Blackseed

a journal of indigenous anarchy

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Black Seed Issue 1

Various

Spring 2014

Welcome to Black Seed

A Contribution to the Continuing Green Anarchist Conversation…

This is a paper that we hope adds to a continuing green anarchist conversation, one that may have started the first time native people were introduced to civilized interlopers, or in the first resistance to cities, or through the writings of Élisée Reclus (depending on how you measure the term "anarchist"). We are part of this tradition: one of violence, genocide, ecology, and anarchy.

It is worth mentioning that we are in a dialogue with Green Anarchy magazine (RIP). We were contributors to and students of that project, and lament its lack of a clear conclusion. Instead of decaying, dying, and being integrated into new life around it, Green Anarchy just seemed to disappear, rejecting the very notion of its own tradition. That was their way; ours is to honor those who came before and tend to the tendrils and shoots that we hope to form from this black seed.

We are not simply against civilization. We understand civilization to be one of many problems we face as anarchists. We wish to explore the material experiences (based in the physical world of interactions) of a perspective that places one against civilization and more broadly within the green anarchist perspective. However, we will also develop space distant from anarcho-primitivists' tendencies towards fetishizing indigenous cultures, uncritical rewilding, appropriated spirituality, and reliance on anthropology. As a group, our preference is to use the editorial to take a stronger stance than we would individually. We are not unified in our opinions. We are using Black Seed as an experiment to suss out more particular critiques. We will use anarchist and anti-civilization perspectives but not be constrained by them.

One of the great challenges faced by all anarchists is that our words (rhetoric) imply activity that is damn near impossible in this world. This is doubly true in the context of the Western world, and double the challenge again given that we are writing this document well-ensconced in the heart of the American empire. We are both the beneficiaries of a system that has destroyed much more than life and the possibility of living it freely, and the victims of this system's most pernicious power: forgetfulness.

If green anarchy is something distinct from either a general anarchist hostility towards the existent, or a red anarchist emphasis on class issues, it is a (necessarily feeble) attempt to reconcile the aforementioned impossibility. We live in the West and recognize the emptiness of what such an attempt entails. We have forgotten freedom and the beauty that surrounds us. We have a suspicion that somewhere in the conceptual terrain of ecological groups and the environmental movement lies something worth saving but it is probably less than we thought it was prior to our direct experience with those groups.

We also think that existing native traditions somehow relate to our project, which is very different from saying that we should emulate, parrot, or parody them; we recognize the presumptuous insufficiency of anthropology and cannot be sure how to negotiate the relationships between post- and pre-colonized people. What would it mean to live in an intact social body that is in spiritual connection to the earth? Neither we, nor anyone around us (especially in the cities), will ever know the answer to this question – weekend trips to native lands absolutely not to the contrary.

This is meager gruel when compared to the utopian aspirations of those green anarchists who believed the revolution, whether it was to be brought about by appropriate technology (in the Whole Earth Catalog period of the 70s and 80s) or the End of Civilization, was right around the

corner. The collapse is not coming. Capitalism has proven its capacity to swallow whole nearly every culture of resistance that has risen out of its belly. The crisis is here. It persists in various permutations within our everyday lives and the worldwide ecological crises that are already underway. We could write paragraphs of statistics about how the forests are being destroyed, the salmon, bears, and wolves are disappearing, polar ice caps are melting, and mountains are being whittled away. Many have named a specific year in the not-too-distant future as a "no turning back" point, when carbon emissions will have reached a point beyond humanity's ability to reverse the damage done to the planet's many ecologies. While we'll explore these worthwhile reminders in our publication, we're more interested in hearing stories, analysis, and celebrations of general upheaval, social revolt, and other experiments in mass refusal. We are asking for dialogue, critique, and reflections on these experiments, while encouraging both introductory and advanced understanding.

We are inspired by the Mi'qmak warriors in so-called New Brunswick, Canada in their struggle against fracking, those squatting and fighting against the development of a new airport (and its society!) in the woods north of Nantes, France, and the actions of the ELF at the Vale Resort to name but a few. We are moved by these events because they tell a tale of people with livelihoods inherently connected to the land beneath their feet coming together to violently resist the dominant social order and its practice of economic expansion.

The black seed is the distant, future possibility of our questions acting like weeds, breaking up concrete and ideology, and germinating into total fucking anarchy.

The Editors,
-Scéalaí
-Cedar Leighlais
-Pietje
-Zdereva Itvaryn
-Aragorn!

What is Green Anarchy?

An Introduction to Anti-Civilization Thought by the Green Anarchy Collective

Bridging both time and work, the following is an article that was featured in one of Green Anarchy magazine's "Back to Basics" primers. We see this as a starting point for further exploration and discussion. The topics covered are central to a green anarchist critique or perspective. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather the beginnings of what we hope will be an ongoing conversation – one to be further expanded, updated, and explored in subsequent issues of Black Seed.

This primer is not meant to be the "defining principles" for a green anarchist "movement", nor an anti-civilization manifesto. It is a look at some of the basic ideas and concepts that collective members share with each other, and with others who identify as green anarchists. We understand and celebrate the need to keep our visions and strategies open, and always welcome discussion. We feel that every aspect of what we think and who we are constantly needs to be challenged and remain flexible if we are to grow. We are not interested in developing a new ideology, nor perpetuating a singular world-view. We also understand that not all green anarchists are specifically anti-civilization (but we do have a hard time understanding how one can be against all domination without getting to its roots: civilization itself). At this point, however, most who use

the term "green anarchist" do indict civilization and all that comes along with it (domestication, patriarchy, division of labor, technology, production, representation, alienation, objectification, control, the destruction of life, etc). While some would like to speak in terms of direct democracy and urban gardening, we feel it is impossible and undesirable to "green up" civilization and/or make it more "fair". We feel that it is important to move towards a radically decentralized world, to challenge the logic and mindset of the death-culture, to end all mediation in our lives, and to destroy all the institutions and physical manifestations of this nightmare. We want to become uncivilized. In more general terms, this is the trajectory of green anarchy in thought and practice.

Anarchy vs Anarchism

One qualifier that we feel is important to begin with is the distinction between "anarchy" and "anarchism". Some will write this off as merely semantics or trivial, but for most post-left and anti-civilization anarchists, this differentiation is important. While anarchism can serve as an important historical reference point from which to draw inspiration and lessons, it has become too systematic, fixed, and ideological…everything anarchy is not. Admittedly, this has less to do with anarchism's social/political/philosophical orientation, and more to do with those who identify as anarchists. No doubt, many from our anarchist lineage would also be disappointed by this trend to solidify what should always be in flux. The early self-identified anarchists (Proudhon, Bakunin, Berkman, Goldman, Malatesta, and the like) were responding to their specific contexts, with their own specific motivations and desires. Too often, contemporary anarchists see these individuals as representing the boundaries of anarchy, and create a W.W.B.D. [What Would Bakunin Do (or more correctly–Think)] attitude towards anarchy, which is tragic and potentially dangerous. Today, some who identify as "classical" anarchists refuse to accept any effort in previously uncharted territory within anarchism (ie. Primitivism, Post-Leftism, etc) or trends which have often been at odds with the rudimentary workers' mass movement approach (ie. Individualism, Nihilism, etc). These rigid, dogmatic, and extremely uncreative anarchists have gone so far as to declare that anarchism is a very specific social and economic methodology for organizing the working class. This is obviously an absurd extreme, but such tendencies can be seen in the ideas and projects of many contemporary anarcho-leftists (anarcho-sydicalists, anarcho-communists, platformists, federationists). "Anarchism", as it stands today, is a far-left ideology, one which we need to get beyond. In contrast, "anarchy" is a formless, fluid, organic experience embracing multi-faceted visions of liberation, both personal and collective, and always open. As anarchists, we are not interested in forming a new framework or structure to live under or within, however "unobtrusive" or "ethical" it claims to be. Anarchists cannot provide another world for others, but we can raise questions and ideas, try to destroy all domination and that which impedes our lives and our dreams, and live directly connected with our desires.

What is Primitivism?

While not all green anarchists specifically identify as "Primitivists", most acknowledge the significance that the primitivist critique has had on anti-civilization perspectives. Primitivism is simply an anthropological, intellectual, and experiential examination of the origins of civilization and the circumstances that led to this nightmare we currently inhabit. Primitivism recognizes that for most of human history, we lived in face-to-face communities in balance with each other and

our surroundings, without formal hierarchies and institutions to mediate and control our lives. Primitivists wish to learn from the dynamics at play in the past and in contemporary gatherer-hunter/primitive societies (those that have existed and currently exist outside of civilization). While some primitivists wish for an immediate and complete return to gatherer-hunter band societies, most primitivists understand that an acknowledgement of what has been successful in the past does not unconditionally determine what will work in the future. The term "Future Primitive," coined by anarcho-primitivist author John Zerzan, hints that a synthesis of primitive techniques and ideas can be joined with contemporary anarchist concepts and motivations to create healthy, sustainable, and egalitarian decentralized situations. Applied non-ideologically, anarcho-primitivism can be an important tool in the de-civilizing project.

What is Civilization?

Green anarchists tend to view civilization as the logic, institutions, and physical apparatus of domestication, control, and domination. While different individuals and groups prioritize distinct aspects of civilization (ie primitivists typically focus on the question of origins, feminists primarily focus on the roots and manifestations of patriarchy, and insurrectionary anarchists mainly focus on the destruction of contemporary institutions of control), most green anarchists agree that it is the underlying problem or root of oppression, and it needs to be dismantled. The rise of civilization can roughly be described as the shift over the past 10,000 years from an existence within and deeply connected to the web of life, to one separated from and in control of the rest of life. Prior to civilization there generally existed ample leisure time, considerable gender autonomy and equality, a non-destructive approach to the natural world, the absence of organized violence, no mediating or formal institutions, and strong health and robusticity. Civilization inaugurated warfare, the subjugation of women, population growth, drudge work, concepts of property, entrenched hierarchies, and virtually every known disease, to name a few of its devastating derivatives. Civilization begins with and relies on an enforced renunciation of instinctual freedom. It cannot be reformed and is thus our enemy.

Biocentrism vs Anthropocentrism

One way of analyzing the extreme discord between the world-views of primitive and earth-based societies and of civilization, is that of biocentric vs anthropocentric outlooks. Biocentrism is a perspective that centers and connects us to the earth and the complex web of life, while anthropocentrism, the dominant world view of western culture, places our primary focus on human society, to the exclusion of the rest of life. A biocentric view does not reject human society, but does move it out of the status of superiority and puts it into balance with all other life forces. It places a priority on a bioregional outlook, one that is deeply connected to the plants, animals, insects, climate, geographic features, and spirit of the place we inhabit. There is no split between ourselves and our environment, so there can be no objectification or otherness to life. Where separation and objectification are at the base of our ability to dominate and control, interconnectedness is a prerequisite for deep nurturing, care, and understanding. Green anarchy strives to move beyond human-centered ideas and decisions into a humble respect for all life and the dynamics of the ecosystems that sustain us.

A Critique of Symbolic Culture

Another aspect of how we view and relate to the world that can be problematic, in the sense that it separates us from a direct interaction, is our shift towards an almost exclusively symbolic culture. Often the response to this questioning is, "So, you just want to grunt?" Which might be the desire of a few, but typically the critique is a look at the problems inherent with a form of communication and comprehension that relies primarily on symbolic thought at the expense (and even exclusion) of other sensual and unmediated means. The emphasis on the symbolic is a movement from direct experience into mediated experience in the form of language, art, number, time, etc Symbolic culture filters our entire perception through formal and informal symbols. It's beyond just giving things names, but having an entire relationship to the world that comes through the lens of representation. It is debatable as to whether humans are "hard-wired" for symbolic thought or if it developed as a cultural change or adaptation, but the symbolic mode of expression and understanding is certainly limited and its over-dependence leads to objectification, alienation, and a tunnel-vision of perception. Many green anarchists promote and practice getting in touch with and rekindling dormant or underutilized methods of interaction and cognition, such as touch, smell, and telepathy, as well as experimenting with and developing unique and personal modes of comprehension and expression.

The Domestication of Life

Domestication is the process that civilization uses to indoctrinate and control life according to its logic. These time-tested mechanisms of subordination include: taming, breeding, genetically modifying, schooling, caging, intimidating, coercing, extorting, promising, governing, enslaving, terrorizing, murdering…the list goes on to include almost every civilized social interaction. Their movement and effects can be examined and felt throughout society, enforced through various institutions, rituals, and customs. It is also the process by which previously nomadic human populations shift towards a sedentary or settled existence through agriculture and animal husbandry. This kind of domestication demands a totalitarian relationship with both the land and the plants and animals being domesticated. Whereas in a state of wildness, all life shares and competes for resources, domestication destroys this balance. The domesticated landscape (eg pastoral lands/agricultural fields, and to a lesser degree—horticulture and gardening) necessitates the end of open sharing of the resources that formerly existed; where once "this was everyone's," it is now "mine". In Daniel Quinn's novel Ishmael, he explains this transformation from the "Leavers" (those who accepted what the earth provided) to that of the "Takers" (those who demanded from the earth what they wanted). This notion of ownership laid the foundation for social hierarchy as property and power emerged. Domestication not only changes the ecology from a free to a totalitarian order, it enslaves the species that are domesticated. Generally the more an environment is controlled, the less sustainable it is. The domestication of humans themselves involves many trade-offs in comparison to the foraging, nomadic mode. It is worth noting here that most of the shifts made from nomadic foraging to domestication were not made autonomously, they were made by the blade of the sword or barrel of the gun. Whereas only 2000 years ago the majority of the world population were gatherer-hunters, it is now .01%. The path of domestication is a colonizing force that has meant myriad pathologies for the conquered population and the originators of the practice. Several examples include a decline in nutritional health due to over-reliance on

non-diverse diets, almost 40–60 diseases integrated into human populations per domesticated animal (influenza, the common cold, tuberculosis, etc), the emergence of surplus which can be used to feed a population out of balance and which invariably involves property and an end to unconditional sharing.

The Origins and Dynamics of Patriarchy

Toward the beginning in the shift to civilization, an early product of domestication is patriarchy: the formalization of male domination and the development of institutions which reinforce it. By creating false gender distinctions and divisions between men and women, civilization, again, creates an "other" that can be objectified, controlled, dominated, utilized, and commodified. This runs parallel to the domestication of plants for agriculture and animals for herding, in general dynamics, and also in specifics like the control of reproduction. As in other realms of social stratification, roles are assigned to women in order to establish a very rigid and predictable order, beneficial to hierarchy. Woman come to be seen as property, no different then the crops in the field or the sheep in the pasture. Ownership and absolute control, whether of land, plants, animals, slaves, children, or women, is part of the established dynamic of civilization. Patriarchy demands the subjugation of the feminine and the usurpation of nature, propelling us toward total annihilation. It defines power, control and dominion over wildness, freedom, and life. Patriarchal conditioning dictates all of our interactions; with ourselves, our sexuality, our relationships to each other, and our relationship to nature. It severely limits the spectrum of possible experience. The interconnected relationship between the logic of civilization and patriarchy is undeniable; for thousands of years they have shaped the human experience on every level, from the institutional to the personal, while they have devoured life. To be against civilization, one must be against patriarchy; and to question patriarchy, it seems, one must also put civilization into question.

Division of Labor and Specialization

The disconnecting of the ability to care for ourselves and provide for our own needs is a technique of separation and disempowerment perpetuated by civilization. We are more useful to the system, and less useful to ourselves, if we are alienated from our own desires and each other through division of labor and specialization. We are no longer able to go out into the world and provide for ourselves and our loved ones the necessary nourishment and provisions for survival. Instead, we are forced into the production/consumption commodity system to which we are always indebted. Inequities of influence come about via the effective power of various kinds of experts. The concept of a specialist inherently creates power dynamics and undermines egalitarian relationships. While the Left may sometimes recognize these concepts politically, they are viewed as necessary dynamics, to keep in check or regulate, while green anarchists tend to see division of labor and specialization as fundamental and irreconcilable problems, decisive to social relationships within civilization.

The Rejection of Science

Most anti-civilization anarchists reject science as a method of understanding the world. Science is not neutral. It is loaded with motives and assumptions that come out of, and reinforce,

the catastrophe of dissociation, disempowerment, and consuming deadness that we call "civilization." Science assumes detachment. This is built into the very word "observation." To "observe" something is to perceive it while distancing oneself emotionally and physically, to have a one-way channel of "information" moving from the observed thing to the "self," which is defined as not a part of that thing. This death-based or mechanistic view is a religion, the dominant religion of our time. The method of science deals only with the quantitative. It does not admit values or emotions, or the way the air smells when it's starting to rain—or if it deals with these things, it does so by transforming them into numbers, by turning oneness with the smell of the rain into abstract preoccupation with the chemical formula for ozone, turning the way it makes you feel into the intellectual idea that emotions are only an illusion of firing neurons. Numbers themselves are not truth but a chosen style of thinking. We have chosen a habit of mind that focuses our attention into a world removed from reality, where nothing has quality or awareness or a life of its own. We have chosen to transform the living into the dead. Careful-thinking scientists will admit that what they study is a narrow simulation of the complex real world, but few of them notice that this narrow focus is self-feeding, that it has built technological, economic, and political systems that are all working together, which suck our reality in on itself. As narrow as the world of numbers is, scientific method does not even permit all numbers—only those numbers which are reproducible, predictable, and the same for all observers. Of course reality itself is not reproducible or predictable or the same for all observers. But neither are fantasy worlds derived from reality. Science doesn't stop at pulling us into a dream world—it goes one step further and makes this dream world a nightmare whose contents are selected for predictability and controllability and uniformity. All surprise and sensuality are vanquished. Because of science, states of consciousness that cannot be reliably disposed are classified as insane, or at best "non-ordinary," and excluded. Anomalous experience, anomalous ideas, and anomalous people are cast off or destroyed like imperfectly-shaped machine components. Science is only a manifestation and locking in of an urge for control that we've had at least since we started farming fields and fencing animals instead of surfing the less predictable (but more abundant) world of reality, or "nature." And from that time to now, this urge has driven every decision about what counts as "progress", up to and including the genetic restructuring of life.

The Problem of Technology

All green anarchists question technology on some level. While there are those who still suggest the notion of "green" or "appropriate" technology and search for rationales to cling to forms of domestication, most reject technology completely. Technology is more than wires, silicon, plastic, and steel. It is a complex system involving division of labor, resource extraction, and exploitation for the benefit of those who implement its process. The interface with and result of technology is always an alienated, mediated, and distorted reality. Despite the claims of postmodern apologists and other technophiles, technology is not neutral. The values and goals of those who produce and control technology are always embedded within it. Technology is distinct from simple tools in many regards. A simple tool is a temporary usage of an element within our immediate surroundings used for a specific task. Tools do not involve complex systems which alienate the user from the act. Implicit in technology is this separation, creating an unhealthy and mediated experience which leads to various forms of authority. Domination increases every time a new "time-saving" technology is created, as it necessitates the construction of more technology

to support, fuel, maintain and repair the original technology. This has led very rapidly to the establishment of a complex technological system that seems to have an existence independent from the humans who created it. Discarded by-products of the technological society are polluting both our physical and our psychological environments. Lives are stolen in service of the Machine and the toxic effluent of the technological system's fuels—both are choking us. Technology is now replicating itself, with something resembling a sinister sentience. Technological society is a planetary infection, propelled forward by its own momentum, rapidly ordering a new kind of environment: one designed for mechanical efficiency and technological expansionism alone. The technological system methodically destroys, eliminates, or subordinates the natural world, constructing a world fit only for machines. The ideal for which the technological system strives is the mechanization of everything it encounters.

Production and Industrialism

A key component of the modern techno-capitalist structure is industrialism, the mechanized system of production built on centralized power and the exploitation of people and nature. Industrialism cannot exist without genocide, ecocide, and colonialism. To maintain it, coercion, land evictions, forced labor, cultural destruction, assimilation, ecological devastation, and global trade are accepted as necessary, even benign. Industrialism's standardization of life objectifies and commodifies it, viewing all life as a potential resource. A critique of industrialism is a natural extension of the anarchist critique of the state because industrialism is inherently authoritarian. In order to maintain an industrial society, one must set out to conquer and colonize lands in order to acquire (generally) non-renewable resources to fuel and grease the machines. This colonialism is rationalized by racism, sexism, and cultural chauvinism. In the process of acquiring these resources, people must be forced off their land. And in order to make people work in the factories that produce the machines, they must be enslaved, made dependent, and otherwise subjected to the destructive, toxic, degrading industrial system. Industrialism cannot exist without massive centralization and specialization: Class domination is a tool of the industrial system that denies people access to resources and knowledge, making them helpless and easy to exploit. Furthermore, industrialism demands that resources be shipped from all over the globe in order to perpetuate its existence, and this globalism undermines local autonomy and self-sufficiency. It is a mechanistic worldview that is behind industrialism. This is the same world-view that has justified slavery, exterminations, and the subjugation of women. It should be obvious to all that industrialism is not only oppressive for humans, but that it is also fundamentally ecologically destructive.

Beyond Leftism

Unfortunately, many anarchists continue to be viewed, and view themselves, as part of the Left. This tendency is changing, as post-left and anti-civilization anarchists make clear distinctions between their perspectives and the bankruptcy of the socialist and liberal orientations. Not only has the Left proven itself to be a monumental failure in its objectives, but it is obvious from its history, contemporary practice, and ideological framework, that the Left (while presenting itself as altruistic and promoting "freedom") is actually the antithesis of liberation. The Left has never fundamentally questioned technology, production, organization, representation, alienation, au-

thoritarianism, morality, or Progress, and it has almost nothing to say about ecology, autonomy, or the individual on any meaningful level. The Left is a general term and can roughly describe all socialist leanings (from social democrats and liberals to Maoists and Stalinists) which wish to re-socialize "the masses" into a more "progressive" agenda, often using coercive and manipulative approaches in order to create a false "unity" or the creation of political parties. While the methods or extremes in implementation may differ, the overall push is the same, the institution of a collectivized and monolithic world-view based on morality.

Against Mass Society

Most anarchists and "revolutionaries" spend a significant portion of their time developing schemes and mechanisms for production, distribution, adjudication, and communication between large numbers of people; in other words, the functioning of a complex society. But not all anarchists accept the premise of global (or even regional) social, political, and economic coordination and interdependence, or the organization needed for their administration. We reject mass society for practical and philosophical reasons. First, we reject the inherent representation necessary for the functioning of situations outside of the realm of direct experience (completely decentralized modes of existence). We do not wish to run society, or organize a different society, we want a completely different frame of reference. We want a world where each group is autonomous and decides on its own terms how to live, with all interactions based on affinity, free and open, and non-coercive. We want a life which we live, not one which is run. Mass society brutally collides not only with autonomy and the individual, but also with the earth. It is simply not sustainable (in terms of the resource extraction, transportation, and communication systems necessary for any global economic system) to continue on with, or to provide alternative plans for a mass society. Again, radical de-centralization seems key to autonomy and providing non-hierarchical and sustainable methods of subsistence.

Liberation vs Organization

We are beings striving for a deep and total break with the civilized order, anarchists desiring unrestrained freedom. We fight for liberation, for a de-centralized and unmediated relationship with our surroundings and those we love and share affinity with. Organizational models only provide us with more of the same bureaucracy, control, and alienation that we receive from the current set-up. While there might be an occasional good intention, the organizational model comes from an inherently paternalistic and distrusting mindset which seems contradictory to anarchy. True relationships of affinity come from a deep understanding of one another through intimate need-based relationships of day-to-day life, not relationships based on organizations, ideologies, or abstract ideas. Typically, the organizational model suppresses individual needs and desires for "the good of the collective" as it attempts to standardize both resistance and vision. From parties, to platforms, to federations, it seems that as the scale of projects increase, the meaning and relevance they have for one's own life decrease. Organizations are means for stabilizing creativity, controlling dissent, and reducing "counter-revolutionary tangents" (as chiefly determined by the elite cadres or leadership). They typically dwell in the quantitative, rather than the qualitative, and offer little space for independent thought or action. Informal, affinity-based associations tend to minimize alienation from decisions and processes, and reduce mediation be-

tween our desires and our actions. Relationships between groups of affinity are best left organic and temporal, rather than fixed and rigid.

Revolution vs Reform

As anarchists, we are fundamentally opposed to government, and likewise, any sort of collaboration or mediation with the state (or any institution of hierarchy and control). This position determines a certain continuity or direction of strategy, historically referred to as revolution. This term, while warped, diluted, and co-opted by various ideologies and agendas, can still have meaning to the anarchist and anti-ideological praxis. By revolution, we mean the ongoing struggle to alter the social and political landscape in a fundamental way; for anarchists, this means its complete dismantling. The word "revolution" is dependent on the position from which it is directed, as well as what would be termed "revolutionary" activity. Again, for anarchists, this is activity which is aimed at the complete dissolving of power. Reform, on the other hand, entails any activity or strategy aimed at adjusting, altering, or selectively maintaining elements of the current system, typically utilizing the methods or apparatus of that system. The goals and methods of revolution cannot be dictated by, nor performed within, the context of the system. For anarchists, revolution and reform invoke incompatible methods and aims, and despite certain anarcho-liberal approaches, do not exist on a continuum. For anti-civilization anarchists, revolutionary activity questions, challenges, and works to dismantle the entire set-up or paradigm of civilization. Revolution is also not a far-off or distant singular event which we build towards or prepare people for, but instead, a life-way or practice of approaching situations.

Resisting the Mega-Machine

Anarchists in general, and green anarchists in particular, favor direct action over mediated or symbolic forms of resistance. Various methods and approaches, including cultural subversion, sabotage, insurrection, and political violence (although not limited to these) have been and remain part of the anarchist arsenal of attack. No one tactic can be effective in significantly altering the current order or its trajectory, but these methods, combined with transparent and ongoing social critique, are important. Subversion of the system can occur from the subtle to the dramatic, and can also be an important element of physical resistance. Sabotage has always been a vital part of anarchist activities, whether in the form of spontaneous vandalism (public or nocturnal) or through more highly illegal underground coordination in cell formation. Recently, groups like the Earth Liberation Front, a radical environmental group made up of autonomous cells targeting those who profit off of the destruction of the earth, have caused millions of dollars of damage to corporate outlets and offices, banks, timber mills, genetic research facilities, sport utility vehicles, and luxury homes. These actions, often taking the form of arson, along with articulate communiqués frequently indicting civilization, have inspired others to take action, and are effective means of not only bringing attention to environmental degradation, but also as deterrents to specific earth destroyers. Insurrectionary activity, or the proliferation of insurrectionary moments which can cause a rupture in the social peace in which people's spontaneous rage can be unleashed and possibly spread into revolutionary conditions, are also on the rise. The riots in Seattle in 1999, Prague in 2000, and Genoa in 2001, were all (in different ways) sparks of insurrectionary activity, which, although limited in scope, can be seen as attempts to move in

insurrectionary directions and make qualitative breaks with reformism and the entire system of enslavement. Political violence, including the targeting of individuals responsible for specific activities or the decisions which lead to oppression, has also been a focus for anarchists historically. Finally, considering the immense reality and all-pervasive reach of the system (socially, politically, technologically), attacks on the techno-grid and infrastructure of the mega-machine are of interest to anti-civilization anarchists. Regardless of approaches and intensity, militant action coupled with insightful analysis of civilization is increasing.

The Need to be Critical

As the march towards global annihilation continues, as society becomes more unhealthy, as we lose more control over our own lives, and as we fail to create significant resistance to the death-culture, it is vital for us to be extremely critical of past "revolutionary" movements, current struggles, and our own projects. We cannot perpetually repeat the mistakes of the past or be blind to our own deficiencies. The radical environmental movement is filled with single-issued campaigns and symbolic gestures and the anarchist scene is plagued with leftist and liberal tendencies. Both continue to go through rather meaningless "activist" motions, rarely attempting to objectively assess their (in)effectiveness. Often guilt and self-sacrifice, rather than their own liberation and freedom, guide these social do-gooders, as they proceed along a course that has been plotted out by the failures before them. The Left is a festering sore on the ass of humanity, environmentalists have been unsuccessful at preserving even a fraction of wild areas, and anarchists rarely have anything provocative to say, let alone do. While some would argue against criticism because it is "divisive", any truly radical perspective would see the necessity of critical examination, in changing our lives and the world we inhabit. Those who wish to quell all debate until "after the revolution", to contain all discussion into vague and meaningless chatter, and to subdue criticism of strategy, tactics, or ideas, are going nowhere, and can only hold us back. An essential aspect to any radical anarchist perspective must be to put everything into question, certainly including our own ideas, projects, and actions.

Influences and Solidarity

The green anarchist perspective is diverse and open, yet it does contain some continuity and primary elements. It has been influenced by anarchists, primitivists, Luddites, insurrectionalists, Situationists, surrealists, nihilists, deep ecologists, bioregionalists, eco-feminists, various indigenous cultures, anti-colonial struggles, the feral, the wild, and the earth. Anarchists, obviously, contribute the anti-authoritarian push, which challenges all power on a fundamental level, striving for truly egalitarian relationships and promoting mutual-aid communities. Green anarchists, however, extend ideas of non-domination to all of life, not just human life, going beyond the traditional anarchist analysis. From primitivists, green anarchists are informed with a critical and provocative look at the origins of civilization, so as to understand what this mess is and how we got here, to help inform a change in direction. Inspired by the Luddites, green anarchists rekindle an anti-technological/industrial direct action orientation. Insurrectionalists infuse a perspective which waits not for the fine-tuning of a crystalline critique, but identify and spontaneously attack current institutions of civilization which inherently bind our freedom and desire. Anti-civilization anarchists owe much to the Situationists, and their critique of the alienating

commodity society, which we can break from by connecting with our dreams and unmediated desires. Nihilism's refusal to accept any of the current reality understands the deeply engrained unhealth of this society and offers green anarchists a strategy which does not necessitate offering visions for society, but instead focuses on its destruction. Deep ecology, despite its misanthropic tendencies, informs the green anarchist perspective with an understanding that the well-being and flourishing of all life is linked to the awareness of the inherent worth and intrinsic value of the non-human world independent of use value. Deep ecology's appreciation for the richness and diversity of life contributes to the realization that the present human interference with the non-human world is coercive and excessive, with the situation rapidly worsening. Bioregionalists bring the perspective of living within one's bioregion, and being intimately connected to the land, water, climate, plants, animals, and general patterns of their bioregion. Eco-feminists have contributed to the comprehension of the roots, dynamics, manifestations, and reality of patriarchy, and its effect on the earth, women in particular, and humanity in general. Recently, the destructive separation of humans from the earth (civilization) has probably been articulated most clearly and intensely by eco-feminists. Anti-civilization anarchists have been profoundly influenced by the various indigenous cultures and earth-based peoples throughout history and those who still currently exist. While we humbly learn and incorporate sustainable techniques for survival and healthier ways of interacting with life, it is important to not flatten or generalize native peoples and their cultures, and to respect and attempt to understand their diversity without co-opting cultural identities and characteristics. Solidarity, support, and attempts to connect with native and anti-colonial struggles, which have been the front-lines of the fight against civilization, are essential as we attempt to dismantle the death-machine. It is also important to understand that we, at some point, have all come from earth-based peoples forcibly removed from our connections with the earth, and therefore have a place within anti-colonial struggles. We are also inspired by the feral, those who have escaped domestication and have re-integrated with the wild. And, of course, the wild beings which make up this beautiful blue and green organism called Earth. It is also important to remember that, while many green anarchists draw influence from similar sources, green anarchy is something very personal to each who identify or connect with these ideas and actions. Perspectives derived from one's own life experiences within the death-culture (civilization), and one's own desires outside the domestication process, are ultimately the most vivid and important in the uncivilizing process.

Rewilding and Reconnection

For most green/anti-civilization/primitivist anarchists, rewilding and reconnecting with the earth is a life project. It is not limited to intellectual comprehension or the practice of primitive skills, but instead, it is a deep understanding of the pervasive ways in which we are domesticated, fractured, and dislocated from our selves, each other, and the world, and the enormous and daily undertaking to be whole again. Rewilding has a physical component which involves reclaiming skills and developing methods for a sustainable co-existence, including how to feed, shelter, and heal ourselves with the plants, animals, and materials occurring naturally in our bioregion. It also includes the dismantling of the physical manifestations, apparatus, and infrastructure of civilization. Rewilding has an emotional component, which involves healing ourselves and each other from the 10,000 year-old wounds which run deep, learning how to live together in non-hierarchical and non-oppressive communities, and deconstructing the domesticating mindset in

our social patterns. Rewilding involves prioritizing direct experience and passion over mediation and alienation, re-thinking every dynamic and aspect of our reality, connecting with our feral fury to defend our lives and to fight for a liberated existence, developing more trust in our intuition and being more connected to our instincts, and regaining the balance that has been virtually destroyed after thousands of years of patriarchal control and domestication. Rewilding is the process of becoming uncivilized.

For the Destruction of Civilization!

For the Reconnection to Life!

When Nature Attacks

Squirrel Blamed For Massive Southern Marin Power Outage - Marin Independent Journal, 1/8/2014

A squirrel is being blamed for a large power outage in Marin County that affected 23,000 customers Wednesday morning, according to Pacific Gas & Electric Co. PG&E spokesman Paul Moreno said the outage began at 10:12 a.m. when a squirrel caused a flashover and damaged a breaker at the Mill Valley substation. He said the squirrel acted as a conductor between equipment and didn't survive the experience. About 12,000 customers in the affected areas of Mill Valley, Corte Madera, Tiburon and Muir Beach had restored power by 11:17 a.m. At 11:39 a.m. power was restored to all, Moreno said.

Pope's Peace Doves Attacked By Crow & Seagull - from The Guardian, 1/26/2014

Two white doves that were released as a peace gesture by children standing alongside Pope Francis were attacked by other birds. As tens of thousands of people watched in St Peter's Square on Sunday, a seagull and a large black crow swept down on the doves after they were set free from an open window of the Apostolic Palace. One dove lost some feathers as it broke free from the gull. But the crow pecked repeatedly at the other dove. It was not clear what happened to the doves as they flew off. Speaking at the window beforehand, Francis appealed for peace in Ukraine, where anti-government protesters have died.

Woman Badly Mauled By Black Bear in Her Suburban Florida Home - from NatureWorldNews, 4/14/2014

A woman in Seminole County, Florida was attacked by a 200-pound bear in the garage of her home, according to the Orlando Sentinel. The woman survived with bite marks to her head, arm and leg and claw marks on her back. She had to have 30 staples and 10 stitches in her head before being released from the hospital. Coincidentally, the day she was attacked an advisory had been issued about Florida black bear activity increasing, as the animals have just come out of their dens from winter hibernation. The day after the attack, the State said it captured and killed three bears in the area that showed no fear of people. One of the three bears was described as particularity aggressive. Our thoughts go out to the bears' families and we wish them a speedy vengeance.

Earthquake Liberates Over 300 Prisoners In Chile - from Russia Today, 4/2/2014

Armed forces were sent to the city of Iquique, Chile to track down escaped prisoners after an earthquake, several after-shocks and the threat of tsunami wreaked havoc on a women's prison. Authorities say the situation got out of control because the prison is located in an area prone to flooding. At the time of reporting, only 16 prisoners had been re-captured.

Letters to the Editors

We received a handful of responses to our original call-out for submissions that were posted on various websites. We decided to reprint the call-out for the sake of coherency alongside some interesting dialogue/responses we've since had.

> It has been almost 6 years since the last issue of Green Anarchy. During its 25-issue run, the magazine brought green anarchist ideas to North America and the world. It succeeded as an incubator of ideas and a real provocation for those both inside and outside of the anarchist milieu. In the intervening years, even with drastic changes in terms of green capitalism, technological advancement, and an ever-worsening ecological crisis, green anarchist and anti-civilization ideas have not been terribly visible.
>
> We intend to reintroduce this green anarchist provocation. The new project will have a different orientation than Green Anarchy did. Rather than framing our theory and practice in the abstract world of historical and anthropological perspectives on civilization (or in a fetishization of primitive cultures), we begin in conversation and with our own personal experiences. Currently, in the English-speaking world, single-issue, campaign-based organizing dominates radical perspectives on the developing global ecological crises and resistance to domination's ever-expanding encroachment. As anarchists, we desire to push the dialogue further and open a space to engage critically with the development of capitalism and the state, along with the dead-ends of environmental activism, in both the radical varieties and the more recent mainstream green "civil disobedience" movements.
>
> We are a collective comprised of former contributors to Green Anarchy magazine, recent propagandists of a green anarchist persuasion, and other rabble-rousers. This publication will be editorially controlled by us and produced and distributed by Little Black Cart. We intend to release a biannual publication and we are asking for your help.
>
> We want to hear about your experiences. Please send us stories of ecological struggle, anti-authoritarian earth-based coalitions, non-materialist anarchist practice, allied prisoners, and signs of the system's meltdown. We are interested in developing critiques of civilization, the state, and technology; as methods of social control evolve and adapt, so must our understandings of them. We are also interested in a mixed medium of submissions such as original artwork, photography, poetry, etc.

RE: Non-Materialist Practice

Question: Can anyone explain what non-materialist means here? Do they just mean they're not Marxists?

Answer: One of the weaknesses of radical politics today is that our desire for freedom sounds an awful lot like, and indeed uses many of the same words as, other groups in their desire for freedom. The English words we use have themselves been trapped by traditions: liberal, Marxist, colonial. It is a challenge to say anything at all, especially something simple or ancient, framed by those we despise.

Personally, I'm looking for stories about what anarchists do that break out of academic or spiritual discourse, out of the particular traps I see in the circles around me. For you, it could be that the traps are countercultural or age-related. For another, it may be a question of rural versus urban or a question of identity or of subsistence. So to clarify the question in our original call-out, how do we open a about anarchist practice without receiving cornball answers to a question we aren't asking. I'm not looking for solutions as much as I am engagement that lives anarchist and breathes the land.

Green anarchism often times sounds either woo or like it's in recovery from Situationist or Earth First! ideas. For many people, that's a high mark that they would be happy to reach. However, a fierce green anarchist perspective could also be specifically land-based, multigenerational, and grounded in relationships beyond casual affinity. It could learn from other people doing this things rather than chasing the so-called radical politics of activism, safe spaces, and decolonization in word alone.

-Aragorn!

Correspondence with Riflebird

What follows is an email correspondence between a member of the Fierce Dreams Collective, who put together a wild-skill-share gathering out in the woods in Australia, and one of the editorial collective members of Black Seed. Both writers felt it was fit for submitting given that it highlights much of the conversations and contradictions surrounding contemporary green-anarchist thought.

Hi there Black Seed.

It's good to know that someone has an interest in continuing an ongoing green anarchist journal, a process that Green Anarchy (an anti-civilization journal of theory and action that was published from 2000-2009) started but couldn't continue with. It is missed.

I had a bit of trouble understanding some of the post, or the journal's intent. It could be a failure on my part, or it may be a collective project so different folks want different things. However, the terminology of 'fetishizing' indigenous cultures threw me off. After all, anarcho-primitivism seems to me to be the only strain of anarchistic thought that takes the ongoing genocide of indigenous people seriously, and the only thread that analyses hunter-gatherer lifeways to compare with current incarnations of mass society. This is significant because humans have existed so long without civilization but this fact is often still overlooked. I could understand if you want to scale back the anthropology, but I don't feel that GA (Green Anarchy) fetishized indigenous cultures (maybe you feel differently, maybe some specific indigenous folks did, and that's a topic for discussion of course), and I guess I wonder because this is a typical attack from leftists against green anarchists still today.

Speaking of leftism, the callout has said it wants to go beyond the dead ends of activism, but wants to focus on the development of capital and the state. If this journal is inspired by GA, the most powerful and long-lasting effects were its decimation of the left. There are so many avenues to talk about capital and the state (red anarchist blogs, historical materialism conferences, etc…). I'm not sure what's meant by this.

I would also offer that green anarchist thought may have not been as visible in some ways as it was in the mid 2000's when GA magazine was in full force but if you are trying to rekindle interest I'm not sure why you would downplay or trivialize the tactical resistance to civilization that is going on worldwide, possibly sparked by GA and similar sources. Right now in Chile,

Moscow, Brazil, Mexico, and Finland, to name only a few, there are people speaking out and directly acting against civilization, explicitly naming it as the enemy in various communiques. I would say personally that the ideas have not gone away, rather they have spread further and also formed connections with other struggles. Of course GA was very well known, and had a huge distribution, and very prominent writers, so there is a need for green anarchist theory and voices nowadays in North America, which you are obviously addressing.

Anyway that's just a few thoughts off the top of my head. If you want to see what our collective has been doing, there is a website: fiercedreams.wordpress.com. We've had a gathering and a couple of discussion nights so far and are motivated to continue exploring ideas around green anarchy in our corner of the world.

All the best, keep it wild.

Riflebird

Riflebird,

First I wanted to thank you for your response. This kind of correspondence is exactly what I'm hoping to get out of working on this publication. I also want to go ahead and say that my response is not representative of the other members of the editorial collective, I don't think this type of correspondence necessitates nor could accomplish a "collective response."

I guess what "fetishizing" of indigenous cultures that was referenced in the original call-out for submissions means to me is this tendency I have seen in the green-anarchist milieu to sort of put forth the idea that the way hunter-gatherer people lived was totally egalitarian, free from domination, and can be taken as a model to plan our future societies after industrial collapse. What I see as problematic in that assertion are a couple of things: A) This idea is largely reliant on the studies of anthropology, an academic social science that views its knowledge and research as ultimate and superior as it stands within the academic university. I do see the importance of studying and learning how humans have lived without the constraints of civilization, and how those studies in and of themselves can have bright insights into the oppressive manner of our current situations, yet the academic university approach is something I wish to step away from in an anarchist discourse given its specialized role in knowledge. B) The idea of creating or finding models in which we can follow to set up new societies "after the collapse" or "after the rupture" is not something I am interested in at all. My "project" or however you want to describe someone's pursuit-of-anarchy-in-life is negative; I mean to focus on the destruction of civilization, the state, capitalism, technology, mediation, etc. The topic of "how will we hunt and gather when the cities collapse?" can be an interesting and fun thought-experiment, yet to me resembles the talk of "how will we organize the factories and cafés after the collapse of capitalism?" I am not so interested in how to live in liberation, which when discussed in this way frames the sometime-in-the-future-insurrection-to-come the same way that Christians might talk about "the Apocalypse" or Maoists talk about "the Revolution," but I'm more interested in dismantling the current structures that dominate our lives and the world around us. I don't believe it will realistically ever happen, yet I believe in the importance of it nonetheless.

Apart from that, one only needs to look at the Green Anarchy Primer Back To Basics Volume 1 to see just one example of the tendency of the green anarchist milieu to fetishize indigenous culture. What is seen on the first page is a picture of children running with spears in hands, taken completely out of context. One could ascertain that the imposed meaning on the inclusion of this photo is "Look at these wild children on the hunt! Amazing! Free! Anarchy!" This surface-level acknowledgement of a lifestyle merely reduces it to images that accompany political thought,

completely disregarding the complexities and nuances that accompany any such lifestyle completely enveloped in the immediate surrounding world.

None of this is to say that indigenous culture is of no importance. If anything I wish to bring to light a discourse with and around indigenous communities and anarchy through this publication. At the least I want to hear from and dialogue with people in those communities, not write about them from afar.

The point you made of the criticism of the left in GA: I definitely find much importance in critiquing the left as they are our enemies and will recuperate anything they can get their hands on. On the other hand, a sentiment that I shared with some of the co-editors of Black Seed was that GA seemed a bit obsessive and fixated on critiquing the left. It became a thing for me at least where honestly I got quite bored with reading essay after essay attacking leftists. And perhaps this is one place in the announcement of the Black Seed project where the wording could have been worked on a little bit more, but to me capital and the state go hand in hand with civilization and technology. They are each spurred on by the other, and an advancement in the economy, technology or politics is an advancement for the others. I hope to help facilitate through this publication an illustration of the intertwined relations of each monster. I am completely baffled when I meet anarchists/anti-capitalists/whatever-rebels who do not find importance in the critiques and dismantling of technology and civilization.

And I would agree with your sentiment that it was perhaps unfitting to downplay currently ongoing explicitly anti-civilization struggles in other parts of the world. I would say that that sentiment came from a focus that is more directed at North America, where the dialogue surrounding environmental issues and radical/anarchist intervention is predominately maintained by those of Earth First! and Rising Tide; mostly leftist coalitions focused on issue-based-campaign organizing that resembles nothing more than begging to me. It would certainly behoove us in the North American context to give nods or at least acknowledge those who we share affinity with worldwide. To "downplay or trivialize the tactical resistance to civilization" is certainly not my intention and I would assume not those of the co-editors either.

Best wishes, for anarchy,

Cedar Leighlais, Black Seed Collective

Hello Cedar!

Thanks so much for your interesting and considered email. I found it quite thought provoking and definitely want to pursue the dialogue as well. As far as writing a collective response yes I have been struggling with that conundrum too this year. For this situation it's a lot better to sort it out as individuals.

All that you have said makes sense to me and leaves me wanting to write something for Black Seed. Not all of it I agree with, however, which is all the more intriguing. For instance I don't think that all band societies were egalitarian and utopian… but they offer the only example of longterm anarchist life to this day in my opinion (anarchy on a basic level, as having no rulers). So in that way, as a comparison point, since certain groups have some characteristics (once again, not treating non-civilized societies as a monolith) that are such a radical departure from life in mass society, I see value in discussing the differences. I do agree that they should not provide any kind of model or ideal, because post-civilization life will be a hell of a lot different to pre-civilization life. I totally agree about avoiding the trap of relying upon anthropology to try to give authority to any arguments against civilization, and I personally see it as just another institution that has to go.

From what you are saying, and I will endeavor to better understand it as we go along, we have a fair bit in common. I realize that because I haven't been involved in any scene or urban anarchist community for a while, some of my influences are not exactly new (not to say they are all outdated, I hope). I am becoming more informed about what people are generally feeling and thinking here in Australia the more I reach out and try to have a dialogue. So I feel as if any discussions I can have are going to be good for me, to bring me up to date and up to speed with what is happening in the urban areas and around the world. Recently I read Seaweed's Land and Freedom and I feel as if that is a great indicator, it does talk of capitalism and production, but also does not valorize nomadic hunter-gathering lifeways as an ideal, and does not dwell on academic or anthropological references, but it is still certainly green-anarchist leaning. Have you read that?

As far as the left goes, I did and do appreciate the anti-leftist raves in GA, but it is more for comic relief and blowing off steam than anything else. I take your point that there was probably too much of it and it detracted from the more important work of dismantling civilization and also may have formed a clique. The main reason I still see value in slamming the left is in the context of Australia it still goes so unquestioned. I feel like I have to defend myself routinely against moderate political activists a lot, and there is a strong overtone of presumptuousness and a pious tone that is still the default setting of 'political campaigning' here. I feel as if there is still a lot of work to do to break away from that and make it clear that we are not part of the left and do not ascribe to the values of the left. But for any potential Black Seed articles I would tone it down and focus on the task at hand! Haha. I certainly can see how the atmosphere is different in North America with Earth First! and whatnot, and it is a different beast. There are a lot more anarchists, a lot more anti-civilization discussion, just basically more people and more history.

There are a lot of parallels here though with activism, anti-logging protests, and N.G.O.'s and environmental campaigning to "save the forests". It is the predominant method of combatting the ongoing ecological destruction, even to this day, and these 'movements' mostly plod along without critique.

You mentioned, "I am baffled when I meet anarchists/anti-capitalists/whatever-rebels who do not find importance in the critiques of technology and civilization." Well, I am too, but subsequently I am baffled a LOT. The general vibe is one of defensiveness, outrage and scorn when these topics come up in most anarchist spaces here. It is breaking down slowly but it is going to take a while. Putting on Fierce Dreams has created a few openings and possibilities and so we will continue with this project in some shape or form as I feel that gatherings put people in direct contact with each other, at least among some trees. For a country so vast where folks are often isolated, it can be a good start.

All the best,
For the death of Leviathan,
Riflebird

Antagonist News

Russia: Two Excavators Torched - from interarma.info, 2/14/2014

"… we followed routine procedure: put some rags around engine parts and oil pumps, soaked them with gasoline, etc. After we left the area, we tarried for some time to enjoy the night view.

Both excavators were trailing huge columns of smoke into the air. We establish the damage done at around 6-8 million rubles (approx. 200 000 USD).

We hope this act will slow down operations in this quarry. The area already boasts several abandoned quarries. Since our initial recon in this district large tracts of wood were drained and cut in order to clear up space for more quarry works. The sand excavated in here is used for future developement projects that do not take Nature or clean air into account.

We wish best of luck to all of you. Keep that fire burning.

MOSCOW 2014, ELF/FAI/IRF"

Turkey: Excavator Torched - from interarma.info, 2/20/2014

"On Thursday, February 20th, in Poyraz rural regions of Anatolian part of Istanbul, we attacked an excavator which is left to sleep on the verge of excavating the nature and we spray painted several locations around the site with the signs of 'ELF-FAI/IRF.' While this nature killer became unusable with a simple, time-set, handmade incendiary device, the message we wanted to give was clear: "If you build it, we will burn and destroy it!"

Tractors Sabotaged in Atlanta, GA - from directaction.info, 2/22/2014

"On the night of February 22nd, we poured a mixture of sand and water into the fuel tanks of two tractors used in the construction of a new Atlanta streetcar. We offer this small gesture of solidarity to the ZAD, the No TAV movement, and the occupation of the Hambach Forest. We would also like to send strength to those affected by increased surveillance or repression the new developments have brought to Atlanta."

Brazil: 10 Police Cars Torched Inside Military Barracks - from War On Society Blog, 2/24/2014

"The financial loss estimated by the alarmed media is around 1 million but the actual losses are really more extensive than financial figures. It shows that they are vulnerable and that with just a little bit of gasoline and audacity we can strike them in the chest. The police, the media, the law abiding citizens, the secretary of security, and the governor poured out their pity. We applaud all the indomitable."

Greece: Imprisoned Members of CCF Attack Prosecuting Witness During Trial - from Interarma, 2/27/2014

During this trial, the members of the Conspiracy Cells of Fire are being accused of setting fire to a prosecutor's house who has been responsible for jailing many anarchist-guerillas. In this session, Vassilis Foukas, the prosecutor, was brought forth as a witness, and when it was the imprisoned's turn to ask question, Foukas grew irritated, mouthed-off and attempted to walk out. Two of the CCF jumped up and got in his way, attacking him. The cops stepped in and helped him to escape before more could get involved.

Before that, the Foukas had said "I don't have to answer anything!" just to get the response by a comrade "Asshole we burned your house, now we will bomb it…" The court adjourned and decided that the witness should be called again so that the questions can be completed.

Mexico: Package Bomb Sent to University Scientist - from War On Society Blog, Late-March

"…We abandon words and analyses in order to begin with our war, the war against what kills us and consumes us, against the invincible megamachine which only wild nature or its very own technology can collapse. We do not seek victories, triumphs or results from what we do or have done, we are not revolutionaries, platformists or anarchists.

We only seek confrontation with the system, the sharpening of the conflict against it. From this day we publicly put aside the word 'analysis,' in order to become The Obsidian Point Circle of Attack.

And with that said, we declare ourselves responsible for a package bomb with a considerable quantity of shrapnel, sent in the final days of March by express mail to Dr. José Narro Robles… Why attack the 'respectable' Mr. Narro?… Here is our response: Narro is one of the many public figures who propels the great majority of scientific and technological projects within and without the country, which tend to improve civilization, which aim toward economic development, and which tend toward progress, toward the perpetuation of the technoindustrial system, and finally the modification and destruction of wild nature (along with human nature).

We care little what they call us, such as 'barbarian,' 'foolish,' 'mediocre,' etc, we do not want to give any 'good impression' to their eyes, we do not want to be, nor are we, nor will we be, the traditional 'social fighters' of Mexico, we are egoist radicals, politically incorrect, irreverently individualist at war against the progress of the technoindustrial system."

Oakland, CA Police Office Attacked - from anarchistnews.org, 4/2/2014

"Our aim was to demonstrate that action, however small, is both possible and desirable.

We dedicate this action to the rebels in Durham, North Carolina who have repeatedly taken to the streets in outrage against the killer pigs who murdered a young man, Chuy Huerta, in the back of a cop car last year. Weapons in hand,

we attacked for Chuy."

Mining Executive's Vancouver, B.C. Home Sprayed With Gunfire - from The Vancouver Sun, 4/4/2014

The home belonging to Johnathan More and Taylor Rae More was peppered with bullets the morning of Friday, April 4th. Johnathan More is president and CEO of Aldrin Resource Corp., a junior uranium company that is listed on the TSX Venture Exchange. The company recently announced its crews had begun drilling in search of uranium at its property in Saskatchewan's Athabasca Basin.

He is also named as a director of Athabasca Nuclear, another Venture-listed uranium explorer, and the CEO and director of Mira Resources Corp., an oil and gas company with projects in West African countries Ghana and Angola.

More is listed on the Mira website as a former investment adviser and the founder of JM Finance LTD, a Canadian venture capital company.

Police responded to emergency phone calls about the incident and taped off the two-story home. It is not known whether or not they were home during the shooting, and no suspects have been named.

Meat Industry Suppliers Sabotaged in Solidarity With Animal Liberation Prisoners in Portland, OR - from Puget Sound Anarchists, 4/10/2014

On the night of April 10th, the locks were glued at Market Supply Co. (139 SE Taylor St, Portland, OR) and McGraw Marketing Co. (2514 SE 23rd Ave, Portland OR) also had its lock jammed with liquid nails.

These minor acts were done in solidarity with animal liberation prisoner Kevin Olliff.

Montreal: Rail Lines Blocked in Solidarity with Indigenous Communities in Conflict with the State - anarchistnews.org, 4/8/2014

"…8 train lines running through Montreal were blocked by disrupting the rail signals. This action was done in response to ongoing effors of colonization and repression by the state against indigenous communities across Turtle Island.

Rebels, indigenous folk and workers alike have targeted the train lines as an apt means for disrupting the flow of capital and these systems of domination. Historically and presently the railways have acted as a necessary toll for imperialism.

CN has chosen to build its infrastructure across indigenous territory as another act of stealing land from autonomous communities.

As anarchists we are invested in contributing to an active disruption of domination and state power."

Land And Freedom: An Old Challenge - by Sever

An Old Slogan

One of the oldest anarchist slogans was "Land and Freedom." You don't hear it much anymore these days, but this battle cry was used most fervently in the revolutionary movements in Mexico, Spain, Russia, and Manchuria. In the first case, the movement that used those three words like a weapon and like a compass had an important indigenous background. In the second case, the workers of Spain who spoke of "Tierra y Libertad" were often fresh arrivals to the city who still remembered the feudal existence they had left behind in the countryside. In Russia and Manchuria, the revolutionaries who linked those two concepts, land and freedom, were largely peasants.

It was not the generic working class, formed in the factories and blue collar neighborhoods, for whom this slogan had the most meaning, but those exploited people who had only just begun their tutelage as proletarians.

The reformers of those aforementioned struggles interpreted "Land and Freedom" as two distinct, political demands: land, or some kind of agrarian reform that would dole out to the rural poor commoditized parcels so they could make their living in a monetized market; and freedom, or the opportunity to participate in the bourgeois organs of government.

Land, conceptualized thus, has since become obsolete, and freedom, also in the liberal sense, has been universalized and proven lacking. Yet if anarchists and other radical peasants and workers who rose up alongside them never held to the liberal conception of freedom, shouldn't we suspect that when they talked about land they were also referring to something different?

Tragically, anarchists became proletarianized and stopped talking about land and freedom. Ever dwindling, they held on to their quaint conception of freedom that did not demand inclusion in government but rather its very destruction. Yet they surrended the idea of land to the liberal paradigm. It was something that existed outside the cities, that existed to produce food, and that would be liberated and rationally organized as soon as workers in the supposed nerve centers of capitalism—the urban hubs—brought down the government and reappropriated the social wealth.

The farthest that anarchists usually come to reject this omission is still within a dichotomy that externalizes land from the centers of capitalist accumulation: these are the anarchists who in one form or another "go back to the land," leaving the cities, setting up communes, rural cooperatives, or embarking on efforts to rewild. The truth is, the "back to the land" movement and the rural communes of earlier generations, organized according to a wide variety of strategies of resistance, turned up a body of invaluable experience that anarchists collectively have still failed to absorb. Though some such experiments persist today and new versions are constantly being

inaugurated, the tendency on the whole has been a failure, and we need to talk more extensively about why.

Non-indigenous anarchists who have decided to learn from indigenous struggles have played an important role in improving solidarity with some of the most important battles against capitalism taking place today, and they have also contributed to a practice of nurturing intimate relationships with the land in a way that supports us in our ongoing struggles. But when they counterpose land to city, I think they fail to get to the root of alienation, and the limited resonance of their practice seems to confirm this.

Land and Freedom Unalienated

The most radical possible interpretation of the slogan, "Land and Freedom", does not posit two separate items joined on a list. It presents land and freedom as two interdependent concepts, each of which transforms the meaning of the other. The counter to the rationalist Western notion of land and that civilization's corrupted notion of freedom is the vision that at least some early anarchists were projecting in their battle cry.

Land linked to freedom means a habitat that we freely interrelate with, to shape and be shaped by, unburdened by any productive or utilitarian impositions and the rationalist ideology they naturalize. Freedom linked to land means the self-organization of our vital activity, activity that we direct to achieve sustenance on our own terms, not as isolated units but as living beings within a web of wider relationships. Land and freedom means being able to feed ourselves without having to bend to any blackmail imposed by government or a privileged caste, having a home without paying for permission, learning from the earth and sharing with all other living beings without quantifying value, holding debts, or seeking profit. This conception of life enters into a battle of total negation with the world of government, money, wage or slave labor, industrial production, Bibles and priests, institutionalized learning, the spectacularization of daily existence, and all other apparatuses of control that flow from Enlightenment thinking and the colonialistic civilization it champions.

Land, in this sense, is not a place external to the city. For one, this is because capitalism does not reside primarily in urban space—it controls the whole map. The military and productive logics that control us and bludgeon the earth in urban space are also at work in rural space. Secondly, the reunited whole of land and freedom must be an ever present possibility no matter where we are. They constitute a social relationship, a way of relating to the world around us and the other beings in it, that is profoundly opposed to the alienated social relationship of capitalism. Alienation and primitive accumulation[1] are ceaseless, ongoing processes from one corner of the

[1] Primitive accumulation, for those unfamiliar with the term, is the process by which the commons are converted into commoditites or means of production; more precisely it is the often brutal process by which capitalist value that can be put to the service of production and accumulation is originally created. A population of rent-paying workers and the factories that employ them already constitute a society organized according to capitalist social relations, in which everything serves the accumulation of ever more capital. On the other hand, things like communal land that directly feeds those who live on it and work with it, or folk knowledge that is shared freely and passed on informally, constitute resources that do not generate capital (that is, alienated, quantifiable value that can be reinvested). To benefit capitalism, such resources need to be enclosed and commoditized, through colonialism, dispossession, criminalization, professionalization, taxation, starvation, and other policies. This is primitive accumulation. Marx portrayed this process as one that marks the earliest stage of capitalism but in reality it is an ongoing process active at the margins of capitalism, which crisscross our world with every successive expansion or intensification of the system.

globe to the other. Those of us who are not indigenous, those of us who are fully colonized and have forgotten where we came from, do not have access to anything pristine. Alienation will follow us out to the farthest forest glade or desert oasis until we can begin to change our relationship to the world around us in a way that is simultaneously material and spiritual.

Equally, anarchy must be a robust concept. It must be an available practice no matter where we find ourselves—in the woods or in the city, in a prison or on the high seas. It requires us to transform our relationship with our surroundings, and therefore to also transform our surroundings, but it cannot be so fragile that it requires us to seek out some pristine place in order to spread anarchy. Will anti-civilization anarchism be a minoritarian sect of those anarchists who go to the woods to live deliberately, because they don't like the alternative of organizing a union at the local burger joint, or will it be a challenge to the elements of the anarchist tradition that reproduce colonialism, patriarchy, and Enlightenment thinking, a challenge that is relative to all anarchists no matter where they pick their battles?

Land does not exist in opposition to the city. Rather, one concept of land exists in opposition to another. The anarchist or anti-civilization idea against the capitalist, Western idea. It is this latter concept that places land within the isolating dichotomy of city vs. wilderness. This is why "going back to the land" is doomed to fail, even though we may win valuable lessons and experiences in the course of that failure (as anarchists, we've rarely won anything else). We don't need to go back to the land, because it never left us. We simply stopped seeing it and stopped communing with it.

Recreating our relationship with the world can happen wherever we are, in the city or in the countryside. But how does it happen?

History

An important step is to recover histories about how we lost our connection with the land and how we got colonized. These can be the histories of our people, defined ethnically, the history of our blood family, the histories of the people who have inhabited the place we call home, the histories of anarchists or queers or nomads or whomever else we consider ourselves to be one of. They must be all of these things, for no one history can tell it all. Not everyone was colonized the same way, and though capitalism has touched everyone on the planet, not everyone is a child of capitalism nor of the civilization that brought it across the globe.

The history of the proletariat as it has been told so far presents colonization (the very process that has silenced those other stories) as a process that was marginal while it was occurring and is now long since completed, when in fact many people still hold on to another way of relating to the land, and the process of colonization that molds us as proletarians or consumers—or whatever capitalism wants us to be in a given moment—is ongoing.

As we recover those histories, we need to root them in the world around us and communalize them, so that they lucidly imbue our surroundings, so that young people grow up learning them, and so they can never be stolen from us again. The printed or glowing page which I am using to share these imperatives with you can never be more than a coffin for our ideas. I seal the beloved corpse within to pass it across the void, but only because I hope that someone on the other side of the emptiness that insulates each one of us will take it out and lay it on firm ground, where it can fertilize tomorrow's gardens.

Expropriations

Armed with this history, but never awaiting it, because limiting ourselves to distinct phases of struggle alienates tasks that must form an organic whole, we must take another step. *The embodiment of a communal relationship with the world through increasingly profound expropriations that are simultaneously material and spiritual.*

They are expropriations because they take forms of life out of the realm of property and into a world of communal relations where capitalist value has no meaning.

They are material because they touch the living world and the other bodies who inhabit it, and spiritual because they nourish us and reveal the animating relationship between all things.

Their simultaneity means that they undermine the established categories of economic, political, and cultural. Each of our acts unites elements from all the analytical categories designed to measure alienated life. *The transcendence of the categories of alienation is the hallmark of the reunification of what civilization has alienated.*

Do we harvest plants to feed ourselves, as an act of sabotage against a commodifying market, or because our herb-lore and our enjoyment of nature's bounty tells us who we are in this world? Leave the question for the sociologists: for us it is a no-brainer.

If this quest leads us out of the cities and into the woods, so be it (though many more of us need lessons on how to reclaim communal relationships, how to enact land and freedom in urban space, and fast). But the profound need to overcome alienation and reencounter the world will never take us out of harm's way. If we go to the woods to find peace—not inner peace but an absence of enemies—we're doing it wrong. Life lived against the dictates of colonization is a life of illegality and conflict.

Expropriation means we are plucking forms of life out of the jaws of capitalism, or more precisely, ripping them out of its hideous, synthetic body, to help them reattain a life of their own. We do this so that we too can have lives of our own.

This does not mean—and I can't emphasize this enough—that we measure our struggle in terms of how much damage we do to the State or how much the State defines us as a threat. Although anarchists embody the negation of the State, we are not its opposites. Opposites always obey the same paradigm.

The State has no understanding of the world as community. Capitalists, who lack the strategic and paranoid overview that agents of the State operate in, understand it even less. Some of our expropriations will be open declarations of war, and they will result in some of us dying or going to prison, but other expropriations won't even be noticed by the forces of law and order, while the capitalist recuperators won't catch on until our subversion has become a generalized practice.

If we are anarchists, if we are truly enemies of authority, there can be absolutely no symmetry between what capitalism tries to do to us and what we must do to capitalism. *Our activity must correspond to our own needs, rather than being inverse reactions to the needs of capitalism.*

Feeding ourselves

Little by little, we need to begin feeding ourselves in every sense through these expropriations. And in the unalienated logic of land and freedom, feeding ourselves does not mean producing food, but giving and taking. Nothing eats that is not eaten. The only rule is reciprocity. What

capitalism arrogantly sees as exploitation, extracting value, is nothing but a short-sighted staving off of the consequences of the imbalance it creates.

Feeding ourselves, therefore, means rescuing the soil from the prisons of asphalt or monocultures, cleaning it and fertilizing it, so that we may also eat from it. It does not stop there. Feeding ourselves means writing songs and sharing them, and taking hold of the spaces to do so for free. Learning how to heal our bodies and spirits, and making those skills available to others who confront the grim challenge of trying to win access to a healthcare designed for machines. Sabotaging factories that poison our water or the construction equipment that erects buildings that would block our view of the sunset. Helping transform our surroundings into a welcoming habitat for the birds, bugs, trees, and flowers who make our lives a little less lonely. Carrying out raids that demonstrate that all the buildings where merchandise is kept and guarded are simply common storehouses of useful or useless things that we can go in and take whenever we want; that the whole ritual of buying and selling is just a stupid game that we've been playing for far too long.

The ways to feed ourselves are innumerable. A body does not live on carbohydrates and protein alone, and anyone who claims that the exploited, the proletariat, the people, or the species have set interests is a priest of domination. Our interests are constructed. If we do not loudly, violently assert our needs, politicians and advertisers will continue to define them.

Finding What's "Ours"

In the course of our attempt to nourish ourselves outside of and against capitalism, we will quickly find that there is no liberated ground. No matter where we are, they make us pay rent, one way or another. A necessary and arduous step forward will be to free up space from the grips of domination and liberate a habitat that supports us, a habitat we are willing to protect. In the beginning, this habitat could be nothing more than an acre of farmland, a seasonal festival, a city park, or even just the space occupied by a decrepit building.

There are several important considerations we must explore if we are to find what's ours. They all have to do with how we cultivate a profound relationship with place. We cannot aim for such a relationship if we are not willing to incur great danger. Making your home on a bit of land, refusing to treat it as a commodity, and rejecting the regulations imposed on it means going to prison or ending your days in an armed standoff unless you can call up fierce solidarity or mobilize an effective and creative resistance. But the more such resistance spreads, the more certain it is that people will die defending the land and their relationship with it.

If you would not die for land or a specific way of moving through it, don't bother: you'll never be able to find a home. But how can we build that kind of love when we are only moving on top of the land like oil on water, never becoming a part of it? Everyone yearns to overcome alienation, but very few people still enjoy a connection worth defending.

The fortitude we need takes great conviction, and that conviction can only build over time. Nowadays, perhaps only one out of a thousand of us would give up their lives to defend a habitat they consider themselves part of. The question we need to answer is, how do we foreground that kind of love, how do we spread it, and for those of us who survive and move on, how do we play our part in cultivating an inalienable relationship with place when the misery of defeat and the coldness of exile make it easier to forget?

It is all the more difficult in North America, where society is increasingly transient. Transcience is not a simple question of moving around, as though anarchists should simply stay in their hometown or as though nomads enjoyed a less profound relationship with the earth than sedentary gardeners. But nomads don't travel just anywhere. They also cultivate an entirely specific relationship with the world around them. Their habitat just has a temporal as well as a spatial dimension.

The problem of transcience in capitalist society is one of not forming any relationship with the place where we live. This is the reason why anarchists who stay anywhere more than a few years drown in misery, and why the anarchists who always move to the new hip spot never stay more than one step ahead of it. It is a key problematic that we need to devote more thought to than we do to the latest French translation or intellectual trend.

In the Americas in particular, there is another great difficulty with finding what's ours. Our potential relationship to the commodified land (land in the liberal sense that has been imposed by force of arms) is largely codified through a system of race categorization that was developed by colonizers in the 17th and 18th centuries. This land was stolen, and it was worked and improved—in the capitalist sense—by people who were stolen from their land. It's true that the land in Europe was also stolen from those who lived in community with it, and that many of those people were shipped to the Americas and forced to work there. It's also true that many of them ran off to live with the original inhabitants, or planned insurrections alongside the people kidnapped, enslaved, and taken from various parts of Africa, and that this subversive mingling is what forced the lords and masters to invent race.

It no less true that apart from having money, the surest way to win access to land—albeit commodified land—in the history of the Americas up until the present moment has been by being white. Whatever our feelings or consciousness of the imposed hierarchy of privilege, indigenous people have been robbed of their land and repeatedly prevented from reestablishing a nourishing, communal relationship with it, the descendants of African slaves have been kicked off whatever land they had access to any time it became desirable to whites or any time they had built up a high level of autonomy, while whites, at least sometimes, have been allowed limited access to the land as long as it did not conflict with the immediate interests and projects of the wealthy. The legacy of this dynamic continues today.

The implication of all this is that if white anarchists in the Americas (or Australia, New Zealand, and other settler states) want to form a deep relationship with a specific habitat, claiming land to the extent that it belongs to us and we belong to it, we had better make sure that the only other claims we are infringing on are those of capitalist and government landlords. Are there indigenous people who are struggling to restore their relationship with that same land? Is it land that black communities have been forced out of? How do those people feel about you being there, and what relationship do you have with them? Under what conditions would they like to have you as a neighbor? If white people in struggle continue to assert the first pick on land, this is hardly a departure from colonial relations.

Treating the land like a tabula raza, an empty space awaiting your arrival, is antithetical to cultivating a deep relationship with it. Etched into that land are all the relations with the people who came before you. By trying to become a part of it, will you be reviving their legacy, or destroying it? Find out before you attempt to put down roots.

A Longterm Proposal

The narrative we express in our struggles exerts a huge impact on the outcome of those struggles. Half of domination is symbolic, and by focusing on the quantifiable or the putatively material, rebels have missed out on this other sphere within which battles against power take place.

If we occupy a building as squatters, we signal that our concern is empty buildings and not the land beneath them, nor our relationship with it. If squatters become strong enough that the State is forced to ameliorate and recuperate them, it will take the path of ceding legal spaces and maybe even tweaking the housing laws or creating more public housing. In a revolutionary sense, nothing is won.

If we occupy a building as anarchists who communicate nothing but a desire to destroy all forms of authority, we are safe from recuperation, because we project no way forward for our struggle, no path for the State to reroute. We also make it almost impossible to advance, and we facilitate state repression. With nothing to win, our struggle thrives on desperation, and with nothing to share, no one else will connect to our struggle except the equally nihilistic.

But what if we raised the cry of "Land and Freedom"? What if we projected our struggle as a drive to progressively liberate territory from the logics of state and capitalism? What if we unabashedly spoke about our desire to free ourselves?

While we are weak, we will choose weak targets: vacant lots, abandoned land, an empty building with an absentee landlord. Or a place we already have access to, a home we live in for example. Whether we transform that place into a garden, a social center, a workshop, or a collective house, it must find its way into a specific narrative of liberation. If we justify our use of that space on the grounds that we are poor, that there isn't enough affordable housing, that the youth need a place to hang out, that people need access to a garden for lack of fresh produce in their diets, or any similar discourse, we are opening the door to recuperation, we are pinning our rebellion to a crisis within capitalism and sabotaging all our work as soon as the economy improves or the government institutes some reform to ease the shortage of housing, produce, youth centers, and so forth.

If we justify our use of that space with a rejection of private property, we have taken an important step forward, but we also construct a battlefield in which our defeat is assured. A rejection of private property is abstract. It leaves a vacuum that must be filled if the capitalist paradigm will be broken. A relationship always exists between the bodies that inhabit the same place. What relationship will we develop to drive out the one of alienated commodities? By refusing to talk about this and put it into practice, we also refuse to destroy private property, no matter how radical a posture we adopt. Nor have we formed and expressed an inalienable relationship with the specific place we are trying to claim. Why that land? Why that building? And it's true, we want to destroy private property the world over. But you do not form a relationship with the land in the abstract, as a communist might. This is why the spiritual aspect of struggle that the materialists, as priests of Enlightenment thinking, deride and neglect, is important. A communal relationship with the land is always specific.

This means that in every case, we need to assert our legitimacy to claim land over the legitimacy of the legal owners. And while we recognize no claims of legal ownership, we must deny every legal and capitalist claim *specifically and generally at the same time.* This means dragging specific owners through the mud as exploiters, colonizers, murderers, gentrifiers, speculators, and so forth, as a part of the process by which we assert our specific claim to that land, but al-

ways within a general narrative that refuses to recognize the commodity view of land and the titles, deeds, and jurisdictions that bind it.

While we are weak, it will make more sense to go after owners whose claims to a land-commodity are equally weak—banks that have won property through foreclosure, hated slumlords, governments that are unpopular or in crisis.

Initially, we can win access to land in a variety of ways. Seizing it and effectively defending it, raising the funds to buy it, pressuring the legal owner to cede the title. None of these are satisfactory because all of them leave the structures of capitalist ownership intact. Even in the first case, which clearly seems more radical, the legal owner maintains a claim that they can pursue at a later date, eventually mustering the state support needed to effect an eviction. Ownership has not been undermined, only access.

Once we have access to land, it is crucial to intensify our relationship with it. To share our lives with it and begin to feed ourselves with the relationship we create. To signal that relationship as a reversal to the long history of dispossession, enslavement, exploitation, blackmail, and forced integration that has dogged us for centuries. To announce the place as liberated land, if we are indigenous to the area, and as a maroon[2] haven if we are not. In our use of the semi-liberated place, we must communicate to the world that the social contract of capitalism is absolutely unacceptable to us, that our needs are other, and we have no choice but to fulfill them on our own. Simultaneously, we invite all the others who are not fulfilled by capitalism to connect with us.

As we intensify a relationship of land and freedom, our spreading roots will come up against the concrete foundation of property that lies beneath us. The next conflict is to negate the forms by which capitalism binds land (rejecting titles and claims of ownership) and to impugn the right of a government to tax and regulate land that it has stolen.

In the course of this fight, we will lose much of the land we gain access to. Buildings will be evicted, gardens will be paved over, forests will be cut down. This inevitability gives rise to two questions. How to strike a balance between prudence and conflicitivity so that we neither become pacified nor lose our places needlessly? And when we lose, how to do so in a way that is inspiring, that spreads and strengthens our narrative and legitimacy so that next time we will be stronger? The first question will be the harder one. Anarchists have a long history of losing well, but at least since World War II one of our most frequent failings has been the recuperation of our creative projects and the isolation of our destructive projects. Gaining something that they can lose often turns radicals into conservatives. Our semi-liberated places must aid us in our attacks on the State and give solidarity with those who are repressed. Not to do so means losing these places even as they persist in time; they are colonized, they become parodies of themselves and agents of social peace. At the same time, even as they must play a conflictive role, these are the places that nourish us, and we should not risk them needlessly.

Little by little, we will win places where we achieve de facto autonomy, and communal relationships with the land and all other living things can begin to flourish. These places will never be safe or stable. Any moment we are weak, the State may try to take them away from us, with or without a legal pretext. The more widespread support we have, the better justified our narrative

[2] The maroons were escaped slaves, primarily of African descent but also including European runaways, who inhabited mountains, swamps, and other wild areas in the Americas and Caribbean. They generally mingled with and fought alongside indigenous peoples as they resisted the plantation states being created by European powers.

and our legitimacy, and the deeper our relationship with a place, the more dangerous it will be for the State to attack us. Additionally, in times of reaction, it will be easier for us to hold on if we have won access to land using a variety of means, from squatting to winning titles. Radical sensibilities will prefer the former, but it should be clear that in both cases the capitalist foundation remains the same. The history of the squatting movements in Europe shows that squatting opens bubbles of autonomy but in and of itself it does not challenge capitalism.

If we have used a variety of means, it will be harder for the State to criminalize us across the board or to construct a legal apparatus capable of evicting us from all of our footholds.

By communicating and building strong networks, these different semi-liberated places can share resources and experiences, broaden their perspectives, and compound their legitimacy. The age-old question of organization is unimportant because such places are heterogeneous. They practice different forms of organization and do not all fit into the same organizational scheme. The present proposal does not envision a movement of urban and rural land projects working towards liberation, as though a thousand people will read this article, understand it in the same way, and all try to put the same thing into practice. The network that will form may well include movements within it, but none will be all-encompassing.

In the Americas, there are already many semi-liberated places in existence that dream of an end to capitalism, and weak networks connect them. Most of these places, or the strongest ones at least, have been created by indigenous struggles. I believe that anarchists who are against civilization can find their place within such networks, defining ourselves in relation to an ongoing attempt to restore a communal relationship with the land, as did the Magonistas in Mexico or many peasant anarchist partisans in the Russian Revolution. Up until now, we mostly define ourselves in relation to an anarchist movement or milieu, or in relation to consumer society. Neither the abstract community of the former nor the posture of rebel and alternative within the latter suit our project of liberation.

In part, this means avoiding sectarian duels with those anarchists who see their battlefield as the workplace or the post-modern city. People who understand themselves as proletarians should struggle as proletarians. I fear that the proletarian worldview is hopelessly poisoned by colonialism and will only reproduce the destruction of nature and the exploitation of all living beings, as proletarian movements have in the past, but using ideology as an indisputable tool for predicting the future just leaves a bad taste in my mouth. It's better to make criticisms, share them, and back them up with robust struggles that embody a different logic.

If we are to understand ourselves within a network of projects that liberate the land from capitalism and create specific, communal relationships with that land, as newcomers (referring to those of us who are not indigenous) a certain amount of humility is in order. How can we learn from the indigenous struggles that have fought the longest and the hardest for the land without fetishizing them? How can we respect indigenous land claims without essentializing them or legitimizing the state-appointed tribal governments that often manage such claims? I can only offer these as questions, leaving the answers to practice. It is worth signalling, however, that such a practice must build itself on personal relationships of solidarity and friendship rather than abstract notions of unity.

Fortunately, there is a long history for such relationships. In the first centuries of the colonization of the Americas, many people brought over from Africa and Europe and made to work the newly alienated land ran away and fought alongside indigenous people fighting for their freedom and survival. Evidently, there existed a strong basis for solidarity. Today, especially in

North America much of that solidarity is absent. Many of the poorest people, regardless of their skin color, are staunch advocates of colonization, Western progress, and capitalism.

Most non-indigenous people in the Americas do not have the practical option of going back to Europe, Africa, or Asia. Yet those of us who are not indigenous, just because we claim solidarity and envision a happy network of communities restoring communal relationships with the land, cannot assume that indigenous people will want us as neighbors. This is a problematic that cannot be resolved with theory or consideration.

Our only option is to struggle for our own needs—this is a prerequisite for any conversation of solidarity, as much as the identity politicians try to avoid it—try to build solidarity with indigenous peoples in struggle, explore the possibilities for a common fight against colonization, and see what answers arise, dealing with the conflicts that inevitably arise with patience and humility.

Communities of the Earth

As more and more of us begin to wrap our lives into these semi-liberated places, communities will form. Not the alienated pseudo-communities that the very worst of anarchists claim to have today. Communities are built by sharing, and if all we share is a little bit of time in our alienated lives, the bonds will not be strong enough to hold us together, as the failures of "accountability," resistance to repression, healing, coping with burnout, and intergenerationality in the pseudo-communities amply demonstrate.

When we come together to intensify our relationships with a semi-liberated place, we share so much more. We become part of the web by which the others nourish themselves. At this point, it becomes honest to speak about a community.

As such communities begin to form, certain things will become evident. First of all, while vigorous debate and historical, theoretical clarity are vital in the life of the community, most of the skills and activities necessary for intensifying communal relationships are neither abstract nor discursive. They are practical skills that support the functions of life. Cooking, gardening, childcare, healing, sewing, brewing, dentistry, surgery, massage, gathering, hunting, fishing, trapping, weaving, welding, carpentry, plumbing, masonry, electricity, painting, drawing, carving, animal husbandry, curing, tanning, butchering, apiculture, silvaculture, mycology, storytelling, singing, music-making, conflict resolution, networking, translating, fighting, raiding, and otherwise relating with a hostile outside world (with legal skills, for example).

A community with three web designers, five writers, three gardeners, four musicians, a tanner, a brewer, a painter, and a lawyer will not survive. And not for lack of self-sufficiency. It is not about seceding from capitalism, but about bringing capitalism down with us. Such a community will not survive because they lack the skills necessary to intensify their relationships with one another and with the place they are trying to liberate. With weak relationships, they will not be able to withstand capitalism's continuous onslaught. They will either be forced to move out or to pacify themselves.

Capitalist deskilling precedes the Fordist economy. Deskilling was present at the beginnings of industrialization, and it was present even earlier in the witch hunts and the attendant creation of universities and scientific professions in Renaissance Europe. Popular knowledge, especially that related to healing, was criminalized and destroyed, whereas a mechanical science of healing suited to nascent capitalism and the modernizing State that was grooming it, was instituted,

enclosed, and regulated within the new academies. If we are to create communal relations against capitalism, we must commit ourselves to an intensive, lifelong process of reskilling so that we may nourish ourselves in every sense.

The creation of communities will not only show us the toxic uselessness of liberal education. It will also reveal the inadequacy of that cherished anarchist concept, affinity.

It is time to forget about affinity. Those who currently call themselves anarchists tend to be the warriors and messengers of communities that do not yet exist. Some others are the poets and artists who feed off of the warriors for a while before they go off on their own. We have seen what artists become, surrounded by other artists, and we have seen what warriors do, surrounded by other warriors, and the anarchist struggle has long suffered the consequences. The concept of affinity has done enough damage. It is a thoroughly rationalist notion, based on the idea of sameness as prerequisite for equality, and equality as something desirable.

Members of the much mythologized affinity group do not all experience their affinity in the same way. They do not perceive the group equally, and nearly every group, contrary to its mythology, does in fact have one or two central members. What holds the group together is not affinity, but a collective project. Only amidst a generalized scarcity of trust and sharing does it become possible to confuse these two binding forces.

The community, as a collective project, does not need affinity to hold together. What it needs is sharing, a common narrative, and above all, difference. In every community there should be some anarchists, in the sense given that term today. But a community of anarchists would be intolerable. As long as anarchists remain specialists of propaganda, sabotage, and solidarity—and this is the normative form that is reproduced today—we will scarcely be able to build communities. But as we learn to form connections of complementary difference, the dream of anarchy will become available to people whose temperament is not that of warriors or messengers, and anarchists, for our part, will find our place in a larger social body.

The gamble here is that a great many people are attracted to the dream of anarchy—self-organization, mutual aid, the destruction of all authority—but they are not attracted to the anarchist mode—protests, frequent risk-taking, the constant and scathing analysis of our surroundings; and that this anarchist mode, looped back in on itself, creates a pseudo-community that is toxic and self-defeating, whereas if it found a place within a broader struggle for life lived completely, could defend and spread communities subversive to capitalism.

In Conclusion

The challenge presented by a truly anarchist vision of the concepts, land and freedom, center an awareness of colonization as an ongoing force in capitalist society. It is a challenge that requires us to root out the liberal conceptions of land and freedom and all the baggage that accompanies them, including a great many ideations long internalized by anarchists, such as organization through affinity, the pseudo-community and self-referentialization within an abstract milieu, and the externalization of land or the dichotomy city/wilderness.

Above all, it is a challenge that requires a great creative labor. The tasks at hand can take the paths of reskilling, forming a specific relationship with the land, recovering histories that speak of our alienation, expropriating aspects of life, winning access to land, transforming that land, intensifying our relationships with it, and putting our destructive activity at the service of these new relationships.

I want to explore each of these ideas in more depth in future articles. But for now, we have the outlines of a challenge. It is not a new challenge, though I have tried to orient it to the specific problems of our times. Through reflection and action, I hope that once again anarchists can join others in taking up the call for land and freedom, and that when we do, we'll know what we're about.

Animal Dreams - by John Zerzan

This is the age of disembodiment, when our sense of separateness from the earth grows and we are meant to forget our animality. But we are animals and we co-evolved, like all animals, in rapport with other bodily forms and aspects of the world. Minds as well as senses arise from embodiment, just as other animals conveyed meaning—until modernity, that is. We are the top of the food chain, which makes us the only animal nobody needs. Hamlet was very much off the mark in calling humans "the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals." Mark Twain was much closer: "the only animal that blushes. Or needs to."[3] The life form that is arguably least well adapted to reality, that has weaker chances for survival among the at least 10 million animal (mostly insect) species. Humans are among the very few mammals who will kill their own kind without the provocation of extreme hunger.[4]

The human species is unique but so is every other species. We differ from the rest no more, it seems, than do other species from each other. Non-human animals have routinely amazing facilities for accomplishing things by acting on information they receive from their environments. They are creatures of instinct, but so are we. As Joseph Wood Krutch asked, "who is the more thoroughly acquainted with the world in which he lives?"[5] Adaptation to one's world is a cognitive process. If we wonder which species is the smartest, the best answer is, most likely: they all are.

I think that Henry Beston is beautifully helpful: "We patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear."[6]

In the 1980s I knew someone who signed his excellent anti-authoritarian writings and flyers "70 animals." That kind of identification has charmed me ever since. In rather a contrary spirit is the long-prevailing ban on that act of appropriation and greatest sin, anthropomorphism. Correcting this desperate error means that "A monkey cannot be angry: it exhibits aggression. A crane does not feel affection; it displays courtship or parental behavior. A cheetah is not frightened by a lion; it shows flight behavior."[7]

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[3] Quoted in Marc D. Hauser, Wild Minds (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000), p. 70.

[4] Konrad Lorenz, The Waning of Humaneness (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), p. 70.

[5] Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), p. 83.

[6] Henry Beston, The Outermost House (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2003), p. 25.

[7] Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy, When Elephants Weep (New York: Delacorte Press, 1995), p. 34. Among other workds that indicate a shift away from anti- "anthropomorphism" are Ruth Rudner, ask now the beasts (New York: Marlowe & Company, 2006) and How Forests Think (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

Why not take this kind of reductive approach even further and simply remove animals from our vocabulary? This is already underway, if the Oxford Junior Dictionary is any indication. The 2009 edition added several techno words like Twitter and mp3, while the names of various animals, trees, etc. had been deleted.[8] Children (and others) have less and less contact with nature, after all.

But there is no substitute for direct contact with the living world, if we are to know what it is to be living. Our own world shrinks and shrivels, cut off from animal culture, from the zones of that shared, learned behavior. What Jacob Uexhull called the Umwelt, the universe known to each species. We need to be open to the community of our beginnings and to the present non-human life-world.

Amphibians have been here for 300 million years; birds for 150 million years. Dragonflies ask no more of the biosphere than they did 100 million years ago, while Homo species, around for not much more than three million years, are the only animals that are—since domestication and civilization—never satisfied, always pursuing new wants.[9]

Might it not be that nature is for the happiness of all species, not just one?7 We sense something like this as we search for oases of wildness in the vacuum of civilization. " 'Hope' is the thing with feathers," wrote Emily Dickinson.[10]

We have mainly lost the sense of the presence or aura of animals, of those who inhabit their bodies so wholly, fully. People in traditional indigenous cultures have not lost that awareness. They feel their kinship with all who live. Some of the bond remains even with us, however, and may be seen in small ways—our instinctive love of songbirds, for example.

All is not sweetness and light in the non-human realm either, especially in this shaken and disturbed world. Rape has been observed among orangutans, dolphins, seals, bighorn sheep, wild horses, and some birds, although it is not the norm in any of these species.[11] But even in animal societies marked by male power, females generally remain self-sufficient and responsible for their own sustenance, unlike in most human (domesticated) societies. In some groupings, in fact, females provide for all. Lionesses do the hunting in their prides, for example.[10]Each elk herd is led by a cow, wise in the ways of coyote, wolf, lynx, cougar, and human. And it is also the case, according to many, that non-humans can be as individually distinct as we are. Delia Akeley concluded that "apes and monkeys vary in their dispositions as much as do human beings,"[12] and Barry Lopez commented on the "markedly different individual personalities" of wolves.[13] But one does see an absence of many old, infirm, and diseased animals among non-domesticates. How the "food chain" operates here brings up questions such as, do wolves only kill animals that are near their end anyway—the old, sick, injured? This seems to be roughly the case, according to Lopez.[14]

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[8] Eoin O'Carroll, "Oxford Junior Dictionary Dropping 'Nature' Words," Christian Science Monitor, February 9, 2009.

[9] An ugly leftist counter-notion is communist Oxana Timofeeva, History of Animals: An Essay on Negativity, Immanence and Freedom (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Academie, 2012), with Foreward by Slavoj Zizek. Timofeeva condemns nature's resistance to technology while bizarrely claiming that animals are natural communists! E.g. pp. 146- 147.

[10] Quoted in Susan Hanson, Icons of Loss and Grace (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2004), p. 182.

[11] Masson and McCarthy, op.cit., p. 140.

[12] Barbara Noske, Humans and Other Animals (London: Pluto Press, 1989), p. 115.

[13] Barry Lopez, Of Wolves and Men (New York: Scribner Classics, 2004), p. 18.

[14] Ibid., p. 55.

Hierarchy and dominance among other species is a long-running assumption, often a baseless one. The idea that there is usually, if not always, a "pecking order" derives from a Norwegian graduate student in 1922. His concept came from observing domestic chickens in his back yard and spread virulently in the animal studies field. It is a classic example of projecting from human domestication where, of course, hierarchy and dominance are indeed the rule. Its universality unravels with the fact that poultry yard pecking orders are not observed in wild flocks.

Similar is the fallacy that the Freudian paradigm of murderous rivalry between fathers and sons represents the state of nature. Questionable in the first application; even more so, evidently, regarding non-humans. Masson and McCarthy refer to zebra, kiwi, beaver, wolf, and mongoose fathers exhibiting acceptance and affection toward their offspring.[15] South American muriqui monkeys, female and male, are non-aggressive, tolerant and co-operative. Steve Kemper's "No Alpha Males Allowed" focuses on Karen Strier's work with the muriqui, which subverts the dominant view of male primates.[16] Among Asian gibbons, primates that live in pairs, the male may stay with his mate a very long time after sexual activity has ceased.[17]

John Muir described a goose attacking a hunter in support of a wounded companion: "Never before had I regarded wild geese as dangerous, or capable of such noble self-sacrificing devotion."[18] Geese mate monogamously and for life.

Widespread among non-humans are the social traits of parental care, co-operative foraging, and reciprocal kindness or mutual aid. Mary Midgley, in sum, referred to "their natural disposition to love and trust one another."[19] Also, to love and trust others, such as humans, to the point of raising them. Jacques Graven, in a striking finding, refers to children having been adopted by wolves, bears, gazelles, pigs, and sheep.[20]

In his irresistible Desert Solitaire, the cantankerous Edward Abbey imagines that the frogs he hears singing do so for various practical purposes, "but also out of spontaneous love and joy."[21] N.J. Berrill declared: "To be a bird is to be alive more intensely than any other living creature, 2 man included…they live in a world that is always the present, and mostly full of joy."[22] To Joseph Wood Krutch it seemed that we have seen our capacity for joy atrophy. For animals, he decided, "joy seems to be more important and more accessible than it is to us."[23]

Various non-human intelligences seem lately to be much more highly regarded than in the past. John Hoptas and Kristine Samuelson's Tokyo Waka, a 2013 documentary film, looks at resourceful urban crows. How they use their beaks to shape twigs into hooks to snag grubs from trees, for example. In 2002, a New Caledonia crow named Betty was declared by an Oxford University researcher to have been the first animal to create a tool for a specific task without trial and error, something primates have evidently yet to achieve. Elephants' actions, according to J.H. Williams, are "always revealing an intelligence which finds impromptu solutions for difficulties."[24]

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[15] Masson and McCarthy, op.cit., p. 72.

[16] Steve Kemp, "No Alpha Males Allowed," Smithsonian, September 2013, pp. 39-41.

[17] Noske, op. cit., p. 116.

[18] John Muir, The Story of My Boyhood and Youth (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912), p. 151.

[19] Mary Midgley, The Ethical Primate (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 131.

[20] Jacques Graven, Non-Human Thought (New York: Stein and Day, 1967), p. 68.

[21] Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), p. 157.

[22] Quoted in Joseph Wood Krutch, The Great Chain of Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956), p. 224.

[23] Ibid., p. 227.

[24] J.H. Williams, Elephant Bill (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1950), p. 58.

More surprising is what is coming to light about animals we usually consider to be further down the "food chain." Katherine Harmon Courage has uncovered heretofore unseen capacities of the octopus. "It can solve mazes, open jars, use tools. It even has what seems to be a sophisticated inner life." Courage goes on to state that the octopus "has a brain unlike that of almost any creature we might think of as intelligent."[25] Along these lines is a growing interest in "cold-blooded cognition," with recent studies revealing that reptile brains are not as undeveloped as we imagined. Lizards and tortoises, for instance, have exhibited impressive problem-solving capabilities.[26]

Jacques Graven was amazed to learn that the method of solving a maze is "scarcely different for a roach than for a rat," and that striking achievements by mammals "reappear in almost identical form in insects."[27] Speaking of mazes and the like, it may be added that very little of important truth is to be found in controlled laboratory experiments, whichever species may be subjected to them.

Memory is important to many creatures as an aid to survival. The work of animal scientist Tetsuro Matsuzawa demonstrates that chimpanzees have far stronger memories than humans.[28] Katydids have a hearing range many times that of ours. Honeybees can see ultraviolet light, invisible to us. The ichneumon fly can smell through solid wood. A monarch butterfly's sense of taste is two hundred times as sensitive as the human tongue. The dung beetle finds its way with reference to the Milky Way. Animals with four legs, and who don't wear shoes, probably pick up on a variety of emanations or vibrations lost on us. How about pet dogs or cats who are separated by hundreds of miles from their host families, and somehow find them? Only a kind of telepathy could account for the very many such cases.

A great deal more could be said about the gifts of animals. Or about their play. It is not "anthropomorphic" to recognize that animals play. Consider the mating dances of birds. I have seen the wonderful dawn dances of the sandhill crane. They dance, and have inspired an endless list of human societies. What of wild geese, whose matchless grace, elegance and devotion put us humans to shame?

Individuals of many species operate on an awareness that there is a distinction between "self" and "non-self." A member of one species can always recognize another of the same species. These kinds of self-recognition are obvious. Another instance is that of grizzly bears hiding out of sight of humans and others. There is a consciousness that the whole body—the "self" if you will—must be concealed.

But do non-humans realize that they are "selves"? Do they have self-awareness such that they realize their mortality? Many posit an absence of self-reflection and make this supposed absence the primary dividing line between humans and all other animals. Bees use signs, but are not conscious of their signing. On what basis, however, can we make assumptions about what bees or other animals know or do not know? Chimpanzees and orangutans recognize themselves in a mirror; gorillas cannot. What exactly does this reveal? There is quite a set of unresolved questions, in fact, as to how conscious or unconscious human behavior is, especially in light of the fact that consciousness in ourselves is such a completely elusive thing. The complex, versatile, and adaptive responses we see as a rule among the living on this planet may or may not be guided by

[25] Katherine Harmon Courage, "Alien Intelligence," Wired, October 2013, p. 84.

[26] Emily Anthes, "Coldblooded Does Not Mean Stupid," New York Times, November 19, 2013, pp D1, D5.

[27] Graven, op.cit., p. 127. 7

[28] Justin McCurry, "Chimps Are Making Monkeys Out of Us," The Observer, September 28, 2013.

self-awareness. But self-awareness is not likely an all-or-nothing phenomenon. The differences between humans and others have not been established as radical; they are probably more a matter of degree. More fundamentally, we do not know how to even comprehend consciousnesses different from our own.

Our concept of self-awareness, vague though it is, seems to be the gold standard for evaluating non-humans. The other watershed condition is that of language: are we the only species that possess it? And these two benchmarks are commonly run together, in the assumption that consciousness can only be expressed by means of language. It is tempting to see in language the explanation for consciousness, to wonder whether the latter is only applicable to language-using beings. Indeed it can seem very difficult to think about the state of our minds without recourse to language. But if language were the only basis of a thinking order, all non-human animals would live in a completely disordered world, after all.

Wolves, dogs, dolphins, elephants, whales, to name a few, can vocalize at about the range of human registry. Humpback whale "songs" are complex intra-species forms of cultural expression across vast distances. It may be that animals' calls are, overall, more a matter of doing than of meaning.

If we look for our kind of symbolic meaning, it does not seem to be sustained among our fellow animals. In their natural state, parrots never imitate the human voice; species that may be seen to draw in captivity do not do so in the wild. Primates trained to master language do not use it like humans. Herbert Terrace, once a convinced ape-language researcher, became one of its harshest critics. Trying to wrest "a few tidbits of language from a chimpanzee [who is] trying to get rewards," says Terrace, produces nothing much of importance.[29]

Animals don't do what humans do via speech, namely, make a symbol stand in for the thing.[30] As Tim Ingold puts it, "they do not impose a conceptual grid on the flow of experience and hence do not encode that experience in symbolic forms."[31] An amazing richness of signaling, of the most varied kinds, does not equate to symbolizing. When a creature presents its intentional acts, it does so without the need to describe them, to re-present them.

The poet Richard Grossman found that truth is "the way it tells itself."[32] Jacques Lacan saw the orientation toward representation as a lack; the animal is without the lack that constitutes the human subject. At the heart of nature, wrote Joseph Wood Krutch, are the values "as yet uncaptured by language;" he added that the quality of cranes lies "beyond the need of words."[33]

I've long wondered how it is that so many animals look you in the eye. What do they mean by it? Gavin Maxwell enjoyed the "wondering inquisitiveness" of the eyes of Canadian porpoises,[34] while Diane Fossey's Gorillas in the Mist is filled with examples of gorillas and humans gazing on one another in trust. John Muir wrote of Stickeen, an Alaskan dog with whom Muir survived a life-threatening situation, "His strength of character lay in his eyes. They looked as old as the hills,

[29] Quoted in Stephen Budiansky, If a Lion Could Talk (New York: Free Press, 1998), p. 45.

[30] Kelly Oliver, Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to be Human (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 186.

[31] Tim Ingold, Evolution and Social Life (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 311.

[32] Richard Grossman, "The Truth," in Animals (Minneapolis: Zygote Press, 1983), p. 421.

[33] Leopold, op.cit., p. 102.

[34] Gavin Maxwell, Ring of Bright Water (Boston: Nonpareil Books, 2011), p. 45

and as young, and as wild."[35] John Lane was drawn by the eyes of alligators, an experience "not to be forgotten. Their black eyes hold steady as if staring through millions of miles or years."[36]

Maybe there's more to be learned there, in those direct windows, in that openness and immediacy, than by means of quite possibly unanswerable questions about consciousness and language. And if we could somehow see with those eyes, would it possibly allow us to really see ourselves?

There is an unmediated openness about the eyes. Death may be mentioned here, as perhaps the least mediated experience, or certainly among them. Loren Eiseley, near his own end, felt that wild things die "without question, without knowledge of mercy in the universe, knowing only themselves and their own pathway to the end."[37] Ernest Seton-Thompson's Biography of a Grizzly (1901) contains much about death. Today we are ever more distanced from encountering the reality of death—and animals. As our lives shrink, Thoreau's words from 1859 are all the more true: "It seems as if no man had ever died in America; for in order to die you must first have lived."[38] One need only add, it isn't humans who know how to die, but the animals.

As if in acknowledgment, humans have exacted a revenge on selected species. Domestication is a kind of death, forcing animal vitality into a subjugated state. When animals are colonized and appropriated, both domesticated and domesticators are qualitatively reduced. It is the proverbial "greatest mistake in human history" for all concerned. The direct victims, once quite able to take care of themselves, lose autonomy, freedom of movement, brain size, and what Krutch called the "heroic virtues."[39]

A farm pig is almost as much a human artifact as the farmer's tractor. Compare to a wild boar. Wild means free. To John Muir, wild sheep represented conditions before the Fall; conversely, he decided, "If a domestic sheep was any indication, Man's work had been degrading for himself and his charges."[40] The level of an animal's perfection, as Nietzsche saw it, was their "degree of wildness and their power to evade domestication."[41] In light of the vast picture of oppression, David Nibert calls the institution "domesecration," and it is not surprising that objections have been raised against even using the same name for wild and domestic members of a species.

