment of indigenous people while the real lives and struggles of the Yanomamo are further pushed into the sidelines of history. Ethnocide is the order of the day.

For more information on the conquest and colonization of the Amazon and its peoples, check out Linda Rabben's quick and excellent *Unnatural Selection: the Yanomami, the Kayapó, and the Onslaught of Civilization* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

## ENCOUNTERING THE OTHERS

*The Healing Land: The Bushmen and the Kalahari Desert* by Rupert Isaacson. New York: Grove, 2001. 278 pages, paperback. \$13.00.

*The Land of the Naked People: Encounters with Stone Age Islanders* by Madhusree Mukerjee. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 268 pages, hardback. \$24.00.

*Savages* by Joe Kane. New York: Vintage Books, 1996. 274 pages, paperback. \$14.00.

There's continuity to these three books and a common appeal. They are all about contemporary gatherer-hunters, are all

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written as travel narratives, and none of the three authors is an anthropologist. So these are the kinds of books for people who want to know more about the lives of gatherer-hunters and how civilization affects them without having to wade through the details of ethnography. In this respect, the books are far from cut and dry books about what a population eats and how they deal with each other than it is about their encounters with outsiders and how that works both ways.

The books are all journeys on behalf of the authors. Isaacson is a white born in South Africa who was raised on the tales of the allusive and mystical Bushmen (!Kung) of the Kalahari. His journey began with wanting to know more about who these people really were. Mukerjee is from India and had been drawn to the Andaman Islands which had been colonized and exploited by India. Her journeys began as a trained scientist writing a number of articles which lit a passion to learn more about the native populations: the Great Andamanese, Jarawa, and Onge. Kane was drawn to the Huaorani of the Ecuadorian Amazon through activism. Having worked with a number of ecological groups, Kane became aware of the Huaorani through a letter they had written trying to assert their own voice in the mix of groups trying to claim in some way to either hold or speak on behalf of the Amazon, and in the process Amazonians.

What each of the authors found is important. Isaacson began looking for a way to root himself in the South African world that his white ancestors invaded. Among the !Kung he found the central role of healing through the land and through community. The importance that cosmology and connectivity places in the very essence of being. Mukerjee

sought to understand the effects of Indian colonization and to understand the gatherer-hunters who were subjected to such brutal portrayals as savages. What she found was the fullness of being among these peoples who resisted, wanting to outlive the civilized menace. She saw first hand the will of a people who had not succumbed to agriculture and saw eye to eye with Jared Diamond who considered it the worst mistake in human history. Joe Kane sought much of the same: to meet the heavily covered voice of indigenous people who environmentalists and corporations only sought to use. To find their dire will to exist as they always had, but continued to fight civilized encroachment through corporations, militaries and missionaries. What he found was a way of being that was thoroughly rooted and non-predatory. Something worth fighting for.

All of these peoples: authors, indigenous, and so forth were struggling: either to find themselves or on behalf what they know and feel in their bones. Gatherer-hunters fighting against civilization. Civilized journalists searching for something more.

To get some technicalities out of the way, all of the books are well written and accessible, though not equally. All three authors seem to get by mostly on their journalistic work, so they're seasoned in that regard. Out of the three Kane's book is the strongest in style and appeal. It is entrenched in the involvement of the subjects in its entirety and carries their arguments and perspectives out strongly. Mukerjee's book is a more back and forth of history and the present. Her encounters with her 'subjects' aren't as in depth as either Kane or Isaacson's, though this itself may come from trying to work with four groups rather than

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one. The voice and direction are strong, but she remains the central character. Isaacson's book focuses on a number of characters and that is its primary strength. However, the bulk of the book lacks a strong narrative tone which can cause a bit of confusion.

Each of these books carries its own strengths and weaknesses, but each one focuses on the indigenous voices and struggles that get pushed aside and used from all angles. They point towards the beauty that life can and will be, and the depth to which civilization has mined our souls. Without resorting to new age or weakened premises, the authors carefully portray real struggles. Though their conclusions are by no means the radical implications we draw from them, their contributions are extremely vital.

*Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology.* By David Graeber. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2004. Paper, 102 pgs. \$10.00. I really wanted to find some redeeming value to this book, but I just can't. Anarchist and Yale Professor David Graeber set out to try and establish an anarchist anthropology. In the process he shows every reason why such a thing should not exist! The book is short and leaves the reader desiring much more considering the topic and the complete lack of anarchist influence. Needless to say, I have a number of issues with the text.

Let's start with the most glaring problem: for a book on anarchist anthropology, it ignores the most likely tenet of anarchism: the anarcho-primitivist critique. When I say ignore, that's what I mean, the few times AP is mentioned at all, it is without the anarcho- prefix (as if we don't deserve it) and isn't even given real grounding (about as much as new agers, whom Graeber has actually

told me he has more in common with). Zerzan is given brief mention, none of which is brought up seriously. No matter what one thinks of the AP critique, the least one can do (especially an academic) is give credit where it's due. If any segment of anarchists is anthropologically inclined, it's going to be anarcho-primitivists. Few, if any, other anarchists are really even interested in it (in fact, it's usually the heaviest line toted against AP).

Furthermore, green anarchy is not given any attention either. That is as either a tendency of anarchists or even as something apparently worth the good professor's expensive time. Where mention is made it's of folks who take what they want from 'primitives' without really getting in depth. A comment easily made when it lacks any contextualization.

Now what really gets me about this is that our Yale Professor is clearly incapable of doing his homework. If one was to do an 'anarchist anthropology', they would probably realize the steps already taken most notably by Pierre Clastres, though more explicitly by Harold Barclay and Brian Morris. Barclay has given a pretty good shot at 'an anarchist anthropology' though he is given no credit. While he's no fan of AP, he at least gave it a fair mention in his book (*People without Government*). Morris hasn't been as explicit on the subject, though Graeber has no doubt read his essay 'Anarchism and Anthropology'. This is clear enough considering he rather blatantly plagiarized a good chunk of it! Of course if the book is coming from CrimethInc or almost any other radical/anarchist group, blatant plagiarism is far from a problem, but for a Yale professor in an academic book? That's a much different story. And

this is not a sole incident either.

Graeber is also prone to making obscure post-modernist statements such as "cultural differences are unimportant" (46) or that history is merely a string of consequences and should be disregarded. What he is doing here is pretty familiar as it is a pre-text for ethnocide. To say culture is unimportant is to disregard the very real conditions that people are living under and why they might want to continue living a certain way or would want to resist another. It's an easy statement to make from a cushy Yale office, but hardly one



most people putting their lives on the line would want to make. That history is a string of consequences does have its truths, but to throw it out is to give up an otherwise priceless source to understanding how things *did* get the way they are now and what we can do about it. It doesn't mean history is destined to do anything in particular to say that certain events bring about certain consequences. And more importantly, that understanding that helps us understand how civilization continues to exist. Of course, Graeber isn't interested in destroying civilization or even industrial society, so such information is not surprisingly worthless for him. It may only impede the brave new world of decentralized globalism...

The book has no citations or real references, hardly giving it much credentials outside of the small, but eager crew of 'anarchists' or students that Graeber is trying to charm. But whoever those

people likely may be, they aren't likely very well aware of what anarchy truly is about. Or more precisely, what it isn't about. According to Graeber, most anarchists "think [America] ought to be a democracy" (92). What anarchists you might ask? Apparently the ones that regular Yale.

Yeah, that one.

Of all the things I've said about this book, my comment that anarchy is not democracy (a fact) is the one that really set Graeber off the handle and ended in me on the receiving end of a fit and slur of obscenities that would make the biggest baby on earth jealous (sometimes I think of this as my crowning achievement: being cussed out by a Yale professor!). But seriously, this is anarchy to Graeber: democracy. Unfortunately, he's not alone, but here it's really just another needle in a haystack.