Industrialism of course brought far worse lives on a mass scale, mass misery to feed mass society. Zoos and marine parks showcase further slavery, a fitting complement to the captivity at large. As the unbuilt, unmassified world recedes, the line between undomesticated and domesticated has blurred. Pretty much everything requires managing, up to and including the oxymoron "wildlife management." We are now in fact in a new age of domestication, including an unprecedented escalation of controlled animal breeding in recent decades.[42]

The completely non-biocentric, humanist myth of immortality is part of the ethos of domestication, its rituals focused on sacrifice rather than on the freedom of pre-domesticated life. Freud's Oedipal family model is a product of jointly domesticated animals and the father. Lacan's for-

[35] Edwin Way Teale, The Wilderness World of John Muir (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1954), p. 281.

[36] John Lane, Waist Deep in Black Water (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), p. 49.

[37] Loren Eiseley, The Night Country (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 173.

[38] Henry David Thoreau, The Journal, 1837–1861, ed. Damion Searls (New York: New York Review of Books, 2009), p. 585 (entry for October 22, 1859).

[39] Krutch, op.cit., p. 102.

[40] Michael P. Cohen, The Pathless Way: John Muir and American Wilderness (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 173, 176.

[41] Jennifer Ham, "Taming the Beast," in Jennifer Ham and Matthew Senior, eds., Animal Acts (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 158.

[42] Clive Roots, Domestication (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), p. xii.

mulations often stem from findings about caged animals, and Kristeva's notion of abjection or disturbing threat, at base, refers to the act of domesticating. But the non- domesticated do not participate in assimilation into the conquered whole, in Freudian terms or otherwise.

Once there was a communal life of organisms in an ecosystem. Life fed on life, but not in a destructive trajectory. Even now we should not forget that the victory of domestication is far from total. Many species, for various reasons, are outside its orbit. "The lion tamer doesn't actually tame anything," John Harrington reminds us. He must stay within the boundaries the cats have established.[43]

"Almost everything about whales is a tantalizing mystery," concluded Diane Ackerman.[44] Wendell Berry quotes his daughter in his poem, "To the Unseeable Animal": "I hope there's an animal somewhere that nobody has ever seen. And I hope nobody ever sees it."[45] Do we need to 5 know, can we know, so much about other animals? Maybe what we need most to know is that we could possibly join them in their non-domestication.

Kant was grievously wrong about human superiority. "As the single being on earth that possesses understanding, he is certainly titular lord of nature."[46] Walt Whitman provides a simple response: "Do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else."[47] It is noteworthy that women dominate what is called animal ethology, and are far less prone to follow Kant's wrongheadedness.

The illusion of human domination of the natural world comes in many forms. One is the assumption that our prowess gives us long-range safety; we forget that this orientation can lead us into danger in the long run. Our lost connection, our lost awareness have led us into an age of horrors of every kind. And as Olaus Murie once said, "In the evolution of the human spirit, something much worse than hunger can happen to a people."[48]

Jacques Derrida came to see the prime importance of the question of animality for humans, as pivotal to "the essence and future of humanity."[49] The image of a free animal initiates a daydream, the starting point from which the dreamer departs. Meanwhile the living reality, the communion among species, yet manage to survive. The Inupiat Eskimo and Gwich'in people, who still travel without maps and discern direction without compasses, know that the caribou carry a piece of them in their hearts, while they carry the caribou in their hearts.[50]

The counsel of immediacy, of direct connection, has not been extinguished. "But ask now the beasts/ And they shall teach thee;/ And the fowls of the air/ And they shall teach thee;/ Or speak to the Earth/ And it shall teach thee." (Job 12: 7-8) In the Arctic Jonathan Waterman moved away from separation, from domestication: "I first removed my watch. My ability to isolate different and unidentifiable smells became incredibly distracting. My hearing seemed to improve."[51] Far from the Arctic, traces of this dimension have always been felt. Melville sensed in the sight of

[43] Quoted in Lane, op. cit., p. 125.

[44] Diane Ackerman, The Moon by Whale Light (New York: Random House, 1991), p. 112.

[45] Wendell Berry, "To the Unseeable Animal," in Ann Fisher-Wirth and Laura-Gray Street, eds., The Ecopoetry Anthology (San Antonio TX: Trinity University Press, 2013), p. 178.

[46] Immanuel Kant, trans. J.C. Meredith, Critique of Judgement (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), Part 2, Section 431.

[47] Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass (New York: Library of America, 2011), section 13.

[48] Quoted in Jonathan Waterman, Where Mountains are Nameless (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), p. 237.

[49] Quoted in Leonard Lawlor, This is Not Sufficient (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 7.

[50] Waterman, op. cit., p. 212.

[51] Ibid., p. 10.

a sperm whale a colossal existence without which we are incomplete. One thinks of Virginia Woolf's use of animal vocabularies and inter-species relations. Something whole, something unbroken, there millions of years before Homo showed up. Bequeathing to us what Henry Beston Sheahan called our "animal faith," which he saw being destroyed by the Machine Age.[52] We are lost, but other animals point to the right road. They are the right road.

We lack that state of grace, but we do know how much is in danger. Laurie Allman, taking in a Michigan songbird: "I can tell in a glance that he does not know he is endangered. He knows only that his job is to sing, this day, from the top of that young jack pine. His beak is open, full of the sky behind him."[53]

Here are Richard Grossman's lines in favor of a return to the old joy: "We shall forge a change of mind and come to understand the spirit as animal.[54] We are still animals on the planet, with all its original messages waiting in our being."

December 2013

[55]] Vera Norwood, Made from this Earth (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), p. 235.

User Experience - by Cliff Hayes

Our experience is abused
by this user experience
filtered through a bitmap grid
layered in concrete and steel
A cradled touchscreen
has replaced the feel
of what constitutes
the real
Here the simulation serves
as stimulation for the nerves
Severed spirit
Never hears it
Until so much exaggeration
bludgeons to exasperation
An internet morphine drip
this digital drug of civilization
celebrity spectacles for admiration
everything a canvas
to elevate your user status
Does this user experience make us more connected
or is it the machines way of making us wretched

[52] John Nelson, "Henry Beston Sheahan," Harvard Magazine, September/October 2013, p. 40.

[53] Laurie Allman, Far From Tame (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 73.

[54] Grossman, op. cit., "The New Art," p. 2.

[55] Throughout this piece, terminology is occasionally used that is imperfect at best: "ecological resistance," "movement," "radical environmentalism," etc variously make me cringe or roll my eyes. Nevertheless, it's hard to describe without using such terms. You know, symbolic culture and all that jazz…

internet trolls
endless filibusters
distractions for a life already surrogated
distilled to bits
fed to drones
then terminated
Technology feeds this lifeless monster
then tells us that we've come so far
it would be too much
to downgrade its GUI
to a more primitive ancestor
Science led us to empty our heart
engineered products of mathematical modeling
those in the way have received a swift throttling
an intelligently designed experience is delivered
your assigned role is user
tribute is expected,
signed,
Your Abuser

Two Steps Back: The Return of Nonviolence in Ecological Resistance

This article originally appears shortened in the printed Issue #1 of Black Seed. The author wished to include historical content which places the article in an historical context for the online version.

At the turn of the century, Green Anarchy's critique of civilization and uncompromising support of militant tactics was a challenge to anarchists and brought a number of new debates to the surface. Green Anarchy also existed within a space that adopted a combative approach towards ecological struggles with a series of high profile attacks, actions, blockades, and the like taking place across the United States. It was the years of black blocs at summit protests, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), and other confrontations that tossed the question of nonviolence to the side in favor of a multifaceted approach embracing a "diversity of tactics."

In the years since, a lot of that activity has receded within anarchist circles. The critique of civilization has arguably become less present, even though the bankruptcy of civilization becomes more obvious each day. If anything, the dystopian future outlined by Green Anarchy is arriving sooner than expected. Despite a shift in anarchist circles away from ecological struggles, these struggles have continued and in some ways are increasing in the United States. Whether due to awareness of global warming, the involvement of more mainstream non-profit groups, or an increase in Earth First!-style groups and approaches, the numbers of actions, action camps, and gatherings is growing. Somewhat like previous eras of resistance, anarchists and Earth First!-style radicals inhabit this new ecology of resistance, albeit with more distance between the two camps (to the extent that they can be separate) than existed in previous years.

Many of these actions fall under the rubric of what could be called "radical environmentalism" in that they are often initiated or supported by groups that have a deeper analysis or more mil-

itant approach than the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, or the other large environmental groups that operate primarily on the political terrain (lobbying and soliciting funds to engage in such activities).[56] Among these groups, Earth First! is the most prominent. From hosting annual meet-ups and conferences, providing trainings, and publishing accounts in the Earth First! Journal and on their website, Earth First! has been involved, either explicitly or indirectly.[57] Much of this new ecological activity has been what could be described as "non-violent" direct action: lockdowns, treesits, and the like. In many ways, it's the standard toolbox from which Earth First! has drawn from for the better part of thirty-five years. However, what is different about these efforts is how Earth First! and this wider crowd has self-consciously started to adopt the restrictive rhetoric of non-violence and civil disobedience, as well as the worn approaches.[58]

There are multiple ways to orient oneself to this approach. On the one hand, outright dismissal seemslike the most easy course. Anarchists would see little to gain and would have an easy time debunking the tactical and strategic choices being made in the radical environmental movement. It isn't hard to see this new route as a retreat into the failed approaches of the past. However, in the relative absence of a green anarchist presence in the United States over the past few years, Earth First! was the primary radical and militant voice. They are one of the only groups that will raise the problem of "industrial civilization"[59] and their publications are peppered with a vague form of anti-civilization anarchism, even if it rarely coheres into much of anything and is often missing from its actions.

A Flash Back…

Radical ecological action has a history in the United States that dates back at least to the 1980s when Earth First! appeared on the scene. Earth First! broke from the prevailing model of environmental activism both in terms of advocating for direct action to protect wild spaces (for example, blockading roads and treesits to prevent logging) and sabotage. From the early 1980s on, Earth First! has supported sabotage (often called "monkey wrenching"), by openly encouraging its use, publishing manuals popularizing the tactics, refusing to condemn its use, and supporting prisoners doing time for acts of ecological resistance. Earth First! is of course not a unified network, it's a collection of relatively autonomous chapters, characterizing itself as "…not an organization, but a movement."[60] Consequently, making blanket statements about Earth First! can be difficult, but it is fair to say that the mix of direct action and sabotage has been a prominent strategy. Nevertheless, Earth First! advocated for a range of different approaches over the years, talking about sabotage one minute and a few minutes later holding up the virtues of civil disobedience. In its

[56] "A Decade of Earth First! Action in the 'Climate Movement,'" earthfirstjournal.org- decade-of-earth-first-action-in-the-climate-movement/

[57] As a matter of course, I consider "non-violence" to be a concept that must be destroyed. For those unfamiliar with such a critique, I'd recommend consulting Peter Gelderloos' How Non-Violence Protects the State (South End Press, 2007) and Pacifism as Pathology: Reflections on the Role of Armed Struggle in North America, (AK Press, 2007). As a bonus reading, Ashen Ruin's Beyond the Corpse Machine is a fun (if somewhat dated) look at how these debates play out in anarchist circles.

[58] "About Earth First!," earthfirstjournal.org

[59] Earth First! Primer, p. 1, earthfirstnews.files.wordpress.com

[60] Earth First! Primer, p. 3.

Primer, Earth First! speaks favorably of monkey wrenching, while hedging its bets and saying that "the Earth First! movement neither advocates nor condemns monkeywrenching officially."[61]

Earth First! has existed within a space that could be broadly called "radical environmentalism" that incorporates a range of other tactics. Anarchists have been involved in Earth First! over the years, coming to prominence in the late 1980s. An important point of reference was the publication of Live Wild or Die. It advocated for more destructive actions and a deeper analysis, moving closer to the anti- civilization anarchist perspective developing at the time. Influenced by publications such as Green Anarchist and Do Or Die out of England, more people in the United States began to advocate for a more conflictual approach. Perhaps as a reaction to some of the more contradictory elements of Earth First!, these critiques grew in prominence in the Pacific Northwest where some of the most high profile environmental struggles were taking place. Zines such as Black-Clad Messenger published with the tag line "actualizing industrial collapse" and Disorderly Conduct published by "The Bring on the Ruckus Society" (a seeming tongue-and-cheek critique of the "mass movement" that emerged after the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999) advanced a critique of civilization and advocated uncompromising militant action,[62] an approach also characterized the journal Green Anarchy.[63]

In the 1990s and into the early 2000s, these different groupings formed a constellation of activity characterized by a variety of new approaches. Lines between different grouping were relatively loose and their was considerable cross-over between groups. From occupations and treesits like Warner Creek to the Minnehaha Free State, different tactics and strategies existed in parallel with and drew strength from each other. While we now know based on various legal cases over the past several years the lines between Earth First!, the Earth Liberation Front, and anarchists weren't always clear, the strategies were often different. For example, while Earth First! was involved with the Minnehaha Free State, the Earth Liberation Front tried tree spiking. Among the participants in the black bloc in Seattle that attacked chain stores and various other corporations during the World Trade Organization (WTO) summit were those who acted within this space.

While not always directly connected to ecological resistance, the years immediately following Seattle were ones characterized by militant confrontations with the state and attacks on corporate property. Outside of trade summits, black blocs were a favorite tactic, attacking the police and property. In Seattle, both the sanctity of corporate property and non-violent protest tactics were challenged. In the wake of Seattle, one heard relatively little about civil disobedience and non-violence, with the discussion dramatically shifting. While not everything was perfect, the subsequent confrontations were described as "direct action" rather than "civil disobedience," a change in wording that signaled a desire to move beyond symbolic and ritualized displays of dissent. While there was no unified view, property destruction was largely seen as a given, with proponents either accepting it outright or trying to argue that it was in fact "non-violent." Pacifism, peace police, and non-violence—all of which were characteristics of the post-1960s movements—were heavily critiqued (see for example, Peter Gelderloos How Nonviolence Protects the State). Rather than the restrictive non-violence codes of the past, "diversity of tactics" was the name of

[61] Black-Clad Messenger #8, (n.p., 2000) and Disorderly Conduct #4, (n.p., Fall 2001).

[62] An archive of issues of Green Anarchy is available online at greenanarchy.anarchyplanet.org/ A published book length anthology of the theoretical pieces called Uncivilized: The Best of Green Anarchy, (Green Anarchy, 2012) is a good starting point for an anti-civilization perspective.

[63] Leslie James Pickering, The Earth Liberation Front 1997-2002, (Arissa Media Group, 2007).

the game and for the most part those advocating for a strict adherence to nonviolence were on the defensive. In the realm of ecological resistance, attacks by the Earth Liberation Front were quite common. These weren't just the high profile attacks at Veil or Michigan State, but reflected a conflictual practice that spread within the context of radical environmentalism to places such as Louisville, KY and Long Island.[64] Throughout the same period, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the more radical portion of the animal liberation movement advocated and engaged in economic attacks. The SHAC campaign—which combined a diverse array of strategies from harassment of individuals to property destruction—almost brought Huntingdon Life Sciences to its knees. Even after September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks caused most leftists to abandon the "anti-globalization movement," anarchists and others continued to pursue summit-based confrontations and nighttime attacks amongst the standard range of collectives, publications, infoshops, and other projects that make up the anarchist space.

If one is to compartmentalize history into eras, this era of activity ended largely due to the collapse of the anti-globalization movement, the Iraq War, and the rise of leftist protest coalitions (although paradoxically, the left was unable to mount an effective challenge to the war, but it was able to largely return the model of scripted mass marches), and the repression of what has been called "the Green Scare."[65] With Operation: Backfire, several former participants in Earth Liberation Front actions were arrested after one became an informant. Other related cases including Marie Mason—who participated in several Earth Liberation Front actions in the Midwest—and the case of Eric McDavid (a victim of a government scheme to blow-up a dam), were followed by a decline in ELF activity.

Even with these setbacks, two mobilizations that happened towards the end of the 2000s reflected the lessons learned over the course of these summit demonstrations. Groups organizing against the Republican National Convention (RNC) in St. Paul in 2008 adopted a set of principles dubbed the "St. Paul Principles" that enshrined many of the operating practices of the previous years. It called for the support for a "diversity of tactics," while also reaching agreements not to cooperate with law enforcement against other activists and to refrain from denouncing others in the media.[66] The primary anarchist organizing body—The RNC Welcoming Committee—and the prominent "liberal" groups all agreed to the same terms. The result was a disruptive mobilization wherein to a certain degree there was support and respect for different approaches. A year later, the Pittsburgh G-20 Resistance Project adopted similar language and organizing principles.[67]

The point of this is not just to present an overly simplified history of the early 2000s, but to make the argument that during the period dogmatic adherence to non-violence was largely abandoned. A wide- range of folks—from anarchists in the black bloc to those engaged in various forms of ecological resistance—were doing so outside of traditional forms of non-violent protest and civil disobedience. Earth First! existed within this context and benefited from the combative approach.

[64] "Green Scared? Preliminary Lessons of the Green Scare," www.crimethinc.com

[65] "St. Paul Principles," rnc08report.org

[66] "Resisting the G-20 in Pittsburgh," rnc08report.org

[67] Candice Bernd, "The Summer of Solidarity: Direct Action Against Extraction," truth-out.org

The Perplexing Return of Non-Violence

One of the most talked about recent campaigns in the radical environmental movement has been the Tar Sands Blockade, an effort in south Texas aimed stopping the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. Tar Sands Blockade was launched with the help of 350.org[68] and Rising Tide to establish a "peaceful direct action camp" with a particular focus on building relationships with those living in the pipeline's path.*14* Members of Earth First! participated as well and the larger Earth First! network issued a call encouraging Earth First!ers to go to Texas.[69] Before the Tar Sands Blockade ceased operating as a result of a civil lawsuit in which TransCanada claimed the campaign had cost them $5 million dollars,[70] it featured lockdowns in pipes and on bulldozers, treesits, and actions at corporate offices.

Tar Sands Blockade embraced "non-violent direct action."[71] Far from using the term as a mere descriptor, they adopted the ideology of non-violence with all of its worst aspects. They described it as "a moral high ground from which we can build community in a broken world," thereby creating a value judgment against other approaches. Similarly, they viewed nonviolent direct action as a course to be pursued only once other methods had been exhausted (a logic that implies one must go the tedious route of pursuing endless lawsuits first, in order to give their "resorting" to direct action more legitimacy). They cast nonviolence as the only choice, stating that "With respect for our community, our opposition, and ourselves, we affirm that we will engage in nonviolent, community building tactics." Moreover, they adopted a rhetoric of professionalism, stating that there is a "need" for it and that all of those they work with will be "well-trained" and "abide by our code of conduct." Not surprisingly, they pledge to treat all people—from police to those building the pipeline—as if they were their "own brothers and sisters." After all, "in the end, we are family." To top it off, much of their rhetoric around non-violence was adopted uncritically from "The 99% Spring" training guide, a booklet that was published as part of a series of trainings held by various non-profits with the goal of reigning in Occupy.[72] The booklet provides a basic introduction to nonviolence as practiced by U.S.-based activist groups, complete with sanitized histories based on prevailing myths of how "social change" happens. Ironically the recuperative and neutralizing advocacy of nonviolence was literally adopted from groups who had that explicit purpose. As the campaign carried on they began to describe it as "civil disobedience"—a change that reflected an even narrower approach. Despite this, nothing critical was said about the Tar Sands Blockade. The blockade received a cover image and a dramatic photo spread in an issue of the Earth First! Journal—notable for the complete lack of content beyond spectacular images.[73] Only one critique of the Tar Sands Blockade seems to have been published, otherwise coverage has been overwhelmingly positive.[74]

Nonviolence codes have proliferated rapidly within the radical environmental crowd. An action camp publicized on the Earth First! Newswire for the "Hands of Appalachia" campaign, was

[68] "Who We Are," www.tarsandsblockade.org

[69] "Get Your Ass Out to Texas and Fight the Tar Sands Pipeline!," earthfirstjournal.org

[70] "Activists Forced to Settle Lawsuit But Will Continue to Fight Keystone XL Pipeline," www.tarsandsblockade.org

[71] "Nonviolent Direct Action," www.tarsandsblockade.org

[72] "The 99% Spring Training Guide," s3.moveon.org

[73] "Tar Sands Blockade, East Texas," Earth First! Journal, Lughnasdh 2012, 32-33.

[74] "Block the Flows: Defeating Tar Sands in the U.S. and Canada," The Raging Pelican, ragingpelican.com

peppered with the words "non-violent" to describe their tactics of choice.[75] In the campaign's "Non-Violence Policy," they state that "All individuals are expected to commit to nonviolence" and further state that they "do not condone property destruction."[76] Mountain Justice, another campaign targeting Mountain Top Removal mining in Appalachia, has a similar code. They explain that property destruction and violence have been used by coal companies to silence opposition, framing themselves as a more dignified non- violent approach.[77] They make it clear in multiple areas of their website that they "do NOT engage in sabotage."[78] RAMPS (Radical Action for Mountain People's Survival)—while less explicit— categorizes their anti-mountaintop removal work as a "non-violent direct action" campaign.[79]

Aside from limiting the range of responses to ecological destruction, nonviolence codes serve a policing role over struggles. There is self-policing when only a limited range of acceptable tactics are considered. In relation to others who resist, they have a policing role by isolating others and having a position that condemns other types of tactics. It's paternalistic in the sense that the movement specialists—those with the training and those who do the trainings—decide for others what the best way to resist is. By stating explicitly that they will remain within certain narrow parameters, it is easier for the state to manage and neutralize them. While debating what is and isn't "direct action" is not the most exciting or most relevant debate, it is interesting to note that the radical environmental movement is increasingly defining it in ways that include tactics that rely solely on representation by specialists, such as the so-called "paper wrenching" of filing lawsuits[80] or highly technical blockades.

Embracing Civil Disobedience?

Along with the embrace of non-violence, there has also been a shift towards even more restrictive forms in which "direct action" has been replaced with "civil disobedience." While it may seem like a semantic debate, it suggests a political orientation. Whereas direct action is largely about disruption and gaining direct results (for example, stopping logging), civil disobedience is about performing an "illegal" act for the purpose of appealing to authority and/or demonstrating the unjust nature of a particular law or policy. It also carries the expectation of politeness, that one will act in a "civil" manner as one demonstrates their opposition.

There has been an increase in civil disobedience actions relating to the environment over the past couple of years. While none of these could be cast as "radical," they are worth considering for the attention that they have received within the radical environmental movement. For the most part, these have been embraced or promoted uncritically. Over the summer, an editor for the Earth First! Journal wrote a piece titled "NGOs Kickoff Civil Disobedience Campaign at Chicago Anti-KXL Rally" which is representative of the attitude towards these new efforts. The campaign was organized by Credo Mobile (yes, a cell phone company that "supports activism and funds progressive nonprofits") and aimed at preventing President Barack Obama from approving the Keystone XL. On their "Pledge of Resistance" they ask people to "engage in serious, dignified,

[75] "Hands Off Appalachia November Action Camp," earthfirstjournal.org
[76] "Policy of Nonviolence and Anti-Harrassment," handsoffappalachia.com
[77] "Mountain Justice policy of non-violence/non-property destruction and Anti-harassment," mountainjustice.org
[78] "Mountain Justice Tactics," mountainjustice.org
[79] "About Us – RAMPS," rampscampaign.org
[80] Panagioti Tsolkas, "Direct Action: What It Is and Why We Use It," earthfirstjournal.org

peaceful civil disobedience,"[81] invoking the images of "the peaceful and dignified arrests" of over 1,253 people in August 2011, which they claim delayed approval of the plan. This is scripted civil disobedience at its finest, a scenario that could be straight out of Ward Churchill's Pacifism as Pathology.[82] The writer from Earth First! didn't seem to find anything wrong with this, instead imploring radicals to "…not to blow it by being self-righteous pricks." The writer argues that actions "make space for growing broader support of direct action in general, if we engage them as such." When the Sierra Club announced they were going to engage in civil disobedience, the Earth First! Newswire expressed some skepticism but saw it as the potential seeds for an ecological "mass movement" and said that the proper role for Earth First! was "to keep pushing the envelope—until said envelope has been reduced to ashes."[83]

Unfortunately, this has not happened. Groups like Earth First!—whether caught up in fantasies about "the movement" or for other reasons—have uncritically supported these efforts. It doesn't seem like they are doing much to catalyze support for direct action as Earth First! may have defined it in the past. Instead, these groups are having a constraining effect on the radical environmental movement. Eager to fit into the new ecological "movement," it seems that many so-called radicals are beginning to narrowly position themselves in a way so as not to separate from these potential allies. Rather than pushing the envelope, Earth First! is in many ways closing the envelope in ways that limit struggles.

Groups within the "radical environmental" movement have started to self-identify their actions as civil disobedience. For example, the Michigan Coalition Against the Tar Sands (MI-CATS) described an action in which some members locked themselves to a bulldozer as "non-violent civil disobedience."[84] Many of these actions have adopted the worst aspects of civil disobedience, playing up the "civil" aspect and adopting an attitude of personal sacrifice and martyrdom.[85] They become acts of personal heroics, as is the case when activists position themselves as being compelled to act in the face of great injustice as a "personal statement of civil disobedience."[86] Actions become about the individuals as much as stopping the act of destruction. The story of why one acted is almost as important as the action itself. A familiar trope is a rhetoric of regret, where participants might express sadness that they are keeping people from "their jobs" or the police from "protecting society"—even though in this case those jobs are allowing for the destruction and the police are a part of the system that allows for it.[87] In the most ridiculous extreme of these actions, activists work with the police, choreographing their actions to place minimal strain on the police. This was the case at an action in Massachusetts where 350.org worked with police to coordinate the protest and wore shirts identifying those risking arrest.[88] It can also happen in smaller ways, such as when protestors announce their intentions in advance, as was seen at a MI-CATS action where an individual climbed into a pipeline until just 5pm.[89] This limits the tactic and removes the threat of uncontrollable disruption. In other cases the individual focus

[81] "Sign the Keystone XL Pledge of Resistance," act.credoaction.com? source=NOKXLORG_kxlpledge

[82] See pages 61–66 in Ward Churchill's Pacifism as Pathology for a classic description of this.

[83] "Sierra Club Announces Direct Action to Stop Tar Sands?!?," earthfirstjournal.org

[84] "BREAKING: Activists Block Tar Sands Pipeline," www.michigancats.org

[85] "Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands Defendants Move Cases Forward in Court," www.michigancats.org

[86] "Solidarity With Fearless Summer: Blockader Skateboards Into Enbridge Pipe," www.michigancats.org

[87] "Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands Defendants Move Cases Forward in Court"

[88] "Forty-four Protesters Arrested at Mass. Coal-Fired Plant," earthfirstjournal.org "Michigan Tar Sands Pipeline Protester Could Get Two Years in Jail,"

[89] bcblackout.wordpress.com

results in a celebrity culture where actual celebrities (think Taylor Swift's ex-boyfriend, Robert Kennedy, and the like[90]) are praised for their sacrifice (and at elevated above others as being more important), or where "movement" celebrities are created.[91]

Over the summer of 2013, many ecological actions followed these models. The #FearlessSummer campaign (a series of actions primarily promoted through "social media") and the #SummerHeat (named with a "Twitter hashtag"—is this really how disconnected from the Earth we have become?) campaign were two examples. Aside from the problematic politics of advocating a "clean energy economy"—which should be enough to keep so-called radicals away, these groups also embrace the same narrow range of tactics.[92] While theoretically decentralized, the influence of organizations pushing for nonviolence was apparent in much of the language. At best the topic is avoided (as is the case in the language for #FearlessSummer), but absent a stated supported of a diversity of tactics, it is all too easy for the recuperative aspects to take hold.[93] An organizing manual funded by 350.org called the "Creative Action Cookbook" was funded by 350.org advocated nonviolence, even offering a helpful scenario in which they described how scary a protest with a crowd of people ("mostly young white men in their twenties") dressed in black is compared to a nonviolent protest where "even the police officers are smiling and they are gently putting protestors in mass arrest trucks."[94] In the case of #SummerHeat, action participants at a scripted sit-in at a Chevron facility in Richmond, California were required to sign-up online and confirm that they "promise to be nonviolent and peaceful in all of my activities during the action."[95] Guidelines further stated that "Non-violence includes no verbal abuse or threatening motions"[96] and that they should "appear dignified in dress and demeanor – these are serious issues, and we want to be taken seriously"[97].

For their part, Earth First!—as much one can make statements about it—seems intent on pursuing a policy of engagement with these efforts. This is most often done uncritically. In the case of the aforementioned #SummerHeat action, the coverage was absolutely glowing. The author praised the campaign, writing "350.org joining with the Industrial Workers of the World on an environmental justice campaign. If that doesn't give you goosebumps, I don't know what will." They also included a quote praising the police for being "very gentle, apologetic, and polite." In the absence of criticism, it is far more likely to see condescending tones directed towards those who disagree with this uncritical embrace of new movements—with anarchists receiving a particular amount of scorn.[98] The attitude seems to be that debate is divisive, a position that may get short-term allies, but is likely to gloss over differences and cause problems down the road. Moreover, it raises all sorts of questions: what are the ramifications of being dishonest about one's beliefs for short term gain? Are they hidden out of fear? Paternalism? Etc? While not relating specifically to nonviolence, one example of pursuing an alliance despite significant differences

[90] "OMG, Taylor Swift's Ex-Boyfriend Totally Arrested for Protesting Keystone XL Pipeline," earthfirstjournal.org

[91] "Earth First! Journalist popped at Tar Sands Blockade," earthfirstjournal.org

[92] "Fearless Summer: Powerful Start 6 Days 18 States 28 Actions," www.popularresistance.org

[93] Kristin Moe, "#FearlessSummer: How the Battle to Stop Climate Change Got Ferocious," www.yesmagazine.org

[94] Creative Action Cookbook, issuu.com

[95] "Summer Heat Richmond," joinsummerheat.org

[96] "Summer Heat Richmond – Participant Info," www.350bayarea.org

[97] "FAQs," joinsummerheat.org

[98] These run throughout lots of Earth First! Journal pieces, but there's an article where they encourage people to suck it up an engage with local city commissions while slamming anarchists that is pretty revealing: earthfirstjournal.org

was Earth First!'s multi-year embrace of Deep Green Resistance, a neo- Maoist group dominated by Derrick Jensen and the transphobia of Lierre Keith.[99]

Limiting Options and Narrowing Forms of Resistance: Ritualized Actions

It's easy to criticize the efforts of groups like 350.org and the more mainstream of the environmental groups. In many ways, in the climate that exists in the United States, it isn't surprising that such groups would adopt a strict adherence to non-violence—it is one of the primary myths that we're taught about how "change" happens. In many cases, there are caricatures of past movements—the glossed over accounts of the civil rights movement or Gandhi and the Indian independence movement—that cast them as solely non-violent struggles or pick out the most passive forms of resistance and hold those up as successful.[100] A group like Earth First! or the anarchists/radicals who chose to work with these new groups should be challenging these narratives, not embracing them. This could be done through constructive criticism and propaganda, or by creating exciting and empowering alternatives.

Instead, Earth First! seems to be caught in a rut, pursuing a limited strategy of moving from one campaign to another and pursuing the same limited set of tactics. What is going to happen at any given action is predictable. There will be a call for solidarity actions (nowadays often called by some big group like 350.org as EF! is often reacting to their work rather than setting their own unique course), a lockdown will take place or a tripod will go up, a post will go on the newswire, and fundraising calls will go out. Or there will be an "action camp" featuring the usual set of workshops, followed on the last day by some kind of "action" following the above template. The actions themselves will be highly scripted and ritualized, with a series of unique roles—media liaisons, police liaisons, arrestables, etc. There is little if any improvisation, the actions are perfected down to a science—hence the reason why Earth First! can conduct so many "trainings" on how to do them. Moreover, by adopting as their primary form relatively specialized types of blockades that require some technical knowledge—it creates a culture of specialists in struggle. The result is an increasingly narrow range of actions with increasingly high stakes. If every lockdown is going to result in felony charges, at what point does the tactic become obsolete?

If the tactics aren't working, neither is using these approaches to advance Earth First!'s understanding and critique of civilization. Whether to build the alliances described above or out of a strategic calculation of some sort, they almost always position themselves around a "single issue" rather than addressing the totality. Consequently, when Earth First! engages in these new movements, its views— particularly the criticism of civilization—are not being taken up. These movements are still defined narrowly in terms of protesting a particular type of energy. There has yet to be anything with a perspective critical of civilization or all forms of industrial infrastructure. So not only do the tactics become confined, but the politics as well.

[99] For a good discussion of the problems with Deep Green Resistance see, Ruhe, "Deep Green Resistance: A Book Review," www.sproutdistro.com and Earth First!'s statement disassociating themselves with the group, "Deep Green Transphobia," earthfirstjournal.org

[100] See Zig-Zag, Smash Pacifism:A Critical Analysis of Gandhi and King (Warrior Publications, 2012).

Alternatives?

At best, the radical environmental movement is stuck in a rut, trapped within a space of increasing contradictions as leftist groups and large NGOs try to manage dissent. Groups like Earth First! and others that share similar approaches are playing a role in this by embracing non-violence, civil disobedience, moral appeals, and a culture of ritualized and scripted actions. Rather than growing from the experiences of the past, they have shifted onto a course that constrains struggle rather than expands it.

Of course, it doesn't have to be like this. There are other approaches to take. Earlier in this piece, there was a discussion of the radical environmental milieu in the years following the Seattle WTO and how a multi-tendency space that broke with traditional forms of protest that created opportunities for new forms of resistance. While success is difficult to define, those years had a level of excitement and even victories that inspired many to take significant risks—perhaps even inspiring some of the current crop of Earth First! elders. Had the current level of stifling adherence to non-violence that we now see been applied to that period, many people like myself wouldn't be around—we would have missed out on the excitement and formative experiences of confronting lines of riot police, the joy of moments of collective acts of rebellion, and the inspiration that came from pushing dumpsters into lines of police. This isn't to reduce things down to simple tactical preferences, but rather to point out that just as Keystone XL won't be stopped by non-violent civil disobedience in front of the White House, the Seattle round of trade talks wouldn't have collapsed unless the states involved saw the opposition as a genuine threat—in that case, one which was unpredictable and uncontrollable, and one that challenged capitalism (at the very least)—via a diverse and combative approach.

Another example that is worth considering is the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign. Using an entirely decentralized and open approach, the SHAC campaign—which targeted Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) and the companies that did business with them—allowed space for individuals and groups to engage in a wide range of actions under the idea that everything helped. A timeline of actions focusing on just one company, Marsh Inc., shows a staggering array of approaches ranging from home demonstrations, locks being glued in offices, blockades at offices, vandalism of homes, property destruction, demonstrations, etc.[101] In just a few months, Marsh ceased involvement with HLS. The symbiotic relationship between the aboveground and the underground, as well as support for a diversity of tactics helped catalyze a range of actions. While there are additional lessons to be learned from the SHAC campaign,[102] it is interesting to consider how such an approach might be applied to the current struggles over pipelines. How well would construction fare if local companies building pipelines were attacked with the same intensity as those doing business with HLS?

Similarly, ecological resistance could learn from the approaches developed by insurrectionary anarchists across North America. Anarchists have created a culture of attack that in the best cases works not only to expand their base, but also to materially damage their enemies. For example, struggles against the police in the Pacific Northwest that both offered relatively open forms for people to get involved in militant street confrontations as well as nighttime attacks on police stations. Moreover, these currents have been successful at catalyzing activity elsewhere, with

[101] SHAC ATTACK! Targeting Companies Animal Rights Style (n.d., n.p.)

[102] See "The SHAC Model: A Critical Assessment" in Rolling Thunder, #8, 2008 and "SHAC: A Campaign That Made History"

calls for days of solidarity resulting in a smattering of actions across the continent. At the risk of reducing complexities, this has happened by advocating relatively open tactical approaches and articulating a need for attack. At best, Earth First! has remained distant from these strands and at worst has been hostile.[103]

Earth First!—and "the radical environmental movement"—could learn from the not-so-distant past and try new approaches being taken elsewhere. The most obvious approach is to cast aside the language of nonviolence, civil disobedience, and morality. Tactics should be measured by their effectiveness, not their adherence to principles loaded with value judgments. Is this lockdown going to work? Are the benefits worth the cost? Will this act of sabotage work? Which approach will work better? These are the types of questions that should be asked. Moreover, a culture should be created which embraces a diversity of tactics wherein groups agree not to condemn the actions of others, refuse to cooperate with the police, and refuse to isolate those pursuing more militant approaches. Regardless of individual and group tactical preferences, all choices gain strength when they are part of a broad space that cannot be easily co-opted and divided.

Of course, such a culture of militancy isn't going to come about out of a simple declaration of support for a diversity of tactics. But, it is at least a start. If options are kept open, not only is there more to draw from, but more places to go.

Naming All of the Names - by Cedar Leighlais

In early February, two communiques surfaced on the Seattle-based website Tides of Flame[104],[105]. The communique author(s) took credit for obstructing the passage of workers headed to their offices at Microsoft in Redmond, WA, and again the next day of workers going to Amazon Headquarters in the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood of Seattle. Similarly, in the Bay Area (San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley) anarchists and radicals have taken to blocking Google, Yahoo and Twitter commuter busses, even going so far as to physically attack them. In one of the communiques from Seattle, the author(s) plainly state that they have taken inspiration from these Bay Area actions. This invokes the memory of Os Cangaceiros, a group of social rebels in France during the 1980's-90's who would commonly block trains with banners and leaflets proclaiming solidarity with prisoners on strike and listing their demands. While it is exciting to see such tactics taken up commonly and spread beyond the original context in which they surfaced, anarchists and other rebels should nonetheless be willing to give actions and their communications the critical glare that we apply to the rest of the world. Holding back critique of anarchist communications out of respect for the actions they accompany would do nothing to further and enhance the struggle against domination.

As quoted in the first communique, "On Monday, February 10th, a small group of people blocked a Microsoft Connector Shuttle in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle." The Microsoft Connector shuttle provides free transportation to Microsoft employees across the city of Seattle to the Microsoft headquarters located in a suburb of Seattle called Redmond, which can sometimes take hours to drive to during rush-hour. In the communique, the author(s) claim "Without

[103] Panagioti, "The Ecology of a Police State," earthfirstjournal.org- state/

[104] http://tidesofflame.wordpress.com/2014/02/10/capitol-hill-microsoft-connector-bus-blocked-for-45-minutes/

[105] http://tidesofflame.wordpress.com/2014/02/11/train-blockaded-at-amazon-hq/

the Connector Shuttle bringing these employees to Capitol Hill, Ballard, South Seattle, and the North End, the hyper-gentrification we now see would not have happened. Microsoft currently employs more people in the Seattle area than Amazon, Google, and Adobe combined. So it is not unreasonable to place the blame for the drastic restructuring of our neighborhoods largely on Microsoft and the developers who built according to their needs."

On the contrary! This reasoning fails to acknowledge the Leviathan that is civilization, capitalism and the death-march that is technology and progress. Microsoft cannot solely be the party responsible for the economic development and gentrification of neighborhoods in Seattle, the Leviathan is much more nuanced than that. It uses its limbs to obstruct authentic life, whether through policing, science, or dystopic visions of 'the future'. Furthermore, it is not just the police and city councils who wish to see neighborhoods "cleaned up" and are responsible for raised rent-prices. We are all complicit in capitalism, and the "revitalization" of neighborhoods in Seattle is an effort applauded by many of those who have relocated to the Seattle metropolitan area in the last five to ten years to begin careers and families. While it is important to connect the dots and name the names of those who play roles in maintaining the ever increasing drudgery of every day life, we cannot fall into the trap of attempting to find one common enemy when the Leviathan is everywhere, and such our enemies.

The other communique, detailing the blockade of a train of Amazon workers, goes into detail about the developed relations of the CIA and Amazon, a history of CIA-staged-coups and Amazon's union-busting practices, and Amazon's intention to replace all of its human workers within their service and delivery centers with drones and robots. The sentiment here is one of desiring a more fair workplace and a preservation of the working class as it has existed since industrial capitalism began. This is similar to the first communique that deeply stresses the economic hardships that have fallen on the poor and downtrodden throughout Seattle as gentrification rampages throughout neighborhoods and rent prices soar, stopping just short of crying "We want cheaper rent now!"

If one were to take these communiques in good faith, it could be assumed that the author(s) do indeed carry a larger critique of Microsoft, Amazon and the developments in technology and surveillance society that these corporations are currently aiding in. So why leave these sentiments out? In hopes of attracting more followers, or to have a message that is more eligible to the masses? Given that journalist Brendan Kiley (who seems to consistently know what the anarchists are up to and writes almost positively about them) from Seattle's liberal paper The Stranger had gotten a secret heads-up of the action[106], the motivations seem clear: to communicate as far and wide to the general populace of Seattle an incredibly acceptable critique of Microsoft and Amazon, thus watering down the critique to be provided. This sentiment abandons the belligerence that is the ineffable and inflammable idea of anarchy. By definition, anarchy goes against the grain of the dominant social order, shouting "No!" while the rest of the world retires into bleak submission. If anarchists water down their ideas with the intention of finding more comrades and co-conspirators, surely they are to only find compromise and relations that in truth lack any real notion of affinity.

For the destruction of this world and for the fostering of friendships that light the night and our souls aflame, we must not hide the unruly elements of our characters in hopes of fitting in

[106] http://www.thestranger.com/slog/archives/2014/02/11/this-mornings-amazoncia-protest

with a social body that will never accommodate our desires. Our enemy is ever expanding and developing as a vast and plural being, and so must our contempt for it.

Uncivilising Permaculture - by Tanday Lupalupa

An Anti-Civilisation and Anti-Colonial Critique of "Sustainable Agriculture"

In this essay, I wish to explore the way that permaculture intersects with an (anarchist[ic] and anti-colonial) anti-civilisation critique. By no means do I wish to tow some anarcho-primitivist line (though some inspiration from it is not denied), but rather to raise questions of where permaculture may accompany a critique of civilisation, and where it possibly diverges. Some of the critiques I raise here stem from my years of study and experience in the area, in which my critical lens often came to be at odds with my colleagues.

In the contemporary environmentalist milieu both the theory of permaculture and its practice have become popular as means by which to repair the earth's depleting topsoil and to otherwise attempt to live more sustainably with our planet. It is but one response to the ecological crisis that we face, whether the conversation is centred around climate change, environmental destruction, food security, or the totality.

So what is permaculture? One of the co-orginators of the permaculture concept Bill Mollison, and his colleague Scott Pittman, define it as such:

"Permaculture (Permanent Agriculture) is the conscious design and maintenance of cultivated ecosystems which have the diversity, stability & resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape, people & appropriate technologies, providing good, shelter, energy & other needs in a sustainable way. Permaculture is a philosophy and an approach to land use which works with natural rhythms & patterns, weaving together the elements of microclimate, annual & perennial plants, animals, water & soil management, & human needs into intricately connected & productive communities."

Permaculture as a concept is, in fact, quite broad. This opens it up as both something more in tune with the true complexities of world, yet vulnerable to co-optation. Permaculture exists not as a singularity, but as a multiplicity. For example, agriculture is a discipline of food production, unaware if its relationship to other disciplines, whereas permaculture is inter-disciplinary: it attempts to understand the interconnectedness of an ecosystem as a totality.

Given how broad the concept of permaculture is, there can be no generalised analysis of it. Rather, we can explore the different aspects of it both in theory and practice, and see how these compliment or detract from an anti-civilisation critique.

Before I go on, it may be helpful to explain where I'm coming from. There was a time quite a few years ago when, after having become more acquainted with anti-civilisation ideas, I began to destruct such things as my relationship to the earth, and my own autonomy – i.e. my own self-sufficiency. What skills did I have? What did I know about the earth/natural world? What did I know about my landbase/bioregion? I had in fact been travelling for a long time, and had very little sense of place. Eventually, I thought it was time to return to the lands I grew up in (or thereabouts), as in fact that was where permaculture had first developed. At that time, I saw learning about permaculture as a means to develop a relationship to one of the things that sustains me – food. Of course I had wilder dreams as it were, but I saw this as a starting point.

And from there, in different forms, I eventually studied permaculture, both formally through multiple courses, and informally through reading, meeting people, participating in projects.

And this is where my journey began.

The Problem Of Cities: Urban Permaculture

Most of my participation in permacultural projects, both in courses or otherwise, was generally urban-based. This of course is not so surprising, due to the fact I lived in the city during these times. I did, however, experience some rural dimensions to this, specifically one rural course (in that case, just outside of the city), and quite a few rural excursions. This is on top of the rural aspects to the permaculture design that I was required to learn in both courses. In permaculture design, a given property is traditionally divided into five (or six) zones. According to Wikipedia,

"Zones are a way of intelligently organizing design elements in a human environment on the basis of the frequency of human use and plant or animal needs."

However, due to the generally smaller size of urban properties, only the first three zones (zone 0 being the house) are ever really utilised, though this may change to two due to the disappearance of backyard space. That is the main scope of urban permaculture.

One aspect of permaculture that straight off the bat stands out for analysis is how it manifests in urban environments. Permaculture as seen in cities can include community gardens, city farms, backyard gardens, and is an attempt to make urban spaces more self-sufficient and reduce our carbon footprint. An anti-civilisation critique of cities is that their existence is predicated on the importation of resources (e.g. food) from rural areas. Permaculture, especially of the urban variety, attempts to mediate this. Funnily enough, in both of the courses I undertook, the idea of the carbon footprint was presented, and we at least once analysed our own.

As it is, with such a concentration of humans in a confined space, there isn't room in their immediate area to produce the means of their subsistence. The importation of resources, most importantly food, then creates a larger carbon footprint. The further the distance required to import these things, the more the system relies on of the existence of industrial infrastructure to move the (e.g. a truck moves food from a farm to a supermarket in the city, which is fuelled by petroleum, which is transported by ship from Saudi Arabia, which is mined by equipment which is also fuelled by petroleum… ad infinitum).

So then, permaculture looks at a given situation and tries to use design principles in order to use the pre-existing features on a piece of land (whether rural or urban) to advance further self-sufficiency, with a lower ecological impact (i.e. carbon footprint), and generally to make a property more green. This indeed goes beyond food, as it is a holistic approach to analysing a given place, and can also include such things storing water, using natural light, composting, etcetera.

It is not the purpose of this essay to discuss in detail (though I will briefly) whether permaculture designed cities can produce enough food for their inhabitants. Such contexts do not exist in my experience in the West. On top of that, Havana (Cuba) is often championed as the great hope of urban permaculture (see the documentary The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil) – whilst still not producing all of its own food. I do think what happens there is an interesting experiment, as experimentation is important to our adaptivity to the changing context of the ecological chaos ahead of us, yet I do also think such a fixation with "saving the cities" may well instead be dancing with the devil, yet another manifestation of greenwashing.

Breaking this down more, there is this emphasis on taking inspiration from nature, of which a city is quite the antithesis, and such a density of humans cannot support the carrying capacity of a given area. According to Wikipedia:

"The carrying capacity of a biological species in an environment is the maximum population size of the species that the environment can sustain indefinitely, given the food, habitat, water and other necessities available in the environment."

According to Toby Hemenway, Paris produces 30% of its own food, more than most western cities, and similarly, Hugh Warwick notes that Havana produces up to 50%. So even in the permaculture mecca, the dependence on rural agriculture (permaculture?) is still 50%. Hemenway, a permaculturist, who lives in the city of Portland, goes on to say:

"We can get better at growing food in the cities, but I don't think we can get good enough".

I tend to agree. Population densities characteristic of cities are not harmonious with any sort of ecological carrying capacity. And I think that the idea of cities is so embedded in at least some strands of permaculture that manifests even outside of the city.

Indeed, I believe there is a certain dishonesty, or disillusionment at best, within the western urban permaculture philosophy, saying that certain modes of living – lifestyles, can be synthesized with carrying capacity. They cannot. This goes beyond simply the existence of cities, as I have witnessed the simple transplantation of the urban lifestyle into the rural setting. There is an individualism rife here, intertwined into a mess of hyper privilege – owning land by oneself (or simply reproducing the nuclear family), paying for both the design and construction to be undertaken by other people, maintaining all their creature comforts of the city (e.g. electricity, going to the supermarket), amongst others. Often, these houses will be much larger than are necessary. This almost appears to be an excuse for such people to ethically live in luxury. It is disgusting, and this very thing typifies my current difficulty with identifying at all with permaculture. Some also try to build themselves, but whether it's a matter of their design or lack of workforce, it takes decades for them to finish building their homes. Again, if we are to take inspiration from nature, we need not look further than ourselves. When our species has lived with nature rather than opposed to it, both in the past and in remnants today, we evolutionarily live together – in a community. As Kevin Tucker said, "Rewilding is never a solitary adventure."

An important distinction to make, however, is that such manifestations of permaculture differ greatly according to context, such as access to wealth. What this means in practice specifically is how technology is used. In richer countries, especially in urban environments, the fixation with usage of complex technological gadgets increases. Rather than it being an option, it often seems like more of a social norm. If access plays a big part in what permaculture may look like, then the versions of permaculture that may appear more ecologically sound will be simpler designs that don't require the same access to economic privilege and resources that highly technological projects do. It is this simplicity, in the end, that inspires adaptation, holistic design, and knowledge out of necessity.

The Problem Of Semantics: Peak Oil/Energy Descent, Sustainability And The Collapse

One interesting and illuminating divergence is the way in which peak oil (or peak everything in Richard Heinberg's words) is framed. Rather than using the aforementioned words, or even

the more emotive and provocative collapse, some permaculturists like David Holmgren refer to a concept of "Energy descent" (also referred to as "Creative Descent"). This refers to:

"[the] retraction of oil use after the peak oil availability… the post-peak oil transitional phase, when humankind goes from the ascending use of energy that has occurred since the industrial revolution to a descending use of energy."

One of the really productive elements of this framework as opposed to that of a more collapse-style, is that creating this imagery of a descent debunks the idea that there is some magical climactic event which will bring forth mass ecological destruction and the fall of civilisation. Instead, this points towards things unfolding in stages, and possibly quite slowly (relatively speaking). However, it goes beyond that, as it also is framed as a gentler, voluntary descent rather than one that is out of our hands. More specifically, another popular concept in this milieu is Energy Descent Planning (i.e. transition), a process developed by the Transition Towns Movement. This is a system for developing local plans to design and prepare for energy descent. In this sense, it means the actual process of gradually changing the way we live, such as the energy sources we use (alternative energy), to be healthier for the earth and to soften the energy descent.

Overall, this is a really helpful way to frame the equation. Creating frameworks where we positively are working together, decentralised, in our region-specific communities speaks to the heart. However, such positive wording is not without its dangers, i.e. greenwashing. Not to mention that it can create the illusion that perhaps things aren't so bad. It's in the cliché false dichotomy of positive/negative, where one may say, "I don't want to think of the negatives, just the positives.". Of course, I'm not suggesting you go out looking for so-called negative experiences, but rather, the trap is the bubble. You'll forget reality. Indeed, it would be quite a bubble for you to forget reality in its entirety (people do try!), but with the types of walls that people create in their lives, in their minds, bursting some bubbles sometimes is a necessary reality check.

It may not be a collapse. Maybe it will be an energy descent. We could be lucky. But honestly, we really don't know what will happen. What I do know is that it may be fucking horrible and no positive wording with save us from whatever comes ahead of us.

Then there's this idea of sustainability. What exactly does sustainable even mean?

In breaking down the word "sustainability" to try to flesh out what it really entails, Toby Hemenway's lecture How Permaculture Can Save Humanity and The Planet, but not Civilization, illuminates the conversation. What he posits is that sustainability is, in fact, a bit of a misnomer. It's not really something that relates to a healthy ecology, but rather survival amidst destruction. For example, so-called sustainable logging may not directly affect the logging of other forests outside of designated sustainable logging coup, but it doesn't help heal any of the destruction that has been, will be, and is currently waged on these forests. So Hemenway places sustainability as a halfway point between what he refers to as degenerative and regenerative practice. The former relates to actions that facilitate the degradation of ecosystems (i.e. everything the dominant culture does), whilst the latter facilitates ecosystem healing (i.e. everything the dominant culture doesn't do). It's an interesting point, and in fact helps break down the façade that claims that this buzzword, sustainability, is helping to save the planet. It's greenwashing again, trying to excuse our destructive lifestyles. So in permaculture, regenerative practice attempts to mimic natural ecological functions that help repair the different types of damage that have been inflicted by civilisation. The message is clear; ceasing civilisation's damage to the earth and being "sustainable," will not save the earth. Until you find me a solar panel that doesn't require mining, the damage is still being done.

The Problem Of Agriculture: Horticulture, Permaculture, And The Wild

So then the question arises—is it a question of scale? So-called urban permaculture ends up being (or at least depending on) another form of agriculture. We may get better at growing food in cities, but cannot grow all of it ourselves: hence, rural agriculture. Where does that leave permaculture? And where does that leave the wild? Some propose an anthropological look at horticultural societies as a possible link between permaculture and the wild. Jason Godesky and Toby Hemenway attempt to define horticulture:

"As I mentioned, [Yehudi] Cohen [in Man in Adaptation] locates another form of culture between foraging and agriculture. These are the horticulturists, who use simple methods to raise useful plants and animals. Horticulture in this sense is difficult to define precisely, because most foragers tend plants to some degree, most horticulturists gather wild food, and at some point between digging stick and plow a people must be called agriculturists. Many anthropologists agree that horticulture usually involves a fallow period, while agriculture overcomes this need through crop rotation, external fertilizers, or other techniques. Agriculture is also on a larger scale. Simply put, horticulturists are gardeners rather than farmers."

To emphasize the difference here, the mention of things like fertilisers is important because the intensity and scale of agriculture is predicated on external sources of nutrients, and even energy. This is similar to a city's reliance on external resources to maintain itself. Large-scale permaculture requires large wild spaces for resources (i.e. mining – petroleum, etc). But of course as cities expand, wild spaces must contract, as is exemplified by agriculture and especially industrialism.

Both horticulture and permaculture contain elements of gardening. They both have this measure of scale to them, and encourage diversity (as opposed to agriculture's monocropping). There is a continuum between permaculture and foraging. For example, permaculture's most wild zone, zone 5, allows for hunting and foraging. And even some of what has been perceived as foraged wilderness in horticultural societies has sometimes turned out to actually be their version of a permaculturist's food forest. If then, the aim is the wild, and not simply the garden, then permaculture is a step in the right direction. Though, to be honest, it never seemed that many permaculturists I encountered ever seemed to see the forest for the trees – they only ever saw a garden.

Permaculture allows for multiple functions, ecologically, but Hemenway also claims that it can't perform all of them, hence the necessity of large wild spaces:

"You can't just turn the whole world into a garden. There are major eco-system functions that aren't going to happen if we have completely gardened the entire planet. We don't know enough about eco-system functions to run it all ourselves. We have to let alot of it stay wild so that alot of the not well-perceived and not well understood and unmanageable eco-system functions can proceed."

So again, permaculture's success, like that of horticulture, is predicated on allowing wild spaces for ecosystem functions. And here, in the presence of the wild, is where the question of the carbon footprint and carrying capacity really clash. The standard understanding of an individual's carbon footprint refers to how much land, or how many Earth's (!) are required for their needs. This usually relates to human use of land – agriculture. But if the whole world were a farm, or a garden, then where would the animals be? No, not cows or chickens, but wilds animals. Where will the resources be? Carrying capacity relates to every living being (human or

not) in a given bioregion, so there's an obvious problem with anthropocentrism to some extent within permaculture too. So every inch of this Earth is not simply a production unit, as some may perceive with their precision in measuring the output from growing grain on a piece of land versus using it to raise cows. The trick, again, is anthropocentrism. Both choices agricultural and neither allow for the survival of wild animals. This brings up biocentrism, the idea that we don't inhabit this planet for our exclusive use – we share it.

Jason Godesky also talks about origins in the link between permaculture and horticulture:

"The fact that so many favorite permacultural techniques—enhancing edge, intercropping, guilds, and even many of Fukoka's techniques like seedballs—are to be found among horticultural cultures around the world, is certainly instructive. Is there anything that can distinguish permaculture from horticulture? To date, I have been unable to find anything, leading me to the conclusion that permaculture is largely re-inventing the horticulturalist wheel."

So it isn't just that permaculture and horticulture have some incidental similarities, but that permaculture is directly influenced by horticulture. It's similar to the way that anarcho-primitivism is influenced by hunter/gatherer societies. It can be seen as a way for those (e.g. Europeans) whose Earth-based cultures and lifeways have been destroyed, to give credence to those whose lifeways existed in the past or still exist. No doubt, enduring horticultural techniques have been integrated into permaculture, as proven by "permaculturists" who were already doing it before it was "invented". Rediscovered knowledge of techniques such as seedballs has been also integrated. Literally, it seems like a process of relearning what we had been doing right, what worked. But this process, of course, is coming from our current situation, reliant on industrial agriculture. Where we are coming from is so tainted, not simply by our resource heavy techniques (e.g. materials dependent on mining), but by globalisation and colonisation. This includes plants and animals of course, though I am by no means being necessarily dogmatic against non-native species (which includes humans!). But what I'm also referring to is ideology.

By ideology, I don't mean some vague anti-everything ideology. Everyone believes in something, or at least uses certain words as a way to convey an approximation of one's ideas, though of course these words will never have any authentic meaning because of symbolic language. We get inspired by many things, and identify in various ways, but the point is to find it in your own context. Ideology homogenizes. Agriculture is ideological. And its ability to universally apply itself to any and all contexts is colonisation. Moreover, the predication of agriculture upon exterior resources because of the depletion it creates in its own context necessitates expansion. This is civilisation.

The Problem Of Ideology: Eurocentrism, Globalisation And Autonomy

"Agriculture itself must be overcome, as domestication, and because it removes more organic matter from the soil than it puts back. Permaculture is a technique that seems to attempt an agriculture that develops or reproduces itself and thus tends toward nature and away from domestication. It is one example of promising interim ways to survive while moving away from civilisation." - John Zerzan

Where does this leave us now? Indeed, permaculture is a continuum to horticulture. Perhaps then, that allows for permaculture as a transitory process in line with an anti-civilisation critique, and perhaps even anarcho-primitivism. However, as with everything under capitalism, under civilisation, they have insidious mechanisms which help perpetuate and reproduce themselves.

And through globalisation and colonisation, the ideology of Eurocentrism has spread. John E. Drabinski posits this:

"Eurocentrism is a key component of colonialism not just as a political and economic relation, but as a cultural project: taking itself as its own measure, Europe could do its violent work across the globe without ever being put in question by the victims. Further, and doubling the violence, taking itself as its own measure underpinned the missionary relation as civilizing force that figured as central to global domination after conquest and enslavement. Conversion to European languages and values (in the broadest sense) becomes equivalent to installing civilization where none previously existed."

And the zine Desert relates this to anarchism:

"That this is happening as part of globalisation, and the growth of cities is not surprising given that the seeds of social movement Anarchism are largely carried around the planet on the coat tails of capitalism and often grow best, like weeds, on disturbed ground."

The same, of course, could be said about anarcho-primitivism, autonomous Marxism, insurrectionary anarchism, as well as many other Western -isms, such as the multitude of those used in identity politics. You can see it in the plants in permaculture gardens – diets imported from elsewhere, and consolidated through genocide. Countless are the arguments I got into with my fellow permaculturists about the romanticisation of European plants and animals. You can see it in the ideas that are normalised in our societies, in the microcosm, in our communities (or lackthereof). The point isn't to prevent idea-sharing (nor to create some false dichotomy of "pure" and "not pure"), or to disallow criticism, but simply to recognize autonomy. The imposition of ideas, and the held superiority of these ideas from a place of power (i.e. White supremacy/Eurocentrism), is the very antithesis of this. In Green Anarchy, Aragorn! similarly talks about Self-determination and Radical decentralization. The point here is that people, anarchists for example, may form a politic into a singularity. This is where solidarity dies, a place where you don't engage with people outside your "understanding of reality," but rather expect "reality to conform to their subject understanding of it." Furthermore, Aragorn! presents some interesting ideas on what he thought could be an Indigenous Anarchism:

"… an anarchism of place. This would seem impossible in a world that has taken upon itself the task of placing us nowhere. A world that places us nowhere universally. Even where we are born, live, and die is not our home. An anarchism of place could look like living in one area for all of your life. It could look like living only in areas that are heavily wooded, that are near life-sustaining bodies of water, or in dry places. It could look like travelling through these areas. It could look like travelling every year as conditions, or desire, dictated. It could look like many things from the outside, but it would be choice dictated by the subjective experience of those living in place and not the exigency of economic or political priorities. Location is the differentiation that is crushed by the mortar of urbanization and pestle of mass culture into the paste of modern alienation. Finally an indigenous anarchism places us as an irremovable part of an extended family. This is an extension of the idea that everything is alive and therefore we are related to it in the sense that we too are alive. It is also a statement of a clear priority. The connection between living things, which we would shorthand to calling family, is the way that we understand ourselves in the world. We are part of a family and we know ourselves through family. Leaving aside the secular language for a moment, it is impossible to understand oneself or one another outside of the spirit. It is the mystery that should remain outside of language that is what we all share together and that sharing is living."

I take inspiration from many things, such as permaculture and anarcho-primitivism, amongst others. I don't see them as roadmaps to our liberation (that is not necessarily how they intend to be taken, though that doesn't mean people don't perceive them that way). The way I see it, both encourage location specific, adaptive strategies for the roads ahead. I also see them as tools for us to discover liberation in ourselves, in our friends, family, communities, and in our landbases. But it doesn't really matter whether you use these words or not. As for me, things like permaculture and anarcho-primitivism are to some degree re-inventing the wheel. However, they are helpful for us in remembering what we were already doing right in our cultural histories. We can use different words, words from our own cultures for example, but if we were to truly search for any words that could describe our desires, of love, of wildness, and of total liberation, I would find that there are no words at all: silence.

Becoming wild and free, again, is a progression. The disease of the spectacle, of such things as instant gratification, creates these delusions that things are immediately consumable and causes us to move on to the next thing. In nature, this is a falsehood. When we develop direct relationships with our food, friends/family/community, bioregion, etc, our perception of time inevitably changes. We can't rewild overnight. Not likely even in our lifetime. The destruction of civilisation is a long-term project as well. But we are but a speck in the lifespan of this earth, and the beginnings of the world we are building will be in our children, and in their children, in the children of the foxes who ate your chickens. And in the ashes of the world we leave behind.

"Any bioregion can be liberated through a succession of events and strategies based on the conditions unique to it."

- Seaweed

It will be a process, both wild and organic, adaptive and local, generational, learning from yourselves and each other, where in the diminishing of ideological homogenisation, diversity reigns, human and nature. Permaculture could be a step. Anarcho-primitivism could be too. I may not stick entirely to the path, but the tracks seem to lead me in a direction I want to be going.

- Tanday Lupalupa

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Curse

May the wind haunt you
with the cries of the caged,
shrill scream swirling
through your ear canal.
May the ground crack always
between your feet.
May the wild ocean
tear you limb from limb,
toss your body on the rocky coast.
May your body finally decompose.
May it for once feed life.
May it know neither economy nor politics.

In Review: Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture by Arthur Evans

In early Spring of 2013, a small handful of anarchists, calling themselves Feral Death Coven, republished and began circulating a book called Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture by Arthur Evans. The original was published in 1978 by FAG RAG books, and is a cult classic among radical fairy and queer witch circles. Without permission or authority, the book is a beautifully pirated edition, suitable for its content. In a world where original editions of the book regularly sells for hundreds of dollars, such an edition is a welcome contribution to the queer, pagan, and anti-civilization canons. The new edition has largely been circulated at anarchist bookfairs and hand to hand, fueling discussion and inquiry.

In the context of a renewed interest in the history of the Witch-hunts and the rise of Christian civilization, this book offers a significant contribution. In recent years, anti-capitalists and pagans alike have explored a radical analysis of these histories and have worked to understand the conditions by which patriarchy and capitalism have developed together as two heads of the same monstrosity. This line of inquiry is perhaps best illustrated by the relatively widespread reading and discussion of Silvia Federici's Caliban and the Witch and also the renewed excitement about Fredy Perlman's Against His-story, Against Leviathan!

This book tells a congruent story, but from a unique position. While engaging with the same history as Federici, Arthur Evans departs from her in some marked ways. He subtitled his book "a radical view of western civilization, and some of the people it has tried to destroy," and in doing so he attempts to hear and to share the perspective of those people annihilated in the Witch-hunts. This effort is something tragically absent in the patronizingly materialist writings in Caliban. While Federici critiques the capitalist Mind/Body and Material/Spiritual splits which cleaved the world into an alienated hell, her methodology is rooted in the Mind and Material poles of these violent dichotomies. This intrinsically domesticated perspective may indict the Witch-hunts, yet it remains a tacit acceptance of the ideology which has fueled centuries of genocide. In his lament for the world vanquished by Civilization and his celebration of the voices of the defeated, Evans' critique has more in common with Fredy Perlman's. Both describe Leviathan's material rise as being inseparable from the sensual and spiritual poverty it has enforced upon the biosphere.

His narrative differs from both Caliban and Leviathan in its being explicitly queer. Fredy Perlman's book describes the rise of patriarchy from a implicitly gender essentialist framework and has absolutely no analysis of the existence or struggles of queer people, which amounts to an unfortunate blemish on what is an otherwise brilliant text. Federici's book is also regrettably tarnished by a more explicit gender essentialism. In the introduction to Caliban she argues that "the debates that have taken place among postmodern feminists concerning the need to dispose of 'women' as a category of analysis, and define feminism purely in oppositional terms, have been misguided" and that "then 'women' is a legitimate category of analysis, and… a crucial ground of struggle for women, as [it was] for the feminist movement of the 1970 which, on this basis, connected itself with the history of the witches." Her willful refusal to engage with anti-essentialist queer and trans thinkers is made all the more sinister by her omission of the histories of these people within the Witch-hunts. In fact, queer people earn little more than a single footnote in Federici's book length academic text. Thus, Witchcraft is a refreshing corrective to ways that Caliban falls short. Firstly, because as a historical document, the book demonstrates that the nascent Gay Liberation movement also connected itself with its witch predecessors. Secondly, by telling the history of witches from the perspective of the queer, trans and gender-variant people in the struggle, Evans provides an implicit rejection of 'women' as a hegemonic or natural category long before the so-called 'postmodern debates' which Federici conjures to dismiss this perspective. And lastly, because this book is perhaps the first to beautifully situate the rise of heteronormativity as inseparably bound to patriarchy, industrialism, and the state. So, for those who cannot be satisfied with a mere study of industrial/white-supremacist/patriarchal civilization, Witchcraft could prove to be a weapon in a struggle which concurrently attacks the industrial, racialized and gendered orders.

None of this, of course, is to say that Witchcraft is beyond criticism. The book is greatly flawed and dated in ways that cannot be ignored. Foremost among these problems is Evans' ambiguous relationship to the disciplines of Anthropology and His-story. While he often critiques the biases and worldviews of the white anthropologists he draws upon, his criticism often feels superficial at best. He implicates these anthropologists and historians in a more general heteronormativity, but he never takes this towards a deeper critique of Anthropology itself (as if these Scientists would be acceptable if they were only more gay-friendly). Anthropology, as a white supremacist and civilized discipline, can only inherently look to the past through a domesticated and racist lens. The result of such inquiry will always then be mystified through a racist and essentialist

paradigm. Many of the claims that Evans reproduces from white anthropologists, must thus be treated with even greater skepticism than he uses, and should constantly be subject to critique.

In Evans' own introduction, he denounces academic historians and anthropologists. Instead, he celebrates mythology and folklore as being as significant and vital to our understanding of our collective past. It is sad, then, that he does not push this alternative to its conclusion. To actually take seriously a critique of the academic approach to the past would mean to be humble enough to admit the massive blind-spots of our domesticated way of seeing and to revere this unknown as a chaotic wonder to be explored. Refusing this academic worldview is equally important if we are to acknowledge that the struggles of indigenous people, queers, and witches are not a relic of the past – rather that these cultures survive into the present and continue their struggle for survival.

Yet there still remains a crucial benefit from a study of the war between Civilization and the nature-cultures that it has struggled to eradicate. This benefit is the perspective that the continuous trajectory of His-story and its Civilization has been won at the expense of countless queers, witches, gender-variants, trans-people, heretics, indigenous cultures and wildlife. And so this story demonstrates that the cherished Progress of the society which holds all of us hostage is also the story of rape, torture, eco-destruction, enslavement, murder, genocide and omnicide. If we understand the beast which confronts us, we are all better equipped to combat it without falling into its snares.

To genuinely appraise our enemy and to avoid its traps would mean to critique this book, but to take its conclusions beyond themselves. Contemporary readers of the text should find it very frustrating for its naïve optimism in its final chapter. Evans concludes his extremely thorough critique of industrialism, militarism, statism and patriarchy by paradoxically arguing for a 'new technology', a 'new socialism' and a 'new civilization' that is not based on any of the infrastructure of the current one. These hopeful and empty assertions can only possibly read as baseless and absurd after enduring the horrors of the text's narrative. Those living in the cybernetic, techno-industrial, mass-alienated prison society which has unfolded in the last 35 years must concede that whatever optimism around technology and socialism that may have ever existed must be left in the dustbin of history. The countercultural fetish for a 'new technology' which prevailed in the 70s gave birth to the cybernetic governance that we now live within. It is abundantly clear that those who fetishize technology and socialism only serve to construct a more abysmal and well-managed dystopian future. Evans reads as all the more dated and foolish in his sympathies for a Maoism of the past. Any misplaced hope in the Maoist project must reconcile itself with the industrial and genocidal atrocities to which that project gave rise. We can safely discard of this naivete and conclude that no 'new technology' or 'new socialism' nor anything short of a cleansing fire can assist us in our self-liberation.

Even after excising the anthropological and socialist perspectives, this book still contains a great deal of relevance for those who desire such a fire. Witchcraft's own argumentation offers a vindication of queer sensuality, magic, and anarchist violence which speaks for itself and can be followed toward any number of endeavors in the pursuit of freedom and wildness. In spite of our criticism, we are passionate about this book because of the way that these perspectives and proposals invigorate our own struggles against this world.

Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture is available from Little Black Cart (littleblackcart.com)

Forevergreen by Tanday Lupalupa

At least I have you
When all is lost
When I am alone
Where all I have is fear
Pain
ztrauma
And there is no one there
For me
I have you
All my life
I've been searching
For someone
For people
Like me
Or that like me
However, unlikely
I left you behind
In this search
To be among the cold of grey peaks
And the loneliness of city streets
My lungs swell
My coughs taste blood
And I sneeze violently
Yet
I never think why
It's killing me
At times I stayed close
And felt, something
Others, I went far
And felt, nothing
Always looking
Never finding
Lost
Confused
No longer even knowing what
I'm looking for
Feeling, nothing
Numb
The people I did find
Reminded me of you
A familiar, feeling
You
Of course

It’s you
It’s always been you
I found you
You’ve always been there
You never left
And as long as I’m there for you
You’ll be there for me
You’ll live forever
With you
The sun empowers my spirit
The birds sing to my childhood memories
Leaves rustle in anticipation of the winds caress
I taste your nourishing power as I consume your bounties
Flowing water, and wild food between my teeth
You brought me back to my senses
The feeling, is back
I cuddle up to your warmth
From the fire
I look to the stars
You read me the stories in the sky
Marvel in your majesty
I close my eyes
Silence
You are silent
Beyond words
And I give myself to you
I give you everything
And you give me the world
At least I have you
When all is lost
When I am alone
Where all I have is fear
Pain
Trauma
And there is noone there
For me
I have you
And perhaps
One day
Others
Will remember you too
And together
We’ll have each other

The End Is Here

Dispatches from the Ever-Fraying Fabric of Reality

Tourist Checking Facebook On Phone Falls Off Pier - from the Huffington Post, 12/18/2013

"A tourist in Australia had to be rescued by police after plunging off a pier while browsing Facebook on her phone, officials said Wednesday.

The woman was walking along a bay in Melbourne on Monday night when she became distracted by her Facebook feed and plummeted off the pier into the chilly water, Victoria state police said.

A witness called for help and police rushed to the woman's aid. They found her flailing around in the water, about 20 meters (65 feet) from the pier.

'She was still out in the water lying on her back in a floating position because she told us later that she couldn't swim,"'Senior Constable Dean Kelly of the state water police told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. 'She still had her mobile phone in her hand and initially she apologized and said sorry.'

NYC Apple Store's $450K Window Shattered by Snow Blower - from Yahoo News, 1/22/2014

"You may have heard that record-shattering snow is ripping through the Northeast. An Apple Store in New York City just felt it firsthand.

The company's world famous glass-encapsulated Fifth Avenue store was reportedly struck by a snowblower Tuesday evening, cracking one of its 15 giant window panes, according to Apple Insider. Details on how the accident happened are unclear, but the fix will no doubt be costly.

Apple news site 9to5Mac reports that each panel runs about $450,000. The store was renovated in 2011, replacing the 90 small glass panes originally making up the store's above-ground cube with the 32-foot sheets that are now in place, a $6.7 million makeover."

California Farmers Hire "Water Witches" To Find Water - from Aljazeera News, 3/2/2014

Due to the intense drought that hit California this winter, farmers were hard pressed to find naturally occurring water-wells for their farms by using a term called dowsing, or "water-witches." "Practitioners of dowsing use rudimentary tools — usually copper sticks or wooden "divining rods" that resemble large wishbones — and what they describe as a natural energy to find water or minerals hidden deep underground."

Two Major Pipelines Proposed To Speed Up The "Doubling" Of Tar Sands - from Warrior Publications, 3/7/2014

Two major oil pipelines — the most expensive in Canada — passed key hurdles this week: Energy East and Line 3 Replacement. Observers say they lead to "massive" environmental and economic consequences.

In a dizzying week of oil announcements, two new giant west-to-east pipelines passed key milestones. If built, the pipelines would rapidly expand Alberta's oil sands, cause massive environmental impacts, and trigger thousands of new jobs, according to several observers.

The first project – TransCanada's Energy East pipeline – would be the largest oil sands pipeline in North America – a continent-wrapping 4,500-km line to carry Alberta's oil to Montreal, Quebec City and Saint John.

Likewise – Enbridge also announced plans for another massive pipeline – the Line 3 Replacement. The company said Monday it now has the financial backing for the $7 billion project.

The project would replace an existing 46-year-old pipeline between Alberta and Wisconsin. But unlike Keystone XL, this American-bound pipeline may not need Obama's approval.

Aboriginal Rights A Threat To Canada's Resource Agenda - from The Guardian, 3/4/2014

The Canadian government is increasingly worried that the growing clout of aboriginal peoples' rights could obstruct its aggressive resource development plans, documents reveal.

Since 2008, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has run a risk management program to evaluate and respond to "significant risks" to its agenda, including assertions of treaty rights, the rising expectations of aboriginal peoples, and new legal precedents at odds with the government's policies.

Yearly government reports obtained by the Guardian predict that the failure to manage the risks could result in more "adversarial relations" with aboriginal peoples, "public outcry and negative international attention," and "economic development projects [being] delayed."

Mudslide in Oso, Washington Wipes Out Town And Kills 34, Officials Blame State-Sanctioned Logging - from The Seattle Times

"The plateau above the soggy hillside that gave way Saturday has been logged for almost a century, with hundreds of acres of softwoods cut and hauled away, according to state records.

But in recent decades, as the slope has become more unstable, scientists have increasingly challenged the timber harvests, with some even warning of possible calamity.

The state has continued to allow logging on the plateau, although it has imposed restrictions at least twice since the 1980s."

Micah White, Adbusters CEO, Makes Plea For Donations to Purchase Google-Glasses and Train Activists in Using Them - activistboutique.com, 2/27/2014

You would have to poor through pages of obnoxious twitter posts by Adbuster's CEO Micah White to find where he explicitly states it, but he's raised enough money for himself to buy one of the Google-Glass-prototypes. He has also started a fundraising campaign so that he can start training activists in Nehalem, Oregon to use them and create new "social memes" to spark a "spiritual insurrection."

"Hollywood-Style" Surveillance Society Inches Closer to Reality - cironline.org, 4/11/2014

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has hired retired Air Force veteran Ross McNutt and his company Persistent Surveillance Systems to monitor in real-time Compton's streets by flying aircraft with a series of video-cameras attached to the bottom to track suspects from the moment a crime occurs.

"We literally watched all of Compton during the time that we were flying, so we could zoom in anywhere within the city of Compton and follow cars and see people," McNutt said. "Our goal was to basically jump to where reported crimes occurred and see what information we could generate that would help investigators solve the crimes."

Police officers in Chula Vista, near San Diego, already have used mobile facial recognition technology to confirm the identities of people they suspect of crimes.

Editor

Black Seed Issue 2

Various

Fall 2014

Welcome to Issue #2

We've made the conscious choice to produce a print-only newspaper in an era where much of anarchist dialogue occurs over the Internet. We hope that our choice of a print medium allows time for slowness and reflection, both as a challenge to the immediacy of the Internet as well as to deepen the dialogue. Whereas so much of Internet anarchist discourse is based on quick dismissals and ideological echo chambers, we hope to foster face-to-face conversations based on reflective of specific articles we publish and the larger questions they address. Black Seed has already helped further conversations surrounding the roles of anthropology and resistance.

Despite these successes, we were reminded that this project and these conversations are very much a process. Professing to not have any answers, yet asking questions, has put us editors in a position of vulnerability. Holding everything in question, even the idea of green anarchy itself, provides a certain kind of provocation for those who have a stake in advocating for or defending their ideological positions and tendencies. When one makes grandiose claims about how an ideology must or must not behave a certain way, the only room for a response remains that of a statement of allegiance or opposition to those claims. By honestly opening up the conversation with a series of questions, we've begun an experiment in life and thought.

How do we pay homage and respect to those who came before, living against civilization and with wildness, without holding hands with racist anthropological practices and appropriating cultures that are not ours? How do we begin to discuss that the very way we live our lives is out of sync with so many basic needs for living (not just surviving) without fetishizing lifestyles? What will it look like to illuminate the horrors that have been wreaked on the wild worlds of all species without laying out a program for revolution or life? It is our aim to explore these questions and their implications on our lives, not to answer them. Lived anarchy is a process with no end in sight. It's our belief that green anarchy helps us to think about these larger questions.

Looking back at the first issue, the conversation was somewhat scattered, just as we were. We put forth a lot of energy trying to make Issue One everything we've ever wanted a publication to be: personal, defiant, studious, news-worthy, convincing, and hilarious. We didn't deliver on all those fronts, as some critics have pointed out. Of course, no publication can grab everyone, but we aim to constantly improve the project. One of the more substantive criticisms we received was in the form of a question: Who is this for? On the one hand, it's a fair question. Who do we expect to read this newspaper? What we do hope they get out of it? On the other hand, we realize that there is no typical reader. For a publication with a print run in the thousands, readership and distribution are constantly evolving. Though we asked specific questions in our calls for submissions, the paper is subject to the content submitted. This is consistent with our goal of creating a space for conversation rather than an ideological box. Black Seed is clearly an anarchist project aimed at the anarchist space that nonetheless hopes to spill out beyond the milieu. We started this project to contribute something to the void of green anarchist publishing, a forum for dialogue, and dialogue is indeed happening. At the same time, there are questions about the limitations of this orientation: are we writing to some perceived mythical "green anarchist" audience? Are we just writing to our friends? What is the point? These are larger questions that will be answered over time; other criticisms of the first issue are addressed by the articles curated within.

In light of all this, we're excited to present this second issue. We're continuing several specific conversations about green anarchy and indigeneity integral to this project as a whole; related is

the topic of anthropology and its relationship to green anarchy. Dialogues growing away from violence/non-violence debates into deeper and reflective questioning regarding eco-defense are raised in the responsive "Two Steps Nowhere" submission. The "Green Anarchy panel discussion" dives into anthropology critique and the green anarchist/anti-civ anarchist distinction, while also touching on the trendy topic of "hope." "Anarchy in Flight," takes a completely different approach altogether by pushing aside the usual jargon but bringing in something very new and inspiring. We are also excited to print continuations of two pieces, "An Interview with Klee Benally" and "A Voice from the Grave," begun in the first issue.

As the days get shorter and the acorns begin to fall, we hope to provide fodder for late night talks 'round the fire and letters sent over the miles that come between us. And when those conversations lead you to think you've got it, know that you haven't, none of us do, but know that we want to hear what you're thinking, what small ways you're finding to get free.

The Editors,
-Scealai
-Cedar Leighlais
-Pietje
-Zdereva Itvaryn
-Aragorn!

A Discussion on Green Anarchy

At the Seattle Anarchist Bookfair this year in late August, a roundtable discussion on green anarchy was held as one of the workshops. The speakers included Ian Smith (the moderator for uncivilizedanimals.wordpress.com), Kathan Zerzan (who co-hosts John Zerzan's Anarchy Radio show once a month), Aragorn! (publisher of Black Seed) and Cedar Leighlais (an editor of Black Seed). What follows is the transcription of the discussion, not including the last half-hour of Q&A. The transcription has been edited for clarity.

Kathan: Well, I've just been elected the MC up here of this discussion that we're going to have up here. We've got some questions that I'll put out that I think are the basis of what we're going to talk about. and then people will introduce themselves. The questions we'll be discussing are: A) What is green anarchy? B) How did you come to a green anarchist perspective? C) Are green anarchy, primitivism, and anti-civilization synonymous terms? And then two kind of topical terms: anthropology—how can anarchists interact with it? And hope: what is the role of hope when we can see that the world has been so fucked by civilization?

What Is Green Anarchy?

K: I'm not going to just repeat the term. I participate in a radio show with John Zerzan, I have since 2007, I'm certainly aware of ongoing discussions and hear phrases and terms of tendencies that over the years seem to be developing into positions… so for myself I have the question: green anarchy, anarcho-primitivism, anti-civilization, are these the same thing? I think there are probably different opinions here that we will flesh out. I tend to think they are pretty much synonymous. I think that there is developing theory about the world we live in and how to interact with it, and that there might be specific, debatable, kind of academic differences that

to me are somewhat irrelevant. Then there are practical-based differences in organizations like Deep Green Resistance or say Ted Kaczynski's writings, that there does seem to be some pull towards military-style, hierarchical, centralized organization; when you get into the topic of armed struggle, you're probably going to have centralized organizations, so that feels to me (and I'm no expert, I'm just saying what I see) that that's one thing where I think there are major disagreements. But in terms of anti-civ, and green anarchy, I think there are way more similarities than disagreements.

Cedar: My name is Cedar. I'm appearing on this panel as one of the editors of Black Seed. To me green anarchy is a political tendency within the larger umbrella of anarchy that doesn't stop at anything. It holds the entire world ready for critique and attack. That is very attractive to me, since I found that most of a lot of other niches within anarchy stop short of going all the way to the root of where these systems of oppression (to use a buzzword) come from. Often times that what is lacking from anarchist analysis is a deep historical understanding of where these things come from. The most important thing to me about green anarchy is that everything in our lives that fucks with us, holds us down, keeps us from being free, can be tied back to civilization; everything goes back to this complete onslaught and domestication, turning everything into a commodity. To me green anarchy is the analysis of this world, not just looking at things in terms of ecology or the environment with an anarchist lens; it's not just about rewilding or hunting and harvesting berries, for me that's not even part of green anarchy. For me that stuff is personal interest, and I'm also excited about it… Green anarchy also takes into consideration ongoing violent clashes in city centers and suburbs — some people would call that class war. Green anarchy is calling into question everything that we know.

Aragorn!: I was a columnist for Green Anarchy magazine, I also wrote essays for the magazine. So I've been involved with public green anarchist projects for a long time. I'm the publisher of Black Seed, which means that eventually I will not be involved that much in providing content, but as part of Little Black Cart, I pay for it and make sure that people can get it into their hands. That's my involvement with Black Seed.

So, anarchism as a beautiful idea, both a sort of impossible conversation to have, and a conversation that becomes one of preferences — meaning all of us. And I believe that most people we meet on the streets agree with us when we say, "I want freedom, and I want to be with people in interesting constellations of freedom," rather than "I want to be oppressed and I want to be in uninteresting relationships of oppression or hierarchy." The traditional forms of anarchism — which happened at the same time as the rise of the workers' movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries — reflected the moment that it lived in, which looked like a progressive, historical, abstract, and Manichean political philosophy. In the 1980s and 1990s, then, it began to be common to differentiate between red and green anarchism. That, progressive, historical, abstract, and Manichean, that is red anarchism. Green anarchism is everything else. So, for me, green anarchism is an umbrella term, that we can now talk about as having distinct interests underneath it, that are usually not progressive, historical, abstract, or Manichean. Green anarchism, obviously, in the way it factionalized out in the past 30 years, has taken on a variety of different nuances, has become influenced by different people who have dogs in the fight. I think it's worth mentioning some of them, who are not usually mentioned in the anti-civilization part of this conversation.

There are people who want to reconcile Hegelian thought with a conversation about ecology; they're called Bookchinites. Those people still exist, they still have journals and people who follow their ideas. There are people who think that instead of talking about destroying civilization,

that we should be talking about post-civilization. There's the anti-civilization discourse that includes a variety of perspectives. Here we're talking about taxonomy, rather than green anarchism in particular, so we can talk about those distinctions later on. But for me, the main point is that green anarchy is not the anarchism that came before, which is progressive, historical, abstract, Manichean.

Ian Smith: I write a blog called Uncivilized Animals, which is probably the vehicle that connected me with some of the people here. I think Cedar's idea of green anarchy being the largest frame that everything's up for grabs is a good way of framing it. Personally I've always used these terms interchangeably, but I've done that unthinkingly, so this is the question that we brought to this and I was interested to hear other people's thoughts. When I first thought about it and tried to think about it more, it was that anti-civilization is a negative term, it kind of leaves the floor open for something positive. Moving on to the next question, which is…

How Did You Come To A Green Anarchist Perspective?

I: On a personal note, my step onto this floor was mainstream, consumer veganism, and taking the next step out and then the next… thinking about what does it mean to respect animals? And how radically different the world as a whole would have to be if we genuinely respected other animals. I think that ripples out to the furthest periphery of what that means.

C: I would say mine goes back, like Ian I've been thinking about this all week, I can trace it back to my childhood. Everything previously in my life has had something to do with where I'm at now. Part of growing up outside of a small town, running around in the woods, I mean it's cheesy American youth bullshit but it's real too. Running around in the woods with total abandon for the rest of the world. In high school I was incredibly anti-social and found a place within the more anarcho-punk hardcore scene. The lyrics in those bands really resonated with me and I found importance in that. Eventually I was vegan and looked at it in a larger context. But when I did away with veganism, that happened at the same time that I started to accept a much more negative view of the world, and to see that even the small, non-profit, organic farm I worked on was bullshit, even that was "domestication." Taking wild and free places and manipulating them for money or surplus or whatever. Even these small things that I had found solace in as a late teenager turned out to be part of an entire system. As I realized that everything is worth pointing a finger at, that was also when I put down veganism, and came to have a very staunch position against everything else. This had a lot to do with understanding that there was an importance outside of civilization, and also being incredibly aware of this relentless anger I have at the forces that control my life and the lives of those around me, and that consistently put down struggles for freedom.

A!: I have always been a green anarchist, but I have yet to figure out exactly what that means. One of the problems with labels and especially labels that are wrapped up with politics is the way that they're very confusing, because they seem to be used much more as weapons than they are as clarifying statements. So the reason I embrace the term green anarchism is because of how open the term is. In other words, green anarchism to me is a set of ideas that desire freedom, and that do not accept that a clockwork universe exists. For me, there's much more to figure out, and one of my goals for Black Seed, one of the reasons I'm helping to make it happen, is that I really want help figuring out what it means to not live in a clockwork universe together, and the way these conversations have happened up until now have felt very troubling and I am very

uncomfortable about them. That said, I do find the work of Fredy Perlman and an U.K. author named John Moore to be very inspirational.

I: I guess I jumped ahead in my first statement. The only thing I would add is that a key component of this transition is shedding old identities that you're given, whether that's as worker or consumer (or whatever the case might be) to an identity as animal, and trying to be humble enough to look to other animals for solutions to problems and to learn from others in that way. Grappling with these things I often feel that in a different time and place people would have learned just by breathing the air when they're growing up and now we're struggling to learn these things with the clunky brain of an adult at whatever age you are and it's really not feasible, but you know, maybe some progress can be made, so…

K: And I have the longest history, so I'll be abbreviating a lot. I appreciate very much Aragorn!'s distinction between red anarchism and green anarchism, because I would say that kind of encompasses my trajectory. So I was born in 1950, female, United States of America, my father was military. I grew up moving throughout my childhood… I think I attended twelve schools or something. I was in Puerto Rico before Cuba, stopped in Guantanamo of all things on my way to Puerto Rico with my family to be a good child of a colonialist in Puerto Rico for three years. Came back to the U.S.; was in Georgia's civil rights movement; where we were considered northerners and federal-agents because the military was integrating. So I started having contradictions with the society I lived in, and being an outsider… my last high school was in Colorado Spring, CO; the Vietnam War was raging, it was '68. I was a good military girl and believed in America and freedom, the communists were the enemies and that kind of thing. I had two older brothers, one ended up in Berkeley, the other in Milwaukee marching with Father Graupee against the war. I went to Oregon University of Portland, started questioning the war, went from doing draft resistance and legal activity to helping people get out of the country, to joining an autonomous Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.) that was probably my first experience with working with other people in an anarchist fashion. We didn't have connections to national S.D.S., they'd had the split with Weather Underground then. Anyways, it's a long history. At University of Oregon I was arrested, and the lovely government that I believed in… it was really in my face, the contradiction was really in my face: the good Catholic girl was looking at 25 years in prison for inciting to riot. And I felt like I was being a good girl, I was doing the right thing. S.D.S. was a local group at University of Oregon, not connected with the national group. In 1970 I was arrested. There was a centralized organization in the Bay Area that was Maoist and expanded to Eugene, O.R., and my lovely group of people I trusted and who I had worked with all year, we all became secret members of R.U. and became very interested in armed struggle and the repression that was taking place and we got more secretive and more ingrown and that kind of stuff. Life went on, the war allegedly ended, the central committee in California was talking about assigning people to … "well maybe we won't fight the charges, maybe you need to go to prison and organize in the prisons." I always had trouble with authority, never respected authority, but… when the central committee in CA, when… I don't even know who these people are, are apparently deciding where I'm going to go spend the next 25 years of my life to organize a revolution that doesn't seem to be taking place in Eugene, Oregon, so I decided to get the hell out of Oregon and go to the belly of the monster, which was Chicago. In Chicago I got involved with left organizations that split with RU into Sojourner Truth Organization (S.T.O.), which was probably the transitional organization. We were accused of being anarcho-syndicalist, that was very unpopular; any reference to anarchist,

anarcho-, it was like "Pfft, you're a bad person." 1970s became the 1980s, Reagan got elected; the group I was with also became in-focused; revolution was not happening. A vanguard of white, theory-centric males began to develop theory that was hierarchical again. Even though we were anarcho-syndicalist and the majority of people were very opposed to the idea of any kind of vanguard party. So I was part of leading a split. Then I moved back to Oregon with my three girls to where my parents lived. Any hope of a new world that I had was fading. Then I became familiar with my cousin's writings through a patient I met as a nurse practitioner. He asked me if I knew John's writings. I got John's books Elements of Refusal, which is a good book. I encourage people to read it. And I began discussions with him, became familiar with the Situationists, Adorno, more theoretical thought that had taken place since I'd left academia; and the 1990s began to see young people on the streets, and anarchy being a developing body of thought. Very unrelated to the Marxism, Leninism and Maoism that I'd experienced before. And as the female voice in all this, you know I've been a female player in many different groups that have largely been male-dominated. and the anti-civilization perspective, and the understanding of where domination comes from and what it means to be domesticated, to be conquered, paralleled very much with ideas I was beginning to think about. So that's too long, but it's a long history.

Are Green Anarchism, Anarcho-Primitivism, And Anti-Civilization Synonymous Terms?

A!: So this is probably where things will get a bit more controversial. Absolutely not. As I think we generally agree, that green anarchy is a sort of umbrella term that encompasses a variety of terms within it. Anti-civ is also a general term, a general critique of civilization. From my perspective, anti-civ shares similarities with Marxism, with any other -ism, because it provides an abstract solution to a variety of problems, in this case the problem that it provides an answer to is civilization, which is a very big and abstract idea that we may or may not agree with all the specific details of, and it says "be against this big abstract thing". As far as I'm concerned, this world filled with abstractions is a horror show from beginning to end, and the particular terminology we use to describe that horror show, whether it's patriarchy, capitalism, civilization, is much more a matter of aesthetics than it is of anything else. I'm happy to have further conversations about why people prefer to believe in one religion vs. another, but there's a certain way in which anti-civilization has become a religious term. Anarcho-primitivism is an even more narrow term that builds from the idea, the common sense idea that 90% of human history — if humans have been around for a hundred thousand years it's only been the last ten thousand that civilization has come into being — so using that common sense idea it uses the science of anthropology to pull back time, and ends the story of freedom with the story of civilization. Anarcho-primitivism is a fine story and I encourage people to read good stories, but I highly dispute using anthropology to make truth claims about the world, and about the past, and particular the way that primitivism has become a set of ideas that are written about by a very small set of authors and has become a sort of cult around those authors, which feels very antithetical to why I am an anarchist.

I: I think we all touched on this a little bit, but I said earlier I have used these terms synonymously but not for any deliberately thought-out reason, so I am interested to hear how other people answer this question. Maybe anti-civ being a negative term can clear the decks of certain problems that Aragorn! sort of spelled out, but then leaves it open for different positive solutions,

which might be why anarcho-primitivism purports to be a more positive vision, something to look to, to fill in those gaps. Not a lot to contribute to that one, I guess.

K: I went with John on a speaking tour in 2007, to some Eastern European countries, and I was asking myself at the time what label, what am I? And the important thing to me is the understanding of civilization as a problem; what makes up civilization, domestication, domination, and how you apply an understanding of existence of humanity and the way of life that happened before civilization to the present era was what I wanted the term to encompass. Anti-civilization seemed like a good one. Primitivism, I thought "that's an art movement, that's fancy painting." It was not a provocative term… "Ohhh I'm a primtivist." Like, what does that mean? [laughter] I kind of liked anarcho-primitivism 'cause it ties primitivism to a political body of thought, anarchism. I don't see it as one of these is better than the other. There's a lot to be said… in the 90s… maybe I'm overplaying what was happening in the 90s and before the "War On Terror," but I think there was more.. you could get more conversation going, there was more understanding, talking about anarchists, anarchy… There was a presence in the general public, that I don't feel is as much there any more. Like, outside of this room, if we just went out and started talking to the people out there, people know what civilization is, but do they know how and why it might be problematic, that's a further conversation.

C: As with Kathan, I remember a very specific period of my life where I was questioning a lot of labels I was putting on myself about political ideas about the world, specifically there was a time where I was questioning whether or not I would identify as an anarchist. Looking back now, what I realize about what was going through my head at the time was what felt uncomfortable to me was the label "anarchist" seemed to posit a forward, positive momentum in the world, which was something I have always been unsure of, the idea that there is a pie in the sky that we're marching endlessly towards; I have always been that way, hating everything. Can't really help it. So, for me anarcho-primitivism, anti-civilization, and green anarchy are not synonymous terms. I think that anarcho-primitivism and anti-civilization are two very separate tenets of what could be maybe seen as an over-arching green anarchy. Anarcho-primitivism is very much this anthropological, anarchist look and analysis on how things got to be how they are now — as Aragorn! and Kathan said — about how some thousand odd years ago, civilization came in and took over and that's when everything got bad. The way that I want to interact with critiquing things is a lot deeper than that, and also realizing that freedom has happened inside of civilization, since domestication, agriculture, and so on. I think the thing that irks me the most about primitivism is this assertion that there is a positive momentum forward that we can take. It does not seem much different from a Maoist program for revolution, or the church telling you how to get to heaven, or the anarchist telling you how to start a revolution. It all seems much the same and I think that green anarchy is a larger, more encompassing thing. If we were to posit these into opposite things: anti-civilization being the negative critique of the world, anarcho-primitivism being the positive place we can go. And my interest in being part of the green anarchy dialogue is to talk about that, and also talk about the idea of abandoning hope, and that there is a lot to lose when we hope for things… but that's another question, so I won't go into that now. The next topic we wanted to cover was of anthropology…

As An Academic Practice, What Role Does Anthropology Have In Green Anarchy?

C: It has a really heavy presence within green anarchy, specifically anarcho-primitivism, often times used as a historical backbone, to back up assertions that, like, "Oh, hunter-gatherer good, everything else bad. Agriculture definitely bad too, the beginning of the end of hunter-gatherer." Oh, I lost my train of thought and I'm answering the question instead of asking it… This is another thing that I am excited about in facilitating with Black Seed, is the conversation about anthropology: does it have a place in green anarchy, where are the contradictions, and what are the positive things that people do get from anthropology…

I: I'm thinking of it as parallel to how do people of this persuasion interact with technology that we might find problematic, that we know has a concrete harm toward others. As a discipline it's had this exploitative history, that is a reason to be skeptical of it. And it's not something that we can necessarily hold on to if we think that we're getting somewhere different. So how do we interact with it: it isn't necessarily true that it has no place? We may need to employ it in the same way we use problematic technologies right now. The other point I want to make is that we recognize that getting to where we may want to go, to keep this from being completely utopian, we have to acknowledge the benefits and the positive things that will be lost. So there are certain ways of knowing about the world that might be powerful that won't exist, that wouldn't exist, in a world that most green anarchists would see as a goal. There are certain ways that we know about the world today that we wouldn't have access to at some point in the future that we desire. Acknowledging that certain benefits are going to be lost is important to have any credibility. We can't just say that "right now it's this parade of horrors with no redeeming virtue and that at some point it will be completely utopian." So continue the parallel of anthropology with problematic technologies, every technology, no matter how destructive it is, no matter how alienating it is, it's sold because it has some sort of benefit to us. We're complicit in it, and we might have to muddle along with it for the time being, but recognizing the pros and cons, and figuring out where the preponderance of consequences lie.

K: Whether it's anthropology or history, and I'm not disagreeing, there is danger in cults and religion and this missionary kind of thing, but I think we're all living in a present that is rather dissatisfying, to put it mildly. You try and construct from where you're at: how can I live day to day, what can I eat, it's not some future-oriented, come to find Jesus, we'll all be hunter-gatherers… but it's that if you look at what happens with language, what happens with writing, that was one of the early things I read, kind of a popular book about before written language… the whole dark ages, as they're called, when civilization collapsed after the Romans, when in fact there wasn't writing, there wasn't history, people were just living for about 900 years, and then civilization rebuilt itself, whatever. So anthropology, history, whatever you have, you use what you have, and sure there might be a real danger of this stupid Fred Flinstone idea, of oh some future, we're gonna be this and that, but the reality is that the resources aren't there for the Chinese who want 'em, to say it crudely. The whole devastation that's happening right now with food resources, this kind of stuff, something is giving as we sit here, it's not sustainable, it's not going to go on… so it's not some big future "things are gonna change" it's the reality; food shortages, water… So anthropology has studies that give you some clues on other ways of being and living.

C: Well I kind of already put out my answer… it's interesting because I feel… I'm constantly trying to figure this out for myself because… while I feel highly critical of anthropology, history is also something I'm very excited about and I think that where I have most often seen anthropology come into contact with anarchy, is when anthropology is used to posit a way of life that we could potentially have like after the collapse or the insurrection or the revolution — however it's put. I think that's very problematic, because time spent on fantasizing about how we might live one day, well like that can be a fun thought project if I'm at work and I have nothing better to do, it's not something that adds constructively to my life project, of trying to create some kind of agitation against things that keep me from being free. Anthropology within anarcho-primitivism creates space for that to happen, it encourages it, and if anything, it limits the greater anarchist discourse from stepping outside of rewilding convergences and… Also ends up creating space for people to inappropriately adopt native and indigenous cultures. Which is interesting because there's been a lot … As soon as I start to talk about that I often get a lot of resistance from anarcho-primitivists who want to immediately write off that I'm critiquing them from a leftist position. Where I'm coming from is a position of wanting to focus on destruction and negativity, less on "this is how it will be someday." So that's why I find it a problem that anthropology has found a place within green anarchist thought.

A!: I'm thinking about this a lot right now because I'm writing an article for the next issue of Black Seed on this topic. And at the heart of what i'm trying to tease out is that anthropology exposes a problem that's actually not about the particular discipline of anthropology, but is about sociology, history, anthropology, and the humanities in general. So really it's a question about how do we think. To distill a big conversation into a small one, I would like to propose a new way of anarchist thinking that is distinct from what I'll call critique. Critique is something that anarchists have pretty much borrowed from Marxists: the idea that the things that you despise, you enter into a dialectical relationship with, so instead of just despising these things, you become the person who fixes those things. So a lot of our friends who we call liberals end up in a critical relationship with the urban planning institutions, with the non-profit complex… with the variety of institutions that exist in the world, and throw their bodies into what turns out to be fixing those things. Many people, and one of the interesting responses to the hostility that Black Seed has expressed about anthropology, has been how many people have responded "since Man The Hunter, so many people have entered into anthropological fields and they're doing the good work of repairing it, of fixing it!" There is a person in the Bay Area who's probably one of the most tortured anarchists in North America. He is a desperate fan of the Spanish Civil War. He knows more about it than any other living person. I'm not exaggerating; he knows more about the Spanish Civil War than any other person and yet is a post-left anarchist. That position, the post-left position, begins when we failed in Spain. The reason I mention him is because I love him; it's adorable that this thing that happened in history is so alive for him. And the reason I can be tolerant of his relationship to the Spanish Civil War is because it's just the story of where he'd rather be. And I'm the last person to judge other people's stories. I love Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. That's where I'd rather be. [laughter] A world of imagination… that sounds fucking awesome, and it will involve candy. So for me what I propose is that, rather than critique, and rather than engaging in dialectics, and rather than improving our enemies to make them more powerful and more effective, that anarchists continue to be incredibly curious, that we attack the things that we have curiosity about, that we do it with hostility, that we do not fix them, we do not embrace these things, that instead we stand apart. So in the context of history

and anthropology, we do not become historians and anthropologists, we become story tellers. We do not get paid for our work, we share it with each other. That's it.

As Green Anarchists, We Can Easily See How Fucked The World Is. Is There A Place For Hope?

K: I'll shoot off the top of my head: yes there is — knowing full well I'm gonna get shot down… [laughter], that nihilism, and no hope is the way to go, that these are all Marxist-Leninist ideas, morals…I'm a moralist, morality, [laughter]. I know on a theoretical level… there are fine, theoretical considerations, I say a lot of things are open questions… I shoot from the hip. Yea, the world's fucked. When I listen to you talk, it reminds me of being 18 [looks at Cedar — howls of laughter] . I was into Nietzsche, I was into Dostoyevsky, I was into Sartre, how do I make sense of this fucked world I'm in? I was looking at kids my age, young men, who… half their body parts were gone, and I was coming from a very visceral place. Army hospital, half-bodied men my age, who… there is something seriously wrong here. What does that mean to me? Should I go jump off a railroad bridge? It's not a joke, my point about figuring things out at 18. And if something in philosophy, or maybe anthropology for some people, just looking at what Western Civilization has provided for me, reading other angsty writers and trying to use my own problem-solving, how do I live my life? I would say there was a certain amount of freedom in existential thought that, it doesn't matter, so you are free. What you do doesn't matter, good, bad, whatever, that's the ultimate freedom. That's the context I take this discussion in, like yea, if you don't have hope you go off the railroad bridge. And more intellectual thinkers can certainly provoke me to question the philosophy of hope and what that means for the future, and that gives me pause for thought and I respect it, and to me that is the bottom line of this panel and this discussion, that this is a growing type thing, there is a … hope.

C: The way I first started grappling with the idea of hope was kind of a tactical mindset, looking at actions of groups and autonomous individuals, radicals, anarchists, generally the illegalists, and over the last 30 years or so there being a general trend of actions that have certain kinds of themes… whether they're legal to try to convince political entities to do this or that, or actions where the communique about them speaks to gentrification and the mistreatment of poor people, kind of seeing a train of thought that says if we act or do these kinds of things, if we drop a banner that speaks a certain kind of message, we will get our desired outcome. Where I applied the brakes on that was the idea that there was a desired outcome that could be perceived, outside of the destruction of everything we know. What I mean by that, to be more specific, often times people are like, "So you say no hope. Are you advocating for doing nothing, because you're arguing that nothing is going to happen, we're never going to win." That's not the point that I'm trying to get across. I think there is a heightened sense of intentionality and integrity and intensity that come out of acting without hope. I think that when we step to this world without any preconceptions about winning, but when we fight like we're going to lose can make what we do more ferocious and unmanageable. It keeps our actions farther out of the reach of recuperation, which is consistently the thing that happens to mass uprisings. Abandoning hope is one of the soundest weapons that anarchists can pick up when it comes to engaging in this world with action.

A!: I don't think you can talk about hope without talking about faith. And in general because radicals eschew religious language, what they put their faith in tends to be something that … it's

a sloppy term but I think generally fits… is humanism. The idea that humans equal good, an ugly corollary is that more humans are better, and most humans is best. So when someone says hope, in general, they're speaking to their analysis of human nature, which makes me very nervous, and what they tend to be implying is that they have faith that human conscious activity is going to result in good things. and I just… I guess when we talk about hope we're being challenged to prove that we should be hopeless, and my turnaround is "prove why I should have faith in conscious human activity as a source of good." I don't see that when I open my eyes in the morning. But everything that Kathan and Cedar said is totally appropriate; Kathan made the nihilist argument, and Cedar kicked it with some insurrectionary flair. So all I need to say is that human conscious activity isn't the magic bullet to solve much of anything.

I: My thinking is that Cedar's thinking was one thought too many. [laughter] Seems like what he was saying is that if people abandon hope, then we might pull this thing off. [laughter] If we abandon hope, our odds are better. That's kind of a hopeful perspective. [laughter] The odds are increased, but we can't in good conscience think that way. So, when I hear these discussion I end up agreeing with whoever is speaking. because the definition being used is self-serving, it all depends on what you mean by "hope." There's the Derrick Jensen line that when you don't have any agency, that's when hope comes into play… Well, if you look at it that way, then yea. But it gets parsed in lots of ways. I'm thinking of it as something on par with cheerfulness [laughter]. The way that… cheerfulness is a virtue because it makes you pleasant to be around [laughter] and I think that hopeful people are more pleasant to be around [laughter], although Cedar's company has been delightful, so… [laughter] so present company excluded. I think it could be considered a moral virtue in that sense of the word, as a disposition; the important thing to say I suppose is that whether we're hopeful or not, we're not making any sort of truth claim. When you say you're hopeful or not, you're saying you think the odds are more likely than not that this will work or not, it's not a claim about the world. It's neither true nor false, more of a disposition, a personality trait.

Interview with Klee Benally

Editor's Note: The entirey of this interview has been posted here, although it originally appeared as two parts in Issues 1 & 2.

Klee Benally is originally from Black Mesa and has worked most of his life at the front lines in struggles to protect Indigenous sacred lands. Klee doesn't believe the current dominant social order (read "colonial system") can be fixed but should (and will be) smashed to pieces. When asked about his politics he says, "I maintain Diné traditionalism as my way of being in this world. I have affinity with Anarchism and identify myself as an Indigenous Anarchist." Klee performed with the rock group Blackfire for 20 years and performs solo today. http://kleebenally.com/

Aragorn! — What would it look like for someone who has no spiritual practice to develop one?

Klee -That's a very personal question and I think what ends up happening is that people start these centers like the ones in Sedona, or start these new age centers. They are seeking that answer from other people (as opposed to within or from within their own roots or asking the land what developing a spiritual practice means). To me that is what it looks like when people

start appropriating from all these other sources. Or they go to the usual suspects who are exploiting their own cultures or just selling them or–even if it's not for sale, even if there is no monetary exchange–sometimes these people have been kicked out of their own communities and are pimping out their own culture for their own gratification. People are seeking from other sources, and forget that mother earth is THE source. Ya know there is this sort of this cliché that mother earth is not a resource it is THE source. It's actually very true though. I think it is part of like, almost all indigenous cultures that I know, they don't fucking missionize; they don't go out and try to convert people. When people start asking that question, it's like… Is that an answer we can give? Because then we assume some kind of responsibility in that relationship. I think where people expect it, you know just different expectations about that. I can maybe speak from experience to people I have known who have come to some kind of spiritual understanding but again that's deeply personal on some levels. Of course we have culture, it's a social cohesion; how we understand our relationship to each other and relationship to the land. There's an anthropological definition of "culture" and there's our own definition or understanding of that, what that term means and how we again understand our relationship to each other and the land. The discussion about spirituality can't happen without a discussion about culture and what that means and there is context to that. I think there is a violent context that we have to come terms with when we start talking about those things. There is a lot of trauma that we have to address through that discussion as well. In the past when I would answer that question, when I think I was in a different place than today, for Diné people we have Hózhó'ji which is "beauty-way" or more well defined Hózhó'ji is a way of health and harmony. Beauty is this sort of fetish as well, that anthropologists are like "here is a great definition." They sort of latched on to but it's deeper than that. You know when we as Diné people understand that foundation and philosophy, for our identity and our relation to each other through K'é or through our clan system, our relationship systems that extend not just to people but to our natural environment, to other beings. It's not something that you can just say "here's what this spirituality means and I'll give it you." There is this whole deeper understanding of what our ceremonial practices are, for us to restore health and harmony with our mind, our body, our spirit, and our soul, even within that. So the problem that we face a lot is when we say that to people, it seems rather convenient just to take it, and just to do what they want and that's exploitation. To me it just an abuse, the process that we carried forward. There's a lot of indigenous people who don't want to share their cultural knowledge of course, for good reason, 'cause it has just been exploited and abused and people just misuse it or they just distort it, and they take different parts that are rather convenient for them when they have an answer that resonates for them at the time. And then they…

A! – "picking and choosing"

K- … I think through my experience (this is why I picked on Sedona really quickly) we have people like James Arthur Ray who was selling Sun Dances for like $10,000 and you know people who were ultimately killed by his hand through his application, interpretation of sweat lodge, who were there for the "Spiritual Warrior Retreat" in very clear quotation marks and that's an extreme but that is what we see. This exploitation continues, so, yeah maybe sometime along the way he asked those questions and people gave him answers. I don't know but that is his application.

A- What I identify with that (I guess I want to talk through why it's impossible) is that basically you are saying that anyone who wants to take this project seriously basically has to commit to multi-generations. In other words, indigeneity, whatever that means, will require that kind of

time span. It's not going to happen in your lifetime. So of course why that's impossible is the american consumer is not going to accept that this is something they can't buy. Even if the consumption we're talking about is of an ideology.

K – For some reason what you are saying reminds of this discussion around the apocalypse that I have been having with friends (you know because things seem very apocalyptic and so forth). Through my research it became clear, and this is even Christians saying this, that Christianity is linear, with this Genesis, with the Christ sacrifice or whatever, coming of Christ's sacrifice and then judgment day. Ultimately the logical conclusion of Christianity is apocalypse, or judgment day ya know, as opposed to looking at it from an indigenous perspective–which is cyclical, you know; we are part of an ongoing process. So I don't see a beginning and end to it, I see it as an ongoing process.. I don't see it like, "oh here's victory over here, here's a goal, I can see a way to achieve something that we want to accomplish which is liberation of our lands, the thriving, the cultural vitality of our people and hopefully abolishing these systems of oppression that are built up and reinforced through colonization." But at this point, and I don't want it to be interpreted as being abstract, 'cause it's not, it's anything but abstract, it's very clear in relation to the system, it's is an ongoing process. To some degree I think that is part of the western mentality; it's like linear thought, how change is gonna come about. When we look at the multi-generational projects, with the seven generation concepts (even from other indigenous nations, certainly it's pan-indigenous right now that it can be interpreted very easily with other indigenous nations) in relation to the core of our practices is to ensure that cultural knowledge is transmitted and maintains its relevance or vitality. So for me that's part of it, thinking in that way that we are part of a cyclical way of being. It's not saying we are going to sit on our hands and wait for shit to change, it's about doing the best we can now.

A! — Did you see that article on indigenous egoism?

K — Yeah yeah, I read that.

A! — Fascinating!

K – Yeah, I, well, it's not fresh in my mind but part of the issue I had with it was, just this sort of like over focus on individualism and which to me is again is this extremely western concept, which is interesting I think because in Diné culture we have a very strong sense of the individual. Children are taught or treated as individuals when they are young, but in relation to each other, there is this sort of like separation of the sense of "community". That's what I wanted to ask the author, what was her upbringing, what was her experience. How can I take what they said about egoism and apply it to my community? I don't think it connects. It is part of the reason I am guarded with my words or I am fairly choosy sometimes. I don't want to speak in these generalities, because that is what people expect. It's just like when talking to indigenous people, oh you speak for everybody. And people want some pan-indigenous solution. Even part of the whole Zapatismo fed into that to some degree; they were very smart about using that to their tactical advantage to some degree. But it's, I'm at the point right now where I am still playing with all of these concepts ideologically and trying to reconcile how they work from a cultural perspective and then apply them, 'cause I don't want to ever get caught in that trap of the theory and shit. It's always on the ground for me… I would like to talk to the author more just to get a sense of what their experiences have been. And I need to read it again. Like I said it's not fresh in my mind. But that was like the first thing. It was just like oh great, another voice that's like, for the egoists and reinforcing the hyper-individualism and wait there is like this stretch and

connection to indigeneity and I am just like, I've never seen that. In every community I have visited and traveled to and

A! — Well you have given me a couple of things to think about. I think that this decolonize, anti-decolonization differentiation… I think there is something interesting there. First of all it is a fantastic way to break away from the decolonization, the way it is being framed right now is not quite toxic, but…

K – I think it's highly toxic, cause from what I see from a non-indigenous perspective to these areas, patently white–for the most part–perspective. It becomes a personal project and we don't need more people just running around with these…

A! — By which you mean a process of personal self-revelation?

K – Yes. And ultimate gratification.

A! — My question for you, and I will frame it in the form of advice. So this new project: my goal is to be the editor emeritus of this project. In other words, I make it happen from the perspective of resources and I open my rolodex to make sure good writers and people find the project, but I am very serious about this. I really want a transformation along lines that we have already discussed, specifically along the line of talking about Native stuff in a different way, in a not fetishizing way and having voices, varied voices…

K – Beyond the usual suspects..?

A! – Yeah, so my suspicion is that what that is going to have to look like is me doing a lot of interviews. We are talking about a green anarchist publication, but I really would like it to look like the Green Anarchism that I would like to create… I think you and I have a bit of a sense as to what that would look like, so how to do this correctly? Because first of all, I have to say, if you look at today vs. ten years ago there's a hell of a lot more people to talk to. I mean it's unbelievable. It's really unbelievable how many more people there are that have come into anarchism. How would you do it if you were me?

K – I know how I wouldn't do it, unfortunately that is a lot of my initial response. I think part of it is just being on the ground with folks and connecting with folks who are on the front lines and being open to a sense that not everybody's gonna have the articulate academic voice and just making sure that people feel comfortable engaging and that it's not just gonna be some type of hostile place for them. When I started doing media work it was partly out of just the frustration with folks just sticking this lens and exotifying, essentializing, and picking off the things they felt were sexy for other people to pay attention to without dealing with the full range of who we are in all our contradictions and conflicts as indigenous folks. Maybe establishing this sense doesn't have to be that explicit but trying to develop that relationship. You want to dissuade the cultural pimps to some degree and you want to get the heart of this discourse/discussion cause it sounds like part of the objective is to amplify indigenous voices in to the larger anarchist milieu, to assert another direction or ya know just another option for folks to embrace their fights. I guess that's like my initial reaction when I heard. What is indigeneity mean for other folks who are not indigenous to this area. There might be some people who want to engage in that discussion. Like I said before, I don't know how interested I am in focusing on that as much as just drawing some boundaries, and saying "hey maybe this is a good place for you all to focus your fight" and making sure people aren't just (for lack of better terms) Zapatista-fying all these external struggles without saying "oh wait, right, here we are on Tongvan (Indigenous folks of LA area) land, maybe we should build a relationship with them and maybe it is going to take a lot longer

than we want and maybe they don't have the articulated position that's convenient for us to just transpose their politics and our politics interchangeably."

A! — But I guess, that's talking about fighting a fight with people on the ground. You're answering that question already with what you're doing here. It's not exactly what I am asking. How many people do you know are confident to say something challenging, how many of those people could say it in print vs face to face, how many of those people would it take days to develop a relationship before they would say it? Cause if that is the only option then if you point me to the right person I am willing to do it.

K – Yeah, so how it could be done is establishing a network. But folks need to have a demonstrated sense that it's not just some exploitative work or something that's hostile. 'Cause like I said. We have a lot of shit lessons. It's part of the reason a lot of native folks don't go to the Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair. We have a lot of shit lessons. It's part of the reason why a lot of O'odham folks outside of Phoenix don't engage with radical folks. I know some communities where people have only gotten hostility. So there is not a good relationship. Starting in the Southwest, like you said there is this strong cultural base, and part of the history of that unfortunately is because a lot of the colonizers, I mean we fought off the Spanish for 350 years but a lot of the colonizers rushed past us for the gold in California. Honestly, looking at some of the sacred sites areas… Like I said, part of the reason people are so aggressively fighting for sacred sites and a lot of young people is because one, they are in areas where there is still an intact relationship so it meets some of the criteria that you established before. And those folks understand the risk and they are engaging on multiple fronts. I think maybe hitting some of those places or just reaching out to people… Just focusing on the project first, your audience, again. Just to hear it a little more clearly.

A! -.. That's a great question. I assume that the audience is the audience of the last magazine but perhaps that's sloppy. So the provocation is how to make it better, how to reach a different set of people, and I would say in general that I have not done a particularly good job of… the term we use is marketing. This is a marketing problem. How do you find, especially since I am, like most anarchists, by and large isolated from the rest of the world, by the wall of them not caring about the way we put things and us being fine with that. So if I break out of that for a second and think, the problem with green discourse is that it's, to use a loaded word, apocalyptic, and the influence of anthropology, green capitalism, and christianity.

K – I guess when I ask that question, part of it is about when you were talking about wanting to reach out to different contributors, find a range of voices. Part of that question is, what relevance is this to my community. It's a question of distribution and dissemination and "Indian Country" too, maybe just looking at how that will work out and how that could look. There has been a range of different projects, the good ones being in Canada, the more a-political and more arts-focused ones here in the US and even them being somewhat limited and being a question. I don't feel as well versed in bridging indegeneity (which to me feels still more like an academic term) and anarchism; you have a lot of interesting writings that explore that. More just your perspectives and what you have come to understand. Last time we talked you said you were an anarchist without adjectives. I don't feel uneasy about saying I am an indigenous anarchist but indigenous always comes first; this is what I have to preface the discussion with. And my affinity with anarchism is through direct action, acting without mediation in the range of values, like mutual aid. Which sometimes reinforces that sense of community. To me it doesn't have to be beyond the mutual here, but to me it connotates that to some degree. The range of other basic

qualifications for anarchism. But I'm curious 'cause you obviously dig deep, very deep. What's your expression? I read something a while back, that I am pretty sure was written by you that was about Locating An Indigenous Anarchism and I went back and read that some time ago. It was more or less, it almost felt like it was a longing for something as opposed to identifying as much. Which I appreciated.

A! — It is also the nature of being an urban, mixed Indian. It's a very different experience than yours. But, I think that where I begin, is probably in this space of having a suspicion that my own internal conflict is… on the one hand, I think that using the word "anarchist" has magic powers. That's on the one hand. On the other hand I think that the anarchistic instincts are generalizable. The interesting part is in the specifics, but that many of the 500 had anarchistic sensibilities. So I'm not excited about the Iroquois (which some anarchists have become excited about cause they model after them their idealized organizational configuration or whatever). For me I am much more interested in the small stories of how one's elders communicate ideas of how to behave and I think somewhere in those stories is something really different. I feel like I am not even a good enough storyteller; the older people in my life have been fantastic storytellers. It took me years to figure out what they were driving at. So for me the challenge to anarchists is, what does anarchism look like if it doesn't use the word? The other part of this is that I have more influence than many people in the anarchist space. If I want to do a green anarchist publication I can and people are going to read it. So the political motivation here is that I want this story to be what the future of anarchism looks like. And the story is going to be a long one. It is going to be drawn out, and it's not gonna be question then answer. I'm enough of a strategy person, up to now I have been able to fit pieces out, thinking a couple years out. This is more like a ten year fitting things together. And it involves a lot of strangers and a lot of suspicions but I'm not sure…The flip side in terms of the audience question is what do the people I am talking to get out of it. And that's important. It's not just important it's a problem I don't have an answer to. What I'm talking about would benefit anarchists, because they need it. So what is it that anarchists have that could actually benefit strangers? And the answer is the same that it always is. Ridiculous enthusiasm, a lot of laughter, but then, danger. So yeah I am going to have to think about that some more.

K – Yeah, that's where we like Drew and Brian's statements about wanting accomplices not allies. They've done a great job of deconstructing f ally-ship. Cause that's part of what I hope gets sorted up front. It's interesting with this current wave of liberal disillusionment, with the Obama administration, and Idle No more, the Keystone XL pipeline, that people are paying attention to native struggles and that there is a bit of a spotlight. And of course the non-profits are flocking, like the moths that they are, rather blind. Fitting the metaphor very well unfortunately. Yeah it will be interesting to see how that plays. 'Cause there have been other times when indigenous struggles have been sexy, and then people just move on to the next interesting spectacle. And that's what I would hope this base has some aversion to. So one question I had for you, I guess I'm still trying to extract some of your politics. So what is your reaction to the statement, we belong to the earth? Do you have an affinity for that?

A! — I do but it doesn't have the sort of specificity that it does for you. A little bit about my story; so while my mother's family is all registered Native people, my maternal grandfather was actually a Canadian, therefore his quantum did not count. So I'm not registered myself. But my father, a white man, loved Indians. Like he really really like Indians like he read all of Carlos Casteñada, he knows all the pipe ceremonies. I mean there is nothing about the western plains

indians that he doesn't know. That's why he found my mother. So while I was raised by my mom, I spent plenty of time with this guy who very much fetishized this whole aspect of my life. So my mother's spirituality was very quiet and not specific. And her mother was a catholic and pretty much everyone else was a catholic. I have one traditional relative, and she is still alive. She is actually why I am going to michigan, and she was raised by Catholics, so all this is very different from your experience. So it is much more on the level of platitudes than places.[?] Even though I can go to this Indian village, which is this shanty town outside of Traverse City, where generations of my people were. But that was a village of timber houses. Not what was there before. So my experience is post genocide. This is my language of course. You might not accept it but to me, my struggle, what does life look like, what does spirituality look like, my language is a couple words and my great great grandfather who died when I was six, who was the last fluent non english speaker that anyone in my family knows. So to me, the question is what does life look like in these sort of ruins. Which is kind of why I don't talk about it so much, 'cause that is what life in the ruins is like. But I know that something in here is very important and I know that something is missing. And I was raised with all the urban indian problems. Alcoholism, violence, etc. But those are the problems of urban people of color. Obviously natives have got a spin. But this isn't a triumphant story. I don't have a good to reflect against the bad. So while I am willing to go out and say spirituality is possible and I can even say there was a place where I spent a lot of my youth that was particularly important, I can't bridge this sort of existential gap. I point to that gap as being the genocide gap. My language is harsh but that is the way that I would put it.

K – Yeah, that makes sense. It's a lot to think about for sure. Thanks for sharing, appreciate it. Yeah I guess that part of it is what's worth fighting for. When you talk about fatalism, that is part of the question for me.

A! — Of course, right. At certain points in my life, I absolutely thought there were things worth fighting for and over time I saw how thin and shadowy they were. So I fought against nazi-skinheads when I was a kid. I did a whole variety of irresponsible things in the belief that it had this certain resonance that it didn't actually have or that it had for me only at that time . I'm not trying to demean my own experiences but what you're talking about is different. Because of the three things or whatever.

K — I know you have challenged me with that question, of how unique intact indigenous cultures who meet those three criteria are. So you are engaging in this project and you put out some analyses sometime or just stories you share regarding indigeneity. I want to see what the chance is, 'cause you put in my face a little bit about what can be done on a practical level. What are we asking or urging people to do or move towards, what are we inspiring. I guess that's maybe in some way, shape, or form to just put that ball in your court and maybe hear your thoughts about that. Cause if we talk about how few indigenous nations maintain, that keep that fire burning…

A! — Have the capacity to.

K – Cause we look at some of the indigenous nations in California who have gotten just disturbingly rich off of casinos, completely removed from their language, spiritual practice, and so forth, not necessarily their land base, and so there are a couple of tribes that we met, or indigenous nations that we met that are just traveling to other indigenous nations and through a process that they just sort of developed, basically sharing and learning from other neighboring tribes but other tribes from other areas. And it was quite interesting cause they were just collecting to establish a culture, which is being done in a way, because they were up front with other nations people were

sharing. And they're doing in a way that wasn't just constructing something false necessarily, because they are doing with a sense of–not necessarily restoring their connection but–restoring a connection to the land. I'm sure that from an anthropological perspective there is some kind of name for it or whatever. You know that's just what they are doing to heal.

A! — That's what they got. But the complication of course is that by and large this is part of the process they have to go through to get government recognition. Which in some occasions has been connected to casinos and other commercial enterprise… In Michigan it is about fishing rights. Fishing rights is big.

K — Yeah, it's like, I guess you were asking, Where do you see things in 100 years or ten years or whatever. That's part of it too I guess, just putting part of that discussion back in the mix.

A! — The way I approach this problem is somewhat different, and perhaps it is because I have read too much philosophy. Western philosophers have done a lot of good thinking about their enemies. I'm sure that there is someone who is waiting in the shadows against every argument that I could possibly have against them. But I basically desire the dismantling of the western project in all of its sundry forms and so specifically in this case what I am about to talk about, my language, is the causal chain that people create between action and spirit.

K- Causal alluding to causality?

A! — Right, cause and effect is one part of it, but also this idea that ethics is why I chose to sit here and talk to you rather than walk over to you and punch you in the face. I feel like all of this is… wrong is too simple, but there's something in the way that all of these are constructed that I have a visceral revulsion to, and I'm not just going to pull it out and say that there is something just spiritual, but I could. But what I'll say is that, a lot of questions that the western mind thinks are answered, for me are mysteries, and they are only satisfying and I can only be satisfied by them as long as they stay mysteries. And the extent to which one wants to answer them, I usually consider that person to be someone I am hostile towards. That make sense?

K – Absolutely.

A! — So, by and large when someone asks me the question, why are you doing what you are doing, my answer is fuck you. So I am a deep pessimist who puts out a book a month. Many of these books are about actions that happen on the street. Like one of our newest books is about street tactics. But I don't believe in fighting on the street. But I put out a book a month. So there isn't an answer to your question other than this mystery that is definitely my preferred mode. Yesterday I was talking with someone about the difference between social and anti-social activities and I more or less identified as being for anti-social activities. I was basically asked, "How can you be for infrastructure and anti-social activities?" And the answer that I gave them, different context, but whatever, spun my little story in a different way, but basically I said, I believe in the power of seduction. [both laugh] So. Yeah. [pause]

K – I wasn't trying to ask you why you are doing what you are doing at all. I questioned earlier "what's worth fighting for." Is it in relation to just looking at some of the core values behind your thought. Sometimes that question about belonging to the earth irritates egoists. I don't' think they like to belong to anything, which is quite interesting. I like to concern myself with not just outputting or making lots of things but thinking about what the outcomes are. It's like the strategic or tactical thing that's been ingrained in me. Just like doing lots of ineffective things for so long, you just gotta try to consider other options. So sometimes you just gotta think about the project that you are working on and how I can put energy into that too, apply it to

these areas and move my agenda, my project along, which I identify as essentially indigenous liberation, ya know, reinforcing resistance and ultimately liberation.

A! — I just don't put things like that at all. There is something in that kind of triumphalism. I recognize how it's a good communication skill to be able to talk like that. [laughs] I prefer to not be understood as far as that goes.

K – Yea, it's interesting. I guess that's why I keep revisiting some stuff cause it's interesting and I'm trying to elicit a bit more understanding for myself and I appreciate your response of seduction and I appreciate reading stuff from the folks in Italy who are torching shit and talking about desire. I don't like to fall into the trope traps and sometimes feel myself, like I said earlier, feeding into them. And I do need to have more discussions and read more about some of these things to some degree because I feel…

A! — Let me, I will maybe say what you are trying to get at from a very different place, maybe from a perspective you won't appreciate. There is a reason why people are turning to you to talk as a spokesperson, and it's because you know how to talk as a spokesperson.

K – Thanks for the insult, but yes, point taken… I think that it is really interesting to see the tendencies in radical circles in relation to the anti-politic, and privilege theory, and identity politics stuff.

A! — When you refer to privilege theory what do you mean?

K – Well, primarily I am referring to folks addressing identity politics in relation to saying "we need to deconstruct this discourse around privilege" and just go beyond that and just focus on collective liberation. Essentially that, like Andrea Smith just wrote an essay that was talking about… essentially just arguing for collective liberation to occur, we need to stop having these discussions that turn into confessionals about each other's privileges and people sort of atoning for their sins of privilege and just move beyond that. Part of what other folks have discussed too is just ensuring that folks are taking initiative and not just objectifying indigenous people or just objectifying even their senses of what the oppression is… I think the bottom line is that this theory based around "if we all come to terms with and own our own privilege and deconstruct it then we are going to get to wherever we need to be," and ultimately that just turns in on itself and neutralizes people and ultimately the result is that whoever are the oppressed group are still objectified. We are just trying to move beyond that. That is my understanding, I think there is more to it.

A! — Yeah, I guess I am curious as to why you care about this?

K – I guess a lot of other people care about it and it seems like the terms to engage in allyship and support… The bottom line is that we can't do this alone. Collective liberation means something else when I talk to other Diné people or other indigenous people and certainly when I talk about resistance and liberation struggles with the white folks we interface with here, or other folks of color, especially in the migrants rights struggle, the so-called migrant rights struggle. Especially in Phoenix, I think we see the problematic dynamics even worse with organizations like Puente perpetuating this invisiblization of O'odham folks whose lands they are occupying but also asserting this sort of indigeneity as well, recolonization as some people call it. This example should be built out more: Large budget non-profit migrant rights organizations like Puente are working for comprehensive immigration reform. Comprehensive immigration reform means increased militarism and "border security" in the form of drone flights, increased checkpoints, armed troops, the border wall, and more. Indigenous Peoples lands such as the Tohono'odham are bisected by the so-called US and so-called Mexican border. Some O'odham resist immigration

reform as it means destroying Indigenous communities. Migrant rights organization and their "allies" invisibilize Tohono'odham and continue to rally for immigration reform perpetuating the destruction of their communities. Part of the basis of this intersectionality of oppression is tackling these issues and finding ways to make sure we are engaging people who can provide material support, cause our folks usually don't have it at all… With the infoshop for example, from the get go we knew that the folks who have the time to volunteer are white folks with "privileged backgrounds"–they have a lot of resources and a sense of volunteerism as part of their social understandings. But for indigenous people it is just like, usually with families with young ages, and school and work and all these other things, it is a hard thing, to find a way to engage on a sustained level. That's part of it; we have been forced to interface with folks who just show up. Then we assert our anti-colonial politic and then they don't know how to navigate, so then we end up going through a bit of a process of orientation. Sometimes there's static, sometimes there's problematic dynamics, especially if there's more white folks that are getting involved. So we have had a lot of growing pains with trying to process all this shit. And people have done it other places where it's like everybody grew out of the identity oppression olympic games and shit, where the challenge has been to find a way to have each other's backs.

A! — But you see, for me, that's simple. And what you are talking about, you are willing to use a whole ton of jargon or discourses, and I know where those things come from… personally I would refer to it as "who I am willing to negotiate with, and on what terms" and that's a pretty different conceptual space than kind of accepting the premise.

K – Yeah, and I think I have to give it more thought. Part of my initial response is that I'm not sure how much negotiation–as far as it is affirming and asserting like who we are and ensuring that other folks understand–and that's establishing the terms and just proceeding, ya know? And certainly there has to be communication. We are not just gonna impose. I don't think it has ever been the nature of the relationship, even though we have been imposed upon for so long… but I mean if we are going to have a discussion about indigeneity and what that means, there are certain terms that can't be negotiated. That's why I talked about the natural law before, there are things that… I guess it's something I have to think about a little bit more. But yeah, I agree. I do get sucked in o the academic establishment sometimes. I get sucked into at least the periphery of the non-profit industry even thought I try to dismantle it at every turn and part of it is just navigating to survive. I am trying to find a way to be as effective as possible and sometimes that means asserting myself in a different way. When I first got involved in the peaks issue I had no idea what the National Environmental Policy Act process was or what an environmental impact study was or anything about The Forest Service decision-making framework, but I had to learn, to be able to navigate and understand. I always really deeply respect my brothers and sisters in the Native Youth movement when that was a really fiery movement, because they were fierce, no fucking question. And they wouldn't have this conversation with white "allies", there's no point and I'm not gonna have this conversation with my elders cause there's no point, and I say that not to dismiss their intellect, 'cause their intellect is beyond this., I would offer them the respect to have a better conversation that's direct on that level. I think part of it is a survival mechanism to some degree. Maybe I'll grow out of it.

A! — I mean you're not gonna be able to keep this space unless you are willing to do it and there is something there that is a realpolitic, that is something that I don't accept but I get it… [laughs] Usually when I hear people say these things I don't like them very much.

K – No, no it's interesting. It's part of a discussion I have had with other Native folks, 'cause one, everyone on the outside presumes that Native people have all the same politics, which is the first fucked up assumption. Two, we do the same thing; we presume we are all on the same page too and I had this… I mean I've had tons of horrible experiences that have led people to either decide not to work with me or whatever, just because I can be really critical sometimes. And people are like "let's start a campaign to get out the vote" and I'm just like "you're presuming we are all on the same page politically and you just told me we didn't have to have a discussion about politics before we talked about tactics that we wanted to use in a campaign." There is definitely some deep things that we need to tackle. Yeah, sometimes I find myself dislocating myself from what I feel should be authenticity, who I am and the expression of who I want to be and honestly I think that's part of the expression… Out of frustration is the differentiation between de-colonization and anti-colonial… I don't think people are gonna get it otherwise. Unless there is a strong enough differentiation where people understand how to engage and how to not. I've told people through music, through work over the years, if they ask, things they can do to engage or not. I am just tired of doing that, I AM tired of sitting in those circles and trying to hold hands. And basically just getting frustrated with people who need that time to figure things out. Sometimes it's easy to subscribe to that, what is it? It's not a treadmill, it's a hamster wheel or… (Sorry hamsters) of discourse and the jargon that goes along with it.

A! — Yeah. Ok let's talk about some anarchist stuff. Weasel words, consensus, accountability.

K – Yeah 'cause I do want to ask you more things.. Early on I had some issues with collective process; the quick response is just noting how people fetishize things easily. It's just like the term "community." What does that mean?

A! — Right. It's a weasel word.

K — I mean we could have a long discussion about it. Yeah, people focus more on the process than the outcome sometimes and that's the issue. Just like you can sit for fucking hours in a meeting or you can try to focus on getting shit done and doing the work, and sometimes that is the process. There's that zine Fetishizing Process, which I think does a great job of sharing some anecdotes about how badly and how easily consensus process can be manipulated. We've had some great discussions… It's the same thing with the word "accountability." It's still somewhat prevalent to fetishize accountability processes in communities and sometimes it is just as easily manipulated as consensus. To the point where we have seen people attacked through accountability processes. So here we have adopted a pairing of accountability and responsibility. There has always gotta be an element of that through whatever process. I think it's great just anytime to throw out words sometimes, but there is also a danger in just deconstructing everything. Where do we stop? For me I have this point of reference, or points of reference which are always culturally based, which is sort of grounding for lack of a better term. Right now, you know like keh being our familial clan-based relationships, which to me I see, I use that interpretation of collective interchangeably, to varying degrees. One of the lessons I learned early on with the big mountain resistance was that everybody was just frustrated after the late 80s and early 90s. The fragmentation of some of the families in the resistance was just like, "Whoa, if we just had unity we would be effective and successful and have victory." And I had some of my elders, some of my relatives, say, "Well if we were unified it might be easier for them to break us and sometimes we just need to be in our own camps, doing our things."

A! — Forcing them to negotiate separate deals.

K- Yeah, and so I always took that with me and used it as a frame of reference when I thought about any joint or collaborative or collective effort. Just thinking about what are the terms of unity and what are the terms for working together, 'cause sometimes people focus too much on the process and we forget about the outcomes that can be achieved in different ways. I really like having discussions like that… We just like the sense of experimentation and we like to take risks here sometimes, see what we can do based upon shitty experiences we have had everywhere else. Just having discussions with other people, looking at some of the methods that they have used and just being like, "yeah, fuck that, let's try something else because it's not working." For years, every time I would get involved in any type of collective, one of the first things we talked about was modifying consensus if it's necessary. There's something to be said about over-focusing on the process and forgetting about what the actual desired outcomes are. So I agree with you on that. Obviously we've come to some conclusions from different perspectives. I would like to hear more from you about that though. I'm sure you have different experiences.

A! — Well I think I stopped… I mean, I was pretty into the process around consensus for a great number of years. I feel like every group I came into that had people less-experienced in these topics, I really walked people down the country road. Oh and partially that's because I was in the Che Cafe (in San Diego), for a couple years and part of the process of becoming a core member was being educated… The Che Cafe is actually at the UC San Diego, and there were four other worker cooperatives at UC San Diego. One of them was a bookstore, they were the smart ones, and they actually, you had to go through a class where they taught you how to think about consensus and there's a book called the "Red Doc", it was a very thick binder and you had to go through the whole thing. I learned afterwards that those people were Maoists, but they were definitely teaching the Anarchists how to do consensus. So that was actually why, I mean I got the hard lesson, [Klee laughs] I got the full nine yards; they had very clear flow charts and the whole thing. They had created it out of a process of decades of big fighting. They did one thing that we actually replicated through my entire time in collectives, which was crit, self-crit. Do you know about this, from the 70s? It actually comes from China. I mean crit, self-crit is basically, we are in a collective together and you do something that is politically inappropriate, crit, self-crit is the process of you being thrashed over it, in public, within the group, within the central committee. To the point to you having to confess your mistake. This was seen as a way to even out power relationships. So in the context of the Che Cafe, every three months the fifteen of us would sit together and block out the whole day–with no one coming in or going out–to criticize each other. It was, I mean especially for me, this really was my, like, becoming an adult sort of thing. Prior to that happening, I threw temper tantrums. A part of my personality and my rage issues and all the rest. I threw temper tantrums. And boy after like two crit, self-crits I was cured. But of course, as you can imagine, there were maybe one or two other people who came from like a poor background. Everyone else… these were the children of rich people. I wasn't a student, they were all UC San Diego students. It was a crazy thing for me to do, but that was… Whatever, that was part of my process; it was part of how I came to understand this stuff. And five years later I never worked with another group that did that because, actually that's not fair. I have become increasingly critical of this over time. And especially what I feel is the sloppy use of language. Every anarchist group is not a collective. Anytime an anarchist decides to do something with another anarchist is not an example of consensus. But that's, it's kind of like a pet peeve, like when people say "very unique", another pet peeve, but um… So I guess what it comes to is this point where there has become an obsession with process because anarchists

don't have particularly good answers to the questions "what does that mean?" Americans, by and large, are Protestants and the Protestants, they care about work a lot. It is part of their religion that they're gonna work. As a matter of fact I grew up in Western Michigan; the neighborhoods in western Michigan were Black people, Poles (as the poorest of the white people they got their own ghetto), Indians, the Dutch. And the Dutch brought their type of Lutheranism to western Michigan, and they believe in pre-destination, so they work hard because they aren't sure which way it is going to go [heaven or hell] but it's already been decided. Anyways, big long story. The point is that…

K – I'm always interested in the long parts of the short stories.

A! — Yeah, of course. That's where the flavor is! So the point is Americans by and large think very functionally. Anytime you share your crazy idea, the first question is always "How you gonna do it?" So the response that has really come through the peace movement of the 70s , but really of the 80s and the–not clamshell alliance but whatever it was called [the abalone alliance]–that was in the bay area. They are the people who brought consensus into the anarchist discourse. It wasn't part of it at all before then. So that happened in the 80s and we have been burdened with it ever since. Basically I would like to have you join me in the resistance to it , but really it is joining the resistance to weasel words, 'cause what has happened is that we just use these words to describe everything even if they aren't necessarily particularly accurate.

K – Yeah absolutely.

A! — 'Cause a group of people sitting around a table and more or less agreeing on doing something together, that still feels like a pretty good way to do things.

K – Yeah. Certainly the will of the majority or impositions are very challenging, but I think that is part of… at least the approach needs to be mindful of… I mean, indigenous organizing with the NGO non-profit world on an international level is focused on free prior informed consent, which I think makes sense to people. And it's applicable I think. Right now there's a bit of a monopoly on that term, in the international indigenous organizing spheres, but I think there's different ways we can apply it beyond so-called human-rights struggles. There is something to be said about free, prior, and informed consent.

A! — The free part is the deception.

K – Yeah, right. Especially when defined by international institutions.

A! — …and the violence all over the place there. Just because violence doesn't look like violence any more.

K – That's the thing. More recently I have been really fascinated with talking about legitimacy too, and just thinking about what that means in relation to… and I think it came out of one of the Rolling Thunders, there was a really good essay about legitimacy and I just took the word out of context. I don't even remember what they were talking about but it was interesting. I think that sometimes if you have these terms and then you apply them you are legitimate, within these circles. And if you don't have them, "What are you doing here?"

A! — Actually I was going to mention this earlier, I was always struck by the land bridge discussion.

K – Yeah, the Bering Strait.

A! — Specifically the idea of how, like I have challenged people a couple different times on the idea that… perhaps I accept that there were people who came out of the heart of Africa, the Euphrates and Tigris, the Euphrates Basin? I'm willing to accept that "POP!" People came. But you're not willing to accept any other point of origin? In other words most people who are

scientifically-minded and believe in evolution are very clear that everyone walked from there. It blows my mind.

K – Yeah. We did a tour with our traditional dance group and took our music up into those areas 'cause there is an Athabaskan dialect, as it's called, has always fascinated anthropologists and we were talking to them, and… You would have a much better conversation with my dad to some degree 'cause he doesn't… Like, he gets straight to the point. So it's what we asked them up there, my dad was talking to them too and we were just asking them what they thought about this and my dad was saying, "Hey we're relatives, in some way, shape, or form we know that in our history this is what we say. That there was a time of conflict here and some of our folks migrated up north and some folks came down and we have words or names for them," and one of the things that folks up there, Dine said was that, if there's a bridge, traffic goes both ways. And we were just laughing about it, because of their interpretation. I think the important thing for me, the main point I mentioned earlier, we have our origin story, our traditional history which is, that's how we know ourselves in this world. It's a challenging discussion when you have people dislocating that and taking that from us and calling it myths.•

Anarchy and Anthropology

by Kevin Tucker

One from the archives. The following is an article that we unearthed by Kevin Tucker which was featured in Species Traitor: An Insurrectionary Anarcho-primitivist Journal, Issue 3 (Spring 2003). The author looks at anthropology with a skeptical and sobering (no pun intended) gaze that offers many insights that we hope can spur further discussions on this particular school of "truth", and maybe lay others to rest. The discussion of anthropology's relationship to science and reason, and the author's asking of whether or not anthropology is a tool that we can "use" without reproducing that system, were particularly good. Though this article was not submitted, it was certainly worthy of a reprint. If you can get your paws on the issue itself, there are some more gems in there that merit a gander. Perhaps Tucker's views have changed since this article was first published 11 years ago, but maybe we can leave that question to the archaeologists.

As Theresa Kintz points out in her interview, anthropology (referring here to the general field that consists of biological/physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics), like all sciences, is a tool of the civilized. Radical anthropologist Stanley Diamond has written: "Civilization originates in conquest abroad and repression at home." The role of science has been to justify and perfect that conquest and repression, and anthropology isn't an exception. However, through the work of anthropologists (both unintentionally and intentional) we've come to a greater understanding of the human-animal and the anarchist state we've lived in for over 99% of our existence. We come against the problem of having to work with such tools of the civilizers while trying to destroy the entire mental and physical system that originated it.

Outsiders Looking In and Away

The original anthropologists primarily worked from the accounts of conquistadors, missionaries and travelers bringing back news of the 'savages' beyond the realms of civilization. The two options that the conquerors saw for the 'primitives' was to wipe them out or assimilate them,

though as we have historically seen, both have led to similar outcomes. The assimilation was spearheaded by missionaries and those who found these people had more value alive (as labor) than dead, although the two are hardly separable. The hopes of the missionaries would be to pave the way for a 'friendly' relationship and to 'civilize' the 'savages' through their God.

The work of the time would predominately be self-serving accounts of the rise to civilization from 'savagery' and 'barbarism'. The major turn would be with Franz Boas who focused on the need for direct field work around the turn of the century. Boas, a German immigrant to the United States, saw the natives of this country being slaughtered off and fast. His concern was that all of this knowledge would die off with these people and began the turn of anthropological work to recording the entirety of the knowledge being destroyed.

With Boas came the importance of describing and cataloguing aspects of people. This kind of approach is work of the scientist. Despite what good intentions Boas and his followers had, their work was entirely subjective. By describing everything that one sees, there is no kind of 'objectivity'. There is only a situation that German philosopher Hans Peter Duerr calls "riding the fence", meaning that there is a person trying to understand one reality to translate it to those in another reality. That person then is stuck in the middle, always a part of one culture and is therefore only capable of observing the other culture through their perceptions. What Duerr points to is that there is no kind of 'scientific method' that can even begin to bring about what it proposes it will . In this case, that is the field of anthropology acting as the study of humans, or as Stanley Diamond says, "the study of men in crisis by men in crisis."

The process that Boas started was furthered by Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski a few decades later after his work with the Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea. Malinowski's initial fieldwork there ended up lasting longer as he moved onto a remote island to avoid deportation during World War One. Over this period he became immersed in Trobriand culture, defining what he would later call "participant-observation". Duerr comes to mind as I can see Malinowski the scientist becoming somewhat emerged into this 'primitive' society to return to Europe. Knowing his situation wasn't permanent he always had a foot out the door in some respects.

I don't feel this wipes all validity from his work, I just feel that when looking at these cases, these are all things we have to consider. This kind of 'observation' carries with it the scientism of objectivity, believing that the wholeness of a culture can be observed and understood from neutrality. French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss has recognized that while science is still myth, it carries the possibility of finding a 'factual reality'. He states: "Science will never give us all the answers. What we can try to do is to increase very slowly the number and the quality of the answers we are able to give, and this, I think, we can do only through science." Through even this rather liberal assessment we are left with the belief in 'hard facts', and while Lévi-Strauss has denied 'scientism' he has none-the-less carried its underpinnings.

Through this, all of the positive outcomes of anthropology must also be understood in a way that is independent of civilized assertions. What we have seen from the field of anthropology and understanding the problems we face now is that "[f]undamentally we are people of the Pleistocene" , we are gatherer-hunters. The anarcho-primitivist critique takes this understanding very seriously, meaning that civilization is a recent invention and the effects of domestication are just a sign of our urging to return to the way of life that has shaped our being. With this, there is little reason why we shouldn't uphold this kind of information, because it speaks directly to the repressed gatherer-hunter in all of us civilized peoples. What we should always be wary of is the dry scientism that underlies the specific search that anthropology takes on.

Creating Reality

In his book, Red Earth, White Lies, Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. opens up questions about "the myth of scientific fact". His drive in this was to debate the well established theory that Native Americans arrived on this continent by crossing the Bering Strait within the last 20,000 years (one of the more modestly accepted estimates). In the eyes of Deloria and other Native Americans (though not all) this theory, established as 'fact', is racist. I'm concerned in certain ways about validity of some arguments which may be based on 'land claim' issues, which has been an accusation against this particular book. As an anarchist, I feel that nothing makes any specific 'land' someone's 'property', although I understand this kind of legal assertion against governments. Regardless of this possibility, I find that a lot of the arguments are worthy of heavy consideration.

What Deloria draws upon in this book are the ways in which anthropology, as a science, will pick and choose what 'evidence' it will bring into its 'factual' reality (although Deloria is guilty of this as well). This is a serious problem of all scientific understandings, a conception of a kind of 'absolute truth' which underlies all of existence (this dependency on 'absolute truth' is the reason that I would qualify most religion as science). What happens is that the possibilities for what is 'real' are framed only within what is 'known as fact' for those who are observing. A lot of people have a hard time understanding that science is all just theorizing, in this way it becomes only possible to think of people coming into this continent through the Bering Strait. I can't say I take the 'science' side or the 'indigenous' side (since neither really exist), but I think that scientific 'fact' has limited our ability to look to other possibilities.

The problem, as I see it, isn't in trying to figure out what is 'right' or 'wrong' but realizing that a system that carries such values and can impose them upon others is the problem. I, like Theresa, have little interest in battling myths with others, and as I will point to later, feel that a mythic, ecological consciousness is important to rewilding our lives, but I feel that anthropology can be vital only in deconstructing the universalized and institutionalized myths that underlie and maintain civilization.

Cataloguing Conquest

The past of archaeology isn't much different than the rest of anthropology. The kind of observation that Malinowski brought into the fieldwork of anthropology could be said to be the basis of archaeological digs. It wasn't till after Darwin's Descent of Man (1859) that archaeologists would even recognize the past as existing outside the 6,000 year span that the Church allowed since 'creation'. In the new world it wasn't till Boas criticisms came to reshape the way digs were done. Archaeological digs, as we know them now, didn't take their current form till the 1960's through the work of Lewis Binford after the 1947 origin of the Carbon-14 dating technique, explicit use of evolutionary theory, employment of cultural and ecological concepts, and the use of systems theory.

Archaeology is essentially the study of the past through material remains. The work of archaeologists can only really be useful when put into context with how certain remains are used by more recently observed peoples or common usage of similar materials. What archaeology really has to work with is finding the exact location of things in the earth. Their work is to literally dig up the past and theorize on the implications of their findings. In many ways this is working with

a huge disadvantage and moving into a lot of speculation, but as Theresa points out, there is a lot that can be learned from this despite the handicap. Some have taken these findings and added to the critique of civilization, such as John Zerzan, Jared Diamond, and Clive Ponting to name only a few.

What I see as problematic here is the actualities of all of this. While I see no point in discrediting the effects of all the collected information that points to the inherent problems of civilization, I do think there may be a point when this becomes self-serving. I'm not interested in ever saying that we should stop looking, but I'm concerned that this search has overcome the possibilities that are being opened up. When I was writing these questions to Theresa, something was constantly coming into my mind; that we know that civilization is fucked up and that this is not the way of life that humans have become ecologically evolved into, but how much do we have to constantly reassert it before we do something about it. I'm not accusing these folks of not trying to do something, but I become concerned in general.

Looking into the fields of anthropology, I constantly see people like Boas who are concerned with constantly recording and cataloguing all the problems of civilization. What comes to mind is a photograph from the Vietnam War of three American soldiers raping a Vietnamese woman. The war photographer (as well as the photographer and journalist in general) have made it their work to constantly record the destruction that is occurring, possibly with the hopes that what they have recorded may spur others to action. How much does it take before we stop just recording hoping that someone else will come along before we act? In many ways the anthropologist is just like that war photographer, watching destruction take place right before their eyes and recording it. Perhaps this is the success of domestication in disempowering individuals to feel that they can have no impact on the situation, but my interests remain purely revolutionary. I again am forced to ask what it will take before we stop being mere observers as our home and all life is being destroyed before we do something about it. I feel anthropology can serve as a weapon against the civilized 'reality', but I'm afraid that so long as it remains within scientific understanding it will seek to only make us all participant-observers to destruction.

As Theresa has mentioned, the work of the archaeologists is the business before the bulldozers. This can be a tough situation. Knowing that developers will completely destroy the land without regard would it be doing something positive to try and pull out the pieces of human past that will be plowed away? Can it serve as a kind of deterrent against developers or is a dig just another method of clearing out the land, whether developers follow or not? Most importantly, I'm concerned with finding a way of trying to stop the destruction from the start, and not trying to make the best of a shitty situation.

Revolutionary Potential

The work of radical anthropologists like Theresa, Pierre Clastres, Marshall Sahlins, Richard B. Lee, and Stanley Diamond (to name a few) is vital to moving anarchist critique and action. What is being uncovered by anthropology is too valuable to be discarded, and it is inspiring to see people from within these fields realizing the potential influence of their work. However, it is equally important to use that evidence as not just 'findings' and 'evidence'. To move beyond civilization we will need to use this kind of knowledge to reawaken the wildness that sleeps within us. Anthropology will remain vital only so long as it speaks to us and we are able to use it without becoming it.

The exact same applies to history and other sciences. I personally feel that the work of the evolutionary theorists was vital to overthrow the scientific mythology of the religious conquerors. However, as a rewilding human, I'm forced to question the potential of this finding. To what degree is it important that we 'know' the specifics of our entire past? What is important is a mythological (anti-institutionalized) consciousness that enhances who we are within the context of the community of life that we are a part of. The success of civilization exists in reducing our reality to a backdrop of things that we exist apart from.

What I'm referring to above isn't a kind of intentional ignorance or turning the cheek on 'knowledge', but to question what is a part of the human-animal. From my own understanding, a mythic, unwritten view is one that is able to flow with the world and can achieve what we'd hope to get from history and science without subjective implications on the world that we are theorizing about. The problem that is being opened here is getting to there from here. I'm interested in a reawakening of primal consciousness that has been repressed by civilized domestication in order to justify and continue conquest and exploitation. We are constantly up against questions of how can we use these things that shape the civilized reality in order to destroy it. Towards this I can only point to what I think is problematic, in this case being any kind of complete faith in sciences like anthropology and using what speaks to my being without disregarding what I just don't care for.

The point in extending on this discussion is to find a way of using these kinds of findings without using the system that has produced them. I feel that a revolt against civilization will require a revolt against the scientism of civilization (Reason). What Theresa has laid out here is a view from inside the field about what is going on. I don't agree entirely with her view, but I can respect her attempts to overturn from within without preoccupation or delusions of anthropology as the 'wonderscience' (as Lévi-Strauss surely would see it). The path to anarchy will require calling into question all of the 'sacred cows' that have laid the path for rational dissent so that we can return to our primal being.

Don't Turn Away

by Diane di Prima

if you are working on something don't turn away &

especially if it hurts don't look away how many how deep the sore flesh eaten to bone by infection

don't turn away like hyena Vulture waiting guardians don't look away guardians of the edge, of

Port0au-Prince, don't look don't look away the wraiths of forbidden hope don't forbidden love

don't dust whose skulls we bury who and bury wehre shall we keep the dead don't loook away

don't blink don't turn it is the same north for the old ones don't look away south for the children

i thought they came to stay look now look thru yr tears if you have any if there are any tears left

look they magnify tears magnify what you can still see

what what look

do you know mud warm mud what breeds in it no don't ook it up don't study it's all before your

yes it's in your skin your memory you can taste it too don't refuse your memories they ARE you

don't look away don't let that one lie face down any longer turn it over is it he or she IS there a

face part of a face look close eyeballs are delicious to many zero in don't go we have only just come to this place it's not a horror show.

what does it mean to rot? a great healer asked h e looked he invited all to look. what does it mean

to ROT what comes apart in the moist air look in the rain look in the streaming mud

what is a mass grave? this is not a rhetorical question. stand on the brink & look look close as you

can never mind the smell this will only take a moment I promise how long do you actually think

you have? stand on the edge the brink who is rotting here? what falls to pieces? how do you know a piece?

look in discover stumble by accident on a grave at the edge of town is it fresh? look closer is it fairly

new? the mud is alive with forms moving shaping self-destructing recombinant they are not fearful

any longer look bear witness look earth is mass grave in the warming air

Answers to Questions Not Asked: Anarchists & Anthropology

-by Aragorn!

The issues with anthropology have little to do with anthropology itself. Wanting to understand and hear other people's stories is a sound desire. It is arguable (but I'd side with it) that stories are one of the best things about humans and hearing new stories is one of the best ways to get to know new people. These things also have nothing to do with anthropology.

Those who confuse the specialization of an academic discipline with human curiosity are the ones doing the work of society, of the social order. Anarchists in general understand that one can observe, test, and propose solutions to any number of problems, in any number of areas of inquiry, without the stamp of approval of the institutions that discipline the curious into orthodoxy, that rely on their own logic, and that steer such inquiry for their own interests. When one eschews these institutions but continues their work, dividing daily life into narrow categories — even when one does it critically — then one is still doing the work of alienation and fragmentation.

Critique Isn't Nearly Enough

By whatever name it is called: anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, etc. human experience has been fragmented into a thousand shards. Those who do the new ordering and

the recombining of the shards will be the new managers. Whether these specialists are speaking truth is irrelevant compared to the process of dissection, isolation, and objective truth telling they are attempting to do. At some point the truth is in the details and those details are about something entirely different from the relationships I have and am capable of having, the details are about something only a specialist would know and understand. The devil-in-the-details is society and the bargain is that tomorrow will be much like today.

Our project here is not a critical engagement with anarcho-anthropologists. Fans of the Other (whether it's anime, Native Americans, or paleolithic era hunter-gatherers) are fairly harmless as far as they go. Our project is with the thinking that may (but may not) underlie the rhetoric of some anarcho-anthropologists but absolutely buttresses the thinking about what the role of society is; i.e. it works to normalize the other, flatten cultural difference, and participate in truth claims.

To put this a bit differently… I believe that the destruction of the western project (what some call civilization and what I call society), is a goal that I share with many of these neo-romanticists but we absolutely disagree about not just how to do it, but how to think about doing it. Painfully, I don't believe we are even at the stage of a debate about tactics, but are instead at a preliminary discussion on how to conceive of the problem, which at some point may turn into a sharing of ideas about strategy that may result in debates about tactics. We are tentative comrades who — if the current reticence towards examining basic ideas is any indication — probably have a long way to go before meaningful cooperation can begin.

What Is The Most Fundamental Of All

A sort of shared beginning where we can start a conversation could come from the lovely words of Against His-Story, Against Leviathan! (AHAL).

Leviathan is turning into Narcissus, admiring its own synthetic image in its own synthetic pond, enraptured by its spectacle of itself.

It is a good time for people to let go of its sanity, its masks and armors, and go mad, for they are already being ejected from its pretty polis.

-Fredy Perlman

This book spins a creation story of Leviathan and of an enclosure—that we can safely call Civilization — that has captivated us all. But it's not a true story. It is not Truth. It did not happen the way Fredy writes in the book (not even close). One could say that his story speaks to greater truths than the actual things that happened, and that's fair, but let's be clear among ourselves that the story of AHAL isn't a true one, it's something else.

Truth is an insistence on a single interpretation of facts on the ground. It lays evidentiary claims to reality by way of disciplines like the experimentation and rational claim-making of the natural sciences. It may claim a tentative or partial nature but it bases all argumentation on the centrality of, and provability or belief in, a central thesis.

To bring this into a discussion about anarchism and anthropology, the central conceit of the anarcho-anthropologists is the theory that prior to the first granary we (humans) were free of coercion, hierarchy, patriarchy (and the toxic mixture of those and more that we call Leviathan). By fixing this line of demarcation in time, location, and import we orient our dreams of a better/different world. If that line isn't real, either because freedom existed both pre- and post- Civilization or because Leviathanesque elements existed prior to priests and the first assertion of a

monopoly of violence, then the entire orientation around the line should be seen for being as utterly subjective as it is.

Serious play requires serious thinking and commitment (and the ability to laugh every step of the way). The issue with truth is how it considers play: as what only children and the ignorant do. The issue with truth is that at some point it will always insist on being taken seriously and will punish those who ignore the evidence — usually first with scorn and eventually with force.

As we go mad here in the shadow of Leviathan our problems seem to fracture and multiply. Is there a way out? Where do we begin? Where does the shadow begin and end? Are we truly mad at all? I would propose that these questions, all of them, are absolutely normal and equally (not) true. The monsters around us thrive in our quiet misery, in our pretend calculations around tripping them up and rising above, and above all in the ways that we understand ourselves in their shadow. The idea of Leviathan as truth is another pernicious way of being framed by ideas (as in the old adage about it's theory when you have ideas and ideology when they have you).

The reification of civilization was not the goal of AHAL. As I read it, the goal of AHAL was to tell a story about a strange and maddening Leviathan, to problematize our relationship with what has come before, but also to see ourselves in that history. As in Fredy's story we are zeks (workers, slaves) but as most of us have no remembrance of elsewhere, of home, he makes it clear how few tools we will have to contest this new disaster.

Behemoth

But what if Leviathan isn't the worst of it. What if it isn't the end but the chapter before a new horrorshow, dominated by a different mythological framework, one that literally disembodies and ensorcels us all, one that crushes Leviathan beneath its hooves, that assumes our disconnection from place, from home, and from each other as fellow travelers, that assumes that we primarily interact with other zeks through screens and ASCII characters. That builds on us, not as zeks, but as consumers of a life that we fear to live. The story of this new Behemoth isn't about the violent dispossession of us from our homes, but of us from our capacity to imagine and make decisions for ourselves. For our resistance to Behemoth will be even more marginalized from the order of things than seizing the means of production was against Leviathan, it'll be utterly constrained by communication technologies and superficialities.

Which is why we must reject Leviathan and Behemoth, just as we already reject Capitalism and the State. We must do this not just as abstractions more alive than most of our personal relationships, but in the very ways that they serve to frame reality, and the difference between what we want to be (or used to be) and what we are. Truth claims are traps that begin with our critical facilities and force us to either remove them or be stuck.

Critique And Hostility

The tension I'd like to build here involves a sort of knowing, understanding details about how the triumvirate (spectacle, biopower, and bloom) works, while at the same time not becoming trapped by that knowledge. As things get more complex (which the operation of a seven-billion-zek-machine necessarily will) those who can wrap their heads around more and more of the whole operation will be rewarded with the perception of their participation. One can become a respected commenter on political events, make a headline or two themselves, or become a paid

functionary of state or industry. By throwing oneself into one's job or into correcting the ills that one can identify and address in the world around them, one can truly make no difference at all.

I assume a reader who is hostile to this arrangement from both directions. On the one hand a revulsion for the business-as-usual roles one is rationalized into becoming and on the other that "making a difference" makes any difference at all, hostile to the idea that we are all eager little producers — of ideas if not products — just waiting our turn to have our products be popular and trendy. I propose that this hostility be destructive; rather than expressing itself as an aloof brand of cool, it should embody attack.

This is a distinct operation from what is traditionally called critique. Critique is always a sort of loving embrace, a negotiation between peers, and a quibbling about details. One critiques an essay, book, or song as one who is also engaged in writing or singing on the themes involved. Critique is usually inside-talking where there is no outside. This is usually disconcerting to those trapped by the context of critique-critiquer (no one likes to be critiqued) but irrelevant, trite, and ridiculous to anyone outside of this insider relationship. These relationships are called dialectical because those inside tend towards a similar goal and agree, by way of reasoned dialog, about the truth of a subject or the goal of their shared project.

Attack, or destructive knowledge, is mostly about understanding terrain, capabilities, and timing. It is not about a pursuit of truth or a purposeful productive project. It is not about a barbarian charge against those things one despises (where would such a charge begin? Or end?) Rather it searches for ways around nodes of critique (aka dialectical sandtraps or clusters of truth negotiations) for its own ends. Attack as an anarchist form of knowledge-acquisition means those ends are likely connected to the destruction of existing systems of social, cultural, and material organization. As it is largely unclear how to resolve the central paradox of knowing as it relates to changing or becoming, attack necessarily becomes languorous, ambivalent, and idle. Entire industries exist to take advantage of this tension, stifling instincts and the energy of attack by way of converting it into simple consumption, partial activism, and ideological solutions. (We fail, therefore we drink. We succeed, therefore we drink).

How could this look different? I will take a specific example. In the Bay Area currently — but within radical politics generally — questions of race have been absolutely captivating. Both from the experiences of minorities who want to express themselves and their difference — in a world that just doesn't seem to give a fuck — and from the experiences of those who know that they have been raised to, on some level, not give a fuck, are levels of anxious efforts towards… what? On the post-marxist side of radical race efforts are projects like race traitor (and the ideological schemes that have grown from its seeds) that claim that the key to solving the problems of our age is abolishing the white race. The liberal/occupy side of radical race efforts was exemplified by the proposal in December of 2011 in Oakland to change the name of #OccupyOakland to Decolonize Oakland. (This argues — put very simply — that the language of occupy is that of colonization whereas the terminology of decolonization is about growing, sharing, connecting to traditions, healing, and education. To put it differently, it argues that language matters and it has an action plan on how to achieve the results it desires.) A final example comes from the post-occupy decolonization movement, which demands that white allies speak about their racial privilege, that occupy activists address genocidal violence, and that future encampments be organized and led by those who need them most.

There are a thousand ways to critically engage with these three perspectives, all of which involve accepting basic premises that may, or may not, be antithetical to how one actually thinks,

but how can one attack them? How can our engagement with interesting and serious problems embody hostility to pre-existing methods and thinking about them? Obviously the first step is to lay them out in this way, to expose their analytical frameworks and solution-based orientations.

Another step is to understand that the politics, the words on paper and claims to goals, are only one level of what is happening. Another level is one of social arrangement and relationships. Most politics is also cover for a social scene and the way its members communicate with themselves about good and evil, right and wrong, and what the order of operations should be.

Most jargons and frameworks are about creating insider-outsider relationships and forcing the discussion (what the good talk about) to live entirely inside the framework. There is no outside.

As a matter of political practice, the attacking anarchist always has to be outside. An anarchist never accepts the premise that forces one inside of other people's assumptions. If these assumptions begin with a series of definitional exercises that constrain reality to essential categories and then claim domination over them… then reject it all.

What Is The Space Between 5,000 Nations And One

Not even Indians can relate themselves to this type of creature who, to anthropologists, is the "real" Indian. Indian people begin to feel that they are merely shadows of a mythical super-Indian.

Many anthros spare no expense to reinforce this sense of inadequacy in order to further support their influence over Indian people.

-Vine Deloria, Anthropologists And Other Friends

After the treaties were signed and the bloody marches completed the government of the US started a long game. To describe this game as genocide is fine, as far as it goes, but what's relevant here is that it's the game that states play by default. Destroy all distinct cultures and organisms. Eliminate all threats to the monopoly of violence (which is the bedrock upon which states are built).

There is a straight line from the mouth-foam frothing colonialism of the 19th century to the secular liberalism of the 20th. This line is drawn in the expansion of job titles like legal assistant, program specialist, coordinator, researcher, etc, (recent job titles drawn from BIA.gov). It's drawn as straight as the railroad, telegraph, highways, and fiber optic cables are. We participate in this heritage (this straight line) when we accept their terms of engagement and that is particularly the case when pan-identities (synthetic amalgamated identities created in the past few centuries) are considered true and real. It is clear that the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians are not the same, do not have the same interests or daily concerns, as the Sicangu Lakota residents of the Rosebud Reservation or the federally unrecognized people of Ohlone descent scattered around California — but referring to natives as one singular thing, as a fixed singular identity is seemingly natural. It is the way 500 nations have been distilled into one, one that is oppressed sure, but that is fading into the sunset of history as a single noble savage slumped over his defeated mount slowly plodding away. It is one sad story in a world where there are a thousand of them, all competing for our attention.

But this pan-identification goes the other way too. White people do not, in fact, exist. There is no white culture, tradition, or material condition. White, in the context of current racial identity and discourse, is another way to express negation: it is the absence of good food, dancing, and

song. It is the way of lamenting how exchange relationships have become confused and entangled with all human relationships and gives that lamentation a cause; white people. And this is true, the forces that have created a phenomena that is called "white" are the same that have confused us about our relationships to each other and forced us into believing that massive pan-identities are singular, true ones. But these forces are not specifically white — white supremacy (if that's even a useful term, which I highly doubt) is a symptom, not a cause. These causes are something, and somewhere, else.

Anthropologists, sociologists, marxists, etc are in the trade of creating these categories and using them to dominate others. They are doing the post-modern work of something-like-genocide. They directly aided in the transition of thousands of tribal formations (in North America and elsewhere) into categories of citizens, and today into categories of consumers, sub-cultures, and counter-cultures. Whatever their motivations, the god they serve is society: not social relationships between peers, but an ordered hierarchical world composed of classes (abstracted tribes), politics (abstracted collaboration), and consumers (abstracted humans).

The Sound Of One Hand Clapping

Whether it is a little matter of the relationship between a cave and the shadow on a wall, the author and the reader, or the observer and the observed, there has been a deep concern since records have been kept between those who keep the records, write them down, keep them safe, and those who are the subject of those records. If one were critical of these mechanisms and techniques one could reconcile themselves to political partnerships with the subjects, perhaps would find themselves protesting the record keepers, the keepers of truth, and resolved to the ways that the Internet has reconciled the difference. The gap between the cave and the wall is now illuminated by the electric glow of information passing by. That gap, between the name and what is being named, is also what is powering the whole show.

"The European materialist tradition of despiritualizing the universe is very similar to the mental process which goes into dehumanizing another person. And who seems most expert at dehumanizing other people? And why? (...) And what the process has in common for each group doing the dehumanizing is that it makes it all right to kill and otherwise destroy other people. One of the Christian commandments says, "Thou shalt not kill," at least not humans, so the trick is to mentally convert the victims into nonhumans. Then you can proclaim violation of your own commandment as a virtue."

-Russel Means,

"For America to Live, Europe Must Die"

Prior to the rise of mass society, when you knew the name or family of every person you met, there was no Other. There were different families, tribes, and ways but they were recognizable. One way to account for the otherification that is the hallmark of society is pure numbers. Regardless, there is no going back. We now live in a world populated by Others, by other people and other ways of treating and considering the shared problems we all have. We are no longer able to consent to this othering, as it's built into the economic arrangement and we live as victims of it rather than as agents.

The only way to fight the othering instinct is to keep your circles radically small, and resist attempts to be integrated into this society. Since integration is the alpha and omega of the triumviarate, this effort is nearly impossible. Every resistance is seen as seductive by the cooptive forces of commerce and pluralism. Becoming impossible to manage is one of the few human (by

which I mean the inverse of mass society) instincts left. Mostly though, this instinct has been manicured out of existence and soon will entirely live in stories and histories, as life escapes into screens and flipping bits. ‘

The whole continent of North America appears to be destined by Divine Providence to be peopled by one nation, speaking one language, professing one general system of religious and political principles, and accustomed to one general tenor of social usages and customs. For the common happiness of them all, for their peace and prosperity, I believe it is indispensable that they should be associated in one federal Union.

-John Quincy Adams, 1811

Military power has severe limits. It implements violence against other recognizable forces and then retreats. This is more true now than perhaps it was in the 18th century but unless you are prepared to salt the earth, at some point forces that work with different forms of logic come into play. Society (especially as we understand it) does not operate by way of violence, or it does but the ways in which this is true are so obfuscated by the triumvirate that one barely notices it. Society operates by the simple mechanisms of going to work everyday, collecting your checks from your fixed income, traveling on the roads provided by taxpayers, etc. It couldn't be more normal that one-step-at-a-time, one-day-at-a-time, one-choice-at-a-time society (fixed, post-modern, and (in)tolerant) becomes the way we manage ourselves. This doesn't mean we have escaped a time of managers, but that even they have little power: their role is more as functionaries: oiling gears; filling out work schedules; making sure budgets are adhered to, rather than telling those beneath them when, where, and what to do.

Today's managers require a sophisticated education in scandal management, communication skills, and timing, to maintain the operation of their little piece of machinery and their few entrepreneurial subjects. Few managers know that when they are training themselves in art history or anthropology, they are actually learning how to operate humans inside of organizational charts. But they are.

The End Is The End

Over the past six months I've had the opportunity to answer a question I never expected to have posed to me: "Why are you so hard on Anthropology?" The argument being that it's just another discipline much like others and only a poor relative of the big social sciences. Moreover, say its defenders, anthropology has learned the lessons of [Man The Hunter, Clastres, Deloria] and no longer [believes in progress, sees the Western project as inevitable, aids in genocide] and should not be held responsible for its past. As a matter of fact — they say — it should be considered the best curator of that past, as it knows where the bodies are buried and — they argue — the cause of freedom & anarchy is best served by honestly and critically engaging with the cultures that have come before, which are only revealed through anthropology…

The anthropologist is Judas but is eager to redeem himself. The point is that the specifics — how humans interacted prior to the toxic abstraction of Civilization — matter. Somewhere in the details of what has come before will be the evidence of a crime, a universal, agreed-upon-by-everyone, evil that we can smash like we do the idols of Racism, Sexism, etc. Indeed we have fallen but our redemption story is the only story we can write, given the evidence of our crimes.

This argument demonstrates the romantic desire to return to Eden: Eden and the possibility of return has always been a central theme of Western thought and is answered in two ways

by anarcho-anthropologists. One answer conceives of a future living in the shadow of the past (at least the written past) listing as superior and preferable examples and experiences from cultures and lifeways entirely different and disconnected from ours. This form of post-romanticism devotes a great deal of intellectual energy to extending the brutal lessons of techno-culture forward in time, while drawing lines back in time through the pasteurization of (other people's) anthropology.

The other answer is a kind of cosplay. If this world is evil, corrupt, and if its failure is already happening and/or guaranteed, then we should prepare for the future by learning to gather, hunt, and forage. Instead of intellectualizing our way out of a world of terror and technology we can rewild (a set of practices that emulate hunter-gatherer lifeways) and check out of the rat race for once and all. This rhetoric boils down to an assertion that we must prepare prior to The Collapse by (kind of) living as if it's already happened.

There is no need to directly criticize these practices or beliefs. They are, in fact, entirely beside the point. The point, if I were to conclude by way of a new beginning, is that we live in a culture that forces all political questions to be answered, especially the big and hard ones about desiring another way of life, of desiring anarchy. Most political people become ensnared by this cultural pressure and end up sounding like city planners, politicians in waiting, and in the case of our friends the anarcho-anthropologists, like a utopian Garden of Eden recreation society.

For the rest of us we continue to have, ask, and think about the hard questions: how to become free individuals in free communities in harmony with one another and with the biosphere; how to break from a world of abstractions and ideologies; how do we treat our fellows zeks in the time of Leviathan? How will that change as Behemoth approaches? But questions have that frustrating quality of running through our hands like water, quenching certain thirsts, but never ours to lord over, much like anarchy.

Resources

Against History, Against Leviathan
– Fredy Perlman, Black & Red Books
Society of the Spectacle
– Guy Debord, Black & Red Books
Theory of Bloom
— Tiqqun, LBC Books
Custer Died for Your Sins
– Vine Deloria, University of Oklahoma Press
Marxism and Native Americans
– ed. Ward Churchill, South End Press

The Undying Appeal of White Nationalism

by James Joshua

Originally only a portion of this essay appeared in the printed version of Black Seed Issue #2. This is the entire essay, originally posted to a website that is now defunct.

****** Neofascism in the Cultural, Artistic, and Ecological Movements**

The earth is firmly enveloped in crisis. This crisis is at once material and existential. The economy can no longer support the human weight that bends it at its foundation. Can not, or

will not. The aftermath of the recession has produced only one reality: an intensified stratification of global society.

The crises have created a world devoid of meaning. Everywhere, people question the bold political narratives of the present, exposing them all as being without purpose. Democracy appears as the ridiculous theater that it always was.

In much of the world, young people found solace in the lack of meaning. They embraced cynicism and insincerity as responses to the real situation. As time went on, they found that this ironic perspective failed them in the very same way as did the dominant paradigm.

The recession of 2008 propelled the earth into a state of delirium. Over the following three years, the world fought to materially answer the existential crisis; to existentially answer the material. These popular movements posed a question. Is it even possible, in the 21st century, to imagine another way of living? All of society was exposed for its repressive essence, and people began to appropriate buildings, parks, universities, vacant lots, and city centers to begin directly creating a different way of life.

The question of the people fighting in occupied buildings and sleeping in city squares never received a response. Echoes, but not answers. The militants of 2011 reluctantly returned to life in the void.

We are still living with the same crisis. Meaning has yet to be restored. Around the world a new movement is emerging.

Across the globe, a reactionary wave has presented itself as the answer to the question posed six years ago. In Greece, Ukraine, Thailand, Venezuela, Russia, and Italy, neofascist parties have reemerged in the form of militant street-level uprisings. In the United States, fascist influences have begun to permeate the cultural, artistic, technological, and deep ecology movements.

In particular, the strong historical precedence of fascist influence on the legacy of ecological movements illuminates a need to take this situation seriously.

Ecology

Esoteric fascism is growing in the ecology movement. This is nothing new. The term "ecology" was coined by the racist, white nationalist, eugenics enamored German biologist Ernst Haeckel in the 19th century[107]. Haeckel founded the eugenicist and white nationalist Monist League in 1905 to propagate his racist views. Haeckel later joined the occultist Thule Society, a spiritual organization that sponsored and helped to develop the Nazi Party.

The German concept of "blut und boden" (blood and soil) traces its origins to the ethnonationalist Volkisch movement. The belief insists that a people are connected to a historical territory, and that whites must protect the health of that land in order to ensure the continuity of the Aryan race.

Inspired by this view, German philosopher Rudolf Steiner founded Anthroposophy in 1912. Anthroposophy was a school of ethno-religious mysticism that promoted the idea of a race's spiritual connection to a local environment along with the belief in a hierarchy of human races and the need to keep these races separate. These beliefs were heavily influential in the Volkisch movement of the 1920s.

[107] The European Graduate School. "Ernst Haeckel Biography". EGS Library 2012

The Wandervogel (wandering bird) youth movement was a strongly influential back-to-nature cultural force in Germany in the early 20th century centered around environmentalism, communal living, eastern religion, and staunch nationalism. Wandervogel youth believed political action to be incapable of correcting the deeply entrenched societal crisis, so they looked instead to personal and cultural transformation. The immigration of some Wandervogel youth to America in the early 20th century helped to inspire the Hippie movement[108]. Initially, the Wandervogel movement was comprised of people from somewhat disparate philosophical backgrounds, but by the 1930s most of the tendency was absorbed by the Nazi Party.

The Wandervogel subculture was a reflection of the larger The Lebensreform (life reform) movement. Lebensreform advocated organic diets, sexual liberation, vegetarianism, and a deep respect for nature. The tendency was popular in Switzerland and Germany in the early 20th century. Anarchists were very influential in the Lebensreform tendency, people like painter Karl Wilhelm Diefenbach and poet Gusto Graser promoted liberatory ideas among the movement. Graser, along with cultural libertines Henry Oedenkoven and Ida Hofmann, founded the Monte Verita commune in Switzerland in 1900. The commune initially existed as an experimentation in living according to communist ideals, promoting a way of living modeled after "primitive socialism". Anarchists from around Europe flocked to Monte Verita. The communards were largely vegetarian, and practiced polyamory and held a deep respect for the environment.

By the 1930s, many of the anarchists of Monte Verita abandoned their long-held ethics and joined the Nazi Party[109].

The same trend occurred in the Lebensreform movement in general. Richard Ungewitter, a white nationalist pioneer of the German nudist movement and advocate of cultural upheaval, wrote and distributed white supremacist and anti semitic texts. He insisted that the seemingly emancipatory cultural trends of the time would be the way that the Aryan race would reestablish its dominance over "the diabolical Jews". This reactionary tendency within the Lebensreform movement later inspired leaders of the Nazi Party.

The environmentalism of the Third Reich largely came from the mystical and anti-rational fascist lineage promoted by Richard Darre, Alfred Rosenberg, Rudolph Hess, and Heinrich Himmler[110]. It was Darre who introduced the blood and soil ideology to the NSDAP (Nazi party). As the Nazi movement was very dynamic in its early days, there was tension between the spiritualistic, anti-rational tendency and the cold, calculating, efficiently rational wing of the party.

Likewise, there was conflict between the ostensibly workerist and often openly gay wing of the movement (the Sturmabteilung, abbreviated as "SA"), and the rest of the NSDAP. The "blood purge" of the SA has become a focal point for some people in the current Neofolk subculture.

Music

The neofolk genre is loosely based around traditional european cultural heritage, practices, and music. Many of the bands that popularized the genre have current or past allegiances to fascist politics. Death in June, perhaps the best known name in the genre, is the project of third-reich obsessed musician Douglas Pearce. Pearce named the band in honor of the SA stormtroopers

[108] Kennedy, Gordon and Kody Ryan. "Hippy Roots & the Perennial Subculture". Hippyland May 13, 2003

[109] Ourednik, Patrik. Europeana. Dalkey Archive Press, 2005. Print.

[110] Biehl, Janet and Peter Staudenmaier. Ecofascism: Lessons From the German Experience. San Francisco: AK Press, 1995. Print.

who were violently expelled from the Nazi Party in the Night of the Long Knives blood purge of 1934[111].

Death in June has a history of collaboration with Boyd Rice, a somewhat more obtuse performer whose usage of third reich imagery is equally unironic. Rice appeared as an outspoken guest on the television show of Tom Metzger, founder of the well-known neo nazi group White Aryan Resistance. Rice has toured the US extensively with Cold Cave, an act founded by Wes Eisold. Eisold was a well known figure in the hardcore scene; his band American Nightmare was very popular in underground music scenes in the early 2000s.

Both Death in June and Boyd Rice have had several of their shows canceled due to pressure from anti-fascists over the past few years.

For the most part, bands in the neofolk and neo dark-wave scenes eschew overt fascist politics in favor of "apolitical" stances and a fixation on cultural heritage and "traditionalism". Artists often state their insistence on playing "white" or "european" music that is free of "negro" influences such as rock and roll, jazz, or rhythm.

Stella Natura is a large neofolk music festival held in the Tahoe National Forest of Northern California featuring dozens of acts and hundreds of attendees. Though the promoter, Adam Torruella, claims the event is non-political, he has invited the white nationalist publisher Counter-Currents to table at the event[112].

Counter-Currents (which recently had its San Francisco office smashed up in a late night attack) primarily sells white supremacist literature from esoteric fascist authors such as Julius Evola and Savitri Devi. Devi, a Nazi sympathizer who served as a spy for the Axis Powers during WWII, was born in France, moved to India, converted to Hinduism, and was an animal rights activist and deep ecologist. She promoted the idea of the supremacy of the Aryan race and the need for whites to respect other "noble races" such as Indians, who were believed by the nazis to be the racial relatives of white Aryans.

The festival is sponsored by the Asatru Folk Assembly (AFA). Asatru is a pagan faith founded in the 1970s based on ancient Norse beliefs. Early on, there was a split in the Asatru movement around the issue of white nationalism. The universalists opposed racism, the tribalists focused on ethnic and cultural heritage, and the folkish tendency advocated an entirely racialized conception of Asatru . The AFA comes out of the folkish lineage, meaning that it is part of the white nationalist wing of Germanic Paganism.

The AFA provided security for the festival as the "Viking Brotherhood"; the original name of the organization. According to reports from concertgoers, the Viking Brotherhood roamed the perimeter with zip-ties on their hips while maintaining a diligent eye for anti-fascists.

The festival's lineup has included several post-fascist acts and performers. Blood Axis, the band of neofascist author Michael Moynihan performed, as did Changes, a band founded by white nationalist Robert Taylor[113]. Fire and Ice and Waldteufel have also played the festival, both acts having ties to white nationalist movements. Neofascist bands Die Weisse Rose and Of the Wand and Moon were scheduled to perform in 2013 but could not enter the country due to visa issues.

[111] NYC Antifa. "Why We Don't Like Death In June". NYC Antifa September 16, 2013

[112] Anon. "Fascists Rally at Stella Natura Collective" Who Makes The Nazis August 19, 2013

[113] Circle Ansuz Collective. "Stephen McNallen Part 4: Stella Natura and What Can be Done" Circle Ansuz September 9, 2013

This cultural tendency has grown among the hipster crowd, many of whom naively believe that the fascist aesthetic is merely ironic or just an added effect for shock-value. It has also grown among young white people from black metal and dark-wave scenes who feel alienated by the emptiness of modern society and desperately reach back to a romanticized and fictitious ancestral past.

Nihilism as Question and the Suppression of the Hipster

The epoch of the hipster has been marked by an irrepressible irony; a tangible insistence on the meaninglessness of things. The entire world appears to rotate without purpose; the era of metanarratives has long since passed and history seems to stand still. This tendency's ascension coincides with a social era widely referred to as "liberal multiculturalism". This multiculturalism is widely seen, by white people at least, as having reached a state of hegemonic dominion over all societal affairs. In this context, nothing can truly be racist, as the institutionalization of political correctness has seemingly relegated the older, more blatant forms of racism to the margins of culture and of society.

Because of this, the era of the hipster is not anti-racist, in fact it has no need to be. The ideology of the present era is better understood as post-racial; the apparent suppression of the old forms of prejudice have rendered white supremacy a phantom of the past only seen presently in the most anachronistic vestiges of white provincial society.

Racism is thus perceived as being powerless and therefore either innocuous or ironic. The hipster appreciation of Boyd Rice and Death in June is the result of the assumption that the resurgent fascist movement cannot possibly be sincere (as sincerity is impossible) and that, if by some far-fetched chance it were, it would be incapable of attaining meaning, as such overt racism cannot be a threat in a post-racial world.

In the world of pop culture and in the world of the anarchist, nihilism has firmly taken root. The rejection of all values, with the exception of the interests of the self, stems from a dissatisfaction with the meaninglessness of modern life. The hipster nihilist surrounds himself with accumulated symbols of irony, as sincerity has become impossible in a world without direction, and true meaning no longer exists. The anarchist nihilist maintains a steadfast refusal to participate in any political activity other than the occasional online cheering for the smashing of windows, as activism reeks of leftist naiveté and fails to comprehend its own pointlessness amid the magnitude of the present subsumption of the world.

Until now, nihilism has been addressed as a solution. But nihilism is a question. It is a passionless cry into an indifferent distance that continues to await an answer.

What will bring meaning to the world? What force can again restore a sense of purpose to those without direction? For many, reaching back toward the dirt-covered hands of long-buried ancestors has been a starting point. A normative vision of the past harkens back to a simpler era. Young people everywhere are again discovering religions and the languages of their ancestors. Many have begun to experiment with the assumed eating habits of someone's distant ancestors, and are convinced that the paleo diet will bring them back in tune with what humans are supposed to eat in their natural state. On trendy shopping strips in America's cities, artisan boutiques are again emerging. Micro-brewing and woodworking are regaining prominence. Experienced beard trimmers and butchers skilled in charcuterie are again making a living as men once did in a bygone past. Young men in Red Wings and work shirts revive the wardrobes of

white men before their supposed systemic emasculation by liberal feminism; they appear identical to their grandfathers walking to work in those old segregated factories. Levi's commercials speak proudly of pioneers and territorial expansion into both the wild west and into the untamed and pre-gentrified neighborhoods of America's rust belt.

The neofolk movement is merely the avante garde wing of this diffuse and growing cultural tendency that longs for a romanticized and uncorrupted past.

Radical Traditionalism, Revolutionary Reactionism

Presently, the mystical current of racist ecology is slowly gaining traction among some circles of former anarchists. Most notable is Olympia, Washington, where two former Green Scare prisoners and ex-anarchists have turned to white nationalism, citing a desire for white-only spaces, a respect for neo-nazis, and a pronounced disdain for "the Mexicans". Nathan "Exile" Block and Joyanna "Sadie" Zacher were heavily influential in the green anarchist tendency prior to and during their incarceration for late-night arson attacks against industries responsible for massive environmental degradation. Disconcertingly, these two influential former Earth Liberation Front militants were initiated into the world of political violence while running through the streets of downtown Seattle in the anti-WTO Black Bloc in 1999[114].

Several other people associated with the green anarchist movement in Olympia have followed their reactionary trajectory.

The quasi-spiritual works of ego-fascist Julius Evola and the "esoteric hitlerism" of white supremacist author Miguel Serrano[115] have been heavily influential in this growing circle. A webpage[116] operated by Nathan Block appears as a cascading scroll of imagery adorned with swastikas, black suns, and Anglo-Saxon runes complimented by an assortment of quotations from obscure neofascist theorists. This cult-like formation has expressed a sincere admiration for would-be race war instigator Charles Manson[117], particularly his environmental decree "ATWA" which stands for "air trees water animals" or "all the way alive" (the latter was used as the title of a 2012 public statement from Zacher published in the Earth First Journal). A 2007 communique written by Block and Zacher makes several vague references to the need to continue the ecological struggle in the name of the white race (often hidden behind double meanings) before concluding with an allusion to Manson's environmental decree.

"[A]nd let those of us who heed the calls so often ignored stand upright, with clear vision, whether illuminated by the great Sun or by a more obsure Light, which rides with the night terror with all creatures of the hidden horse: the clawed, the winged, the hoofed, and also with those beings referred to by the euphemisms of 'the ancestors,' 'the fair folk,' or indeed, the 'elves.'

air trees water animals[118]"

As with the Apoliteia tendency (explained below) and the Wandervogel movement, they claim an aversion to the political and a focus on individual and cultural pursuits such as touring in Neofolk bands and practicing Germanic pagan rituals.

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[114] Flies On the Wall. "Report From Sentencing…". Portland Indymedia. June 1, 2007

[115] Antidoto and The Flaming Sword. "Esoteric Hitlerist: An Interview With Miguel Serrano". Black Sun Invictus 2008

[116] Block, Nathan. "Loyalty Is Mightier Than Fire". loyaltyismightierthanfire.tumblr.com 2014

[117] Whitehead, John W. "Charles Manson's Race War: The Beatles and Helter Skelter". The Huffington Post August 3, 2009

[118] Block, Nathan and Joyanna Zacher. "First Epistle: Phoenix From the Flames". Portland Indymedia July 11, 2007

Unfortunately, many green anarchists do not fully understand this resurgent white nationalism. Many assume that any apparent fascist sympathies must be purely aesthetic or symbolic. This willful ignorance will likely allow the trend to continue to grow, particularly in the white counter cultural enclaves of the Pacific North West.

Retreat from Politics

The current resurrection of fascism continues virtually unchecked due to the insistence of its authors and artists on their supposedly "apolitical" stance.

Apoliteia, as described in the early 20th century by the currently influential post-fascist author Julius Evola, is the rejection of compelled allegiance to the realm of traditional politics. For Evola, this did not mean that all political action is problematic, only that individuals should base this activity solely on their own personal interests.

Evola, promoting the concept of a hierarchy of races that placed blacks at the bottom and whites at the apex, also fixated on the mystical realm of race. He believed that race was manifested both in the body and in the soul, and that the ideal human being embodied the Aryan race both physically and spiritually[119].

"Our position, when we claim that race exists as much in the body as in the spirit, goes beyond these two points of view. Race is a profound force manifesting itself in the realm of the body (race of the body) as in the realm of the spirit (race of the interior, race of the sprit). In its full meaning the purity of race occurs when these two manifestations coincide[120]."

Evola promoted a sort of egoist fascism; the individual was to seek to become an "aristocrat of the soul" and to embody the brutality and order of the Holy Roman Empire within their own individual essence.

Evola objected to many of the visions of the PNF (Italian National Fascist Party) because of their focus on material conditions and relative lack of attention to spiritual and racial considerations. Though never a member of the PNF, he was an associate of Benito Mussolini and his writings eventually influenced the racial perspectives of the PNF hierarchy.

"And if Fascist Italy, among the various Western nations is the one which first wished for a reaction against the degeneration of the materialist, democratic and capitalist civilisation…there are grounds for thinking,…that Italy will be on the front line among the forces which will guide the future world and will restore the supremacy of the white race[121]".

Evola was a bizarre character. At the peak of WWII, he would walk the streets of the city during allied bombing raids in order to "ponder his destiny". One one such stroll, he was maimed by a Soviet bomb and as a result spent the remainder of his life paralyzed from the waist down[122].

For Evola, as for many of todays' esoteric racists, a retreat from the political realm is accompanied by a rise in the cultural and artistic worlds. Liberal social-democracy has dominated the globe and vanquished its opponents on a political level. Post-fascists advocate remaining in the cultural sphere until the moment that social-democracy begins to collapse as a result of its own decadence; this fall will be the moment to again emerge into the world as a material force.

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[119] Sunic, Tom. "Julius Evola On Race" The Occidental Observer May 1, 2010

[120] Evola, Julius. "Synthesis of a Doctrine of Race." Hoepli 1941

[121] Evola, Julius. The Problem of the Supremacy of the White Race. Rome: Lo Stato. 1936

[122] Stucco, Guido. Translator's Introduction. The Yoga of Power By Julius Evola. Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1993. Print.

Modern society is meaningless, directionless, decadent. A new way must emerge to once again give purpose to life. For many, this force will resurrect the spirits of the ancestors, a reincarnation that is starting to appear in the world of culture.

The New Force

Third-positionism is a political tendency that seeks to synthesize aspects of anarchism and communism with white nationalism or extreme ethnic traditionalism. This tendency has grown significantly in Europe over the past few years. In Italy, the neofascist squatters of Casa Pound are occupying buildings and organizing militant demonstrations against the proposed construction of a high-speed rail that would be heavily damaging to the local environment. In Russia, fascists have used the anarchist black bloc tactic to anonymously march through city centers.

Today, neofascism appears much more exciting and radical than did the far right organizations of decades past. The images of popular unrest in Ukraine during the winter months inspired people around the world. It was not long before it became clear that violent neo-nazi street movements were responsible for instigating much of the anti-government unrest.

The May 22 military coup in Thailand came as the result of months of reactionary struggle, with many militants finding an ideological base in third-positionist (though not white supremacist) inspired politics[123].

In America, some third-positionist groups have been bold enough to refer to themselves as "anarchists". BANA (Bay Area National Anarchists) was a short-lived white nationalist organization based in San Francisco and Dublin California. The group dissolved shortly after members were publicly beaten by anarchists in San Francisco following BANA's counter-protest of a May Day immigration march[124].

In New York, NATA (National Anarchist Tribal Alliance) members were forcibly ejected from the anarchist bookfair last year, making it clear that the presence of neofascism will not be tolerated in anarchist circles, regardless of what name white nationalists choose to hide behind.

Nothing Before the Earth

At the time of its inception in 1980, the radical environmental group Earth First! took its name literally, avoiding broader social issues and focusing exclusively on a militant commitment to the preservation of the environment.

A decade later, the dedication of Earth First! attracted many anarchists to the group. These newer members were interested in developing a movement that, in addition to defending the earth, fought against racism, sexism, homophobia, and capitalism. This new political direction caused a split in the group with some of the founding members eventually leaving the organization in disgust.

David Foreman, Earth First! cofounder, went on to cofound the Wildlands Project and later joined the Sierra Club's board of directors. His virulent anti-immigration views have caused many people in ecological movements to distance themselves from him, however his reactionary ideas have a surprisingly strong following. He was described by anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin as a "macho mountain man". Bookchin, on the Foreman tendency:

[123] Kasama. "The Solstice: On the Rise of the Right-Wing Mass Movements". Kasama Project February 24, 2014

[124] Smiley, Lauren. "Post-Immigration March Scuffle Targets National Anarchists" SF Weekly May 1, 2010

"There are barely disguised racists, , macho Daniel Boones and outright social reactionaries who use the word ecology to express their views, just as there are deeply concerned naturalists, communitarians, social radicals, and feminists who use the word ecology to express theirs. [...] It was out of this [former] kind of crude eco-brutalism that Hitler, in the name of 'population control,' with a racial orientation, fashioned theories of blood and soil that led to the transport of millions of people to murder camps like Auschwitz. The same eco-brutalism now reappears a half-century later among self-professed deep ecologists who believe that Third World peoples should be permitted to starve to death and that desperate Indian immigrants from Latin America should be exclude[d] by the border cops from the United States lest they burden 'our' ecological resources[125]."

Foreman currently acts as the President of the Board for Apply the Brakes, an anti-immigration campaign initiated by white environmentalists[126]. Last year, he published a virulently xenophobic article for the green nativist "Earth Island Journal" obtusely entitled "More Immigration= More Americans= Less Wilderness[127]".

For some reason, Mexicans only become a problem for the environment once they cross over to the white-man's land. On the other side of the line, their impact on those fields and deserts who don't yet know of borders doesn't seem to be of concern to these environmentalists.

In spite of their disdain for indigenous "immigrants", even the conservative ecological tendencies often maintain a fetishistic reverence for "The Indian". In this Jeffersonian view, indigenous people are the archetypal noble savages presently confined to history books; the current realities of most indigenous communities are of little interest. For many white environmentalists, indigenous people are a natural extension of the local environment much like a wolf or a tree. In spite of this exoticization, indigenous people from south of the Mexican border are often viewed as alien trespassers on America's soil.

Paradoxically, indigeneity is conceived of within the confines of colonial borders.

For David Foreman, the earth's population has grown to unstable levels, and people in the third world must be purged to bring humanity back into equilibrium with the environment.

From an interview with Bill Devall (author of "Deep Ecology"):

"When I tell people the worst thing we could do [during the famine] in Ethiopia is to give aid—the best thing would be to just let nature seek its own balance, to let the people there just starve—they think this is monstrous... Likewise, letting the USA be an overflow valve for problems in Latin America is not solving a thing. It's just putting more pressure on the resources we have in the USA[128]."

Foreman's views are unfortunately commonplace in the deep ecology tendency. If anything they are merely an echo of an earlier wave of reactionaries who offer an academic counter to Foreman's simple-minded, He-Manish, backyard wrestling, Macho Man Randy Savage approach.

Lester Brown, a renowned ecologist and prolific author, also speaks on behalf of the Apply the Brakes campaign. Brown is a staunch nativist and promoter of the reduction of human population in the developing world. Much of his focus has been on China and the role that its growing population may play on global food prices.

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[125] Bookchin, Murray. Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology:A Challenge for the Ecology Movement Burlington: Green Perspectives, 1987. Print.

[126] Apply The Brakes. "David Foreman". Apply The Brakes 2014

[127] Foreman, David. "More Immigration= More Americans= Less Wilderness". Earth Island Journal October, 2013

[128] Devall, Bill and David Foreman. Interview With David Foreman. Simply Living. Sydney: Simply Living, 1986. Print.

American zoologist, microbiologist, and ecologist Garett Hardin was fixated on the forced reduction of human population as a means to ensure the longevity of the environment. Hardin advocated for coerced abortions, eugenics, and forced sterilization until his death in 2003[129]. Hardin promoted a pseudo-scientific concept of a racial hierarchy of intelligence, and in 1994 he was one of 52 signatories to an editorial published in the Wall Street Journal on the genetic basis of racial superiority. In 1974, Hardin argued against sending food to people starving to death in the Ethiopian famine as a way to reduce the human population, decades before Foreman crudely parroted his ridiculous statements.

Like Hardin, Finnish ecologist Pentti Linkola argues that human population must be drastically reduced for the health of the earth. An advocate for eugenics and totalitarian state control, Linkola stated that the "massive thinning operations" of Hitler and Stalin were a step toward establishing an equilibrium between human population and the environment. He states that global chemical or nuclear warfare would be an ideal way of swiftly reducing the human population.

While Linkola's wingnut ramblings are unlikely to develop directly into a global campaign of genocide, watered down variations of his ideas have a material base in the reactionary corners of deep ecology.

Left-Right Collusion and The Technocratic Future

Bizarre fascisms are starting to appear everywhere. Two of the three members of the board of directors of the Occupy Solidarity Network (Occupy Wall Street's nonprofit wing) have at times publicly expressed vaguely fascist sentiments. Micah White, former Adbusters editor and cofounder of Occupy Wall Street, has traveled across the country promoting a populist left-right alliance, recently going so far as to advocate working alongside the violent Greek neo-nazi party Golden Dawn.

While it would be comforting to attribute this prospective collusion to naivete, it is clear that White is by no means unfamiliar with the dynamic nature of fascism. He has studied political movements for years and even authored an article exposing Pentti Linkola and other fascist influences in the ecological movements in 2010.