Other things Graeber's anarchists are apparently concerned about are reclaiming work (not even worth touching) and ending North-South inequalities. True enough for some, but I think it's safe to say that most anarchists favor abolishing globalization, even if it means much different things. Here Graeber wants global redistribution of the wealth: more akin to dull liberals like Global Exchange.

I could go on, but I think my point is clear: there is and never should be a capitol A anarchism and certainly never an anarchist anthropology. It only gives dim witted academics like Graeber a chance to try and take the spotlight by

using a relatively fringe concept for the same old post-modern bullshit.

*The Party's Over: Oil, War, and the Fate of Industrial Societies.* By Richard Heinberg. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 2003. 275 pages, paperback. \$17.95.

This is an extremely timely and important book. Heinberg chronicles the history of civilization and sources of energy and energy exploitation. From wood to coal to oil, he explains it all in depth and for those of us with little technical background in this sort of topics. But the book carries one primary message: industrial civilization is in no way sustainable and we are tinkering on the verge of collapse.

He goes through all the possibilities for 'alternative energy' and dispels myths of sustainable energy though focusing less on the complete undesirability of civilization. He focuses primarily on Hubbert's Peak, the outcome of major studies done on the peak of world oil production. That peak is happening and the results will be increasingly felt. His book is really like a bit of an updated addition to William Catton's vital *Overshoot* (which is still highly recommended, especially for the importance placed on basic ecological themes like carrying capacity).

Heinberg's work is immediate and he's not splitting hairs about the inevitability of collapse. However, what he's pushing for is to 'manage' the collapse. Something we'd all ideally like to see happen, though it seems obvious that we shouldn't be too disillusioned as to think that those in power will be willing to go along with their decline. Hope is best, but action is even more important. But I'm not talking about the kind of activist action and push for alternative energy

for a soft crash as Heinberg is.

While this was really a point of disagreement while reading the book, Heinberg's reevaluation of the anarcho-primitivist critique in a recent Fifth Estate highlights the severity of our differences. According to Heinberg being "against civilization" is counterproductive. Perhaps to the unfruitful PR efforts on Heinberg's behalf, but for those of us who wish to do more than merely tend our gardens and cross our fingers for a soft and easy transition, this is a rather staunch opposition. Not that there's any one way people should act, we will all deal differently and not everyone is realistically going to take out power stations or take up arms, but there's so much more to gain by embracing any number of means rather than shutting ourselves off to others. Especially when it comes to trying to sell ourselves on our weak, do nothing conclusions.

*The State.* By Harold Barclay. London: Freedom Press, 2003. Paper, 109 pgs. £5.50.

This small pocketbook is a rather necessary addition to anarchist literature. As the rear cover asserts: "The state is neither an inevitable, nor natural, phenomenon, but the creation of despots. Its history is a history of power, wealth and tyranny. The immortality of the state is the greatest myth of our society." Barclay is rightly convinced that any attempt to destroy the state requires a greater understanding of it. This is his contribution.

The book is limited by its size to remain a widespread introduction to theories on the origins, maintenance and failure of states. That's both a positive and a negative. A positive because it will be appealing to those who aren't already interested or experienced with the huge

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amount of social science devoted to the understandings of state and civilization. A negative because being an introduction means it will have to leave out a number of important points and details. Obviously it's a risk worth taking.

Barclay sets out to define the state primarily by its ability to sanction the populous. The true hallmark of the state is its hegemonic grasp on coercion: that it is sustained by a willing population. The problem is that people are not born with the urge to give up their autonomy to some greater force or majority of people. What this book sets out to unfold is how the majority of the world's population ended up doing exactly this.

Pushing aside any kind of evolutionary theory of state development or idea that a state has or ever will be necessary the book highlights that there were eleven factors that made coercive, hegemonic power possible. These are; population, sedimentary settlement, horticulture/agriculture, redistribution, military organization, secondary significance of kinship, trading, specialized division of labor, individual property and control of resources, hierarchic social order, and an ideology of superiority/inferiority.