On August 12, 2011, a month before the start of Occupy Wall Street, White was interviewed by Nathan Schneider, author of "Thank You, Anarchy":

The worst outcome would be to get there and they just fumble it by doing this whole lefty game we always play, which is self-defeatist. We go there, make some unreasonable demand, like, we want to abolish capitalism and we won't leave until we do. And well, that's like the war on terrorism; that's an impossible dream. Or they just squander it by being some hipster, anarchist insurrection like, we're gonna smash some stores and make a spectacle. And everyone's like, 'Why?'

Because we have something beautiful going here. So we're trying to rise above the sectarian clashings of whether or not US Day of Rage is tweeting too much or whether or not the libertarians are – you know? And reach out to the Tea Party too. This is a moment for all of America.

I don't see why this has to be a lefty moment or a righty moment, because this is a moment for us to reinvent democracy in America, because it's getting to be too late. If we don't do it now, we are reaching the end[130]."

[129] Omni Magazine and Garret Hardin. "Interview, Garrett Hardin." Omni Magazine. June 1992

[130] Schneider, Nathan. Thank You, Anarchy: Notes From the Occupy Apocalypse. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. Print.

While the far right Tea Party is not technically a fascist formation, White's proposed nationalist left-right collusion is cause for concern, especially in the light of his statements about Golden Dawn. A proposed collaboration with the Tea Party is ridiculous, yet it must be mentioned that, in real terms, the Tea Party was the initial popular response to the economic crisis of 2008. This street-level conservatism spanned the nation with demonstrations against the bailout of Wall Street nearly three years before the left decided to occupy it.

While White's dream of left-right collusion is disconcerting, it is important to note that he is not alone. Justine Tunney, creator of occupywallst.org and the Occupy Wall Street twitter account is also a member of the Occupy Solidarity Network board of directors. She currently works as a software engineer for Google. Recently, she used the official Occupy Wall Street twitter account to publicly advocate a corporatist political agenda:

"Ending poverty isn't a political program- it's an engineering problem[131]."

"I want to make clear that this is not an anti-corporate movement. This is an anti-wall street movement.[132]"

In an interview with Business Insider about her role in Occupy Wall Street, she stated that "democracy never works[133]". From her personal twitter account she attempted to bolster her image of Google as a revolutionary force by insisting that "Silicon Valley is firmly post-capitalist" because tech companies like Google "expropriate ad money from capitalists to build a superintelligence & don't pay dividends" to "entitled shareholders". In March, she posted a petition to the White House website demanding the termination of all 4.3 million government employees, the resignation of Barack Obama, and the appointing of Google executive chairman Eric Schmidt as CEO of America[134].

Google, the largest collector of private personal information the world has ever known, acts as a giant data mine for advertisers and the state. The mere suggestion of granting the giant surveillance apparatus even deeper governing power is troubling.

Google's rigid hierarchical structure has been (positively) likened to a monarchy by some reactionaries. Shareholders have virtually no voting power in the company as the company's two founders control the vast majority of votes through the organization of shares. The workforce is organized into veritable castes delineated by colored badges. Most employees enjoy high pay (median salary $125,000), free gourmet meals, and a relaxed work environment. Lower-paid yellow-badge workers are confined to a separate building and excluded from the free food, limousine shuttles, or usage of company bikes. Their jobs consist entirely of tedious data-entry. These workers are not permitted to speak with the rest of the workforce. Filmmaker and former Google employee Andrew Norman Wilson stated that the yellow badge workers were mostly people of color[135].

According to its own numbers, Google's overwhelmingly male American "tech" workforce is a mere one percent black and two percent latino[136].

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[131] Tunney, Justine as Occupy Wall Street. "Ending Poverty Isn't a Political Problem" Twitter. February 6, 2014

[132] Manuel, Rob. "Occupy Wall Street Wakes From Slumber, Thinks Some Corporations Might Be Okay Actually If You Really Think About It, Man". Us Vs. Th3m.

[133] Russel, Kyle. "Meet the Google Engineer And Occupy Wall Street Organizer Who Wants Silicon Valley To Run The Country". Business Insider. April 7, 2014

[134] Frkbmb. "Justine Tunney's Bizarre Analysis of Silicon Valley and Capitalism Itself" Storify. March, 2014

[135] Gobry, Pascal-Emmanuel. "At Google, Talking To Coworkers Can Get You Fired". Business Insider. April 30, 2011

[136] Google. "Our Workforce Demographics". Google. 2014

Both Tunney and White have advocated raising funds to sustain a mercenary "non-violent militia" to take to the streets. Recently, Tunney suggested that her twitter followers "read Mencius Moldbug" referring to the pseudonym of computer programmer and aspiring writer Curtis Guy Yarvin. Yarvin, along with English philosopher Nick Land, is among the best known names in the "Dark Enlightenment" movement. This tendency, also referred to as the neoreactionary movement, promotes a pseudo-scientific notion of the racial superiority of whites under the guise of "human biodiversity", opposes egalitarianism and democracy, and supports autocratic governance[137].

"Human biodiversity [HBD] is the rejection of the 'blank state' of human nature. Creepily obsessed with statistics that demonstrate IQ differences between the races, the darkly enlightened see social hierarchies as determined not by culture or opportunity but by the cold, hard destiny embedded in DNA…

Cue the adherents of The Bell Curve, eugenics enthusiasts, believers in white supremacy and sympathizers of the National Socialist German Workers' Party. In the Dark Enlightenment, we seem to have stumbled across a place where pseudo-intellectually grounded racism is flourishing in a way it hasn't since before World War II.

In our discussion, [Nick] Land was explicit in his view on this: 'HBD, broadly conceived, is simply a fact. It is roughly as questionable, on intellectual grounds, as biological evolution or the heliocentric model of the solar system. No one who takes the trouble to educate themselves on the subject with even a minimum of intellectual integrity can doubt that'…

Is this fascism? Desire for genetically determined ruling classes, distrust of popular democratic reform, distaste for the aesthetic standards of mass culture, and nausea over the political correctness of modern life—the Dark Enlightenment does have all the markings of a true neo-fascist movement. It's here that the dangers of the Dark Enlightenment are hard to dismiss[138]."

They advocate a return to feudal city-states as a counter to democratic governance while maintaining an almost religious reverence for technology.

Yarvin advocates a form of total corporate domination of society he calls "neocameralism":

"To a neocameralist, a state is a business which owns a country. A state should be managed, like any other large business, by dividing logical ownership into negotiable shares, each of which yields a precise fraction of the state's profit. (A well-run state is very profitable.) Each share has one vote, and the shareholders elect a board, which hires and fires managers[139]."

While ridiculous, the ideas of the neoreactionary tendency have attained some degree of support in the world of Silicon Valley tech workers.

Balaji Srinivasan, Computer Science lecturer at Stanford University and current partner in Silicon Valley venture capitalist firm Andreesen Horowitz, promoted "dark enlightenment" inspired ideas during a speech to a crowd of tech entrepreneurs last fall. He encouraged the dawning of a Silicon Valley secessionist movement that would break away from the United States and establish authoritarian city-states run by technology firms:

"We want to show what a society run by Silicon Valley would look like. That's where 'exit' comes in … It basically means: build an opt-in society, ultimately outside the US, run by technology. And this is actually where the [Silicon] Valley is going. This is where we're going over the next ten years

[137] Pein, Corey. "Mouthbreathing Machiavellis Dream of a Silicon Reich". The Baffler May 19, 2014

[138] Sigl, Matt. "Dark Enlightenment: The Creepy Internet Movement You'd Better Take Seriously". Vocativ December 2, 2013

[139] Yarvin, Curtis. "Against Political Freedom". Unqualified Reservations. August 16, 2007

...[Google co-founder] Larry Page, for example, wants to set aside a part of the world for unregulated experimentation[140]."

The contrast between this hyper-technological conservatism and the right-wing traditionalist ecological movements highlights the pluralistic essence of fascism. Throughout history fascism has been a movement that is at once rational and anti-rational, secular and spiritual, traditional and futuristic, capitalist and socialist, authoritarian and anti-statist, social and individualistic, luddite and technological, nationalistic and international. Fascism is a rigid paradox that does not fall in the face of contradiction. The Third Reich was at once the mystical and environmental perspective of Hess, Himmler, Rosenberg, and Darre and the hyper-rationalist and industrialist reality that flattened much of Europe. Mussolini was as influenced by Julius Evola's esoteric traditionalism as by Filippo Marinetti's rejection of of the past and advocation of a technological and artistic "futurism".

The commonalities shared by these ideologically diverse reactionary movements are concerning: the belief in racial, ethnic, or cultural superiority, the revival of The Nation, the concept of a superhuman ubermensch at the individual or the racial level, fearsome disdain for groups considered "inferior", an aversion to collective desire, and a reverence for force and brutality.

Realization and Confrontation

Autonomous from the directives of any centralized institution, neofascism exists as a single point in a perpetually expanding galaxy of state prisons, renegade police, urban developers, realtors, Sheriff Arpaios, minutemen, neo-nazis, militaries, psych wards, public education, and George Zimmermans. The new fascism is merely a third position of domination, another knot in the repressive net of state, patriarchy, and racism. Its hegemony comes not from its own virtue, but from its position in the wider network of white supremacy. It does not walk alone, but travels through the night guided by the spirits of overseers and pioneers, its path illuminated by fiery crosses and the barrel flash of vigilantes' guns along the border.

Although the beneficiaries of American reactionary politics are almost exclusively white and gender-normative, it is important to remember that the token mouthpieces need not fit these descriptions. While the spokesmen of green fascism are mostly male and exclusively white, it is notable that Micah White is black, Justine Tunney is transgender, and Curtis Yarvin is Jewish.

While neofascist ideology does not appeal to most Americans, white supremacist and corporatist rhetoric has a clear resonance among powerful people with substantial means at their disposal. The whims of such people have always yielded a profound social impact.

Although the technocratic aspirations of Justine Tunney and the Dark Enlightenment scene seem far fetched, the social implications of the currently thriving technology industry must be taken seriously. In the Bay Area, the influx of highly paid mostly white Silicon Valley programmers and software engineers into low-income black, brown, and broke communities has dramatically altered the urban landscape. Around the Bay, a racialized reconfiguration of urban neighborhoods is occurring; blacks and latinos are being forcibly relocated or incarcerated to make room for the Justine Tunneys and Curtis Yarvins. When not exiled from their communities, the immiserated populations live stacked atop each other in overcrowded units while the wealthy newcomers build their technocratic dystopia.

[140] Giridharadas, Anand. "Silicon Valley Roused by Secession Call" New York Times October 28, 2013

Like virtually all Silicon Valley empires, Tunney's beloved Google is wholly unapologetic about its role in steamrolling California's cities, as are the majority of the high-paid workers who have no problem participating in the expulsion and confinement of black, brown, and broke people.

In a global sense, the role of blacks in the tech industry has been most clearly represented in the coltan mines of war-torn Congo, excavating the precious minerals necessary to power Silicon Valley's digital bubble.

At times, the vast displacement of black residents has been accompanied by a more blatant racism, though generally this position is obscured through the lens of economics.

Bill White, prominent third-positionist and former national spokesman for the National Socialist Movement, owns nine properties in a low-income black neighborhood of Roanoke, Virginia. As a landlord, he engaged in a project of harassment and gentrification that he referred to as a "ghetto beautification project"[141]. He raised rents, evicted tenants, and was alleged to have patrolled the neighborhood carrying a shotgun to intimidate local blacks.

In more general terms, the whitening and gentrification of black and brown communities is materially congruent with neofascist ideology. The vaguely liberal sentiments of a handful of landlords and developers does nothing to change the real situation.

While the most recent waves of resistance in America have been leftist and at times even revolutionary, modern history has made clear the entirely unpredictable nature of white-majority subcultures and movements. Much of the 60s generation that shut down America's thoroughfares in opposition to the war in Southeast Asia grew into the right-wing formation that elected Ronald Reagan in 1980. The America of Golden Gate Park's drug loving hippie acid freaks metastasized into the war on drugs within fifteen years, with many middle-aged former leftists leaving their convictions behind with their youth. For the most part, white America sat by and watched as military-style raids into black and brown communities fed the expansion of a draconian prison slave-society that expanded over 700% since 1970.

From a global perspective, the socialist sensibilities of Mussolini and his associates transformed into an uncompromising fascist state, just as many the libertines of the German Lebensreform movement eventually joined the Nazis.

In May, the European Union's parliamentary elections saw the rise of fascism in traditional politics. In France, the National Front won the parliamentary election, while in Greece Golden Dawn received enough votes to enter the European parliament for the first time[142]. Fascist representatives were also elected in Denmark, Germany, England, Austria, and Hungary.

As fascism views itself as a revolutionary tendency, it will not cease its attempts to disfigure the beautiful trajectory of radical movements. The current momentum of the New Right will smash up against a blockade of material resistance. The Tunneys and Whites, affixed to the most senseless fringes of the Occupy movements, along with the washed up Earth Liberation Front militants currently agitating in the ecological scenes of the Pacific Northwest, will not turn popular resistance into reactionary foolishness.

[141] Southern Poverty Law Center. "Bill White". Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Files. 2014

[142] Traynor, Ian. "Front National wins European parliament elections in France". The Guardian. May 25, 2014.

Bibliography

Implications of an Anarchist Spirit in the Salmon Run

by Cedar Leighlais

One day in the height of Autumn, my friends and I went to a secluded place in the Pacific Northwest to fish for salmon at the beginning of their spawning run, and we were nervous because we weren't sure if they had arrived as far inland as the place we chose. Due to the thick undergrowth of sword fern, devil's club, and heavy cedar branches, catching sight of the creek was impossible until we were standing on its banks. As soon as our feet were upon the tiny pebbles of the creek-side, we could hear that the splashing and turning of the creek was not just running water and could see countless large salmon making their sprints upstream. Our hearts delighted at the mere sight of the powerful fish, finishing their eternal cycle of life and death.

We all began to take our shoes and socks off, rolling up our pants and very reluctantly stepping into the water. The creek was so ice-cold and biting, I actually thought that if I stood in the creek long enough my toes might sustain serious nerve damage. Quickly losing feeling to my feet made it even harder to walk in the creek; navigating rocks, logs, the current, and constantly having large salmon swim through my legs was incredibly distracting.

To say the setting was beautiful is an extreme understatement. The forest seemed to be radiating that day. When I think back to that experience and truly recall everything about it: the feeling, the sights and sounds, the rare moment of felt-presence, I seem to remember seeing and feeling the forest's pulse as I suddenly became aware of all of my surroundings. This is the opposite of what it's like to live in the city. I find myself constantly shutting out so many things: the sound of traffic and the train that permeates through my backyard and house, shouts from incoherent drunks on the corner, annoying conversations seemingly coming from all sides, ugly housing developments, police, the list goes on. This prevents me from being present, from seeing and experiencing intense sensorial occurrences. But in the forest in that moment, I wanted to attach myself to everything happening around me.

Seeing that there were a handful of salmon hiding under a log and caught in a whirlpool of currents in a little off-shoot of the creek, one of my friends and I slowly walked towards them from opposite sides, not wanting to scare them off but wanting to have as far of a reach as possible between the two of us should they dart off.

My footing and balance were compromised by cold and uneven terrain when I found myself practically standing right next to a group of hiding salmon. Bending over with my hand waiting just above the water's surface, I paused before striking. What was about to happen? I was so close to this fish it felt too good to be true; my heart was racing. Without a moment's more hesitation, I plunged my hand into the water, aiming for the end of the tail where it joins with the fin. It happened almost too fast to recall, yet I found my fingers grasped around the slimy scales of the salmon's fin, which acted as a sort of hilt to prevent it from sliding out of my hands as it wriggled, squirmed, thrashed and turned, attempting to get back into the water.

Without even thinking about it I placed the salmon on the log that it had been hiding under, plunged my free hand back into the creek, and grabbed a rock that was slightly smaller than the size of my fist. Holding the fish down with my palms on its gills with one hand, I proceeded to bring the rock crashing down on its head three to five times or so. Adrenaline was coursing

through my veins and I can't remember all of the specifics, but I did not need much more than intuition to tell me when the salmon was dead, the blood from its eyes and mouth mixing with the blood coming from my fingers that had ended up too close to where my rock was striking.

Breathing heavily and unable to tear my eyes away from the salmon's, I announced, "I got it!" to my friends who had stopped their attempts to watch mine. Upstream, my friend shouted to me "You gotta drink its blood!" Without even questioning it I lifted the salmon up over my head, tilted back as if it were a giant vase full of something worth drinking all at once, and opened my mouth under the salmon's, letting its still warm, salty blood pour into mine. I walked over to a downed tree that lay across the creek and crawled on top of it to get my feet out of the freezing water and to stand in the rays of sunshine that had sneaked past the clouds, cedars and Douglas firs and just stood there. Adrenaline rushed through my body. I was equally amazed and thrilled at what had just happened. I also felt total awe and wonderment. To this day, I am struck with total fucking joy when recalling this moment in my life. I am grateful for every time I retell the story, because it allows me to feel that experience all over again.

Processing the fish later on in the day, we laid out our catch on stumps and began hacking off the heads and tails and pulling out the spinal cords. I took the fish I had caught home, even though I was living by myself at the time, because I wanted the experience to be complete, to eat my entire catch and to allow this fish to give me its gift of sustenance throughout the winter.

My reflections and analysis of this experience has not stopped here, however. Often the discourse around hunting, fishing, and wild-food harvesting does not go much farther than its economic implications; these are wild resources untouched by capital and civilization and if we are to live wild and free we must learn how to use them to our advantages. I found that the reward for having caught, killed, processed and eaten a salmon from the wild went much farther than economics for me; for the first time in my life I believe I had what some may call a spiritual experience.

What does this even mean? I had the luck of not having grown up in a religious home, and the most experience I had with church was having gone to a week-long bible-camp in the summer out of my own volition that focused mostly on hiking in the woods or kayaking on the sound. The only religious teaching I was ever given at that camp was that God would love and accept me for who I was, no matter what, even if I arrived at the pearly white gates of heaven proclaiming "Fuck god in the face!" Organized religion failed to bring me under its grasp then, and it did not take much more than reading Sam Harris' Letter To A Christian Nation at the age of 16 for me to foment an unbridled hatred towards western religion and all of its affiliates.

So spirituality for me had a negative connotation for a very long time, and it wasn't until a couple of years ago that I began to accept the idea of experiencing spirituality divorced from any kind of practiced religion. However, I still have no idea what that could look like today, hundreds of years after the genocide of so many earth-based spiritual practices.

What I do know, however, is my experience. Intense sensorial engagement, complete joyous fulfillment, incredible awareness of presence, and the sense of wonder and awe that can only come after one has engaged with the cycle of life and death. Every time I retell this story, I can feel all of these things in my body, not just remember feeling them but actually go through the emotions all over again.

There are so many things that I feel must be taken into consideration when embarking on a journey into this conversation. First and foremost, that there were and still are many indigenous tribes in the Pacific Northwest that have celebrated and relied on the return of the Salmon

Run since pre-history. Since the arrival of the colonial West and the signing of land treaties at the Nisqually River, the United States has systematically fucked with every Indigenous person's access to traditional fishing practices. In my act of catching salmon, am I merely just taking advantage of my ability to drive out to a wildlife refuge and spend the morning in a creek with my friends, effectively latching onto a traditional practice that I have no experience with as a white person? Am I participating in the act of defiance that Indigenous people throughout the Puget Sound and coastal waters of the Pacific Northwest who, since that fateful signing of land treaties at Nisqually River, "poached" their salmon catch, disobeying orders of Fish & Game Authorities? Or am I partaking in neither of these, simply creating a new practice for myself of relating to wildness, of the self and the other?

Another thing I'm aware of is the disconnect between the telling of these traditions and the people who have traditionally practiced them. The only reason I am allowed any insight into any of these traditional practices is due to books written by historians and social anthropologists. Not only does this put me in an incredibly alienated position in relation to these practices, it also feels greatly appropriative, and thus inappropriate. I cannot in good faith pick up these practices and call them my own "tradition," I cannot say I do them because "it's how it has always been done." Due to the uninhibited reaches of civilization and it's efforts to destroy all earth-based spiritual practices, I have absolutely no ties whatsoever to any traditions or rituals that build spiritual connection to the earth. Furthermore, I have no elders with whom I can consult. I have older family members who do hunt and fish, yet the farthest my conversations have gone with them on the personal rewards of these endeavors does not venture farther than, "Damn, there's really nothin' like sittin' on the lake with a fishing pole in one hand and a beer in the other!"

So I am left with improvising and creating a practice or rhythm of my own. I am a lost child seeking entrance into a world of interconnectedness, yet I consistently remain detached from myself and others. So what is the space that I inhabit, neither here nor there? This is where I find the struggle to determine some kind of spirituality in relation to the earth and away from civilization, if we are to use two polarized catch-all terms, in confluence with anarchy. As an anarchist, I find myself in a position between a world I cannot live in and an idea of a world that I want to live in. The impossibility of both of these raging rivers inevitably brings them crashing together.

This is why I find importance in the searching and questioning of a "spirituality" within an anarchist discourse. Understanding the historical implications of conquest and colonization and attempting to understand what has been taken from every grouping of humans since the onslaught of organized time and forced worship, we can continue to expand our understanding of how it is that the material conditions under which we live are unbearable and banal. When we realize what has been taken from us, we can begin to know what we must take back. I am not advocating for a new earth-based anarcho-religion, but for the lived-hatred of the systems enforced on us to be evermore total.

There is an ethereal high that accompanies the attack. When one shifts the emphasis from thought to feeling and action and utilizes their intellectual disdain for one's enemy, the reward is far greater than words can express. It is my wish in writing this to spark a dialogue within an anarchist context around the spirit. What is it, how can we interact with it, how can we reawaken our own? How has it been damaged? It is also my wish that through these dialogues, anarchists can begin to again become aware of an age-old saying, "healing is a form of fighting is a form of healing is a form of…" Our enemies deserve to feel the brunt of our rage and sorrow, and we

should also grant ourselves the chance to revel in and celebrate our unleashed spirits wreaking havoc on the material world.

Points For Further Discussion in the Digital Era

by Oxalis

In an issue of Green Anarchy published in 2004, Sphinx responded to one of the early Internet-based social networks, Friendster, declaring "You Won't Find Me on Friendster."* The article, while obviously now dated, was an early attempt to develop an understanding of modern networked computer communications. Its historical overview of the development of computer technologies and the ways that they had (at that time) changed how we interact with each other and the world were important insights. Sadly, this is a topic that needs further elaboration and discussion. The computer-based forms of communication and mediation have only increased in the years since 2004 and have done so at an incredibly rapid pace. The objections to Friendster from ten years ago—the concern about legality and a commitment to human communities—while still true, seem almost quaint as the proliferation has increased to a level that seemed almost unimaginable just a few years ago. In the past, the idea of abstaining from Friendster or a particular digital social network seemed plausible, to do so simply meant not going on the computer and/or limiting computer use. Computer use largely took place at a specific site, something that we could essentially choose to interact with. In many cases, that is no longer possible. Over the past few years, the Internet has essentially become all pervasive. Through smart phones, the Internet is everywhere. While there are exceptions outside of so-called "industrialized" countries and among those who cannot afford smart phones, for the most part the discussion is more a question of when people will get the capabilities, not if (see for example, all the efforts to get computers to everyone across the world and to enclose the entire world in the web).

This has all had a real impact on how we relate to each other. Seemingly everything is mediated or interrupted by computer-based communication. There are relatively few private moments left, as shown by the numerous studies that track the phenomena known as "sleep texting" or the numbers of people who admit to checking their phones during sex. The particular studies matter relatively little, what is important is the way in which this activity has more or less been normalized. Few people seem to care and indeed for those who have an issue with it, there seems to be nothing that can be done. The rather laughable digital utopianism has proven to be untrue—we haven't arrived at an equal society as a result of equal access. Even in the best cases of open source tools, their challenge is a drop in the bucket and they can often be just as easily mobilized towards non-liberatory ends. Moreover, the Internet and computer technologies have contributed to a situation of information overload and the fragmentation into a seemingly unlimited number of different identities, making it harder than ever to be seen on the digital networks, arguably the ultimate goal. Added to this, the increasing fragmentation and personalization—enabled through sophisticated forms of behavior and browser tracking—assure that there is no universally accessible network that one can simply have access to, but rather a series of largely closed and overlapping networks. These technologies extend the logic of computers into all realms: success is the documentable and quantifiable number of "friends" or "connections" we have on various sites, future activity, preferences, and "personalization" are predicted by algorithms informed by massive amounts of stored personal data, and everything is ranked and rated.

In the present, more and more of our interactions are mediated by computers. The social networks are built on representation and presentation – we don't necessarily show ourselves (assuming that there is somewhere an authentic self), but rather a representation that will do the best in a particular situation. The potential employee deletes last night's drunken party photos to present a serious tone, while the frat boy eagerly shares photos of the previous night's debauchery. Moreover, depending on the particular social network, the presentations differ. While "compartmentalization" is something we all have done in civilized social contexts for quite some time, the speed and frequency at which it happens is different. The constant maintenance of how we present ourselves results in a compulsive "need" to "check" everything, seeing what is "happening" on "social media" at all times. There is always something better "happening" elsewhere, whether that be the cool event that we didn't know about or something "happening" entirely in the digital realm. Consequently, the real "event" may not be the one that we are physically at, but the "conversation" that happens online. "Reality" is increasingly redefined as that which is documentable online, and "conversation" is the "discussion" which happens through social media. Something is always happening elsewhere and we are never really present anywhere (while at the same time, we are stuck in a seemingly ahistorical constant present). The constant need to be attached, to be checking what's going on, to be instantly accessible, is beneficial to the system, not only in terms of pacification but also in making us ideal workers. The maintenance of social networking profiles and other such activities is essentially free labor; and "always on, always reachable" isn't just about "convenience." While the networks are about others, especially in terms of quantifiable audiences and visibility, they are paradoxically also about the self. There is a built-in form of narcissism with constant pressure to act as if you and what you are doing is all that matters. There's a striking sense of self-referentiality and praise, digital greetings from our "friends" always tell us how beautiful we are or how strong we are. In many ways, the new forms encourage a celebrity-like performance, where one assumes that at any point some of our "friends" might catch a glimpse of what we are doing—in many ways life becomes a constant performance for a real, imagined, or potential digital audience.

The technologies have also encouraged a further separation from the natural world. An already distanced populace has become further separated. Much of what we see—if we actually take the time to look—is filtered through screens. The "nature scene" is potential background for a "selfie," the flower the perfect fodder for a photo blog. The aspiring forager need not learn through direct experience or shared knowledge, but can simply point the phone and determine what a particular plant is. The more attached we become to the phones in our pockets (or, let's be real, in our hands because for some even the one-second delay in retrieving a phone from a pocket is too much), the less we actually see and experience on a day-to-day basis. Our separation from the wild increases, as does the domestication that comes in the form of virtual chains. Computer technologies are presented as compatible with the natural world, with much of the rhetoric invoking natural images. We have "cloud" computing, "green" "server farms," and pledges that buildings containing thousands of computer servers are environmentally neutral because they are powered by solar energy, wind, etc. At the same time, the environmental impacts of these new technologies are largely ignored. This isn't a call for green computing, but rather, a recognition that the environmental costs of a digital society are quite high, in terms of waste, water used in manufacturing microchips, and in minerals extracted. Moreover, just as there is always something happening elsewhere on social media, much of the creation of computer technologies happens "elsewhere" with the productive consequences made invisible.

As it has in the larger world, the proliferation of computer technologies has had a considerable impact on the anarchist space. Much of the discourse that happens within the anarchist space is mediated through computers. News websites, blogs, and social networks have gained a hold within the space, becoming virtual sites through which we come together. In a networked society, it is relatively obvious that the use of many of these technologies allow one's enemies, be they the state, fascists, or others, the capacity to map activities and track specific individuals. The possibilities of this—while always hiding in plain sight—have become all the more obvious as more becomes known about the extent of government surveillance and the willingness of corporations to share data with the state. Despite this, many of us continue to use these technologies and participation in the various social networks, dating sites, photo sharing services, etc, barely raises an eyebrow in most circles. Even when using "open source" tools and those that respect privacy, the proliferation of these technologies has had a major impact. The snarky comment, the photos of the cool banner seemingly crafted for dissemination on the Internet, and the rise of "scannable" text and 140 character Tweets attest to this. As with any technology, modern computer technologies have a certain logic and ideology embedded within them and when we "use" them, we often internalize those values. Moreover, attachment and allegiance to (as well as dependence on) digital technologies makes us less likely to criticize them.

In terms of both the anarchist space and the larger world, the proliferation of these technologies has ramifications for how we act. If everything we do on the computer is tracked, if every movement is logged thanks to our smart phones, every person a potential cop, and every corner adorned with an Internet-enabled surveillance camera, what are the possibilities for action? If—as is increasingly the case—to abstain from the social networks is to mean to "not exist"—what does it mean for those of us who choose to abstain? What does it mean to assume that these technologies will exist "after the revolution" and/or that they can somehow be "democratized"? How does our willingness to use the platforms constrain our interactions and alter our forms of communication? With the ever-increasing expansion of Internet-access into previously "unconnected" spaces, is there even a possibility of abstention? Owing to the importance within the economy of the new communications technologies, are there new targets for attack that can be identified? How does one "oppose, "resist," and/or "attack" something that is literally everywhere and seemingly nowhere at the same time?

To a large degree, many of us are complicit in these systems in varying ways. Perhaps there is way through which we can maintain a critical engagement via distance, using these systems and technologies to the extent that we feel we have to, i.e. using them for some forms of outward communication while making our priority face-to-face communication and discussion. At the same time, there should be more efforts aimed at directly and indirectly combating these technologies (i.e. attack, lessening reliance on them within the anarchist space, and assuming a position of hostility towards them). Additionally, more discussion and theorizing is needed to explore the ways in which these technologies function and how they have changed the terrain, both on an inter-personal level and a system-wide level. In a so-called post-industrial economy, the reliance on these systems—however much they may invoke seemingly intangible images of "the cloud"—ultimately depends on physical infrastructure and as such vulnerabilities exist. We should be looking for these weaknesses, both physically and rhetorically, and advancing an anti-technological practice and critique.

— "You Won't Find Me on Friendster" is available on the Internet at http://black-seed.anarchyplanet.org

Anarchy In Flight

by Ron Sakolsky
I sing as the bird sings.
I sing because—I am a singer.
But I use you for it because I need ears.
-Max Stirner
At home (in California) I used to play, and the birds used to whistle with me. I would stop what I was working on and play with the birds.
-Eric Dolphy
While living in London I had an apartment with a small garden. During the summer around 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, just as the day began, birds would gather here one by one and sing together, each declaring its freedom in song. It is my wish to share this same spirit with other musicians and communicate it to the people.
-Dave Holland

When jazz improviser Dave Holland entitled one of his early recordings Conference of the Birds, he was drawing upon the deep well of mythical thought about the "language of birds". Some see it as a perfect language. Others as a magical language used by birds to communicate with those humans sensitive to its cadences. In the Talmud, Solomon's proverbial wisdom was reportedly due to his being granted understanding of the language of birds. In Kabbalah, Renaissance magic and alchemy the "green language" of birds is a secret language which is the key to perfect knowledge. In Sufism, the language of birds is analogous to the mystical language of angels. In a poetic rather than a mystical sense, surrealist writer Rikki Ducornet would give her highest praise to the radical nature of Penelope Rosemont's book, Surrealist Experiences, by proclaiming: "In these writings, critical theory embraces the 'language of birds' and poetic language reveals open secrets of thought that is revolutionary thought at its wildest and brightest." And perhaps the essence of the foundational surrealist practice of automatism itself can be most brilliantly rendered in Ducornet's alchemical language of Birds of calcium and mercury, of lead and sulphur.

In further examining the depth of the surrealist affinity for birds, we might consider the passion of post-Second World War Paris Surrealist Group member, Vincent Bounoure, for "objects that speak in bird cries." And in relation to bird song, we can make an analogy between André Breton's praise of auditories over visionaries, and his ecstatic reveries on "free flight" expressed upon encountering the seabirds of the Gaspé peninsula during his wartime exile in Québec. As he so emphatically stated, "There can be no more valuable and far-reaching hope than in the beat of a wing."

Beyond the musings of philosophers, poets, artists and musicians, within the culture of the Kaluli people of Bosavi in Papua New Guinea, everyday human singing is intimately connected to the rising and falling songs of rainforest birds (with the Kaluli even "becoming" birds on ritual occasions). Within this tropical setting, the human voice finds expression in relation to nature by being "in sync" not only with these rainforest birds, but with the fluid sounds of creeks, streams and waterfalls. All of these sonarities are connected to one another as participating "voices in the forest," fading in and out, thinning and thickening, over the course of a day, with seasonal

variations over time. Kaluli singing is characterized by what participant observer Steven Feld has called a "lift-up oversounding," a dense multi-layered aesthetic and ecological soundscape which he considers to be consistent with anarchy as a lived experience.

As he explains:

Lift-up oversounding, like harmony, is both a grand metaphor for natural sonic relations, the way tones come together in time, as well as for social relations, for people doing things together in concert. It is the pattern of fluid but tense egalitarian social life, where an anarchic synchrony of energy and assertion takes prominence over fixed categories, in a social order without political or economic hierarchy.

As a result of his fieldwork in this Bosavi sound environment, Feld underwent a kind of poetic metamorphosis himself from academic ethnomusicologist to "echo-muse-ecologist." Of course, the Kaluli sound mosaic is only one possible soundscape for anarchy. The egalitarian society Feld observed in Bosavi should not be exoticized as bucolic or pastoral. Rather, in his words, it is "fluid but tense." Lift-up oversounding then is one site-specific Kaluli approach to striking the delicate balance between individual freedom and community in practice. Therefore, in a creative problem-solving sense, it provides a way of resolving the same kinds of anarchist tensions that flutter throughout the more familiar writings of both Kropotkin and Stirner, who each wrote on the relationship between birds, freedom and mutuality.

Too often, our conception of the anarchist soundscape is unilaterally forged on the barricades of social war and rebellion against authority. We experience the carnivalesque rhythms of an anarchist marching band in the streets or the dramatic thunder of the martial soundscapes associated with urban insurrection. We immerse ourselves in the sonic environment of a noise demo in defense of the winged resistance of the Individualist Cell of Birds of Fire or kick it to the beat of a punk-edged rap soundtrack by P.O.S. in the midst of a black bloc throw-down. Yet, we can likewise discern the broad musical sweep of anarchy by recognizing the anarchist trace of birdsong embodied in free flights of jazz improvisation, sound collage experimentation, deejay mash-ups and the naturally-layered soundscapes of indigenous peoples living on the land.

For Feld, both city-based and rainforested anarchic soundscapes are of sonic interest. Accordingly, in 2002, he recorded the songs, chants, speeches, and parades of anarchist May Day as celebrated in Carrara, Italy under the title, Primo Maggio Anarchico. When I first heard about this difficult to find 2002 recording, I'd never had the pleasure of hearing it, but since these outdoor festivities are held in the Merry Month of May, I assumed that on such occasions birdsong would always be a part of the mix. When I finally did get to listen to it in 2013, my hunch was confirmed on lucky Track 13.

When Nature Attacks

Attack is never inconsequential. When we do it we often justify our actions by rhetorical flourishes and calls to history, greed, or the correctness of some position or other. Fuck that shit! Our attack should never be reconciled to language but to velocity, sinew, and the ground we launch from. We share the passion that our non-human friends have against civilization and howl alongside them in rage.

Cop Hit By Falling Tree During Traffic Stop

from http://gawker.com, May 11th

An Centreville, Iowa cop had pulled over a driver for not turning their headlights on when a 30- foot oak tree cracked and fell, totaling the car and slamming the cop to the ground. The police

chief said there was no wind in the area that night and the owners of the tree said they had no idea it had rotted because it "appeared healthy" and continued to sprout green leaves each season. Both the driver and the cop walked away without major injuries, and the driver managed to not get a ticket.

Soldier Mauled By Bear At Base In Alaska

from Yahoo News, May 18th

A soldier was badly mauled as she jogged on a trail and encountered a bear and her two cubs. The soldier said she didn't scream or fight during the attack, and the bear left her bleeding in an embankment. She sustained cuts to her neck, arms and legs, a torn ear and neck fractures. She was rushed to a hospital by a soldier who was driving by when he saw her walking down the road holding both hands to her bleeding neck. Soldier Mauled By Bear At Base In Alaska, Again from Yahoo News, July 21st An Alaska National Guard soldier was mauled by a bear while participating in a training exercise at a military base, officials said. The female brown bear was defending her two cubs when it mauled the Alaska Army National Guard soldier Sunday morning at Joint Base Elmendorf- Richardson. The exercise involves giving soldiers compasses and maps and timing them as they make their way alone to hidden locations on the course. The soldier was going through the woods when he encountered the bear and her cubs late Sunday morning. The bear approached the soldier, swatting at him and biting him before retreating after about 30 seconds. The soldier blew a safety whistle, alerting medics stationed nearby, Olmstead said. This was the second mauling at the base in about two months.

Small Town Mayor Killed By Wasps

from CNN, July 23rd

The mayor of La Prairie, a small town just outside of Montreal, Canada, was killed when she was attacked by 15 wasps. The spokeswoman for La Prairie said that the mayor was not allergic to wasps. Otter Attacks Swimmers In Pilchuck River, WA from Associated Press, August 1st A grandmother and grandson duo were swimming in the river when a 4-foot-long otter emerged and attacked the 8-year-old boy. Both had to be treated for their injuries at a hospital. 'All of a sudden I just heard him scream for his life. He was just bobbing up and down in the water and as he came up there was something all the way on top of his head,' she told King 5 News. The otter continued to attack as they left the water. 'Even after it got into the river and out of our way it stood on its hind legs looking at us like, 'Don't do it again; don't come in here.''

Boy Attacked By Mountain Lion in Cupertino, CA

from www.ktvu.com, September 8th

A child was hiking about 10 feet in front of his family at the Picchetti Ranch Zinfandel Trail when a mountain lion jumped and attacked him from a hidden position. The large cat bit his neck and head and attempted to drag him off before two adults from the group scared it off. The boy was taken to the hospital under serious, yet non-life threatening condition. The authorities claim that the mountain lion followed them back toward their vehicles after the attack, and that they will kill the mountain lion "in the interest of public safety" when found, yet the mountain lion remains free and at large as of this publication. "This is the leanest time of year for all wildlife," Rebecca Dmytryk, president of the Wildlife Emergency Services, said. "There is less out there to eat and this is the driest season we have had in decades… We should expect more and more of these encounters just the way the cards are stacked."

Two Men Killed in Bull-Running Festival, Won't Stop Festival

from huffingtonpost.com, September 14th

Authorities say two men, aged 46 and 27, were killed in a bull-running festival where the bulls are let loose inside barricades throughout a city and people are allowed in the barricades to taunt the bulls. People are warned of the dangers of this "festival" and it continued the next week.

Black Bear Kills Hiker in New Jersey

from huffingtonpost.com, September 22nd

A small group of hikers found themselves being followed by a black bear while hiking in the Apshawa Preserve and without knowing any better, decided to run and split off in different

directions. Two hours later, one of them was found dead with the bear enciricling his body even while authorities attempted to scare it off. The bear was killed by authorities, and wildlife officials claim that the attack may have happened due to a shortage in acorns and berries, integral parts of their diets.

A Voice From the Grave

Editor's Note: The entirey of this article has been posted here, although it originally appeared as two parts in Issues 1 & 2.

by S-kw'etu? Siceltmot

On occasion I have made the acquaintance of travellers who come from the lands that lay across the shqwun'u. It is customary on my territory to receive visitors with respect and courtesy, to make them feel welcome, but not too welcome, in light of the behaviour of their predecessors. What unfortunately occurs during some of these exchanges is the very awkward confession from the visitors that they are very much surprised that I am not dead because they have been encouraged to believe that I had died long before I was ever born. This myth—that the genocide of the indigenous people of North America is a historical event that, although sad and possibly wrong, is a reality that cannot be altered—is quite chilling when it is you and your family are the people who are still being annihilated.

My name is S-kw'etu'?, I am not dead, that is a myth, and I am not actually even an Indian, that too is a myth. I am a Salish Warrior. I have the great honour of being a descendent of my ancestors who have existed on our territories for well over ten thousand years, something that is very sacred to me. We are of the Mother, without her nothing would exist. It is my responsibility as a Warrior to protect my territory and the life that exists on her, including the settlers. I put myself at risk to protect people being assaulted as well as to prevent resource extraction that is doing harm to the Mother.

Many people would not understand why I would even include the settlers considering all the misery they have created and continue to create. However, if I excluded anyone that would be assimilating to colonial culture which would require that I discard my belief in equality for all and become a racist myself. This I cannot do. Not only is it not physically possible being I am not 'pure anglo stock' (nor is anyone else), but settler culture requires me to despise myself and my family, which is out of the question. I am very proud of my family and love them dearly, in fact I cherish them, and will long after I join the ancestors. No, I cannot even pretend to be a settler, not even to prolong my life and even if I did it would make no difference to the state who is occupying our territories, because with racial genocide nothing you do will alter the attitudes and beliefs of those who are the perpetrators or the state. Basically, assimilating to the dominant, oppressive, Aryan culture will not change your race; ergo assimilation will not save your life. It will, however, cost you your soul, which is too high a price to pay when it comes to your own racial extermination. Colonial Canada has established itself as very much active in the genocide of indigenous people, despite the cover-ups and denial that have caused most people, even some natives and the larger percentage of the settler population, to be unaware of this fact, or, due to the horrors of this reality, stay sane through its denial.

Admitting to or facing something as horrific as racial extermination is not easy for anyone, least of all me. Writing about my own experiences is in fact very difficult. However, allowing the truth to be continually swept under the rug will in no way alter that reality. Is it safe to assume, or even intelligent to believe, that what is being told to you is the truth, even though it contradicts what is occurring right before your eyes. Are the lies more cunningly told any more believable than the ones more commonly uttered? Are untruths and myths made any more factual based only on the quantity of voices repeating what they have been told of tale? Not at all. But from their point of view, putting a positive spin on genocide is not a very easy thing for even the greatest wordsmith to do, so best we just shh, keep that quiet, the economy may suffer if we don't.

Secrets. I dislike secrets a great deal. The whole nefarious world has secrets, and relies on them to continue plaguing all life with destruction for economic reasons. And we keep these secrets, only because for the most part it is too dangerous to speak the truth or to cry out for help. Instead, we whisper in each others ears, which excludes many from ever knowing who preys upon the vulnerable in their communities. The children, the elderly, the disabled, women, men—it makes no difference when the mandate is ethnic cleansing.

The differences at times are subtle, indiscernible to the untrained or disinterested eye. The superior eye of course see things through their own narcissistic blinders, other times they see things that are vile, sensational and extreme but if ignored or discredited these things will eventually go away so things can get back to normal. Canada's "normal" being getting our genocide back on track and progressing. I am a genocide survivor who is not Jewish, nor am I hundreds of years old. I am not even close to reaching one hundred years of age, and there is less chance

of me living to that age than there is of my dying a violent death. These are the realities, not the myths.

So what then does genocide look like when not being perpetrated by Nazis and the SS? What does it look like when not on the television, edited and formatted for the viewers' entertainment or pleasure, heroically portrayed by Hollywood's finest actors, who are very willing, for money, to provide everyone with steady streams of indisputable evidence of all that is right and just in the world? This caters to its advertisers' needs for money, nothing more. Genocide and racial cleansing are not known to generate much interest in car financing or electronics so don't expect to see much footage on the subject, but do expect to see a great deal about money and its importance.

For those of you who are unaware, or kept in the dark due to systematic racial intolerance, I will tell you what genocide looks like. It looks like apathy. It looks like deliberate marginalization based on race. It looks just like Canada, the multicultural home to racial oppression, human rights violations and injustice in North America.

It looks like Timmy. Timmy is also not century old (this I can attest to because when I was a child not long ago so was he). He had the most amazing smile. Crooked teeth only made his face that much more handsome, and that smile made it easy to want to be his friend, to play with him, except by the age of ten Timmy was already incapable of playing—or much else. Before Timmy was transferred into the settler public school system he, as a status native, had been receiving his special privileges so he had been educated in a private school, unlike the common settler rabble. The special privileges are designed by Canada who assumes legal entitlement to natives by making them Canada's wards. This is due to our racial inferiority and the privileges are kind of in lieu of rent on the property which colonial Canada now occupies.

Timmy's privileged lifestyle meant that he had been kept as an inmate of the settler government on the remote Penelakut Island. The residential school on Kuper Island, as the settlers erroneously referred to it, first opened its doors 1890 and operated up until 1975. It is better known by its nickname, Alcatraz, due to its location and the fact that so many children drowned while trying to escape from the institution. Catholic-run under the watchful eye of the settler government, the inmates ages four and up were starved, beaten, raped, murdered, and tortured, many to death because their emaciated state made them wonderful subjects for Canada's medical experiments. Of course, these private school educations that the modern multicultural settlers now accuse Natives of being ungrateful for (or in Canada-speak, 'Taking the free educations we gave them and using them against us') were funded by the slave labour of those students—another couple myths down the toilet.

Thirty percent of all the inmates who were condemned to exist at that institution did not survive the torture and abuse. They died. Was Timmy a survivor? No. He was technically alive, but his future after all that education was not looking too rosy. Have you ever met a person, a child, who had been so severely starved from an early age that their body and mind simply stopped developing?

Someone who was denied the right to grow, speak, interact or respond, to mature and have children of his own? This is the point of racial genocide. There are many like Timmy who I have met. It is extremely disturbing that a government would do such a thing, much less one that delights in condemning other people's human rights violations despite the fact that they pale by comparison to Canada's ongoing crimes. Calling them out on it also has no effect. The Chief Medical Officer of Indian Affairs, P.H. Bryce, called them out in 1907 when he saw what they

were doing and how they were manipulating the records to cast the blame onto the parents. His book on the subject, titled The Story of A National Crime, was published in 1922 and sold for thirty-five cents a copy. It is now available free online for anyone who is interested in the truth. The fact is that none of this has been a secret, genocide is a cultural reality that many settlers accept and even justify to this day. If exposing the truth was all that was required to end the horrors then Timmy would have never been like that, he would have been healthy and happy. He attended one of those institutions fifty years after the first book exposing Canada's deliberate abuse and slaughter of children was published.

Timmy was not his real name, his real name was unknown to me and is likely that no record of it exists, because the settler government began to destroy the school records in 1937. It is unlikely that anyone will ever know who he was. Timmy, you see, was not returned to his family. He was instead put into the care of a lonely, elderly, white spinster, which was not unusual. It still isn't. Native children are still removed from their families and put into foster care, and are still often abused in those situations as well. The parents of the children who perished while receiving their special privileges never learned what happened to them. It is safe to assume that his family believes he is one of the many children who now lay in one of the mass graves at the school site or drowned in an attempt to escape. This is the norm. Many parents still have not found out what happened to their children, or whether they became grandparents and lost their grandchildren as well. Many of the girls who were raped in those institutions did bear children, and those babies were dispatched to hide the evidence. They did not hide Timmy though, not after what they did to him, because as he was he served Canada and settlers, he was evidence of their racial superiority and of our inability to take care of our own children without their generous ongoing help.

Dr. Bryce must have been a rare exception as a doctor back in those days. My own doctors, who operated half a century later, had much poorer attitudes towards healthcare and children than he did. Shortly after my birth, I became afflicted with a common baby malady: an intolerance to cows milk. Due to that simple problem I was incarcerated in the hospital for an extended period of time. My condition in the hospital has been described to me as wretched. I was uncared for and covered in bed sores. When my grandparents expressed concern about the open sores, they were promptly informed that the wounds could not be felt because I had no feelings. At that point they, along with all my family members, were banned from entering the hospital when I was a patient. This ban extended far beyond that initial hospital visit, and extended beyond my family members.

I can still clearly remember spending days, weeks, and months on end in that place, in total seclusion. The doctors or nurses would come to me, but did not often speak to me. They jabbed me, examined me, and left. During all those incarcerations I was not permitted to exit my room, or crib, if that was the only place they had for me. I spent many days confined to a crib at seven and eight years of age when I was shuffled out of the way when a non-native child was admitted. I was not allowed in the playroom, so I had to sate my boredom by watching while all the other sick children played with their family members who were encouraged to visit. Those people were not Indians, they were white and uncomfortable having us around. In those days segregation was common, still is actually.

In all that time I had two conversations. They were so unexpected and rare that to this day I remember them very well. One with a nurse who was trying to make me eat my hospital food, which was crap. She promised me pudding if I ate it all, so I did. My reward, the pudding, was far worse crap than the meal. I still remember the gross texture, taste, and my disappointment as that

was the only offer of anything child-friendly I got there. Now I always refer to it as settler pudding, a lie, some blatant manipulation followed by a generous serving of crap as your reward. The second conversation I had was with a nice lady whose baby was occupying another crib. Her baby, unlike myself, fit the bed. She spent a lot of time up there with her baby, and my lack of company bothered her to the extent that she finally made the effort to make her way to my crib and visit me for a bit. On reflection, my lonely state aided those who deliberately and calculatedly harm us. By banning my native family members, they provided the anglo parents with evidence of the neglectful behaviour of native peoples, reinforcing their belief that the genocide is a wholesome and righteous act.

My ailments, whatever they were, where never disclosed to me or anyone else. My health is extremely poor, although I pay it no heed most of the time because being ill with an unknown problem that baffles medical people is not the most comforting position to be in. It is so bad here that often we turn away from ourselves, if only to remain sane in this multi-generational deliberate genocide.

The state and corporate paid media often spin the situations of at-risk people to appear as something that they, usually dead, must have surely created themselves. They should have known better or they would not be dead. Race and sex are both powerful elements in this colonial design, which they wield quite effectively. This is no surprise, the European elite mastered it through religion thousands of years before these colonizers ever stepped foot on our shores. It is a carefully crafted bias which colonial politicians use effectively. Can people who have not been permitted to be exposed to any other cultures can even hear them? Having nothing to compare their own culture to is a form of blindness that is very hard for the afflicted to remedy when it is so rampant and they have been taught to distrust and hate everything different from what their leaders tell them. They do not understand that the never-ending accusations and mudslinging that they believe is a proper democracy is little more than a corporate plutocracy. They could have easily looked to Iceland, an indigenous community of anglos who are not suffering like they are with the never ending enslavement to the capitalistic machine and elite. They instead prefer to blame us for their colonial reality, they blame us for the economic woes that their government creates and uses to justify their need to take more from everything and everyone. Their tax system was not created and is not managed by indigenous people. We don't even have the right to raise our own children on our own land, to exercise our rights. We don't even have human rights based on your government's racist view points. Their own leader has stated that 'human rights are a threat to democracy.' One would think that would raise a little suspicion at least as to who they are allowing to control their life.

There is seemingly no practical point in creating biased spin against natives except to further bring about our extermination. Settlers are so incensed that their government treats natives differently—although they don't know how or why—that they do not hesitate to inflict violence, often fatal, on any natives person they come across on the native territory they illegally occupy. Unprovoked, or government-provoked violence is common here. Be warned if you are not white; our territories are not safe for visitors. The sound of a bullet whizzing past my ear is another early childhood memory that I doubt many settler children have. I had been learning to fish. The shot was fired from across the lake from someone concealed in the forest. The bullet struck the water with a plop. I remember the ripples clearly, ripples that were first created by a colonial government determined to kill the Indians. Those words are in their own documents and the British Aryan Nation of North America is also found there. "Canada" is the theft of a native word

that they use to describe their British Aryan Nation. Accidents do happen: had that person been a better shot, then I, too, would now be 'just another dead Indian' and the blame would have been mine somehow.

I bring history in to point out that this history is also present and alive today. This genocide is unlike the ones people understand better, the ones that rise up suddenly and are extinguished. Our genocide is past, present, and future because it has now gone on so long that it is accepted as rational or just the way things are and have to be. Many settlers and natives accept it because they were brought up with it. To them it is normal, unhealthy and destructive, but normal. The settlers who call themselves 'white men' do not want to look at what is going on because it is extremely unpleasant and they have grown used to nice, gentle, positive consumer messages. Natives cannot look because that only brings us more despair and hopelessness. The potential for suicide is another reality that has to be considered. In fact, I just found out that three days ago that another beautiful young person took their own life. Again, this is our normal. The onus is on the settlers to look. It is not up to us to tell them. They need to free themselves and learn to think for themselves, to become human beings again, not higher status slaves to oppression.

Violence and abuse has been a huge component in my existence and such accepted practice that it was not until I was in my early 20s that anyone bothered to even try to inform me that there were laws that prevented people from assaulting each other. That was news to me. That was my normal, and their reality was not much different—less, due to racism—but they, too, had suffered assaults that had not been addressed or remedied. The settler who told me that this was against the law was correct. The law somehow made them feel safe, except they refused to acknowledge that laws are applied on a sliding scale and never on my and many other people's behalf due to their race, sex, or position in society. I am not a criminal. I behave in a moral, respectful manner towards all life. Technically, I break their laws constantly, but what I do is harmless; the laws I apply for myself are those of my own people not theirs. Even in their system I have no criminal record. My own arrests have been due to civil orders, they are deliberate violations of my rights as the inherited land owner, allowing businesses to remove resources from my territory against my expressed consent. Arresting natives for resisting the theft and destruction of their property is not a simple matter—they constantly have to break their own laws to do it—but they seem to have no problem managing it. The process is stupid: the province decides to sell some of your forest without your knowledge or consent. You object, as it is technically your land. You are arrested. You are released. You then have to go to court to have the charges dismissed because they are in violation of your rights and should not have been pressed in the first place. The fact that the police, judges, lawyers, and government agents conspired to create the illegal civil order in the first place is never addressed. Actually, I don't know what they talk about at those trials, I never bother attending. No justice is ever served, it is all just a corporate subsidy. On criminal matters, however, they are very lax and prioritize their responses by their busy schedules: "Sorry, we can't help you with that assault. We have a pre-scheduled appointment on behalf of the economy. You should be getting yourself to the hospital anyway, you are bleeding all over the place." That is the response for non-native peoples. With native peoples who have been assaulted, it is often: "Hey, come back here. I noticed that they missed a few spots." There is plenty of evidence of police assaulting native peoples: beatings, sexual assaults, starlight tours, the list is endless and because there are no repercussions for this, it continues today. Not knowing this can cost you your life if you are native. Reporting crimes is risky. Many people have gone in to report an assault only to be arrested. This behaviour, too, has been documented and sometimes is even reported in the

press, but only if it is horrific and will sell media time and advertising. Depending on the level of nastiness, books, plays, and movies could bring in even more revenue. After we become dead Indians they pick apart our corpses because there is still a little more left to take and put in their own pockets. The true crime entertainment business is in no way suffering from a lack of consumers or material in the modern free world where whatever is good for the economy is the only thing that matters.

As the result of the police's refusal to enforce the law and investigate and charge people who have assaulted other people, I have had those people come to me for shelter and protection instead, people whose faces are bloody messes, yet have been turned away and denied not only police aid but any other aid such as medical assistance or shelter as well. Finding themselves just sent back out and still in fear of whomever it was who hurt them, they come to me and stay with me until the violent party has had time to cool down and it is safe for them to be out again. Usually three days is adequate, depending on the nature of the problem. Actually, now that I reflect back a bit, I have done a considerable amount of policing on behalf of the people they are supposed to be aiding, and for no remuneration. I have broken up brawls, prevented assaults, corrected the behaviour of sexually deviant males, aided people in distress, helped temporarily homeless human beings re-establish themselves in securer, more fulfilling environments, simply because it needed to be done. However, I do not racially exclude anyone from this. The non-native people are extremely shocked, declaring that no one had ever done such a thing on their behalf before, not even the people their government pays to do it, pays with the money generated from the stolen resources from my people's land. The truth is, the people being paid to take care of other people would probably arrest me for doing their job of helping people because that steals from the white man, instead of doing what they are supposed to, which is to do their job and respect my cultural rights. (These rights go beyond harvesting and hunting; culturally we take care of everyone and everything.) This does happen. They have created laws specifically prohibiting indigenous people from competing with them in the labour and resource market, which effectively set the norm in modern hiring practices. This took some time and effort as many of the settlers did not hate natives, that had to be ingrained first. Simply doing the opposite, creating a law in order to make amends while painting natives as the enemy, accomplishes nothing. Racists do not simply stop being racists because a law was created. They simply ignore the law, beyond complaining about it, and continue their racist hiring practices, because that is how it is done in the mythological land known as Canada. If natives find employment it is because the employer has chosen that person, not because of any laws—even many in the government still discriminate when hiring.

The fact people chose myths over facts is very concerning. The foolish narcissism of adopting this attitude is not only detrimental to the people you choose to put beneath you and stomp on, it is also detrimental to yourself, your family, and those who are yet to come. People determined to believe that Canada is legit and perfectly wonderful in order to fulfill their mandate of feeling happy always at all costs to everyone else, blind themselves to the truth. The truth is, whether you like it or not, that the failure to recognize and see the truth can kill you. We all have to die anyway; I have almost expired more than a few times. Death is inevitable, that is, unchangeable. How we appreciate the gift that is our life by using it is our decision. We have the ability to change a lot of things, including our lives and our deaths to some extent. We can chose how we do not want to die, we can put a little effort into that I think: we can chose not to allow ourselves to be poisoned by businesses, industries, drug companies, doctors, and food-producing industries. We can also chose not to be killed by mentally ill people who are not receiving treatment or

support. We can choose not to be killed by members of other racial groups who are supposed to be our enemies. We can choose not to be killed by the gangs who are taking advantage of corrupt systems and unhealthy social conditions for profit (they are not all on the street either). We can choose not to be killed by state police agents or military who are being paid to protect us. We can choose not to fall prey to a sexual deviant or predator, of whom there are many alive and operating in the land of myths.

Very recently, Maryanne Pearce published a book titled An Awkward Silence: Missing and Murdered Vulnerable Women and the Canadian Justice System. She took this task on herself, researching and compiling a database of all murdered and missing people in Canada. She now suffers from post traumatic stress disorder, which she should, she took the onus and learned the truth, and these truths have to be known. The reality that Canada is a safe place is another myth. There are currently many dangerous and violent people wandering around free and at large and no effort is being put into apprehending or imprisoning them. This I was already well aware of, because the predators know that native and other minority women are marginalized by Canada, which means we are excluded from receiving the same rights, protection, and benefits many do receive only because of their race. For many years now, voices have risen in protest stating that there are six hundred missing or murdered native females who the police and government do nothing about because we are excluded. Six hundred missing or murdered is astronomical if you consider we are only two percent of the population that Canada claims to be responsible for. The number of six hundred was provided by an organization that Canada shut down in 2010 in response to the this fact coming out. Canada and the police have publicly denied this. Maryanne Pearce's database proves there is now 824 missing or murdered native women, which means from 2010 to 2013 at least 224 more native women and girls were allowed to be murdered due to the Canadian government and their police agents' deliberate attempts to sweep the problem back under their rug of nasty.

Even the United Nations condemned Canada for this ongoing crime. Canada's response at the last crown speech? They stick by their prostitution laws. Of the 824 missing or murdered, she discovered that 659 were not prostitutes. Some were high school students, some even younger; many were young mothers, many were university students. The government, police, and media always apply the standard racist, colonial-logic formula (native + female = prostitute), claiming that consent was given for all abuse and violence, so these women had it coming. This is the same formula the police and the judicial system apply to any violence perpetrated against any indigenous woman or child. The male formula differs slightly (native + male = drug and alcohol crazed savage). He was the instigator of the violence, so had it coming. This is law by stereotypes, or "We reserve the right to judge any person who has been savagely violated and murdered based on our biased racist criteria before addressing the behaviour of the criminal who committed the crime, no matter how heinous the act."

Only six were murdered by their significant others, which is quite low and deviates from the norm with non-natives. Thus, we dispose of the myth that it is native males who perpetrate the crimes. I do know more than a few native men. It is true that we have been subjected to never-ending streams of sexual, physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse from the colonial occupiers, which has resulted in us having numerous friends and family members who are now suffering with severe emotional and trauma issues. This will happen when the priest or foster daddy routinely shoves it in you from an early age in order to demonstrate what his god/culture thinks of your race.

Unless they have assimilated to 'white culture,' which is brought about through torture, I have no fear of native men. I actually admire them a great deal to have endured that and still come out of it sound, wonderful, and supportive. Native men are good men. They respect and admire us as well, something people who identify as being 'white' do not comprehend. Their culture does not promote equality between the sexes and they accept that as natural.

So what Maryanne Pearce discovered was that there are currently a large number of killers and more serial killers free and at large in Canada. The RCMP and police show little interest in the problem which everyone should be well aware of by now. Maryanne Pearce's findings were used by several journalists to compose stories expressing the urgency of the problem. More than a few people are condemning those stories for being racist because they are not about white women who have been murdered. Dead white woman syndrome is a reality for racist cultures: twenty-seven times more news coverage is rewarded to missing white females than to missing native women and children. The deliberate racial bias in the coverage is also significant in that missing white females receive heartfelt, positive and impassioned coverage, designed to get that person back to their loved ones safely, whereas native females and girls who go missing get little more than "Missing native female, age, missing from, missing since and oh yeah did we mention she is brown?" Mug shots taken from previous arrests, if available, are the preferred images that accompany these messages. Many self-described 'white' people are now complaining about all the racism they have to endure because of these news stories. It is so tragic how these 'white people' have to suffer from so much racism which is due to the fact that other races do still exist and some journalists, especially Caucasians, actually have the audacity to remind them that there are still natives actually living on the territories they have been occupying. The very idea must chill them to the core: if that is true then there may even be other kinds of brown people out there too. Oh, will the horrors never end?

Maryanne Pearce's work does include all women. She, like many people, had had enough of the vile racist, toxic attitudes within the Canadian government, police, judicial system and far too many of the settlers who continue to deliberately and remorselessly pursue their god-given right to harm the people whose lands they continue to occupy. I thank her for having the courage to to stand up and say, "Although I did not begin this, that is not the point. I am still a part of it and do want this to end." The reality that over two percent of native women and girls in this population are being slaughtered indicates that racism is a serious factor behind this. This is very important to be aware of, especially when the foundation of your society and your claim to our territories is based upon ethnic cleansing.

Not every Caucasian who was born on our territories is a racist, despite the government and media's continued anti-native propaganda. In fact, a steady growing number are beginning to stand up against it. Not every Caucasian wants the blood of innocent people on their hands, or on their conscience. No one should be comfortable with any government that sees human rights as a threat to democracy, or as something that is only given to those they allow to have them. One day you too may earn yourself or one of your grandchildren some of the 'special privileges' we have been receiving from your government. No one is immune to violence and horrors just by their superiority complex and lack of empathy for others. Even the self-described white people can just as easily be taken unawares, actually more easily due to their insisting on wearing ass hats. Whether or not you are the one who is subjected to being physically restrained, vilely and sickly tortured, raped, degraded, and slaughtered in order to sate a sadist's urge depends not upon you, but upon them, they chose the prey. A high percentage of predators are racists, being that

Canada is a racist culture, but some predators are ego-based. For them, whites are more suitable because they get the bonus of all that publicity. Many are opportunists, watching, waiting for the right moment. Only they define who they are and only they know what they need as far as a victim goes, what kind of suffering will sate their desires.

The predators who have been caught are primarily white males and strangers to their victim, Sometimes they even work in teams; four men gang-raped and murdered a young student. Only one of them, years later, received a five-year jail term. The racial motive has been repeated by killers and serial killers repeatedly. The response by police and the justice system is racist but what is all this racism actually achieving? Canada is condemning children and young women to death because of their race. Their handling of the long term violent sexual offenders is shrouded in secrecy. The names, charges and sentences are all kept hidden under legal publication bans. They selectively chose who the public is allowed to know about and that is a very rarely done. They have the power to allow the public to know if the person they are releasing is still a threat to the community, which means it is likely that the racist killers' releases are not ever disclosed. They also take great pains to cover up the truth about the deaths of native children whom they have removed from their parents' care and placed into foster care. This is another high-risk factor that is behind the missing and murdered native girls phenomenon. The criminals are often not even known to the victims in racially-motivated attacks. How are young girls, 13, 14, 15 years of age, who have been removed from their families and placed in strange communities for educational purposes, supposed to protect themselves from sadistic sex killers?

Youth and young women are targeted because they are naive, friendly, and their innocence makes them easy prey, but that is okay with Canada. There have been documented and published cases like that of a young native woman who was forced into sexual solicitation and the police being aware for over a year that the pimp was advertising her over the internet. They even arrested him for assaulting a male and recorded him threatening her on their jail system. They knowingly allowed him to force her to continue selling her body in order to pay his fines and provide him with canteen money for months. Not only did they not intervene, but the prison system and judicial system took the money. They knowingly accepted money generated from the forced sexual exploitation of a minor child. When they released the pimp after his fines were paid off, he physically assaulted the girl in the jail parking lot before driving home. They did nothing until a member of the public who saw the extent of the injuries on that child's face phoned to log a complaint. Only then did they decide to obey the law. This was published in the mainstream press but publish any story about a native, the accusations against natives, and defense of the RCMP, and other police agencies rise up in a clamour. Clearly, the secrets have a purpose and the laws are deliberately ignored by police and the justice system. What happens when a child is sexually abused like many native children still are in their foster care or group homes where the state places them? They are severely traumatized and without support turn to drugs and alcohol, and prostitute themselves so they can afford their relief. By being forced down this path by the systematic racism that defines Canada, they eventually end up as bait for the steady stream of sexual predators and sadists.

Janet Henry, one of the many missing women and girls, is from the KwaKawQueWak Nation. She had two loving parents, her father was employed full time in fishing and logging, and they were living happily on their traditional territory until the Canadian government seized Henry and her siblings and placed them into the residential schools or foster care homes. While in foster care, she was abducted and drugged but not murdered for reasons only known to serial killer

Clifford Olson, who slaughtered many children. One of her sisters was also murdered and another sibling committed suicide. Despite this, she finished high school, became a hairdresser, married, had a child. When her name was put on the missing persons list for women who disappeared from the DTES Salish Territory, it was assumed she was just another prostitute who fell victim to the pig cannibal killer Robert Pickton. However, no evidence has ever been found of her whereabouts or remains. It is quite likely yet another unknown serial killer took her life, or perhaps she is just vanished for her own protection; that also happens.

Three times in my life I have had encounters with known and released violent offenders, one of whom worked as a performer for children. That encounter for me was not traumatic; he tried to scare me, failed, and because I was clearly not frightened, simply went away kind of scared himself. It was not until a couple of days later, when I told my employer, that I found out how nasty he really was. She repeated the story to a female neighbour who he had attacked and violently assaulted years before, who had a severe PTSD attack just hearing that he was residing in the area. It kind of made me wish I had known his identity before. Then the police showed up. I hate those guys. They were annoying, but they seemed to be aware of his potential for violence, although did not confess anything to me.

The second violent offender I encountered had done time for breaking and entering a couple's home and threatening them with a hand gun. He began showing up wherever I would; after work I rode a bicycle for a bit to the store, then out for dinner and he clearly knew my schedule. He found out where I lived, knocked on the door, and pretended he had been looking for my neighbour. I was not amused and sent him away. After telling the neighbour (who had not invited him over), and that same neighbour overhearing his conversations in the pub about me, let's just say the boys got together and went to have a talk with him. Whatever was said stopped him.

The most recent offender I encountered, however, is by far the worst. He is a confirmed, listed sexual predator who has been convicted many times of sexual assault, assault, and also of sexual assault of a minor. His first juvenile conviction was for attempted murder. His famous attempted murder charge (which he got off) included several assaults of people with a weapon and unlawful confinement. The intended victim was thrown from a third story window into a dumpster, which saved his life. Fortunately for that person the police showed up just in time. The man was unknown to me when I first encountered him. I was unaware at that time that I was not unknown to him. When I refused his invitations to spend more time with him, he physically grabbed me and began to force his intentions on me in a busy public park. I had to force him off of me which was not easy. During our grapple apparently my elbow struck his penis and that was taken by him as consent. That was the beginning of my long game of cat and mouse with potentially deadly consequences for my children who he has promised to have sent to me a piece at a time. He is not posturing. I was watched constantly for well over two years, I was sexually assaulted more than I like to remember, and this has been the first male I have ever come across who could best me. Of course, I am getting old now, always have been physically challenged due to my early childhood illnesses, and he is twice my size. The scope of bizarre and twisted things that have taken place is beyond belief. Eventually he did find out where I lived. My neighbours witnessed and called emergency services because they feared for my life. He had a habit of shouting threats in front of my home in public, some of these episodes woke the whole neighbourhood. Despite the fact that he was on probation and had a restraining order against him from another woman, as well as being classified as a serial sexual predator, they refused to arrest him. They also decided that I really had no grounds for fear: why should a one-hundred-pound, ill, middle-aged woman

fear a younger, two-hundred-pound, fit, athletic sexual offender after all? I had been suffering from pneumonia that day, which tends to happen sometimes due to whatever is wrong with me. I found myself alone with a family to protect, so we left the city and went into hiding for a few days to give him a cool down and eliminate the potential for murder.

Upon returning, I found I still had an amorous, potentially deadly admirer but now was also being harassed by police. The next thing that happened is that the police came and hauled me in for questioning about my 'husband.' They call him my husband. I have never been married and he was on probation from charges stemming from an incident with his wife which had occurred not even five months before. Finally, they told me that they would provide me with a no contact order. I wondered just how many women in the area that I was not aware of also had one. The loud public verbal threats continued, people witnessed him trying to enter my home on several occasions. They witnessed him hiding under my stairs in the early hours and after dark. I recorded the times and dates for several calls which came from his residence and provided them to police who made up excuses that were false as to why they could not be used as evidence of breaches against my no contact order. They basically put the onus on me to prove to them that he was in fact the party on the other end of the phone. My word alone was not enough evidence. Then, they literally tried to convince me to speak to him, which is absolutely the wrong thing to do with stalking and harassment situations.

He is an erotomaniac. One does not engage with an erotomaniac. The point of a non-contact order is not to have contact with the mentally disturbed individual because that will only make matters worse, but apparently the experts are not aware of this. Not long after, strangers were approaching me on his behalf, neighbours started receiving phone calls and having their windows knocked on, more midnight threats came, along with more harassment from police trying to pry into the sexual assault business. The man, as I saw on his record, is charged annually. He gets off on the rough sex defense. They know he is a rapist and stalker and all they want to do is get me to tell them about the sex bits, like that is not creepy. Eventually, because he was now harassing my neighbourhood and everyone was pretty much terrified I moved my family out of the city far away. Three months after I moved, the police found out where I was and called, not to see how I was or if I was alive, but because they had a warrant for his arrest stemming from the initial 911 calls that were made on my behalf by several people. What they wanted to know is if I could tell them where he was presently, very comforting. Sexual offenders are supposed to be supervised. They are supposed to report their addresses, working locations, car, and all other information that the police require, and his probation officer was supposed to have that information also. He did some time. Around six months later, I found out that my new home was now under police surveillance, which was kind of an obvious give away as to our location in the community, it was quite rural. I confirmed he was again at large, the surveillance continued, the RCMP kept coming to question me, but would not tell me what it was all about so we moved again, and again. That was a few years ago, we have had to completely disappear, to leave the community where we had lives and friends, to create new lives while he continues to terrify those people. But I guess at least they got rid of a few more Indians. There are children and people back there who relied on me to take care of them and now I can no longer do that. That is what hurts the most.

The male does not worry me as much as the police. When the whole business began, I did as I always do, I went to the library and researched the problem thoroughly, and I am very glad I did. What I learned, written by a police officer from the US who did not have anything nice to say about his colleagues in this area, prepared me for not only what the pursuer was doing

but also how the police would fail. His advice did save a life, that I will attest to. But the police's attempts to get me to engage with the stalker were very disturbing. They were trying to set me up and put myself at risk by encouraging me to talk to him and they had a twisted interest in trying to get me to speak about sexual assaults. I did search out and find the procedures manual they are supposed to use in situations like this. They clearly did the opposite, so basically I have to wonder how many other native women have been set up by the police? And one final note: there is a name on the list of missing and murdered women which was brought to my attention by a certain admirer several times. I haven't read the new one through, I wonder if my name is on it now too. I have gone missing, but once again my death is actually a myth, only because I am one of the very few lucky ones.

This has to stop. No person, especially a child, should be allowed to be tortured, much less slaughtered, for the betterment of the economy. Please do not buy stolen native resources, do not buy from Canada. I do not want my grandchildren to endure what we have had to suffer for so many generations. We need sanctions now!

The Dark Mountain Manifesto

We have published an excerpted version of this manifesto with the hope that we were faithful to the tone and intent of it, here it appears in its entirety. Dark Mountain is a literary group based in the UK that is arguing for a kind of /dark ecology/ that is pessimistic towards activist approaches to "saving the environment" and optimistic about the possibility of us telling stories to each other. You can learn more about them at http://dark-mountain.net/

<example>

> Rearmament
>
> These grand and fatal movements toward death: the grandeur of the mass
>
> Makes pity a fool, the tearing pity
>
> For the atoms of the mass, the persons, the victims, makes it seem monstrous
>
> To admire the tragic beauty they build.
>
> It is beautiful as a river flowing or a slowly gathering
>
> Glacier on a high mountain rock-face,
>
> Bound to plow down a forest, or as frost in November,
>
> The gold and flaming death-dance for leaves,
>
> Or a girl in the night of her spent maidenhood, bleeding and kissing.
>
> I would burn my right hand in a slow fire
>
> To change the future … I should do foolishly. The beauty of modern
>
> Man is not in the persons but in the
>
> Disastrous rhythm, the heavy and mobile masses, the dance of the
>
> Dream-led masses down the dark mountain.
>
> — *Robinson Jeffers, 1935*

I: WALKING ON LAVA

<quote> The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilisation.
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Those who witness extreme social collapse at first hand seldom describe any deep revelation about the truths of human existence. What they do mention, if asked, is their surprise at how easy it is to die.

The pattern of ordinary life, in which so much stays the same from one day to the next, disguises the fragility of its fabric. How many of our activities are made possible by the impression of stability that pattern gives? So long as it repeats, or varies steadily enough, we are able to plan for tomorrow as if all the things we rely on and don't think about too care- fully will still be there. When the pattern is broken, by civil war or natu- ral disaster or the smaller-scale tragedies that tear at its fabric, many of those activities become impossible or meaningless, while simply meeting needs we once took for granted may occupy much of our lives.

What war correspondents and relief workers report is not only the fragility of the fabric, but the speed with which it can unravel. As we write this, no one can say with certainty where the unravelling of the financial and commercial fabric of our economies will end. Meanwhile, beyond the cities, unchecked industrial exploitation frays the material basis of life in many parts of the world, and pulls at the ecological systems which sustain it.

Precarious as this moment may be, however, an awareness of the fragility of what we call civilisation is nothing new.

'Few men realise,' wrote Joseph Conrad in 1896, 'that their life, the very essence of their character, their capabilities and their audacities, are only the expression of their belief in the safety of their surroundings.' Conrad's writings exposed the civilisation exported by European imperialists to be little more than a comforting illusion, not only in the dark, unconquerable heart of Africa, but in the whited sepulchres of their capital cities. The inhabitants of that civilisation believed 'blindly in the irresistible force of its institutions and its morals, in the power of its police and of its opinion,' but their confidence could be maintained only by the seeming solidity of the crowd of like-minded believers surrounding them. Outside the walls, the wild remained as close to the surface as blood under skin, though the city-dweller was no longer equipped to face it directly.

Bertrand Russell caught this vein in Conrad's worldview, suggesting that the novelist 'thought of civilised and morally tolerable human life as a dangerous walk on a thin crust of barely cooled lava which at any moment might break and let the unwary sink into fiery depths.' What both Russell and Conrad were getting at was a simple fact which any historian could confirm: human civilisation is an intensely fragile con- struction. It is built on little more than belief: belief in the rightness of its values; belief in the strength of its system of law and order; belief in its currency; above all, perhaps, belief in its future.

Once that belief begins to crumble, the collapse of a civilisation may become unstoppable. That civilisations fall, sooner or later, is as much a law of history as gravity is a law of physics. What remains after the fall is a wild mixture of cultural debris, confused and angry people whose certainties have betrayed them, and those forces which were always there, deeper than the foundations of the city walls: the desire to survive and the desire for meaning.

It is, it seems, our civilisation's turn to experience the inrush of the savage and the unseen; our turn to be brought up short by contact with untamed reality. There is a fall coming. We live in an age in which familiar restraints are being kicked away, and foundations snatched from under us. After a quarter century of complacency, in which we were invited to believe in bubbles that would never burst, prices that would never fall, the end of history, the crude repackaging of the triumphalism of Conrad's Victorian twilight — Hubris has been introduced to Nemesis. Now a familiar human story is being played out. It is the story of an empire corroding from within. It is the story of a people who believed, for a long time, that their actions did not have consequences. It is the story of how that people will cope with the crumbling of their own myth. It is our story.

This time, the crumbling empire is the unassailable global economy, and the brave new world of consumer democracy being forged worldwide in its name. Upon the indestructibility of this edifice we have pinned the hopes of this latest phase of our civilisation. Now, its failure and fallibility exposed, the world's elites are scrabbling frantically to buoy up an economic machine which, for decades, they told us needed little restraint, for restraint would be its undoing. Uncountable sums of money are being funnelled upwards in order to prevent an uncontrolled explosion. The machine is stuttering and the engineers are in panic. They are wondering if perhaps they do not understand it as well as they imagined. They are wondering whether they are controlling it at all or whether, perhaps, it is controlling them.

Increasingly, people are restless. The engineers group themselves into competing teams, but neither side seems to know what to do, and neither seems much different from the other. Around the world, discontent can be heard. The extremists are grinding their knives and moving in as the machine's coughing and stuttering exposes the inadequacies of the political oligarchies who claimed to have everything in hand. Old gods are rearing their heads, and old answers: revolution, war, ethnic strife. Politics as we have known it totters, like the machine it was built to sustain. In its place could easily arise something more elemental, with a dark heart.

As the financial wizards lose their powers of levitation, as the politicians and economists struggle to conjure new explanations, it starts to dawn on us that behind the curtain, at the heart of the Emerald City, sits not the benign and omnipotent invisible hand we had been promised, but something else entirely. Something responsible for what Marx, writing not so long before Conrad, cast as the 'everlasting uncertainty and anguish' of the 'bourgeois epoch'; a time in which 'all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned.' Draw back the curtain, follow the tireless motion of cogs and wheels back to its source, and you will find the engine driving our civilisation: the myth of progress.

The myth of progress is to us what the myth of god-given warrior prowess was to the Romans, or the myth of eternal salvation was to the conquistadors: without it, our efforts cannot be sustained. Onto the root stock of Western Christianity, the Enlightenment at its most optimistic grafted a vision of an Earthly paradise, towards which human effort guided by calculative reason could take us. Following this guidance, each generation will live a better life than the life of those that went before it. History becomes an escalator, and the only way is up. On the top floor is human perfection. It is important that this should remain just out of reach in order to sustain the sensation of motion.

Recent history, however, has given this mechanism something of a battering. The past century too often threatened a descent into hell, rather than the promised heaven on Earth. Even within the prosperous and liberal societies of the West progress has, in many ways, failed to deliver the goods. Today's generation are demonstrably less content, and consequently less optimistic, than

those that went before. They work longer hours, with less security, and less chance of leaving behind the social back- ground into which they were born. They fear crime, social breakdown, overdevelopment, environmental collapse. They do not believe that the future will be better than the past. Individually, they are less constrained by class and convention than their parents or grandparents, but more constrained by law, surveillance, state proscription and personal debt. Their physical health is better, their mental health more fragile. Nobody knows what is coming. Nobody wants to look.

Most significantly of all, there is an underlying darkness at the root of everything we have built. Outside the cities, beyond the blurring edges of our civilisation, at the mercy of the machine but not under its control, lies something that neither Marx nor Conrad, Caesar nor Hume, Thatcher nor Lenin ever really understood. Something that Western civilisation — which has set the terms for global civilisation—was never capable of understanding, because to understand it would be to undermine, fatally, the myth of that civilisation. Something upon which that thin crust of lava is balanced; which feeds the machine and all the people who run it, and which they have all trained themselves not to see.

II: THE SEVERED HAND

<quote>
Then what is the answer? Not to be deluded by dreams.
To know that great civilisations have broken down into violence,
and their tyrants come, many times before.
When open violence appears, to avoid it with honor or choose
the least ugly faction; these evils are essential.
To keep one's own integrity, be merciful and uncorrupted
and not wish for evil; and not be duped
By dreams of universal justice or happiness. These dreams will
not be fulfilled.
To know this, and know that however ugly the parts appear
the whole remains beautiful. A severed hand
Is an ugly thing and man dissevered from the earth and stars
and his history ... for contemplation or in fact ...
Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness,
the greatest beauty is
Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty
of the universe. Love that, not man
Apart from that, or else you will share man's pitiful confusions,
or drown in despair when his days darken.
— Robinson Jeffers, 'The Answer'

The myth of progress is founded on the myth of nature. The first tells us that we are destined for greatness; the second tells us that greatness is cost-free. Each is intimately bound up with the other. Both tell us that we are apart from the world; that we began grunting in the primeval swamps, as a humble part of something called 'nature', which we have now triumphantly subdued. The very fact that we have a word for 'nature' is evidence that we do not regard ourselves as part of it. Indeed, our separation from it is a myth integral to the triumph of our civilisation.

We are, we tell ourselves, the only species ever to have attacked nature and won. In this, our unique glory is contained.

Outside the citadels of self-congratulation, lone voices have cried out against this infantile version of the human story for centuries, but it is only in the last few decades that its inaccuracy has become laughably apparent. We are the first generations to grow up surrounded by evidence that our attempt to separate ourselves from 'nature' has been a grim failure, proof not of our genius but our hubris. The attempt to sever the hand from the body has endangered the 'progress' we hold so dear, and it has endangered much of 'nature' too. The resulting upheaval underlies the crisis we now face.

We imagined ourselves isolated from the source of our existence. The fallout from this imaginative error is all around us: a quarter of the world's mammals are threatened with imminent extinction; an acre and a half of rainforest is felled every second; 75% of the world's fish stocks are on the verge of collapse; humanity consumes 25% more of the world's natural 'products' than the Earth can replace — a figure predicted to rise to 80% by mid-century. Even through the deadening lens of statistics, we can glimpse the violence to which our myths have driven us.

And over it all looms runaway climate change. Climate change, which threatens to render all human projects irrelevant; which presents us with detailed evidence of our lack of understanding of the world we inhabit while, at the same time, demonstrating that we are still entirely reliant upon it. Climate change, which highlights in painful colour the head-on crash between civilisation and 'nature'; which makes plain, more effectively than any carefully constructed argument or optimistically defiant protest, how the machine's need for permanent growth will require us to destroy ourselves in its name. Climate change, which brings home at last our ultimate powerlessness.

These are the facts, or some of them. Yet facts never tell the whole story. ('Facts', Conrad wrote, in Lord Jim, 'as if facts could prove anything.') The facts of environmental crisis we hear so much about often conceal as much as they expose. We hear daily about the impacts of our activities on 'the environment' (like 'nature', this is an expression which distances us from the reality of our situation). Daily we hear, too, of the many 'solutions' to these problems: solutions which usually involve the necessity of urgent political agreement and a judicious application of human technological genius. Things may be changing, runs the narrative, but there is nothing we cannot deal with here, folks. We perhaps need to move faster, more urgently. Certainly we need to accelerate the pace of research and development. We accept that we must become more 'sustainable'. But everything will be fine. There will still be growth, there will still be progress: these things will continue, because they have to continue, so they cannot do anything but continue. There is nothing to see here. Everything will be fine.

We do not believe that everything will be fine. We are not even sure, based on current definitions of progress and improvement, that we want it to be. Of all humanity's delusions of difference, of its separation from and superiority to the living world which surrounds it, one distinction holds up better than most: we may well be the first species capable of effectively eliminating life on Earth. This is a hypothesis we seem intent on putting to the test. We are already responsible for denuding the world of much of its richness, magnificence, beauty, colour and magic, and we show no sign of slowing down. For a very long time, we imagined that 'nature' was something

that happened elsewhere. The damage we did to it might be regrettable, but needed to be weighed against the benefits here and now. And in the worst case scenario, there would always be some kind of Plan B. Perhaps we would make for the moon, where we could survive in lunar colonies under giant bubbles as we planned our expansion across the galaxy.

But there is no Plan B and the bubble, it turns out, is where we have been living all the while. The bubble is that delusion of isolation under which we have laboured for so long. The bubble has cut us off from life on the only planet we have, or are ever likely to have. The bubble is civilisation.

Consider the structures on which that bubble has been built. Its foundations are geological: coal, oil, gas — millions upon millions of years of ancient sunlight, dragged from the depths of the planet and burned with abandon. On this base, the structure stands. Move upwards, and you pass through a jumble of supporting horrors: battery chicken sheds; industrial abattoirs; burning forests; beam-trawled ocean floors; dynamited reefs; hollowed-out mountains; wasted soil. Finally, on top of all these unseen layers, you reach the well-tended surface where you and I stand: unaware, or uninterested, in what goes on beneath us; demanding that the authorities keep us in the manner to which we have been accustomed; occasion- ally feeling twinges of guilt that lead us to buy organic chickens or locally-produced lettuces; yet for the most part glutted, but not sated, on the fruits of the horrors on which our lifestyles depend.

We are the first generations born into a new and unprecedented age — the age of ecocide. To name it thus is not to presume the outcome, but simply to describe a process which is underway. The ground, the sea, the air, the elemental backdrops to our existence — all these our economics has taken for granted, to be used as a bottomless tip, endlessly able to dilute and disperse the tailings of our extraction, production, consumption. The sheer scale of the sky or the weight of a swollen river makes it hard to imagine that creatures as flimsy as you and I could do that much damage. Philip Larkin gave voice to this attitude, and the creeping, worrying end of it in his poem Going, Going:

> Things are tougher than we are, just
> As earth will always respond
> However we mess it about;
> Chuck filth in the sea, if you must:
> The tides will be clean beyond.
> – But what do I feel now? Doubt?

Nearly forty years on from Larkin's words, doubt is what all of us seem to feel, all of the time. Too much filth has been chucked in the sea and into the soil and into the atmosphere to make any other feeling sensible. The doubt, and the facts, have paved the way for a worldwide movement of environmental politics, which aimed, at least in its early, raw form, to challenge the myths of development and progress head-on. But time has not been kind to the greens. Today's environmentalists are more likely to be found at corporate conferences hymning the virtues of 'sustainability' and 'ethical consumption' than doing anything as naive as questioning the intrinsic values of civilisation. Capitalism has absorbed the greens, as it absorbs so many challenges to its ascendancy. A radical challenge to the human machine has been transformed into yet another opportunity for shopping.

'Denial' is a hot word, heavy with connotations. When it is used to brand the remaining rump of climate change sceptics, they object noisily to the association with those who would rewrite the history of the Holocaust. Yet the focus on this dwindling group may serve as a distraction from a far larger form of denial, in its psychoanalytic sense. Freud wrote of the inability of people to hear things which did not fit with the way they saw themselves and the world. We put ourselves through all kinds of inner contortions, rather than look plainly at those things which challenge our fundamental understanding of the world.

Today, humanity is up to its neck in denial about what it has built, what it has become — and what it is in for. Ecological and economic collapse unfold before us and, if we acknowledge them at all, we act as if this were a temporary problem, a technical glitch. Centuries of hubris block our ears like wax plugs; we cannot hear the message which reality is screaming at us. For all our doubts and discontents, we are still wired to an idea of his- tory in which the future will be an upgraded version of the present. The assumption remains that things must continue in their current direction: the sense of crisis only smudges the meaning of that 'must'. No longer a natural inevitability, it becomes an urgent necessity: we must find a way to go on having supermarkets and superhighways. We cannot contemplate the alternative.

And so we find ourselves, all of us together, poised trembling on the edge of a change so massive that we have no way of gauging it. None of us knows where to look, but all of us know not to look down. Secretly, we all think we are doomed: even the politicians think this; even the environmentalists. Some of us deal with it by going shopping. Some deal with it by hoping it is true. Some give up in despair. Some work frantically to try and fend off the coming storm.

Our question is: what would happen if we looked down? Would it be as bad as we imagine? What might we see? Could it even be good for us?

We believe it is time to look down.

III: UNCIVILISATION

<quote>

Without mystery, without curiosity and without the form imposed by a partial answer, there can be no stories—only confessions, com- muniqués, memories and fragments of autobiographical fantasy which for the moment pass as novels.

— John Berger, 'A Story for Aesop', from Keeping a Rendezvous

If we are indeed teetering on the edge of a massive change in how we live, in how human society itself is constructed, and in how we relate to the rest of the world, then we were led to this point by the stories we have told ourselves — above all, by the story of civilisation.

This story has many variants, religious and secular, scientific, economic and mystic. But all tell of humanity's original transcendence of its animal beginnings, our growing mastery over a 'nature' to which we no longer belong, and the glorious future of plenty and prosperity which will follow when this mastery is complete. It is the story of human centrality, of a species destined to be lord of all it surveys, unconfined by the limits that apply to other, lesser creatures.

What makes this story so dangerous is that, for the most part, we have forgotten that it is a story. It has been told so many times by those who see themselves as rationalists, even scientists; heirs to the Enlightenment's legacy — a legacy which includes the denial of the role of stories in making the world.

Humans have always lived by stories, and those with skill in telling them have been treated with respect and, often, a certain wariness. Beyond the limits of reason, reality remains mysterious, as incapable of being approached directly as a hunter's quarry. With stories, with art, with symbols and layers of meaning, we stalk those elusive aspects of reality that go undreamed of in our philosophy. The storyteller weaves the mysterious into the fabric of life, lacing it with the comic, the tragic, the obscene, making safe paths through dangerous territory.

Yet as the myth of civilisation deepened its grip on our thinking, borrowing the guise of science and reason, we began to deny the role of stories, to dismiss their power as something primitive, childish, outgrown. The old tales by which generations had made sense of life's subtleties and strangenesses were bowdlerised and packed off to the nursery. Religion, that bag of myths and mysteries, birthplace of the theatre, was straightened out into a framework of universal laws and moral account-keeping. The dream visions of the Middle Ages became the nonsense stories of Victorian childhood. In the age of the novel, stories were no longer the way to approach the deep truths of the world, so much as a way to pass time on a train journey. It is hard, today, to imagine that the word of a poet was once feared by a king.

Yet for all this, our world is still shaped by stories. Through television, film, novels and video games, we may be more thoroughly bombarded with narrative material than any people that ever lived. What is peculiar, however, is the carelessness with which these stories are channelled at us — as entertainment, a distraction from daily life, something to hold our attention to the other side of the ad break. There is little sense that these things make up the equipment by which we navigate reality. On the other hand, there are the serious stories told by economists, politicians, geneticists and corporate leaders. These are not presented as stories at all, but as direct accounts of how the world is. Choose between competing versions, then fight with those who chose differently. The ensuing conflicts play out on early morning radio, in afternoon debates and late night television pundit wars. And yet, for all the noise, what is striking is how much the opposing sides agree on: all their stories are only variants of the larger story of human centrality, of our ever-expanding control over 'nature', our right to perpetual economic growth, our ability to transcend all limits.

So we find ourselves, our ways of telling unbalanced, trapped inside a runaway narrative, headed for the worst kind of encounter with reality. In such a moment, writers, artists, poets and storytellers of all kinds have a critical role to play. Creativity remains the most uncontrollable of human forces: without it, the project of civilisation is inconceivable, yet no part of life remains so untamed and undomesticated. Words and images can change minds, hearts, even the course of history. Their makers shape the stories people carry through their lives, unearth old ones and breathe them back to life, add new twists, point to unexpected endings. It is time to pick up the threads and make the stories new, as they must always be made new, starting from where we are.

Mainstream art in the West has long been about shock; about busting taboos, about Getting Noticed. This has gone on for so long that it has become common to assert that in these ironic, exhausted, post-everything times, there are no taboos left to bust. But there is one.

The last taboo is the myth of civilisation. It is built upon the stories we have constructed about our genius, our indestructibility, our manifest destiny as a chosen species. It is where our vision and our self-belief intertwine with our reckless refusal to face the reality of our position on this Earth. It has led the human race to achieve what it has achieved; and has led the planet into the

age of ecocide. The two are intimately linked. We believe they must decoupled if anything is to remain.

We believe that artists — which is to us the most welcoming of words, taking under its wing writers of all kinds, painters, musicians, sculptors, poets, designers, creators, makers of things, dreamers of dreams — have a responsibility to begin the process of decoupling. We believe that, in the age of ecocide, the last taboo must be broken — and that only artists can do it.

Ecocide demands a response. That response is too important to be left to politicians, economists, conceptual thinkers, number crunchers; too all-pervasive to be left to activists or campaigners. Artists are needed. So far, though, the artistic response has been muted. In between traditional nature poetry and agitprop, what is there? Where are the poems that have adjusted their scope to the scale of this challenge? Where are the novels that probe beyond the country house or the city centre? What new form of writing has emerged to challenge civilisation itself? What gallery mounts an exhibition equal to this challenge? Which musician has discovered the secret chord?

If the answers to these questions have been scarce up to now, it is perhaps both because the depth of collective denial is so great, and because the challenge is so very daunting. We are daunted by it, ourselves. But we believe it needs to be risen to. We believe that art must look over the edge, face the world that is coming with a steady eye, and rise to the challenge of ecocide with a challenge of its own: an artistic response to the crumbling of the empires of the mind.

This response we call Uncivilised art, and we are interested in one branch of it in particular: Uncivilised writing. Uncivilised writing is writing which attempts to stand outside the human bubble and see us as we are: highly evolved apes with an array of talents and abilities which we are unleashing without sufficient thought, control, compassion or intelligence. Apes who have constructed a sophisticated myth of their own importance with which to sustain their civilising project. Apes whose project has been to tame, to control, to subdue or to destroy — to civilise the forests, the deserts, the wild lands and the seas, to impose bonds on the minds of their own in order that they might feel nothing when they exploit or destroy their fellow creatures.

Against the civilising project, which has become the progenitor of ecocide, Uncivilised writing offers not a non-human perspective—we remain human and, even now, are not quite ashamed — but a perspective which sees us as one strand of a web rather than as the first palanquin in a glorious procession. It offers an unblinking look at the forces among which we find ourselves.

It sets out to paint a picture of homo sapiens which a being from another world or, better, a being from our own — a blue whale, an albatross, a mountain hare — might recognise as something approaching a truth. It sets out to tug our attention away from ourselves and turn it outwards; to uncentre our minds. It is writing, in short, which puts civilisation — and us — into perspective. Writing that comes not, as most writing still does, from the self-absorbed and self-congratulatory metropolitan centres of civilisation but from somewhere on its wilder fringes. Somewhere woody and weedy and largely avoided, from where insistent, uncomfortable truths about ourselves drift in; truths which we're not keen on hearing. Writing which unflinchingly stares us down, however uncomfortable this may prove.

It might perhaps be just as useful to explain what Uncivilised writing is not. It is not environmental writing, for there is much of that about already, and most of it fails to jump the barrier

which marks the limit of our collective human ego; much of it, indeed, ends up shoring-up that ego, and helping us to persist in our civilisational delusions. It is not nature writing, for there is no such thing as nature as distinct from people, and to suggest otherwise is to perpetuate the attitude which has brought us here. And it is not political writing, with which the world is already flooded, for politics is a human confection, complicit in ecocide and decaying from within.

Uncivilised writing is more rooted than any of these. Above all, it is determined to shift our worldview, not to feed into it. It is writing for outsiders. If you want to be loved, it might be best not to get involved, for the world, at least for a time, will resolutely refuse to listen.

A salutary example of this last point can be found in the fate of one of the twentieth century's most significant yet most neglected poets. Robinson Jeffers was writing Uncivilised verse seventy years before this manifesto was thought of, though he did not call it that. In his early poetic career, Jeffers was a star: he appeared on the cover of Time magazine, read his poems in the US Library of Congress and was respected for the alternative he offered to the Modernist juggernaut. Today his work is left out of anthologies, his name is barely known and his politics are regarded with suspicion. Read Jeffers' later work and you will see why. His crime was to deliberately puncture humanity's sense of self-importance. His punishment was to be sent into a lonely literary exile from which, forty years after his death, he has still not been allowed to return.

But Jeffers knew what he was in for. He knew that nobody, in an age of 'consumer choice', wanted to be told by this stone-faced prophet of the California cliffs that 'it is good for man … To know that his needs and nature are no more changed in fact in ten thousand years than the beaks of eagles.' He knew that no comfortable liberal wanted to hear his angry warning, issued at the height of the Second World War: 'Keep clear of the dupes that talk democracy / And the dogs that talk revolution / Drunk with talk, liars and believers … / Long live freedom, and damn the ideologies.' His vision of a world in which humanity was doomed to destroy its surroundings and eventually itself ('I would burn my right hand in a slow fire / To change the future … I should do foolishly') was furiously rejected in the rising age of consumer democracy which he also predicted ('Be happy, adjust your economics to the new abundance…')

Jeffers, as his poetry developed, developed a philosophy too. He called it 'inhumanism.' It was, he wrote:

> a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to notman; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence…This manner of thought and feeling is neither misanthropic nor pessimist … It offers a reasonable detachment as rule of conduct, instead of love, hate and envy… it provides magnificence for the religious instinct, and satisfies our need to admire greatness and rejoice in beauty.

The shifting of emphasis from man to notman: this is the aim of Uncivilised writing. To 'unhumanise our views a little, and become confident / As the rock and ocean that we were made from.' This is not a rejection of our humanity — it is an affirmation of the wonder of what it means to be truly human. It is to accept the world for what it is and to make our home here, rather than dreaming of relocating to the stars, or existing in a Man-forged bubble and pretending to ourselves that there is nothing outside it to which we have any connection at all.

This, then, is the literary challenge of our age. So far, few have taken it up. The signs of the times flash out in urgent neon, but our literary lions have better things to read. Their art remains stuck in its own civilised bubble. The idea of civilisation is entangled, right down to its

semantic roots, with city-dwelling, and this provokes a thought: if our writers seem unable to find new stories which might lead us through the times ahead, is this not a function of their metropolitan mentality? The big names of contemporary literature are equally at home in the fashionable quarters of London or New York, and their writing reflects the prejudices of the placeless, transnational elite to which they belong.

The converse also applies. Those voices which tell other stories tend to be rooted in a sense of place. Think of John Berger's novels and essays from the Haute Savoie, or the depths explored by Alan Garner within a day's walk of his birthplace in Cheshire. Think of Wendell Berry or WS Merwin, Mary Oliver or Cormac McCarthy. Those whose writings approach the shores of the Uncivilised are those who know their place, in the physical sense, and who remain wary of the siren cries of metrovincial fashion and civilised excitement.

If we name particular writers whose work embodies what we are arguing for, the aim is not to place them more prominently on the existing map of literary reputations. Rather, as Geoff Dyer has said of Berger, to take their work seriously is to redraw the maps altogether — not only the map of literary reputations, but those by which we navigate all areas of life.

Even here, we go carefully, for cartography itself is not a neutral activity. The drawing of maps is full of colonial echoes. The civilised eye seeks to view the world from above, as something we can stand over and survey. The Uncivilised writer knows the world is, rather, something we are enmeshed in — a patchwork and a framework of places, experiences, sights, smells, sounds. Maps can lead, but can also mislead. Our maps must be the kind sketched in the dust with a stick, washed away by the next rain. They can be read only by those who ask to see them, and they cannot be bought.

This, then, is Uncivilised writing. Human, inhuman, stoic and entirely natural. Humble, questioning, suspicious of the big idea and the easy answer. Walking the boundaries and reopening old conversations. Apart but engaged, its practitioners always willing to get their hands dirty; aware, in fact, that dirt is essential; that keyboards should be tapped by those with soil under their fingernails and wilderness in their heads.

We tried ruling the world; we tried acting as God's steward, then we tried ushering in the human revolution, the age of reason and isolation. We failed in all of it, and our failure destroyed more than we were even aware of. The time for civilisation is past. Uncivilisation, which knows its flaws because it has participated in them; which sees unflinchingly and bites down hard as it records — this is the project we must embark on now. This is the challenge for writing — for art — to meet. This is what we are here for.