In this we are in agreement. The book highlights all the necessary factors and functions of the state. But I have two main areas of disagreement. The first is the questionable lack of qualifications for proto-states. And the second is the ambiguity of his conclusions.

The first problem leads back to other work that Barclay has done. He's a fellow anthropologist, but one who I've often mentioned is overly influenced by Kropotkin. In this I mean that his idea of anarchy is defined more by a lack of state than by the presence of coercive institu-

tions, either physical or cognitive. This is my primary criticism of his previous book *People without Government* (London: Kahn and Averill and Seattle: Left Bank Books, 1990).

Domestication is not challenged, either in terms of human, plant or non-human animal, which I would say is an extremely important factor, though a society can still remain relatively egalitarian (in human terms) while possessing any or all of them. However, like anarchist and anthropologist Pierre Clastres, he grants the power of influence held by Big/Head Men, chiefs and occasionally kings as largely ambiguous.

To a certain degree, he's right. The role of a Big Man or chief are not always permanent positions and those who hold them are hardly as untouchable as politicians, theocrats and the powerful are in our own society. But I feel both Clastres and Barclay dismissed the power of influence too easily, especially in terms of chieftainships. As Clastres himself uncovered, the power of a chief may only be absolute during periods of warfare, but warfare is the creation of the state. The hegemonic power and increased influence of war chiefs created the increasing capability for coercive power. Though this may not have always have lead to the creation of the state, it certainly did on a number of occasions as is painfully clear now.

Barclay realizes that the main goal of warfare is conquest and that expansion and warfare laid the roots of the state. However, he makes a rather decisive split between warfare and the feuds and raiding that plagues horticultural societies. But such a split makes sense if we're talking about scale and stated intents, but it doesn't hold up anywhere else. Feuding between kin groups and

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raiding are primarily linked to sedentism and store houses: this includes largely sedentary gatherer/hunters and mounted gatherer/hunters. This is significant because it surrounds the origins of scarcity, either in terms of land or 'resources'.

The response of nomadic gatherer/hunters to arguments or avoiding ecological overstress is to move. It's a highly adaptive way of living. Splits can easily happen without consequence and bands can roam elsewhere. When people start to settle, not only do populations expand, but the amount of places left to go become limited. When the populations expand, the influential role of redistribution becomes increasingly important and thus a potential source of power. Barclay notes the increase in specialization made possible by sedentism and food production, but sleights the influence of this in stateless societies only immediately before the state arises.

There is lack of attention for proto-state societies (namely extremely complex chiefdoms and kingdoms), but the lack of significance in less complex horticultural societies is a glaring omission.

My second major complaint is the nearly complete lack of vision or direction in the book. Barclay is an anarchist, and ostensibly this is what he seeks. But like in his previous books, his prospects for its existence are rather lacking. He is unquestionably aware that the state is hardly an eternal institution and that its collapse (both ecological and social) is imminent. But what this means is left open. The book ends disappointingly along the lines of Hakim Bey's *Temporary Autonomous Zones*. He calls for the creation of Permanent Autonomous Zones or intentional societies which seek to undermine statist legitimacy for domi-

nation to contrast and hopefully outlive the *Mad Max* prophecies of a post-collapse society.

He is somewhat hopeful about human nature to overcome the worst of the state, but lacks any real proactive solution. Even in his voluntary societies, there remains the need to organize around issues of "education, health, sale of consumer goods, fire protection and so on." Granted we "can be more kind to the earth" (106) we're not left with a whole lot of options apparently.