IV: TO THE FOOTHILLS!

<quote>
One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.
— *William Wordsworth, 'The Tables Turned'*

A movement needs a beginning. An expedition needs a base camp. A project needs a headquarters. Uncivilisation is our project, and the promotion of Uncivilised writing — and art — needs a base. We present this manifesto not simply because we have something to say—who

doesn't?—but because we have something to do. We hope this pamphlet has created a spark. If so, we have a responsibility to fan the flames. This is what we intend to do. But we can't do it alone.

This is a moment to ask deep questions and to ask them urgently. All around us, shifts are under way which suggest that our whole way of living is already passing into history. It is time to look for new paths and new stories, ones that can lead us through the end of the world as we know it and out the other side. We suspect that by questioning the foundations of civilisation, the myth of human centrality, our imagined isolation, we may find the beginning of such paths.

If we are right, it will be necessary to go literally beyond the Pale. Out- side the stockades we have built — the city walls, the original marker in stone or wood that first separated 'man' from 'nature'. Beyond the gates, out into the wilderness, is where we are headed. And there we shall make for the higher ground for, as Jeffers wrote, 'when the cities lie at the monster's feet / There are left the mountains.' We shall make the pilgrimage to the poet's Dark Mountain, to the great, immovable, inhuman heights which were here before us and will be here after, and from their slopes we shall look back upon the pinprick lights of the distant cities and gain perspective on who we are and what we have become.

This is the Dark Mountain project. It starts here.

Where will it end? Nobody knows. Where will it lead? We are not sure. Its first incarnation, launched alongside this manifesto, is a website, which points the way to the ranges. It will contains thoughts, scribblings, jottings, ideas; it will work up the project of Uncivilisation, and invite all comers to join the discussion.

Then it will become a physical object, because virtual reality is, ultimately, no reality at all. It will become a journal, of paper, card, paint and print; of ideas, thoughts, observations, mumblings; new stories which will help to define the project — the school, the movement — of Uncivilised writing. It will collect the words and the images of those who consider themselves Uncivilised and have something to say about it; who want to help us attack the citadels. It will be a thing of beauty for the eye and for the heart and for the mind, for we are unfashionable enough to believe that beauty — like truth — not only exists, but still matters.

Beyond that… all is currently hidden from view. It is a long way across the plains, and things become obscured by distance. There are great white spaces on this map still. The civilised would fill them in; we are not so sure we want to. But we cannot resist exploring them, navigating by rumours and by the stars. We don't know quite what we will find. We are slightly nervous. But we will not turn back, for we believe that something enormous may be out there, waiting to meet us.

Uncivilisation, like civilisation, is not something that can be created alone. Climbing the Dark Mountain cannot be a solitary exercise. We need bearers, sherpas, guides, fellow adventurers. We need to rope ourselves together for safety. At present, our form is loose and nebulous. It will firm itself up as we climb. Like the best writing, we need to be shaped by the ground beneath our feet, and what we become will be shaped, at least in part, by what we find on our journey.

If you would like to climb at least some of the way with us, we would like to hear from you. We feel sure there are others out there who would relish joining us on this expedition.

Come. Join us. We leave at dawn.

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF UNCIVILISATION

'We must unhumanise our views a little, and become confident

As the rock and ocean that we were made from.'

1. We live in a time of social, economic and ecological unravelling. All around us are signs that our whole way of living is already passing into history. We will face this reality honestly and learn how to live with it.

2. We reject the faith which holds that the converging crises of our times can be reduced to a set of 'problems' in need of technological or political 'solutions'.

3. We believe that the roots of these crises lie in the stories we have been telling ourselves. We intend to challenge the stories which underpin our civilisation: the myth of progress, the myth of human centrality, and the myth of our separation from 'nature'. These myths are more dangerous for the fact that we have forgotten they are myths.

4. We will reassert the role of storytelling as more than mere entertainment. It is through stories that we weave reality.

5. Humans are not the point and purpose of the planet. Our art will begin with the attempt to step outside the human bubble. By careful attention, we will reengage with the non-human world.

6. We will celebrate writing and art which is grounded in a sense of place and of time. Our literature has been dominated for too long by those who inhabit the cosmopolitan citadels.

7. We will not lose ourselves in the elaboration of theories or ideologies. Our words will be elemental. We write with dirt under our fingernails.

8. The end of the world as we know it is not the end of the world full stop. Together, we will find the hope beyond hope, the paths which lead to the unknown world ahead of us.

Ways of Casting Wishes

by Vira Hawthorn

We all have ways of casting wishes. In the anarchist milieu, one of the most common of these practices is the communiqué. Written as a story and shared in our world, communiqués attach a group of intentions to their departure. Each intention cannot be known, but every communiqué at least wishes for connection. It is the desire for resonance, a sharing of inspiration. The communiqué carries the wish for feeling and perceiving between people, for speaking in the space that alienation strangles into silence. Green anarchists know that civilization is responsible, at root, for alienation – the impassable distance between all of life. When we write about an event that has occurred, especially an event that breaks with normalcy, we aim with our intention for that barrier. We hope (despite our hopelessness) that even the slightest tingle of a real feeling will be felt.

In “Naming All Of The Names,” Cedar Leighlais continues the great tradition of criticism in our milieu. But, thrust into empty space, their blade has a blunt edge. That is to say: We should critique their criticism–even if only to make caricatures of ourselves-because they have not only missed the point, they have articulated a position that will only aid in the maintenance and growth of alienation, and the weakening of the wish for communication.

Leighlais’ article argues that if – in a communiqué — you do not name civilization as your enemy, explicitly, you have watered down your ideas, and will fail to build authentic relationships. Despite the fact that the communiqué they are critiquing in no way excludes civilization as an enemy, and that Leighlais’ argument is simply a bad faith criticism, we should still examine this position. Because there is a tendency in the anarchist world to equate every effort at communication with liberalism. Especially if the style of our communication uses description rather than jargon.

I have a sister. She isn’t an anarchist. But she does care deeply about the ways that society affects her and her loved ones. We talk about that. We talk about it because it is a place where we connect. If I said to her, “you feel alienated from yourself all of the time because you’re domesticated, because of the modernist separation of mind, body and spirit, because of the Leviathan and all of its limbs. We must attack the limbs for the sake of freedom!” – she would say, “What?”

This does not mean that my sister and I cannot be comrades or co-conspirators. There are places where we connect and can collaborate if we so choose. This does not mean that my sister doesn’t understand the world. She understands it in different terms. And this does not mean that my effort to connect with her is in any way liberal, proselytizing, or strategic. It means that I value the quality and content of our communication. I care about her, and I care about communicating my ideas to her, and I care about hearing what her ideas are, too.

If anarchists only communicate in jargon, our relationships will be built on style rather than content. With the intention of keeping our messages “pure,” we will find all else hollow. This is how the enforcement of anarchism as a subculture (and all subcultures create their own internal languages) contributes to the maintenance and growth of alienation. There are many ways that we insulate ourselves in the anarchist subculture, weak and shallow communication being second only to non-communication. And there isn’t much difference, in effect, between non-communication and poor communication.

To preemptively rebut an expected reaction here: I have a real, genuine, longing desire to meet and connect with people. This desire cannot be equated with the intentions of politicians and churches who, in an effort to amass popularity and power, seek to collect people and impose beliefs upon them.

For the communiqué, for conversation, for the wish of connection, honesty and clarity are far more creative powers than the classic anarchist or anti-civilization vocabulary. “Naming All Of The Names” directly requests of anarchists a hollow and rhetorical style of communication. Leighlais also writes in the style they are so encouraging of. For example, referencing Os Cangaceiros makes little sense in the context of the article. Os Cangaceiros was not the first, the most recent, nor the most similar example to Seattle’s context of anarchists putting their bodies in the way of labor to slow capital and share messages. However, A Crime Called Freedom is probably one of the most popular anarchist texts in circulation, and seems to be referenced here for its popularity over its relevance. The same type of reference is made to Against His-Story, Against Leviathan. I love that book, but just calling civilization “The Leviathan” out of context makes no sense, except that it’s hip in anarchist and anti-civilization circles.

Finally, there are three main pieces of writing that I found in relationship to the Microsoft and Amazon transportation blockings in Seattle. Two were the communiqués referenced in Leighlais' article, and one was an analysis and history of gentrification from the last 10–15 years. The analysis and history described the correlation between gentrification, racism and colonialism, including an intimate story of someone's lost relationship with nature. "Naming All Of The Names" is – to be blunt – a jaded, thoughtless, poorly researched straw-man argument.

But the article did initiate a series of inquiries for me, and my wish is that this response asks at least this question: How do we choose to communicate and what are the intentions behind our communication?

In the course of my growing, I have experienced communiqués and other forms of sharing as small openings into the unknown. Little splinters in the skin of the existent. It is in practice and in actions that I've searched for those pinholes and have attempted to tear further. As an insurrectionary anarchist, I communicate with the desperate urge for those moments. As a green anarchist, I believe that the material torn is the spiritual body of civilization.

If we don't know our intentions, our wishes easily become curses. It feels likely to me that jargon and rhetoric belong to the capitalists. Let us speak truly and aim our intention with care: toward the heart of civilization.

It's All Falling Apart

The end of the world will not come in a bang, a clarion call of trumpets, and the dawning of a new era. The end of the world will be decades, if not centuries, of immiseration and degradation that will humiliate and starve us. This starvation will be of the body and the soul. This humiliation will be because at the same time we are taught about God and Country we, especially North Americans, will wait by the shore for our next barge of products from distant lands, believing the promise that the next gadget will fill the void we paved over, cut down, and wrapped in plastic in the first place. The end of the world isn't going to be exciting or heroic, it'll be bright, flashy, and mediocre.

Liquid Food To Replace Eating Called "Soylent"

from the New Yorker

Three men living in a small apartment in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco, CA were forced to come face to face with the inconveniences of food when their startup failed (a startup is a project to create some kind of new technology service that is funded by big-time investors before it is even created, much like the companies and people who funded colonial expeditions into North America in the 1500's). Not having any time nor facilities to tend to their cooking needs, one of them isolated the nutritional needs required from food, ordered them over the internet as supplements, blended them into one drink, and is now calling it "Soylent." Soylent's production has been funded by Silicon Valley and heralded by the press as "the end of food."

DNA Company To Track Dog-Poop-Perpetrators

from newsfeed.time.com

Dog poop is enough of a problem at an apartment complex in Plano, Texas that the management is deploying DNA tracking to find the pooping-perpetrators. Residents are expected to bring their dogs in to a lab to have them "registered", and then they can be fined up to $250 if their dogs are found linked to retrieved "samples."

Driver posts Facebook Update Collision

from globalnews.ca, April 28th

A woman in High Point, N.C. is dead after a head-on collision with a truck literally right after posting an update to her facebook that said "The happy song makes me HAPPY!" Authorities said "The facebook text happened at 8:33 a.m., we got the call on the wreck at 8:34 a.m.."

Google's next data collection project: Human body

from Russia Today, July 25th

Google's research arm is planning an initial study of 175 people to collect anonymous health data from biological samples like blood and saliva in the process of creating individual genome

databases that could eventually help fend off illness or disease. For Google's Baseline Study, researches will track one's genetic history, metabolic processes, and other aspects of an

individual's body in efforts to create a baseline health standard. This is reminiscent of many futurist science-fiction stories where characters are plugged into a computer and diagnosed.

How far off are we?

Kid Climbs Trees With prosthetic arm

from Russia Today, July 29th

A 6-year-old boy has now been given the ability to catch balls and climb trees from a 3D Printer and a group of charitable university students in Florida. The boy was born with "right arm deficiency" and is missing his right arm from just above the elbow. An engineering doctoral student heard about the boy and decided to print a replacement arm with a 3D Printer, a piece of technology that runs with off-the-shelf materials and batteries. "We've already heard from another family who needs an arm. We're committed to helping who we can. I think 3-D printing is revolutionizing our world in many ways. I believe changing the world of prosthetics is very real. There's no reason why this approach shouldn't work on adults too."

River in China mysteriously Turns Red Overnight

from Russia Today, July 29th

A river in Eastern China has mysteriously turned red. Residents remarked on how clean the water has been for as long as they've known it, "We have always been able to catch fish and you can even drink the water because it's just normally so good." While there's no chemical plant upstream, a professor of limnology (the study of inland waters) says "It looks like a pollutant phenomenon, water bodies have turned red very fast in the past have happened because people have dumped dyes into them."

"Occupy Hong Kong" Kicks Off, Demanding Democracy

Happening at time of printing

Many news outlets have been announcing the arrival of a large protest movement in Hong Kong, some calling it "Occupy" yet all of the reports differing in some degree. It seems that this is

a student movement demanding democracy, violently fighting police in the streets and blocking avenues of traffic while all on their iphones, not looking at each other. "Movement leaders"

stepped out of political negotiations with government officials after protesters were physically attacked by people who were either "neighbors who opposed their tactics" or "thugs hired

by the government."

Two Steps Nowhere

by Tommy Brock & Dire Wolfe

(Caveat I: Communication Is Impossible)

There is much to be said about the differences and potential collaboration between the green anarchist and eco-defense milieus. However, nearly everything stands in the way of honest communication. Critiques are both written and received in bad faith. There are those too jaded to contribute anything but snark to our struggles and those who take themselves too seriously to receive well-intentioned, thoughtful criticism. There are those so caught up in who they are as radicals, activists, militants, that they have completely lost the ability to stop and think or to reflect critically on their own activity. Our milieus are populated by so many personalities vying for social capital, attention, meaning, purpose, or adventure that it's difficult to actually keep an eye on the thing that brought us into these spaces in the first place.

There are those who try, though. There are those who critique because they are frustrated by seeing things they care about fall into the same traps again and again. There are those who are risking failure by trying new things, by experimenting with new ways of resisting despite the constant gaze of naysayers. And there are those who are keeping their eye on the impossibility of total freedom while trying to throw themselves fully at their own limitations in everything they do. It is in this spirit that we write this—with an appreciation and respect for those who are pushing back against the onslaught of civilization but also with the knowledge that civilization is far too good at absorbing any attempts to resist it.

(Caveat II: Labels Are Useless)

The anarchist milieu seems to have become increasingly distinct from the space inhabited by people who participate in eco-defense. In other moments, there has been much more overlap. These days, eco-defenders (anarchist or not) have a network that feels mostly independent from the anarchist milieu (whatever that is).

Green anarchists, in one sense of the term, are those who make up a constellation of tendencies, all of whom, at the very least, situate themselves against The Left and against Civilization

(both very ambiguously defined). Green Anarchy Magazine, along with others, elaborated a diverse and broad series of critiques that drew from insurrectionary, individualist, post-left, nihilist, anti-civilization, and indigenous thought.

A common problem: if you don't happen to live on the West Coast, "green anarchist" is probably more often used in reference to a sort of 'eco-focused' anarchism that can be found in the radical environmentalist movement. Usually big-tent anarchism with a particular soft-spot for radical environmentalism: Noam Chomsky-reading, pro-democracy, left anarchists whose main concern is the environment. Some are perhaps more skeptical of cities and production, reading Derrick Jensen instead of Murray Bookchin, but still lack the expansive critique of domestication, colonization, morality, revolution, and politics that characterizes green anarchy.

While some who fall under the Green Anarchist umbrella (anarcho-primitivists, for example) propose courses of action (rewilding, attacking the grid, etc.), what unites green anarchists is perhaps a particular theoretical orientation to the problem of civilization—a series of critiques and questions. Although these critiques have inspired exciting actions, struggles, and moments of revolt, they can be seen as experiments and gestures—not 'correct practices' that all green anarchists engage in because they are implied by the theory. From this point of view, it's anyone's game as to how we might resist our situation.

Radical eco-defense, on the other hand, is a milieu that has coalesced around a practice or set of practices. Usually centered on particular campaigns (Tar Sands, Keystone XL, Mountaintop Removal, Logging, Fracking), all sorts of people come together to protect this or that parcel of land from those who would destroy it. Those indigenous to the threatened land, bleeding-heart activists whose consciences just can't bear to see another tree cut down in the name of corporate profit, and everyone in between gather under the banner of eco-defense. The same people who attend a Earth First! Rendezvous can also be seen at Power Shift or giving workshops for the Sierra Club.

That's what makes the eco-defense space so complicated. There are lots of different people with radically different critiques, goals, strategies, and relationships with the current order working together on a single campaign. Usually with predictable results: the people with the highest stakes and those taking the greatest risks get sold out while the NGOs and liberals pack up and go home, happy to have 'made a difference' by compromising with those who are destroying the land.

Because everyone is, on paper, working toward the same immediate goal, real differences in perspective and strategy are suppressed in the name of unity, access to resources, or mass appeal. People who, from my point of view, shouldn't ever be on the same team, are. And there's little recourse to draw meaningful lines when there's also an immense repressive apparatus breathing down your necks and the only thing protecting you from it are the well-funded NGOs and progressive organizations.

Recently, Black Seed featured a critique of the radical environmentalist movement generally, and Earth First! and Tar Sands Blockade specifically. The article critiqued the way that Non-Violent Civil Disobedience (NVCD) has become central to the rhetorical and tactical arsenal of many direct action campaigns. Many anarchists share this complete disinterest with any struggle that so severely limits itself from the outset. However, the call for an increase in militant tactics or harking back to the good ol' days of black blocs and summit shut-downs doesn't feel very useful. An increase in militancy would likely bring down the full force of the repressive apparatus—to up the ante would almost certainly mean to go the way of the ELF.

Our struggles exist in the impossible space between absorption into liberal activism on the one hand, and the crushing might of the state on the other. Anarchists know this double-bind well. Many have learned the hard way that working with individuals and organizations whose interests lie in the perpetuation of this world leads to co-optation and exclusion at best and at worst, the firing squad or the grand jury. As the dust settles, the ones doing the heavy lifting on the front lines are swept aside by the bureaucrats and career activists who take credit for all the work and eclipse the possibility of further spontaneous, wild resistance.

We live in a country that has crushed every struggle that it has deemed a threat. The state unscrupulously murders or imprisons those who go toe to toe with the forces of control. Any movement or group that enjoys some amount of success is torn apart from the inside—it's most radical factions disappeared and the rest channelled into liberal activism.

The radical environmentalist movement is living with the legacy of Operation Backfire and the reality of the green scare, of domestic terrorism watch-lists, of FBI, state, and local police collaboration, of snitches and informants, of trumped-up charges and constant surveillance. Even the most liberal environmentalists are looking over their shoulders more and more. In this light, it makes some sense as to why the rhetoric of NVCD has become so central, why the protective shadow of NGOs is covering so much of the landscape.

But it seems as though for most, the situation has escaped them. The reasons given for infiltrating NGOs, for playing nice with movement leaders, or for concealing their 'real' politics go beyond simple tactical considerations. We have inherited a history of repression, the implications of which don't seem to have fully sunk in. Meetings are attended, coalitions are formed, and internships are taken while talking shit and having a laugh about how liberal and problematic everyone else is. But, despite rhetoric that says otherwise, the whole situation runs along smoothly—NGOs have little trouble finding interns and coalitions usually find themselves with those willing to go to jail for a few days. All this in exchange for a paycheck and the satisfaction of knowing that you and your friends are the real radicals. For all the talk of using resources for underground resistance, it rarely goes that far. The defeats and recuperation of the past 40 years are still with us. It has made us docile. Most are satisfied with patting themselves on the back for being more militant, radical, and correct than others, while doing little more than reproducing the subculture that makes us all feel like we're important, that we're really doing something.

Much of what happens in the radical environmentalist movement both lacks the capacity to accomplish its goals and the ethical commitment to autonomy, spontaneity, and the constant undermining of authority that allows revolt to flourish. On the one hand, many eco-defenders continue with the strange ritual of lockdown-arrest-bail out while waving the banner 'No Compromise In Defense Of Mother Earth!' all the while becoming more and more entangled in the web of compromises weaved by the non-profiteers, activists, and advocates who seem to be everywhere these days. Victories for people with the most to lose are rarely won.

For many anarchists, the terrain is murky. The mostly smooth gradient between liberal activists and militant eco-defender is confusing—it is difficult to know who is a potential accomplice and who is more interested in making a name for themselves (or worse, the organization they are a part of). Alliances can form in unlikely places and it's important to be open to these, but it is also important to know your enemy.

It is clear enough to most anarchists that when at a demonstration or action, the police are our enemies. In other moments, we might find ourselves at odds with the loggers, surveyors, and construction workers unfortunate enough to be working their respective careers at those

respective moments. More subtle, and for that reason all the more deserving of our hostility, are those enemies among us: those who would manage us in our struggles, those who would have us be little more than foot soldiers in their campaigns, those who define the appropriate ways to resist, those who need our energy to feed either their own egos or the swollen organization that, in turn, feeds off of them.

There are those whose participation in environmental campaigns amounts to little more than a desire to speak for others, to do 'good'. We know them well: the many activists, advocates, social justice organizers, and career revolutionaries who spend their entire lives bouncing from one injustice to the next, always for the fame, for the paycheck, or for the peace of mind that comes with the knowledge that they're dedicated to something more important than themselves that populate our worlds. These characters are the mechanisms by which Politics reproduces itself. They are the agents of Progress, channeling the energy and potential of a moment into the familiar avenues of spectacular activism.

This moral backdrop is a barrier for many anarchists' enthusiastic involvement in campaigns. From where we sit, people are far too ready to sacrifice themselves on the altar of deep ecology with little but some moving photographs and an FBI file to show for it. There can be little affinity between anarchists and the martyrs caught up in their own narratives of spectacular self-sacrifice and pseudo-militancy. This isn't to say that there aren't things worth risking arrest (or death) for and I'm not really talking about tactics either. Lockdowns, for example, have been an important tactic in winning campaigns. Rather, I am trying to get at the strange moral logic—the peculiar desire to sacrifice oneself for The Good, to suffer— that motivates so many radicals.

Morality is only part of the problem. For so many, our milieus are our own specialized identity-machines. We become so caught up being 'anarchists', 'militants', 'allies', 'activists' or 'eco-defenders', so captured by micro-economies of social capital that we care more about appearances and our own stories than the things we say we're committed to. We are ensnared by the logic of the milieu: moved to action by the reproduction of our selves as radical subjects, as individuals who know who they are by virtue of a particular kind of belonging. Despite our attempts, our desire to be something never amounts anything more than being this world's loyal opposition, always ready to play its game by believing that it's possible to belong or to honestly communicate who you are to others within the logic of civilization. Whether by the causes you are committed to, the clothes you wear, the news stories you share, the words you use (or don't), or who you hang out with, insofar as we are motivated by advertising ourselves to strangers, we are being managed, controlled, disciplined.

"And we forget everything but the minutiae of struggle, this struggle which has become a way of life, and an end in itself. This struggle, which we kid ourselves is about the world, is now no more than the means of legitimising a microcosm, a milieu, a particular way of life that is wholly reliant on its own defeat and the continuation of the world as it is as the condition for its perpetuation."

— frere dupont, Why Is It That Others Feel No Interest For Us?

The terrain is also populated by many organizations, each weighed down by their own tendencies to expand, accumulate, and absorb. Every organization—whether grassroots or multinational—falls into the same trap. What might start out as a genuine attempt to formalize a group dedicated to tackling a problem or issue quickly becomes its own monster (Leviathan, anyone?), concerned primarily with it's own growth and permanence. As a group's membership swells, as it enjoys a small parcel of influence or success, as jobs are created or contracts signed, it becomes increasingly concerned with securing more contracts, gaining more influence,

recruiting more people. Until you have Greenpeace. Or the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Or Epitaph Records.

The most energetic and rowdy eco-defenders are put in the spotlight, offered jobs, invited to write articles, and flown around to give trainings—slowly sapping their energy as their commitment to a particular set of ideas comes into conflict with the organization that is keeping them fed and housed. People who once knew better end up working for the same organizations that sold out other campaigns a generation earlier. If campaigns are to maintain any autonomy, lines must be drawn (and redrawn and redrawn) between those committed to total freedom and those whose interests lie in Politics, their identities, egos, morality, or the organizations they work for.

As was said earlier, we live and struggle in the shadow of the Black Panthers, of Project M.O.V.E., of the American Indian Movement, of the ALF and ELF. This is a history of inspiring moments, but also of defeat at the hands of an unscrupulous enemy. What does this mean for current eco-defense campaigns? For those who want to do-the-damn-thing (you know, win), they must free themselves of any illusion that the state can know their face or name and actually let them pose a threat to something with as much capital behind it as the KXL Pipeline, for example.

What would it take to successfully defend an area of land? Do we have the capacity to accomplish this? Are we willing to accept the risks or consequences for our actions? Will it be worth it? We must keep in mind the possibility that campaigns in response to the biggest, most egregious assaults on the natural world will not be winnable unless eco-defenders are willing to go seriously underground. We might be tactically out-gunned. And if those campaigns aren't winnable, what is to be done?

There are a number of different ways to think about struggle. For many anarchists, any struggle worth participating in happens on the level of everyday life. They admit that we are not, and can never be agents in something as inhumanly large as History, Politics, or Progress. To aim our interventions at the level of meta-narrative is to admit defeat before we start, but continue out of sheer stubbornness or sacrifice.

The activities of Nations, multinational corporations, even your own city council (to say nothing of Capitalism or Civilization) are probably out of our control. It is unlikely that a small minority of anarchists, eco-defenders, or activists will ever manifest a force powerful enough to save the environment or destroy the existent. Our activity matters, but not really in the grand scheme of things, at least probably not in the way we wish it did. Yet many continue to speak, write, and act as if this weren't the case.

A turn away from politics and from the constant defeat of activism and revolutionary struggle would mean shifting the scale with which we concern ourselves. We can disconnect the activity of our lives from fighting an all-or-nothing war against some perceived totality. We can instead find opportunities to be agents in our own lives and, occasionally, in the towns, neighborhoods, or land that we call home. We can understand that our situation is close to total but see our surroundings as made up of fragments of power—a multiplicity of connected but discreet apparatuses of control that can, in turn, be interrupted and in some cases destroyed. While there is no clear escape from civilization in sight, there are certainly lives and struggles that are more wild, less domesticated than others. And there are certainly enemies and weaknesses in the modes of control that order our lives.

This means a shift not necessarily in what we do, but rather, why we do what we do. It has less to do with actual actions/ practice and more to do with how we're conceiving of our activity, struggles, collaborations. We can do these things to play, to learn more about our surroundings

and how they're controlled, to strengthen bonds, to form new ones. We can find each other and build relationships in the context of a shared project or deep affinity. We can engage in a relentless series of experiments to find the limits of what we're capable of and, each time, push beyond them. We can explore the mechanisms of power that envelope us, find the weak points, and celebrate in the pockets, cracks, micro-ruptures that we're able to momentarily create.

"As for civilisation, so for anarchy and anarchists — severely challenged, sometimes vanquished; possibilities for liberty and wildness opening up, possibilities for liberty and wildness closing. The unevenness of the present will be made more so. There is no global future." — Desert

Moments of intense struggle and revolt seem to appear rarely and when they do happen, it seems clear that they are the result of years and years of groundwork, of careful relationship building between different groups (anarchists, eco-defenders, farmers, those who live in neighborhoods poisoned by fracking, etc). Our milieus are transient. We are rarely capable of sustainable relationships or long-term commitments. Our infrastructure is difficult to maintain and few are willing to do the unglamorous behind-the-scenes activity that allows the most intense struggles to flourish. We might find ourselves faced with different questions were we to stop chasing fire for the moment and imagine ourselves engaged in something that will last generations.

What would it mean to develop relationships that both last decades and are increasingly incompatible with the current order? How can we weaponize these relationships, remaining invisible enough to power to survive, but visible enough to others to be seductive? What if the goals were to connect with one another through our projects, to attack and get away with it, to engage in activity that is worth doing for its own sake— regardless of the consequences? What if we elaborated modes of struggle that don't rely on the hope of certain victory or the despair of "well, we've got to try anyway, right?" What if we pushed ourselves to become as wild, chaotic, and unpredictable as possible—not with the goal of winning any particular campaigns necessarily, but to see how far, how strong, how sustainable, and how broadly we can extend the fight, while taking great care to disappear as the omnipresent repressive apparatus closes in on us and reappear when they least expect it. No faces, no names, no photo-ops, except perhaps of fire, defended territory, and broken machinery.

Are sure arrests and the consequent no-fly lists, felonies, and FBI files worth it if victory seems unlikely? Are there more liberatory and empowering ways to struggle against the machinery of civilization? Perhaps making some new enemies would be useful—maybe new generations of eco-defenders will tell Sierra Club and 350.org to go fuck themselves. Maybe we'll see new relationships emerge between anarchists and eco-defenders who aren't accountable to NGO stakeholders. And maybe we'll be able to be more honest with ourselves and each other about who we are and what we are doing. Perhaps we'll figure out how to do it more patiently, carefully, and without compromise. To the future conversations, the forging of new alliances, the fierce new conflicts, and the relentless expansion of those parts of us that are wild.

Review: Green Syndicalism: An Alternative Red/Green Vision

by Oxalis

These days, everyone from corporations to the government are "going green." There has been an almost endless barrage of "greenwashing" campaigns aimed at painting everything with a shiny new "green" veneer from chic eco-friendly cafes to "environmentally friendly" dog food.

Moreover, as the ecological crisis becomes ever harder to ignore, even political groupings are getting in on the act, with socialists and mainstream liberals suddenly discovering this fact and trying to dress up progress as "green."

In light of this, its not surprising that some anarchists would adopt a similar approach, especially with many anarchists still clinging to the vision of mass society and mass industrialism. A few years back, the Northeastern Federation of Anarchist- Communists (NEFAC, since renamed to Common Struggle) published a snazzy green-colored edition on "The Environment, Industry, Crisis, and Alternatives" while the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) launched an "Environmental Unionism Caucus" and this year organized a campaign called "Towards an Ecological General Strike: Environmental Sustainability Through Economic Democracy." In many ways, they are efforts designed to "green" the industrial-focused vision of anarchism expressed most often through anarcho-syndicalism, with some re-branding it as "green syndicalism."

For those of us coming from an anti-civilization perspective, this is perhaps worthy of some attention as it is helpful to understand the ways others approach the crisis of civilization. I hadn't encountered these theories until a few years ago, although I must admit to some small glimmer of hope when a Wobbly organizer in my hometown told me that there are currents within the IWW that envision the destruction of the industrial system, not just the wage system. As a means of exploring this idea, I sought out Jeff Shantz's Green Syndicalism: An Alternative Red/Green Vision (Syracuse University Press, 2012). While it was rather dull and hard to read at various points due to its rather cumbersome language, it did offer a good introduction to the theory.

Green syndicalism advocates for increased connections between anarchists and other radicals who come out of what could broadly be called "the radical environmental movement" and "the labor movement" (46) arguing that both are incomplete without recognizing the other. Shantz argues in Green Syndicalism that the two perspectives have considerable overlap, a point that he makes by looking at Judi Bari's role in building connections between Earth First! and the Industrial Workers of the World in the 1990s, as well as examining the historical reliance of both movements on direct action tactics including sabotage. Moreover, Shantz argues that the workplace provides a critical site of struggle (165) and that workers are uniquely positioned to put a literal "stop" to the destruction wrought by industrial society. Most interesting to our perspective, Shantz comes out strongly against the productivism of Marxism (xlvi) and argues that syndicalism is not simply a vision of a worker-centered world (xlviii), but is a counter-cultural movement that moves beyond pure economic concerns (108). He repeatedly asserts that green syndicalism is a multi-faceted approach that recognizes that "the mass-production techniques of industrialism cannot be reconciled with ecological sustenance, regardless of whether bosses or sturdy proletarians control them" (164).

When it comes to envisioning what a green syndicalist future would look like, Shantz—like many anarchists—says that there isn't a specific plan, but rather it would grow out of the struggle (172). Still, in reading the book, there are some indications of how this future would look. Whereas previous visions of syndicalism may have seen industrialism as containing some liberatory potential, green syndicalists do not believe this (168). Instead, Shantz articulates a vision of producers against industrialism (169) and argues that the goal (to some degree) is the dismantling of factories. The theory includes "both a literal destruction of factories and their conversion toward 'soft' forms of small, local production" (54). According to Shantz, this would be decided by the workers themselves who would make decisions about the future of their workplaces (129). Beyond this, he speaks of the potential for voluntary federations (171) and de-centralized bio-regional

communities (170–171) as potential ways of organizing society. While talk of the destruction of factories is appealing, the more one reads, the less certain this seems. There is a lot of talk of keeping production going, for example: "…certain industrial workshops and processes may be necessary (how would bikes or windmills be produced, for example)" (169). In other cases, he asserts that capitalist production would be replaced with "socially necessary production through means that are ecologically sensible" (167).

Like many theories, when it comes to practical applications, green syndicalism gets a little hazy. For the most part, Shantz argues in favor of traditional syndicalist tactics and those that have been developed in recent years such as "rank-and-file workers' committees, flying squads, and precarious workers' networks" (161). He argues that workers' control is essential to stopping ecological destruction (113). In getting to that point, tactics include "such direct, nonbureaucratic forms of action as shop-floor sabotage, boycotts, green bans, and the formation of extra-union solidarity outside the workplace" and the ultimate weapon, the strike (130–131). Of course to do this, considerable time must be spent organizing workers. Green syndicalism rejects the concept of "boring from within" mainstream unions (131) and instead advocates developing other structures. He asserts that anarchists within the labor movement have been especially visible in building rank-and-file power in recent years (133), through processes including "building rank-and-file workers' committees, flying squads, and precarious workers' networks" (161). For Shantz, this power is what is ultimately important, not whether or not the structures are specifically anarchist (160). As workers "reach the consciousness of their own power and exercise this power in their daily lives" they are "in a way consciously adopting the ideas of anarchism" (160). Arguing the semantics of what is and isn't anarchism is not all that exciting, but a question that remains is how will workers arrive at the conclusion that the factory system (or at the minimum suggested by green syndicalists, certain components of it) need to be dismantled. Obviously toxic forms of production might be easy targets (i.e. a company polluting the river running through the center of a town), but how would workers arrive at a more comprehensive critique of industrialism? In a global economic system where the most destructive forms of production are outsourced and obscured (for example, when using an iPhone, the average user likely has no idea how and where it was made), many modern consumer items seem to have relatively few environmental costs. Similarly, the idea that "production" could be organized by workers in a particular location is out-of-date, given both the declining number of workers in such positions as well as the reliance on raw materials and technologies from elsewhere.

While informed by radical ecological critiques, Green Syndicalism does not spend a lot of time engaging with anti-civilization and primitivist critiques. At one point, Shantz writes about "…anti-technology/anti-civilization discourses arguing quite persuasively that humans must abandon not only industry and technology, but civilization itself," but then moves to a discussion of the abolition of work and/or its reconstitution along democratic lines (128). Such a position is seemingly at odds with the statement, and if the arguments are so convincing, why limit the discussion? Elsewhere, he describes anti-civilization perspectives as being "fundamentalist," including those of "Earth First!, neoprimitivism, and Green Anarchy" (21). He argues that those advocating such views neglect the importance of class and "collapse capital and labor together" and fail to see how working-class power could contribute to a radical ecological movement (22). In keeping with this line of thinking, he argues that there cannot be "an immediate break with industrialism" (168). Interestingly, while Shantz says that "attentiveness to ecology means that entire realms of work, leisure (work's accomplice), sustenance, need… must be brought into question,"

his discussion does not raise civilization as an item of particular concern (184). Moreover, in accepting the possibility of some forms of industrial production, green syndicalism ignores the deeper questions of what industrialism does to us and our worldview. The interconnectedness of various forms of technology and methods of organizing production are not explored, therefore it is hard to imagine how one could have wind turbines without the entirety of the industrial system. These forms and processes are inherently complex and interrelated and we can't generally have one technology without accepting the entire system. Moreover, from an anti-civilization perspective, it is important to understand that industrialism, factory production, small-scale production, etc. are part of an interrelated whole that is civilization and that its component parts cannot be isolated. In other words, we can't have "production" of bicycles and windmills without the domestication, separation, division of labor, etc., that removes us from the land.

Overall, Green Syndicalism doesn't offer much to those of us coming from an anti-civilization perspective. While it might be refreshing to see anarcho-syndicalists coming out against some forms of industrial production, the idea of "green syndicalism" falls short of fully indicting the present order. Its examination of industrialism is relatively limited and it leaves the larger question of civilization unexplored. In the end, the book was indeed trying to paint a "green" picture of a somewhat downsized future, while largely lacking in its exploration of the consequences of industrialism and civilization. At the same time, its tactical and strategic suggestions—largely more workplace organizing—were not convincing. We obviously cannot ignore the way in which workers are alienated in the current era, but at the same time, we need to go deeper in our critiques if we want to get to the root of that alienation and really reject industrialism. If anything, Green Syndicalism is a reminder that we need to argue more forcefully for our perspective and that in the absence of an anti-civilization critique, efforts will continue to recast some version of the current mass society as ecologically sustainable, whether that be green capitalism or green syndicalism.

Jeff Shantz, Green Syndicalism: An Alternative Red/Green Vision, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012).

Pulling on the Threads of Representation

by Hedwig

A communique on the release of pheasants from a Game Bird farm in Gervais, Oregon by the Animal Liberation Front ends with "For anarchy and animal liberation." The insurrectionist group Individualists Tending Toward the Wild (ITS) state that "what moves us is reason and instinct, the defense of Wild Nature (including human) and consequently Freedom and Autonomy." Part of the description for a talk at the 2013 Boston Anarchist Bookfair says "Natural anarchists see plants and nonhuman animals as allies in a shared struggle for peace and freedom for everybody."

Once, this was an inspiration, during a time I tightly held the label veganarchist; honestly, deeply believing in the revolutionary potential of the animal and earth liberation movements.

Time passed and with time came an uncertainty I could not ignore, a question that lurked inside. And now as I consider participating in an action for anarchy and animal liberation, I am forced to pause. Eventually, I turn away.

In whatever language is used, no matter how their 'solidarity' is framed, I cannot get past the question.

"The problem of the head is the problem of representation, the problem of the existence of a body that represents society in so much as a body, of a subject that represents society in so much as subject."[143]

The anarchist critique of democracy, political leadership, identity politics—all are the critique of representation. Representation flattens. Individual interests are universalized into dangerous 'truth claims' that cannot contend with the volatility of the world. The critique is the rejection of all acts that characterize individuals as a certain kind of being or that allow one to speak on behalf of another.

"Practices of telling people who they are and what they want erect a barrier between them and who (or what) they can create themselves to be."[144]

Representation is a form of alienated power. Individuals are separated from their ability to act and forced to work through an intermediary. These individuals are left behind as their representative barters with other influences, making compromises for some greater good. Responding to the will of majorities and other alienated powers, desperately attempting to keep their sacred standing, the representative exploits the bodies and spirits of those they claim to stand for.

Against all representation and mediation, this is what it means to be anti-political.

Through the critique comes a new anarchist vision. My past was bound to the current, viewpoints expressed as against that which exists: anti-capitalism, anti-sexism, anti-speciesism… Our negativity must be more: "that which breaks from such orientations in the most absolute sense: the negating prefixes a-, an-, anti- … anti-politics as a provisional orientation, branching out into countless refusals."[145] It must think not only of the formulations but also the forms, a negation of politics, morality, historical progress, and all of the other backgrounds that act as our starting points. "We do not wish to run society, or organize a different society, we want a completely different frame of reference,"[146] a negativity that can only lead us to places unknown.

I approach nihilism. My anarchist thought becomes more than a radical or militant politics, it cannot be defined simply as a position against hierarchy or against domination. It grows into a rejection of all universal claims – moral and political.

The ground quivers. Old ideas are a comfort in the uncertainty—they are difficult to move past. Still, I am willing to ask the question nihilism brings, the question that lurks, that cannot be ignored.

What now of animal and earth liberation? What of these movements remain for me?

Obstacle 1: Against all hierarchies, earth and animal liberationists are against the human domination of animals and earth. In order to confront these oppressions directly, they become representatives of animals and earth.

Animal liberationists educate people about the experience of non-human animals, describing the conditions on factory farms, slaughterhouses, research laboratories, etc. (sometimes never having had first-hand experience with these institutions themselves). Earth liberationists become the 'helpers' of the wild and introduce words such as "defend," "save," and "protect" to the dialogue. Actions such as veganism, protest, or sabotage communicate a message about the

[143] Tiqqun #2 (2001). The Problem of the Head

[144] May (1995). The Moral Theory of Poststructuralism.

[145] Alejandro de Acosta (2013). Its Core is the Negation. AJODA #74. It should be said that many of the ideas presented here owe a great amount to this work.

[146] Green Anarchy Collective. What is Green Anarchy? Back to Basics Vol. 4.

desires of animals and earth; assumptions are made about how other living organisms want to be treated.[147]

A Thanksgiving pamphlet from the Black Paw Collective (a "crew of punks and anarchists") tells us to fight alongside the turkeys who are protesting their death until their last breath.[148] We are told that connecting to the land can put one in touch with the 'suffering of the earth,' culminating in statements of "the personhood of plants… beings who can emote and feel pain or respond to other stimuli."[149] All these claims to knowledge of animal and earth subjectivity…

These representatives then remind us that animals and earth are not the only ones harmed by animal and earth exploitation industries, hoping to bring more people over to the side of animals and wild nature. They may even expand their claims, that their actions begin to represent all of the 'dispossessed' (the actors sometimes simultaneously believing they epitomize the ideas of the human majority yet must guide this unconscious mass—as one communique states: "This was just a reflection of what millions of people already know and feel").

It is no trivial point that non-human living species cannot communicate verbally,[150] they cannot speak their interests to any human, including those who represent them. The people involved in animal and earth liberation movements have no choice but to speak on their behalf. But representation is a political act, always. What is politics if not the belief that one can influence others in the name of some collective interest?

"On this point, it is important that we define our anti-politics as refusing all political logic: representation, mediation, dialogue with power. And so, once again, we must abandon queer academics and their easy answers."[151]

Obstacle 2: Morals and ideals are asserted, often implicitly, hidden beneath statements of plurality.

When individual interests are defined by another, they are often shrouded in moral claims. Sometimes these moral codes are overt, and most anarchists are willing to critique (and mock) these blatant assertions (such as "veganism is an obligation and not an option").[152]

But the anarchist critique of morality is more than just the critique of strict moral codes, it is a critique against universal statements and against the concept of the Good.

When animal liberationists fight for a world in which animals are no longer oppressed by humans, they are making statements about what is good, often involving a total rejection of any way of living that involves animal exploitation, as defined by them. Earth liberationists, particularly those with anti-civilization and primitivist leanings, often demand a certain style of living which may not be possible or desirable for others. Actions and communiques for animals and earth are laden with claims to good and bad behaviour.

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[147] Of course, the job of the representatives of animal and earth is much less complicated than most, as there are no individuals able to contradict their claims.

[148] You can find the pamphlet at: http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca/story/no-thanksgiving-leafletting-toward-total-liberation/13289

[149] Bison Wilder (2012). Wheat is Still Murder; Agriculture is Still Rape: Veganism, Post-Veganism, and Anarchy. You can find this at: http://earthspiritandanarchy. blogspot.ca/

[150] I would like to point out non-human animals can, of course, communicate with humans non-verbally. When I cut my cat's nails she makes it very clear to me that she does not want to be there. Despite this ability, humans are left to speak verbally for animals, making various claims regarding their desires and interests.

[151] Baeden #1 (2012). The Anti-Social Turn.

[152] John Talent (2013). Leftistis and Animal Rights: Why Veganism is an Obligation and not an Option. http://veganarchismaintnojoke.tumblr.com/ post/50418819697/leftists-and-animal-rights-why-veganism-is-an

There is no one 'true' way of living with the earth (and animals). Expanding the argument to say there are many or a variety of true ways of living with the earth does not make the argument any less moralistic. To flee from a definition of the Good only to be recaptured by arguments of many Goods misses the point. It is a nihilism that denies the validity of the singular Good at the heart of universalism, as well as the distinct senses of the Good at the heart of pluralism.[153]

In order to upset the foundation of anthropocentrism, in Animal Dreams John Zerzan reminds us of the 'gifts of animals,' describing the complexities of animal lives.[154] He even references scientific experiments that demonstrate ways in which animal capacities outstrip humans. Establishing that all animals (including humans) have exceptional abilities may help decenteralize humanity but it does nothing to negate morality—it still relies on the concept of the natural as the Good. The same argument can be applied to primitivism in which the Good (living in harmony with nature) is distributed into multiple goods as they acknowledge the variety in indigenous ways of life.

To be against morality is a negative act. There is (are) no Good(s). We should be shaking the ground of others' moral claims, not creating new ones.

The step towards the anti-political has created obstacles that have kept me from the animal and earth liberation movements. I cannot find a way around the barriers, perhaps there are some things that cannot be reconciled.

I have not abandoned green anarchy. I want to contribute to a project building connections between the beginning of civilization, the development of gender, the production of science, the destruction of the earth, and the domination of animals. I am not ambivalent to the acts performed by animal and earth exploitation industries – they are vivid examples of why I want to see the current social order dismantled. The links are not trivial. Capital takes all of life, human and non-human, commodifies it, and alienates it, forcing the reproduction of hierarchical social relations. The domestication of all life destroys possibilities, forcing us to submit our bodies and minds to fixed modes of being. When we talk about changing the ways in which we relate to the world, our relationship with animals and earth should be a part of that discussion.

I don't want to ignore the issues. I want a completely different frame of reference.

I am no longer interested in discussing the "animal problem" or the "ecological problem." I do not want to be a representative for animals and earth. I do not want to speak in political or moral terms. I want to escape politics, not reproduce them. I am afraid there is no reconciliation. I've pulled on the thread of representation, and the whole sweater has unraveled.

There are a hundred reasons to attack industries that harm animals and the earth but we should be honest about where our motivations lie. I have no critique for the individual who sabotages a factory farm that is contaminating their water source or a worker who destroys the machinery at the slaughterhouse they work at. But as for me, I will not lie so that I can continue to challenge these industries—I will not pretend my actions are the realization of my desires when the real motivation remains my intention to save animals or the wild. I want to be honest about my experience. There is no animal or earth liberation movement left for me.

I am not sure what this different frame of reference is. I am not sure what a nihilist practice will look like, at this moment I only have an idea of what it is not. An anarchist friend asks

[153] Ibid. 3.

[154] John Zerzan (2014). Animal Dreams. Black Seed Issue #1

me to join the Animal Defense League to stop trophy hunting in B.C., and I am forced to pause. Eventually, I turn away.

Editor

Black Seed: Issue 3

Various

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Welcome to Issue 3

On once woody branches, translucent tendrils and the softest of leaves emerge. Even the most reluctant of trees are budding out. The days are getting longer and some of us can lift our heads a little higher. Despite small signs of life's persistence, something is gnawing at us that we can't ignore.

As the scope of social and biological devastation has broadened, the tactics employed to bring this destruction about have diversified. The margin for creative self-expression has decreased as threats to populations and landbases have expanded, limiting dialogue and action around these issues. The response generated in both mainstream and radical narratives only seems to create a negative symbiosis with the expanding devastation. The call and response between the dominant culture and radical narratives moves us very little. We find ourselves looking for inspiration.

People look for meaning, spirituality, and guidance in a myriad of ways. Some of these attempts are obviously fulfilling, while others are not. Why does it make some of us so uncomfortable when people wholeheartedly try to reconstruct "a European indigeneity?"

Another way people – including some of our anarchist friends – try to make sense of history is through anthropology. It outrages us that people who have been torn from their culture have sometimes had to reconstruct stories, customs, and languages with the superimpositions of academia. Anthropology is a tragic byproduct of capitalist colonialism which we don't want to reproduce here. We want people to tell their own stories because we know objectivity is a farce. In a world where anthropology's truth is a given, we want to make space for something different.

In this issue of Black Seed, Sever's "Childhood, Imagination, and the Forest" discusses the importance of a search for one's own spirituality and talks about what a relationship to a landbase can actually look like. The author writes about the pitfalls of falling back on Pagan traditions, which had their own ties to colonization.

This issue also continues with themes of autonomous, land-based, lived anarchy, stressed by Sever in Black Seed Issue #1's "Land and Freedom," with a section of the paper devoted to the ZAD in France and an interview with Corrina Gould, wherein shares her experiences at the spiritual occupation of Sogorea Te and the differences she sees within indigenous and anarchist approaches to occupations. We will continue discussion on these themes in issues to come.

This project, as we've stated already and will continue to reiterate, is an experiment with time and conversation. We are alarmed that something as basic as conversation is being stripped away. Our relationships are mediated by lit screens and character counts, just the latest tools of domestication, making further demands on our time and removing the wonder that human animals once enjoyed through experience and experimentation.

When we say, time and time again, that this is a conversation, whether you are an anti-civ old timer or you are reading about these ideas for the first time, we are looking for your thoughts on these topics and others close to your heart.

We print our publication twice each year and, while this can result in a stilted dialogue, it's a dialogue worth having. We encourage readers to savor the slowness and contemplation of storytelling, of letting ideas mull over and become new ones over time in the context of face-to-face conversation. And so we carve out a small hole and plant some seeds, dreaming that this experiment may germinate into new ideas, because alone and disconnected, we are lacking.

Until the leaves fall,

-Scealai

-Cedar Leighlais
-Aragorn!
-Pietje
Zdereva Itvaryn
-Madrone

Childhood, Imagination, and the Forest - by Sever

One summer when I was about thirteen, I decided to live for a week in the forest near my house. I had read up on edible plants, but pretty early on I took on raiding my father's garden. In retrospect, I suppose my experiment in rewilding was a perfect success, since raiding the garden is exactly what the deer and gophers did.

I spent a large part of my childhood in that forest. I watched it assailed by progress. My family was among the first wave of profaners. Every year a new parcel of farm, orchard, or woodland would be converted into ugly, poorly made houses. The very ground was scooped up by bulldozers, contoured to fit the look the subdivision's developers were projecting.

I noticed the effect on the creek I always played in, wading miles upstream in the summer, walking dangerously on a cracking sheet of ice in the winter, crossing fallen logs, catching crayfish, giving chase to the deer since they didn't have any wolves to run after them anymore. The more woods were replaced by subdivisions, the worse the floods became, swelling the creek, brown and gorged, washing away its banks year after year. An island I once could leap to, gone, ancient tulip poplars that towered overhead, undermined and knocked down, the rocky bank where I let my pet garter snake go when I realized it wasn't happy, silted over. An old railroad bridge where years later I learned they had executed an abolitionist preacher and a black militia man had been wounded and escaped, swept away.

My forest, though, the greater part of it, remained, protected by some law or another. In most places it was a long strip, just wide enough that I could ignore the houses on either side, walking from cliff to marsh to pine hill without ever coming in sight of what I recognized for civilization. And the length of it… I never got to the end. On some summer expeditions I would go for hours, albeit at a snail's pace perhaps, until I reached some glade that I imagined humans had never set foot in before. Only later would I learn to distinguish first or second generation forests from old growth. In the meantime, how perplexed I would become on discovering a rusted length of barbed wire or an old junker in the midst of what I was sure was pristine forest.

The wild is often characterized as pristine. One element of the myth of the pristine is changelessness. In books, the intellectually rigorous will mention how nature is always changing, how even when it finds stability it cycles. They write the same thing about acephalous societies that are not properly "historical" in the Marxist sense. I had read these texts and understood them, but the idea was meaningless, or at least unactualized, until I took in all the intimate changes in one particular forest over a span of decades.

The concept of pristinity conveys a certain fragility. Wilderness is not wild unless it is untouched. I see it reflected in the tendency of post-modernists not to talk about freedom, to read any kind of influence as a form of corruption and thus a circumvention of liberty. So close, yet so far, they have deconstructed the self, and found liberty meaningless because they still use the rationalist, Enlightenment concept, based on sovereignty, a naturally endowed lord over his do-

main. Another kind of freedom dwells in the world where the self only exists through its relations, and the freedom of one does not end but begins with the freedom of another.

I find another echo of pristinity in the thinking of the primitivists, who believe that freedom and wilderness ended with one invention or another. It also stalks the thinking of the back-to-the-landers, who think that nature does not exist in the cities, nor capitalism in the countryside.

My bedraggled, polluted, eroded, young, bounded little forest saved my life. While my yearmates were learning about how to be popular, dress well, and play football, I was learning about life. This whole horrible farce never would have been worth it for me without that. And the wilderness that taught me had probably grown up in the space of a mere seventy years, since the Depression I reckon, on what had previously been farmland, clearcut by the English at least two hundred years before.

The wild is everywhere, ceaselessly pushing back. The only thing it needs from us are cracks. In the city, in the countryside, all of it impoverished by centuries or millennia of progress, wildness and freedom are active forces. Those who say there is no outside to capitalism never talk about crab grass or sparrows. They are almost right, there is one tiny, infinite thing they forget, and it is the most important thing of all.

The purpose of anarchists is to destroy. We don't even need to destroy all of it. Confounded by words, we will have a hard time figuring out what exactly is meant by all of it. We only need to destroy enough of it, make enough cracks that sunlight and rain filter down to whatever poor dust is left beneath, enough so that the machine can't reassemble itself, and nature will do the rest.

If we still wish to live after all this horror, we can also worry about cultivating what grows back, the way beavers or even deer shape their habitat. We can do that as gardeners, as humans, and beings who choose to live. The anarchist tradition also suggests a passel of marvelous future worlds, each of which are worth talking about it. But anarchism is the bastard child of civilization, the umbilical cord hanging ragged, another purpose in mind for the dagger clenched between its teeth. Anarchism's destiny is to murder a certain future. To be tasked with destroying and replacing would convey an awful lot of power, even to a vocation that foreswears power.

Games of imagination came naturally, unbidden, while I wandered in the forest. The other kids played video games, and while I never kept myself entirely pure from this pursuit, I quickly noticed an inverse relationship between imagination and the consumption of imaginary worlds. I always preferred computer games to video games, the more open-ended the better, and especially those that allowed character development and the exploration of other universes. Nonetheless, they had a numbing effect. I found that with just a stick, and perhaps a friend or two, in the woods I could accomplish so much more, and afterwards I felt exhilarated, alive, kept up at night thinking about what adventures the next day would bring.

One of the greatest blocks of cement that we anarchists must crack is that which has been poured over the faculty of the imagination, with more being poured every day. People who cannot imagine other worlds are dead. They are zombies, they will never be revolutionaries. Anarchists who cannot imagine other worlds might as well roll over and rot. All of their words are moribund, fetid things. The nihilists who willfully confuse the drafting of blueprints with the exploration of imagined futures have to resort to pyrotechnics to cover up their fundamental frailty.

And while everyone had their own method of surviving repression, I find that imagining other worlds can disrupt the hegemony of this one. When I face a line of riot cops, sometimes I have to laugh, because what I see are corpses. I love the politicians in their pretty suits, because those

are the same suits they are wearing as they are forced at gunpoint to clean up Superfund sites. And when I'm sad about friends in prison, I look out my window and see gardens where roads had been, and I know our fight is worth it.

The anarchist imagination has a lot to offer. But imagination rooted to place is even more potent, more alive. All the games I ever played in my forests are there waiting for me. And all the people who live in a place, though they do not dare to be anarchists, can imagine changes in their surroundings that could never be born from an ideology, and that the cleverest of all the anarchists would never think up, unless she were also from that place. One of the contributions of an anti-colonial, anti-rational anarchism is the importance it gives to the particular, against abstract schemes and universalities. There can be some benefit in anarchists debating levels of technology, one vision of the world versus another, but only if they realize that all they are doing is playing a game. For the winner of that debate to impose is vision on the world would be the cruelest violence. It is a million specific places that human communities must relate to, each of them different. Freedom will triumph when everyone actively imagines their own surroundings, and remakes themselves within the specific place that holds them up.

The forest also calls on our spirits to exult and express themselves, against the confines of a world that is rational and materialist, both in its dominant expressions and in the theories of its dissidents. Clumsily, like a baby first learning to swing its chubby fist, I began to pray in my forest. I would light candles, meditate, and feel the other living beings around me. Completely lacking guidance, I didn't know anything about Daoism, Wicca, and Native American spirituality. I didn't know anything about cultural appropriation (I think I still don't), but the books on European paganism seemed the most appropriate to me. (And being on stolen land,"appropriate" is not the word I would use today).

I am reminded of the recent controversy in the Pacific Northwest, with a couple of Green Scare prisoners and their immediate circles dabbling in Norse neo-paganism and its attendant, crossover white supremacist iconography.

It's curious how some white people look to Scandinavian pagans for a link to authentic, eco-centric European traditions. I could claim a line to that myself, if I wanted. Some of my ancestors were Vikings who became farmers. When I was a teenager I carved my own set of runestones and laid them in my little forest shrine. Since then it had occurred to me that what's most interesting about the Norse is not their funny alphabet or their Prometheus-Christ god hanging from a yew tree, but all the ways they became what I hate most about this world. Why lie and see them as pure earth children when their brand of paganism made them so susceptible to statism and ecocide?

Nowadays, I cherish my ancestors for all their ugliness, their mistakes, their horrors. I cherish my ancestors for their puritanism, their involvement in genocide, the KKK, in clear-cutting one continent and then another. I cherish these things I hate, because this is all they gave me, and if it does not serve as a positive compass, it serves as a map of a minefield, warning me of a hundred possible missteps.

Why would so many white children, who in general despise their parents and ignore their grandparents, want to emulate their ancestors? Trauma is always the first hand-me-down, and I'm pretty damn sure our shit did not start with the Industrial Revolution.

The European pagans, at least those who populated or neighbored the Roman Empire, cut down their forests and created many more states than they overthrew. Turning to them might be better than mining the remains of colonized societies to manufacture spiritual models, if those

were the only two options, but the truth is, there already is an unbroken spiritual connection between the ancestors of the West, and its forlorn modern children, and it isn't to be found in any book, for it's writ large across the world. Our heritage is ecocide, patriarchy, monotheism, the State, alienation, along with a hundred half-forgotten stories of rebellion against these forces.

I understand the need for authenticity, but everyone who feels it should understand it as a red flag, warning us away from the inherent artificiality of a search for the authentic.

The recent anarchist children's story, The Witch's Child, provides a sort of negative history of the West. Instead of proletariat and bourgeoisie, the classes it posits are the uprooted and the rootless ones, which I read as colonized peoples fighting to reassert their way of life, and people who have been colonized so completely and so long ago that even the memory of it has been obliterated. This last category certainly includes me and most people I know. We have no remaining spirituality, only the need for it.

It occurs to me that most comrades who attempt to fulfill this need fall into some rationalist assumptions about self and victory, namely that a person is simply one body and one lifetime. In fact each of us is the nexus of a million beings and the inheritor of a thousand generations, whose lives will play out in many lifetimes to come. What kind of idiot would think that life ends with brain death? It would take years of education to make a person so ignorant.

Facing the problem of spirituality, all of us rootless ones assume that we must and we can come up with a solution in a single generation, in a single body. But how could that be? If an old growth forest, by definition, cannot spring up in a single generation, how could a single generation in a human community create a healthy, earth-centered spirituality?

I don't trust people – at least not white people or westernized people – who talk about spirituality. I think that's a healthy impulse. Perhaps those of us who are starting, not from scratch but from the misery that our ancestors left us, shouldn't ever talk in public about spirituality, nor shamelessly make collective rites. Maybe we should feel ashamed of our spirituality, and only talk about it in whispers. Maybe it's not strong enough to come out into the open yet. Perhaps we should only attempt the most timid of steps forward, trusting that if we suggest a vague outline, the next generation will be able to fill in some darker shades, to talk about their nascent spirituality a little louder, and on and on until eventually we have something robust that can be passed on with confidence.

I might talk about the times the deer woke me up in the middle of the night, snorting and stamping at me as I lay in my sleeping bag, or the night I felt the contours of the land for a half a mile in every direction as an extension of my own body, as I listened to gust upon gust of a powerful wind rush over the pond, past the cliff, through the marsh, up the hill, and then suddenly crash all around me, rocking the trees back and forth then leaving us in silence until the next gust. But I am not good at talking about those things. They were very private moments.

I know that many of my friends have moments like that too, that they have never shared with me. I also know that when I'm holding a friend's baby or taking care of a toddler, there is no limit to the stories I can tell or the songs I can sing. It's funny the way adults will talk about magic with children but with no one else. They're not simply taking advantage of the youngster's gullibility to tell a tale no one else would listen to. What's actually happening is they are confiding in these children a part of themselves that they need to exist, but don't have the confidence to nurture on their own. The cycle becomes endless when we are taught never to learn from what children do best.

This time around, we can do it differently. We can tell our secrets to our children, tell them about magic and spirits, share in the private knowledge of the other worlds that so many people are ignorant of, and as they grow, have their backs rather than beating them down, honor their wisdom and lend them our confidence, so as they grow, they might trust their experiences, and speak a little louder, dare to go places where we could not tread.

Don't Worry, You Can Sleep at Night … and being able to sleep functions as a symptom of a greater problem – by Hunter H

No longer do the ideological extremes function as the ultimate threat to our livelihoods, yet many within the so-called anarchist milieu (or other radical-leftist currents) remain focused on defending themselves from such extremes as central tenets of their praxis. How do we prevent ourselves from structuring ourselves as scarecrows – mere shells of humans existing only as a response to a threat, perched in place against crows, against the Other?

Certainly, fascism (an ambiguously used and degraded term) is horrible, along with nationalism in its many forms (racialized forms of nationalism, cultural Marxism, glorification of the nation-state, etc.), but this distaste for fascism is not popularly contested. In our post-Cold War era, political extremism and ultra-nationalism lack the ideological traction they once held, with the neoliberal politics of globalization guiding the nature of capitalist relations. The rhetoric of anti-fascism is not all explicitly anarchist and has served as fodder for the mobilization of countless ideologies, be it the justification of the Atomic Bomb in Japan or the creation of the Berlin Wall (which was officially referred to as the "Antifaschistischer Schutzwall" or the "Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart").

European anti-fascist demonstrations draw out supporters by the thousands, but serve as no attack on any actual forces of power. Rather, these demonstrations merely vocalize a popular moral position while glorifying the dominate structure in place that stands in contrast to the dark centers of extremism, fascist or otherwise. Witness the freedom of the anti-fascist demonstrators to exercise their rights to protest, a true victory! But the victory goes to the interests of the state and capitalist enterprises, which understand the value of concessions towards public interest for the sake of self-preservation. Power in the 21st century is articulated more effectively through pacification and social control than through explicitly violent brute force. Rights, equality, and freedom are synonymous with assimilation into global markets and legal recognition by the state. The momentary material gains promoted by civil rights are delivered as a Trojan Horse, with pacification emerging from its bowels… What is to be done?

There are so many activists, radicals, militants, guerrillas, revolutionaries, entrepreneurs, politicians, businessmen, philanthropists, scientists, strategists, and other experts who know the answers – who know which crops to plant and how much water to add – and yet their crops continue to fail, season after season. If action is better than passivity, it hasn't worked so far, and all we have to show for it are more and more farms of failed ideology; progress stacked upon progress, leaving the land overworked and barren, our planet destroyed, and ourselves socially and culturally bankrupt.

This is the logic of revolutionary optimism (or dogmatism), a logic that says that any push is a push in the right direction, even as the knot of industrial civilization and post-modernity tightens and tangles in the same direction. The decomposition of civilization into endless frag-

ments is accelerating as each gesture that opens up the possibility of change in turn opens up the range of civilization's dominion as it acquires new avenues for growth and expansion. Nihilism acknowledges that draining puss from an infected blister leads to a good chance of worsening the infection, and that there is no sterile incision that can be made into the flesh of the catastrophe that is post-modern civilization1. The screw of progress tightens and deepens into the depths of the future, with the torque of neoliberalism stripping away at its head.

Revolutionary In-Crowd

Politically active so-called revolutionaries, social anarchists, militants-taking-action, and other optimistic political actors frown upon what they call hipster nihilism. The hipster is an exemplary case of the Other in the context of idealized post-modern commodity relations, subsumed to the construction of an identity-via-commodity relationship to the ownership of goods. A hipster's defining characteristic is their relationship to aesthetics as determined by popular capitalist production, in that they are seemingly hip or up-to-date with their fashion and clothing. Their taste for aesthetics is molded by ideological precedents laid forth by clothing manufacturers and marketers founded on the concept that clothing and the ownership of other consumer goods composes one's personal identity.

Unfortunately, this dynamic is a two-way street, and gives progressive or radical-minded individuals the notion that negating popular aesthetics somehow leads to a more genuine form of fashion or self-expression. While a variety of aesthetic tastes certainly sounds more interesting, there is nothing that inherently removes counter-cultural variations of aesthetic preferences from their ideological roots (e.g. believing that dressing differently makes me different; that dressing like a crust punk makes me not a yuppie; that utilitarian aesthetics represent the true modern subject of the working class, etc.).

Those who mockingly shrug off alleged hipsters as lacking authenticity continue to exist, live, and dress themselves in the context of post-modern global capitalism, putting their superficially chosen pants on one leg at a time, just like the rest of us. Both conformity and non-conformity serve different gods of ideology, and capitalist production not only benefits, but thrives from the ebb and flow of both. There is no revolutionary cotton-polyfiber blend of fabric, no proper way to wear a black beret as an armed urban guerrilla. Nothing you can wear that will bring you closer to some mythical state of righteous commodity relations within the context of the world we exist in today, or for any foreseeable future. "Breaking out of the box" only means creating new markets for profitable expansion.

Abstention from commodity relations (veganism, dumpster diving, D.I.Y. movements) have no devastating effect on the targeted economic growth (and the subsequent economic devastation) – yet such trends are firmly entrenched in dictating group morality within the radical milieu, often serving no purpose beyond the social buffer of initiating new members into the group setting. Group stature is revoked upon the dismissal of group ideology. Breaking vegan within an anarchist scene? Betrayal towards the movement! But no one can explain why consumer politics are essential to the anarchist project or how creating or supporting alternative, "agreeable" markets is more ethical within the scope of anarchist thought. The overwhelming influence of leftist and often liberal ethics – which say that positive change can take place in the form of endless reform, awareness, consciousness, and righteousness – pervades the self-proclaimed anarchist scene but does not escape the realm of neoliberalism, which utilizes the implementation of reform and "im-

proved" comfort of the masses as a weapon with which to maintain the power of state-commerce and social control.

What may have begun as counter-cultural trends have been recuperated and sold back to the next line of willing consumers looking to further devoid the aesthetic qualities that the trends were promoting of meaning, leaving any sort of "punk" or "queer" aesthetics to be just as economically subversive as a fashionable Abercrombie & Fitch wearing "yuppie." Recuperation is the process of decomposition that begins with the '77 style punk-rocker and streamlines it into stores like Hot Topic; that turns rioting into a glamorous subject of mainstream music videos. Every notion of change and progress is prey to state or capitalist forms of recuperation, be it sex, drugs, violence, anarchy as ideology, images of AK-47s, or rock & roll. Anti-capitalist and even former anti-state politics are targeted for recuperation by the state, which makes the necessary reforms and concessions, tightening and re-arranging the framework of civilization while greasing the gears of progress ad infinitum.

The "hipster nihilist" vs. the "genuine militant" dichotomy parallels the "fashionable hipster" vs. "ethical consumer" dynamic in that the latter in both cases claims to be ideologically superior to the former. The hipster modifier implies an inauthentic position, apparently derived from the notion that nihilists aren't organizing or taking revolutionary action and are therefore only interested in the social acceptance provided by a political orientation within a scene. Thus, the subject of the hipster also carries over to other theory-based or intellectually-driven (as opposed to action-oriented) milieus (e.g. hipster Marxism).

But the hipster modifier also highlights a prominent misconception about the nature of current themes within nihilist thought – specifically of the distinction between passive and active nihilism. The proto-typical hipster would fall into the former category, a willing passenger in the rollercoaster of history, unaware that they are buckled tightly to their seat. The active nihilist is on the same ride, but is aware of the straps and buckles, can see the gears and wheels, and braces for the blind turns accordingly. Alejandro de Acosta describes:

...the difference between active nihilism and passive nihilism as an awareness. I do think that awareness matters in terms of how one might live beyond resentiment and beyond the spectacle of society. (216. The Impossible, Patience. History as Decomposition).

Active nihilism serves as a microscope to analyze claims of truth, severing ideological claims from their alleged metaphysical roots and exposing their folly.

There is a prominent current within the anarchist milieu, where one gets the sense that everyone has a plan. They know which action will bring forth the one true revolution, the Good and Right thing to do. In a formally structured socio-political environment that functions within the vacuum of causality, where one could coordinate and execute a strategic plan for political action towards some sort of global revolutionary framework (e.g. Marxist fields of thought), precise, persistent, and calculated action indeed seems to be the ethically responsible position. Indeed, if there was an end to the rope that could be pulled to untie us from this mess, most would likely pull it. But the knot only tightens.

Ideological disputes against fascism and nationalism aside, the strategy and tactics implemented by contemporary anti-fascist movements are mostly reduced to spectacular displays of territorial control – which is to say they aren't seeking to destroy the idea of fascism as much as they are creating a uniform ideological space within the milieu. Any visible trace of fascist elements must be erased from common sight, steering them further into the extremes of the political spectrum and fundamentalist ideologies. The realm of extreme difference thrives from this

interplay between the pro- and anti- forces, with nationalist and fascist-oriented political actors thriving from the necessary existence of the radical Other- the Other which justifies the very basis of their political agenda!

Anti-fascist groups, in the wake and tradition of post-WWII Germany, insist on the cultural censorship of fascist elements, insisting on a purity of ideas and aesthetics. This conservation of "problematic" concepts and imagery upholds the essence of the ideological source behind the imagery, which would otherwise lose its metaphysical power to time and the decomposition of its idealized forms. Musicians and artists that satirize or evoke Third Reich imagery are labeled as neo- or crypto-fascist, despite any actual political adherence to or support of fascist ideals – only blatant satire and formal critiques are deemed acceptable.

This maintenance of pristine imagery and ideology is more than fine for the professed practitioners or believers in the far-right. Ultranationalist street gangs cheer upon stumbling into anti-fascist groups to rumble with, with street gang politics providing a great way to perpetuate the platform of each group ad infinitum. Parallel to the moral War on Terror, the struggle for supreme ideology is self-replicating; with sides battling for righteousness eternally as ground troops (e.g. U.S. Military, ISIS, Anti-fa members, or racist skinheads) toss themselves into the meat grinder of war. This is the tainted hamburger meat of the political, which causes the anti-political stomach of the nihilist to wretch in distaste.

Nihilism should not be mistaken for apathy, lack of interest or ethics, or as some simple or shallow perspective disconnected from reality. It is a question, a different way of understanding, reacting to, and situating ourselves within or against our times. Against ideology, against the flow of history, and against civilization!

An Interview with Corrina Gould: On Disappearing to Survive – by A!

Corrina Gould is a Chochenyo and Karkin Ohlone woman, born and raised in Oakland, CA- or the ancient village of Huichin. She works at a drug and alcohol program for Native women and children, she and her close friend Johnella LaRose started the Shellmound Walk and the yearly Shellmound protest that happens at the Emeryville mall on Black Friday. Here, she talks about the history of indigenous people in the bay area, the shellmounds, and the spiritual occupation at Sogorea Te.

Aragorn! (A!): Can you talk a little about why you thought about doing the shellmound walk, the history of shellmounds in the bay area, and focus more on people finding them and celebrating them (instead of just paving over them).

Corrina: Yeah, there are over 425 of them that ring the entire bay area, wherever fresh water meets salt water; they're these huge mounds, and there are always burials inside of them. Folks have to have fresh water. And our ancestors ate lots of fish, lots of clams… This is why they're called shellmounds, because when archeologists came from other places they called these mounds "midden." In Europe, midden means a dunghill or garbage heap, right? But then they realized that they were all burial sites. So, since they were known as midden already, people were like "So, you just throw your ancestors in the trash?"

It's asinine… These are all spiritual places. People were buried, and then layers of shell would be put over them, to keep them safe of course, because there were large animals in the bay area, you know, grizzly bears lived here. These were places where people came together to have

ceremony, people lived on our shellmounds, they were vantage points because people could see, and send signals to each other across the bay. They were needed for survival.

A!: How tall were they, and was the land around them usually cleared?

C: The one in Emeryville was one of five; they fingered out (like your hand). The one in the middle is central, and then smaller ones radiate out around it. The one at Emeryville was three stories high. You can imagine, that's pretty tall. And it was three football fields in diameter. So you can get a visual, kind of, right? That was the largest of all of them. The oldest one was the one in Berkeley. That was around 4th Street, by Spenger's parking lot, under the railroad tracks and under Truitt and White hardware store, that's the oldest according to their carbon dating. But Strawberry Creek, which we can't see at all, is under there and went right into the bay.

What we found was the issue of how to talk about these things in the bay area when one, even Ohlone people amongst Indian people, were nonexistent really, which happened because of the relocation laws. The Relocation Act was in the 50s and 60s, I'm not sure of the exact date…Their rationale was to take Native people out of the reservations because there was so much poverty, which of course was true, right? But there also their desire to get the Indians off the reservations so that the U.S. government could go into the reservation and use the resources that were there.

The whole assimilation process was really building on the idea of wiping out Native people in America. Which is why the 1978 Longest Walk happened, because there were bills that were going through Congress that were going to allow the US to say that American Indians no longer existed.

A!: It's interesting to think in these terms of… where was the intentional genocide, and where was the unconscious motivation of genocide. I'm comfortable using the word, because I feel like… whatever, I don't think it's too harsh of a word.

C: I don't think so either.

A!: I think a lot of people feel nervous about… 'oh, it just happened'.

C: Well, it's "progress." It's "just how things are." The interesting thing is that California Indians are talking a lot about genocide right now because Junipero Serra is about to be canonized. What does that look like? We talk about the mass genocide of California Indians that happened with their first colonizers. And I think that's one thing, that folks in the bay area don't realize the history of where they're at. That was one of the main reasons that we really needed to do the shellmound walk, because so much is invisible here. So I started talking about even Indian people not even knowing that Ohlone people still existed in the bay area, right? And you can't blame them, nobody knew that, right? And even then it was really scary for Ohlone people to come out.

A!: And we could think of the missions as city states?

C: There were 21 of them, started in 1767 and lasted 98 years, starting from the bottom of California to San Rafael. My ancestors were enslaved in Mission Dolores in San Francisco, and Mission San Jose in Fremont. So Junipero Serra started the first nine missions with one of the first being Mission Dolores in SF. And, of course, his idea was to conquer the Indians, to use them as slave labor, and to kill them if they didn't cooperate and become Catholic… to civilize, but it was really about having free slave labor to create these missions and to look at the land in a different way.

It's still true that Native people look at land in a different way from non-Native people. Folks look at land and say, "look, there's all these thousands of acres and the Indians aren't using it, so they don't need it." While the Indians have been tending to the land for thousands of years,

harvesting in ways that they can get their basket shoots straight, burning stuff off so that the vegetation that they ate came back in a good way, ways that they brought animals in to the land so that it's not destroyed, and how they take care of the acorns and the fish in the area, so there was a natural process of care-taking the land, tenuring the land.

When other people got here they said, "There's all this land and there's so much rich soil," ('cause the natives had been tending it) "that we could put all these orchards up." And that 's exactly what happened; they put these orchards up and kept pigs and goats and all these animals that we know as food. And giving those foods to my ancestors made them sick, as anybody eating food that they're not used to will get sick, so they got sick and died. The animals came with diseases that folks here had never seen.

A!: If you were going to talk about the stages of genocide of California natives, how would you do that? Was there a stage prior to the founding of the missions? perhaps with the initial contact with whites?

C: So Native people were free to go after the missions closed, right? And the state of Mexico was here for a while, right. What was supposed to happen was that Native people could apply for land tracts for land that used to be theirs. The problem was that folks were illiterate.

A!: Not to mention the traditional world view about land.

C: Right. so how would they have done it? they didn't think about it like that for one, and two, so they're posting stuff up with words on it, so what do the words mean? It means nothing, and who's gonna tell you that it does mean something? "Well, none of these Indians came forward and got this land that they could've gotten, so…" So, Mexico had it.

Then there was the Treaty of Guadalupe, where Indians were supposed to get land back, but that didn't happen. Then the state of California was created and the state of California created laws specifically for genocide, for example a law stating basically that it was illegal to be Indian: that any white man could take you to a court of law and say that you were vagrant, and say that they would take care of your food and your clothing for the next 40 years, if they could use you for work, and the court would find in favor of that. They could take people's kids away.

This is in to the 20th century. They could take your children and say they were orphans. And they could shoot you, as the parent, to make the children orphans. You didn't have any rights because you couldn't say anything in a court of law if you were not white. So children were taken from their parent(s) and sold into indentured servitude. People were hunted down because the state of California paid over a million dollars for the scalps, heads, and ears of Native american people.

A!: This is after Mexico.

C: Yeah, after Mexico. So this is Gold Rush era. Everybody flooded into the state, and of course there's not enough gold to go around, but on the weekends, there'd be these black sundays, people would get on their horses, shoot a couple of Indians, have some money to get through so they could continue panning for gold. So it was all of these things that created the genocide of Natives in California.

A!: Sounds like you're now talking about Natives who would've lived closer to the Sierras, while obviously San Francisco and the bay were already a different environment, with cities, etc. But also it is where the missions were.

C: Right. Yeah, there weren't missions up there, they were all on the coast. It was still illegal to be Indian, even though you were in San Francisco or Oakland, so people could still kill you and get a bounty… this was the case anywhere in the state of California. They were trying to exterminate

the Indian. There was no reason to have us here; we were an inferior race. They called us diggers, here. We were not even human. Not even just in the state of California, in the US, Indians did not get citizenship until 1924. So my great grandparents were not even born with citizenship. It wasn't until 1978 that we had our own right to religion. So all of this forbidden stuff had to go underground. My particular family survived all of those ways of genocide by pretending to be Mexican. They worked on a ranch in Pleasanton, and survived. But the interesting thing is that they all intermarried with other Ohlones and other mission Indians who were close by.

A!: There was still some language.

C: There was still language. My great grandfather was one of the last speakers of Chochenyo language. This crazy… JP Harrington, and he was absolutely nuts. (I think the ancestors had something to do with it.) But he went… not just California languages but all these languages in Mexico, he'd seen all these languages disappearing and he just went and wrote notes and had people talking to wax cylinders and recorded them and got all of this information and that's how we're bringing our language back. Because he did that with my great grandfather. It's really amazing that those things happened. Nels Nelson, who worked in Berkeley in 1909 knew then, over a hundred years ago, that all these shellmounds were going to be desecrated or removed, and he made a map of them, over a hundred years ago, and that's what we used for the shellmound walks. It's not just Ohlone people who were invisibilized, all Native people were invisibilized in the bay area for a while, even after Alcatraz and stuff. They kind of went away, you know?

A!: Yeah. And the problem with Alcatraz is that it's sensationalism: it's not "Natives exist in daily life" it's "Natives exist in a circus."

C: Right. I agree with that. So we decided that was important after Emeryville was such a debacle…

A!: That mall that opened in 2003?

C: 2002, I think. We decided to protest it. So we protest it every year…

So we walked all the shellmounds that we could find, superimposing our bay area map on Nels Nelson's map and trying to figure out roadways and reading old newspapers that had stories about when ancestors were pulled out.We just figured out where they were, and we stopped and prayed at these places that were under buildings, under railway tracks, under bars, under schools, under all this stuff. And one of our main reasons was that if we didn't recognize the ancestors from this land, we couldn't do the work to be recognized. People work for recognition in different ways…

A!: For the audience, you're talking about federal recognition of your tribe, and the complicated process, and the value of that recognition, pro and con.

C: Right. There are folks that work on federal recognition and I think it's a farce. It was set up in a way that has never been for Indians or about Indians, it's about preventing us from being recognized.

A!: It's about genocide. Why don't you talk about Sogorea Te. Since you're talking about the end of the chapter of the walks, and there were a bunch of other things too…

C: In 2011, after twelve and a half years,t we've been going and helping Wounded Knee, SPIRIT, that's the group that worked to get the city of Vallejo and the Vallejo Restoration District not to build a park there. It's 15 acres of open land on the Carquinez Strait. It's the last 15 acres right there in Vallejo that's open land, and folks have been going to city council meetings–the city council is actually separate from their park district; their park district holds a lease on the land and are the caretakers.

So, we had to go through their board, and their board was super racist, and didn't want to hear anything about holding on to that piece of land and leaving it as open space. There was an old abandoned house that was on top of it before, it would be overgrown all the time, there was a little creek that ran through it, and fishermen would fish there regularly, and people walked their dogs there. It was just open space and no one basically went there and there was a big huge housing development that was butted right up against it and actually a lot of the cremations had been removed when the built that development, and put onto Sogorea Te space, right? So, twelve and a half years going to board meetings, impact report meetings, having letter writing campaigns, all of that to have them say "we're gonna do it anyway." At that time the city of Vallejo was going bankrupt, people can look that up. So, they decided in all their wisdom to give the Greater Vallejo Park District $40,000 in free permitting to go ahead with the park.

We decided there was nothing else we could do. On April 14, 2011, we called folks up to go up there and hold it down. We figured we'd be there for a weekend, we ended up being there 109 days. We set up camp, we set up a sacred fire first of all. That was the first thing we did. And Fred Short was the one who put that together for us, he got the sacred fire going, and it stayed burning for 109 days. That was one of the biggest fights.

A!: So I've heard you speak about this as prefiguring the Occupy moment, especially as figuring out how a big pile of people shares a small space that is not where they normally live, so can you talk about some of the decision making, and some of the ways it mirrored and didn't mirror Occupy, which happened later that same year.

C: Yeah, we actually came and welcomed Occupy that first day [in Oakland]. Sogorea Te, for a lot of the people who were there, was a spiritual awakening, and also caused a lot of post traumatic stress. I think at some point we need to get all together, because there's pieces of the experience that are missing somewhere. I forget a lot of stuff. But, there was a group of eight of us, four Native and four non-native people, that got together to figure out things like how we were going to deal with the media, how we were going to do messaging, how we were going to deal with the police when they got there, who the security was gonna be, who was gonna be in charge of food, etc.

Each of us took our own place, but as we noticed people coming in to the land, the one thing that was centralized was the sacred fire and people who had never been there were greeted (by security or people there from the beginning) to tell them that when they walked in there they were walking on sacred land, and to come in a respectful way, and that if they wanted to stay there they could. And then they were told that we didn't care what religion they were, but whatever they believed in, to say a prayer to whatever it was, and to put tobacco on that fire to help to keep this strength. The fire was a central place for having conversations with the entire group that lived there at the time, it helped focus us when the police came, everyone gathered around (children and women inside, men outside, security outside of that)… it was the central place we would meet when anything happened.

It was our place of spirituality, we would stand there in the morning and pray before we ate breakfast to welcome in our ancestors. There were ceremonies there; people from all over California, different tribes, people from the Pacific, came and brought ceremony there. It became an ongoing spiritual ceremony, we knew that there was something else besides us. So it took a lot of ego out of stuff, by doing it that way. Also we kept the space. There was no cussing when you were around the fire. No alcohol or drugs of any kind on the premises at any time. It was set up that way and everyone was in agreement about it.

People ask us how we kept it together, and it was because everyone had the same mind set; we were there to hold down this land for these ancestors, and that's what our lifework was and we didn't have time for that other stuff. So everyone found a place within there. Some people were good at cooking, some people were good at cleaning up trash, some people were good at watching people's kids, some people were good at going and making copies so that we could flyer. Everyone had something they could do that would help the community.

A!: So that's the strength. What were the weaknesses, compared to, in the context of, Occupy.

C: I think those were the strengths of Sogorea Te and the weaknesses of Occupy. I think that there's some amazing things that happened at Occupy… I think the leadership was lacking in a way.

A!: Helps to have a specific mission.

C: Yeah. that helps. I don't know. I traveled to different occupies, and some of them were just a group of folks hanging out in front of a post office. Some of them were big like Oakland. It was different. I think because… maybe it was because of how Sogorea Te was positioned.

I think the idea of occupy was great. the idea of people coming together and learning how to live together again is an amazing idea and it has to happen again. I think if I was to build up an Occupy in Oakland, not nationwide but in Oakland, then I would ensure that there was representation of all people, in the leadership, and that was not true of the Occupy in Oakland. There was a lot of education, but people were still stuck in their ideas of how things should be.

Sometimes in leadership folks have to make unpopular decisions, and stick by their guns, and sometimes they need to step back and let someone else shine for a while. And I think that is what happened at Sogorea Te. When you're doing something that is so big, you're not on all the time, you just can't do it, so allowing yourself to back up and let someone else take the face, for a while? is good to do. It allows other people's ideas and inventions to come in and you can see different things happen.

A!: So you're using the word "leadership," which is very loaded word for anarchists. Can you talk about it in a way that we can understand what you mean? A leader is not a boss, or a ruler?

C: No, not at all. Although sometimes people in those positions need to make harsh decisions. Let me back this up a little bit. I don't know what Occupy had in place to make sure that everyone stayed safe and people were asked to leave. In the time we were at Sogorea Te, we asked four people to leave. It came from the group of people, and then it came to the leadership group, and then we talked to the people, and then they usually just left, in a quiet way. It wasn't something where people had to be dragged out or anything like that. There were specific reasons for it. I don't know if that happened at Occupy. I think there were some particular protocols that need to be in place when people are living together like that.

That said, for me leadership is not about people appointing themselves as the group head, but someone who follows what needs to be done. And I think whatever community you live in, mainstream or anarchy, there are certain people who make themselves available to regular folks, who have ideas that get grabbed onto by other people and gone with, and I think that's happened with Sogorea Te. We had built relationships with folks, "you've been walking with us for four years, you know the work that we are doing here, you know what Wounded's been doing for twelve and a half years, we're now calling on you to help us." So, folks showed up, and then folks who hadn't met us before showed up, and folks who they knew showed up. So it was like that.

The Native people who were in the group that invited people had been doing the work for so long, people respected them and shared food with them and talked with them and they made

themselves available and showed up at each others' funerals and…we shared a life before. The non-native people who came had been involved in some way in grass roots organizing, and also had some kind of skill to share with folks and were willing to take direction from the Native folks and from women. And vice versa. So a leadership role comes from the people within, not from self-appointment or winning a popularity contest.

A!: I just talked to a friend who is in the bay area purely to go to school here. When he's done with school he's going back to the rez. He's Dineh. It's a little surprising to me that he is associating with the decolonize crowd in Oakland. Decolonize as far as I can tell is has amorphous definition, it's not a clear, coherent, singular kind of thing, but it's become weaponized before it's become coherent. I talk about this moment from Occupy Oakland as sort of a central moment of this diffusion of the term decolonize. In talking to my friend last week, it was striking to me when he said that for him decolonize is the direct spiritual practice of reclaiming this land. Which is a very powerful thing to say, and what I really appreciate about him is that there was no guile. There were no political machinations in what he said. What he said is exactly what he meant, and I almost can't even imagine someone in the bay area saying this and really meaning it, and backing it up in practical terms. Because decolonize is such a political movement, post Occupy. So maybe we can start this by talking about your sense of decolonize prior to the confrontation in 2011 and then since.

C: So, he can say that the way he said it because he comes from a place that is more traditional. So it's not decolonize the way that the bay area looks at things. Where he comes from, it makes total sense to me that he would say that, think that, believe that. For me, I don't think I really thought about decolonize before the whole movement or whatever it is. At that point, I was trying to re-acclimate myself into this world, because when we were at Sogorea Te, when we were left there, it left this huge void in a lot of us…

A!: Did you call it an occupation?

C: It was a spiritual occupation, yeah. We used that terminology. And it being a spiritual occupation made it different from a political one. But I think that–well, ok this is what I know–when people left Sogorea Te they were devastated because they were leaving a community they had built, a family that they created, and they were going back to this world that doesn't care about anything that we care about.

I went back to my kids and I didn't know how to be a mom to them the same way I was a mom before. I couldn't watch tv for six months, or read a book. I couldn't even concentrate… so going back to work full time was just getting through the day. I asked other people if they felt the same thing and they said yes; it was just so difficult to get back in our own bodies and to be in this kind of…I don't know what it is. What society is today. It took a long time to get back.

Then we were asked to be at the Occupy thing, and did the welcoming folks to Occupy. Then pretty soon I started getting emails from folks about hey, we should change the name to decolonize, and I thought "Ok, I can jump on board with that." So what does that mean? I started asking people, well, what does that mean to you? Cause there were a lot of groups, people were having teach-ins about various things including indigenous stuff. I was asked to do one but I was not there in my mind yet, I just couldn't do it, but I started thinking about what does decolonize mean, and I decided that it does mean that people need to be educated about where they are, whose land they're own, and to be adjusted to that place and space in their life. To me that's the first part of decolonizing, is to realize you're not from here. I don't even care if you're another Indian, you're not from here. Folks really need to know that, that America was a creation. It's

not real. So what is reality, and how do you go back to these things… and then it just started to be a joke. After the whole decolonize thing happened in Occupy and screwed up, it was like "decolonize your food," "decolonize your water," you know what I mean?

If you start using a word frivolously like that, then it loses its original meaning, and that's what happened. And I think that happens in the bay area a lot. That people take on the new fad, "let's decolonize everything…" Like, if you have white privilege then find out about that, own up to it, and do something about it. But it's not our job to teach you about that.

My friend Johnella says, we can't teach all these folks about how they need to be in this world. Sometimes they need to figure it out themselves. It's kind of like teaching your kids, you know? For a while I babied the heck out of my kids. They never knew we were poor, although we were. But then that stunted their growth, going into young adulthood. When people start to ask those questions, it's because they already have a mindset that something's wrong in this world. If they start to think about decolonizing, or going to rallies, or reading things about anarchy and different theories, then their mind is already there and they need to have conversations with people and not expect people to have all the answers for them.

When I think about decolonize now, I think it's about re-educating ourselves about who we are, as human beings, and what our connection is to specific places, and once you figure that out you have the ability to see other human beings as other human beings, and to work together on bigger issues. I always say yes, I have this little tiny group of Ohlones who are left here, and we have this little tiny thing called shellmounds that are mostly paved over, and why should anybody give a shit about this issue when there's global warming, all of this stuff, right? I always ask that, why should people be interested in this? Because what it comes down to is when we all have people we bury, those spaces should be sacred. When you can't respect people's sacredness around their burial sites, then you can't respect a lot. That's why I ask people to do the work, or to join me to save these places. If we don't then after this generation we will be annihilated. We will only be a street sign. [pause] Save an endangered species…me [laughs]

A!: There's a ton of places I'm tempted to go that are so theoretical and abstract that I don't want to go there. One thing I do want to ask you about (which I think was one of the strengths of Occupy) was the idea of no demands. Have you heard of this?

C: Remind me.

A!: The concept is that as a way to fight the politicians, who of course will try to take over any movement or any sign of life… You know, there are always these people who predate on that sort of energy, and usually how they leverage it, how they succeed in politicizing these moments, is by nailing down the movement to a set of demands and they become the spokesperson for the demands, they become the most fluent in talking about the demands, and when they win, that becomes the tool belt that they use to justify how necessary they are for future activity along this issue.

So one anarchistic way of dealing with that is to no longer be a movement or a moment to nail itself to demands like "better education, we just want x, y, and z". That defeated the politicians, but that tactic also allowed Occupy to come through people's lives, and other than the people who were devastated by it (similar to your experience with Segora Te), for many people Occupy just passed right through their lives. This is sort of the criticism of it, especially when compared to the Civil Rights Movement, we can all point to this wonderful law, that's you know greatly improved our lives… Civil Rights exist! And we can use it in conversation. But for people who are not fluent in these kinds of conversations, they didn't come away with much from Occupy.

C: Right. I think people say the same thing about Segora Te, and we had demands. That's interesting. I think that people look at the world in such a materialistic way, that they think there has to be a goal that you can grasp onto, to come away with. That you can say "this law exists because we did this," or "35,000 other people didn't get arrested because we did this." We stopped hunger in America, or at least Oakland, for one day.

I think when you do something with a bigger idea behind it, you have to be ok with saying "I got some kind of awareness, there's some kind of spiritual awareness now, there's some kind of human contact that I had, that now I'm a different person. Because of Occupy, because of Segora Te, when I walk in this world, that walking still makes change, because it impacts the other people in our lives, and we have to continue having that impact on each other's lives. Just like this guy who I visited today, he made an impact on my life. And vice versa, and we talked about that, just by being there and talking to each other. Children who experienced Occupy will be able to talk about that, and there are kids who come every year and say, "Mom, you remember when we slept here, in the teepee… how come our tent's not here anymore, what happened to this place?" and we can continue to tell those stories.

A!: Is there an annual event?

C: There is an annual event, around April 14th, that's the day we began the occupation, so either the weekend before or after. People come from all over the place back there, and people who weren't there now want to come and see what it is.

A!: Can you talk a little about how it fell apart? Because it was a little different from Occupy, it wasn't the cops storming in…

C: Yeah, it wasn't the cops storming in, although we were ready for the cops storming in at any time… but at the end of the day [the city of Vallejo] worked with the Native American Heritage Commission and got the area designated as a tribe that is not from that area's land. And Yocha Dehe, Cache Creek Casino, is the tribe that said that this was their land. We were gonna fight that because we know it's not their land and we decided against that because we know that it's my ancestral land, but coming into it, what Yocha Dehe did was to become a partner with them, with the city and the park district. By creating that partnership the city and park district became owners of the land as well. So it created the first… what's called a cultural easement, within a city and park district and tribal entity. The first one ever created.

So, for $35,000 (I think), they bought into this, to create this cultural easement, and called us, telling us they were going to take care of it, that they were basically going to follow what we wanted. They were going to make sure that the structure was taken down in such a way that it didn't have any heavy machinery on it where the shellmound was, that they weren't going to grade the hill that had the cremations in it, that there would be no overhead lighting or bathrooms, and that the parking would be down to two spaces for handicapped people. There's hundreds of parking spaces there because we had hundreds of people on that land for many different ceremonies, and none of them ever needed to park on the land. They ended up creating six parking spaces, putting in a water fountain, no overhead lighting and no bathroom, they did put these big cement benches and tables on it and they got rid of the housing structure but they did use heavy machinery on top of the mound without protecting it, they did grade down the area that had the cremations… So they got what they wanted by using other Native people.

A!: So they made a verbal agreement with you, everyone left, and then you discovered…

C: Yes. They made a verbal agreement with us, everything was written down, we looked at it, it basically gave us what we wanted. And it said we had to leave the premises by July 31, which

is why we left on that day. And we figured, because it was a tribal entity, that they would do the right thing, so we were very naïve about that, figuring that Indians weren't going to… So in retrospect we were like, "we could've done this ourselves." We could've created a land trust, and a land trust could've done the exact same thing the tribal entity did, so that's the tool we were missing…

So yeah. I think we had to be there, so we could learn these lessons. So for me, that's what it is. For Occupy, that's what it is… People who were involved in Occupy, did the medic stuff and did the kitchen and all of these crazy, fun, wild ideas, and brought life to themselves and other people, th'ats what they walk away with. So, in the material world, whatever, maybe it's a loss. Just like Segora Te, which was a loss to some people.

This is what I tell people, it gave us how to be a human being again. And I think that's the same with Occupy. People learned how to be human beings again, and share with each other, oh my gosh, and talk to each other.

A!: There's a thing you brought up earlier that I would love to hear your deeper thoughts on, which is this idea of disappearing to survive. That is a really interesting idea, and I know that other people have experienced this… I'm just curious about your thoughts about what that looks like in this world, where it's so hard for people to be visible at all.

C: I still see it in Indian kids, 'cause I work in the public school district. That it's easier to kind of mask yourself as something else, so that you don't get those questions asked of you. I go around to the schools and track all the Indian kids in the Oakland Unified School District, and sometimes I find one kid in an elementary school. He's the only kid, he's in fourth grade, and they're doing stuff on gold rush and the missions, and he definitely does not want to be asked, "what does it feel like to be Indian?" Even as adults we don't want to be asked those questions by people who…I have no idea why they would ask that. But kids, and teachers, ask that still to this day.

In a city like Oakland, it's easy to just kind of hide and invisibilize yourself so you don't have to do that. A lot of the kids who we work with who are in afterschool programs, are mixed with African-American. So it's much easier to fit in with the crowd, you know? And then when they come to us, and start talking about their traditions, and how their family still goes back for ceremony, there is a different part of them that lights up, and they're able to leave the other folks behind for a while. It's the popular culture that really kills us, you know. I think that's what it is. I think it's hiding to be whole, in some kind of way. My ancestors hid so they wouldn't be killed. Then they hid so they could hold on to our songs 'cause they were against the law until '78. And they hid for their kids to have an easier life–in California it was easier to be Mexican, even, than Indian.

It's my generation that's saying, ok, we don't have to hide anymore. It's ok for us to come out and talk about this stuff, but even with my kids going to elementary school with a bunch of Native kids (it was one of the schools with the largest populations), they still had a hard time in their classroom with their teacher. It's the education system and society as a whole that makes you want to hide, still.

A!: Almost impossible to change it at all unless you change the whole damn thing.

C: Yeah. I often think that. It all needs to change. People need to figure that out sooner than later. So, I'm thankful that my ancestors hid in the way they did. And I'm thankful that whoever the crazy people were in the past, wrote down stuff and left those clues so I could find those things. I think having a voice in today's society allows the next generation to pop up and say, "hey! I've

got something to offer too, and we're still here." I think hiding is a good way to survive; like you say, people do it all over the world. They hide in different kinds of ways. I think sometimes we're just tired of hiding.

A!: So the last question I have for you is one I brought up earlier and you may not have any particular thoughts about it, but… it's the idea of what makes a good ally. Who have been people you've worked with who you've enjoyed working with, and what do you think of the accomplice vs ally, that is sort of the flavor of the month terminology. It's the new decolonize…

C: Yes, the new decolonize… [laughter] I think that… gosh it's hard to say.

A!: To approach it from a different direction: most of this bureaucratic nonsense that you're trying to do, are you mostly doing it with other Natives or are you getting much help from people who are not native? And what have your collaborations looked like. 'Cause it sounds like a lot of what you're doing has Native people as the driving force, but I'm sure that's not entirely true, especially financially.

C: Well, we had a small two-year grant from a foundation to start the land trust. We got one year of funding and don't know if we'll get the second year, which is what I hate about foundation stuff. I've had people who were at Segora Te with us, who provided herbal stuff, supplies, who said that they want to be this next step, this next journey, where we're going with this… Because I think all folks came away wanting that community, loving that community, wanting to be a part of something like that. I haven't utilized folks in a way that probably I should. People have come to me, but I think that…for me, there hasn't been enough conversation to move this forward in a way that I feel comfortable with. Part of me is afraid to do this, what is it gonna look like, how is it gonna change my life…

A!: Are you gonna jeopardize what you have…

C: Yeah…yeah. I guess that's it. Sometimes you get scared when you're trying to do those kinds of things. Folks who are my allies are the ones who have walked with me from the beginning and haven't left, and want to stay and offer help and also know when to back off and let me do what I gotta do. Who bring me information, so I can use that for the work. And are willing to stay on the line with us. And I saw a lot of people who were ready to do that, at Segora Te. I really have a lot of respect for and honor those people.

Accomplices. I don't know. I think of my friend Johnella, who has been there and created IPOC with me, as my accomplice. She is the one that… we dreamed this stuff together. She's gone off to school, but is still working on this landtrust. We live in different places, she lives out in the country mostly and I live out here in the city still but we're still dreaming those ideas together, we both have that relationship with the land, because we're both Native, we're both mothers and grandmothers, and we've gone through all these years of work, doing this stuff and trust each other. For me that's what an accomplice is, somebody who I would lay my life down for, who I trust.

So Johnella, I trusted her before, she was the one who came up with the idea of these walks. I had no idea what a walk was like. I had no idea. I trusted her. We sat down at that little cafe down the street with the maps and wrote it all out, and then drove the things, and it looked like, hey, we could drive this so easy, 18 miles, it's nothing, right? We could do this, no big deal [laughter], but walking every step of that with all these people behind us, really counting on us to have food at the end of the day, counting on a floor to sleep on. That's an accomplice. I appreciate the people who help me sit at the table and be an equal, that's an ally. That's somebody who says, your work is bomb, and people need to hear this, and I want you to share this with other

people… but it's not the same as having someone who does that work with you like that. An accomplice is more rare. I have a cousin, who grew up with me and helped me raise my kids, she's my accomplice in that part of my life. I have a friend who went to all of our events, every single thing, and was kind of like my shadow to make sure nobody messed with me, until her health got bad, she is an accomplice, and we raised our kids together too, so it's like that. So I have those folks. Wounded Knee, who has gone out of his comfort zone on all that kind of stuff and drove all over the world, all over the country, talking to people about Segora Te and why it's important, he's an accomplice. Fred, who lit the fire, and teaches us, someone who prays with my kids in the sweat lodge. I have lots of friends who are not native, and they do great work, and they support us, but on the weekends I don't see 'em. So, there's different kinds of relationships.

A!: Any last thoughts?

C: I do have something. One of the things I really want to talk to people about is coming back to the land in a way that nourishes them, and feel whole again. I was talking to people over the weekend and they were saying, "oh yeah, there's parks in the bay area and stuff" and I said, yeah, but do you know there's kids living in the flatlands of Oakland that never get to the hills of Oakland and never are able to see that, and wouldn't it be nice to have a plot of land in the middle of east oakland bottoms that kids could go to and feel safe in and have ceremony there. People could come and share food. Because people are so stuck in these boxes that are apartments, that have no land attached to them and don't know where they come from, and don't know where they're going. We need to become interdependent again, and that's part of the dream of the land trust, for people to become human again.

Collision of Worlds: the pause between wilderness and civilization in California

This is an introduction or review of the chapter "Collision of Worlds" by M. Kat Anderson, from her book, Tending the Wild (2005). Originally published with the chapter, it is available in zine form if you write to loosedogs@riseup.net.

"The white man sure ruined this country. It's turned back to wilderness…" – James Rust, Southern Sierra Miwok elder

"Viewed retrospectively," writes Max Oelschalaeger, "the idea of wilderness represents a heightened awareness by the agrarian or Neolithic mind, as farming and herding supplanted hunting and gathering, of distinctions between humankind and nature. As understood today is a mélange of competing philosophies, ranging from resource conservation to so-called deep ecology." Wilderness, the wild, therefore names a loss. It names that from which we have actively separated ourselves in order to survive. The indigenous peoples of California did not distinguish between civilized lands and wild lands, as we do. In fact, both "wilderness" and "civilization" are missing from native vocabularies. This is language created by the colonizers and later conservationists. Instead of cultivating distinct tended plots that had been separated out from a wild nature, natives tended the lands around them. They altered those lands, sometimes drastically, so as to generate resources for their use, but never to such an extent that this distinction was produced: the wild, the civilized.

When European colonizers arrived in California, they found what they mistook for a particularly pristine wilderness. Henry David Thoreau saw California as "a foreboding wilderness, a

place to do God's work, a giant unmapped storehouse of wealth, and a place of raw, unspoiled beauty." Euro-American nature enthusiasts wrote beautifully about valley grasslands, thick with wildflowers and wildlife, about dark redwood forests with bearing soil. Their writings, like their inspiration to preserve and control what they found, was misguided. It never occurred to them that the grass they walked on had been annually beaten by baskets constructed in such a way that the seeds they hit fell into the earth instead of being carried away into the wind.

What the Europeans had found was actually a cultivated forest, the product of thousands of years of care by individuals in native tribes: "Through coppicing, pruning, harrowing, sowing, weeding, burning, digging, thinning, and selective harvesting, they encouraged desired characteristics of individual plants, increased populations of useful plants, and altered the structures and compositions of plant communities." Where fire was to be avoided they protected it; where fire was necessary, it roared – including, later on, through the homes of colonizers.

The text, "Collision of Worlds" by M. Kat Anderson, is just one chapter of a much larger book, *Tending the Wild* (2005). It tells the story of colonization, of the renaming and transformation of lands. It is about what happened when one world was imposed on another, altering it in such a way as to destroy the intimacy thus separating and so destroying the natives themselves. See, there was no way to combine the way the two cultures lived. Their daily practices were antithetical to one and other. Californian natives had "an intimacy unmatched by the modern-day wilderness guide, trained field botanist, or applied ecologist," developed through successive generations. They did not only grow food for themselves to eat. They worked with the landscape to harvest enough materials for food, for construction, and so on, while maintaining relationships with plant populations that went beyond production and consumption. They tended the organism, the population, the plant community, and the landscape. Where a surplus was accumulated among them, it was shared. Land that had been used intensely for a time was left to develop from altered states, for decades.

That collecting sites were left untouched for generations was precisely what suggested to colonizers that much of California had never been touched, that these lands were wilderness and therefore available for the taking. Such taking did happen without intense struggle and rebellion. Regardless, a major factor in the vulnerability of this land (and its peoples) was that it had not been permanently claimed by nomination but by tending over long periods of time.

Colonization obliterated the work of thousands of years by tending. Destruction came swiftly. In 1868 the transcontinental railroad was completed – bisecting and connecting the shores. Indigenous people on this land described a barreling noise that started out faint and then grew louder as it came closer. The first time they saw a train they questioned its origin. "Is it of the stars? Or from the afterworld? A monstrous beast of the white man?" The iron rails were a message from a future that was so clumsy and loud it did not know how to whisper.

"Collision of Worlds," as well as the larger work of which it is a part, tells the story of Europeans' destruction of Californian plant communities, as well as of the human communities that lived among them. But it is important to remember that *Tending of the Wild* does not tell the story in order to advocate for a more careful preservation of the California wilderness. Anderson corrects the misconception that there are only two choices: one the one hand, private property, the destruction of the wild in preference for the civilized, and on the other hand, foraging, the preservation of nature as against small tribes who hardly alter the landscape by their activity.

The modern era has overseen and undertaken a long process of separation, which encourages us to see these two extremes as our only choices. We think of ourselves as nature outside of

itself. We distinguish man from nature not only in our words, but in our world: our houses, our national parks, our supermarkets – we re-enact this separation daily. We then rely on this very separation in order to critique our world and our world-destroying ways of life. For, in the face of this enormity (and the constant boredom) that is man's attempt to subdue nature, it is so tempting to declare oneself a partisan of nature, against man.

How often do we find ourselves pining for a faraway past, in which man was too weak to damage nature? We apply musical concepts of "harmony" or mathematical notions of "equilibrium" to imagine nature as something that remains ever the same, as perfect in itself, in a word, as natural. We forget that nature is also something terrible and cruel, something constantly subduing itself – as the ant subdues the aphid to collect the fruits of its labor, or as the hawk subdues its prey, tearing the nutrient-rich organs from still living and screaming flesh, then shitting them down into the soil that birthed man. Mountains crush their way onto shore and crumble down again. Super volcanos collapse and simmer into meadows. Change is inevitable. And so, man, too, partakes in this beauty and cruelty, as they were found here a part of it, in the organic process of dirt and sun, in the work and leisure of natural life, in the suffering and ceaseless transformation of a world that bears in side within itself no progress, no regress, no moral law. We partake in these things whether we tend the wild, or burn it down to make way for pastureland.

If the ambivalence of nature – of ourselves as nature, absorbed in nature as water is in water – is obscured, it is constantly separated out into good and bad objects, that is no accident. Whether we are wildcrafting for herbal medicine to heal us or fracking for natural resources, the same impulse that sends an anthropologist out to field work to find the "good" native, who lives in harmony with the earth, who uses, as they say, all parts of the animal. The role of anthropology – or as Agamben terms it in The Open (2004), the anthropological machine – is to draw and redraw the lines distinguishing us from "nature".

This machine does not draw lines because it knows what the human is; rather, it is always trying to distinguish what the human is not: to distinguish the liminal figure of the inhuman man or the humanized animal, and thereby preserve man from his own animal nature, to save man from a confrontation with his natural nature. Here is a machine that must be brought to a halt: "To render inoperative the machine that governs our conception of man will therefore mean no longer seeking new – more effective and more "authentic" – articulations, but rather to show the central emptiness, the hiatus that – within man – separates man and animal, and to risk ourselves in this emptiness: the suspension of the suspension, Shabbat of both animal and man."

What would is mean to risk ourselves in this emptiness, to suspend the suspension – of man and animal, of man and nature – within man? Tending the Wild gives us some idea. We may never get a chance to see a world like the one Anderson describes, a world in which the hiatus between wilderness and civilization has been suspended in favor of a different mode of existence. Our own version of that world would have to somehow preserve some of the immense extension of human possibilities that civilization claimed, over thousands of years, while ending the massive suffering and destruction of so much life that it bore within itself. – **Chloe**

Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex

This provocation is intended to intervene in some of the current tensions around solidarity/support work as the current trajectories are counter-liberatory from my perspective. Special thanks to DS in Phoenix for convos that lead to this 'zine and all those who provided comments/questions/disagreements. Don't construe this as being for "white young middle class allies", just for paid activists, non-profits, or as a friend said, "downwardly-mobile anarchists or students." There are many so-called "allies" in the migrant rights struggle who support "comprehensive immigration reform" which furthers militarization of Indigenous lands.

The ally industrial complex has been established by activists whose careers depend on the "issues" they work to address. These nonprofit capitalists advance their careers off the struggles they ostensibly support. They often work in the guise of "grassroots" or "community-based" and are not necessarily tied to any organization. They build organizational or individual capacity and power, establishing themselves comfortably among the top ranks in their hierarchy of oppression as they strive to become the ally "champions" of the most oppressed. While the exploitation of solidarity and support is nothing new, the commodification and exploitation of allyship is a growing trend in the activism industry.

Anyone who concerns themselves with anti-oppression struggles and collective liberation has at some point either participated in workshops, read 'zines, or been parts of deep discussions on how to be a "good" ally. You can now pay hundreds of dollars to go to esoteric institutes for an allyship certificate in anti-oppression. You can go through workshops and receive an allyship badge. In order to commodify struggle it must first be objectified. This is exhibited in how "issues" are "framed" & "branded." Where struggle is commodity, allyship is currency. Ally has also become an identity, disembodied from any real mutual understanding of support.The term ally has been rendered ineffective and meaningless.

Accomplices Not Allies

ac·com·plice/noun: ***accomplice****;/plural noun:* ***accomplices***
a person who helps another commit a crime.

There exists a fiercely unrelenting desire to achieve total liberation, with the land and, together.

At some point there is a "we", and we most likely will have to work together. This means, at the least, formulating mutual understandings that are not entirely antagonistic, otherwise we may find ourselves, our desires, and our struggles, to be incompatible. There are certain understandings that may not be negotiable. There are contradictions that we must come to terms with and certainly we will do this on our own terms.But we need to know who has our backs, or more appropriately: who is with us, at our sides?

The risks of an ally who provides support or solidarity (usually on a temporary basis) in a fight are much different than that of an accomplice. When we fight back or forward, together, becoming complicit in a struggle towards liberation, we are accomplices. Abolishing allyship can occur through the criminalization of support and solidarity.

While the strategies and tactics of asserting (or abolishing depending on your view) social power and political power may be diverse, there are some hard lessons that could bear not repli-

cating. Consider the following to be a guide for identifying points of intervention against the ally industrial complex.

Salvation aka Missionary Work & Self Therapy

Allies all too often carry romantic notions of oppressed folks they wish to "help." These are the ally "saviors" who see victims and tokens instead of people.

This victimization becomes a fetish for the worst of the allies in forms of exotification, manarchism, 'splaining, POC sexploitation, etc. This kind of relationship generally fosters exploitation between both the oppressed and oppressor. The ally and the allied-with become entangled in an abusive relationship. Generally neither can see it until it's too late. This relationship can also digress into co-dependency which means they have robbed each other of their own power. Ally "saviors" have a tendency to create dependency on them and their function as support. No one is here to be saved, we don't need "missionary allies" or pity.

Guilt is also a primary ally motivating factor. Even if never admitted, guilt & shame generally function as motivators in the consciousness of an oppressor who realizes that they are operating on the wrong side. While guilt and shame are very powerful emotions, think about what you're doing before you make another community's struggle into your therapy session. Of course, acts of resistance and liberation can be healing, but tackling guilt, shame, and other trauma require a much different focus, or at least an explicit and consensual focus. What kind of relationships are built on guilt and shame?

Exploitation & Co-optation

Those who co-opt are only there to advance self interests (usually it's either notoriety or financial). As these "allies" seek to impose their agenda, they out themselves. The 'radical' more militant-than-thou "grassroots" organizers are keen on seeking out "sexy" issues to co-opt (for notoriety/ego/super ally/most radical ally) and they set the terms of engagement or dictate what struggles get amplified or marginalized irregardless of whose homelands they're operating on. The nonprofit establishment or non-profit industrial complex (NPIC) also seeks out "sexy" or "fundable" issues to co-opt and exploit as these are ripe for the grant funding that they covet. Too often, Indigenous liberation struggles for life and land, by nature, directly confront the entire framework to which this colonial & capitalist society is based on. This is threatening to potential capitalist funders so some groups are forced to compromise radical or liberatory work for funding, others become alienated and further invisibilized or subordinated to tokenism. Co-opters most often show up to the fight when the battle has already escalated and it's a little too late.

These entities almost always propose trainings, workshops, action camps, and offer other specialized expertise in acts of patronization. These folks are generally paid huge salaries for their "professional" activism, get over-inflated grants for logistics and "organizational capacity building", and struggles may become further exploited as "poster struggles" for their funders. Additionally, these skills most likely already exist within the communities or they are tendencies that need only be provoked into action.

These aren't just dynamics practiced by large so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs), individuals are adept at this self-serving tactic as well.

Co-optation also functions as a form of liberalism. Allyship can perpetuate a neutralizing dynamic by co-opting original liberatory intent into a reformist agenda.

Certain folks in the struggles (usually movement "personalities") who don't upset the ally establishment status quo can be rewarded with inclusion in the ally industry.

Self proclaiming/confessional Allies

All too often folks show up with an, "I am here to support you!" attitude that they wear like a badge. Ultimately making struggles out to feel like an extracurricular activity that they are getting "ally points" for. Self-asserted allies may even have anti-oppression principles and values as window dressing. Perhaps you've seen this quote by Lilla Watson on their materials: "If you come here to help me, you're wasting your time. If you come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." They are keen to posture, but their actions are inconsistent with their assertions.

Meaningful alliances aren't imposed, they are consented upon. The self-proclaimed allies have no intention to abolish the entitlement that compelled them to impose their relationship upon those they claim to ally with.

Parachuters

Parachuters rush to the front lines seemingly from out-of-nowhere. They literally move from one hot or sexy spot to the next. They also fall under the "savior" & "self-proclaimed" categories as they mostly come from specialized institutes, organizations, & think-tanks. They've been through the trainings, workshops, lectures, etc., they are the "experts" so they know "what is best." This paternalistic attitude is implicit in the structures (non-profits, institutes, etc) these "allies" derive their awareness of the "issues" from. Even if they reject their own non-profit programming, they are ultimately reactionary, entitled, and patronizing, or positioning with power-over, those they proclaim allyship with. It's structural patronization that is rooted in the same dominion of hetero-patriarchal white supremacy.

Parachuters are usually missionaries with more funding.

Academics, & Intellectuals

Although sometimes directly from communities in struggle, intellectuals and academics also fit neatly in all of these categories. Their role in struggle can be extremely patronizing. In many cases the academic maintains institutional power above the knowledge and skill base of the community/ies in struggle. Intellectuals are most often fixated on un-learning oppression. These lot generally don't have their feet on the ground, but are quick to be critical of those who do.

Should we desire to merely "unlearn" oppression, or to smash it to fucking pieces, and have it's very existence gone?

An accomplice as academic would seek ways to leverage resources and material support and/or betray their institution to further liberation struggles. An intellectual accomplice would strategize with, not for and not be afraid to pick up a hammer.

Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers seek power over, not with, others. They are known for the tactics of controlling and/or withholding information, resources, connections, support, etc. Gatekeepers come from the outside and from within. When exposed they are usually rendered ineffective (so long as there are effective accountability/responsibility mechanisms).

Gatekeeping individuals and organizations, like "savior allies," also have tendency to create dependency on them and their function as support. They have a tendency to dominate or control.

Navigators & Floaters

The "navigating" ally is someone who is familiar or skilled in jargon and maneuvers through spaces or struggles yet doesn't have meaningful dialogue (by avoiding debates or remaining silent) or take meaningful action beyond their personal comfort zones (this exists with entire organizations too). They uphold their power and, by extension, the dominant power structures by not directly attacking them.

"Ally" here is more clearly defined as the act of making personal projects out of other folk's oppression. These are lifestyle allies who act like passively participating or simply using the right terminology is support. When shit goes down they are the first to bail. They don't stick around to take responsibility for their behavior. When confronted they often blame others and attempt to dismiss or delegitimize concerns.Accomplices aren't afraid to engage in uncomfortable/unsettling/challenging debates or discussions.

Floaters are "allies" that hop from group to group and issue to issue, never being committed enough but always wanting their presence felt and their voices heard. They tend to disappear when it comes down to being held accountable or taking responsibility for fucked up behavior. Floaters are folks you can trust to tell the cops to "fuck off" but never engage in mutual risk, constantly put others at risk, are quick to be authoritarian about other peoples over stepping privileges, but never check their own. They basically are action junkie tourists who never want to be part of paying the price, the planning, or the responsibility but always want to be held up as worthy of being respected for "having been there" when a rock needed throwing, bloc needs forming, etc.

This dynamic is also important to be aware of for threats of infiltration. Provocateurs are notorious floaters going from place to place never being accountable to their words or actions. Infiltration doesn't necessarily have to come from the state, the same impacts can occur by "well meaning" allies. It's important to note that calling out infiltrators bears serious implications and shouldn't be attempted without concrete evidence.

Acts of Resignation

Resignation of agency is a by-product of the allyship establishment. At first the dynamic may not seem problematic, after all, why would it be an issue with those who benefit from systems of oppression to reject or distance themselves from those benefits and behaviors (like entitlement, etc) that accompany them? In the worst cases, "allies" themselves act paralyzed believing it's their duty as a "good ally." There is a difference between acting for others, with others, and for one's own interests, be explicit.

You wouldn't find an accomplice resigning their agency, or capabilities as an act of "support." They would find creative ways to weaponize their privilege (or more clearly, their rewards of being part of an oppressor class) as an expression of social war. Otherwise we end up with a bunch of anti-civ/primitivist appropriators or anarcho-hipsters, when saboteurs would be preferred.

Suggestions for some ways forward for anti-colonial accomplices:

Allyship is the corruption of radical spirit and imagination, it's the dead end of decolonization.The ally establishment co-opts decolonization as a banner to fly at its unending anti-oppression gala. What is not understood is that decolonization is a threat to the very existence of settler "allies." No matter how liberated you are, if you are still occupying Indigenous lands you are still a colonizer.

Decolonization (the process of restoring Indigenous identity) can be very personal and should be differentiated, though not disconnected, from anti-colonial struggle.

The work of an accomplice in anti-colonial struggle is to attack colonial structures & ideas.

The starting point is to articulate your relationship to Indigenous Peoples whose lands you are occupying. This is beyond acknowledgment or recognition. This can be particularly challenging for "non-federally recognized" Indigenous Peoples as they are invisiblized by the state and by the invaders occupying their homelands.

It may take time to establish lines of communication especially as some folks may have already been burnt by outsiders. If you do not know where or how to contact folks, do some ground work, research (but don't rely on anthropological sources, they are euro-centric), and pay attention. Try to more listening than speaking and planning.

In long-term struggles communication may be ruptured between various factions, there are no easy ways to address this. Don't try to work the situation out, but communicate openly with consideration of the points below.

Sometimes other Indigenous Peoples are "guests" on other's homelands yet are tokenized as the Indigenous representatives for the "local struggles". This dynamic also perpetuates settler colonialism. A lot of people also assume Indigenous folks are all on the same page "politically," we're definitely not.

While there may be times folks have the capacity and patience to do so, be aware of the dynamics perpetuated by hand-holding.

Understand that it is not our responsibility to hold your hand through a process to be an accomplice.

Accomplices listen with respect for the range of cultural practices and dynamics that exists within various Indigenous communities.

Accomplices aren't motivated by personal guilt or shame, they may have their own agenda but they are explicit.

Accomplices are realized through mutual consent and build trust. They don't just have our backs, they are at our side, or in their own spaces confronting and unsettling colonialism. *As accomplices we are compelled to become accountable and responsible to each other, that is the nature of trust.*

Don't wait around for anyone to proclaim you to be an accomplice, you certainly cannot proclaim it yourself. You just are or you are not. The lines of oppression are already drawn. Direct

action is really the best and may be the only way to learn what it is to be an accomplice. We're in a fight, so be ready for confrontation and consequence.

If you are wondering whether to get involved with or to support an organization:

- Be suspect of anyone and any organization who professes allyship, decolonization work, and/or wears their relationships with Indigenous Peoples as at badge
- Use some of the points above to determine primary motives. Look at the organizations funding. Who is getting paid? How are they transparent? Who's defining the terms? Who sets the agenda? Do campaigns align with what the needs are on the ground?

Are there local grassroots Indigenous People directly involved with the decision making?

A Few Notes on the Social Machine – by Xander

No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing in any branch of industry, or training the rising race in the path of education: in a word, whether it be applied to the purposes of perpetual prisons in the room of death, or prisons for confinement before trial, or penitentiary houses, or houses of correction, or work-houses, or manufactories, or mad-houses, or hospitals, or schools."

-Jeremy Bentham, Panopticon Letter I [1787]

Make no mistake about it, we are being consumed. This eating and digestion of life – human and nonhuman – is perpetuated by a complex and diffuse system of inculcation and complicity that has been referred to as the social machine.1 Comprised of states and their economic systems, their statistics, institutions, sprawling urban and sub-urbanism; it is the university system, it is the police, and it is you and me. It is the machine that tries to harness and ingest everything it touches.

The social machine preserves itself by consuming, reconfiguring life by establishing and proliferating the colony system. The social machine is the heart of colonization and is not limited to a particular place or time, but is the projection of a specific relationship and vision that seeks to integrate and consume all life, past and present. Colonization needs loyal adherents, managers, and the continuous manufacturing of the timeless Other – as the object of charity, fear, or a combination of the two. This othering takes the form of the classic dichotomies: civilized/savage, legal/illegal, proletariat/non-proletariat, and the state's favorite : criminal/citizen. These divisions are important. They form the rhythm of this machine and the intensity of monotonous suffering that conditions both our mentalities and the ground beneath us. The social machine, meanwhile, manufactures a system of perpetual double-binds, leaving nearly no room for escape, only endless rearticulations of freedom.

Discussion of the social machine raises the centuries-old question, phrased differently over time: how is colonial rule – or the industrial state – established, maintained and continuously able to grow? Here are a few notes from a perspective that seeks to challenge the positive social investments of this machine; investments that seek to confuse, implicate, and create self-identification in people through its colonizing processes.

The heart of the social machine is industrialism: the material form of capitalism in all of its divisive variants including liberal, planned, command, and neoliberal economies. All of these economies are a substantial part of this amorphous machine operated by "developed" and "developing" countries and people alike.2 The social machine is big, it's everywhere, and it is trying to implicate and consume all of us into its gears. However, this is not to say it is omnipresent – it can be destroyed. This destruction requires intimate personal reflection on the structures around us and on the quality of life that the social machine enables; finding friends3 that want to take on a joyfully anarchist praxis; and, at the least, reflecting and conversing on the failures of organizing (it is often the reproduction of oppressive state organizational forms and relationships in organizing work that leads to activist burn-out). This might look like people adopting a different set of values (possibly anarchist) that will enable them to fight where they stand on their terms against the multiplicity of continuous attacks by the machine, its appendages, and its army of lemmings.

The social machine formed with Civilization and advanced with the mechanical philosophers and their utilitarianism that sought to create an "ideal perfection" for society.4 Jeremy Bentham, among others, articulated an obsession with a utopian order of geometric and moral perfection.5 Bentham's solution to social "disorders" was the Panopticon, a guard town with blacked-out windows. More importantly, it was to be God's eye making people feel they were under constant surveillance by the guard tower, the doctor, the factory foreman, or the teacher. Inspired by military planning from previous centuries, the Panopticon or more accurately panopticism is a technology that possesses the values and logic at the center of the social machine. As Bentham outlined, "the person to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection," and "the underkeepers or inspectors, the servants and subordinates of every kind, will be under the same irresistible control with respect to the head keeper or inspector, as the prisoners or other persons to be governed are with respect to them.6"

The crucial point is this: in what other instance as in this, will you see the interests of the governor and the governed in this important particular, so perfectly confounded and made one? – those of the keeper and the prisoners – those of the medical curator with those of the patients? Clean or unclean, safe or unsafe, he runs the chance that they do: if he lets them poison themselves, he lets them poison him. Encompassed on all sides by a multitude of persons, whose good or bad condition depends upon himself, he stands as a hostage in his own hands for the salubrity of the whole.

While a liberal ideal, panopticism is trying to create a system and social terrain of mutual dependency – a hostage-making system in which everyone is implicated and brought under the system's order. Never forget, this internal control was introduced to people through abduction and overt violence. The emerging police apparatus would abduct anyone it saw as a vagrant, idler, or social enemy of the church, state, and its growing economy; an economy that would abduct and torture people into working. This process required the division and commodification of people and, with the rise of enclosures, the land itself.7 Bentham, among others, knew very well that this could only be sustained with dependency: "What other master is there that can reduce his workmen, if idle, to a situation next to starving, without suffering them to go elsewhere?8" This is what propels the social machine.

After abducting people, beating them, and burning or seizing their homes, the social machine needs to create enchanting and pleasant carrots after the stick of repression. These carrots could come in the form of new homes, sewage systems, education, computers, or even social relations.

The rise of what are now known as counterinsurgency warfare techniques – attempts to turn relationships into levers, to transform flirtations, touch, and charismatic personalities into weapons of integration and pacification – has allowed the social machine to deepen its hold. The general point of this conquest and colonization is to create a situation of dependency. Dependency must also install addiction.9 What could be better for the industrial order than people's perceived need for and addiction to its sweets? What keeps the corporate careerists, police, and doctors going other than the mythology of their own importance, their complete and utter dependence on work, and the cheap and expensive drugs ranging from donuts – hydrogenated oils, high doses of sugar, salt, etc – to mind numbering pharmaceuticals, to favorite television shows? In the social machine we are all rendered hunkies and prostitutes and our jumping between these roles is what keeps us and this machine going.

The social machine needs you to learn to endure and even like your work. Bentham knew that creating the possibility to allow work into the prison or workhouse that was not completely miserable could reinforce the positive lure of self-management. He writes: "But I neither see the great danger nor the great harm of a man's liking his work too well; and how well soever he might have liked it elsewhere, I should still less apprehend his liking the thought of having it to do there.10" Once you can accept the work introduced to you and even better identify with it, and more so learn to derive meaning from it, you have been assimilated into the social machine and maybe there is room for your comfortable survival managing and policing others to keep with the perfection of things. Isn't this the lesson of society and our personal goal of survival? Isn't this how thoughtful and dangerous people end up cogs in the university system? Often, 'we' – individuals – fail to find the space or alternatives we need, especially if the alternative is a circle of people who talk past each other and establish informal group hierarchies with any number of techniques to cut down and guilt each other, until we eventually integrate full-time into these gears – at least temporarily. So, I anticipate the droning mumbles and squeals as I challenge my own and everyone else's pleasures and social identities intertwined in this machine, is this assimilation all bad?

Dependency, addiction, and self-management seek to establish what has been called "administrative decentralization,11" or the decentralization of hierarchical systems. It is the epitome of self-identification and belief in a particular often unspoken, set of values that spread the consumption process of the social machine. Many libertarians and anarcho-syndicalists fall into this trap. With the right ingredients (roughly one part captured imagination, two parts addiction, and one part dependency) one can flip the slogan: "There is no authority but yourself" on its head to entail managing our own slavery with self-identification, no longer requiring intense coercion. Panopticism seeks, by any means necessary, to have people internalize a particular kind of authority that uses dependency and addiction as the criteria for punishment and reward. Administrative decentralization is the autonomous set of complex gears (social processes of consumption and production) that operate in synchronization with other complex gears within the framework of the state, while providing degrees of autonomy, feedback, and a sense of real and imagined freedom.

Once people have internalized this logic and are dependent on the colonial system, they have drunk the Kool-Aid of acquiescence and their pastimes, hopes, dreams, and discourse are predetermined, propagated by the media-industrial complex. On the other hand, if an individual is to take up an insurrectionary or anti-civilization disposition then they are faced with a series of

double-binds. I do not mean to suggest these two camps – drinking Kool-Aid and insurrectionary dispositions – are mutually exclusive. They are all part of the same tumble dryer.

Double-binds are the way this machine protects itself and holds everyone hostage. The entire social machine is an elaborate system ready to integrate and implicate everyone, by any means necessary. It makes layer upon layer of double-binds that send the message to those that are colonized and being colonized that "if you act against this machine in part or in whole in a tangible and material way then you will not make a single difference and you will be imprisoned or killed." While the other side of this double-bind is: "yes, things are really bad; people are dying, species extinct, and collapse looming, but you can change this machine, make it friendly, more efficient and representative of the people." And of course there is the "who gives a shit" discourse. In short, this double-bind tries to capture the hearts and minds of people. It captures their hearts by "persuading people their best interests are served by [the social machine's] success" and minds by "convincing them that [the social machine] can protect them, and that resisting [it] is pointless.12"

To engage in the political system formally is to accept the systematic double-binds that prolong this social machine of death – Obama or Romney? – the machine continues. This is why anti-politics is advisable, this is why despite our formal and informal degrees in political science we need to destroy power and reclaim our own. We must take back our colonized hearts and minds and see past the clever trick of administrative decentralization, present even in some attempts at decolonization, which only maintains the social machine despite its rotten racism/patriarchy/classism/industrialism.

This double-bind could not be made more apparent than in humanity's total integration and dependency on cybernetics and logistics. Logistics are the veins of the social machine and the life blood of humans as we shuffle from box to box – house to bus to work to bar to park to supermarket to restaurant to movie. Almost the entire existence of the modern industrial human is resigned to a series of boxes that are completely dependent on logistics. The more this machine grows, the more vulnerable it feels, the more it wants to take, the closer it mixes our lives with its own structures, making us dependent on transportation, lights, air, food, sanitation, internet, the list goes on, but after all this machine serves us, right? That is why we are paralyzed by traffic, work, television, junk food, expensive hobbies, and booze. It is through logistics, the third order of the art of war, that dependency and addiction merge into one. Proliferating sicknesses that come in the form of entitlement, narcissism, insensitivity, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, industrial poisoning, elaborate drug habits and crippling dietary concerns – this machine is war, subtle and permanent.

This extreme dependence is making us needy, legislating and enforcing helplessness to spread the social machine, if we let it happen. On the other hand, this dependence creates mind-boggling entitlement and self-identification with the thing that is killing us. If it's not directly and immediately to the point at which our reference to health is completely distorted, there are more of us ill than healthy, and emulation takes hold. Likewise, modern idleness takes the form of poison, insecurity, and dependency on machines that require specific and specialized modes of work. Either way and no matter what your take on these issues, the more we attack the logistics that propel this machine, the more we are attacking ourselves and our comforts – a double-bind, to say the least.

The social machine has a place for rich and poor, criminal and citizen, woman and man, black and brown, and any variety of sexualities. Some positions in this machine are less miserable than

others, but that is exactly what keeps us eating each other while this machine is eating all of us. This machine loves it when we love our work, especially after five hundred years of disciplining us into loving it. Add some technophilia/techno-addiction to this work, and it appears unstoppable, but to maintain this regime of work, this particular order of perfection, it is bleeding us, our values, and our ways of life.

Let's not forget that cable television was developed for three principle reasons in the 1960s:

1) to act "as a medium for citizen participation,"

2) "citizen-government communication," and

3)"violence prevention" against widespread urban rebellion and race riots.13 These three rationales had one endgame: to secure internal state economic interests in developing a technology that would promote social integration through constant propaganda for national politics, manufactured debates and options, and, later, enchanting entertainment that served the overall purpose of social domestication and pacification. We have been taught not only to take the carrots, but to fight for them, and see them as our own. When we work to create or obtain these enchanting carrots, it is within an architecture that has built-in trap doors – or double binds.

If people are to ever going to begin to uproot this thing and begin to genuinely decolonize – acknowledging the rotten form of architecture and organization – it mean s not taking the bait, or at the least holding a tension against these technologies that are so good, so sweet and so pleasurable, so amazing it makes magic look like an outdated joke. It means seeing the social machine for what it is: a colonizing machine that seeks to consume everyone on its altar of progress – for its continued growth and development – turning hearts and minds into junky consumers whose agency is corralled into some form of prostitution. In short, maybe the only carrots we should eat are the ones we grow ourselves, and with our friends.

Soylent Green14 demonstrated one way industrial humans could start eating each other, but the social machine is designed to consume and perpetuate itself using every facet of our being – our spirit, our sexuality, our desires, and our actions. This negative set of concerns is not intended to be righteous or helpless, rather it intends to recognize the extent to which we are all being formed by this machine, some in much worse positions than others, but all of us still in it, taking its prescribed roles, scrapping for assimilation and work that is bearable if not pleasurable,15 searching for dignity in its architecture. Worse still, we may be forgetting how to live without this machine's services and style of work, how to enjoy free time without the insane plethora of "modern" conveniences.

This is a quandary I face and symptoms I experience and I share these notes:

1) The social machine is consuming all of us in different intensities.

2) It has been building an architecture over the centuries to keep people dependent and addicted.

3) It wants to induce the feelings of pleasure and positive investments.

4) Furthermore, it likes it when we enjoy our work.

5) Finally, we are a technology of this colonial process, rebuilding and spreading its mentality. One way to think about this latter point are those scary robots in sci-fi movies. Once they are blown, destroyed, and shattered into hundreds of pieces, people think they've won the struggle against the machine. They begin to talk, celebrate, and relax, and then the camera pans over to these shattered pieces on the ground. Slowly, they begin to wiggle, pieces start moving together, and wires start poking out and connecting back to one another to rebuild this super robot. It is this wiggle and piecing back together that the industrial human has been conditioned to serve,

acting as the social machine's reproductive technology and its feedback that will work out the kinks, improve growth, and reassemble it back together.

It is in these terms I think we should revisit the failed practice to take back our values and destroy the reproductive capacities of the social machine that we have been made to serve. Let's loot the social machine, take what we can, burn the rest, and be conscious about what will constitute its reproduction.

The old, and the new – by AJ

Having articulate and thoughtful politics about something that is currently ongoing is hard. Sacred truths that anarchists hold in common are rarely grasped immediately. Now-popular critiques become canonized in anarchist thought after the dust has settled, zines have been read, and books have been written, but not until then.

Technology is always uncharted territory. Having an analysis of it involves not only acknowledging that it produces anti-social behavior, something anarchists are overly-proficient in already, but theorizing specific ways it impacts our thoughts, behavior and perceptions. Experiencing new technology leaves impressions, which sit raw in the mind, producing vague emotions and thoughts, but rarely resulting in something which is easy to articulate. It usually takes many years for such experiences to settle in and become normalized before an understandable critique finds circulation through radical circles. By the time anarchists can explain the new alienation, it's become the old alienation of two Apple press conferences ago.

Combine this with the fact that in liberal democratic society it is easy to adopt popular rhetoric which, by design, appears to be consistent with our (and everyone else's) views. This sloganistic, talking-head rhetoric impedes thoughtful analysis and engulfs us in the empty marketplace of ideas which acts as a revolving door for stale critiques. Usually this occurs in the context of media-packaged 'issues' that are falsely presented as having two sides to them. In the past, this might have looked like something that NATO versus the Eastern Bloc, or North Vietnam against the United States. Maybe today it's gentrification versus impoverished inner-cities. Essentially meant to reflect the eternal "are you a liberal or a conservative?", these questions serve to hide perspectives that are hostile to the foundation on which the system stands. When we surrender to the pluralist mandate, we subsequently end up arguing on terms that are contrary to our radical values and goals.

Of particular interest to anarchists who read this publication is the debate over smartphones and how they impact our lives. To an anti-civ anarchists' initial delight, there exists in mainstream discourse an anti-tech position. This rhetoric is not very well articulated, and can most easily be summed up as disgust over perceived images of vain teenagers taking selfies, people immersed in their phones in public settings, and the urge to taking pictures of magnificent situations instead of directly experiencing them. Anarchists might hear these talking points and repeat them because they seem to be anti-tech.

The trap we're falling into here is that this is simply a pluralistic generational conflict, nothing more. It's the millennials versus the 'old-timers,' whose fetishization of their times is completely knee-jerk. It's one of the most enduring and least productive arguments of modern times. In consumer society each generation has new trends, fashions, and commodities that they define themselves by. This fuels a distancing between generations due to how quickly such things become

outdated and irrelevant by a new set of cultural artifacts that always targets the next generation of young people.

To take up the anti-tech position in these arguments is just to pick a side in this pluralistic divide. As the shiny new toys increasingly colonize more of daily life, younger generations consider them defining of themselves and their identities. They cling to them and defend them the same way every generation defends themselves against their elders. The same people who criticize selfie-vanity were likely called out by their parents decades ago for listening to music on headphones during time meant to be spent with family. They likely don't have any problems with seeing headphones worn in public.

Taking the "old-timers" argument may seem rational in that, as time passes, it appears technology colonizes more of our daily lives. One might say that the older generations' perspective could be a basis for more critical conversations about civilization, since their technology was less invasive and colonizing. The problem with this premise is the false assumption that anti-civ anarchists share similar motivations regarding the present generation's obsession with advanced technologies. Older generations long for 'the good ol' days' before smartphones, and by doing so reify the cliché rose-tinted glasses phenomenon. In these critiques of present-day technology, the technology and lifestyles of the past are celebrated nostalgically and without critique. This is something the younger generation points out, and they're justified in doing so. Instead of glancing at their smartphones on the bus, old-timers want walkmen and newspapers. They deplore people interacting on the internet in their own rooms and miss when the family would sit mindlessly around the television in the living room. Essentially, they don't have a problem with the public-private shift, or how increasingly the private is invading the public, just how the instruments of alienation have changed. The old-timer perspective is basically a combination of confusion of new mores, and disdain at being considered irrelevant. Nothing radical here.

Most situations that people experience in modern Western societies are boring and useless. The landscape of the world has been shaped in such a way that everything is efficient in making us consumers/workers/citizens, and as such the roles we find ourselves in do not promote social interaction or engagement. For example, in the supermarket waiting line one is separated from others by shopping carts, facing forward, with impulse purchase items to our right and left. There are so many commodities and hobbies marketed to us that there is few and few overlap in our interests as time goes on. If they do have something in common, it is their experience consuming the same spectacles like the newest season of a Netflix series. Social life has very little potential for meaningful interaction. We are in our own private worlds at home, and in public we have little to say to each other, if we are in a situation that facilitates us saying anything at all.

As products of western philosophy, we think that the things themselves must be the cause of anti-social behavior, but that's not getting to the root of why screens and the internet are so enticing. Like most things, smartphones are a cause, but they are also a result. Taking the above example, I think we can say with certainty that the uninteresting and meaningless situations of modern life, such as waiting in line at a supermarkets, helped create the smartphone. The smartphone is an improvement (from a capitalist perspective) on experiencing this miserable and mundane world. What was before merely boring can now be somewhat interesting. If we apply that formula everywhere and in every situation, then we can grasp the true purpose and meaning of the smartphone. It is this society's alleviation of the boredom and social atomization that it creates.

Asserting new technologies as the cause of modern alienation is only half of the appropriate critique. Technology in a consumer society comes into existence as an attempt at reforming an otherwise dreary or unappealing aspect of the form of life it creates. Smartphones are meant to relieve the boredom of late capitalism. Instant access to information and one's friends in addition to games and other entertainment means that one can now "live without dead time."

Maybe social life is now at the point for many people where the smartphone experience is more interesting and desirable than talking to people in real life. Maybe our culture is no more or less alienating than it was before, but new technologies merely make it more apparent – giving form to our anti-social conditioning. The interests, hobbies, and values that people have are becoming increasingly diverse, while the form-of-life prescribed to us under capitalism remains just the same. The internet is again both a cause and result of this fracturing. If the people on your Tumblr are just like you and you become just like them, then the people you are physically around lose their appeal. The internet is where you find people who share your interests, more than the physical world.

I agree with those who critique smart-phone society, but we need to approach these questions with a broader perspective. Civilization itself, with all its shiny new toys, should be destroyed. But lamenting over how alienating they are is pointless at best, especially if it takes the form of arguments and positions that actually affirm the real-life alienations that modern society throws at us every day. We should remember that the problem isn't just that people look down at their screens, but that there is increasingly little value in looking back up.

Memories of the ZAD

Quite briefly, the Z.A.D. is a struggle concerning the building of a dam in southern France, near Toulouse. Its construction would flood the valley to irrigate industrial farmers' land, growing large amount of corn for animal agriculture. This also implies the destruction of 13 acres of wetlands supposedly protected by law and would affect the ecological system of the valley. The dam was over-evaluated.

The contestation starts to build in 2011 with the creation of the Collectif pour la sauvegarde de la zone humide du Testet (Collective to save the wetlands of the Testet) that will end up playing an important role on the legal field. In 2012, a few legal institutions give an unfavorable opinion about the project, and as they're only consultative, no one cares. Surprisingly, the minister of Ecology cares, and refuses to sign the ministerial amendments. Unsurprisingly, the minister is dismissed, and the project revives. In October 2013, an informal group named "Tant qu'il y aura des bouilles" (literally, 'Til there'll be faces) joins the Collective. The occupation starts in the valley in different forms of squatting. In February, the place is evicted. End of August 2014, the valley is reoccupied, as deforestation starts. Machines cut, uproot, smash everything, and annihilate life on the surface and below.

I arrive on the 22nd of October, three days before the big manifestation that was called for on site:

AGAINST THE SIVENS DAM: Let's enroot the resistance! BIG MEETING Saturday 25th, October 2014 at midday. Let's bring back life to the Tester: constructions, workshops, plantations, debates, concerts... For more information: tantquilyauradesbouilles.wordpress.com

It is the first time I come. Many friends have arrived here before I and would share their stories and frustrations once we would reunite. I'm familiar with the atmosphere and the life at camp as I've spent most of the last 2 years at Notre Dame des Landes (NDDL).

So all I know on the struggle at this point it what I've been reading, and what I've been told.

On Site

There was a strong divergence on site about what methods should be employed to counter the works: strong enough to discourage a few to come here again or to set actions. There was a rich diversity of people composing the struggle, going from the young barricade holder to the mother of a 5-year-old and all you could imagine. This diversity, which was part of our force, was also a weakness. It brought a lot of debates, fights, and frustrations. We had to face the cultural, ideological, generational gaps between everyone. Not everybody was familiar with ecological resistance, political struggles, whatever we call the situation we were in, but many were full of certitudes and would try to convince others the way they think was more appropriate and should be followed by everyone. Pacifism and citizenism had a strong influence all along the struggle. Friends that preferred different methods got pointed out as "turbulents" and "dangerous". During actions, some people even denounced them to the cops as potential trouble. Insane situations that prevented me from coming, because friends couldn't be discreet in this situation, and cops could easily target them.

So once again come the questions: How do we compose together? How do we coordinate our differences. I believe we must find unity in diversity for it is one of our best weapons. With determination, then nothing could stop us.

So, as some would reject violence or more radical actions, as it would "only bring more violence," some others would reject "pacifists" and spit on their methods too. Only a few would consider that who cares what you are, pacifist or violent, 'cause we're all on the same fucking side. Amazing how this divides us and how everybody jumps into the trap it sets. Why don't we rather focus on how effective our actions are?

If indeed certain situations require certain more appropriate methods, it seemed that the way the struggle went until now was quite ineffective. The participation of THFS, the actions, and all that has been done brought positivity and brought a lot of individuals and the collective, but still, the situation was not in our favor at all. Machines continued to work, and trees continued to be cut.

There were about 30 to 50 people for the last two months. A lot of people started to arrive before the days of manifestation. Frustration grew into those who'd like to actually do something about the machines working less than two kilometers away. In camp, you could hear the machines, and see the dust flying as they would move. But so many trees had already been cut, that probably a lot of those on the site were exhausted. Cops illegally evicted camps, tents and squats, burning personal and collective belongings, IDs, instruments, tools, all kinds of resources, even piercing the water bottles and containers. CS gas, beatings, observing the destruction and being powerless about it. This is all that the life in these places involves. It takes a lot of resources. It is more intense than anything I've lived through before.

So the atmosphere was very exciting. Those working on the event were very busy and positive. Lots of good things going on, from writing signs to building toilets with bamboo, from delimiting

the humid zone and raising awareness on what plants and what protected species lived there, to cooking, welcoming newcomers, playing music, and all the activities it suggests.

The "Préfet," meaning the chief of police in the department, representing the state, announced that no police would be on site during the manifestation.

There, a kind of fort had been built, digging 10 to 15 feet deep with 100-foot long moats, with a fence and a portal to prevent an easy access to the machines. And so, on Friday afternoon, all the machines were brought somewhere outside the site. All that was left was only a generator and a construction site cabin, all guarded by three security personnel.

During the night, a group of thirty people came to the fort, and set the cabin and generator on fire without harming any of the guards. This event played a great role into what happened next. As lots of us felt that something had to happen with the construction site and the machines, that night, something did. There were no machines, and the construction was not compromised in any way. But we were not powerless anymore. We were determined. We were together, and we were a force.

So it's now Saturday, and more people arrive onsite. The weather is sunny and the mood is high. A lot of the newcomers don't know much about the situation on site, aside from what they've been reading on the website or the newspapers. So it's kind of strange to see this mass of supporters to the cause, mostly only here for 48 hours.

The riot cops, probably because of the night's event, are back on the construction site, close to the Fort, and now their presence raises a few questions. There was strictly nothing to protect, nor any risk to prevent. Nothing. Also, the Préfet had announced that no police would be here, so what were they doing onsite? I guess he didn't like the message that was sent.

And so, there were hundreds of riot cops, dozens of trucks. The police commander will later say that 2000 people were protesting passively when "100 to 150 anarchists, masked and dressed in black, threw incendiary devices" at the police.

The situation was extraordinary. On one part of the site, where the camp was, there was the "big meeting" happening. Hundreds of people bringing food, construction material, tools, tents, any kind of resources. People smiling, people chanting, reuniting, chatting, dancing, welcoming others and whatnot. But resonating into the whole valley, we could hear the detonation of the grenades being thrown two kilometers away. A really deep roar. A noise that you're not familiar with, something strong and terrifying. And so from where I was (meaning the camp), I was wondering what the fuck was happening to the other side of the site, wondering if my friends were OK. So I got some stuff and walked all the way to the "combat zone." Along the way I was crossing people that would go there, a beer in their hand like tourists, and others would come back, some a bit shocked, some a bit amused.

As I had lived through similarly extremely-tense situations before in Notre Dame des Landes, something was happening in my inner-self. As I was walking, all these half-forgotten feelings were merging back to the surface. Fucking war. Grenades, spray gas, rubber bullets, charges, helicopters flying over, recording everything. Anarchy in the valley. There were people, carefully standing away from the cops and the situation, just looking at it, while others were trying to… I don't know what they were trying to do. Bow they were there, as hundreds of people were gathering against this fucking dam and the world that comes with it. The police come with this world, so let's fight it! Something like that. I don't know, I wasn't there when the fight started. There's loads of recordings of the moment on the internet. Type "Affrontments Testet" for riot-porn.

There's people talking to the cops, people throwing random shit, people clowning, people being ineffective, people trying to be effective but wondering how to, people standing and watching…

I'll see only a single Molotov cocktail, the one that was necessary for the media to justify the violence of the police, only "replying to the extreme violence of the protestors." 700 grenades of all kinds will be thrown all along the afternoon and during the night, OF. The OF grenade is the kind of grenade that killed Rémi. I had experienced them before at NDDI, but I don't recall the cops using the grenade launcher to throw them. Now I still doubt about it, but what I had learned at NDDI is that it was forbidden to launch them, so they were compelled to throw them manually, shouting "F4" before. So you could expect them and you'd better run if you didn't want to get harmed. This time at Le Testet, cops would just launch them as they would launch spray gas. That was new to me and set a whole different atmosphere in the fight. You could only hear the grenade launcher "pop" as it would for any kind of grenade, but if the grenade didn't explode in the air and spill its five-spray pucks (like hockey picks) whatever, it meant it could just fall between your legs and explode. These grenades, while exploding, spread dozens of pieces of plastic or metal, that get stuck into your legs, genitals, wherever it can get. It's painful, hard to take out, and can seriously harm your tendons.

It was during the night that it was the most impressive. They would explode and provoke a mini nuclear-shroom-like-explosion. Again, the sound was terrible. Resonating into the whole balley. What did the birds think? According to the official report, during the night of the 25th to the 26th, in three hours, 298 grenades and 41 rubber bullets were shot. One is enough to lose your eye. A friend got shot in the genitals during fights in the summer. He'll never be a father. During the day, with the media and all, the rules are different than the night. The situation always differs, but those who carry the "flashball" like to aim for the head, the genitals, the knees and plexus, right where it hurts the most. However violent and impressive it was, it is far from the repression other countries are submitted to. I reckon that. I guess you could just get accustomed to it.

During the night, the police will never move from their positions. Little groups would try to worry the cops, but they were quite ineffective. Why were they so ineffective? I'd say because the majority of the people present would do nothing. They would just assist the situation, safely shouting back from the front, where only other protestors would hear, but not even the cops, to which the message is addressed. People far from being serious, returning to the camp once they got bored and continuing "the party".

No one thought about collecting rocks, bringing food and water, walkie-talkies, bring up gasoline, motivating those in front of the sound systems, not minding that grenades explode a kilometer away from the base. I think one reason to this is that a lot of "protestors" were not familiar with such a situation, they kept on being passive. I get that you don't want to risk yourself too close to the cops, because you could get arrested or get hurt by a grenade. But there were a shitload of things to do outside of that perimeter, and because no one was doing shit but only a determined few, these few were ineffective. The cops never really got worried, even though they must have been scared at some point. It must be strange to be in a valley of people hating you, throwing rocks at you, howling like wolves, lighting fires all over the valley, insulting you constantly, but it was more of a spectacle, otherwise we would have made them leave the site. I'm being very critical now, because I'm frustrated to see how powerless we generally are in these situations. I might develop that when I'll talk about my experience at NDDL in a future writing.

I wasn't on the same side where Rémi died, maybe I wasn't even there anymore, maybe I had left the combat zone. My memory's pretty confused. I can't remember the events chronologically

very well. I can picture the grenade that killed him, but maybe I just dreamt it. Anyway, it's Sunday morning, I'm at the camp site, it's about 11 AM. Someone shares a rumor, someone might have died yesterday night. No way, no fucking way. I try not to keep it in my head before being sure. There's no reason to give it importance while it is not confirmed. An hour passes, and we get the confirmation. Someone died. He was 21 years old. It could have been me, it could have been any one of us. It is us they killed. We decide to spread the word all over and meet at 1 PM, under the biggest tent. Before this I had to go into the woods. The intensity of the last 48 hours was a lot to process. Emotionally a mess, I walked among the trees, sat down and got some time for myself. Then I got back up, and went back to the valley. Everything had changed. Nothing would be the same anymore. They killed a man.

Right after the grenade exploded and took Rémi down, cops equipped with nightvision ordered to stop the use of OF grenades. They sprayed gas all over, turned the spotlight to where Rémi was, and for the first time in the night, got out of their perimeter and brought the body back to their trucks. A cop says "the guy is dead… this is way serious…", and adds "they must not know." Ten minutes after, a blue light appears, the ambulance. Total blackout, the cops turn all lights off. This lasts for 20 seconds. They turn the lights back on. The ambulance is gone.

Since Rémi died, all further construction work has been stopped. An inquiry was made to examine all details leading to his death. The police remained vague about how he died, even suggesting that he was carrying some bomb device in his bag that suddenly exploded, just so that they didn't have to admit that they killed him. They said "a protestor died yesterday night at Sivens." To us there was no doubt who was truly responsible.

So, the media repeated the cops' statement, that someone had died, so suddenly everybody heard about the dam construction and started considering it, but the cops had managed to lighten their responsibility in his death.

We were only a few hundred in the streets of Toulouse, one of France's biggest cities, to claim our rage. I got sad facing how few we were. How dew were were, actually realizing how important this was. The last protester that died in France was Malik Oussekine, in 1986.

He was killed by a group of cops named les voltigeurs (the acrobats), those who rode motorcycles. On had a bat, the other drove, and they beat up protestors after a demo. They beat Malik up so hard that he died. This no longer officially exists in the image that the police present to the public eye, although it does still exist in a different form. They don't ride motorcycles anymore.

So the project is off the record for some weeks. An E.U. commission opens an infraction procedure against France for neglecting the ecological consequences of the dam on the wetlands. The ecology minister claims that the project is a mistake, and that it should differ from the initial project to satisfy both parties involved. The most recent update we got is: there'll never be a dam where Rémi died. That they will not build what they first expected to. They're currently working on the procedure to evict the site. There's still pressure from those in favor of the dam.

Timeline of the ZAD

1970 - Inhabitants of Notre Dame des Landes (NDDL) and surrounding villages learn in the newspaper that there is an airport project planned for their area.

1972 – ADECA created, a local farmers association against the airport, project put on hold.

2000 – Project re-started.

2001 – ACIPA created, local people's association against the airport.

2007 – Les Rosiers squatted, first political anti-airport squat on the ZAD.

2009, August – Climate action camp, week of actions, debates, a group of locals, "the resisting inhabitants," invite people to stay and occupy to fight the airport. Ten people stay, squat "la Gaite" and start the occupation as a conscious strategy.

2009, Late – During a picnic at a worksite to protest drillings and earth samplings, a farmer and a squatter find all the earth samples, two weeks of work, and dump them on the ground. They are arrested and charged with "stealing the earth."

2010, August – First general assembly in NDDL, starting a period of more interaction with locals outside of the ones we knew already.

2010, Fall – VINCI named as contractor for the airport.

2010, November/December – Public inquiries in Notre Dame, a time for discussing with locals and also trying to block the inquiries from happening.

2011, February and All Year – Blocking Biotope (environmental studies company) at least a couple times a week, to take their equipment or make them leave etc, then people started doing actions at their offices, like daytime raids.

2011, May – Occupation of the Sabot (farm), first big collective public-callout-type occupation, made in conjunction with the Reclaim The Fields Network. People were encouraged to bring pitchforks.

2011, June – Earth sample drillings at the Rolandiere, whole crazy week of actions, the first time that it was like war. Big meetings in a barn lasting all night.

2011, July – Occupation of the airport in Nantes with a couple hundred people, fighting in the airport, first time the police really started hurting and arresting people.

2011, August – Socialist party (in power) caravan attacked in the afternoon while they were campaigning, caravan destroyed, 4 arrested.

2011, September – Tree occupation in a park in the middle of the city to "bring the ZAD to Nantes" and be able to discuss with people. Violently evicted, 35 arrests.

2011, Fall – Radio Klaxon created, the pirate radio of the ZAD, (squatting the radio waves of VINCI) operates out of a treehouse a couple nights a week. It becomes a vital mode of communication during the evictions, and is emitting all the time, only to be destroyed by internal conflict in the radio group in the spring of 2013.

2012, March – Biggest demo in Nantes until then, 8-10,000 people, collective organization between different parts of the movement. ACIPA, squatters, Greenpeace, political parties, etc.

2012 – Repression! At least one trial every month, and at the demo outside the trial at least one person arrested every time, meaning always more trials and less energy for more offensive things. Lots of people questioning if they would stay or not.

"Remember when the judge used to come every Tuesday? Oh yeah that was 2012. And the Action Samba would always go play? Yeah, and just kind of chase him around, annoy the police a bit. But I feel like we used to talk about it every Monday, like ok, what are we going to do for the judge tomorrow?

"It's funny to imagine the police driving down the road. I remember getting pulled over on my bike and harassed all the time."

"I remember building my treehouse and getting pulled over with my bike trailer full of beans, and they passed all the time in la Saulce, like you would say, oh yeah, there's a cop car passing again. You would see them almost daily. Now it's unimaginable."

2012, Summer – Lots of international meetings/convergences, there was an an intersquat, a skillshare, that got interrupted in the middle to go squat a house that was getting boarded up and then I don't think there were any more discussions.

2012, October – Noise Fest. The party them was to have everyone dance on the ground, to flatten it to build a new cabin. *"Ah yeah, where everyone was on LSD?" "I think so, I mostly remember that everyone was fucked up but me. LSD is not a good drug for stompy dancing."*

2012, October 16th to November 7th – Evictions.

2012, November 17th – Reoccupation demo, 40,000 people come to rebuild and build a village (la Chateigne) in a day.

2012, November 24th – Military police come back for a final eviction and stay, occupying all entrances, exits and crossroads, 24/7 until April, asking for ID several times a day, randomly beating and arresting people, forcing everyone to walk around the crossroads through the mud while being followed with spotlights. They are ambushed from time to time.

"The first Thursday meeting – which one? The first one after evictions, that huge messy meeting when we were like, right, ok this is a Thursday meeting, and it was kind of horrible but also a turning point, when we decided that we were going to re-establish some kind of stable idea od what the ZAD was. Because there were so many people coming and going all the time, it just seemed crazy to have an inhabitants meeting."

Post-eviction wave of successful and united actions of any attempts to further the airport project, strong period when we could do actions with hundreds of people, including local farmers, at night, cause lots of damage, and not face very much legal threats.

2013, April – Seme ta ZAD demo to start new agricultural projects on the ZAD (all the old gardens and collective fields having been bulldozed). The police leave the crossroads for the first time, there is a huge party with all kinds of different people for two days in the crossroads, then people find the police one kilometer away and go attack them. They immediately take back the crossroads with extreme violence, some cops get beaten or set on fire, lots of comrades get hurt.

Agriculture becomes an important part of everyday life and also of political organizing. Most agricultural projects operate out of Bellevue, a house squatted by local farmers.

2014, February – Demo in Nantes, 50-60,000 people, the police block the path of the demo and it turns quickly into a riot. Giant paper-mache tractor puppet of a Mohawked Salamander (endangered species that is one of the legal reasons for protecting the ZAD). Police station set on fire, tourist and public transport offices destroyed.

2014, April – Disagreements between people who want forest to grow back and people who want to harvest hay in the fields to support other struggles. Several long days of meetings, with the people of "the East" making a "non-motorized zone", effectively dividing the ZAD. Maybe there are too many nuances to put in a timeline, but it was definitely a turning point.

2014, June/July – Repression and trials following February demo.

2014, October/November – Remi Fraisse killed by the police at the ZAD due Testet, followed by three demonstrations/riots in Nantes over the course of 2 weeks.

Transmission from the ZAD de Notre Dame

What follows is the transcript of a conversation between Ana, Moonbeam, Sarah and Gaia, four participants in the ZAD de Notre Dame reflecting on their experiences within that struggle.

G: Ok, lessons learned – it's really easy to be united when the police are evicting us.

All: Yeah, surprisingly so, yeah.

S: Yeah, it's really easy to be united with each other but also to get people on our side, generally. Like the media's a lot more sympathetic with us…

G: That you get local farmers saying things like "come and get us."

A: And with this kind of support, and especially local support during evictions, I found it quite surprising how unpredictable it could be, the support, and not only local but farther away, networks of comrades, etc, and how also it was partly years and years of building up communications and stuff, of preparing for evictions, alarm lists, reoccupation demo… And we felt so unprepared before evictions, but partly it was due to the work that was done before, and partly things you can't really anticipate so much, like how many people are coming from the villages around, and how much it really does touch people, and you never realized before, you thought it could be great. But you do some general assemblies and put invitations in everyone's mailbox but not many people come, and then if evictions are happening or a strong moment like this, for me that was really… Wow.

And for me that was something that you couldn't really count on before, but then you can't totally exclude it either. That this is possible… and also a lesson it it's actually putting lots of energy into things, even if you don't really feel they're working out so well, or trying to imagine the scenario of evictions and thinking, *"Whoa there's so many points where it can fail…"* For example, at the end the communication thing worked so super good, and there's lots of things that got put together last minute also, and it could have not worked if they decided to completely cut radio and mobile signals, and it could have not been possible, but at the end it was possible, and worked super great.

M: And even if they cut all the communications, everyone was walking back and forth all the time, I mean it would have been a big problem if they cut the communications, but there were people crossing each other all the time on foot in the fields, and then there was E [local woman] on a horse… ah that was the best part of the forages [June 2011], E on a horse making the rounds and yelling at the cops.

G: Methods to successfully resist an eviction include: having loads and loads of people, being spread out across 8 kilometers by 2 kilometers, having police that don't come with that many people, having years to prepare and knowing the date beforehand…

M: The mud helped a lot though, because they couldn't run in the mud, and would think twice before chasing us through the mud.

S: Maybe that's one thing we learned, gendarmes; not very equipped to run in mud. (*laughs*)

M: And afraid of the forest – like one time with a couple of people making animal noises hiding behind trees and they felt unsafe and left. Oh, maybe that was against Biotope1… And also during evictions, a few people with slingshots in the big forest making noises and the cops just fucked off because they weren't comfortable… they got more comfortable though.

S: I think they got a lot more comfortable when there's 1,000 cops in the forest. They weren't good at walking in the forest though, they fell over a lot.

A: I think it played a lot into our advantage that in the beginning of the evictions, for weeks they were more in this thing of not really arresting people, not really being super offensive, like hurting people. It more started with the attack on the Chat-teigne and the eviction of the big forest, the last eviction of the forest, and before that I don't think they really hurt people badly…

G: But did that help us?

A: Well, it helped in the way that a lot of things were possible, like at the Sabot and around that area, people fighting back against the cops, it would have been still possible with the arrests, but I think it was this thing of OK – you throw all kinds of stuff at them, and they shoot back tear gas grenades and flashballs, well maybe flashballs came later. I don't remember exactly, but mostly teargas, teargas, teargas and then feeling like they hold their position (the police) and don't actually come and get anyone. Like they already have trouble in other parts of the ZAD, just keeping their line, and in that waty I think it helped that lots of people joined this quite offensive resistance around the Sabot. And same with other places, like the barricade situations that were getting quite a lot of people on board. I don't know if it changed in the moment when there were cops disguised in black-bloc that arrested people on a barricade, it was in a time when there were less (manned) barricades but there were still some near the far west and Sabot and stuff.

S: Yeah and also I feel like they chose that tactic, going for two places at once, so there wouldn't be loads of people in one place, so if they've got people in the Sabot when they're not really trying to evict it then they can evict the big forest more easily.

M: And when people tried to leave the Sabot like to make a demo to the Planchettes or go to other places, they were violently and quickly pushed back, which showed that keeping people stuck in the path of the Sabot was to distract them.

G: And anyways, once they started using force, well maybe not arresting, well that was good for them in that it got people scared of being on barricades, but once they started using stronger weapons and more scary eviction tactics, that got loads of bad media and loads of public support for the struggle.

A: That was probably the turning point in evictions.

G: Yeah, why they gave up.

A: And then they couldn't get it under control, the area.

M: And I still think that the mud played a big role, like the machine that was destroying my house, and V's house, it got stuck in the mud several times, and they had to have another one come pull it out, and I heard of other houses where the same thing happened. And places like the Far West and the Gare were protected because they didn't want to lose their machines, have them bubble under the surface, never to be seen again.

Evictions for me changed how I saw… well I was always really anti-journalist, because I felt like whatever we had to say that was important, they were never actually gonna print, they would only print what was possible to recuperate. Like they're gonna print how we eat communally and how we compost our shit.

And they're not gonna detail the political positions that we hold, or our critiques of hierarchy or capitalism. And so I was always anti-journalist, because I felt that if we used them to pass a message, they wouldn't be able to transmit it because what we had to say was directly threatening to their job and social position, so what was the point? And then in evictions, well, I still have the same opinions about journalists, but seeing the difference that they made in publicizing what was happening, made me re-think the utility of talking to them. Also because most of my comrades felt similarly towards journalists and so it was the people that I head the least political affinity with talking to the media, presenting an image that I felt was boring and liberal and lifestyle centered, so I figured if people are gonna talk to them, I might as well do it too.

A: But partly it was us talking to them, and partly it was just them coming, filming, and putting it in the newspaper. And it did change public opinion or whatever, and it's seen as a

danger. What I think they wanted to avoid in the beginning with evictions was that it becomes such a big thing, but also the fact that there were so many people that were there and they kind of had to make media coverage on it, and also so much was happening that you could make daily headlines with it, pages and pages in the newspaper, and even without us talking to them, they already made a big media coverage.

But there were actually places for different ways of doing, like I had a urinary tract infection and was feeling super tried for two weeks, and it was possible to still do things even being down or sick or tired, and have a place, like a role – not necessarily a warm nice sleeping place, I mean I was still sleeping in the hay in the barn with everybody else, but that there was space for not being full-on every day, and knowing there are still all these people around, and everyone gives what they can when they can. It was only ten people, and so you have the feeling that you have to be full-on, if not you can't be there. And maybe it's a fucked up logic and we should put it into question anyway, but the fact that there were so many people and the infrastructure worked so well, it made it possible to step back sometimes.

S: I feel like when we had debriefings after evictions that the thing that nearly everybody said was *"I felt really bad because I wasn't being useful enough," "This was happening somewhere else and there was nothing I could do," "I didn't know what I could do to be useful,"* and all the people that I thought were the most on it, and feeling bad that you were not doing as useful things as them, were in this meeting saying "I felt bad because I wasn't being useful" and it was really telling.

G: And so what other lessons did we learn… [*in ironic voice*] that diversity brings conflict…

M: Oh we didn't talk about the hay. Like the field of disagreement.

G: Well we learned that it's really difficult to organize when you're a completely fluctuating group of people that never show up to the same meetings.

S: Especially when half of them hate meetings…

G: And are in political disagreement with the act of organizing. But that's kind of obvious, maybe it's not a useful lesson to many people.

But in a way, I think it showed that we weren't really in agreement on the main things, that we agreed upon…some people were like "But I came to save nature, and to save nature we need to turn this field back into a forest," and some people said "We came to resist an airport, and to do that we need to support the farmers in struggle as much as possible," and other people said, "We see the ZAD as a possibility, and a place for doing social experiments, including cultivating the land and trying to feed ourselves," and there were all these perspectives that weren't compatible.

S: I think it's also that all of our conflicts are in the open, like I don't think we have more disagreements than you would expect from a group of people that all came together for kind of a common objective, but for lots of different motivations… I feel like, the way that it happened and the way that it is, living here, with the ways of communicating between people, even if we think that we don't communicate that much, I feel like compared to a village with the same number of people, we actually know each other and our points of disagreement quite well, and I feel like that's got something to do with it, that you actually know what everyone else is doing, you hear about it, you react to it, people shout at each other in the street about it, rather than muttering about it to their families in the evenings.

G: Also, a lot of it had to do with really strong emotions, people feeling "I have fought for this, I spent a month defending this place" and even though we say that the evictions were a period of really strong unity in the movement, a lot of people, especially around le Sabot, felt like they were

abandoned by the rest of the ZAD, that they fought off the tear gas and police while thinking that the rest of us were safe and comfortable. And after having fought for something, I think there were vague agreements on the eastern barricades as to why they were there, and just the barricades in general, the ZAD didn't care and were getting on with their lives, having meetings, knitting, rebuilding… While they were there on the barricades waiting in case the police came back. And both felt like they had fought for something, so they weren't gonna give it up just like that, and people were saying "*We stopped the police coming to destroy this area, and now we're not gonna just let you come destroy it by driving a tractor down the Chemin de Pinky.*" And the idea of, *"We've spent a lot of energy, risked our health, went through a shit period, to gain control over this area, and we won't just give it back because you say you've got something important to do with it."* A lot of people felt also like the farmers had abandoned them, that this was their struggle (the farmers) originally, but they didn't come regularly to the barricades, so why should they hand it back…

M: I feel like part of that view, at least what I understood from people that I spoke to in the east and who were at those meetings, came from the fact that they arrived after what I would consider to be the period of evictions. And so yes, they were on the barricades, but they didn't really have the same experience. And so for people that were here for the evictions, or what I would call the evictions, saw it as being very improbable with the political climate that they would re-attempt to evict right after, and saw it as not being strategic to spend 24/7 on the barricades. And so people decided to do different things with their lives and go about the struggle in other ways, and the people who had just arrived found it strategic to be on the barricades. And so they felt like they had been abandoned, like they had never seen the farmers, didn't even know who they were, when my experience of eviction was that the farmers were highly present, were making barricades with their tractors, even leaving farm machinery or tractors to protect houses, like in front of the Rosiers, when the cops slashed all the tractor tires, that they definitely put themselves at risk.

G: Yeah, but for the amount of time that people were at Sabot, it was only one time. And there was always a new place being evicted, so the new people and new energy was getting dispersed but never going to the Sabot. I feel like most of the people at Sabot arrived during evictions but weren't there before. And so they felt like it was really important to do barricades because they felt like that was what the ZAD was all about, and they'd seen it as successful during evictions.

M: I found it hard in the hay discussions and for the non-motorized zone, like that there had already been an agreement the year before, that wasn't respected, and I found it really strange that people would make an agreement with a farmer, break it, then say, "We want all we've taken and more," and I found it hard to take them seriously because they didn't really have any bargaining power, and they weren't enough people to have a rapport de force, so the only thing they had was their word, and they broke it, and then expected people to trust them to make a new agreement. Like, how do you make an agreement with people that break the only agreement you've ever made together?

A: Yeah, but a lot of people had totally different ways or ideas of organizing (or not organizing), and so on one side there are people that are used to having meetings and making decisions together, and we count on everyone respecting what we've agreed on together. Or at least people who are concerned, or who were there, and also that it's passed on to those who arrive, and we expect them to respect it too, because we just spent all this time talking about it to find something

we can agree on, and on the other hand there are people who don't want to organize like this at all, who say, "We do as we feel and we decide for ourselves."

S: I think a lot of it depends on how long people have spent on the ZAD, and I don't mean it in a patronizing way, like "Oh, you don't know, you've only just arrived." But it does have an effect, because it depends on where people were before and what they were doing before, but I feel like the idea of being in a place where we're supposed to be non-hierarchical or there's like all of these things that you've felt oppressed by or all of the rules that you've had put upon you for your whole life, and you dream of having a place where that doesn't happen. And then you come into the ZAD, and somehow you feel like there are rules being imposed upon you, because there are people having meetings and things are being decided, that you haven't been able to get involved in or you can't find your place in it, and I can totally imagine that people would feel restricted and have the need or desire to rebel against it and get pissed off, and say, "But no, fuck you actually. I'm here because I don't want to be involved in long boring meetings or listen to other people."

Or like taking the piss out of the "ZAD-Elders" because they are rolling their eyes in meetings, saying *"We've already talked about this before,"* but at the same time we've seen it happen really often after being on the ZAD for a while, when someone sees that actually, it is really annoying when there's no rules, and that it is really annoying when everyone does what they want without talking to each other, it's not a good strategy, just for getting on and having nice relationships with each other because you have to have some kind of guidelines about how the way you're living stops other people from living he ways that they want to. I feel like we have more of a stable population now, and it helps because we learn to live together and the things that we disagree on, and that actually it's quite selfish to think you can arrive and do whatever you want, and refuse to talk to people about it.

A: And I do understand, this thing of arriving on the ZAD, and this wish to finally be in a place where there are no rules, where you can supposedly be really "free" and decide "freely" what you want to do. I understand that there is a longing for this place, and a vision that people put into it, that there is a place where all your dream can be coming true, like this is a utopia. But it pissed me off so many times, the attitude that comes with it, especially coming and expecting that it is that way, and maybe not even moving around enough to realize how things work, and how they came to be put into place, and coming and seeing how it is now but not how it came to be, and seeing it as a "liberated area" in some ways, at least for the moment. Or a temporary autonomous zone, or however you want to see it. But not seeing that there was lots of work preceding it, lots of work to put the structures into place, like lots of people who struggled and had many disagreements before you came. But also, it's not easy to come new.

A: For me, it's also on the ZAD where I became the most sensibilized towards this whole idea of nature, and how twisted it is.

S: Well, you can twist it to whatever you want. It's THE argument against vegetarianism – that it's natural to eat meat. And then you're like [*smacks fist into forearm*].

M: Or as an argument against homosexuality.

S: Exactly. I think one thing that upset me about the discussion around the non-motorized zone, in loads of discussions actually, was the territorial aspect. Like during and after evictions I felt quite criticized for concentrating all of my energy into the forest and not really being involved in other ZAD-wide structures. And when I say criticized, I mean by other people, but also by myself. Before but especially since the evictions I've had this feeling of a "ZAD-ness," of wanting

things to be available for other people on the ZAD. I don't care if we don't ALL talk about things, I don't think people should have to talk about things they don't want, but I like that there are things that are available to everyone on the ZAD, or things that everyone on the ZAD is invited to, things that we can all share, and for me that's a really important thing, because we're all living in the same place. And in a lot of meetings, like in the "grand moment" meetings, I found myself talking to mainly people in the East. Like when this question was brought up of what decisions do you think are relevant to you, what kind of decisions do you want to be involved in, they were like, "Well it depends where it happens."

If it's a decision that's gonna affect where I live, then I wanna be involved, but if people are gonna do things where they live or in their houses then I don't care, they can do what they want. And it just made me so sad, because for me that's like no longer all thinking of it like a community or an area where we share things or whatever, because if I don't care at all what people do in their homes, then that means I don't consider their home to be my home and that I consider it to be completely separate. That there's some kind of weird border, so I don't care. So people in Bellevue can raise animals, and I don't know, beat their animals and have some kind of weird factory farm, and I won't care because it's not my house.

A: I feel like it's just more rich, it makes more sense politically to see the ZAD as a whole. When we have the non-motorized zone, it's like dividing it up, it takes away from us all sharing land and discussing together how we use it, and what we want to happen here.

M: And it's like, "No, I don't want to leave you alone" (the East) like you do your thing and I do mine. I want to organize together, because we live together, we're in a struggle together. And maybe we don't want the same things, but that's kind of the point. Like we stand to gain so much from each other, from exchanging ideas, like with permaculture I don't want to be in this confrontational standoff of tilling vs. permaculture. I think there's a lot to discuss and learn, but there's just a block. It's like we have to fight someone, so we went from fighting the police to fighting each other.

Prison News

Amelie, Fallon, & Carlos Released From Prison

After just over a year of time spent in prison in Mexico for the alleged involvement of a Molotov attack on a Nissan dealership and an office belonging to the Department of Transportation, the three comrades were released after their charges were dropped due to an appeal process. On April 10th, a letter from Carlos was published in 325.nostate.net declaring his decision to go on the run to defy his conditions of release. Our hearts go to them in a celebration of their release from enclosure.

Eric McDavid Released From Prison

After 9 years spending time in prison after getting set-up by FBI informant "Anna", Eric McDavid was released on January 8th, 2015, 11 years earlier than his original sentence mandated. He's ecstatic and extraordinarily thankful for people's support and the work that people continue to do in supporting prisoners. We are incredibly overjoyed to hear this news, and to be able to publish it far and wide.

Technical Authority: Ideology, the Social Construction of Technology, and Technocracy - by Jason Rodgers

Technology reproduces the ideology of the totality. As a technology proliferates, it changes the people and communities that use it, in subtle but total ways. This point should not be confused with technological determinism. Technology is socially constructed. Technology doesn't produce society. Society produces technology, and technology then produces society. Wolfi Landstreicher argued that technology "always develops within a social context with the explicit aim of reproducing that context. Its form, its purpose and its possibilities are determined by that context, and this is precisely why no technology is neutral" (Landstreicher 250).

This is not an argument that computers are evil. Morality does not play a part in this critique of technology. My primary point is that technology is not neutral, and that the notion of neutrality obscures and mystifies its influence. This is an influence that I find particularly negative in regards to freedom and autonomy.

It is often argued that a technology, such as the Internet, is just a tool. Well, certainly the Internet is a tool, but tools are also not neutral. Tools are also a product of the culture in which they develop, also a social construction. Tools reflect the values of these cultures. Cultures with different value sets create profoundly different tools. Kirkpatrick Sale said:

"Tools come with a prior history built in, expressing the values of a particular culture. A conquering, violent culture – of which western civilization is a prime example, with the United States as its extreme – is bound to produce conquering, violent tools. When U.S. industrialism turned to agriculture after World War II, for example, it went at it with all that it had learned on the battlefield, using tractors modeled on wartime tanks to cut up vast fields, crop dusters modeled on wartime planes to spray poison, and pesticides and herbicides developed from wartime chemical weapons and defoliants to destroy unwanted species" (Sale 262).

I would like to imagine that in a culture not based on domination that a whole new set of tools might develop, vastly different than most that we use today.

Media theorist Marshal McLuhan is often portrayed as a cheerleader for technological change, but actually he had a more nuanced viewpoint. To him, any technological change has at least two aspects, that "Any invention or technology is an extension or self-amputation of our physical bodies" (McLuhan 45). A person does not merely use a tool, the tool uses them. The object changes a person as they use it, allowing them to do certain things and eliminating the need to do others.

Technology causes changes over the entire social terrain. For instance, in technocracy the meaning of words changes. Take the word "expert", which Neil Postman characterized by saying that "technopoly's experts tend to be ignorant about any matter not directly related to their specialized interest" (Postman 87). Knowledge is broken down to such a degree that expertise in any facet requires systematic ignorance of all other aspects. With high tech devices, there is the additional dimension of being a product of massive divisions of labor. In a technological society, it becomes impossible to live autonomously. Every aspect of society is broken down and each person builds an isolated aspect. The process of manufacturing these tools remakes the world, through strip mines, economic slavery, and manufacturing processes which release highly toxic chemicals. Green tech is no exception, requiring the same manufacturing processes and alienating labor as any other industrial product.

A certain mythology has built up around technology, a mythology which serves an ideological purpose. Critics of technology are portrayed as being conservative, even as high technology has often been the underpinning of totalitarian regimes. James Carey wrote, "Instead of creating a 'new future,' modern technology invites the public to participate in a ritual of control in which fascination with technology masks underlying factors of politics and power" (Carey 195).

The very notion of objectivity, of being able to look at pure data and understand reality, contains a sort of mystification. This mythology has a highly authoritarian basis. It is perfectly compatible with, and even complimentary to, totalitarian regimes. "Information smacks of safe neutrality," wrote Theodore Roszak, "it is the simple, helpful heaping up of unassailable facts. In that innocent guise, it is the perfect starting point for a technocratic political agenda that wants as little exposure for its objectives as possible" (Roszak 19). Information is presented as being discrete bits of which one can gather enough to understand reality. Actually, these pieces of data are discovered by cutting the world into certain grids. There are an endless variety of ways that raw existence can be divided. It may be impossible to escape this, but it is important to remember this process and realize it is not some simple objective truth.

Guy Debord said, "Isolation underpins technology, and technology isolates in its turn" (Debord 22). Through technological systems, more and more of our lives are separated from other people. Individuals gradually lose their tries to others. What ties a person has are through the consumption of media. A key point of the anonymous book Test Card F was that the problems of media are intrinsic to the technology, not due to content:

"The media is integral to the maintenance of hierarchical social control. The external models of experts have supplanted our own lived experience. With social life mediated by a bureaucracy of image technicians, communal life has been disrupted and denied; a surrogate, supervised community is the replacement. Under these conditions, a small elite makes the rest of the people dependent on its tutelage [sic] for survival" (anonymous 78).

This is not individualism. The fact that leftists can characterize capitalism as individualistic demonstrates the poverty of language. The individual is reduced to an isolated component of a collectivist system. The breakdown of community in favor of a massive state corporatism is not individualism.

The reason I often target computers and the Internet is because they are probably the most omnipresent and prevalent of technologies. Computers absorb everything they touch. Other forms of media become computerized. Gradually, more and more goods are digitized. "As the price of computing and bandwidth has plunged," wrote Nicholas Carr, "it has become economical to transform more and more physical objects into purely digital goods, processing them with computers and transporting and trading them over networks" (Carr 122). Social relationships are also digitized. Lee Siegel wrote, "This new world turns the most consequential fact of human life – other people – into seemingly manipulable half-presences wholly available to our fantasies. It's a world controlled by our wrist and finger" (Siegel 17). Computers are the dominant technology in everyday life.

Not only are computers the dominant technology, they are the technology of domination. "Unlike most machines, computers do no work; they direct work," wrote Postman, "They are, as Norbert Wiener said, the technology of 'command and control', and have little value without something to control" (Postman 115). Computers allow surveillance and data gathering at a level that would otherwise be impossible. Wolfi Landstreicher wrote, "Cybernetic technology's ability to process, record, gather and send information nearly instantaneously serves the needs of the

state to document and monitor its subjects, as well as its need to reduce the real knowledge of those it rules to bits of information-data-hopping, thus, to reduce the real capacities for understanding of the exploited" (Landstreicher 39). The most boring sorts of computer programs, like a database or a spreadsheet, are the core of effective surveillance. This reveals the utter banality of totalitarianism. The countless uses of technology for authoritarian ends should dispel the utopian mystification surrounding it. It seems clear that, as Nicholas Carr wrote:

"Computer systems are not, at their core, technologies of emancipation. They are technologies of control. They were designed as tools for monitoring and influencing human behavior, for controlling what people do and how they do it. As we spend more time online, filling databases with details of our lives and desires, software programs will grow every more capable of discovering and exploiting subtle patterns in our behavior" (Carr 191).

Looking at the origin of computer systems may help to explain why this is the case. The Internet finds its origin in cold war military systems, such as SAGE, a network of radar centers built across the US connected by "some 1.5 million miles of dedicated phone lines" (Lubar 148). Computers and the Internet replicate the ideology of the military-industrial complex from which they arose. As they spread, they transform society more and more towards this regimented form.

None of this is meant to outline what anyone should do, how they should live, or what technology they should use. Most people live directly within the technological society, and survival will require some use of its technology. However, by critically examining technology, it is possible to determine which are personally distasteful and unpleasant, through which one could refuse them to increase the quality of their life. Furthermore, this will hopefully contribute to the development of tactical anti-media and an awareness of pressure points on which to focus resistance.

Should we ever be lucky enough to see the toppling of authoritarian society, technology would go with it. Without coercion and social control, there would be no one willing to do the alienating and demeaning labor required to maintain industrial society. Without wage slave shit workers and literal slave labor, it cannot be maintained. The society that would arise would certainly have some sort of tools and technology, but it would not be the sort one would generally call "tech". It would most likely be low tech, the sort of objects that could be created by individuals and individual-scale communities.

It's All Falling Apart: Dispatches From The End of the World

Civilization is the sum of many parts, the culmination of a series of different processes (for example, mediation and domestication), which have brought us to this point. Its end will likely be the same. As much as we might wish to, we won't see it all end with a heroic struggle in which some version of "we" emerges triumphant and returns to the land. These stories are symptoms of a world stepping quickly towards the void of a humiliating and boring existence, enhanced by each new gadget sold to us as some miracle cure for the all-encompassing dread of daily life. Occasionally, the land and its inhabitants cry out, but for the most part, it's a slow slog. Civilization is a morass: there are no easy ways out. If one takes the time to look, the signs that something is amiss are all around.

First Man-Made Biological Lead May Carve Path for Colonizing Space

www.dezeen.com, July 25th, 2014

A synthetic biological leaf has been developed which absorbs water and carbon dioxide to produce oxygen just like a plant, potentially enabling long-distance space travel. The "leaf" consists of chloroplasts suspended in a matrix made out of silk protein. Like the leaves of a plant, all it needs to produce oxygen is light and a small amount of water.

Death Of Northern White Rhino Leaves Only Six in Existence

www.thinkprogress.org, October 19th, 2014

Suni, a northern white rhino at a wildlife conservancy in Kenya, has died at 34-years of age. Suni was the first-ever of his kind to be born in captivity, and while his father died of natural causes at the same age, the death of Suni is yet to be determined, "The species now stands at the brink of complete extinction, a sorry testament to the greed of the human race," said the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, which houses four of the rhinos left in the world. From the story: "Formerly found in central countries in East and Central Africa south of the Sahara, the northern white rhino was decimated by poaching, with their wild population reduced from around 500 to 15 in the 1970s and 1980s. In Asia, rhino horn was used as a traditional medicine and is often now used as a status symbol of success, especially in Vietnam. It can sell for more than gold or platinum."

Couple Dies While Trying To Take Selfie / Man Dies While Taking Selfie with Gun

www.huffingtonpost.com, August 11th & 14th, 2014

A couple stepped past a protective barrier along a Cliffside in an attempt to take a picture of themselves, only to fall 260 feet into the ravine below and ultimately, their death. Their children, aged 5 and 6, witnessed the fall. Four days prior, a 21-year-old man from Mexico City died while taking pictures of himself with a loaded gun.

Tanzania Is Evicting the Maasai so Dubai's Royal Family Can Hunt Lions and Elephants

www.salon.com, November 17th, 2014

40,000 Maasai people will be evicted from their homeland in Tanzania, because the Dubai royal family has bought it with the intention of using it as a reserve to hunt big game. Last year, the Tanzanian government had resisted the purchase, proposing instead a "wildlife corridor" dedicated to hunting near the Serengeti national park. However, the deal will still reportedly go through, and the Maasai will have to leave by the end of the year. There is a stall on this now, but the threat is still hanging over the Maasai's heads.

Facebook Argument Spurs Pickaxe Attack

www.mlive.com, December 17th, 2014

A 21-year-old Holland Township, MI man was hospitalized after getting into an argument on Facebook over a former girlfriend. The suspected assailant and a friend drove to the man's home armed with a pickaxe and baseball bat, delivering facial and head injuries.

3-D Printer Now Prints Food

www.cnn.com, December 31st, 2014

From CNN: "Currently, the device only prints food (squeezed into stainless steel capsules), which must be then cooked as usual. But a future model will also cook the preparation and produce it ready to eat. Users will also be able to control the device remotely using a smartphone, and share their recipes with the community. "This is real food, with real fresh ingredients, it's just prepared using a new technology."

Newsflash! Humans Are Destroying the Earth

www.news.vice.com, January 16th, 2015

From Vice: […] "In 2009, a group of 28 scientists from around the world came together to create the "planetary boundaries framework," which identified nine processes that need to be monitored in order to maintain life on Earth. The processes were ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, chemical pollution, climate change, ocean acidification, freshwater composition, land systems change, nitrogen and phosphorous flows, and atmospheric aerosol loading. Crossing the recommended thresholds for any of these processes could generate abrupt and possibly irreversible environmental changes. Humans have surpasses the safe threshold for four of these boundaries, researchers say.

Mother Calls Cops On Son Who Won't Stop Playing Xbox

www.usatoday.com, January 16th, 2015

A mother who couldn't get her son to listen and turn off his video game called local Post Falls, ID police, who sent an officer to have a chat with the child. The son eventually turned off the Xbox after a conversation about respecting his mother. The officer hopes the interaction "left a lasting impression."

Kenya Police Tear-Gas Children Over Playground Protest

www.cnn.com, January 22nd, 2015

School children and social-justice activists held a protests against the removal of their playground by a powerful politician and were inevitably met with violence from police. The private development company who has the title to the land now plans to build a parking lot for a hotel on the land. The protestors tore down sections of the wall that had been put up around their playground, and were later shot at with teargas by police.

Measles Outbreak At Disneyland

www.news.vice.com, January 22nd, 2015

Disneyland in California was ground-zero for a measles outbreak earlier this winter, with forty-two out of the fifty-nine total cases being linked to the so-called "Happiest Place On Earth," five of those cases which were employees. After the United States had supposedly eliminated measles in 2000 after a 40-year-long vaccination campaign, the re-emergence has resurrected the debate on vaccines, which have proven to have devastating effects like causing brain tumors. According to the National Vaccine Information Center, the federal government has paid out more than $3 billion in settlements to people who claim injuries from vaccines over the past 25 years.

A Tiny Mussel Is About To Destroy The Amazon River's Biodiversity

www.news.vice.com, February 7th, 2015

The golden mussel, native to China, arrived in Argentina in the early 1990's via ballast water ships use to stay afloat, and its population soared within two years from five organisms per square meter to 82,000 per square meter. From ViceNews: "…Attempts to kill the mussel with chemicals carry environmental risks and aren't guaranteed to solve the problem. The mussels can sense the toxicants in the water and slam their valves shut, remaining in a high-stakes game of hide-and-seek for weeks at a time." Demetrio Boltovskoy, who has studied the golden mussel for 20 years, told ViceNews, "I think the solution is to learn to live with the mussel, and get used to it and try to fight it in plants, in industrial plants, in power plants, where it's truly powerful,". "In the wild, we have lost the battle."

Woman's Hair Gets Eaten By Robot Vacuum Cleaner

www.theguardian.com, February 8th, 2015

52 year-old South Korean woman takes nap on floor after taking a break from household chores, including running her robot vacuum cleaner. The vacuum cleaner came upon the

woman's hair while she napped on the floor, and began to suck it up. Firefighters freed the woman from further agony.

Toxic Orange Cloud Spreads Over Catalonia After Chemical Blast

www.theguardian.com, February 12th, 2015

From The Guardian: "More than 60,000 residents in north-eastern Spain have been told to stay indoors, after an explosion at a chemical warehouse sent a dense orange cloud into the sky that hovered over their municipalities for hours. As the cloud settled over of six municipalities in central Catalonia, including Igualada, Jorba and Odena, Spain's emergency services told residents to close their windows and seal off any means of ventilation. "This is not a game," they tweeted. "Don't put yourself in danger to take pictures of the cloud outside."

Robot Teacher Helps Students At Grand Rapids School

www.woodtv.com, March 18th, 2015

Every day, teacher Amy O'Neil commutes to high school in Michigan and two other states… via Internet chat and a robot. O'Neil helps students one-on-one using a $6,000 robot that moves on wheels from student to student, and classroom to classroom. Student Maddie Hoffman said, "When I first saw her coming right here, I was kind of like, 'Um, OK, what is that?" However, in the end, she said it's actually "pretty cool… because you get more one-on-one time with it instead of a big classroom."

The Nameless Raccoon – by aragorn!

As important as donning the cloak, coat, or hat that makes one as of the Raccoon people (and separate from the gray) is the process of taking a name. Unlike the world of the gray where you are inflicted with labels that come from horrible stories of sacrifice and vengeance, the self-naming of the Raccoon people is a time for celebration and game. Usually names are taken from favored things and can tell a short story of an accomplishment or friend.

There was one Raccoon person who was so broken by the gray that this person refused to take on a new name. They knew that the gray would come one day and wanted to guard against that by being untraceable. If you have no name you have no shadow, and in a world that remembers everything only those who live in, as opposed to have, shadow will be free. Or so our nameless friend believed.

As it turns out, having no name can be a real challenge. You cannot be referred to, you cannot be called to dance or sing, and while the gray may not find you, neither can any of the Raccoons, Bears, or people outside of a very small group. This may be the best way to live in a world so very gray, but it is also a way that hasn't much room for spark, dissonance, and the loving chaos that the Raccoons are known for.

The nameless Raccoon became referred to as just that. A wave of the hand and everyone knew who you were talking about. A nod, wink, and a 'one-who-must-not-be-named' foretold the nameless one's arrival. A hug and an 'until we see you again' their departure. In a world without gray, it could be that none of us have names, but until then there is the Raccoon-with-no-name.

Blank 8 – by Noah Bernes, age 11

The forest is everywhere but now.
A stark contrast to where I am is where I was,
The difference of today is yesterday.
Birds chirping is where I was,
Steel and glass is where I am.
The trees, like a beacon of life, shooting into the air,
Are now the smoke, a beacon of technology and automation.
Wolves are replaced by rats, and life by steel.
The sky at night now holds not stars, but planes.
The city is everywhere but then.

Chronicle for Black Seed

I have something to say about my father and the rest of us. Given our context, who I imagine you are, what I imagine our context is, I suppose a lot of you hate your fathers. Or never knew them. Or both. Or that others of you have fathers that love you or treat you well enough, but you can find no way to translate your life to theirs, so there is just a communication gap between you. Asshole fathers, conservative fathers, liberal fathers, absentee fathers. In any case, I get along well enough with my father, and that is how this example moves me, because I am that rare case, getting along well enough with him, feeling able to say so, to write this out; maybe sharing something with him that he and I don't share with a lot of others, a way of speaking, a sense of humor. Look, in the last ten years though, something's happened to him. As long as I can remember, he has been concerned with the doings of the world's governments, and this concern has led him to stay informed. A lot of people do this, read the news. If you are old enough you might remember this gesture: someone's face hidden behind the newspaper as they read silently, then, still holding it open, folding down the top half to make some sort of comment – a lot of people did this.

This had to do with a way of responding to what he was taking in: he would read, and when something was bad in a glaringly-obvious way, sometimes upsetting but usually egregiously wrong, hypocritical, or transparently propagandistic, he would fold down the top of the paper and say something. He would usually read out loud the part that really set him off, and make sure you knew what was going on with the world and with him. One thing about this behavior is that it is one-way. At least in my place there was only one newspaper, only one World or Nation section to get mad about, and he had it. What was it all about? As I recall, the informational content was very low; it was mostly a kind of moral lesson. It's difficult now to know how I heard it. I suppose that in some ways I learned the lesson.

Given who I imagine who you are, and what I imagine our context is, this remembered scene I'm narrating is now strange to us both, because it was staged as outrage, and it is as outrage, not as morality, that I ultimately inherited it. You might ask how. By learning it too well, passing through a hyper-moral phase of denunciation. I got stuck there for a while. Of course, one can get stuck in the outrage as well as the hypermorality and the denunciation. By stuck, I mean having no other form of understanding what is happening, no other way of being by oneself or

with others, dwelling in hyperbole and exaggeration. Communities form like this, communities of outrage, of hypermorality, of denunciation, of course, united in their forness and againstness, though not really united at all, and so maybe not communities at all in the end.

So what I am trying to say, first, is that whatever kind of fathers you did or did not, do or do not have, I don't think you are so distant from my story. Though we – you, and me at some times – have managed to hide such proximity by being against, denouncing. We have denounced, for example, something someone (not us) called patriarchy, which has to do with fathers but at a certain remove of abstraction – the remove making the denunciation functional. Anyhow, one could say that in my case, and maybe in your case, what defined us against real and imaginary fathers, and what brought us together as people so defined, was first of all a moral lesson learned and expressed as hypermorality and denunciation. In my case, the moral lesson eventually transformed, decoded almost, into outrage. The second thing I will say, then, is that this memory is not an entirely-bad one, that there was some againstness in his moral lesson that I am ok with having inherited, though my style – my style is quite different.

All of that for background. Now here's what happened; it didn't happen all at once, Slowly, he began lengthening his interventions. I didn't live at home anymore, and I would call to say hello – and because I thought it would make them happy, my father and my mother, to get the call. And when he and I would be on the phone, he would ask me some trivial question or another about what I was doing – always what I was doing and not what I was thinking – and after a pause, he would launch into a lengthy monologue. My father is not an asshole, and so I cannot call it a rant, a vicious rant. It was not an irrational thing, at least not from within the monologue, which was like his newspaper outbursts of old but engorged, entirely engorged in terms of the informational content. He was no longer reading aloud; rather, he was condensing, rehearsing fact after fact, and then interpretation after interpretation, gleaned from books, television, newspapers, and, as the years passed, the internet as well. The moral outrage was there as well, but it was entirely channeled into the recitation of facts and interpretations, which he would discharge at me with no regard for my interest or perspective. If I so much as suggested that I differed from him, he would respond by increasing the volume, both the volume of his speech and the volume of facts. It was easier to let him go on, and go on he did, for hours at a time. It was exhausting and confusing, even more so because I had long since abandoned the attitudes of hypermorality and denunciation.

I understood still that my father had taught me a moral lesson, a moral lesson that I had applied to non-moral ends by studying its technology in moments of hypermorality and denunciation (also I just wanted some relation to my father that was less constrained, less ridiculous, but that may not matter much to you). So if at first I learned the moral lesson and then exaggerated it into hypermorality and denunciation, then afterwards I maybe taught myself how to grasp what in it was sheer outrage (for example, from anger at this or that government to hatred of all government, and from that to… well, I suppose you know this story). Now he too had changed. I was inclined to see my self-teaching as voluntary, but I couldn't see what changed in him that way. The moral lesson and the outrage hidden within it were, whatever else they were, lively, seeking engagement. This new speech was more mechanical, and it didn't seek anything except an ear to hear it – a jack to be plugged into, as it were.

I'll begin again and tell you about a dream I had, in which my father confessed to me that he believed in UFOs. The nightmarish element was his fear, the fear in his voice and the contortion of his face as he told me about something he had secretly held onto for his whole life. There were

no UFOs in the dream, as there are no UFOs in this world, not for me and not for him; at least, I mean no archetypal flying saucers from space with alien pilots who are inexplicably interested in some or all of us. That was not the nightmare. The nightmare was that this reasonable man turned out to be less than reasonable, and realized it, and to tell me was frightening in itself, frightening to both of us. I remember this dream now and then. Maybe it was a way of telling myself something about him, a sort of dream analysis in which it is not the dream that is analyzed, but the dreamer who is the analyst. It happened years before the shift I explained above, from the shorter outraged remark to the lengthy mechanical monologue, but in some way it came to explain that shift to me. The dreamer that I was analyzed him ahead of time, and concluded that after the shift he would be speaking out of anxious fear. I don't mean the fear of being hurt or seeing something horrible, but something more diffuse: the fear of having your world unravel before you. UFOs meant, first of all, a world-shattering reality flying overhead. There are still people who believe in UFOs in the flying saucer way, so let me be clear about this part: it is of little interest for someone who is already paranoiac in their thinking to add one more suspicion, one more superstition, one more fantasy explanation to their hoard. It certainly has a lot to do with certain marginal political circles in this country and how they form, communities united in their paranoia, which also tears them apart, so that they are maybe not really united at all in the end. United maybe in listening to some radio show or visiting some website, and placing their bumper stickers on their truck and feeling it's brave to do that, imagining an FBI agent taking a picture of the bumper that includes their license plate in the frame; yes, all this is done in concert but there is no chance for any unity in it, and it is another form of sadness. I am more interested in my father's case, which is to say two things, first, what I already wrote, that in the moral lesson I learned something, something that does not authorize but in some sense allows me these analytic words; second, that I do care about what happens to him, who he was, who he is, what he is becoming. I think depending on who reads these pages the paranoiac's story or my father's maybe be more appropriate, but I have almost nothing to say to the paranoiac other than a dim and quiet good luck, good bye. I am wondering if my father has become someone to whom I have nothing to say, and I am wondering that in part for reasons that concern us all, those of us stretched between analysis and outrage. In my father's case, what the dream analyst in me decided is that the shift came when his world unraveled, and the fear overtook the outrage.

For my father, outrage was not the capacity to act; he ceased to act politically, at least in any sense you or I would care about, long before I was born. But intelligent speech and outraged comment, fatherlike though they were in genre, were still effective actions in the sphere of family, and that is how I learned their lesson, unfatherlike and nonfamilial though I may be. I mean that his speech referred back to a situation where friends, not relatives, would gather and discuss events for the purpose of taking action. Analysis. I suppose I heard the echo or the memory of all that in his tone. After the shift, though, the tone changed. As I said, it became more mechanical, as recitations from memory can be; it also became more desperate, as though the only thing that could be done against the outrageous is to recite and repeat crimes and transgressions. Maybe you can understand what is so disturbing for me in all this, because it is not that my father would is unraveling and becoming more paranoid. He would have to have had that tendency to begin with. No, I think he is realizing, as rationally as he can, that his world is unraveling, that, as some say, the world is unraveling. That there is no analysis to be done, or that analysis is useless. But he realizes this unconsciously, or at least silently, privately, and the only interpretation that the few of us he talks to get to hear is the lengthy fact-filled monologue. The facts and interpretations float

freely, as though awaiting an analysis that would give them a form and orient one to outrage, and of course, action; but the analysis never comes, as though the horizon of meaning had fallen away entirely. As though it had silently been acknowledged that analysis is useless in the end, and that we were closer to that end than we might have thought, or wanted to think; that what we were doing, then, was happening in a space of denial, denial of that uselessness, of the catastrophe of sense…

The unraveling of his world; the insistence of fear when outrage and analysis failed to coalesce, the denial of it all… Which comes first? Is one the cause of the other? Are they both the cause of the third? Or vice versa? I have no idea how to answer these questions; I need another dream image, but I have no yet had one come to me. The dream analyst is out. So I will set them aside, the questions, and write some about the rest of us. Here is an image: picture a meeting, people gathered in a circle or semicircle in a small room. Someone is speaking there, at length, and the others react and sometimes respond, attentively or not so attentively, acknowledging the too-long speech and making plans. Now subtract the speaker: simply make the figure disappear, leaving the rest of the people at the meeting. Picture everyone still gathered there, still doing just what you had them doing before, looking in the same direction, now at nothing – still acknowledging, still making plans. Or inattentively ignoring nothing, inattentive now to no one.