I can't blame Barclay for his lack of hope, but his lack of vision is a different story. What is the goal of his study? To understand the state so that we can attempt to oppose it through the subtle subversion of its mentality even if it only means downscaling capitalist societies? He admits that few communes have survived or have been 'successful', even with his rather low expectations for what is 'libratory'. Is there nothing left to do than make the best of our *Mad Max* future other than hope we can overcome the power of roaming hordes of rival gangs through the principles of freedom and love as refuge for the children? I certainly think so, Barclay doesn't seem quite so convinced.

The book is important in terms of its understanding of the state. I'd hope all interested in destroying it are concerned with what exactly it is, how it works and where it comes from. For that end, this book is a worthy contribution. The anthropological approach contributes more than most historical anarchists have offered. Barclay is definitely an anarchist who has not dropped the critiques to appease academics in the way populist cowards like David Graeber has. And while we clearly have different ideas of the implications and theory in anthropol-

ogy, he's at least been willing to take different approaches seriously.

*Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflections on the Liberation of Animals.* Edited by Steven Best and Anthony Nocella II. New York: Lantern Books, 2004. Paper, 391 pgs. \$22.00.

In all fairness to this book, I have to judge it by my own standards and for what it



is. This collection is about the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) but perhaps not what myself and others might be expecting. More to the point, Best and Nocella state in the beginning that it is "an anthology of essays by leading supporters and critics of the ALF from *within* the animal rights movement (with the exception of Lawrence Sampson)." (49)

In that regard this is an excellent book. It offers a number of essays from all different sides of the tactical and moral debate on animal liberation in numerous forms, featuring all the big names from the animal rights movement. Often this is even done to the point of exhaustion with a continuing repetition of fewer than ten quotes from the likes of Gandhi, King, and so on in nearly every essay. Despite this, the book should be seen as an anthology of debate in the animal rights milieu as to what constitutes ethical practice and application of theory and how it is justified. As a historical and philosophical document, this definitely has a high point in its time and place.

But I have my reservations. I think this book is important, but I have the feeling that something is missing. I can't

entirely say what it is, but there are some clear setbacks. Those, however, extend to the animal rights movement at large, which this book is clearly an extension of. So let's pick through it a bit.

The major problem that I have with the bulk of the book and movement is that it is assumed that the ALF is firmly within the animal rights movement. I think that is a highly questionable posturing. Only a few times in the book are there efforts to distinguish between animal liberation and animal rights. While there is a great deal of bleed over between the two, there are also major points of contention.

From any anti-state perspective, the question of rights is a bit of a non-issue. So the relationship between what constitutes liberation cannot be removed from the political context. This is important because the ALF and its support tend to come from a larger anarchist constituency. That has a great effect on the idea of liberation or the goal of action itself.

For the animal rights movement, liberation comes at the attainment of equal rights and respect for 'sentient' species. Their movement is rooted in democratic conditions and is reformist in nature. The world they envision is one that would have to be compatible with the scale and framework of this society if not the policies and technology as well. While there are a vast range of anarchists in the world, a great majority don't envision that kind of world as a liberated one.

Taken in the context of movements, this is a problem. There will always be a

great effort on the part of movements to co-opt or affiliate with any 'likeminded' action. That is why the animal rights movement has flocked to the ALF and felt such a need to produce excessive amounts of debate over what is and what is not ethical. For them, what anyone does is reflective of their movement whether that is the intention of the actors or not. And when you're dealing with anonymous cells, then the actors aren't going to just come forward and denounce their affiliation. So things barrel forth. What you end with are debates like the ones in this book. Ones that I and likely most actually involved in ALF actions feel little solidarity with.

So what's in the book? It opens with a useful history of the western tradition of animal liberation coming from three different perspectives, though largely overlapping. Off to a good start. From here it moves into the further sections: liberation, motivation, perception, tactics, and terror. I found the contributions individually to go back and forth between good and interesting to dull and detached philosophy to repetitive and dogmatic. I suppose almost all essays are born without universal appeal.

Now before getting into this, I intentionally opened with some comments about movements and the nature of rights based theory. This is why: a movement must be appealing to be successful. As such, it cannot take or support any action without justification. That's one major reason why I have no interest in affiliating with any movement. To justify action (or inaction as the case may be) you have to accept certain ethical and moral standards against the backdrop of the status quo and public perception. I have no interest in doing these things.

But the bulk of the contributors to

this volume do. Mark Bernstein, patrice jones, Karen Davis, Karen Dawn, Tom Regan, Freeman Wicklund, Bruce Friedrich, and Gary Yourofsky are all included in that list. They lay out standards which must be met to justify any action, and sadly enough, liberations, releases and arsons are often not fitting to them. You get the classically repetitive and predictable debates: is property destruction violence, is that acceptable to ridiculous Gandhian standards, is violence against humans acceptable, and if property destruction is not violence, is it acceptable then?

You end up with a lot of debate about what I and many other non-moralistic folks see as a stupid question. I agree with Tom Regan that you're not going to convince the public that property destruction is not violence, so you have to roll with it. But I don't agree that you need some grand justification for violence. Not coming from a rights/reformist perspective, I think it is not only unnecessary, but plain stupid to go through all the legal steps to try to end exploitation (knowing full well it won't work) when direct action gets it done quicker.

Karen Dawn looks directly at the issue of public acceptance. She is willing to accept actions she wouldn't fully endorse (including the release of a native species, mink, into its habitat because it's a carnivore!) because it does benefit 'the cause' some in the end. Her take is a bit more forgiving than the rest, but it still follows those standards.

The most impressive part of the book is the section titled 'Motivation'. However, it begins with perhaps the most pointless essay in the book where Judith Barad attempts to bring Aquinas into the question and application of lib-

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eration. Does anyone really care? But aside from that, you have essays from one of the best and most outspoken folks in the animal liberation milieu, Rod Coronado, the best essay in the book from native and non-animal rights activist Lawrence Sampson which rightly points out that the question is not whether we eat animals or not, but whether we continue the self/Other dichotomy and continue our spatial removal from the earth (that essay is reproduced in this issue), and an excerpt from the Western Wildlife Unit of the ALF's pamphlet, *Take No Prisoners*. All of these essays toss aside the justifications and morality to say straightforward that the exploitation of animals must be stopped.

Another one of those accepted standards in this book is that liberation is the American ideal, and in numerous places, the American legacy. If you accept that, then earth liberation and animal liberation are as American as the Boston Tea Party as Best and Nocella state in their introduction and something that comes up again and again throughout the book. But what is the purpose of such naturalization? It appeals to American and Western traditions of history as a trend of natural social evolution and enlightenment. And it does this favorably. So if it was perfectly rational and evolutionary to (legally) abolish slavery, then sex and racial discrimination, then it's only logical that animals get equal rights and the earth is granted legal rights. It's not a problem for people like Best to say and think that America was founded on liberation and freedom; it's just a sign of where they are coming from.

What it shows is that we are coming and going in vastly different directions. The problem is that he is trying to

take the ALF and now ELF with him. For him, those taking part in animal and earth liberation actions are the true patriots, the defenders of democracy. He writes that the battle for animal rights must be a battle for democracy (335) and he very well may be right, but is that liberation? Not to me.

Some other high and low points. Patrice Jones makes the predictable and dull feminist argument that liberation is often macho along with other confused points over gender ideals and the 'motherly contribution' to the liberation as both back seat matriarch and nurturer. She remains unquestioning of the fact that women can just as easily be militant and just as often take part in actions.

A number of contributors have moral dilemmas about the extremely effective (and I say preferable) act of torching research labs. And along those lines you have ridiculous arguments (all new to me) that say the symbolic and egotistical/martyr 'open liberations' are far superior to the masked raids of the ALF. These daylight raids feature animal rights folks breaking into farms and labs (even leaving behind replacements for locks they've broken!) without masks and film themselves cuddling animals, giving them water and taking a few for the media to galvanize. Some even go so far as to say that this is an act of courage rather than the cowardice of the anonymous and masked liberators!!