For my father, the world is unraveling in the only sense that matters to him since his newspaper days: geopolitically. His outrage was based on a sense of shared values and expectations, on the reality of morals and the transmissibility of the moral lesson; on a horizon of meaning, then, about what sensible people do, what is after all possible, or desirable. If the web of relations that seems to hold the world together geopolitically is so corroded that there no longer seems to be any sensible people, the sensible people are a tiny or powerless minority, the world is unraveling. Or if those relations are so corroded that the moral lesson, or the aesthetic or mathematical lesson for that matter, are no longer transmissible, then the world is unraveling. This is fearful and, unable to admit it, he holds out facts and interpretations in hopes that they will be caught up in a more distant, or future, or virtual web. Or perhaps it is far worse and he is in some sense more gone from the scene, just feeling himself speak to echo the old scenes of analysis and outrage with friends and family, talking to me not because he thinks I will inherit the moral lesson but because it feels good to remember, feels better than to admit what's happened to the world.

And the rest of us? For some of us, the planet is unraveling in the ever-present sense we have of the destruction of animals, plants and places. For others, it is social life or social hope that is unraveling in past and present genocide, extermination, ultraviolence, all these relentless ways humans have of hunting other humans. There are also some among us who might say that they never had a planet or a world, never inherited or assembled one, and so what is unraveling or unraveled for them is the very idea, the social part, communicating with others who hold that there is something shared. And even for those of us in this place, we had a childhood, we had illusions. That we never had a world is a retroactive realization. So there are many of us, the rest of us, and we might share this sense that the world is unraveling. It is a metaphor, of course: unraveling, a simple enough image, but with the planet the metaphor is materialized, as what cuts into the webs of relations are manufac tured things, things that break apart eventually and, in their breakdown, pollute the webs of relations that make up the planet. This is why, for me, there is an echo, sometimes dim, sometimes deafening, of the shift that affected my father in all of our doings, if it's true that between analysis and outrage we stretch our actions and our lives. I saw something of myself and the rest of us in all of that, so I made my father the case in a clinical

sense; I studied him here with you to get a sense of a pathology that's also ours. A little bit of neurosis (obsessiveness) on his side, and maybe a little bit of psychosis (paranoia) on yours.

A simpler way to put some of this, though, would be to say that the monologue comes from loneliness. My father had a political speech once, with his friends, maybe comrades; later, he had morally driven remarks for his family; now he gathers facts and interpretations largely in solitude, registering the world's unraveling. I wrote that when he begins speaking to me, I only get the dimmest sense of moral outrage; it's rather the fear, the obsessiveness over facts and interpretations disguising the fear. Now remember that this was happening over the phone, nowadays over the computer in real-time streams. When it happens face-to-face the technological mediation is still there to be felt, in the improbable quantity of facts and interpretations, and in the disconnection that barely lets the fear be felt as it overcomes, overshadows what's left of the moral outrage that presumably motivated all of this to begin with, back with his friends. I said that his outrage used to be about the propagandistic element in the news, the shitty lies so transparently reprinted as if to see if anyone noticed or cared (because even then it was less about convincing through lies than seeing if anyone would ask a question or contest the lie) – so there was always this healthy skepticism in his performance with the paper. And now after the shift it is not as though that is gone and he has become propagandistic. It is so much stranger, the loneliness is absolute. The facts and interpretations, the obsessive recitation: there is no propaganda in it. He never spoke in slogans, still doesn't (I view that as something I learned from him, difficult to understand and retain like all negative lessons, which is why part of my apprenticeship was to try on slogans for size in moments of hypermorality and denunciation). He still won't speak in slogans, but it's clear that the data stream is one-sided; I mean that it has a small set of sources and echoes their terminology, their paradigms, their limits, their placement of the facts in the space of their interpretations. He is telling their story not through ideology and propaganda but through information, through being informed. And because information is not a story, not even that skeletal story we call analysis, and so neither creates nor nourishes bonds, in all that the fear also comes through. It's a solitary fear mutated into fear of being misinformed, his fear about himself and others being misinformed (this being one nominal reason for his expression of all this in my direction, another being habit) – all of that as the armature and structure of denial, the impossible, pathetic response to the unspeakable world-catastrophe.

Analysis and outrage have always needed something like information, probably just perception and awareness, but you know very well what I mean when I talk about this other sense of information, its panic or overload. Information that accumulates endlessly and evades your attempts to analyze it. If you want to be outraged about something there are endless examples, endless real and even endless fake examples. If you are already outraged there is plenty to be outraged about… but that is where the fear comes in, the sense that this is all entirely out of control, and thus the unraveling. Out of control hardly means free, hardly means liberated or liberating. My father is indeed free to gather endless facts and interpretations as you are free to endlessly photograph yourself, or briefly express your clever opinions on multiple platforms. You may also liberally add facts and interpretations as you propagate your images and opinions. So freedom means little here, that freedom is the right word, although maybe you prefer liberation because it sounds less American, or qualify freedom with total so as to mark a real difference.

It is easy enough to say that my father is not an elder, since I have not presented him as one and since in our context, what I imagine our context to be, there are generally no elders. So, with or without me this silent fearful cry may go unheard. And it is easy enough to describe the

fear, the almost panic behind the hoarding of facts and interpretations as something generational and technical, as someone of a newspaper generation responding to the internet. Something like that is of course at stake, and here I am discussing it in the pages of a newspaper, published by people who presumably think there is something to this sort of paper media. It would be where analysis and outrage are expressed in a way that also encompasses gestures such as forming a pile, getting passed out, being tucked under an arm or in a bag, and of course being spread open and read. Maybe even the remark over the fold I was referring to earlier. All these gestures amass and around or through them people amass. Communities form this way, communities of outrage, of hypermorality, of denunciation, of course. United in their for-ness or against-ness, though perhaps not really united at all and so maybe not communities at all in the end. I wonder about this not just because I think the technical means are failing us, not merely because we have so little serious analysis of the media we obsessively return to, but because there is also this thing I refer to when I write that my father's world is unraveling, or that fear has overtaken outrage.

My father accumulates facts and interpretations and the rest of us accumulate something as well. For example, we take action and document our actions in little notes, more or less secret notes, written in a special code. We write these notes mostly to each other, and find many platforms ready for the uptake of these notes, so we go on writing them, and often enough it seems the actions are done so the note can be written. And the note is written so the community may be united, though now I wonder if it is bound in this way, and so whether it is a community in the end. I know more than one person troubled by this kind of unraveling who studiously avoids the word community as a result, replacing it with a synonym whose similarity they avidly deny. Are you, are we, gathered together in the hope that this is all going somewhere worthwhile, united in for-ness and against-ness, or at least in agreement occasionally enough to pretend that we have made or found a community of outrage, of hypermorality, of denunciation (though not really united at all, and if it is pretend, then maybe not a community at all in the end)?

If the elder my father could speak here, if he could rid himself of his fear, he would say: train yourself in the suspension of belief. If the elder I may become could speak now, he might say: rid yourself of fear; first of all, see the sadness in your compulsive repetitions. But here and now are world events and maybe what I am saying is that the world we share is unraveling, though we act in denial of that fact. The dream analyst is still out, so here is a final image: there are bodies in the street, not corpses, but active, militant bodies, so this is the site of action. They are lined up against something, it is a barrier, a wall or fence, and they've brought tools, sledgehammers and boltcutters, to attack it, to tear it down, to get at whatever or whoever is on the other side. I need you to picture this as a smoky scene, there is a lot of dark smoke everywhere, so you can barely see the barrier. Mostly, you see the bodies going at it, and you hear their work, their destructive labor. A chaotic noise. Now, in your imagination, subtract the barrier – this shouldn't be hard, it was barely there. Leave them all there, let them keep attacking the nothing left where the barrier was. Picture that. And now, one more step: remove the noise, watch it all happen in silence.

The Bear vs. The Mob – by aragorn!

In the not so distant past, there was a day that will live on in memory and song. It is still talked about today as if it happened only yesterday. During this amazing day, the air was very crisp, a whisper of the first winter breeze. The day is remembered because of a tragedy. This tragedy was

a tragedy for the gray, and has since been inflicted upon the people as the justification to end all justifications. But on the day itself, it was difficult to distinguish between something that should terrify the gray, and something that should scare people too. The people didn't help matters much. Always wary of the gray, they sent up a great alarm, that we were next, that the end was nigh, and that much more was coming for us and for others. A gathering was called of all the people in the area. On the agenda was the hope that we could turn this day into a chance to work together on a common project, to use this opportunity for ourselves, rather than to just run and hide. The gathering worked out as many do. The people were in full regalia, Raccoon, Bear, Beaver, and Salmon People. People were there who you almost never see, except for during special occasions, like when gray attacks. While there was a happy atmosphere because of seeing each other, it was tempered with the fear of the gray.

The people are generally of two minds regarding the gray. They either believe that the gray is watching their every move and therefore they must take every precaution to seem innocuous, or they believe that the gray, out of ambivalence, ignores the people entirely. Either way, the people tend to both over-and under-estimate the gray. The people tend to respond to the gray, rather than to put the gray into the situation of having to respond to them.

"What should we do?" asked the Beaver person who sat in the center of the room. Simple questions often have unforeseen consequences, and this one was no different. Just as the people were of two minds regarding the gray, they were of several minds regarding the role of the people in defeating the gray. The question was never whether or not the gray should end, but how. Simple questions often hide not-so-simple things. And talking about not-so-simple things isn't easy, and is usually avoided, even by the people. This is where the Bear People come in. In times of difficulty they can be relied on to make one thing very clear. It may not be the thing that they intend, in fact often the Bear-person-who-speaks-truth is blamed for it, rather than celebrated, but in times of difficulty Bear People roar and everyone listens. During this meeting the Beaver people were confused about what to do, but knew that something had to be done; something had to be built, to block the torrent of the gray, but they were wrong. The gray both couldn't be stopped, it was only capable of running itself down.

When our friend the Bear Person roared that day, no one wanted to hear it. They chased the Bear out of the room. They proceeded to holler that the Bear should be ignored, that their confusion was actually far more coherent than the Bear's protestation. But they didn't end up building anything new. They didn't stand in front of the gray as it rolled over anything in its path, and eventually, the gray slowed down and found something else to do.

Wild Interventions

We share the following events not as an attempt to speak for our non-human friends or the earth, but rather in recognition that we are not alone. There are those who have been against civilization from the start. We share their passion and howl alongside them in rage. We do not aim merely to celebrate these acts of violence, and certainly do not wish to condemn them. When "wild animals" attack campers, they do so because their homes and being are under pressure of annihilation. These stories function as an acknowledgement of the ongoing war of the civilized versus the wild, sometimes spectacular and sometimes mundane, but always a war.

Selfies With Bears Prompt Warning From Park Rangers

www.npr.org, October 31st, 2014

Photographs of people posing with a bear in the background have started to appear on social-networking website Instagram, and have prompted park rangers to issue warnings specific to the new phenomenon. "Wild bears are unpredictable and could attack."

Unidentified Feline Loose Near Disneyland Paris

www.foxnews.com, November 14th, 2014

A large cat that was mistaken for a tiger was spotted in the neighborhood of Montevrain, about 25 miles east of Paris, and sparked a search that involved 200 police and military soldiers, including a helicopter. Police and soldiers were armed with tranquilizer guns for the hunt, which was reported to have lasted two days. There have been no reports of the feline's capture.

In Russia, You Don't Ride Plane, Plane Rides You

www.rt.com, November 26th, 2014

Freezing temperatures in Igarka, Russia kept a plane's wheels stuck frozen to the ground and prevented it from lift-off, until the 74 passengers voluntarily got off the plane to help lush it down the takeoff runway.

Fascist Man Mauled By Lions At Zoo After Entering Enclosure

www.mirror.co.uk, December 7th, 2014

A 45-year-old man in full fascist regalia entered the lion enclosure at a zoo in Barcelona, Spain and was consequently attacked by a lion and two lionesses who pulled him into the service tunnel. He was rescued by zoo staff, firemen, and police who were able to push the animals back with water hoses and fire extinguishers, and then rushed to the hospital.

Deer Attacks Man After Being Shot With Arrow

www.fdlreporter.com , January 2nd, 2015

A 72-year-old man was injured when he was attacked by the deer that he had wounded with an arrow. While going through some thick brush, the deer leaped out and went after him, striking him in the leg with her head. He was transported to the hospital via ambulance.

Snowstorm Causes Massive Car Crash in Michigan

www.cnn.com, January 10th, 2015

A whiteout and slippery roads caused a huge pile-up on Interstate Highway 94 in Michigan, involving nearly 200 vehicles in a chain-reaction crash. Visibility was so bad that drivers could not see already-stalled out and crashed vehicles, building on the wreckage. A truck carrying fireworks was involved, causing a fire, and another truck carrying formic acid also crashed and damaged part of the highway, due to its contents.

Sperm Whale Engulfs Divers With "Poonado"

www.vice.com, January 23rd, 2015

A group of divers found themselves swimming in a sea of poop, as a sperm whale they were swimming close to decided to crash their photo-opportunity. The divers were on an expedition to photograph whales, when the subject of their pursuits released what one of the divers called a "poonado", not stopping until a 100-foot-die cloud of its feces had coated the divers and their equipment. From Vice: "Some believe the torrent of rusty nuggets was a little-known defense mechanism, triggered by the proximity of the divers. On the other hand, it could have just been a spastic, diarrheic beast – that's how little we understand about whales and their insane, magical shits."

Coyotes Attack Horses At Lapeer County Sherriff's Mounted Department, Killing One

www.abc12.com, January 30th, 2015

Over the last week of January, coyotes attacked horses at the County Sherriff's Mounted Department in Lapeer County, Michigan twice, killing one of the horses and badly injuring the other. One of the horses suffered a two-foot gash on her side. "The owners of the farm said they saw the horses running around startled Friday morning. They went outside to see what was going on, and said they saw coyotes chasing their horses."

Groundhog Bites Wisconsin Mayor On Groundhog's Day, Confusing Weather Prediction

www.weather.com, February 3rd, 2015

As the Wisconsin Mayor bent over to "listen" to the groundhog's weather forecast pertaining to an early spring or long winter, the groundhog (named Jimmy) took a bite out of his ear. This unprecedented act of hostility between the mayor had properly translated Jimmy's prediction for the arrival of the coming Spring. The futility in attempting to understand all of the underlying factors in this incident seems boundless, yet let us celebrate our comrade's brave attempt at freedom. Viva la Groundhog.

Drought Forces Brazil To Cancel "Carnivale" Celebrations

www.news.vice.com, February 5th, 2015

Droughts across the region have brought cancellations of Carnivale throughout Brazil. Traditionally, there are large water fountains and displays, yet the seriousness and longevity of the drought has caused some of the festivities to cancel those parts of their program, or cancel the entire party altogether. The BBC reported on the effects of the drought on Sao Paulo all the way back in November, as a severe drought that had been going on for months.

Meeting At The Dead End: Nihilism, Green Anarchy and the Desire for Immediate Revolt – by Riflebird

We are not autonomous, we are everywhere and everyone. We are looking to set an invisible trend that is already here, that abandons the shackles of subculture, identity and ideology, and finds comfort in the revolutionary discomfort we all feel. The suicidal are in control, destroying the land that feeds us, mediating our relationships with each other and all life on this planet, and establishing a global reality that efficiently forces all life to survival as opposed to living. There is unity in our cynicism, skepticism, and common contempt. There is unity in our neglected passions, malnourishment, and feared temptations. While there is also a division set in their very existence, there is a unity in these feelings. There are those who share these feelings, and those who look to silence them, deceive them, or murder and imprison those feeling them. 'Fire to the Prisons'

The conversation regarding nihilism in anarchist circles has been almost impossible to tune out in recent years. This article has come about from my own recent reading, personal experiences, and talking to those that read nihilist-influenced literature. Not many of these folks would identify as a nihilist of course, because they usually have a strong aversion to labelling themselves and are working toward 'a negation of political identities'. There are innumerable articles, books, and lengthy theses on nihilism, published around the world. I don't profess to know about even a fraction of them, I am simply trying to scratch the surface.

The nihilistic literature I have come across can be deep and convoluted, often deliberately contradicting itself. The level of theory makes some articles dense and nearly impenetrable at

times, alienating those that don't appreciate the philosophical tone and the now-generic writing style. Some of the articles I attempted to read just did not hold my attention, even if they were designed as a preliminary reading. Some were overly poetic, contrived or just simply resigned and pessimistic. In other cases, however, I was totally on board and felt like I could relate to the sentiment.

Throughout this piece I will mostly refer to green anarchy and green anarchist theory but also will touch on (anarcho)primitivism which I see as closely related and a necessary inclusion in the topic. As it did with basic anarchist theory and green anarchist ideas, it would take a few years of contemplation to really familiarise myself with the vast array of nihilist-influenced material that's out there. Oftentimes too, I think it is unclear where nihilist influences end and insurrectionary anarchist ideas begin, or vice versa. I am merely dealing with the material I have read and found relevant to my own exploration. A preoccupation with internalising theory and regurgitating ideas, at the expense of dialogue and experimentation, is not something worth striving for anyway.

Much green anarchist writing resonates with me, and nihilist tracts and journals may speak deeply to somebody else- it's all personal and subjective. I have felt from my interactions with nihilists a definite sense of kinship and trust, and I wanted to uncover why this is so. Part of my curiosity is that within nihilism there is often an expectation of a much sharper and deeper critique, which I have felt challenged and confronted by. I see this as a positive. Another pattern I have noticed is the willingness to go further in both theory and action.

FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO OBLITERATION

"The current nihilism amongst the youth is not arising from nothing. It is a reflection of the total failure of both resistance and capitalism. Many see no alternative and want nothing else other than the complete destruction of the beast that feeds them: the city."

Uncontrollable : Contributions to a Conscious Nihilism.

As aforementioned, I have tried to find commonalities with nihilist thought and green anarchist viewpoints because I do sympathise with both. I came to green anarchist beliefs the long way around, starting from a destructive and nihilistic streak that showed up earlier in my life. I was originally guided almost solely by boredom, depression, and frustration, then inspired by crappy punk and hardcore music, situationist ideas, art, and existential philosophy via Crimethinc, I'm not ashamed to admit. This led to a rejection and abandonment of the values of mass society, far before I had any serious interest in the natural world, environmentalism, or anthropology.

By this point I believed I should question everything, and attempted to start this process, finding many smokescreens and lies that had clouded my vision. During this process I developed a deep distrust of society and authority in general terms, way before extrapolating this out to the entire phenomenon of civilisation. This is contrary to many other green anarchists I have since met; many had a direct experience with some form of remote, wild place early on, which shapes their anti-civ perspective. I realised that I was against civilisation, but at the time was living in an urban environment with almost no connection to my bioregion, no comprehension of the annihilation of the ecosphere, and no understanding of life outside the industrialised bio-dome.

Like many friends I saw little meaning in anything and wanted revenge on society. This manifested in varying small-scale, non-threatening ways, such as petty larceny and vandalism. At the time there was a generalised refusal of what was 'on offer'; work, careers, shopping, moral-

ity and the spectacle. It was not until the literature of Derrick Jensen, Chellis Glendinning, Ward Churchill and Jerry Mander came my way that I specifically critiqued civilisation. These are lesser discussed nowadays by myself not because they say nothing of worth but are not anarchist, and they don't delve quite as deep as I would like to go.

COMMON THREADS

By interrupting the apparent consensus and social peace, confrontations make injustice visible and legitimize the rage others feel as well. When the fog of apparently universal submission is dispelled, those who wish to fight can finally find each other—and readiness to fight is a better basis for allegiance than merely ideological agreement.

'Say you want an Insurrection'

The similarities of green anarchist thought and nihilism start where they discuss 'civilisation' as a specific enemy and target of attack. This belief is non-existent in workerist and leftist thinking. I also have noticed that domestication is named as an enemy in several (what I would describe as) nihilist influenced publications and communiqués, and the term is discussed extensively within the pages of magazines such as 325 and Baedan. Domestication is not usually referred to or recognised as a part of the problem (these days). It has been 'off the table' in most discussions and accepted as inevitable. Alongside green anarchists, nihilists appear to have it in their sights, along with all the other techniques of control and domination that mass society imposes.

A conscious level of self-reflection appears to be key and common to both green anarchy and nihilism, at least in theory if not always in reality. By remaining critical of all social institutions both seek to tear down internalised structures of morality, repression and leaving behind the guilt-driven ineffectual activist mentality that accompanies and characterises so much of broader anarchism. This extends to vehement criticism of politics in general, embracing and referring to a stance of antipolitics, sustaining a critique of the left and traditional ideas of revolution. This is a step in the right direction in my eyes. It should be obvious, but by encouraging critique I am not referring to ripping other peoples' efforts to shreds, meanwhile contributing nothing useful to the conversation. Nonetheless, this phenomenon seems as widespread as it is infuriating in anarchist 'communities' and literature.

The schism seems to begin where green anarchists will outline what they are fighting for and oftentimes nihilists will not. Nihilism deeply opposes any blueprint and seem to favour attack, sabotage, and rupture for its own sake without a specific outcome in mind. This is probably stemming from the failure of leftist 'programs'; and therefore an understandable reluctance to carry on in this tradition. Instead, nihilists emphasise the sensation of liberation which comes from a direct confrontation with a target. In this way it is similar to the way green anarchists express a desire for immediacy and, in my opinion, possibly comes from a similar place.

Both green anarchists and nihilist reject activism and organisationalism. There is a focus on the subjective experience in both, and a desire expressed for direct sensory experiences, whether in a forest, ocean or cityscape. An overarching premise common to both nihilism and green anarchy is that one should never wait around or ask permission to be liberated or feel free.

KNOW-IT-ALLS AND NO-HOPERS

"Some contemporary insurrectionism affects a nihilist posture, proposing in an offhand manner that everything that exists must be destroyed. To indigenous or environmentalist ears, this project of universal destruction can sound suspiciously like the program industrial capitalism is already carrying out."

-Say you want an Insurrection

"Does nihilism mean that pretty much everything must go for a decent life to be possible? If so then I'm a nihilist. It's safe to say that nihil-ism isn't literally nothing-ism or one couldn't be both a nihilist and an anarchist. If it means the politics of desperation or hopelessness, no thanks."

-John Zerzan

As John Zerzan, prominent anarchoprimitivist writer, has pointed out, his problem with nihilists is not what they stand for but what they rule out. I have noticed this too, but would say it is generally relegated to the soul-sucking vortex of the internet where 'know-it-alls' and contrarians find their miserable home. However, I have come across plenty of articles and personal examples where nihilists have not ruled out everything, and find joy and celebration within destruction. Indeed some nihilist-influenced writing and themes I find genuinely intriguing and seductive, inciting the desire to act like few others. The concept of 'passionate friendship' (as mentioned by the nihilist/egoist writer Wolfi Landstreicher), and a steadfast commitment to solidarity are concepts that are embraced by many nihilists. These are principles that are certainly more meaningful than whether or not you are in political agreeance all the time. On the other hand, some pieces on nihilism and individualist anarchism emphasise the pitfalls of being attached to anything, so commitment or long term alignment with people or groups can be more difficult, or ephemeral.

My own interpretation is that there is an elitist streak present in some nihilist circles that is irritating. Of course, that claim has been levelled at green anarchists and primitivists plenty of times too. It would be wise to remember and focus on the fact that intellectualism, leftism, and the academy are the enemy and have always drained energy away from any struggle or threat to mass society. That said, in terms of practical, tangible direct action and regular attacks on the infrastructure of civilisation, I am inclined to argue that an awful lot is motivated by a purely nihilistic influence, rather than a belief that such a tactic will 'bring it all down'. It has to be said that if the nihilists are an observable phenomenon (which they would probably argue against) they have been more inclined than most groups to engage in risky and sustained direct action, predominantly fuelled by anger, hatred, and revenge.

By all means, explode with rage. Refuse to reduce your raw anger to demands or suspend your emotional responses to the tragedies around you. Turn your years of pent-up anguish into a fearsome instrument of revenge. Don't translate your grievances into the language of your oppressors—let them remain burning embers to be hurled from catapults. Attack, negate, destroy.

But if it's rage you're feeling, why quote philosophy professors?

-Say you want an Insurrection

THE FAILURES OF PRIMITIVISM

Coming from a green anarchist, anti-civilisation background, and heavily primitivist-leaning myself, I can say there is a significant section of primitivists that are essentially eco-activists that

enjoy being outdoors. There is therefore significant crossover with the realms of green activism, student organising, drum circles, and pacifism, and as a result, often, more militant anarchist folks get frustrated. I have witnessed instances whereby folks advocate to 'drop out' of civilisation and not give it any 'energy', as a primary mode of resistance. Obviously, this does not go deep enough or address the crisis seriously. It is important to recognise how dire the situation is and what level of resistance would be necessary to disrupt the onslaught of techno-industrialism. An acceptance of practical resistance has usually been a major facet of primitivism but I would say this has been dwindling of late, in its place a deluded idea that knowing traditional skills will miraculously heal the entrenched pathology of civilisation. I disagree. A level of philosophical support and solidarity for attacks on civilisation, at the least, should go with the territory.

This is not the case, perhaps due to the co-option/dilution of terms like rewilding and the ongoing campaign of greenwashing by environmental groups, have had the effect of making primitivist concepts palatable to moderate and fluffy hippy activists. I wish it wasn't so, but I have to concede that it has been an observable phenomenon at gatherings and primitivist encampments I have attended. Conversations around primitivism seem more common but fighting back against the ever-growing tendrils of civilisation is less frequently discussed. Much of this could be self-censorship, attributable to the green scare and the rise of the surveillance state, so the conversations may take place elsewhere. But in many cases it appears some folks just don't see the point to fighting back and have given up any hope for personal or collective liberation and action. Others pursue change via the mundane, reformist and futile channels of activism and politics.

It is a fine thing to tell stories, foster community, pursue spirituality or magic, and enjoy the fire and stars, and 'drop out' of civilisation so that it does not poison one's psyche. I would argue that all of this can be helpful. Without the flipside of a generalised antipathy towards mass society and decisive strategic self-defence component though, this can be a frustrating waste of time for those genuinely fed up with civilisation. An over-reliance on positivity, hope and magic is absurd. A degree of anger, resentment, bitterness, and a desire for destructive change is a healthy sign and should be encouraged and supported. Without this balance, a paralysing sense of morality tends to take over, and a regression to milder 'green/eco' politics. This soon becomes the default setting; and broader, unauthorised actions are condemned as 'jeopardising all we have worked for', and careerist eco-activist politicians hijack any struggle for their own purposes.

MEETING AT THE DEAD END

The nihilism I am advocating would pit itself against all those who wish to manage the potential of the present, not against the people who are managed. Our enemy is not society, our enemies are the people who maintain and create society.

-Uncontrollable: Contributions Toward a Conscious Nihilism

'The dumb or elite try to pass us off as hoodlums. In some ways they're right. As we mention we are "for nothing" and in this we look to create a trend that desires to destroy "everything". We are not a political party, but we are a party; one that celebrates tension, conflict, and attack. Not against each other, but to everything that is everything as we know it.'

-Fire to the Prisons

The uncompromisingly militant perspective of many nihilist-influenced articles offers a counterpoint to this current failure of primitivism – it primarily advocates and supports property de-

struction, direct action, attack and sabotage against the mechanisms of society. On the far end of the spectrum are groups like ITS and Wild Reaction, from their communiqués it is clear they have no qualms about killing folks. Other nihilist- influenced texts seem more measured, and offer messages of friendship, community, and favour attack against the machine to facilitate a move toward something better. This aligns well with green anarchist ideas, which encourage the dismantling of the infrastructure of civilisation to slow the assault on our planet, bodies, and psyches and allow us to heal.

In my personal dealings with those who have a more nihilistic outlook they have shown themselves to be quite reliable, solid friends and have shown consideration of my thoughts regarding green anarchy and primitivism. Much more so than other 'radical' friends who jump to the defence of civilisation, and lecture me about activist causes I should be supporting more. In general I have found them to have a stronger and deeper critique of mass society, and a willingness to form bonds rather than fight all day about our differences, particularly as many of them are sick and tired of urban existence and what is on offer. This has been a welcome antidote to the waves of anarcholeftist social justice 'experts' who revel in the banality of iphones, popular culture, modern 'life' and act as apologists for the techno-nightmare engulfing the planet.

'While many of us feel the specific analysis of institutions, dynamics and origins of civilisation is a necessary project, as well as the investigation of our true desires and their separation from manufactured ones, nihilism may also be an important element to integrate into our deconstructive process. It is actually a liberatory process to be freed from the restrictions of thinking within the confines of conceiving of another world. That responsibility should be left to individuals and their communities of affinity. It cannot be fully dreamed, let alone realised, until all power is destroyed!'

-A Morefus – Nihilism as a healthy influence

If, in the fine words of Klee Benally, it is preferable to be 'accomplices not allies', I see a possible and potential relationship with some nihilist-leaning individuals. These folks support the sabotage, destruction, and permanent dismantling of civilisation, which would force civilisation to retreat and wildness to flourish. There may still be a rift between nihilists and green anarchists, and sometimes are goals will not be the same, but oftentimes I think the targets and the enemies will be closely related.

Editor.

Black Seed: Issue 4

A Green Anarchist Journal

Various Authors

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Is the End of the World Upon Us?

There are plenty of signs that would lead us to believe that this is the case. In this issue we focus on natural catastrophies, both the incredibly dangerous ways they're minimized by government agencies and popular media, as well as our total lack of collective responsibility, demonstrated by our increasing consumption of finite resources. Our world has gone mad with profit-for-the- very-few and the political and social con- sequences of a world with as great a gap in income levels as there has ever been are dangerous. How will the next economic crash look compared to the 1930s? Will it take another war to end the next one? Can we survive such a war? Finally, is the end of the world visible in how we allow our- selves to be treated by the State? If Black Lives Matter has taught us anything it is that the human capacity to objectify and destroy other humans is as high today as it has ever been and that the rhetoric is even more sophisticated (and not) and even less forgiving. If the end of the world is a measurable event there is plenty of evidence that the meter for it is at a near high.

But if we were to predict what is going to happen we would not predict a technicolor, end-of-the-action-movie, discrete end of the world in our lifetime. What we would predict is instead something of a whimper. We would argue that the end of human progress looks like a thousand Space X capsules failing to make orbit, islands in South Asia disappearing, and the infamous air pollution in Bejing. The headlines will continue to scream about the end of the idea that humans are capable of thinking and acting in big and successful ways about our own possibilities. We will slowly starve.

The end of the world—just like ideas of human perfectibility or our progressive future of reasonable solutions to logistical problems—should be seen for what it is: a construction of the amazing myth machine of the particular society that we live in. Our four horsemen will not come with scythe, sword, arrow, and scale. They will just come with less: less resources, less political stability, and less capacity to see a way out. This is because ultimately what we call the end of the world will merely be the end of this particular humanist society, the end of a Western Civilization that spans the globe, the end of Global Capitalism™ as we know it. It may be the end of neo-Rome but it isn't the end of us.

The problem we face is: who are we without the world as we understand it? Are we preppers whose future vision is limited to fences and feeding our (homogenous) children? Are we parochial victims of future strongmen as prefigured in so many movies and books? Or are we something else?

If rewilding has been worth anything in green anarchist thought and practice it's been engaging as an intervention into this question. But along with gaining skills we also need to seriously reassess how we associate with one another. Perhaps it is too late for city dwellers, who appear to be no longer capable of caring for one another even in today's world. We have plenty of examples of what co-existence can look like, what forms cooperation and mutual aid have taken, but we experience its impossibility in our daily lives. Perhaps the lesson we should draw from the upcoming Great Whimper is that we have serious work to do regarding the depth and sincerity

of our interpersonal relationships. Other people may not save us but they do sometimes make surviving on less seem like thriving on more, a lesson that becomes more and more obviously necessary, as we have experienced excess and it has turned out to be less desirable than we could have imagined.

What's in this issue?

This issue of *Black Seed* meets the crisp air of Fall with open arms. Each Summer seems to drag on longer and longer and our hunger for the Winter becomes increasingly desperate, but enough about romance. There was a thought that the theme of this issue would be the end of the world. There has been enough evidence that it (The End of the World) is upon us, or at least there was three months ago, but today we have terror in our headlines and not the orange river in Colorado.

This issue (and the centerfold) has an interest in end of the world thinking (why it is and is not our thinking) but it also considers a few other things like animism and the anthropocene, liminal identities and the failure of the new Bookchinism, and the pleasure of text, trees, bears, and crows. So not the end of the world in fact, but maybe the endtime of this civilization. And instead of a concern with how to manage the transition to a new world (i.e. civilization) a concern with crows and other natural survivors of the annihilation-machines of this order.

This issue does seem to demonstrate that our capacity to publish this paper may be more ephemeral than we had originally anticipated but for now we still plan on publishing twice a year; it's just unclear whether it'll be a Spring/Fall schedule or a Summer/Winter schedule. We have decided to commit to subscriptions at $12/4 issues (or $6/year) and it'll include shipping and whatnot. Or you can become a special *Black Seed* LBC accomplice and get a book a month in addition to a bundle of each new *Black Seed*.

We continue to be excited about the potential for this project, the space for conversations that have never happened before (or at least not on as large a stage), specifically native and anarchist tendencies meeting and diverging, and the needed challenge to the self-satisfied and ideological green thinkers currently best known in the US. We look forward to your feedback and thoughts!

— The Editors

Anarchy on the Scorched Earth, by Balora

> *"Social disruption and economic consequences of such a large sea-level rise could be devastating. It is not difficult to imagine that conflicts arising from forced migrations and economic collapse might make the planet ungovernable, threatening the fabric of civilization."*
> — Eric Rignot
> Climate Scientist at NASA

> *"Its no longer us against 'Nature.' Instead, it's we who decide what nature is and what it will be."*
> — Paul Crutzen

There is a famous story that after the Trinity test in 1945, a quote from the *Bhagavad-Gita* came to Oppenheimer: "Now I am become DEATH, the destroyer of worlds." There is another translation of this line that some claim is more accurate: "I am become TIME, the destroyer of worlds." Of course, the discovery and use of the atom bomb was not the first time an event has pushed apocalyptical language into popular discourse, but the devastation wrought to Hiroshima and Nagasaki reignited the understandable belief that the end times were at hand. Eschatology has never simply been a fringe interest for theologists, it would be a mistake to marginalize what has also been a secular concern. In this society rationality is prized above all else, and holy people of past ages would now be diagnosed with any number of psychological disorders, but perhaps the secular and the religious views of humanity's role on this earth are not as distant from each other as they first might seem. Signs of the end times are no longer hidden knowledge. Anybody is a click away from seeing these portents. No one ideology or world view has ever owned end-times discourse. Paul Boyer in *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* observes that apocalyptic thought is "chameleon-like," used by both the subjugated and the powerful, secular and religious alike. Past the sensational headlines though, the stories are transformed into statistics and numbers that only the experts can decipher.

Never before have debates between scientists who study rock layers garnered so much attention, all due to a theory that we are living in a new epoch that stratigraphers are calling the Anthropocene. Coined by Eugene Stoermer in the 1980s and popularized by atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen in a 2002 article *Geology of Mankind*, the Anthropocene (The Age of Man) differs from every other marked epoch in that humans themselves are the geologic force shaping the planet. In a relatively short amount of time, we have shaped the earth as much as supervolcano eruptions and meteors have in the past. This has been a controversial theory in scientific circles, but there is simply too much evidence to ignore the reality that *homo sapiens* have dramatically and permanently altered the earth. Geologists aren't the only ones interested in studying and debating the Anthropocene. It has now become part of the lexicon of many diverse areas of study.

Everything from economics to gender studies has been touched by this theory and it has been highly influential in a diverse variety of academic disciplines including human-animal studies, philosophy, and history.

Despite the sudden proliferation of the new term in respected academic journals, which has led some to call the theory a "fad, a farce, or a hoax," this is not at all a new idea. In 1873 Antonio Stoppani, an Italian Catholic priest and geologist, wrote "I do not hesitate in proclaiming the Anthropozoic era. The creation of man constitutes the introduction into nature of a new element with a strength by no means known to ancient worlds. And mind this, that I am talking about physical worlds . . . this creature, absolutely new in itself, is, to the physical world, a new element, a new telluric force that for its strength and universality does not pale in the face of the greatest forces of the globe." Stoppani's theory, ahead of its time, was considered unscientific, just as similar theories are derided today.

Descriptions of the human impact on earth are awe-inspiring: 'A single engineering project, the Syncrude mine in the Athabasca tar sands, involves moving 30 billion tonnes of earth—twice the amount of sediment that flows down all the rivers in the world in a year. That sediment flow itself, meanwhile, is shrinking; almost 50,000 large dams have over the past half- century cut the flow by nearly a fifth. That is one reason why the Earth's deltas, home to hundreds of millions of people, are eroding away faster than they can be replenished." Its not hard to imagine that this single example of human impact alone is causing irreversible changes that will prove to be detrimental to the continuation of civilization, creating a world that we cannot foresee. Unlike cataclysms of the Zoo wants to build a "frozen zoo" where genetic material taken from extinct animals is used to bring them back from the dead. The last of the White Rhinos, surrounded 24 hours a day by armed guards, will be witnessed through virtual reality. Perhaps one day after our own extinction cryogenically frozen *homo sapiens* will be revived and be the main attraction in a future zoo.

Most people, even the scientists who feel there is no doubt that humankind is looking down the barrel of a cannon, watching the fuse grow shorter, continue to be optimistic about their new world. Environmental journalist Christian Schwagerl believes children should learn about the Anthropocene for practical reasons: "Students in school are still taught that we are living in the Holocene, an era that began roughly 12,000 years ago at the end of the last Ice Age. But teaching students that we are living in the Anthropocene, the Age of Men, could be of great help. Rather than representing yet another sign of human hubris, this name change would stress the enormity of humanity's responsibility as stewards of the past, there will not be a single "collapse" or catastrophe, and in a way this leads people into a false sense of security, that the banal statistics will be the key to humanity's salvation. We are no longer waiting for Christ, we are waiting for the experts to save us. As long as there are still people with air conditioning, and all the other luxuries civilization affords them, there will always be more time to make their society "sustainable." Meanwhile heatwaves are getting hotter and more frequent and islands are being slowly swallowed by oceans.

Due to what Crutzen and other environmental scientists have termed the "Great Acceleration," a second stage of the Anthropocene that begins after 1945, we are also currently living in the sixth extinction. Much of the debate about the Anthropocene in environmental circles involves conservation. People want to conserve, they want to keep nature around for their own entertainment, or to keep exploiting its resources. They can't stand to think of a world without the polar bear or the orangutan. Yet, even more they cannot stand more the thought of existing in

an uncivilized state. They want to watch the Gorilla, not be the Gorilla. San Diego Earth. It would highlight the immense power of our intellect and our creativity, and the opportunities they offer for shaping the future." This is secular society's reworking of the Christian ideal of dominion.

> "*This is a solvable problem—if we start now.*"
> *— President Obama*

> "*Time doesn't mean anything when you're about to have water lapping at your door.*"
> *— Peter Dutton*
> *Australian Immigration Minister*

In anticipation of the UN Climate Change Conference hosted in Paris this November, on August 31st, Obama began a tour of Alaska to ostensibly bring attention to the dramatic environmental changes happening in the Arctic state. In reality, it was a promotion for the tourism industry. As the glaciers recede, so will the cruise ships full of tourists paying good money to line up on deck to get an instagram-worthy shot of the magnificent icebergs. Before leaving for his vacation (which included personal survival lessons from none other than Bear Grylls—no word yet on whether he had to drink his own piss), Obama made sure to sign over the final permits Shell needed for oil exploration in the Arctic. Like so many others, Obama continues to act as though the economy can continue to grow even as climate change is mitigated. Rather than seeing the glaciers melting as a sign marking the end, entrepreneurs and businesses around the world see unprecedented opportunities for expanding their bank accounts. Even before the President finished his tour of the imperiled state, he proposed the building of more Coast Guard icebreakers. "The retreat of Arctic sea ice has created opportunities for shipping, tourism, mineral exploration, and fishing. . . . The growth of human activity in the Arctic region will require highly-engaged stewardship to maintain the open seas necessary for global commerce and scientific research, allow for search-and-rescue activities, and provide for regional peace and stability."

As it stands, there are many problems with the Anthropocene discourse, but there is still something there that is well worth anarchists' time. Those on the official Left are already engaged with the topic and creating their own narrative that merely continues the same line of thinking that got us to where we are now. Some believe the Anthropocene is a myth, and that it is not humanity that is impacting the earth, the only culprit is capitalism. "Socialists cannot ignore a change of this magnitude, or treat it as just one aspect of our program The fight to avoid a catastrophic outcome to this crisis engendered by capitalism is the fight to safeguard the material conditions for survival with dignity of humankind. . . . Socialism is not possible on a scorched earth." Unlike socialism, anarchy is possible on a scorched earth. Anarchy doesn't rely on exploited resources or the I management and control of society. If we can cultivate imaginations that extend beyond rewilding and social and climate justice, anarchy can and will survive the worst calamities. As the author Roy Scranton points out in *Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene*, "The biggest problem we face is a philosophical one: understanding that this civilization is already dead. The sooner we confront this problem, and the sooner we realize there's nothing we can do to save ourselves, the sooner we can get down to the hard work of adapting, with mortal humility, to our new reality. . . .

The choice is a clear one. We can continue acting as if tomorrow will be just like yesterday, growing less and less prepared for each new disaster as it comes, and more and more desperately

invested in a life we can't sustain. Or we can learn to see each day as the death of what came before, freeing ourselves to deal with whatever problems the present offers without attachment or fear." The anthropocene opens up fertile ground for discussions that should be of interest to anarchists and wild rebels everywhere. Like the opening of seeds after a wildfire, this space of death can breathe new life into the stagnant approaches to anarchism, still bogged down in political struggles. This is no time for safe spaces and trigger warnings, the Anthropocene is unforgiving and hostile, but this is exactly where anarchy can be dangerous and thrive. Let us not forget that the universe was created by chaos! Instead of positioning anarchism as the world's savior, as technology and geoengineering are viewed by the experts, let us position anarchy as the end. If we are to burn in the fires, let us stoke the flames. *"We are become ANARCHISTS, the destroyers of worlds!"*.

The Issues are not the Issue: A Letter to Earth First! from a Too-Distant Friend

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In July of 2013, the national Earth First! rendezvous took place in North Carolina. At the gathering, a former Earth First! Participant circulated the following essay which critiques the Earth First! movement from an insurrectionary anarchist perspective. At the rendezvous, the text prompted many debates about what strategies make sense in a new era of global resistance. We reproduce this essay, followed by a debate between the author and a member of EF! in hopes that it continues to inspire discussion and critical reflection on our activity.*

Once upon a time, I found myself before dawn hiding in the kudzu and ivy that grew just below the treeline of a mountain gravel road. Time had slowed down, as it often does in those situations, but eventually the moment came when a dozen others, armed with locks, a soon-to-be-disabled car, and a tripod, materialized out of the darkness to block the mine's entrance. Looking back up the steep incline to see the barricade lit red by flares, rendering the further destruction of that beautiful place impossible for at least a few hours, remains one of my fondest memories.

Eight years have passed since that small experience. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge. I continue to be involved in struggle, though more out of a desire for survival, conflict, vengeance, and affinity than a hope for social change. Nevertheless the return of the Earth First! Rondy to my home state seemed an appropriate time to renew certain critical questions, questions that have been raised before by better writers than I but were seemingly set aside under the constant pressure to address the newest threat that would destroy The World. Though certainly a critique, I hope that this can be seen as a gesture of affinity and communication to people who also want to live wild and free.

An Image From the Past

The larger world of radical politics during my EF! years was suffocated by the anti-war movement, which was dominated by the Left and various socialist sects. These folks were lost in the anti-capitalist riots of the anti-globe era but at home in the lukewarm waters of "anti-imperialism." Anarchists, for the most part, felt awkward and at odds with this period, especially those of us like myself who sharpened our political teeth in the street conflicts at the turn of the century. The anti-war days molded our thinking and our practices nonetheless. We became sequestered in "community building" and single-issue politics which could never fully reflect our ideas or desires. Earth First! made sense in some ways, as the best possible version of that model, so many of us got involved with eco-defense in this period.

The prevailing winds changed, however: riots broke out in the slums of Europe, Greece was set ablaze when Alexis was murdered, the black bloc re-awoke at the '08 conventions, university occupations in '09 refused to make any demands of Power, widespread and generalized antagonism to police broke out in the Northwest a year later, Oakland got revenge for Oscar Grant and

a couple years later went on general strike. Many of us felt like we had come home again. Others remained in the activist house they had built for themselves, limited but comfortable. Seeking different experiences, we began to speak different languages that reflected not only conflicting analyses but, maybe even more divisive, different desires. This was not fundamentally a conflict over specific activities or post-rev visions (i.e. infrastructure vs. attack or green vs. red), but over how the matrix of capitalism, politics, activism, and "issues," functioned, and thus over what it meant to try to intervene. Increasingly it has become difficult even to talk to each other, our words and deeds passing unheeded like ships in the night.

A Glimpse of the Future

If it was not already, it became clear to many of us that single-issue politics and its activist campaigns were a dead-end. This understanding was rooted in the desires of admittedly impatient and unruly participants, as it should be, but also in a hardnosed analysis of late 21st century industrial capitalism, a system that is always able to evolve one step ahead of even the most radical demands, more than willing to replace fracking with tar sands, tar sands with coal, coal with wind, wind with solar, solar with hydro, hydro with nuclear, forever leaping from one issue to the next in perpetual self-preservation.

In reflection, I realized that what was meaningful about these EF! campaigns to me was not the ever-elusive possibility of reform or change but those rare accidental moments of rupture, the time when the lockdown unintentionally became a trampling mob destroying the office lobby, or when the Appalachian campaign spilled over into locals taking potshots at bulldozers with their .308s. This was not mere adventurism, but a real desire to break out of the stranglehold of politics.

I gave up on the idea of gradually increasing our power with small victories, for this approach had little to no basis in reality. Insurrections do not erupt on the surface of history via gradualist-oriented issue-activism. Put another way, Turkey is not currently exploding to save a tree-lined park; those trees are a coincidence that provides shade to the multitudes who rebel for a thousand different reasons against every aspect of capitalist life. Thousands of people do not riot to save a few trees or, for that matter, the life of one murdered youth. In this sense the struggle in Turkey is politically legible neither to Power nor to the social movements that would manage it, including the country's radical environmentalists. This is an advantage.

The camps of Occupy, the Arab Spring, the austerity riots across Europe, the demand-less explosions which occur every time the police murder youth, the flash mobs that steal en masse, even just the general breakdown of civil society, all make it more clear where industrial society and our resistance are heading. Months after a black bloc awakens at the heart of a second Egyptian revolution, Turkey explodes, and weeks later Brazil's cities are set ablaze by its poorest inhabitants, explained away by the media as a response to "corruption." The time between these moments is decreasing, the ruptures themselves increasingly violent and generalized. We are entering a period where the state of exception is increasingly permanent and deterritorialized. This is our future. In this context, to speak of drawn out, gradually escalated strategic campaigns against specific ecological practices makes no sense.

After witnessing and participating in these events, many of us have tried to find a different path, keeping our love and fondness for the land while seeking new ways to develop into a social

force that can contribute to a more total break with the society we live in. Like any experiment, this has been wrought with failures and mistakes. But we have also undoubtedly interrupted and intervened successfully in many of the aforementioned rebellions. Much of what was once specific to the trajectory discussed here has become general features of rebellion around the world: a refusal to make demands, the creation of autonomous communal spaces, a hatred of the police, a critique of the media, a critique of the Left, a critique of direct democracy, a sharpened understanding of recuperation, an emphasis on attack. To be sure, this generalization is not something any single "we" can take credit for. These positions are as much descriptive as prescriptive, less the product of a certain milieu advocating certain strategies and more a reflection of modern life and social conditions. But this is our world, the one that creates us. Our revolt flows inside it, and must evolve alongside it.

Many of these positions incubated awkwardly during the mid-2000s, but are now reflected (albeit very unevenly) by everyone from Raging Grannies to homeless youth to New York Times editorialists. That such premises have found expression around the globe in so many circles, and yet stay more or less aloof from the Earth First! activist subculture, remains a mystery to me. When so much has changed, not just within the boardrooms of our enemies but in the kinds of revolt present among our friends, how can a network of creative and brilliant people still be doing activism and issue politics in the same old ways? When a formerly middle-class Obama voter can be heard articulating a critique of the demand-form at an illegal public encampment, how and why does such a critique elude the militants of Earth First? Do Earth Firsters still believe they can save the World one forest, one species, one dirty energy method at a time? Is the change they wish to see merely the summary of every individual campaign issue?

Nothing Doing and Doing Nothing

Driven by an almost theological morality, many will respond with the age-old strawman that to not do activism means to do nothing, that to not try to stop fracking or save the wolves means letting the world burn. Such a statement may have held sway in earlier, quieter times, but the events of the past few years have exposed this to be a false dichotomy. I am not contesting involvement or even engagement with issues per se, but rather the manner in which it occurs and the intention behind the activity itself. Put another way, I would argue that what is exciting about the ZAD struggle in France is not stopping the airport, which will likely just be built elsewhere in France if the occupiers "succeed," but the actual rupture, the mass revolt itself, represented both by the conflicts with police as well as the network of communal relationships established via the illegal occupation. The activist would see the ZAD as a tactic to protect a piece of land; I am arguing that it should be seen instead as an end in itself, and perhaps a path to greater insurrectionary possibilities in the future.

One might suggest that this is all mere semantics, that it doesn't matter why someone is excited about doing direct action as long as they're doing it. This is wrong; that which we find meaningful and useful about an experience affects the kind of experiences we will choose to create in the future. It drives the trajectory of our struggle. If petition drives and scary home demos seem more "realistic" ways of accomplishing a specific political goal, and that single issue is your priority, then you're less likely to make strategic choices which later put you shoulder to shoulder with a thousand comrades fighting cops among the trees. If a moment of revolt happens

in this activist context, as does sometimes occur, it is more as a coincidence than anything else, one which the participants will be ill-prepared to spread and deepen.

Both literally and figuratively, the activist is often at the back of the surging crowd in such situations, dragging their feet and desperately trying to hold back a struggle that threatens to break the barriers of their carefully chosen issue-narrative. Many Earth Firsters will personally object to such a characterization, but it is a framework of doing politics I'm discussing, not the authenticity of its individual participants. How that framework contributes (intentionally or not) to techniques of government by sequestering revolt to "issues" is what concerns me. A more militant or DIY version of the same framework is not adequate.

Political Identity vs. Affinity

The intention behind our activity also affects with whom we form relationships. Earth First! is traditionally an ally of mainstream enviro groups in many campaigns; as the "extremists" they offer a convenient whipping boy for the Big Greens, but benefit from the institutional connections and power-broking that helps accomplish their issue-goals, all while maintaining a radical image. The historical analogy of MLK and Malcolm X is often made here, but misses the point that both these men were statists who were highly legible to Power, and were more or less politicians in their own way. When they ceased to be so, their relationship both to Power and each other changed dramatically.

Historically Earth First! itself has contributed to a critique of the Green Left, but it nonetheless continues to operate in the same framework. EF!ers are radical environmentalists, no doubt, but they are still environmentalists, still doing the same politics as Sierra Club and Greenpeace but in a more militant way. Is it any surprise that so many older EF!ers get day-jobs with Rainforest Action Network, Sierra Club, Greenpeace, etc.? A friendly relationship with the institutional Left makes sense given the group's issue-focus. This is not an accusation of selling out—a meaningless epithet in any case—but it is worth thinking about how the political method we choose affects the relationships we prioritize.

If, on the other hand, one's priority is to perpetuate a general culture (and develop new practices) of revolt, it makes more sense to be antagonistic to the Left but tight with one's neighbors or co-workers or "non-political" friends, whomever one judges might go crazy with you when the shit hits the fan. Affinity rather than political identity becomes the center of gravity of the relationship. What someone "thinks about the environment" is meaningless to me. Do they hate the police? Do they hate work? Do they hate having mercury stored up in their gut? Do they hate some aspect of capitalist life? Do they want to knee-cap nuclear execs? Do we do similar kinds of crime to get by? Could I be friends with them, and do we have meaningful skills or ideas to share with each other or teach other? These questions are more interesting.

The Issues are not the Issue

I realize none of this is particularly new. Around 15 years ago now participants in UK anti-road struggles raised many of the same points, and in 2007 an editor for the EF! Journal proclaimed "Earth First! Means Social War" loud and clear, attempting to shift the direction of a waning movement, writing that, "Political identity and its limited effects have reached their expiration

date. What little autonomy we carved out by producing EF! as an activist approach is being taken from us. Whether we call it 'climate justice' or whether we relate our notion of we to a philosophy of biocentricism, we are still failing to draw lines that are based in reality."

That expiration date is now long past. The priorities and restructuring of Capital in the 21st century, along with our own experiences of revolt of the last few years, have confirmed this fact irrevocably. The enemy we face is adaptable, flexible, horizontal, a better democrat and better environmentalist than any Earth Firster could ever hope to be. Likewise, the experience of comrades from Athens to Cairo has proven that it is easier to topple governments than to reform them. This can only be more true when an "issue" strikes at the core of industrial society. The methodology of campaign activism that Earth First! has inherited from forest defense and the animal rights movement is hopelessly out of touch with this reality. Left to itself, would Earth First! as it currently stands have conducted Occupy as a campaign against corporate tax policies? Would it see the insurrection in Istanbul as a campaign to save a few urban trees? Would it reduce the 2008 riots in Greece to a way to achieve "criminal justice" for Alexis' murderers? I am left wondering.

Ultimately, Earth First!, a non-organization full of non-members, is besides the point. People will continue to intervene in ecological crises and struggles, as there are certain to be more of them, and the name with which they do so is irrelevant. But it is time to engage in a new way, with the conscious intention of breaking out of the barriers set by activism and issues. Political success is a quantitative thing that can be known through policy changes, polls, and statistics. It offers a degree of comfort in its legibility and pragmatism, and makes its participants feel reasonable. This continues to be the seductive logic of activism, militant or not. But this cannot be our logic.

The point is not to stop the Keystone Pipeline, for example, but to expand that struggle so that it becomes unrecognizable to its former self, so that it is no longer an "anti-pipeline movement" but multitudes of different kinds of people revolting against intersecting aspects of capitalist life. Because a pipeline will eventually be built anyway, even if the route changes a hundred times, because there will be fracking, even it's moved to another bioregion due to stronger resistance here, the center of gravity of our intervention must be fomenting general revolt, not "winning issues." A critique of green capitalism does not alone accomplish this task, if our method remains enmeshed in issue politics. Building a dam to hold back individual flows of Capital is not a viable option anymore, if it ever was.

As a proposal this probably sounds ridiculous to at least a few readers, but it's not so impossible as it sounds. Every neighborhood reaction to a police murder, every illegal encampment, every food riot, every prison fire, every land takeover of the last few years has taught us that any moment of disobedience has the potential to transform into a general ungovernability. We can contribute meaningfully to this potential in myriad ways, from helping a kid tie his shirt into a mask or calling out would-be politicians to building clever barricades or facilitating neighborhood assemblies. The skills we've learned as Earth Firsters are still useful, but the orientation has changed.

So I'm suggesting it's time to take a deep breath and reorient ourselves. The monster of civilization will not be brought down by gradualist activist campaigns, small nighttime bands of eco-issue warriors, or some combination of the two. Nor will industrial capitalism simply collapse of its own weight, at least not into anything other than a nightmarish fascism. Accepting these realities does not mean abandoning struggle, but changing how and why we intervene. I

still look back fondly on the days when I considered myself an Earth Firster, but as I read the reports from around the world, and think about my own experiences in the US, I must admit it feels like a very, very long time ago.

In love and struggle, for good BBQ and insurrection!

— S. T.

Against the Green Left: A Debate About Activism and Identity

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The text that follows, borrowed from the Crimethinc podcast* The Ex-Worker #10, *contains excerpts of a debate between Neal, who originally circulated the* "Issues Are Not the Issues" *text, and Panagioti, a member of the Earth First! Journal Collective. In italics is commentary and a final discussion between the two hosts of the podcast, Alanis and Clara, as they draw out conclusions from the debate and ask more questions. The full transcript can be found at:* `http://crimethinc.com/podcast/10/`

NEAL: My name's Neal. I've been involved in anarchist stuff for a long while. I was involved in Earth First!, especially around mountaintop removal and the struggle around that for a couple of years when I was living in a different town. And since then, moving here I got involved in different projects and followed the currents that seemed to make sense to engage in at the time. Really I started out with a couple of nights before the rendezvous, having the desire to reflect on why I was going. So I was actually trying to suss out personally why I was there and try and think, well, what has happened in the last seven or eight years since being involved in Earth First! stuff that has pulled me away? Because it seems like that's a valuable thing to think about, both for people who are in social movements and people who are no longer part of it, to try and think about what brings people in and what pushes them away. And so I was trying to reflect on that and it became something more like a critique of a certain model, or way of doing activism, is sort of what came out of it. Mainly coming from observations about where conflict or struggle has been sort of trending, I guess you could say, in the last few years, especially since 2008 but maybe even before then.

PANAGIOTI: I'm Panagioti, and as folks said, I work on the Earth First! Journal collective. Specifically relating to this text; after reading it and seeing it circulate at the rendezvous in North Carolina this summer, my feelings were pretty strong and then escalated as I thought more about it. The danger of it – and not danger in that cool, exciting, "let's be dangerous" kind of way, but in the way that's counterproductive to growing a movement, and some concerns that I have in relation to this and to the history I think it stems from and the potential future of where it could go are what I hope to present tonight; in particular that I think it's misdirected in critiquing Earth First!. Although there's a lot of valuable perspectives and opinions in it, I think that there's got to be a better way to present the concepts here without degrading a movement that has a lot to offer and has a history that's minimized or sort of ignored by the text.

The debate began with a question about how to respond to the flexibility of capitalism today, with which our enemies often co-opt or outmaneuver our resistance (for instance by building nuclear power plants when coal mining is politically difficult, or vice versa). What can we actually hope to gain by fighting particular instances of ecological destruction?

NEAL: First and foremost, I think that fighting specific instances of ecological devastation offers an opportunity that's not fundamentally different than any other time that we intervene in

some specific manifestation of the systems we hate as anarchists. The center of gravity when we intervene in some kind of instance of either ecological destruction or exploitation or oppression is not to engage in the way that we've been taught that politics typically work, in terms of policy analysts or a quantitative approach, but the question of: how do we come out of this with stronger and deeper affinities with new people? How do we come out of this as more powerful? How do we come out of this with greater material access to resources than we had before? How do we come out of this engagement with new tactics that we hadn't thought of before?

We've been taught that if we stop mountaintop removal on this site, that's a victory. And that drives us forward; it gives us a sense of urgency, and that can propel us to do positive and even courageous things. But it's also important to be able to step back and say, "Wait a second, they just mined the other mountain instead." It does push us to reevaluate how we judge success. I think what I'm proposing in a sense is that we try to start evaluating success when we intervene in a social struggle in a different way: less quantitatively, oriented towards how many petition signatures did you get, how many votes did you get, did you ban this thing or that other thing, are the cages two feet by one foot wider now, et cetera; and more in the direction of a qualitative sense of, did we come out of that more powerful than we went into it?

I think this becomes even more urgent on the ecological front when we look at the ways that ecological devastation is trending now, which is less and less towards things like, we're trying to save this specific acre of forest, or we're trying to free these 100 mink, and more and more towards giant totalizing things like climate change, peak oil, massive droughts and water shortages, disasters like Sandy and Katrina. Those kinds of instances of ecological devastation really aren't instances at all, they're hugely difficult to grasp patterns that the traditional methodology that we've inherited from animal rights and forest defense work that Earth First! still largely operates on and has inherited doesn't deal with well. A forest defense campaign, thinking about a problem in the way that a forest defense campaign or a nonviolent civil disobedience campaigns orient you, doesn't approach Hurricane Sandy very well. It doesn't approach climate change very well, because there's not a single target, or a set of single targets. There's just one massive social system. And so that forces us to reevaluate not only the way we do campaigns, but also how we evaluate success. We're less oriented toward specific victories in the short term and more oriented towards opening up spaces of general revolt, because that's really all that's left to us.

PANAGIOTI: I do think that there are some things here. I want to elaborate on why I initially said that it was misdirected and dangerous (not in a good way). And that's because I think that the view is a little bit, it's too abstract, which I think has been admitted. And also, for sounding larger and broader, to me it actually reflects a less long-term perspective or view on our participation in social struggles. And I say that because I've been organizing under an anarchist model and essentially, under different banners or slogans or whatever, but for the past 15 or 16 years, and it's been enough time to actually see actual successes and victories on the smaller scale that have rippling effects and help evolve a sense of strategy. For example, you know, the growth of an anti-coal movement being popularized and mainstreamed in my opinion, as opposed to promoting nuclear energy, that gave an opportunity for organizing against green technology and green capitalism, because the back end of things were covered. As far as the trajectory of capitalism is concerned, the old methods were already under attack by a broader mainstream presence, leaving space for us to start attacking the other end: biotechnology, solar and wind at the industrial scale, all these things… fracking and other forms of extraction that are relatively new and under scrutiny that I think strategically it would be more important for us to look at how

we tackle those things. You know, maybe setting aside some of the puritanical aspects of anarchist theory and ideology, and instead embracing some of the broader and practical elements of, you know, breaking up power in a practical and real way. Like, if energy companies are the most powerful companies on the planet, really powerful sources of force on this planet, more so than governments or other areas of social struggle, then it makes sense to attack them and fight them and use the tools that are available and real for us—which at this point in this country primarily is affinity-group-based direct action, along with smaller cells of underground sabotage. And I know maybe that's kind of a cliche formula, and the text we're talking about references that a little bit. But it's the tools that are present here. And I don't think that limits us from participating in movements that spring up like Occupy Wall Street or the Arab Spring and that current era of movement that's happening around the world. I think, on the contrary, that gives us experience, it gives us an opportunity to deepen trust and courage and skill and relationships in a way that allows struggle to be more valuable, more threatening to our opponents. The examples I want to reference are: the nuclear renaissance that was being heralded five years ago as a response to the coal backlash is now also crumbling, in part because of public pressure and in part because the whole economy is crumbling. I think it's worth giving ourselves some credit where it's due, and not just in that realm of energy, anti-energy extraction work, but also local campaigns. Like where I live, animal rights folks have been fighting this vivisection laboratory called Primate Products using the SHAC sort of model which I think a lot of people have said "Oh, it's passe," or "There's federal legislation, it's too dangerous, we can't do it." And they just shut down the primary facility they've been fighting, even though everyone's been saying that that's an old model, and they're scared to use it. So I think there's something to that. It's energizing and motivating and inspiring to move forward when we actually succeed in the things that we're doing.

NEAL: The first and foremost lesson or thing that I've seen from maybe looking at the last few years in the, on an international scale but also on a national scale in terms of what's happening with social struggle, rebellion of an ecological, social, class, race, whatever nature is that it's becoming increasingly clear that a gradualist mode of attacking issues or problems no longer seems even remotely relevant to me. That's sort of a shift… the traditional way we think about those things, or we're taught to is that as the active radical minority, you sort of engage with issues that lots of people are concerned about, and you push it and people kind of agree with you and you can get more radical and you gradually have more people and then eventually you have a whole lot of people, and then you storm the Bastille. But that's not really how things have been playing out. I don't know if people have noticed, but out of nowhere, Turkey explodes. Out of nowhere, Brazil explodes. You know, Occupy feels like it comes out of nowhere. And of course we know from being closer to those things that there's actually all sorts of relationships—organizational, individual, personal, political—that result in those kinds of sparks suddenly catching fire. And some of that is exactly the kind of stuff that Earth First! would be doing or that any of the rest of us would be doing. But the lesson that I learned from is that things tend to go from zero to sixty really, really, really, really fast. And what tends to get left behind in those moments is the narrowed, the unnecessarily narrow range of how we think about how we intervene as activists. All of a sudden, the "Well we sometimes do sabotage, and we do aboveground nonviolent direct action becomes irrelevant overnight, in terms of the tactical and social options available to us.

So what I'm proposing is not, like, let's not do those things. But let's recognize the field of possible opportunity about how to possibly engage is drastically broader than that, and that

those kinds of things aren't going to get us where we want to go. If you acknowledge that, you go further.

The discussion went on to examine the relationship between ecological struggles and broader social upheavals, including the distinctive contributions made by Earth First! perspectives and tactics.

NEAL: Understanding the limitations of capitalism from an ecological point of view is one example of how eco-defense can contribute to broader social upheaval. Another example: presenting a sharp and pointed critique of the green left. I think Earth First! does a really good job, and just generally green anarchism over the last 12 years, 15 years, has done a good job of criticizing green technology, especially in the last five years, as that's become more—you know, the green light bulb thing is everywhere, etcetera, etcetera. But the green left, in terms of these organizations, has become more of a sticking point in my conversations with folks, because on the one hand there's this anarchist critique of recuperation. There should be an anarchist critique of recuperation. More specifically, how does an environmentalist group that pressures the government to ban a specific form of dirty energy actually function to help extend capitalism's life span? Does that make sense?

That critique of the green left can be done by people who are outside of green anarchist circles, but it's done better by people in green anarchist circles, because they have an understanding, a historical relationship with some of those organizations. That gets again into the question of, who do we have relationships with as anarchists who care about the earth, right?

Third thing I'd say, sharing skills and popularizing forms of struggle that encourage a relationship to the land is something that specifically ecological revolutionaries can contribute that's uniquely their own. And also, it's not just about relationships with other anarchists or other people who want to struggle, but specifically with the land. And there are all kinds of really awesome land occupations that I think have broken through the limitations of activism, and in the process really encouraged a relationship with the land. ZAD is a really good example, and some of the free states in North America are good examples.

Fourth, I would say the various tactical skills and concepts that the eco-defense folks, ecological revolutionaries have, are particularly useful not just for the more narrow kinds of campaigns that are currently going on, but actually for all kinds of struggles that we haven't even thought of yet. Like, all the different reasons and ways you could build a blockade apply to a million other scenarios that have an ecological bent, but maybe don't fall within what we think of as eco-defense.

PANAGIOTI: I feel fortunate to have been present at the tail end of the previous climax when Earth First! organizing essentially facilitated some of the WTO protests in Seattle by using blockages in the street to escalate a general protest into a more rebellion-style demonstration. I organize with the Everglades Earth First! group in Florida, and in general I'm in touch with a lot of the Earth First! organizing on the east coast, but I know this happened on the west coast as well, where Earth First! groups were offering a lot of the trainings and organizing the direct action component. Our Earth First! group started the direct action working group at the Occupy Palm Beach group where I live at, and did really interesting shit. I mean, nothing that's like, would get anywhere close to the word "insurrection" or "rebellion," but for the context were pushing the envelope. And I would like to see more of that happening. And if there's a different avenue or vehicle to do it, then great. But I think that Earth First! has a lot of tools and resources to move forward with that.

They reflected on social and environmental struggles in Greece, which is known internationally as a hub for insurrectionary upheavals rather than campaign-based struggles.

PANAGIOTI: The current realm that a lot of Greek anarchists are organizing in is this anti-gold mining campaign model that's like—maybe it's kind of ironic, but it's one of the most exciting and interesting things happening in Greece, in part in light of the fact that some of the primary squats were evicted that were home bases of insurrection in Greece over the past couple of years. And just in general I think after like three years of straight rebellion with little to show for it, other than the intervention that's obviously really inspiring, and great photographs with the dog in front of the burning cops and stuff. I mean: people are like, "Fuck, man!" kind of bummed out. You know? And I think that the anti-gold mining campaign is this weird refreshing thing that's happening there. Maybe because in the past, that style of campaign organizing hadn't quite happened as much or hadn't—although they'd been fighting gold mining for years, I think that I saw a different and new energy happening there that I thought was in some ways a lesson or worth thinking about.

NEAL: When I think about Greece I don't get that excited about a gold mining campaign. In the last few years what's exciting about anarchists in Greece is that they've built up a social force that's maybe the only social force in Greece strong enough to overthrow the state—which is what we wanna do as anarchists, right? And would make the issue of a gold company somewhat moot. That being said…

Incidentally, if you're looking for examples of how to break out of the mold, or never enter into ecological struggle in the mold of activism and still want to look at ecological struggles in Greece, I suggest looking at the neighborhoods that destroyed all of the highways going into their city so that they couldn't build a landfill. It's really crazy and interesting. It would probably be more difficult here, but it's an interesting alternative.

PANAGIOTI: The anti-landfill campaign, you mean?

NEAL: Yes, it was a campaign. But…

PANAGIOTI: But it was insurrectionary too, and I think that's what we're getting at.

NEAL: Exactly. That's what we're getting at.

They went on to discuss the distinction between political identity versus affinity as the basis for our shared struggle, while criticizing institutional green leftist groups. The conversation concluded with further reflections on the limitations of the campaign model and the importance of a long view for understanding the value of our interventions over time.

NEAL: What I would propose, if it seems like a functional model, is shifting from what I would call a politics of identity or political identity to a politics of affinity. The questions change, right? So the question of, are they an environmentalist? What do they think about fracking or what do they think about the gold mine or what do they think about this, that, or the other starts to shift into something more like, do they wanna see the same things I wanna see? Do they have some of the same desires I have? Am I able to be friends with them? I don't give a shit whether someone calls themself an environmentalist. I don't care what bumper stickers are on their car, I don't care how they vote, I don't care even if they call themselves an anarchist. Don't care. What I care about is when I'm in a situation that calls for—and I want to intervene in a certain way, do they want to do the same things? Do we have something, some kind of basis for affinity? And that can come from a lot of unpredictable places that are totally outside the world of politics as we tend to have taught ourselves to think about it.

So that sort of gets at the difference between the campaign model and the model of neighbors forming fight crews that defend immigrants [against] the Golden Dawn, right? It gets at some of the differences between actually the land campaign and the gold mining campaign. But more to our point here, it relies on a really sharp critique that we need to have of the environmental left. I also think from an ecological perspective that it's really important to understand the green left, because it's the left that's gonna sell out the next major social revolution in this country. You know, if the worker's left was the left that sold out the social revolution in the last century, it's going to be the green left that does it this time.

If you shift from being worried about what somebody's political identity is with reference to specific policies towards an issue of "Oh, can I act with this person? Do we have some kind of affinity?" If you shift from one to the other, you end up somewhere in the middle, because there's always going to be people with whom you share both political identity and affinity. But the real issue is affinity, not whether on paper, are we both environmentalists? OK, cool, I'm just a more radical version of them. No, we're something fundamentally different! And so affirming that means a real strong break with the left. I think that has to happen.

PANAGIOTI: All right. Strong break with the left. So we were fighting this campaign against Scripps, this biotech company who wanted to clear forests for building giant facilities. And their next proposal came up, and all the people who had compromised on the first victory were like, we can't touch this one—we basically told them anywhere but here. So it was just us who were left, and then the random wingnuts who also opposed Scripps because they needed $500 million of public money to move forward. Which left us basically hanging out with people in the fucking Tea Party, or like fiscal conservative circles. And most of the people I hang out with were not up for going to those meetings of Young Republicans and Tea Party people. I did. It mostly sucked, and I feel like I got to call people out and kind of expose them for their rhetoric being hollow. But then I'd occasionally find someone who was in the back of the room who would say "My god, they test on animals, that's disgusting!" Or would be critical about the corporate welfare element.

In 2003 when we were organizing for some semblance of a direct-action confrontation with the FTAA, we also went to the weird AFL-CIO luncheons and stuff, so we could find out who there was on board for being in a mass march so we could be present in the streets as well. So you know, yeah, I think we should break from the left. But the organized right isn't that interesting, or something a lot of people want to be part of. So yeah, hopefully we transcend those categories when we step into the realm of actually doing shit, you have to find people where they're at. And it takes more than who's hanging out in the break room at your job, you know?

NEAL: I was sort of searching for a concrete example of this affinity concept versus identity, and then Panagioti sort of like—that's exactly what I'm talking about, really. It's less a relationship with this institution or these groups between other groups, between other activist groups, and more of, well, it sucks doing the hard work of going to this meeting. But you don't go to engage with the AFL-CIO boss. You go to have a conversation with different people, and say, there's these three or four people who we have some affinity with and at least they're gonna tell us what their bosses are up to, etcetera. And that's really sort of what I'm suggesting.

And that's not a new suggestion; that's not something that anarchists aren't doing. Anarchists already do that all the time when we try and engage on a community level, locally or regionally, we find ourselves having to play that awkward game. That happened a lot with Occupy. But I still think to an extent for whatever reason in ecological circles, there's still a fairly strong relationship

with a lot of groups like RAN, even to an extent with Sierra Club, Greenpeace, etcetera. And there is this tendency where, especially if you look at the spectrum on which these groups operate, Earth First! really does look like a more radical version of them.

I'm not proposing that we don't have a strong ecological anarchist resistance movement. I'm proposing that any strong anarchist movement of any kind, but particularly a strong ecological anarchist movement, has to set as its goal breaking out of the limitations of what has been defined as activism. And if that doesn't happen, we start to fail. We start to ghettoize, we start to specialize, in particular. What we do becomes more and more specialized: you need 15 different kinds of special roles to pull off an action. You got your police liaison, you got your legal liaison… I think we should ask the question, how does that kind of protest look different than the kinds of moments that we have found exciting as anarchists?

The point is not to say, "well, if the only place we can start and begin from is activism, fuck it, I'm not gonna begin, I'm not doing anything." That's not what I'm proposing. I'm saying, if that's where we have to start from, fine, but let's be intentional about that being a model we're trying to break out of. And let's be conscious of why we're trying to break out of that model; let's include an analysis and critique, a self-critique of the model and how it keeps us where we are.

As long as we remain constrained in this campaign model, we are letting the way we do our anarchism, our rebellion, be defined by the state, which will forever keep it constrained. And so the goal has to be to consciously get out of that even though we start in that place. And that's not just an abstract observation; that actually concretely changes the kinds of things we choose to do and why we choose to do them, right? So I might not bother with a campaign that I know will end with a petition drive, even if it will win, right? Because it won't get to the points that I want to get to. Because I'm not oriented towards this immediate policy issue; I'm oriented towards something else.

PANAGIOTI: I might bother with the petition campaign, likely because I know the people who are initiating it or hoping to see it succeed in some way. In this recent victory against a nuke plant in Levy County, a rural county in North Florida, a beautiful place with more freshwater springs than anywhere in the world, it's like worth checking out. And people there really didn't want a fucking nuclear power plant to be built in the state forest in their backyard. And in the end, you know, the victory was mostly credited to the NGOs who hired attorneys to defeat it. But we were present with our little kind of small-scale action camp and some level of presence to express solidarity and support in a rural community that's probably never going to come to the city to participate in an insurrection. But it felt valuable and meaningful.

And I think it's important to figure out how to navigate the relationship between our feelings of urgency and what's actually really happening around us. Because sometimes they intersect and sometimes they're too far off to be useful, and I think that just comes with trying it. You know, sticking around for a couple decades and trying to see where it goes, where the things that you put effort into, where they result in ten years down the road. And you know, I understand feeling urgent and nervous about waiting that long, but… you do what you can, what seems to make sense to you in the moment, and a couple years down the line, you get to look at it and see what the results were and try something new. And if you haven't thought about sticking around for the next couple decades in this circle of people in the anarchist struggle, I hope that you'll leave here, more than anything else we talked about, that you'll leave here thinking about that. OK, I'm going to stick around for the rest of my life in this and see how it goes.

CLARA: Well, what did you think, Alanis?

ALANIS: *Hm… I think they both made solid points, and didn't actually seem to be disagreeing most of the time. And certainly I agree that the new global context means we have to change how we orient ourselves towards eco-defense struggles and campaigns. But there's a point that seemed crucial to me that neither of them really touched on.*

Thinking back to our third episode on green anarchism, it seems like the thing that sets Earth First! apart from most other environmental groups is their biocentrism—you know, seeing the defense of the wild and living beings as an end in and of itself, not a means to an end. This insurrectionary position seems incompatible with biocentrism, because it evaluates eco-defense struggles based on whether or not they open up new affinities and ruptures, instead of whether or not they successfully defend the earth. In that sense, the insurrectionary position is actually more similar to the green left's arguments that we should protect land and wildlife because it's good for the economy, or tourism, or recreation, or whatever. In all of these cases, the value isn't life for itself, but as a means to something else that's valued more highly. It matters very much whether or not you win a particular campaign if you live in the watershed of the land that's about to be hydrofracked, or for the living things in a forest threatened with clear-cutting, right? For Earth First!ers who value life for its own sake, it seems like you would reject the notion that eco campaigns are only valuable as a means to another end—even if that end is anti-capitalist revolution.

CLARA: *But I think the critique is that single-issue campaigns, whether or not they win their goals, aren't succeeding at catalyzing the kinds of broader revolts that actually have the potential to topple capitalism—and isn't anti-capitalist revolution that halts the ecocidal economy the only way to actually defend the earth in the long term?*

ALANIS: *Well, yeah, I think so, and I think both of the debaters would agree. But that's a question of the best strategy towards the goal of defending the environment, separate from the question I'm trying to raise of whether defending any particular piece of it is a means to that broader end or an end in and of itself. Either way, we gotta rethink our strategy for eco-defense, when rebellion and recuperation come at a faster and faster pace. But I don't think Earth First!ers are gonna abandon biocentrism for the idea that these struggles are only worthwhile as means to an insurrectionary end.*

CLARA: *I'm still a little unclear about what's being proposed when we talk about affinity versus political identity. "Affinity" seems pretty vague for such a central concept to the insurrectionist critique. I mean, political identity isn't in opposition to affinity; it's a particular type of affinity, as is living in the same neighborhood or getting along as friends or whatever else. The question is how useful any particular type of affinity is as a basis for struggle, right? And I get that the critique is that political identity, i.e., calling yourself a radical or an environmentalist or an anarchist or whatever, isn't the central basis for affinity in contemporary struggles. The examples they talked about from Occupy and such makes that clear. But I'm not sure that I'm convinced that other more informal types of affinity are actually stronger or more reliable.*

Against Resilence: The Katrina Disaster & The Politics of Disavowal, by John Clark

Part I of II

Forgetting Commemoration

About a week ago, New Orleans went through the ten-year commemoration of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. In fact, there were several quite divergent modes of commemoration. At one end of the spectrum there was the Tenth Annual Katrina March and Second-line, the most serious political event of the day, which sponsored speeches and performances at the site of the levee break in the devastated and still depopulated Lower Ninth Ward. It had a significant turnout, though certainly under a thousand participants.

At the other extreme was the *Krewe* of O.A.K, which practiced a kind of "commemorating by not commemorating" in its annual Mid-Summer Mardi Gras parade and celebration. O.A.K. stands for "Outrageous and Kinky," in addition to "Oak St.," its starting point at the Maple Leaf Bar. The parade, noted for its wild costumes and zany ambience, attracted perhaps 10,000 to this Carrollton neighborhood event. According to the *Times-Picayune*, the Krewe chose the theme "Tie Dye Me Up," to evoke the famous "Summer of Love," and "bring good vibes to this annual parade." It added: "No mention of the 'K' word, please."

Most of the "Katrina 10" activities fell somewhere between the two extremes, but tended more in the direction of the Krewe of O.A.K., in that they were overwhelmingly in a *celebratory mode*. This was certainly true of the official commemoration that was sponsored by the city administration and local businesses. It focused on recovery, economic and educational successes, and, above all, the remarkable "resilience" of the local community. It presented an upbeat official narrative that erased many of the ongoing problems and tragedies of the city, in addition to effacing many of the most significant struggles and achievements of the community, when these did not fit into the official story. The major concerns here will be this official narrative, which pictures the city's post-Katrina history through the distorting lens of a politics of disavowal, and the many realities that this narrative disavows.

What then, is "disavowal?" It is in fact something that is quite common in everyday experience, and which we have all experienced many times. We often face two psychological processes in which truth is negated. One of these, "denial," is a defense mechanism in which the truth can never be consciously recognized or spoken. Denial is *silence*. The other process, "disavowal," is a defense mechanism in which the truth is at times recognized or spoken, but is systemically forgotten or silenced at every decisive moment, when it really counts. Disavowal is *re-silence*. The Hurricane Katrina Ten-Year Anniversary has been primarily a celebration of disavowal and re-silencing.

Resilence Kills

Much of this re-silencing has gone under the banner of "resilience." While this term has been used throughout the post-Katrina period, it has become a kind of watchword and rallying-cry for the official commemoration and the politics of disavowal that it expresses. Even beyond its ideological uses, it is in some ways a strange term to use to describe post-Katrina New Orleans. Resilience is defined as "The capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape" and "an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change."[1]

Neither of these definitions describes post-Katrina New Orleans terribly well. As for the "strained body" part, consider this. If someone had a serious accident or disease and after ten years is alive and doing tolerably well—except at only three-fourths of his or her original size—we wouldn't think of that as the most admirable of recoveries. There are also problems with the "easily" part. Harry Shearer deserves much credit for defying the forces of complacency and self-satisfaction and boldly popularizing the term "the Big Uneasy."[2] Whether New Orleanians have fully recovered or not, the last ten years have not been particularly "easy' for most of them. Maybe these long years weren't so hard for those who had the good fortune to be extremely wealthy, delusional, comatose, or dead. But for a large segment of the rest, they have been difficult and even excruciating.

But the major problem with the term is its ideological use. In Post-Katrina New Orleans, "resilience" is associated with tendencies toward regression and mindless compliance. The voice of resilience says, "Congratulations, you're still here! (Those of you who are still here)," and asks, "How about doing a second line, or cooking up some gumbo for the tourists?" It asks, a bit more delicately, "How about making their beds, cleaning their toilets, serving their food and drinks, maybe even selling them some drugs, and doing a special dance for them at the club." It urges, above all, "Be resilient. Be exactly what you are expected to be."

The ideology of resilience ignores the extraordinary creative achievements and visionary aspirations of New Orleanians in the post-Katrina period, and celebrates survival, bare life. It focuses instead on the community's continued existence as a site for imposition of corporate-state hierarchically-formulated development plans. All the compliments to the people of New Orleans for being resilient are a bit condescending and demeaning. After all, it's not the greatest tribute to people to compliment them on their ability to survive. "Thank you for not just giving up and dying *en masse*. If you had done that, it would have been somewhat of an embarrassment to the greatest country in the world."

The real post-Katrina story is not a story of resilience. More on this later, but if you want to see the real post-Katrina story, check out the film *Big Charity*.[3] It's an account of heroic courage and dedication to saving lives and caring for the community. It's a story of crimes against humanity that are systematically repressed and forgotten. If you want to see the real post-Katrina story (in this case, of the larger region of Southeast Louisiana), check out the film *My Louisiana Love*.[4] It's the story of passionate struggle for the beloved community and the beloved land. It's another

[1] "Full definition of Resilience" in *MerriamWebster Dictionary*; online at http://www.merriam-webster. com/dictionary/resilience.

[2] See the website for his film *The Big Uneasy*; online at http://www.thebiguneasy.com/.

[3] See the website for *Big Charity: The Death of America's Oldest Hospital*; online at http://www. bigcharity-film.com/.

[4] Website for *My Louisiana Love*; online at http:// www.mylouisianalove.com/.

story of crimes against humanity, and also against nature, that are systematically repressed and forgotten. Both sides of this story, the nobility of struggle and dedication on the one hand, and the criminality and betrayal on the other, are lost in the fog of resilience. They are lost in the resilencing process. They are lost in the Official Story. It is versions of this Official Story that were presented by former President Bush, President Obama, and Mayor Landrieu as part of the official Katrina commemoration.

The Official Story: The Bush Version

According to Former President George W. Bush's typically blunt and non-nuanced judgment, "New Orleans is back, and better than ever." In fact, he is *amazed* by what has happened in New Orleans. This is not so astounding, since he specializes in being amazed. He was amazed by the atrocities of September 11, 2001, claiming that "nobody could have predicted" that there would be an attack on the World Trade Center—though about ten years before there had been an attack on the World Trade Center. Hint! He was amazed by the post-Katrina flood in 2005, exclaiming that no one could have "anticipated the breach of the levees"—though several experts actually did, and it had already happened in recent memory during Hurricane Betsy.[5] Hint!

So we should not be surprised, much less amazed, by Bush's reaction to Post-Katrina New Orleans in 2015: "Isn't it amazing?" What amazes him is that "the storm nearly destroyed New Orleans and yet, now, New Orleans is the beacon for school reform,"[6] But what alternative universe does he inhabit? On Planet W, "the storm nearly destroyed New Orleans?" But what storm? Hurricane Katrina didn't hit New Orleans and even what missed New Orleans had lost much of its force by the time its winds came our way. The disaster was not a storm, but rather flooding caused by criminal governmental and corporate negligence. Furthermore, over a quarter of New Orleans was not damaged at all by the storm and flooding and most of the rest could have recovered relatively easily given a reasonable level of response and support.[7] What should be truly astounding is that the victimizers of the city made the recovery so difficult for the victims. Bush should also not be amazed by the quasi-privatization of the school system, since his own administration was responsible for promoting exactly the kind of predatory opportunism and disaster capitalism that produced that system.

Does Bush remember *anything* about what actually happened? Please excuse the foolish question. Of course, he has no idea, and he's counting on everyone else to forget, if they ever knew. As he twice implores of his listeners, *"I hope you remember what I remember."* This recalls the delusional wife-killer Fred Madison in *Lost Highway*, David Lynch's classic story of monumental forgetfulness. As Fred announces, unconsciously diagnosing his delusional rewriting of history,

[5] Hurricane Betsy was a larger hurricane than Hurricane Katrina and hit New Orleans directly, with the latter passing slightly west of the city. .

[6] Cain Burdeau and Jeff Amy "George W. Bush Visits Disaster Zone, 10 Years After Katrina" (Associated Press, Aug. 28, 2015); online at http:// hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_KATRINA_ BUSH?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT.

[7] It is significant, and not widely known, that 28% of housing units in the city were not damaged, and 58% were not damaged seriously. See Rachel E. Luft with Shana Griffin, "A Status Report on Housing in New Orleans after Katrina: An Intersectional Analysis" in Beth Willinger, ed. *Katrina and the Women of New Orleans* (New Orleans: Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Dec. 2008); online at http:// webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=- cache:jd9AwzZZSWgJ:https://tulane.edu/ newcomb/upload/ NCCROWreport08-chapter5. pdf+&cd=8&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us.

"I like to remember things my own way." Similarly, Bush's voice is the voice of denial. Never even reaching the level of *re-silence*, it is just dumb silence about anything that counts.

The Official Story: The Obama Version

Curiously, the same day that Obama visited New Orleans I got an email from him saying, "Let me be perfectly frank—I'm emailing to ask you for $5 . . . ."[8] My first thought was, "Why don't you pass by so I can give you the $5 in person! That would give me a chance to be perfectly frank too, and explain how things in post-Karina New Orleans are not quite as rosy as you've been painting them to be." I was about to send the email to Air Force One, and then it occurred to me that Obama's problem is not really a lack of information, as his Katrina speech in fact confirmed.

Admittedly, Obama's speech was infinitely better than the ramblings of Bush, whose unfortunate native tongue is English As A Second Language. Obama usually manages to combine a certain amount of intelligent and lucid analysis (even if it is often intelligently and lucidly deceptive) with a calculated folksiness aimed at mitigating any sins of excessive sophistication and erudition.

Folksiness prevailed in his Katrina anniversary address, which gets the award for more clichés per sentence than any speech ever given here, and perhaps anywhere else on Planet Earth. In just the first paragraph, he managed to dispose of many of the obligatory local references, including "Where y'at," "the Big Easy," "the weather in August," "shrimp po' boy," "Parkway Bakery and Tavern," "Rebirth," "the Maple Leaf," "Mardi Gras," and "what's Carnival for."[9]

But the agenda was basically about re-silencing. Obama enthusiastically promoted the neoliberal corporate capitalist project, including the quasi-privatization and de-democratization of the local schools. He actually citied some damning statistics about child poverty and economic inequality in New Orleans. And he noted that the city "had for too long been plagued by structural inequalities." "Had been" before Hurricane Katrina, that is. But this brief moment of quasi-recognition was lost in the deluge of upbeat generalization. He told the city that "the progress that you have made is remarkable" in achieving, among other things, a "more just New Orleans." In case we didn't get his point, he added, "The progress you've made is remarkable." So we are told that post-Katrina New Orleans is not only a model of opportunity for entrepreneurs and developers, as the Chamber of Commerce will enthusiastically inform us, but also a model for *progress in justice*.

Obama's voice is clearly the voice of disavowal. He knows the truth, and he can even tell you that he knows it. But this truth is consigned to footnotes and asides to a larger ideological pseudo-truth that is to be the focus of our attention. The truth is there only to be strategically forgotten. The dominant discourse remains the verbose but empty speech of re-silencing. So much for *les Menteurs en Chef*.

[8] Barack Obama, "important (don't delete)." An email from Barack Obama at dccc@dccc.org to John Clark at clark@loyno.edu (Thu 8/27/2015 11:59 AM).

[9] "Transcript of President Obama's Katrina speech" in *NOLA.com* (August 28, 2015); online at http://www.nola.com/katrina/index.ssf/2015/08/transcript_of_president_obamas.html. Fortunately somebody caught him before he told the crowd "jockamo fee nané."

The Official Story: The Landrieu Version

Next, the local political and corporate establishment, led by mayor Mitch Landrieu, joined in the celebration. For the anniversary, Landrieu and Walmart, along with other corporate entities, co-sponsored a "Citywide Day of Service." It's unfortunate that the community couldn't organize a large-scale volunteer effort itself, as it did after Katrina, when our state and corporate masters largely abandoned the city, except as opportunities emerged for incarceration and then exploitation. The mayor's version of a "Day of Service" was four hours of service projects in the morning, followed by an hour of speeches and celebration, and then a break, before three more hours of speeches and celebration.

From Landrieu's perspective, there was much to celebrate. On his "Katrina 10: Resilient New Orleans" web site he claims that the Katrina disaster turned out to be a positive opportunity and as a result "New Orleans has turned itself around and has built the city that we should've built the first time."[10] Presumably the city had to wait 287 years for the current experiment in neo-liberal social engineering to arrive. Landrieu's boosterish assessment of Post-Katrina New Orleans can be summed up in his depiction of it as "America's best comeback story." In a blatant attempt to mislead readers, he boasts that "the New Orleans region has now returned to approximately 95 percent of its pre-Katrina population."[11] In fact, as a recent report shows, "New Orleans is now at about 78 percent of its population before the storm" and the recent growth rate has been 1.4%.[12] Aggregating the population with surrounding parishes is a transparent ploy to confuse the public.

Many have not come back to New Orleans because of lack of opportunities here and because the dominant model of development has created obstacles to their return. To make them disappear through fake statistics is an outrage. Landrieu obviously didn't grasp the ludicrous but painful irony of calling the post-Katrina era, in which almost a quarter of the population did not return, "the best *comeback story*" in US history!

Landrieu's voice is the voice of denial, deception and delusion. Let's be explicit about what is denied, silenced and re-silenced.

Part II will appear in *Black Seed Issue 5*

[10] Polly Mosendz, "New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu on the 10th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina" in *Newsweek* (August 29, 2015); online at http://www.newsweek.com/new-orleans-mayor-mitch-landrieu-10th-anniversary-hurricane-katrina-367046.

[11] Mitchell J. Landrieu, "About the Project," in *Katrina 10: Resilient New Orleans*; online at http:// katrina10.org/about-the-project/.

[12] Jeff Adelson, "New Orleans area population still growing post-Katrina, but slowly: Post-Katrina increase slows to a plateau," in *The New Orleans Advocate* (March 28, 2015); online at http://www. theneworleansadvocate.com/news/11941581-172/ new-orleans-area-population-still.

The Roots of a New Practice: An Interview With Knowing the Land is Resistance

I first heard about the group Knowing the Land is Resistance on the *Earth First! Newswire* or some other such website. It was at once both a pleasant reminder that I needed to get off the computer, and a bit of inspiration that is often missing in anarchy land.

The group is based in the occupied territory currently known as Hamilton, Ontario. They've produced three excellent zines—two called *Knowing the Land is Resistance* and a third called *Towards an Anarchist Ecology*. The writing—at times beautiful—relates their experiences becoming (re)acquainted with the land in their area and urges readers to pursue the deeper questions regarding the alienated and damaged relationships that many of us have with the land.

OXALIS: What is Knowing the Land is Resistance? How did the project get started—what initially motivated you all to pursue this path of exploration?

KNOWING THE LAND IS RESISTANCE: Mostly, we really wanted to celebrate all the wild spaces we love, how these places sustain our courage in our lives and resistance. We wanted to encourage other folks to connect with the health, healing and hope that exist in the land.

We started out by doing workshops, inviting folks to go out into the then-wintery wild corners of the city and pretty simply just encouraging them to treat themselves to some quality forest time. We wrote a report-back from the first workshop and published it in *Mayday Magazine*, a local monthly magazine, along with some reflections from talking with workshop participants about breaking down the alienation imposed by city life. We continued writing monthly features based on exploring the wild spaces in the area and those texts became the first two KLR zines.

There was a strong intention from the start to intertwine a love for the land with an anti-capitalist and anti-colonial dialogue. We knew rooting these ideas in the land where we live was a good way to make real and tangible those sometimes– obscure ideas and find ways to weave them into our everyday lives (not just our days off when we go deep into the forest).

O: One of the things that I immediately liked about your project was that the name "Knowing the Land is Resistance" seemed to contain the answer within it. Your choice eschews the usual approaches of choosing something cryptic or excessively militant—it suggests a slowness and sense of reflection that often seems missing from anarchist projects. Could you explain what you mean when you say "Knowing the Land is Resistance"?

KLR: The name really goes both ways: resistance without knowing the land is hollow and so is knowing the land without siding with it and fighting for it. Settlers today on Turtle Island especially have so much work to do in developing this connection, as we are possibly the most alienated from the earth of any humans ever before. We have a lot of respect for naturalists and their careful commitment to knowing and spending time with the land, even though it tends to be disengaged and conservative. We also have a lot of respect and love for the bravery and passion of anarchists and activists, even though these scenes are usually very uprooted and not grounded in place. KLR seeks to bridge gaps in those practices— hence the name.

We also know from listening to older and more experienced anarchists and land defenders that getting people out on contested land is the best way to get them caring about it enough to fight for it in a committed and sustained way. The slowness and sense of reflection you are referring to reflects the fact that our projects are long-term and take a lot from us in terms of care and commitment.

O: In your writings, you have suggested a deeper and closer connection to the land could strengthen existing social struggles. For example, you speak of gentrification and Hamilton and imply that those efforts could be strengthened with a more land– based approach. Can you elaborate on this? Also, what are some social struggles that embody the approaches—or at least the orientation—that you are suggesting?

KLR: Gentrification, for instance, is very concerned with controlling space. It wants to rationalize space, strip the wild out of it, including ungoverned actions by humans, and bring marginal areas back into the economy. An example in our neighbourhood is the obsessive mowing of once-healthy meadows to make space for sod and security cameras – cutting down trees, tidying up vacant lots and alleyways, all this opens space up to technologies of control and destroys habitat. We know the people being displaced further east, and we knew the foxes and coyotes who would follow the tracks here before the massive new commuter train station came. We know how much less space there is for kids to play in trees and wild spaces outside of city logic now. In knowing these things, it's hard to argue that gentrification and progress is anything that improves lives. It's about destroying life and imposing control, and it's the opposite of health – we explored this in more detail in our workshop series, North End Raccoon Walk. This knowledge was already in people's hearts, and simply giving folks the space and permission to love areas that are normally considered blight was enough for all sorts of ideas to emerge.

It's tragic to see a brownfield that's been slowly healing for thirty years made into a short-sighted condo project, especially when we understand that developments like this also reproduce ways of life and relating to the land that are opposed to healing. It's about placing land back in the logic of economy, about rationalizing forgotten and slowly healing brownfields into short-sighted condo projects. Resisting development on the basis of rewilding and healing is a total refusal – there is very little possible compromise. It also brings with it a set of tactics, beginning with walks on sites that we're normally taught to fear and escalating towards occupations and blockades. All of these steps also break down private property and re-establish a sort of commons.

One example of this right now is in Kingston, Ontario, where folks are trying to prevent the construction of a new road over a river-side park. This road would allow the further development of both existing urban areas and of healing brownfields (and these are some of our favourites anywhere). Most of the opposition to the road shares its goal of putting a dirty, weedy park back into economic use, just not a road, but anarchists there are having traction emphasizing the importance of collective, ungoverned space, the defense of urban wildlands, and a watershed-scale understanding that even a former tannery site is important to the health of the whole region.

We saw other examples of this during our Seeds of Resistance tour, where we did nature–connection workshops for groups engaged in land defense or anti-development struggles. In Peterborough at that time, students were organizing to prevent a wetland adjacent to the university from being developed into a privately-owned but university-partnered dormitory, something they saw as a step towards privatization. They wanted to connect the arguments around priva-

tization to a defense of the wetland, but by spending time there, they developed ideas around unexpertness that could attack both universities and development at a much higher level.

O: While I enjoyed the two *Knowing the Land is Resistance* zines and the way that you all have undertaken a specific effort to get to know your land base (and indeed I feel the approach is one that more folks should take), *Towards an Anarchist Ecology* probably made the biggest impression on me as it seems to be your most theoretical work and had the most to offer folks outside of the Hamilton area. Can you explain what you mean by "anarchist ecology" for those who have not yet read the zine?

KLR: Amazing! That's so good to hear about because that was our intention. Those first two KLR zines are really specific to here where we live. They are good examples of what that process can be like, but unless they inspire you to go and get giddy about the place you live, the idea might be hard to share because it isn't easily distilled into words on a page. After doing that work for four years, we felt like it made sense to reflect and compile what we learned in a theory-based way: that's *Towards An Anarchist Ecology*. We wanted to celebrate liberatory approaches to a science, to a process of inquiry, like the cyborg witches in Spain and the work of some of our most inspiring herbalist friends.

Ecology is often seen as a progressive discipline in itself, because it tends to be less reductive and come more often into conflict with capitalism than other hard sciences. But we feel that the mainstream practice of ecology does not have liberatory potential and in fact has come to produce a new alienating hierarchy of experts that primarily serve to justify more and greener destruction of the wild.

It's one thing to offer a critique, but it's a bigger challenge to offer an alternative. The rest of the zine seeks to lay out five starting points for an anti-colonial, anti-authoritarian way of connecting with the land. These starting points are: rooted in relationships, deep listening, urban ecology, re-enchanting, and unexpertness. We have tried to identify and avoid the usual pitfalls of cultural appropriation, de-politicization, escape, expertly arrogance, and hastily jumping to an energetic or spiritual way of connecting. At the root of it, we believe that everyone, wherever they are, inhabits a watershed and is a dynamic living creature that is part of a complex and beautiful web of interrelationships. We can choose to ground ourselves in this truth, to connect with the land around us, and let the health of our communities guide our actions. We hope folks who pick up this guide find something in it to help you in breaking with this stifling society of control and in finding lives of freedom and wildness.

O: One thing I noticed while reading is that while you all speak to the importance of anarchy and anarchist approaches, there aren't a lot of direct references to the green anarchist tradition. Do you all have any connections to that trajectory of thought and has it influenced your project in any specific way?