This is really just plain stupidity. I can't even think about it without getting violently angry. Karen Davis is the worst of the lot and is really just about as dumb and ignorant as they come. She tries to coax the argument by saying the body language of animals and humans in a video of an open rescue is more caring and compassionate than the hurried and

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directed rescues of the ALF. She even compares wearing masks and black to trying to imitate Zorro! This is sheer stupidity, apologies for wanting to actually liberate a lot of animals, not get caught, liberate more, and not feed the system money through the courts. And since when were rescues about building relationships? It's about ending animal enslavement! But perhaps the tender egos of a few professional activists and their token animals are more important after all?

Kevin Jonas offers a bit of a surprisingly good essay focusing on the successes of SHAC. Steven Best ends with a call for immediate action and even violence against animal abusers. Like Craig Rosebraugh and Leslie James Pickering, he calls for a revolution, but the question is seriously begged as to what kind of revolution that might be and is it desirable. At the same time, continues to focus on the label of 'terrorist', which like the issues of violence is a long and uphill battle. And it's one that is equally not worth the time and effort. Yet he argues against the application of the term while advocating terror against the system. It's so much easier to accept the terms and go, but it does mean tossing aside some catch all terms for what animal rights

people think is what the American public wants to hear.

So after being rather harsh, I have to reiterate that the book is important for what it is. I do think it's worth the sometimes laborious read to see where people are coming from in a well put together display of a certain trend in a particular time. It is what it is, and in that way, it could be a very welcomed contribution.

*Welcome to the Machine: Science, Surveillance, and the Culture of Control.* By Derrick Jensen and George Draffan. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2004. Paper, 277 pgs. \$18.00.

This book is centered on surveillance technology. Nanotechnology, computers the size of grains of sand used for tracking and sending information, put in clothing, products, and bodies. It's about collecting information for governments, militaries, and corporations (for all they can be separated). There's enough in this book about hyper-technology to scare the hell out of you. The message is clear, the technology exists to watch you at all times and even to put thoughts directly into your brain or cause your body to move or to give you organs: all outside of your control.

However, this is not a book about





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science or technology gone wrong. This isn't another book that says things have gone out of hand and they can be fixed. Against all the quick fix solutions and mounds of books and work about how we can "regain" control over technology through Science, Law, Democracy, this book is that grenade on the dance floor.

This is where civilization has and must move, and this is why it must be destroyed.

What this book is about is control. It is about power. Meaning simply that it is about civilization and how it works.

Civilization is impossible without being reproduced every minute by the very beings it feeds off of. We embed the machine in ourselves. This can be done any number of ways, but this book focuses on one: control. Control is maintained by fear. You do everything 'right', and you have nothing to worry about. That is the message of those in power: a diversion, a threat, a promise. Looking at the model for a prison offered by eighteenth century philosopher Jeremy Bentham, the Panopticon, Jensen and Draffan found the blue print for hyper-technological society: a place where there is nowhere to hide and the prisoner (every being) feels they are always being watched. People are scared into submission and everything goes according to planned: absolute control is maintained.

Surveillance cameras, information storehouses that have every bit of measurable and quantifiable aspect of your life, children being fingerprinted at schools, police and military with super human upgrades: this is not the stuff of science fiction; this is the logical conclusion of a fully rationalized, scientific, and deadened society. This is civilization. This is our lives. This is our world.

But the book is not a dystopian rant

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or an excuse for passive nihilism. It is straight forward and this is its primary strength. This is our future *unless we do something about it*. We can turn off the machines, we can burn equipment, we can walk away, but most importantly, we can destroy the lifeblood of civilization once and for all and we can live again as human animals.

This is what Jensen and Draffan are saying. Very powerfully. And it is extremely important.

LAST MINUTE QUICKIES (sorry, but ran out of space!)

*Continuum Concept: In search of Happiness Lost* by Jean Liedloff. (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 1985. Paper, 172 pages. \$16.

Unfortunately, we ran out of time and space to stick in an interview with *Continuum Concept* author Jean Liedloff, so thought I'd give the book a slight plug anyways since I think it's easily one of the most important books out there. While Jean lived among the Yequana Indians of the Amazon, one thing stood out to her: the way that children are raised and how that affects society at large. This book is the product of that spark. She took to understand the basic differences between primal parenting and civilized parenting, and, no surprise, discovered that the way we treat children mirrors the world we're bringing them into and encourages another generation to simply perpetuate the same mistakes and never fulfill personal happiness and gratification.

Though by no means an anarchist herself, she mentioned to me that some have called her book the best case argument for anarchy. I couldn't agree more.

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*Fire and Ice* by Laurel Luddite and Skunkly Monkly (Apeshit Press, 2004. Paper, 178 pages. Available from us or Green Anarchy for \$10. See [apeshitpress.org](http://apeshitpress.org).

*Fire and Ice* is a compilation of thoughts, feelings, emotions and reflections of two people in the process of rewilding. It's written from a very personal perspective, and though somewhat complicated by the dual authorship, is likely to grab anyone who has been dealing with these similar issues in their own life. If that's you, this book will pull you in and run you through an emotional roller coaster, while being strangely comforting at the same time and you won't want to miss out on this.

*Original Wisdom: Stories of an Ancient Way of Knowing* by Robert Wolff. (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2001. Paper, 197 pages. \$14.95.

This is yet another book from a Westerner who lived among an indigenous society and was compelled to write how much he learned about their society and our own. This is about the pre-agricultural Sng'oi of Malaysia and Wolff intertwines stories of his own cultural baggage as the Sng'oi are slowly introduced to the West through industry and missionaries. His realizations, carried through by an excellent narrative and literary ability, are wonderful in their simplicity and common sense. Like the old saying goes, you learn best through humility, and here Wolff has a lot of insight as normal civilized activities are shrugged off by those who never wanted them or saw that they took more from community than offered.

Excellent critique and delivery make this probably one of my most highly flat-out recommended books of all time.

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*The Other Side of Eden: Hunters, Farmers and the Shaping of the World* by Hugh Brody (New York: North Point Press, 2000. Paper, 376 pages. \$14).

I'm always skeptical of mainstream books dealing with gatherer-hunters, but this book is excellent. Brody, who has been working with arctic and subarctic gatherer-hunters for years blasts through ideologies that g/h's are relics of the past and goes in depth into the beauty of Inuit life versus the realm of domestication. Looks at how g/h's have almost always been abused by their neighbors and argues against any inevitability about their way of life being doomed. Another excellent and highly recommended read, especially for those who know little about the arctic g/h lifeways.

*Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* by Michel-Rolph Trouillot (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. Paper, 191 pages, \$16).

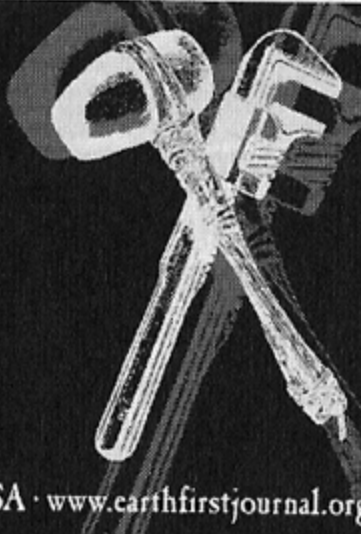
Who said scholars had to be dull?! This book is truly excellent and extremely relevant for anyone with any concern about the idea and use of history and the shaping of social consciousness. Taking the largest slave revolt in history and the inability of those in power to see it for what it is contrasted with contemporary Holocaust denial, debate over the Alamo and the construction of the 'event' of Columbus' 'discovery' of the Americas for its base, this book lays out the relationship between power, history and consciousness. Amazingly well written, this is a quick and highly important read.

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