KLR: We're definitely very influenced by green anarchy and see ourselves as part of that tradition. Particularly, we value the analysis of alienation from the wild and from each other as a state that was deliberately produced over centuries, and the anti-civ critique. However, one of our starting points for KLR was a sense that the green anarchist space was too ideologically motivated and not strongly rooted in place or personal connection. Flipping through old issues of GA, it's interesting how much the placelessness and focus on intellectual proofs in most of the articles recreates the kinds of alienation they set out to smash.

We set out to strip away some of our own ideological baggage and see if we couldn't reach green anarchist conclusions by developing our connection with our local landbase. The first two

KLR zines are a pretty good description of what this project looked like for us, here between the escarpment and Hamilton Bay. We found that not only could we reach similar conclusions (industrial civilization is killing the earth) but those conclusions often came along with concrete ways to ally with the health of the land.

A lot of other people set off from the green anarchist space in pursuit of rootedness around the same time we did, often by developing what's called primitive skills, and a lot of them ended up strongly influenced by the Wilderness Awareness School. Although we definitely draw from some of their ideas, we have some big wariness of the WAS, especially as it is explicitly hostile to struggle, glorifies colonization, and recreates a settler survivalist attitude. We have tried to offer a sustained critique of their practices while also pirating their best ones and creating alternatives.

Some of us have been spending time in EF! spaces lately, and we think there is a lot of potential there to relate more to the colonial history of the land and rooting direct action in a deeper relationship to the land. People there strongly desire that relationship and have a lot of courage, but there's not always a lot of willingness to consider meaningful decolonization and to face up to just how alienated we are from the land. Unfortunately, adopting green anarchist principles on the level of ideology, rather than the level of relationships, seems like it can actually make it harder to develop that relationship to the land, because of the sense that we do or should somehow just already have it by virtue of our identification with those principles.

O: Moving beyond writing and ideology, what for me seems most exciting about Knowing the Land is Resistance is that you are thinking through some of the big questions, for example, asking how we can develop relationships with the land and what that means when many of us live on land that has been wrecked by cities, civilization, and colonization. I was particularly struck by the way you talk about the importance of finding land and wildness in urban places. How have you all done this with your project and why was this an important to you?

KLR: It's so hard to face up to all the destruction and loss, but also so important. Even in the hearts of cities, the wild is always there, pushing back, waiting for us to return to it. Even on Hamilton's industrial piers, we find coyotes, seedlings, and brave poplar trees. The myth of the pristine wild space actually harms us at this point, because it devalues all the other land that is considered damaged. Yes, we need to protect those few remaining least-devastated spaces, but for the most part, that's not what wildness on this planet looks like any more. We need to grieve this loss while still centering ourselves around interconnected systems like watersheds. Looking at the health of a whole watershed makes it obvious that the patch of Junk Trees in the parking lot is doing important work to create health and habitat for the whole system. The myth of pristine wilderness always has us looking elsewhere for wildness, and feeling like we need to uproot ourselves in order to go find it, when in fact this is the opposite of useful. It sets us back in our own relationship to the land, and also is frequently damaging to those few remaining old growth places.

Having a connection to the land, even and especially in cities, helps us stay grounded and committed, even when things feel hopeless. It reminds us that amazing things are possible with a slow push towards deep relationships and a rejection of civilized ways, aligning our hearts to the moss and mullein creating soil on the concrete pads of abandoned fuel storage terminals…

O: Beyond personally becoming acquainted with the land, your collective has also toured Ontario and given numerous workshops that expand on the themes you raise. Your workshop guide—*Learning from the Land*—is quite impressive and is something that I could see being useful for a lot of readers of *Black Seed* who are interesting in encouraging similar conversations

and processes in their own areas. How has the response to the workshops been among participants? Have there been any successes or challenges that stand out? How have these workshops continued to surprise or excite you?

KLR: Probably the biggest surprise and most important challenge was how much fear and trauma can be brought out by engaging with our senses in the forest. It's not easy to enter the forest – sure, we can just walk in, but to really quiet our minds and be present can bring up overwhelming feelings of loss, inadequacy, alienation, fear, as well as traumatic memories. We need the voices of trees, the cool breath of the forest, and the presence of stars to feel healthy and strong, but when we begin to open ourselves to these things, we first encounter how much we've been hurt.

In each of our first several workshops, one or more participants would need to leave or would cry because of what was coming up for them. Once it was tied to memories of a childhood forest or meadow that became a clearcut or mall, another time it was a more recent lost land defense struggle, with the trauma of police violence combined with watching a piece of land and the life you had with it be destroyed. Other times it was less directly connected to specific stories about land, a more abstract despair or fear. In this way, our workshops came to focus on building relationships, with ourselves, with each other, and with the land. Can we find space to build some trust among strangers? Can we transform hurt and alienation back into possibility and wonder? Can we make this healing part of movements in real, physical defense of the land, and what does it mean to do so?

O: I find great affinity with the ways in which you all have chosen to write and talk about our relationship with the land, both in your writings and in your workshops. You use words like "wonder," "joy," "play," and "enchantment" to talk about how we relate to the land. I also liked how you de-emphasize "expertness" and formal plant names, stating that answers terminate thought and discussion, while questions lead to more questions. Could you elaborate on this a bit and how this philosophy relates to your overall approach?

KLR: It sounds like you know about the immensely fulfilling joy of connecting with the land, too! We talk about re-enchantment a lot, because we all have that freedom, play, joy and life inside of us. It's a constant struggle, for us and maybe everybody, to keep that stuff stoked and alive in this world. One way to push back is to reject the ugly, stifling idea of expertness. We find un-expertness inspiring because it destroys the myth that "someone else" is better equipped to deal with the massive, ongoing ecological destruction. We also want to go beyond the pretty toxic expertly behaviour that narrowly celebrates names and taxonomy in more naturalist-y spaces. We often hear people describe the reason they don't engage with wild spaces is because they don't know enough.

Finding time to be present, think deeply, and feel joy in connecting with the land can get us out of our heads and into our bodies. Generally, anarchists could use some more joy and play.

O: I also like how you talk about spirituality and encourage people to approach it cautiously. *Black Seed* has been interested in fostering a conversation about spirituality and green anarchy. Why do you urge caution around this topic?

KLR: It's pretty understandable that people seek to fill the void of alienation created by this society with something positive, something that promises a deeper connection to the wild. However, our experience is that often people want to rush to talking about magic, animal spirits, literally hearing words from trees, that sort of thing, while skipping over the long, hard work of getting to know their landbase on its own terms. Similar magical practices exist in various in-

digenous landbased traditions around the world, but for settlers (especially white settlers) living in the land called North America, we need to appreciate just how gone those traditions are for us. They are really, really gone. There isn't an older, earth-based culture for settlers still clinging to existence on the margins of industrial society, the way there was in Europe until the end of the 1700s. There is nowhere for us to escape to when we realize the lives and worldviews we have been given are crap.

The project of rebuilding a land-based tradition for uprooted people is a beautiful one, but it can only be a humble and slow starting place for settlers, and potentially a multi-generational project. Around the world, spiritual knowledge is held and passed on by wise elders, drawing on knowledge and traditions accumulated over generations and rooted in intricate knowledge of the relationships between the plants, animals, waters, and lands of their territories. It isn't respectful to the beauty of earth-based cultures to think we can somehow get around the absence of elders and traditions just by wanting to. We believe that learning to really pay attention to the wild, to observe it with our physical senses, learning to read the land and understand how to ally with its health is the best starting point for this exploration.

O: I see the conversation around spirituality as being quite connected to how we talk about colonization and what it means in the context of folks living on stolen land. I also feel as though it—spirituality for lack of a better term—has at least some type of relationship to science as an alternative way of looking at the world. In your writings you have been critical of science and what you call "dominator ecology." What do you mean by "dominator ecology"? At the risk of setting up a simplistic binary, do you see criticisms of science and discussions of spirituality as being connected?

KLR: We decided to describe the mainstream science of ecology as "dominator ecology" to refocus attention on the power relationships created by the practice of science as it is commonly carried out. "[It] is the ecology of management from a distance, and of remote expertise, that sees itself as fundamentally separate from the land, inhabiting a present without a past or future." In *Towards an Anarchist Ecology* we further trace out how the practice of dominator ecology upholds colonial and capitalist structures while enforcing our alienation from the land by situating it as the realm of experts. We see reclaiming inquiry and the roots of science as absolutely vital in rebuilding a connection to the land, which will lay the groundwork for any land-based spirituality that might arise.

We need to critique and fight dominator science to create space for us to trust our own experiences again, while reclaiming from it the tools we might need. We also need to prevent the space created in this way from being hastily filled by a supposed spirituality that projects our assumptions about the land back onto it, recreates our own alienation from it by trapping us in our own egos and imaginings, and supports new claims of unaccountable knowledge.

It might sound like we're being really hard on spirituality, but it's because we consider it to be too important a project to move hastily. There is a huge grief involved in recognizing that we truly are alienated from the land, that there is no easy way out, that we really are so ignorant. We need to truly feel that and cultivate humility in the sorts of knowledge we claim access to. Our experience is that observing the wild closely and honestly leads inevitably to action in its defense and to clashes with power—the more these clashes are collective and sustained, the more we build a community that orients its values in line with the health of the wild. Such a community is the soil from which any spiritual practice might (re)grow.

In particular, we've found close observations of healing wildlands to be full of profound truths about how to live in this world. Take a walk down the traintracks, through old brownfields, rewilding farmlands, old quarries, around abandoned houses and buildings, and you'll see the plants and creatures who are courageously facing up to the utter devastation and who are working hard to recreate health and resiliency even in the most damaged places. Learning to appreciate the work being done by plants with deep taproots like chicory, burdock, and curly dock, for instance, not only inspires us to fight for health in hard situations, but gives us practical ideas about how this can be done. These are the roots of a new practice.

O: Finally, what has your collective been up to recently? How do you see your work continuing in the future?

KLR: We haven't been that active as a closed collective in the past few years. One big reason why we stepped back from KLR (at least for now) was it felt like we were beginning to occupy an expert-like role— it felt pretty silly to let ourselves become the experts in unexpertness. Our goal as KLR was to develop and then freely share simple practices for an anti-colonial and anti-capitalist way of connecting to the land, and we felt that through thirty or so workshops, our zines and posters, and the *Learning from the Land* guide, we had got some of these ideas out there. Continuing in the way we had as a closed collective didn't feel like it was in service to this goal.

These days, we like to encourage and support anyone who sets out to connect with the land, especially those who are determined to act. We continue to distro our resources and to support others in putting on workshops or developing actions. We love taking part in conversations about land defense, especially about spreading the practice of long-term land defense occupations in settler communities as a way of developing collective knowledge and practice of allying with the health of the land. We have also been prioritizing modeling good security culture and encouraging people to take this seriously in land defense.

Corrosive Consciousness — Part I: How One Might Profane Green Platonism, by Bellamy Fitzpatrick

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a selection from a failed debate with Kevin Tucker intended to be published in issue #2 of *Black & Green Review*. KT rejected this because he desired the debate to be constrained to the question of egoism (pro or con) and the author desired to make a broader case. We will publish the rest of this argument, the author's positive case for egoism, in *Black Seed* Issue 5

> *"The primal war is a spiritual war. It began as the spirit of wildness was buried. . . ."*
> -Kevin Tucker, "Egocide"

> *"To be sure, to speak of spirit and the good as Plato did meant standing truth on her head and denying perspective itself, the basic condition of all life."*
> -Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good And Evil*[1]

The history of Western philosophy can be divided, very crudely but nonetheless meaningfully, into two[2] broad strands depending on assumptions, or lack thereof, about lived experience. One tendency—calling itself in its various incarnations Realism, Christianity, scientific materialism, and so forth—begins not from *the real* of our lived experience but instead with a presupposition about *what the world is* really *like*, positing something greater, deeper, or truer than what we feel. It follows from a presupposition like this one that our lived experience is only a pale reflection or echo of what is seen as the fundamental truth. This speculative, reifying mode "finds its origin in Platonic philosophy and has been dominant from the very beginning."[3] I will call this mode of thinking, broad and varied as it is, Platonism, for the purposes of this essay, as I think its roots are meaningful and highlight its tendency toward reification and morality.[4]

The second tendency—a perpetual minority that has been called or has called itself perspectivism, egoism, existentialism, nihilism, and other names—considers phenomenality, lived experience, to be prior to and to take precedence over any such reifying speculation. Knowledge and

[1] Special thanks to Roufus H. Byrd for reminding me of this line and for a wonderful conversation that contributed to this essay.

[2] This taxonomy may, and I suspect does, apply to philosophical thought in general, beyond the Western tradition. I am framing it this way due to my relative familiarity with Western thought and relative ignorance of non-Western perspectives.

[3] Bell, David F. Introduction to *Joyful Cruelty: Toward a Philosophy of the Real* by Clément Rosset.

[4] Note that, by this definition, most anarchists are Platonists, as most engage with some kind of alienated conception of the Good, like Humanity, Justice, or Social Progress.

value come from phenomenality, are felt in the flesh, and are always instrumental and provisional rather than aiming at an imagined ultimate, objective reality disembodied from moment-to-moment existence. I will in this part of the essay analyze Anarcho-Primitivism from this perspective; in part two, I will argue that this second tendency is an essentially anarchist mode of thinking.

Exiting the Madhouse: Moving Toward a Truly Critical Theory

> *"Man, your head is haunted. . . . I regard those persons who cling to the Higher . . . almost the whole world of men, as veritable fools, fools in a madhouse."*
> -Max Stirner, *The Ego And Its Own*

The madhouse is civilization,[5] and the fools are those who, not only in their actions, thinking, and language; but also, unfortunately, in their critical theory, spend a great deal of their activity reproducing it every day.

History is rife with examples of critical theory that purport to liberate humans (and, rarely, nonhumans) from domination, exploitation, and alienation. Nearly all of them, however, criticize "particular forms of enslavement merely in order to substitute other forms of enslavement."[6] In order to be consistently and thoroughly liberatory, then, a critical theory cannot simply effectively critique one aspect of civilization or a particular manifestation of it, nor can it stop at critiquing every aspect and manifestation of all extant and historical civilizations.

Instead, thoroughgoing critical theory must effectively critique *all possible* forms of domination, exploitation, and alienation—it must provide a moment-to-moment practice of critique that allows for perpetual yet always provisional analysis leading to potentially immediate action. In doing so, it allows one to be critical not only of present civilizations, but also possible future iterations of domination and exploitation, the reemergence of alienated lifeways and modes of thought, and the inadequacies of present and future partial liberation theories.

Anarcho-Primitivism (AP)—in spite of contributing importantly to the anti-civilization critique—fails in this regard because it does not break free of the speculative Platonic tendency, that essentially civilized mode of thinking. AP therefore seeks totalizing truths that render the world absolutely knowable, recapitulating an ideology of control and measurement; draws sacred moral lines where they do not exist in the biosphere; posits objective and transcendental values and entities, reifying aspects of our phenomenality; and succumbs to the same dualistic logic that has characterized classical anarchism. I will examine only a few specific instances of these issues here, due to constraints of scope: the vagaries of domestication, the mystification and sacralization of wildness, and the Manichaeism that motivates and unites both.

[5] Many discussions of civilization are hampered by a lack of a clear definition of the subject. Briefly, by civilization, I mean a way of human life characterized by the growth of cities, areas of urban population sufficiently dense as to require the routine importation of food from corresponding rural surroundings characterized by agriculture. Civilized life generally includes all of the following, to varying degrees: collective activity tightly organized around a linear and numerical conception of time; a high level of ritual and symbolic culture; complex and explicit social hierarchy; political representation; the formation of a State, which attempts to monopolize the use of physical violence and delegitimize non-State violence; bureaucracy; compulsory labor (work); and societal mores and ideology rationalizing racial or cultural supremacy, dominance of nature, and social progress. As I will argue later, an additional important characteristic, which subsumes all of the above, is highly reified thinking and social roles.

[6] McQuinn, Jason, "Critical Self-Theory," *Modern Slavery*, volume 3, C.A.L. Press.

The Vagaries of Domestication

It is seductive to talk of domestication in anarchist theory: it applies ideas of domination we have already come to understand in a new dimension. The idea that our present crisis is caused by dominating Nature—or burying the spirit of wildness, as you prefer—implies, when it is not already explicitly stated, that we might exit this nightmare by simply learning how to stop dominating and somehow negating those who refuse to stop. It is thus a recapitulation of egalitarian tendencies of thought that consider liberation to be tantamount to the elimination of power. It is easy to talk to anarchists about power; for many, it is already a placeholder for *bad*. Indeed, Tucker, at the 2014 Philadelphia Anarchist Bookfair, summarized anarchist theory as *the search to identify and eliminate power*; green anarchy's contribution, he continued, has been identifying that power with agriculture, with domestication—it is a pleasingly elegant, readily comprehensible critique that implies the familiar Manichaean theme.

To effectively avoid doing something, one needs to know clearly what it is; but when it comes to defining domestication, APs have been vague, tending toward moralistic, quasi-religious, and maudlin language. John Zerzan has defined it at his most sober as "the attempt to bring free dimensions under control for self-serving purposes"[7] and elsewhere, with metaphysical adventurousness, as "a cosmic change"[8] —sacred lines are being crossed, one is to understand. Kevin Tucker has been more erratic, either clearly defining or vaguely gesturing at domestication in a wide variety of ways:

- Though Kevin at times appears very conscious of the accusations of religiosity that have fallen on AP, he nonetheless endorses Chellis Glendinning by saying "the original trauma of domestication is a deep wound."[9] Here, domestication is perhaps our Fall.
- Elsewhere, he seems to agree with Zerzan's "cosmic change", describing it as relating to metaphysical erasure or transformation: "Domestication is the destruction of the soul."[10] or "Domesticated plants and animals replace wildness."[11]
- Domestication also seems at times to be naturalized, synonymous with socialization, as when "Our submission to the system is our domestication,"[12] described as "the internalized system: the cop, missionary, politician, economist, and worker in our heads."[13]
- Most mundanely, Kevin often refers to dependency, perceived dependency, and control to characterize domestication.

How is domestication so many different things? If it is, then is it actually a useful term? At times, domestication is even contradictory things, as when "Our own self domestication has not changed who we are"[!][14] – so it does not seem to create or prescribe different metaphysical

[7] Zerzan, John. "Enemy of the State: Interview with John Zerzan," by Derrick Jensen. *Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilization*. Feral House, 2002.

[8] Quoted from his public debate at Stanford University with transhumanist Zoltan Istvan. Available on YouTube as "Zoltan vs Zerzan."

[9] Tucker, Kevin. "Egocide," *For Wildness and Anarchy*. FC Press and Black and Green Press, 2010.

[10] Tucker, "The Witch and the Wildness," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

[11] Tucker, "Agents of Change: Primal War and the Collapse of Global Civilization," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

[12] Tucker, "The Disgust of Daily Life," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

[13] Tucker, "The Witch and the Wildness."

[14] Tucker, "Agents of Change: Primal War and the Collapse of Global Civilization," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

categories, after all – or "domestication is not some monolithic and irreversible event in the past, but a constant reality that we recreate daily through our own lives"[15] – and so it is therefore not an original trauma or Fall, which is a decidedly singular event.

Domestication, then, as Kevin deploys it, is a *margarine-word*, a word "whose function is to circulate, not to mean."[16] It is used less to convey information than to indicate the user holds a certain moral position. This residue gleams clearly in certain moments, as when Kevin writes: "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 [sic] and dictate its relationships."[17] There are things we must not do, and one of them is to control the world around us; but the phrase "control the world" is as vague as "domestication."

We cocreate one another's worlds: my phenomenality is inseparable from myself—it constitutes me—and I am therefore a multifarious being composed of every other being that I encounter. Intimacy and symbiosis are cocreation, meaning that creatures are continually shaping one another. But this cocreation is not a lack of control or a surrender of power, it is a simultaneous competition and cooperation of powers. Do we not all control each other's worlds, as we are the constituents of one another's worlds? Where does symbiosis end and domestication begin?

I have written elsewhere in greater length and depth that power, control, and interdependence as well as more one-sided dependence are rampant among nonhumans: orchids sexually deceive their pollinators, parasitic barnacles castrate their hosts and hijack their reproductive organs, and leafcutter ants engage in quasiagriculture.[18] Through co-evolution and symbiosis, species are constantly shaping and influencing each other.

I thus cannot take seriously the idea that power, control, and dependency are what problematize inter-organismal relationships. A Foucauldian analysis of power, normally understood in terms of inter-human relationships, seems equally applicable to ecology: exertions of power characterize all interactions and are inescapable—indeed, Stirner and Nietzsche seem to have understood beings as iterations of force and the act of being alive as consisting of exertions of power, the cessation of which is one's death. Rather than run from power, control, and dependency, drawing nonsensical, life-denying barriers around them; we might instead acknowledge and seek to understand our power over other organisms, how we are shaping them and they us. It is not that everything is bad," but that everything is dangerous," and we may thus move toward a "hyper—and pessimistic"[19] awareness of what our power means and how it can be more life-affirming.

Other takes on ecology contrast with Kevin's moralistic one—that seeks, Platonically, to carve nature into joints, the good and the bad—and refuse this dualism. Permaculturist Bill Mollison famously argued that everything gardens, that is, every organism exerts power to create a favorable environment for itself: the bacterium *Lactobacillus*, for one, shits lactic acid that favors itself and its conspecifics but inhibits the growth of many competing molds and bacteria—this act is power, this act is an effort "to control the world […] and dictate its relationships." Former

[15] Tucker, "The Forest Beyond the Field: The Consequences of Domestication," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

[16] de Acosta, Alejandro, "To Acid-Words," *The Impossible*, Patience, Little Black Cart (Ardent Press), 2014.

[17] Tucker, "The Forest Beyond the Field: The Consequences of Domestication," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

[18] The piece is written but presently unpublished. It will be published in an upcoming Enemy Combatant pamphlet on egoist conceptions of ecology. It is a response to John Zerzan's "Animal Dreams," which was printed in the first issue of *Black Seed*.

[19] Foucault, Michel. Interview, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress."

Animal Liberation Front member Rod Coronado spoke in an interview conducted by Tucker of being inspired by the way predators exert a domineering presence.[20] Nietzsche saw life as continually overcoming itself, always surging forth in new forms. When I envision the ichneumon wasp injecting its eggs and mutualistic viruses into a host, seizing control of its body, I am moved similarly to see a kind of ecstatic and violent act of life overcoming itself.

I of course agree with Tucker that there is a horrific dimension to many of our human-nonhuman relationships; certainly, he is getting at something important. To tease out what this horror is more empirically and less morally, we might paraphrase permaculturist Toby Hemenway's definition of agriculture:[21] the process by which ecosystems are annihilated and turned into human beings and their domesticates, resulting in an economic surplus that encourages the creation of rulers to oversee it, slaves to harvest it, bureaucrats to measure it, guards to protect it, and an ideology to rationalize the whole disgusting process. And there our focus is revealed: it is not the hazy act of domestication, inveigled as it is with co-evolution and symbiosis and fraught with vague and moralistic condemnations like dependence and control; rather, it is *the social and ecological relationships* that emerge from certain forms of power exertion that are problematic. The recent anarchist interest in M. Kat Anderson's *Tending the Wild* and the ideas of permaculturists like Hemenway, Mollison, and Fukuoka seems to be a healthy recognition of the fact that high levels of human-nonhuman cocreation, control, coevolution, and interdependence are not only inescapable but also not necessarily undesirable, as they need not engender the massive biotic denuding, exploitation, and alienation that characterize civilization.

The Elusive and Sacred Wildness

> *"When we learn to open ourselves to wildness [...] the organic anarchy of our beings will flow."*
> *"That spirit is what connects an individual to the [...] wildness around them."*
> *"Wildness that flows between living beings . . ."*
> - Kevin Tucker
> *For Wildness And Anarchy*

> *"Constantly regard the universe as one living being, having one substance and one soul . . . and how all things act with one movement; and how all things are the cooperating causes of all things that exist."*
> – Marcus Aurelius
> Stoic Emperor of Rome

As a foil to domestication, Tucker frequently evokes "wildness," which exhibits the same slippery qualities of seeming to define decidedly different things. With possible self-transparency and hesitation, Tucker often deploys the word with a vanguard and rearguard of qualifiers and negative descriptions.[22] Nevertheless, the positive descriptions or gestures shift freely between vastly different ontological realms. As above with domestication, I briefly explore a few here:

[20] "The Resilience of the Wild: Talking and Stalking Wolves with Rod Coronado," *Black and Green Review*, vol. 1

[21] From Hemenway's "Toward a Horticultural Society" presentation.

[22] He writes, for instance, in the piece "Egocide": "I can't say what it is that I feel [...] I can say that I feel something." and "I'm not talking about some new age 'oneness.'"

Sometimes, wildness seems to refer to a feral, unsocialized state or act: "we fear the wildness we are born into . . . such a savage, primal state."

Though Tucker expresses an allergy to "new age oneness,"[23] he nonetheless also seems to be positing some kind of universalizing force or essential connective substance as when he refers to "that spirit is what connects an individual to the . . . wildness around them." and "wildness that flows between living beings"[24] —at times, it is even composed of divisible units, "pieces of wildness."[25]

And though Tucker agrees with me that "There is no 'Nature,' alone and isolated outside of our grasp," he does not shy away at times from describing wildness as some elusive, essential substance of the world, perhaps independent of any given being as when there is "a war against looming wildness,"[26] one fought against "the state of wildness,"[27] being lost as "there isn't enough wildness left . . . wildness is running thin."[28]

Wildness, then, is anything from a propositional attitude to a quintessence of life that is definitively out there, capable of being tapped into or destroyed. I have had occasion on *Free Radical Radio* to point out that, at his most metaphysically adventurous, Tucker sounds like nothing quite so much as the Classical Stoics, quoted in the epigram, who believed in, among many other things, living well by aligning oneself with Nature. I have noted in those same episodes how Nietzsche so effectively ridiculed this notion:

"You desire to LIVE 'according to Nature'? [which is] boundlessly extravagant, boundlessly indifferent, without purpose or consideration, without pity or justice, at once fruitful and barren and uncertain . . . how COULD you live in accordance with such indifference? . . . Is not living valuing, preferring, being unjust, being limited, endeavouring to be different? . . . In reality, however, it is quite otherwise with you: while you pretend to read with rapture the canon of your law in Nature . . . In your pride you wish to dictate your morals and ideals to Nature, to Nature herself, and to incorporate them therein. . . ."[29]

The idea of living according to some abstracted idea of life, biology, or Nature—be it Stoicism, biocentrism (Tucker's other preferred term), universal love, or wildness—places one in a peculiar ethical paradox. One wants not to be anthropocentric or in line with *The Culture*, opposed as these are to *Nature*, and so one attempts to give oneself over to the way of Life or the Universe. But Life is not actually a coherent, consistent entity that always strives toward the Good, in spite of Tucker's assertion that Nature plays the part of protagonist: though at times its acts are "unpredictable and chaotic," we can count on its consistency as "The only thing they will do for sure is catalyze the life cycles of all living things."[30]

In contrast to Tucker's Platonic portrayal of it, the biosphere is a complex of biota and abiota that are not only often beautiful, rich, stable, and fertile; but also often indifferently destructive and contradictory. Cyanobacteria, the first photosynthetic organisms, may have wiped out most life on Earth 2.3 billion years ago by filling the world with atmospheric oxygen, then toxic to

[23] Tucker, "Egocide," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

[24] Tucker, "The Forest Beyond the Field."

[25] Tucker, "The Spectacle of the Symbolic," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

[26] Tucker, "The Forest Beyond the Field."

[27] Tucker, "The Spectacle of the Symbolic."

[28] Tucker, "The Forest Beyond the Field."

[29] Nietzsche, "On the Prejudices of Philosophers," *Beyond Good and Evil*, Penguin Books, 2003. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale.

[30] Tucker, "The Creation of Disaster," *For Wildness and Anarchy*.

most organisms, and went on to create a 300 million year ice age during which even the ocean surface may have been slush. Paleontologist Peter Ward, noting that several similarly apocalyptic events have happened, has put forth the Medea Hypothesis, suggesting that multicellular life is essentially self-destructive and therefore periodically annihilates itself. When philosophers talk about aligning themselves with Nature or Life, they pretend that cyanobacterial nigh-omnicide does not exist; they focus instead on the interconnectedness of trees and mycorrhizal fungi.

The effort to cease being anthropocentric, then, ends up merely recapitulating anthropocentrism by picking and choosing the aspects of the nonhuman world that humans want to emulate. And why should we be afraid of this evaluation, as Nietzsche said, for is the act of living not one of moment-to-moment evaluation? APs, like all Platonists, seem to fear that a lack of objective, transcendental value would entail either a total devaluation of the world or else a complete arbitrariness about what has value—if we do not enshrine Nature, wildness, Life, or *something* as the Good, and especially if we show that Nature et al. sometimes do pointless and destructive things, then, it follows for them, that there would be no good reason we should not just continue to monotonously and immiseratingly denude the biosphere. But this conclusion does not necessarily follow.

The cyanobacterial annihilation of most life was one articulation of life's possibilities, just as the present civilized annihilation of much of the organic is another—as a unique, evaluating being, I am fully prepared to say, unhesitatingly, that I prefer certain assemblages to others. Such an act could be called anthropocentric in its refusal to defer to some imagined, unified will or objective value of biocentrism or Nature; but I would call it simply a unique, entirely perspectival and personal evaluation, as it defers to neither an imagined totality of nature nor to any variation of humanism.

The Persistence of Manichaeism

> *"the primal war: the refusal and resistance to domestication wherever and whenever it has imposed itself on life and the world."*
> - Kevin Tucker
> "Agents of Change: Primal War and the Collapse of Global Civilization"

Both wildness and domestication, then, seem to be vague predicates referring more or less ambiguously to Platonic Forms. Domestication gestures at a certain social and ecological relationship, but suggests that an exertion of power is the primary problem. Wildness refers to some will or essential rightness of Nature. Domestication and wildness, then, refer primarily to moral categories, diametrically opposed, and AP insistence on using them has the function of framing the world as a cosmic battlefield between essentially opposed forces.[31]

In this way, Tucker has not departed categorically from classical anarchists, in that he frames the struggle of anarchism in a Manichaean schema that sees wildness, nature, and humanity in a moral-cosmological struggle with domestication, civilization, and the capitalist state. It is replete

[31] Indeed, John Zerzan has, more than once, on *Anarchy Radio* as well as in personal conversation, expressed contempt for an anti-civilization perspective that does not base itself on a Civilization/Nature dualism, regarding the refusal of such a metaphysic as implicitly capitulatory. In spite of his important recognition in the 1980s (essays collected in *Elements of Refusal*) that one of the driving aspects of civilization is reification, Zerzan demands at least some level of Platonism.

with a Rapture event, the Collapse, that replaces Revolution;[32] and a *ressentiment* aimed at "the domesticators," who are our nouveaux-bourgeoisie.[33] Tucker, in spite of significantly different particulars, is thus in the basic logic of his thinking in alignment with Bakunin, who understood anarchism as the struggle of natural authority against artificial authority, the former not being oppressive because its laws "are not extrinsic in relation to us, they are inherent in us, they constitute our nature, our whole being physically, intellectually, and morally."[34]

We are thus left with a decidedly submissive logic predicated on externalized value, defined both in submission to an abstract Platonic authority, nature or wildness, as well as through *ressentiment* toward the domesticators and civilization; we have the same self-diminution with respect to Good and Evil. This leaves one with the same deference to reification that has characterized all of civilization, precipitated its creation, and crippled the majority of critical theories waged against it.

[32] Though Tucker is circumspect in extolling present action and emphasizing that he does not perceive collapse as a discrete event, he is still prone to endorsing this millenarianism, the ultimate in delayed-return anarchy. The introduction to Black and Green Review, for instance, frames our present context in terms of collapse. Tucker is perhaps unaware of the degree to which some anarcho-primitivists base their entire perspectives, and entire lives, around waiting for this deliverance while learning primitive skills. This practice recapitulates Marxist-Leninist revolutionary discipline, training one's mind and body to be prepared for when the Revolution comes.

[33] This ressentiment-fueled analysis places blame for our situation on a tiny politico-economic elite with nefarious motivations. While I can certainly sympathize with disgust for the behavior of specific persons and attitudes among said elite, I find this kind of unqualified vilification distorts the reality of the social machine that creates a qualitatively and quantitatively different enslavement and imprisonment for each person in civilization as well as mutual co-dependence among us.

[34] Quoted in Newman, Saul, "Anarchism and the Politics of Ressentiment." Thanks to Nicola for pointing this connection out to me.

It's All Falling Apart: Dispatches From the End Times

43 STUDENTS DISAPPEAR

A year later the Mexican State still has no answers.

The families of the missing students have always distrusted the government's account of what happened to their relatives on the night of Sept. 26, 2014. The male students of Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers College came under attack several times by Mexican security forces that evening in the nearby city of Iguala, after they tried to commandeer buses for an upcoming protest. By the end of the night, three of them were dead and 43 were missing. The government said the students were abducted by local police, who handed them to be killed by the Guerreros Unidos drug cartel.

But the official account of events is riddled with holes and inconsistencies. The government faced accusations that suspects and witnesses were tortured and that their refusal to investigate the role of federal forces amounted to a cover-up.

Source: Huffington Post

OCEAN FISH NUMBERS ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE

The amount of fish in the oceans has halved since 1970, in a plunge to the "brink of collapse" caused by over-fishing and other threats. "There is a massive, massive decrease in species which are critical", both for the ocean ecosystem and food security for billions of people, he said. "The ocean is resilient but there is a limit."

The report said populations of fish, marine mammals, birds, and reptiles had fallen 49 per cent between 1970 and 2012. For fish alone, the decline was 50 per cent.

Source: WWF International

SYRIAN CONFLICT AND MIGRANT CRISES ACTUALLY DUE TO COMPETING OIL INTERESTS

The timing of the Syrian conflict is peculiar: The meddling in Syria came about immediately on the heels of discussions of an Iran-Iraq-Syria gas pipeline that was to be built between 2014 and 2016 from Iran's giant South Pars field through Iraq and Syria. With a possible extension to Lebanon, it would eventually reach Europe, the target export market.

Perhaps the most accurate description of the current crisis over gas, oil, and pipelines that is raging in Syriahas was described by Dmitry Minin, writing for the Strategic Cultural Foundation in May 2013: "A battle is raging over whether pipelines will go toward Europe from east to west, from Iran and Iraq to the Mediterranean coast of Syria, or take a more northbound route from Qatar and Saudi Arabia via Syria and Turkey. Having realized that the stalled Nabucco pipeline, and indeed the entire Southern Corridor, are backed up only by Azerbaijan's reserves and can never equal Russian supplies to Europe or thwart the construction of the South Stream, the West is in a hurry to replace them with resources from the Persian Gulf. Syria ends up being a key link in this chain, and it leans in favor of Iran and Russia; thus it was decided in the Western capitals that its regime needs to change."

Source: MintPress News

IF THE FISH WEREN'T ENOUGH, THE TREES ARE DYING OFF ALSO

Those are the findings of researchers who on Wednesday unveiled the most comprehensive assessment of global tree populations ever conducted, using data including satellite imagery and groundbased tree density estimates from more than 400,000 locations worldwide.

The estimate of 3.04 trillion trees—an estimated 422 for every person—is about eight times higher than a previous estimate of 400 billion trees that was based on satellite imagery but less data from the ground.

The new findings leave abundant reason for concern—with people at the root of the problem.

The number of trees has fallen by about 46 percent since the start of human civilization and each year there is a gross loss of 15 billion trees and a net loss of 10 billion, said Yale University ecologist Thomas Crowther, who led the study published in the journal *Nature*.

"There are currently fewer trees than at any point since the start of human civilization and this number is still falling at an alarming rate," he said. "If anything, the scale of these numbers just highlights the need to step up our efforts if we are going to begin to repair some of these effects on a global scale."

Source: Reuters

THE WEST COAST WAS ON FIRE ALL SUMMER AND NO ONE CARED

This year, there were wildfires.

Not the typical wildfires, mind you. Not the normal smattering of (relatively) easily controlled seasonal blazes that nature herself always ignites to help purge and clear; I mean all the massive, drought-amplified, state-engulfing wildfires you've been hearing about all season long—nearly all of them larger, earlier, and more frequent than any time in modern history, ranging from a few thousand acres to the largest in the country, the Soda fire, currently engulfing upwards of 265,000 acres in southern Idaho, which joins with all the other Pacific Northwest fires burning throughout Washington, Oregon and Montana. And here you thought just California was ablaze.

Do you know about Alaska? Nearly five million acres have burned throughout that unusually hot, dry state this year, which is a record, which is something like the size of Connecticut (combined), which is more staggering than your heart can process. Go ahead, try it. And then add in Canada's staggering wildfires, and you hit upwards of 11 million scorched acres – that's 17,000 square miles, and still going strong. That's terrifying.

The scariest part? Fire season, historically speaking, doesn't even begin until September. Did you know 2015 is already officially the hottest year ever recorded on Earth? Did you know Alaska recorded its hottest month ever, in 91 years of record keeping, in May? Or that Washington's biggest fire could keep burning until it snows? The worst—as nearly every scientist, climatologist, environmentalist in the world is all too sick of saying these days—is yet to come.

Source: SF Gate

THERE IS NO FIX TO THE DAMAGE HUMANS HAVE DONE TO THE OCEAN

A new study finds there is no "deus ex machina" way to prevent a catastrophic collapse of ocean life for centuries if not millennia—if we don't start slashing carbon pollution ASAP.

The panel warned of the huge risks with the more invasive strategies to reduce the amount of sunlight absorbed by the Earth: "There is significant potential for unanticipated, unmanageable, and regrettable consequences in multiple human dimensions from albedo modification at climate altering scales, including political, social, legal, economic, and ethical dimensions."

Source: thinkprogress.org

URANIUM MINING AT THE GRAND CANYON

In June, the Grand Canyon was named one of the "Most Endangered Places" in America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. But the designation came just two months too late to possibly influence US District Court Judge David Campbell. In April, he denied a request by the Havasupai tribe and a coalition of conservation groups to halt new uranium mining next to Grand Canyon National Park, just six miles from the Grand Canyon's South Rim.

This uranium project could haunt the Grand Canyon region for decades to come," said Katie Davis with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Uranium mining leaves a highly toxic legacy that endangers human health, wildlife, and the streams and aquifers that feed the Grand Canyon. It's disappointing to see the Forest Service prioritizing the extraction industry over the long-term protection of a place as iconic as the Grand Canyon."

Source: EF! Newswire

CHINESE AIR POLLUTION MAY BE KILLING AS MANY AS 4,000 PEOPLE A DAY

A study out just now from Berkeley Earth in California, written by Robert Rohde and Richard Muller, deserves attention. It concludes that air pollution in China, familiar to everyone, in fact does more damage than is generally recognized. The study finds that as a result of this pollution, some 1.6 million Chinese people per year, or more dramatically well over 4,000 per day, are dying prematurely.

Source: The Atlantic

THE EPA TRIGGERED A MULTI-MILLION GALLON SPILL OF MINE WASTE WATER

Southwestern Colorado has a lot of abandoned mines and environmental officials have been in the area for years, working to clear toxic metals and acidic water left behind.

At the Gold King Mine, EPA officials were using heavy equipment for their site investigation to learn the extent of contamination. Not only was there was more mine wastewater than expected, but the water was held back by a dam of soils as opposed to rocks. While the EPA was digging around, water gushed out and started to drain down.

"We typically respond to emergencies, we don't cause them. But this is just something that happens when we're dealing with mines sometimes," said Dave Ostrander, EPA Region 8 Director of Emergency Preparedness.

Source: Colorado Public Radio

NEAR-COMPLETE MELTDOWN CONFIRMED AT REACTOR 2 IN FUKUSHIMA

RT: How dangerous is the area right now?

KK: Unfortunately we don't have much information yet after these record breaking floods just last week, which in a very big way has moved radioactivity to new places in the environment, or has re-contaminated places previously decontaminated supposedly. So there is so much that we don't know. Certainly there have to be very careful steps taken to measure the radioactivity in the environment. Any pronouncements by local mayors or even the Japanese government that they are only detecting so much radioactivity one meter above the ground—it misses the point in a very big way. Radioactive cesium, strontium, tritium, and other radioactive poisons can enter the food supply, and people can eat the radioactivity or drink it in their drinking water. Very careful measures to guard against the contamination of the food supply and the drinking water supply have to be taken. And I don't know if that is happening in all places right now.

Source: Russia Today

DROUGHT IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF OUR FRIGHTENING WATER EMERGENCY

The United Nations reports that we have 15 years to avert a full-blown water crisis and that, by 2030, demand for water will outstrip supply by 40 percent. But the global water crisis is just that—global—in every sense of the word. A deadly combination of growing inequality, climate change, rising water prices, and mismanagement of water sources in the North has suddenly put the world on a more even footing.

Climate change is another equalizing phenomenon. Melting glaciers, warming watersheds, and chaotic weather patterns are upsetting the water cycle everywhere. Higher temperatures increase the amount of moisture that evaporates from land and water; a warmer atmosphere then releases more precipitation in areas already prone to flooding and less in areas prone to drought. Indeed, drought is intensifying in many parts of the world, and deserts are growing in more than 100 countries.

Source: Alternet

EASTERN PUMA DECLARED EXTINCT, REMOVED FROM ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

The US Fish and Wildlife Service today declared the eastern puma extinct and removed it from the list of protected wildlife and plants under the Endangered Species Act. The eastern puma was a subspecies of the animal also known as cougar or mountain lion, which is still widely distributed across the West. It once roamed as far north as southeastern Ontario, southern Quebec and New Brunswick in Canada, south to South Carolina and west to Kentucky, Illinois and Michigan.

"Through public and civic tolerance and through reintroduction at the state level, pumas could be returned to the East to play their ancient role in controlling deer herds," said Robinson. "This is a somber moment to think about what the land under our feet used to be like, and what roamed here. It should also be a clarion call to recover pumas and all of our apex predators to sustainable levels to help rebalance a world that is out of kilter."

Source: Planet Experts

500 INJURED AT TAWAINESE WATER PARK

Firefighters said the firestorm erupted around 8:30 p.m. Saturday (8:30 a.m. ET), when a flammable powder substance blew up over a stage at Formosa Fun Coast, according to a CNA report.

Video showed a massive fireball suddenly engulfing the stage, followed by screaming people running for their lives through flames.

Source: CNN

US POLICE ON TRACK TO KILL 1,600 PEOPLE IN 2015

Looking at the data for the US against admittedly less reliable information on police killings elsewhere paints a dramatic portrait, and one that resonates with protests that have gone global since a killing last year in Ferguson, Missouri: the US is not just some outlier in terms of police violence when compared with countries of similar economic and political standing.

Source: The UK Guardian

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ACTUALLY HELPING WHALE HUNTERS

Meanwhile, the prospect of increased commercial fishing in the region threatens to reduce the amount of food for the massive mammals. And as warming driven by fossil fuel consumption makes the Arctic more accessible, it's made the estimated reserves of oil and gas in the region more accessible.

All of those pose threats to whales, which also can die when snagged in fishing gear, hit by ships' propellers, or fouled by an oil spill. Ewins said humans need to come up with "a smarter and better-balanced" approach to the Arctic before pouring into the North the way they have swarmed other frontiers.

"Most sentient people agree that humans appear to be crashing along and are about to set up the same mistakes… Whale populations will need to be monitored and managed long-term for both those species and the indigenous Arctic populations that still depend on them for subsistence," he said.

"Unfortunately, at the regional and local level, resource-hungry nations right now are prioritizing GDP as the basis, maximizing economic growth," Ewins said.

Source: Vice News

BEIJING CONTROLS THE WEATHER, FOR PHOTO OPS!

Less than 24 hours after the end of China's massive military parade, Beijing is back to its usual smoggy self.

Residents woke up Friday morning to find the crystal blue skies that graced the city nearly two weeks suddenly gone—in their place, the familiar sight and smell of dour gray pollution clouds. Starting late August, Beijing enjoyed a rare string of continuously clear days as authorities took drastic action to ensure an azure backdrop for the largest parade it's ever held—a showcase marking the 70th anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II.

Hundreds of factories were shut during this time, while half of Beijing's five million registered cars were banned from the streets.

Source: CNN

Prisoner Updates

In each issue, we include news and addresses of prisoners in hopes that readers will choose a few to write. Sometimes, what is going on behind prison walls feels foreign to those of us on the outside. However, when we are in correspondence with prisoners, we strengthen those bonds between the inside and the outside.

REBECCA RUBIN

In the late 1990s, Rubin is alleged to have participated in a spree of arsons that caused upwards of $55 million in damages as part of the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front. She is among the targets of the FBI's "Operation Backfire." She is currently serving five years.

Rebecca Rubin
#98290-011
FCI Dublin
5701 8Th St – Camp Parks
Dublin, California 94568

JUSTIN SOLONDZ

Another target of Operation Backfire, Justin Solondz was indicted for multiple counts of arson, conspiracy and use of an "unregistered destructive device" in 2006 for his alleged participation in an arson at the University of Washington and an arson at the Litchfield Wild Horse and Burro Corral in Susanville, CA.

On December 20, 2011, he plead guilty to a single count of conspiracy and a single count of arson for the arson at UW. He was sentenced to five years in prison.

Justin Solondz
#98291-011
FCI Oakdale I
Post Office Box 5000
Oakdale, Louisiana 71463

CASEY BREZIK

Casey Brezik is an anarchist from Kansas City area who is charged with slashing the throat of the Dean of Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley in an alleged plot to attack the Governor of Missouri, Jay Nixon, during a talk at the college. In 2013, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Casey Brezik
#1154765
Northeast Correctional Center
13698 Airport Road
Bowling Green, MO 63334

BILL DUNNE

Bill Dunne is an anti-authoritarian prisoner sentenced to 90 years for the attempted liberation of an anarchist prisoner. Bill was arrested in 1979 when he and Larry Giddings attempted to free

fellow revolutionary Artie Ray Dufur. The two were arrested after an exchange of fire with police as they were fleeing the scene. Bill and Larry were charged with auto theft and aiding and abetting the escape, for which Bill received an 80 year federal prison sentence. In 1983 Bill attempted to escape prison and was given another 15 years in prison.

Bill Dunne
#10916-086
USP Lompoc
US Penitentiary
3901 Klein Blvd
Lompoc, CA 93436

MARIUS MASON

Marius Mason is an anarchist, labor organizer, and eco-warrior serving nearly 22 years in prison for carrying out acts of property destruction, including an arson at a Michigan State University genetics laboratory and an arson of logging equipment in Mesick, Michigan. He was sold out by his former partner, Frank Ambrose, who became an FBI informant.

In 2014, Marius came out as transgender and is currently fighting for a name change, hormones, and surgery. In a recent update from his support website, it was stated that he has received almost no mail in the last few weeks.

Marie (Marius) Mason
#04672-061
FMC Carswell
P.O. Box 27137
Fort Worth, Texas 76127

Note: address envelope to "Marie (Marius) Mason", and the letter to "Marius."

JAY CHASE

Brent Betterly, Jay Chase, and Brian Church were arrested just before the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012 and charged with "possession of an incendiary or explosive device, conspiracy to commit terrorism, and providing material support for terrorism." Set up by a police informant, they were sentenced to prison for making molotovs and saying that they planned to use them to attack police stations, a Democratic Party campaign office, and the mayor's home during the NATO summit. Brian Jacob Church was sentenced to five years, Brent Betterly to six years, and Jay Chase to eight years. Brian Jacob Church was released in late 2014, Brent Betterly was released in April 2015.

Jared (Jay) Chase

Pontiac Correctional Center
PO Box 99
Pontiac, Illinois 61764

Note: address envelope to "Jared (Jay) Chase", letter to "Jay".

THE CLEVELAND FOUR

The Cleveland 4 are four Occupy Cleveland activists arrested in 2012 after being coerced into plotting a series of bombings by an FBI informant.

Connor, Doug, and Brandon took non-cooperating plea deals. Doug is serving 11.5 years, Brandon 9 years 9 months, and Connor 8 years 1 month. The judge applied a terrorist enhance-

ment, resulting in longer sentences and harsher prison conditions. Skelly took his case to trial, refusing a plea deal. He was found guilty and sentenced to 10 years.

Brandon Baxter
#57972-060
USP Atwater
P.O. Box 019001
Atwater, CA 95301

Connor Stevens
#57978-060
FCI McKean
PO Box 8000
Bradford, Pennsylvania 16701

Doug Wright
#57978-060
Currently in transit
Check cleveland4solidarity.org for more info

Joshua Stafford
#57976-060
USP Tucson
P.O. BOX 24550
Tucson, Arizona 85734

ERIC KING

Eric is a vegan anarchist awaiting trial for an alleged firebombing of a Congressman's office in Kansas City, Missouri.

Eric King
#27090045
CCA Leavenworth
100 Highway Terrace
Leavenworth, Kansas 66048

MICHAEL KIMBLE

Michael Kimble is a black, gay anarchist held captive by the State of Alabama since 1986 for the murder of a white, racist homophobe, for which he received a life sentence. After moving away from communism, Michael turned toward anarchism and continues to struggle as an anarchist against his conditions. Michael has a long history of uncompromising struggle against prison and its world.

Michael Kimble
#138017
3700 Holman Unit
Atmore, Alabama 36503

“There’s No Place to Go” — An Interview With Dominique

ARAGORN!: I’m sitting here talking to Dominique. I could introduce him in a variety of ways but I want to start out by asking him how he would describe himself and why he thinks he’s of interest in the context of the series of interviews I’ve been having in *Black Seed*.

DOMINIQUE: Well I think that I’m in a position in the middle in some ways. Usually people are coming strongly from one side or the other, either as an anarchist or a Native American. Within the tension between post left and identitarian positions, I’m like an illegitimate child. I’m someone who stays aware of what comes out of native theory but I’m also interested in reading anarchist writers. So as far as identities go, I would present myself as a reader with bruises, that would be my role for today.

A!: It is funny because when you set up an interview, obviously a lot of my goal in these interviews is to present a long-form version of a talk with a native person who the general reader will probably never have this talk with, and I guess the goal was to say rather than infantilize/celebrate Natives just because they exist, just talking to them in a series of talking points (“I’m an activist who’s done prison work in minnesota, and I’ve had these successes…”), my idea was always to take Native people who have an interest in anti-authoritarian politics broadly and contextualize them. In this way you’re an interesting person to talk to because the previous two people I interviewed for *Black Seed* have activist pedigrees. And that hasn’t been your schtick.

D: I guess I could say who my family is, how I grew up, with connections to Native radicalism, or talk about being a prison convict, even though I wasn’t a political prisoner, but I think a lot of times in anti-authoritarian circles, that’s considered an *authentic* identity. But I’m not really concerned with presenting authenticity. I would *like* to think that I’m not an activist but I have been involved in doing things with other anarchists for a long time, for better or worse.

A!: But that’s you responding to activist as a swear word in anarchist circles or the…

D: The term has some negative connotations. Activism as the obligation to sacrifice yourself for the cause, to stay busy until judgment comes, that doesn’t work for me, but I still exist in a world where actions occur.

A!: …opposite of a swear word. In other words it’s almost a meaningless signifier.

D: With the idea of reading in the context of green anarchist perspectives, I would agree with a lot of critiques of anthropology and say that it’s a lot more stimulating to me to directly talk to Native people, as opposed to through a second source, but that you can also look at indigeneity through literature, and that’s maybe a more respectful way to go about it.

A!: How do you think about quote unquote literature in the context of the famous Russell Means essay about spoken word vs written word?*

D: Looking into these issues, I’ve found that there’s more questions than answers. For someone totally immersed in our American environment it’s hard to say we are oral, and to argue that in academic papers in English; it’s hard. I agree that a text is a sort of static conversation that

happens in this alienated way, but I still think that literature is not an alien thing for natives at this point.

A!: When I think about my own life… I experienced life entirely as an oral culture until I was six or seven. I can say pretty strongly that my mother was an incredible bookworm, she loved to read, but she was also my gateway to Native America. So most of social life was around the kitchen table until I was old enough to read and then I went into a room alone and read, but then it was richer when I came back to the table… I guess my tentative argument is that the slices of our life could have these different moments.

D: I think that's what is interesting about Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor; he's trying to put the oral culture into literature. He's trying to write in a way that is inspired by story telling. Me trying to describe him or write like that, I can't do that. But this points to how important oral traditions are to the Three Fires peoples.But I guess, also, I mean to talk about my story… I think I'm similar to you in a way in regards to my family. Like my dad was a Native radical in the Twin Cities at the height of when that was something people were talking about…

A!: When America actually cared…

D: It was a time when people conspicuously cared about these issues. My mom is a non-Indian who is still involved with Native solidarity work so it's… it's a personal thing. I grew up on military bases, so it was kind of like I didn't know I was Native until later. I mean, I got the "you're Native," but I didn't understand what that meant. After going and meeting older relatives, going to the reservation, it was kind of like a therapeutic ritual. So what gets transmitted… is the stories. The stories that people tell you is, I guess, the link where it's not merely genetic, you know? It's not an abstraction, it's the actual people in stories… that's what I got. So it's important to me…

A!: So… it wasn't stories about some mythological figure, it was the stories about the lives of actual people around you that were mythological? Like, larger than life…

D: I'm just trying to make a point about what's left of an unbroken culture, which is already sort of a paradox. Genocide affected more than just material conditions but there are still pieces of story and ceremony. Like you hear about Nanabush and the fact that storytelling still happens… so it leads me to question materialism in a different way and wonder what it means to accept atheism. I connect the stories with people and personalities. Post-left anarchists and indigenous radicals find it hard to talk to each other. I don't consider Ojibwa to be an abstraction. When Stirner talks about Ludwig not being a generic Ludwig when you're speaking of a person; that's something I keep in mind when I talk about Anishinabe—it's not just the idea of an Indian, it's a real people who I've seen in uniqueness…

A!: That's interesting… Just to go back to something that you said before we were recording that I was really interested in – you said you were not political. What does that mean? (Like, you're using a lot of political terms…)

D: Part of what I'm saying is that I'm not interested in mass movements… I don't think that the idea of an american indian movement makes sense for me or by extension APOC politics… I think that politics could be something you use in a small group, direct relationships, I believe all of our language is politicized, and that's related to a criticism of Native radicals— that comes from a Native perspective. These radicals in camo don't automatically represent traditions (I would say) and they're speaking for elders as if the elders can't talk themselves. This can also apply to Tribal Councils. That is one part of the story of why I would reject politics. Vizenor's critique of communism has more to do with the communists he encounters than with historical materialism.

The radicals he sees selling papers in Minneapolis would never laugh because their struggle was so grave. If I have to give up laughter for politics, I choose laughter.

A!: That's a great point. So last winter we threw what I'll call a local book fair, distinct from the national-scope bookfair that is also held in the area called the Bay Area/San Francisco Anarchist Bookfair. We throw what we call the East Bay Anarchist Book and Conversation Event (we shortened that to EBAB), and it happens roughly in November. It's a twopart event, one part traditional tabling for anarchist projects and publications, and the second part sort of an intentional set of conversations obviously about the books that are interesting but also about theory, anarchist ideas, what does it mean and why is it relevant to be an anarchist in this century. This year the theme was decolonization, and you did a presentation. Can you talk a bit about that and start out with the name, which I think for many people was very provocative.

D: My presentation was called "Native Simulations, Cross Bloods, and Pre-Left Anarchy." I'll start with pre-left anarchy, which was a response to post-left anarchism. It examines a tendency in Native radicalism or decolonization (when those overlap) to say that the pre-contact new world was egalitarian and didn't have this whole list of things, patriarchy, capitalism, etc… I'm concerned when people call for a non-western anarchism. I think it's interesting the way the post-left posits that there's a relationship to the Left that we've gone past. Unfortunately, I think Native Americans are still expected to share interests with the Left.

A!: we've definitely been a victim of the Left for…

D: Right. A lot of these critiques of anthropology could come out of native experiences, a lot of criticism comes from there. I don't know that there was pre-left anarchism that you could easily line up to categories that we use today. But there were possibilities that pointed towards anarchy. You can't generalize about Native Americans but there's enough evidence for me to believe that there were different ways of living, that societies were distinct in their values, expressions, and economies, and I like the idea of openness instead of trying to put our categories in other peoples, places, or times.

A!: So let's unpack that a little. You say you're uncomfortable or you don't like the idea of non-western anarchisms. What are you referring to, what does that mean? ie are you referring specifically to the pamphlet called "Non Western Anarchisms," written by Jason Adams in the late 90s?

D: The non-western anarchist pamphlet I think was mostly big-A anarchism in non-western places, but not necessarily a non-western worldview that is also anti-authoritarian. I'm responding partially to people who say things like "anarchism is white," that it is "of no use for supposedly marginal people." Anarchism *has* been a mostly European phenomenon…

A!: By the word…

D: Perhaps we should turn to Marxism? But, seriously I think there was probably plenty of anarchy on turtle island. There's anarchistic aspects to Nanabush who is (I would say) not a generic trickster from a primordial folklore, but a specific way to tell stories or a certain spirit. That's what I draw on.

A!: The other thing I was going to ask you about was what you mean by a utopian pre-contact world vs the world we live in now. This has a lot of impact because part of what people mean when they speak about the Left is something like a utopian future (that's equality, liberty, and fraternity since the Left comes out of the French Revolution). So that's what they seem to be referencing: "they came to this land and these things existed and then we fucked them up."

D: When you're talking about decolonization, the problem is: where do you draw the line? What tools are you going to use to decide what things were like before, or who we were before as Ojibwa people? You have to use experts like ethnologists for information. Christian missionaries for indigenous hymn and bible translations. Looking backwards can be problematic for the colonized. Political optimists use the child to represent the future. Natives are often times expected to look back on a lost utopia. We're supposed to already be dead. That's sort of my reaction to some primitive yearnings, that seem to say, "Here's the point that we need to rewind to." I think the drawbacks may be close to those of other utopias.

A!: I heard a disturbing story from one of my elders recently. They basically said that the Ottawa (related to Ojibwa but not quite) had a pretty fixed notion of the great spirit, that was basically an origin story of a Great Spirit that created but was indifferent. But the Great Spirit was always referred to, so when the Catholics came, it was a seamless transition. This obviously makes me very uncomfortable because it means that my people were okay with the Christians when they came! Because the world views just weren't that different. And whoever came, the Jesuits or whoever, did a pretty good job of "all ya gotta do is change the name!"

D: Yea, I always like to listen to elders but I've never been very good at hearing what they tell me.

A!: [laughs]

D: But I've heard traditional people say that the pipe and the cross are same thing.

A!: Ooo fuuuuck.

D: That the smoke brings our prayers up to the Great Spirit… I don't think they're the same thing. But if our pre-contact ancestors were interchangeable with the monotheists we would have to rebel against them too.

A!: For me the point is that Native America is not one thing. Different tribes have different ways in which they wore these values, so for me the disturbing part of the story is that my people, who as it turned out at some point in the geopolitical story were given this choice of "convert or walk to Oklahoma," were really okay with the conversion (very few Ottawa from Michigan walked to Oklahoma) because mostly they were okay with… in other words the way they wore their version of the Great Spirit ended up being—in their own minds—okay with Catholics. And for me, someone who wants to believe that my predecessors were ready to fuck shit up… they really weren't.

D: For sure. This is related to where you draw the line in the situation that we're in presently. I would like to consider Christianity as something that I know doesn't work for me as a tool. The idea that natives lived a natural, edenic existence that got fucked up but there is a way we could get back there, sounds pretty Christian but of course my rez is Catholic, and I don't know if the world views match up necessarily, but colonization wasn't always one-sided, and that's part of the dilemma… that there was an exchange. And how can we leave our ancestors with agency, if you want to call it that? They were humans who were reacting, and that's sort of how I approach anarchism, because it's mostly a non-Native thing, but I like to think that I can use it and not become a European.

A!: Ok. So then, I guess that an appropriate question that I'm supposed to ask you is what does decolonization mean to you, but I find that difficult because it seems like a robot question. I don't even personally know what decolonization means for myself so I wouldn't ask the question but…

D: When people ask me that question my answer is "a lot of burning." That is the only thing that makes sense to me if you want to use that as a metaphor. In *The Witch of Going Snake* it says "Throw away your guns and your steel knives and pots. Kill your cats. Destroy everything you have that came from the white man." I don't know where to begin to make that separation. I don't know what is colonized inside of myself. It all seems pretty damaged. Maybe that is what is radical. I can say to natives in the city, "you can't go home and find the answer there." Just like, me leaving rural areas and coming to the city didn't change everything; there's no place to go.

A!: Meaning you weren't innocent in the country and spoiled by the city.

D: We can't always look to what A.I.M did, or to our great ancestors, or wait for the future for answers, that's part of what I'm saying, not to look for something else besides what is here, and what is here sucks, so that's the position I'm in.

A!: There was also something in your presentation about Andrea Smith, who has been in the middle of some controversy recently…

D: I talked about her piece called "Indigenous Feminism without Apology," which makes the case that pre-contact societies were matriarchal and basically anarchistic. I want to see anarchist ideas reflected throughout societies, but I'm not sure that it's always true. The fact that Andrea Smith has been outed as a Native imposter is not surprising. Apparently there were rumors for a while that she was faking Indian. It's difficult because proving that you are an Indian involves official papers and government bureaucracies. No one really asks if someone is a "real" white person. But, the Smiths and Dolezals are at home in the world of simulations. Vizenor says that if Natives are gonna live, then the Indian as a sign has to die.

A!: Oh, that's interesting. He means Indian as in tear in the eye of the crying stoic…

D: The savage, the vanishing tragedy. The natural ecologist.

A!: Right.

D: The post-Indian approach centers specific tribal groups or bands, as opposed to using Native American as a catch-all, because while the Ojibwa existed; there's never been an Indian except in people's imaginations. This means stepping away from victimization and recognition as a way to frame what it means to be Native. The idea that we all died or that we're sad and defeated isn't true and it isn't helpful for those of us who are still around. Talking about Vizenor for me includes a statement against the brown paper bag test [the idea that if one is not darker than a brown paper bag then one may as well be white] because he is very phenotypically white. I could talk about indigeneity without referencing light complexions or dark skin at all, and I guess mine is somewhere in between. There is more to the story than just pigmentation. Sure Natives have a phenotype, there is a blood memory, but Nanabush doesn't have DNA.

A!: Can you talk about Nanabush?

D: Nanabush is an important Ojibwa character in story telling, usually credited with creating the world, but sometimes seen as a prankster. I would say to people reading this, don't go read a book that's like, "Folklore from All Around the World." Because it's not really about that. Nanabush is something that's indescribable and dangerous. They are someone playful who breaks taboos, they wouldn't fit in with a Christian society, he's not civilized. In *Baedan*, they say they want to become feral—they're talking about wanting to approach life wildly. I can relate to that. I think that these queer nihilist identities have something in common with the person of undetermined race…

A!: Of course.

D: …since we can't fit in, in either place. so we're in this strange position, but maybe that's not a bad thing.

A!: There's a thousand things to talk about in that little bit you just said, not the least of which is how unacceptable it is to break taboos; in other words we're talking about a whole set of people who are proclaiming their liminal status (as anarchists) but no one will break a taboo. One of the ways I experience it is around moralism… To bring up a really stupid (and old) example: Bob Black calling the cops. The idea that this event is such a fetish object 20 years after it happened—many people, any time they see a Bob Black post or anything about him, will repost the shitty thing he did 20 years ago. This is the opposite of celebrating or even appreciating taboo, it's indicative of a policing culture. It feels almost puritanical, like we should be wearing corsets and shouting "shame" at people (which I do sometimes in play, only because it's hysterical that people think it means anything). It's just strange to me that there's all this theory that says one thing, but all this practice that says you cannot do that thing.

D: You could frame Nanabush as a sinner according to Christian values. He would get called out in the anarchist subculture. He (or sometimes she) has an tendency to shape-shift. I like crossing lines as a liminal person, not that it's a dialectic, but I don't believe that there's a static identity. Earth First! the way it used to be, or seemed to be, with rednecks and radical environmentalists going out and fucking shit up, to me is awesome, better than reaching consensus.

A!: Black Seed folks went to the EF! gathering in 2014. This year in 2015 the details are unclear given the report backs, but it appears that a POC faction denounced the gathering from within, and as a group left the gathering. That was the 2015 controversy. I know. Very surprising.

D: I would quote Bob Black and say nobody intervenes more to mind other people's business than separatists. Like radical feminists, who have this affinity and want to live by themselves. I can see why that makes sense, and they should do that. The idea of people choosing who they want to work with, that totally makes sense to me. For me personally it means it's hard to be a nationalist. I can't find people exactly like me, so I'm not interested in agreeing on every point before I work on something with someone. A!: I guess I'm the closest person to you around…

D: I can relate to you because we share a certain double burden of concerns… I could go back around now and say how I got here. Being a prisoner and being poor, that's not what makes a Native, but it was part of my experience, There were a lot of Native prisoners in the prison where I was.

A!: Because it was in…

D: South Dakota. They automatically put you in a cell with someone of your own race. It's rigidly segregated . And that's part of why I felt an uneasiness about Oakland scene politics, because I had already had to live in a violent racialist environment. While I was in prison I recieved free copies of *Green Anarchy* magazine and read a lot of other radical texts. At the same time, I was also confronted by racist nationalists of different stripes. It was all sort of coming at me, so it made sense to view the ideologies as stories. When coming to the Bay Area… that's another thing that's important for what I'm talking about is that I talked to actual anarchists in person. This is me doing the anthropological fieldwork with existing anarchists, and it's important because it made me see the ideas differently, what the scope is, different from being in prison, reading essays. It's a different terrain. For example labels such as a snitch, pedophile, white supremacist etc. are used less frequently and carry a different weight in prison than when used by some anarchists.

A!: One of the things that's really different is an urban setting, especially a big city, in something like what we could call the APOC scene. Almost no one talks about their childhood, because if they did the coherence of their political position today, and the difficulty of reconciling that with an actual life story, would all fall apart. Let's go on talking about your presentation. Say more about liminal identities and Vizenor in general. He's written dozens of books?

D: Almost 50. You could situate him as writing speculative fiction. He sometimes gets put on the science fiction shelf or in the slipstream genre. He has written short stories, novels, poetry, and non-fiction. He gets lumped in with postmodernism. I think it's because it's hard to frame what he's writing about.

A!: How would you compare him to Sherman Alexie, another well known Native story teller, with fantastical elements?

D: "Magical realism" is usually how people refer to writers like Sherman Alexie , but I would say that Vizenor is different because he's interacting with continental philosophy, if not always directly.

A!: Less sex?

D: More sex than you might expect. Taboo themes are often featured in Native fiction. In a strange way it is sexy. Native people aren't necessarily puritanical. So in these stories by Vizenor and others like N. Scott Momaday there is transgression, wastefulness, incest, people having sex with two dogs or a bear, and it's in the frame of Native storytelling, and it's not speculating like "i can imagine a world where you could hump a dog;" it's more like, "what if the line between human and animal isn't a real thing?" Definitely there is sex and it's great, and I guess people could think of Vizenor as sort of like Samuel Delany? But maybe a little harder to analyze.

A!: How many of his books are books of essays?

D: That is a lot of what he writes. He started off in Eastern Studies, studying haikus, and I believe he spent some time in Japan. I just think he's a strange character, and the idea that he'd be into Japanese things makes as much sense as anything one would do in university. Ojibwa dream songs have a similar structure to haikus and may have developed earlier. He explicitly talks about his ideas outside of fiction and I enjoy that too. He has several collections of essays some of them touching on Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, and Albert Camus…

A!: Does he have a similar story of one Native parent, one white parent?

D: Yes a similar story. He was raised by his Grandmother on the White Earth reservation in Minnesota. We're related because we're both related to Nanabush, coincidentally. He also taught at UCBerkeley.

A!: Is he retired now?

D: He is a professor emeritus at Berkeley; but that's the thing… I'm not a philosopher and I don't think that ethnic studies is a position of strength. But just like people use anthropology as an anarchist practice, I enjoy reading. Other fictions like the works of the Dark Mountain project are great too. They share stories that don't spoil the ending.

A!: …So, liminal identity.

D: For me I can say I'm half Native and half white, but I don't always want to do that because I don't think it's too symmetrical, and there are automatically issues at least for my tribe where it gets into conversations about blood quantum and genetics and I'm not interested in that. Also I'm enrolled in a federally-recognized tribe but I don't think that is the way to tell who is Native or not. Either through the government or through hereditary science. None of that really matters.

A!: Just a side bar, I have a Canadian Ottawa grandfather.

D: Oh shit.

A!: It doesn't count.

D: Yea. [laughs] Vizenor uses the term cross bloods for mixed-race Indians. it means that you're part of two worlds and don't really walk in either one of them. The scruffy rez dog mongrel comes to mind. There are some Native science fiction writers who talk about Metis identity, and frame it as "we're have Louis Riel as our messiah figure, and mixed blood people are feral and wild." I don't know if I necessarily live up to that…

A!: It would be nice…

D: Sure. Liminality means that things don't have to be this or that, I guess. But it's not necessarily a synthesis either. The two sides might not ever be reconciled. It opens a space for questioning the value of identity altogether.

A!: What's nice about it is that liminal evokes a twilight area where things are indistinguishable from each other, and could be a whole bunch of things.

D: I was recently reading an HP Lovecraft story called "the Mound" that is basically about a haunted Indian burial ground.

A!: I'm sure HP dealt with this with total sensitivity…

D: Of course… The narrator is an ethnologist studying people in Oklahoma. I guess when we talk about queerness, it's like it can mean you don't want to reproduce, you can't get married, you're not a normal part of society, so you're in the shadows. and I like that idea—you could apply it to liminal people. But in the Lovecraft story, it's one of the only times that he vividly describes the Cthulhuian underworld, and he could be describing modern American cities. I mean everything is covered in slime, or whatever, but to the point of Lovecraft looking in shadows, and looking at ambiguity as something that's a complete terror. So I'm thinking about shadows not being horrifying, but also that being horrified is not necessarily something to avoid.

A!: To go back, we sort of touched on her for a second and then I distracted us with the controversy. In Andrea Smith's work you got some points that were worth talking through? So what were those points, and how does that change now that we know that her "quantum doesn't correspond to her points."

D: Yea. Well it seemed like she was trying to do something similar to your explorations into indigenous anarchism, in trying to de-center Europe, and looking at ways that traditional societies were more anarchistic and especially in Latin America, groups that are saying "we are for anarchy and it has to do with our traditions." I think that's worth talking about. I don't know what to say about her non-existent blood quantum. I want to say that it doesn't really matter; but I think it does matter in a way. The question is do Indians think differently? Academic writing can be so abstract that the words are interchangeable. The identity doesn't matter because there's too much distance. If you can switch "indigenous" with "queer," "disabled," or "woman"… cut and paste, and it would be saying basically the same thing. I think that is a problem.

A!: This corresponds with your general point which is that specificity matters. In other words we don't need a new Native American movement, we need a new Minnesota Ojibwa movement.

D: I'm not sure how to respond to that, because I'm not really even concerned with…

A!: …the politics of it.

D: Things are going on now that are political, and it's not really interesting to me but, a lot of Minnesota tribes are changing from blood quantum to descendency. Currently there is a percentage of blood required to become a tribal member, and they want to change it so that you can enroll if you have a distant ancestor. It has to do with resources really. You could make

a connection between tribal organizations' preoccupation with funding and the relationship of Native radicals to white activists; there's already an imbalance but people need the help. Native solidarity activists are always going to talk about how much they hate the allies, but they are always going to invite them to come back. Self determination in the case of the Red Lake Ojibwa means living by themselves and practicing traditions. It doesn't need a defense, they're doing it, they don't need help from academics in the cities. Environmentalists are always going to want to talk to Natives, really, so that's why I feel like I have something different to say. Maybe I'm just offering another fictitious image?

A!: Does Vizenor use the term "simulation"? Obviously I know about Baudrillard using that word…

D: He does draw on Baudrillard, so if people aren't familiar with the concept, it refers to the making of a map that is 1:1 in scale, where the representation replaces the actual thing. It's easy to see that none of the shit on TV about Indians is real. Representation is an enemy, so I'm not positing that there's a right one. Every movie… it's a mythical thing, it's not real. Its just spectacle. Vizenor is saying that the real thing is the Ojibwa spirit of survival and we lose something when we learn to identify with the Image. I don't know if there's a real thing under everything, I guess.

A!: Right. This reminds me of watching Natives who I respect get all hot under the collar about the feather headdresses that the sexy people are wearing to concerts… I totally accept that this is the same thing as wearing blackface or whatever… and *privileged people do that.* That's almost the definition of privilege, that you get to wear the scalps of your enemies around your neck or whatever [laughter]. I guess there's a liberal thing at the heart of this that says "yes, colonization happened, yes there're horrific class differences, yes, *racism* by some definition is at the heart of the american engine… and we should hide it!" In other words the fight against the headdress isn't the fight. Not at all. But a lot of people get so wound up about these being the fights. And especially the headdress… I mean, it's not my culture… this is not the universal sign of Natives. Anyways, something of a sidebar, sorry…

D: No, that is something that I think about. I question what kind of understanding of racism includes the idea that you could just ask someone not to be racist, and they'll be just like, "Oh yea, you're right. What was I thinking?" It's not about winning moral arguments. When it comes to headdresses, it's possible people on your reservation did wear headdresses during the time when that attracted tourism. I've seen old pictures at Red Lake with men in headdresses, and it shows you… it's not always about calling other people out. I also see how much we've been affected by these images as well. They had to wear headdresses because that's what people thought natives did. But you have to give up anything left of the Ojibwa to become an Indian.

A!: This is a big topic of conversation in my family because we were involved in putting on powwows in the area. Of course a traditional powwow would be acorns and raccoons, it wouldn't be flashy looking at all. It would look like woodland stuff, which is drab and dark colors, no yellow feathers or spears…

[laughter]

…and tomahawks and all that nonsense. So of course that wouldn't bring any of the white people with deep pockets who will spend $500 on a necklace. Or, you'd get people for the cool baskets, but…

D: I think what you're describing also applies to Native radicals. You have to present yourself as a Native to non-Natives, so you're going to have to simulate. To me that's humiliating.

[laughter]

A!: What we're talking about are complex deep problems that are not solvable, and those kind of questions tend to get called postmodern. So how is the direction you are taking this conversation in, not postmodern?

D: Well… By default it is postmodern, but it's not coming from France. One sort of becomes postmodern if you're living in this society with cultural schizophrenia. You could line up these categories, like multi-centeredness vs centralization, there are certain concepts that line up with postmodernism, like the postmodern premise that there are many stories, not one central truth. While the Ojibwa compromise is "there's science, but we can still tell our stories, which are not invalidated." There is also an obvious indigenous influence on French theory going in the other direction, in the form of Pierre Clastres' war machines, Situationist potlatch, and so forth. We could also reach the conclusions of animism using object-oriented ontology—the idea that humans are not the center of the universe. But I wouldn't say it's postmodern. Not an easy answer I guess.

A!: I would say that people calling this postmodern is basically name-calling, and is really a complaint about not knowing what to do, and wanting to be told what to do.

D: I think the way that the question is asked already limits how we can answer it. I'm not convinced that we can have the right ideas, and then go forth and change the world. I think I'm part of the world and the world changes me. I don't think that we have special consciousness we can bestow on other people. Or that there's a way forward. And maybe that there's not a way backward either. My only answer is that it's complicated. If the idea is decolonization (that is, understanding Native people) be cautious when someone tells you that they have the answer, that they know the right approach for working with Native people. Skip the anti-oppression workshops. There's not one way because there's not one Native society. So there's not an easy solution. If you want to learn from Indians, consider caring about the people close to you right now. Try to get to the point that what you're doing is revolutionary, without waiting for some kind of break.

NOTE * "For America to Live, Europe Must Die!" starts out with this passage: The only possible opening for a statement of this kind is that I detest writing. The process itself epitomizes the European concept of "legitimate" thinking; what is written has an importance that is denied the spoken. My culture, the Lakota culture, has an oral tradition, so I ordinarily reject writing. It is one of the white world's ways of destroying the cultures of non-European peoples, the imposing of an abstraction over the spoken relationship of a people.

Nihilist Animism, by Aragorn!

Ultimately everything I do, every project, everything I build, every relationship I start is going to fail. The world, to the extent that I am part of it, is also dissolving. This building/destroying is my expression of a feeling that lives somewhere between the Protestant work ethic, the will to inflict anarchy on the world, and an attitude against the projects of Man. I am satisfied living here, in this unstable place, continuing to do things that will blow away as soon as the center stops holding. I'm satisfied to call this nihilism, not because that is what it is, but because our culture is into naming things and I am into sending lemmings off of the cliffs of their own creation.

There is a current that breezily uses animism as a solution to the "problem of spirituality." I have concerns. An older article on the topic, Sarah Anne Lawless' "The Song of the Land: Bioregional Animism,"* both demonstrates and refers to the problems of immediatist spirituality rather well. On the one hand we benefit from the knowledge (mostly from anthropological data) of the seeming parallelism between many peoples (i.e. that everyone, in the past, was an animist) and on the other hand any attempt to practice animism either suffers from being a sort of cultural appropriation or a hokey stab in the dark that does not immediately satisfy a cultural need and feels embarrassingly small compared to the greatness of the whole earth.

There is a painful gap between being (or naming yourself) an animist and feeling the glory of the profane (and holy) things around you. This gap is enormous. It is filled with the monoculture religions, civilization, and technocracy. This trinity makes the compelling claim that the holy holy is in fact achievable by ritual, law, and blinking lights. It claims this with the promise of personal salvation and potential of private revelation by way of priest, urban living, and new cell phones.

It an enormous provocation to say that kneeling alone by the bank of a river and being cleansed by the sacred is a pure, unadulterated animism. It may be a true moment (especially to someone enveloped in spectacle and lies) but it is not a complete one. At some point one packs up the REI equipment in the Subaru and drives back home. Sometime later one posts about it on Tumblr. One is not complete in the moment, but instead is an observer of one's own life. That life can feel like a series of real moments punctuated by gaps of disconnection that look like daily life. Living can be like a problem that can be solved after retirement or whatever.

Animism (grand, capital A) began to die as the City was being born. This does not mean the urge died, but that urge primarily moves us against ourselves and towards camping trips, Eschatology, and faith– based approaches to the sickness of this world. Our question is whether mediated experiences are the only ones we are capable of. If that is the case, as is likely, then our capacity for revelatory joy is similarly curtailed, all arguments to the contrary. If we are indeed broken are we capable of NOT being broken? As anarchists who have an interest in how the world operates, and perhaps how we could perform as wooden shoes to it, we are naive about what grinding gears mean today. We think it is enough to change the world without realizing that troubleshooting gears is a quarter of what the world does. We have urges but little wisdom about the unforeseen consequences of our small strategies. This is the reason why we are so

hungry for the possibility of animism, a spiritual practice where desire and capacity are mapped perfectly.

The reason we will not solve this problem like the little special snowflakes that we are is because of exactly that. Just as monotheism has succeeded in the deception that it represents a personal relationship between you and the almighty (parsed and mediated by priests, ministers, and the dining room table) animism needs a social fabric, outside of the civilized order, to keep warm. This social fabric isn't as simple as playing outdoors with other children, starving for life lessons from the kitchen table where the elders sit and talk, or rituals that help you understand that you are a part of something large. But one can imagine such simplicity. One can imagine life without screens as that life just passed us by, but that is only a fraction of what it would take to live a whole life. While the cell phone may itself be sacred and alive, the things we see on it are mundane and ordinary and make us the same.

It is on infertile land that future spiritual practitioners attempt to live. These are hardscrabble lives, devoid of community or anything but scraps of information of how others did what you are trying to do. In this context it makes perfect sense that racial, silly, or fantastic elements (often the same thing) often infiltrate what is an impossible effort. It's not that we can't "go back," it is that doing so is just as difficult as marching to somewhere completely new (whether Narnia or into the Star Wars universe). The new just seems easier.

What I would propose, what a nihilist animism would entail, would be an acknowledgment that a spiritual endeavor must come from a sociable practice. This might be a conversation between seven of us in the woods, or different sets in different places but it has to pass the test of the I/we. If you can find a group of people who are willing to ride the tension of being individuated, having undergone the great pain of core alienation in the modern world, while not privileging one's own experiences in a group then you could begin. This would look like a long waiting, while the traffic passes overhead, while your devices beep, bop, beep in your car, when you could be doing other things, for the world around you to expose its language to you. This would not happen quickly. It would probably take years and then it could shape a set of principles, a path to walk, that would make sense to your set of people. This is why it is impossible to imagine in this world, the context has shifted too radically to imagine building a set of tools over years before even thinking about using them. The context has shifted too radically to imagine doing anything so long term with sociability.

This long listening project does not make sense in a world of traffic, screens, and bullshit dichotomies like I and we. But this is the start. One, find a set of people, two, find a language. That language should probably not be a public one because the task that comes next is all too vulnerable. We are talking about creating something that the history of the current order has done a bang–up job of genociding, mocking, and parading in front of the slavering consumers of modern spectacle for their amusement. Keeping this language secret will be nearly impossible in a world of social media but the task isn't nearly complete then. Finally this language has to become meaningful. With it a set of people, who will have to become multi-generational, have to disassemble and recreate a world that does not suffer from monotheism, civilization, and modern technology.

That impossible task set I share with you is the closest thing I would put forward as a recommended practice. A worldweary rebuilding of the very reasons we should do things together at all. A practice I am myself incapable of participating in because I have been broken by the same things as you. My mind is no longer limber enough to learn a new language. My heart is

too scarred to do something so honest with a group of new people and too experienced to do it with the monsters I surround myself with (for other reasons). To go deep enough to subvert the conditioning and violence of this world is just impossible enough that I can imagine the kind of person who would attempt it but I have no idea what will result, even in a best case scenario.

I dream of free actors who live without fear. I imagine words that speak beyond comprehension. I imagine the same goals that I have expressed lived by people who care for one another, who laugh at the empty sociability of our era, who are the anarchy unleashed unto the world. I imagine connections to the world that I am not capable of. This impossible set of conditions and potentials is why a nihilist animism appeals to me at all. It names capabilities I don't have in a world I can't imagine living in. That's all one can ask of oneself.

NOTE * http://sarahannelawless.com/2014/02/21/ the-song-of-the-land-bioregional-animism/

Spacious Treeline In Words, by Gerald Vizenor

EDITOR'S NOTE: *"Spacious Treeline in Words" by Gerald Vizenor is from an out– of–print collection called* Earthdivers: Tribal Narratives on Mixed Descent.

> *"Between the too warm flesh of the literal event and the cold skin of the concept runs meaning. This is how it enters into the book. Everything enters into, transpires in the book. This is why the book is never finite. It always remains suffering and vigilant. . . . Every exit from the book is made within the book. . . . If writing is not a tearing of the self toward the other within a confession of infinite separation, if it is a delectation of itself, the pleasure of writing for its own sake, the satisfaction of the artist, then it destroys itself. . . . One emerges from the book, because . . . the book is not in the world, but the world is in the book."*
> — Jacques Derrida
> *Writing and Difference*

Holding forth at the spacious treelines with the bears and the crows, the best tellers in the tribes peel peel peel peel their words like oranges, down to the last navel. Mimicked in written forms over winter now, transposed in mythic metaphors, the interior glories from oral traditions burst in conversations and from old footprints on the trail.

"The text you write must prove to me *that it desires me*," writes Roland Barthes in his book *The Pleasures of the Text.* "This proof exists: it is writing. Writing is: the science of the various blisses of language. .. . I am interested in language because it wounds or seduces me. . . . The language I speak within myself is not of my time; it is prey, by nature, to ideological suspicion; thus it is with this language that I must struggle. I write because I do not want the words I find…"

The most imaginative tribal writers seldom peel peel peel peel their oranges at random, not even in the ritual darkness, but untribal translators and talebearers march march march their words down mission rows in perfect grammatical time, building word castles here and there in the sacred sand, territorial and colonial verbs, fabricating their words in prestressed phrases, interior mechanical landscapes, separating tribal orchards from the sacred. The written word leaves a different footprint near the treeline. The oral tradition is a visual event, but in written form stories are formed as scripts, struck into print from grammatical philosophies, so that the reader, trained to read with critical class expectations, becomes the master of sand castles, a teller and a listener in a single interior voice from a written template. The reader remembers footprints near the treeline, near the limits of understanding in written words, but the trail is never marked with printed words. The trail is made as a visual event between imaginative creators, tellers, and listeners: we hold our breath beneath the surface, the written word, but we know that respiration and transpiration are possible under water.

"The pleasure of the text is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas," writes Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*, "for my body does not have the same ideas I do. . . . The pleasure of the text is not the pleasure of the corporeal striptease or of narrative suspense. In these cases, there is no tear, no edges: a gradual unveiling: the entire excitation takes refuge in the *hope* of seeing the sexual organ ... or in knowing the end of the story. . . . Thus, what I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon the fine surface: I read on, I skip, I look up, I dip in again. Which has nothing to do with the deep laceration the text of bliss inflicts upon language itself, and not upon the simple temporality of its reading. ..."

These imaginative narratives are written in double visions, peeled from visual experiences on the trail near the spacious treeline and transposed in tribal visual word cinemas. The four interior scenes, the stories within stories and between tellers and listeners, are satirical mind theaters staged at the crossroads near the orchards, near the windmills on distant moors, mountains, and in classrooms.

"The imagination is always aware of the present. . . ." writes Mary Warnock in her book *Imagination*. "Neither understanding alone nor sensation alone can do the work of imagination, nor can they be conceived to come together without imagination. . . . Only imagination is in this sense creative; only it makes pictures of things."

The scenes in these stories, in these word cinemas, are visual dream flights, untimed in unusual places, with terminal believers and urban shamans and landfill meditators. The word *indian* appears in lowercase letters in these stories.

Classroom Windmills

Tulip shares her dreams with me at dusk. She is fascinated with natural power, wind through windmills, the moon through pine boughs, white water down the mountain, salmon in the sun, crows over the prairie. She builds miniature windmills, and she has transformed our tribal resource center, one of several special ethnic libraries on campus, windows opened wide to the ocean, into a palace of whirrs and wind rattles.

Tulip reveals no secrets, and she bears no confessions from her tribal origins. She is more beautiful than the wind from all directions and she is my weakness, but her weakness has never been me. She has but one weakness, it is her pure hatred for indian men, parts of me included, mixedblood or whole; and, though she is obsessed with natural power, she is inhibited about the instinctive power of sex. Most offensive to her is the language of sex.

Tulip finds much more pleasure and awareness in water and wind than she does in masculine muscles or an erect penis. The copper blades on her miniature windmills, white water, sandpipers, wounded killdeer, the motions and sounds from the earth, morning in the cottonwoods, but not indian men, speak the natural languages she understands. Tulip trusts me, rather, she trusts the secrets and silence in me, and she shares her dreams with me when we are alone.

Histories harden like prairie mud and disappear in her memories. The first time we were together she was a flower, the wind was gentle over the meadow, and the shamans and the tribal clowns at the borders of sexual reversals burst over the earth, through the wet leaves in the summer ceremonies of the sun. Sexual contradictions are like the changes in the wind, enchanting, wind and rain on the leaves, the pleasures are tacit and preternatural. We touch with words, but

she believes that the words on sex are demeaning, metaphors from violence and domination, reductions from natural experiences, the opposites from nurturance. She demands silence in sex, restraint like birds in magical flight, control, too much control, wordless and breathless at the most ecstatic moments. Not a thunderstorm in her, but a warm hesitant rain on the cedar and fern, no more than whispers. She is not a shadow, she is the moon.

Tulip has sound reasons to hate indian men. As a child, a beautiful natural creature like a fur salmon upstream, and as a young woman, she was abused by several indian men. Living in a small shack on the reservation, she watched drunken indian men lust for women, word pits, scored brown books, and she heard the harsh and violent sounds of sex over her mother and her sisters.

Tulip has the haunting face of a woodland animal, soft skin, smooth black hair. Her smile flickers from the first dream fires of the tribes. She chooses to be alone, to be silent, to live with secrets, to be with her winds like a windmill near the ocean. Tulip is the wind, she is nature, and I am a fool.

Tulip is in my dreams.

The sound of the windmills reminds me of her power.

Tulip is also a victim of what she remembers and avoids. Behind her desk, through a thin plaster wall in the next office, she can hear, three or four times a week, the uninhibited and unabashed sounds of wild sex.

Satirical Stallion

Twice a week in the afternoon, two hours before his special seminar on tribal literature, Pink Stallion has loud sex with blondes in his office next to the tribal resource center. The windmills, even in a stiff wind, do not rise above the sounds of sex. Tulip cannot avoid hearing these smut events through the wall behind her desk.

"Blondes stimulate ideas," asserts the Pink Stallion. When we hear blonde laughter coming through the thin wall from his office, moaning over the sound of the windmills, the center turns silent. Even the windmills seem to slow down to listen. Lips open and close with special care, books drop closed, pens poised, while we wait to hear the final cries from the blonde resurrection of General George Custer.

Tulip hears the first sounds near her desk. The opening of the couch against the wall, a thud, a moan, curses, hard breathing—all drive her to pack her books and wind charts and leave for her apartment in the hills. She dreams there, flashing her fur upstream in the sun.

Pink Stallion bridled his mixedblood horse in time for our seminar on tribal literature. Twice a week he appears with flush cheeks, lecture notes in hand. From the curve of his smile like a trickster he must know that we listen in on his time with blondes.

"This week," said Pink Stallion, opening the seminar, "we will discuss the meaning of culture, mythical opposition and resolution, sacred connections and secular separations, and experiences in the oral tradition, as discovered in several indian novels, and in *Landfill Meditation*, a collection of skin stories about an urban shaman."

"Shall we begin with these questions, please: What use is culture if it does not support our dreams and visions? As a form of consciousness, is culture a denial of mortality? The denial of

the earth in us? Should we be at war, word wars in opposition with a culture that invalidates our dreams and visions?"

Silence.

We were bored; after the sounds of sex through the wall we were bored with seminars and trick questions. Bound in urban rituals, we were bored with words; material magic and street chatter limited our imagination. We were unable to respond to metaphors with more than passive political rhetoric and disconnected curses.

"Shit, man, culture? What culture you talkin on, brother?" carped Bad Mouth, the first and the last to speak. Her words were broken arrows. She resisted ideas, and from her passive resistance she found personal power in symbolic opposition. Mixedblood and urban, she was immortal in word wars.

Bad Mouth never reads. She frowns and sulks. She hates books, white people, and insects, in that order. The whirr and rattle of the miniature windmills sound to her like thousands of insects, and she hates the wind too because of the windmills. She prevails with hatred and insists that what sounds evil must be evil.

Pink Stallion resists the world in a different manner. When he was first asked to teach a seminar on indian literature for indians, he resisted because there would be no white students there, which meant in translation, no blondes. He called such a seminar "bone head literature for racists," but as the power of the indian students increased, he turned the indian seminar idea into an act of survival.

Pink Stallion leaned forward, mounted his white-framed reading glasses, and read from *Myth and Meaning* by Claude Levi-Strauss: "Mythical stories are, or seem, arbitrary, meaningless, absurd, yet nevertheless they seem to reappear all over the world. . . . Each of us is a kind of crossroads where things happen. The crossroads is purely passive; something happens there. A different thing, equally valid, happens elsewhere. There is no choice, it is just a matter of chance."

Silence.

The students looked out the window.

The windmills whirred.

Pink Stallion looked out the window, looked toward the ocean with the students, while he continued his lecture: "The invented indian in us has become a perfect victim, separated from the living, an object with no sacrificial significance, *objet-trouve*, a word icon, perfect inventions from romantic literature. The invented indian is thrown in us from a white wheel, a white ceramic creation without nurturance."

"You always talk about that shit, man, what white people are thinking, how about talking about what indians are thinking for a change?" demanded Injun Time, who was the brightest in a pride of tribal fools. She received an urban vision and was given her sacred pet name by the leader of the San Francisco Sun Dancers.

"Did you hear me?" asked Injun Time.

"Why do you always quote white people? Quote some indians for a change."

"Language, as we have discussed it in the past, structures our perceptions of the world," Pink Stallion explained. Looking toward the ocean, he pinched his lips until the skin turned white.

"Did you hear me the second time?" demanded Injun Time. "How come you never find out anything that indians write and think about?"

"You are quite right, Miss Injun Time," said Pink Stallion, leaning back in his chair at the head of the seminar table. His eyes returned from the ocean. "Your timing is perfect, because, it is now

the time and place to consider indian authors, but first, let me make a check around the room to see who has read the indian materials."

Silence.

Fast Food, short, fat, and flush, true to his urban dream name, was the first to respond while he munched on corn chips. He brushed the crumbs from the seminar table in front of him, and mumbled that he had not read "all of the stuff, the stories."

"Which parts did you read?"

"The best parts that are indian."

"Name one part."

"Sure, the part where the white man gets what he's got coming to him, that's the part that I liked the best," said Fast Food. Token White, lips and cheeks twitching from the opposition in her consciousness between tribal traditions and her word place in the urban world, said that she had read the stories, but she wished that she had not done so, because, she explained, indian author or not, she thought the tribal people in the stories were made to look foolish.

"Have you ever heard of satire?"

"Satire is not sacred," answered Token White, fulfilling the meaning of her romantic name. The students used their descriptive pet names from the urban sun dance. Token White stands tall, white, angular, absorbed in indian dreams, and tribal by serious practice.

"Mother earth is satire," said Pink Stallion.

"No, never," said Token White.

"Never, never," said Fine Print, moving his lips in silent recitation, passive and distant. He confessed that he was not a reader, never read prose, he explained, because prose is not traditional and because he is a writer of poems. The manner in which some students avoid linear thinking is linear.

Bad Mouth, slouching in her chair, sneered behind dark sunglasses, curled her upper lip, and cursed. "Shit, man, it never mean nothin to me, no how, man, indians never write that shit, man, indians got an oral tradition, man." Bad Mouth survived in the world with hatred. Invectives were the source of her urban visions, and her dream name, but she has not been an indian for long, which makes it difficult to know where and when the indian hatred begins and ends. Three years ago when her mother told her that her grandmother was a mixedblood indian from Mission La Soledad, Bad Mouth demanded that the Bureau of Indian Affairs make her an indian and give her a scholarship to college. Before her indian enlightenment she told her friends that her parents were both Maoris from New Zealand. "The third world is all the same," she said, and boasted that her father was a leader in the Northern California Hau Hau Movement, a sort of sacred urban cargo cult.

"What was that?"

"Shit, man, third world, man."

"Third world where?" asked Pink Stallion.

"Right here, man, shit." Bad Mouth was scheduled to graduate at the end of this quarter, but Rubie Blue Welcome failed her ass in a seminar on tribal languages, which is a degree requirement in indian studies. She did not wait long on the rim. With Doc Cloud Burst and the San Francisco Sun Dancers, Bad Mouth is leading a movement to control the department with urban indian spiritual power and eliminate the courses she did not pass.

Touch Tone, in braids and plastic bear claws, could have been named for plastic, but because he is best known for his long distance telephone conversations back to the reservation, he was

named in a dream for the fastest dial. Wherever he visits he leaves a trail of long distance telephone bills. Aiming his water pistol around the room, he said he never did read what the indians wrote because indians live in oral traditions, and a real indian teacher would tell stories and not make indians read stories, "what is there to read in the indian world?"

"Perceptive question," said Pink Stallion.

"Shapersons are the best writers," said Injun Time. She tells stories with the voice of a shaman, or as she insists, a "shaperson." She sees auras and speaks about magical flights to other worlds where she learned the languages of plants and animals and birds. She knows about animals, and medicines from plants. Animals come to her on the streets and tell her stories, complain about their health in the cities, and laugh about their foolishness. Injun Time bears vitamins in her medicine bundle, a common practice among the members of the San Francisco Sun Dancers.

"When indians write, indians write," said Injun Time, fingering her leather medicine bundle around her neck, "and when indians read, indians read, and when this indian reads she reads what she likes to read, and she likes the short stories she read about the landfill meditator because he had a shit load of visions."

Silence.

The windmills whirred.

Injun Time smiled.

Pink Stallion slapped his thighs.

Transformations are not uncommon in the tribal world. Pink Stallion wished that he could become a large bird or a dark bear during his special seminar for indian students and flash his fur on the wind. He appeared now, chin in hand, to be soaring, but he explained later that he was transfixed with boredom and repressed hostilities about some of the indian students. "Tulip is a shorebird, and she transforms me from boredom with her windmills," he said, but then he changed her metaphor to a small animal, one he could mount no doubt.

"Have teachers become the ceremonial victims," Pink Stallion whispered over the windmills, and then he bounced from his hands and pawed through his notes and papers like a bear at a picnic.

"In time, all in good time, now, let me show all of you fine oral scholars, avid readers of indian literature, how to read, since this is your seminar and my survival," said Pink Stallion, turning the page in a collection of short stories written by indians. "*Landfill Meditation* has an outside and an interior observer, or an omniscient narrator who goes for it and knows what is coming down. The story starts with a teacher telling stories and then one voice leads to another, as stories did in the oral tradition, from teller to listener to listener and more. We move through time with a shaman until the end when the writer delivers us back to the classroom where we started as readers and listeners. These stories take place in a house of word mirrors, with the denouement being little more than the return of the narrator to our interior space."

"Shit, man. … "

"Shit, what, woman," responded Pink Stallion.

"Shit, man, you done teaching here."

"We were done when we were invented," countermoved the Pink Stallion from behind the windmills. He remounted his reading glasses and cleared his throat. "These *Landfill Meditation* stories begin with Clement Beaulieu, a mixedblood character from the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. Beaulieu conducts seminars on Native American philosophies and tribal meditation, environmental fantasies, animal languages, and talking and walking backward, one night

each week at Shaman High, which, as you know, is a transcendental college in Marin County, California.

Bad Mouth stopped two windmills before she shouldered her red pack, and leaving the seminar and cultural resource center, she slammed the door three times.

Injun Time straightened the blades on the windmills.

Pink Stallion looked out toward the setting sun over the ocean. The wind was cool on his face, and he remembered the stories he would tell about the urban shaman teacher. He looked down at his book and began to read about landfill meditation and tribal transformations.

The windmills whirred in time.

Bad Mouth returned to the seminar table, mean as ever, with three new urban sun dancers to hold her evil line.

Urban Shamans

Last week, when the in teaching trickster entered the classroom, conversations stopped in the middle of sentences. He removed his leather coat with unusual caution, walked backward moving his head from side to side like an animal at the shoreline, smiled, turned out the overhead fluorescent lights, and then he waited near the open window in silence. There, in his woodland visions, he followed the water moons backward over the mountains on familiar tribal vision faces. Traffic over the Golden Gate Bridge roared down the word maps and sacred place names in the distance.

Pink Stallion stopped reading and looked around the table to see who was listening. Fast Food was munching corn chips as usual. Touch Tone was sleeping with his head back and his mouth wide open.

"How does he know that sacred stuff?" asked Token White, strumming the sinew on her favorite bow.

"Sacred memories."

"But his stories are like entertainment," Token White insisted. "How can that stuff be sacred?" "Memories have no unconscious forms," explained Stallion. "Entertainment is not a categorical experience we seldom remember events in forms."

"What was that?"

"When we tell about our experiences we remember events outside the forms in which the experiences first occurred"

"Shit, man."

"Remember sex first and the backseat later."

"Now we meet the characters in the stories," said Pink Stallion. The trickster told stories backward about the four directions and the four tribal characters who traveled with him that night from the window: Martin Bear Charme the landfill meditator, Happie Comes Last the demure gossiper, Oh Shinnah Fast Wolf the metatribal moralist, and Belladonna Winter Catcher the roadwoman with terminal creeds.

The following is an imaginative translation from the *drawkcab*, or backward patois, in which these stories were first told and recorded:

"Backward what?" asked Token White.

"Patois means a special language, street talk, for example, or a common dialect which is different from the standard language," explained Pink Stallion.

Martin Bear Charme owns a reservation, the teaching trickster told backward from the darkness, teaches a seminar on refuse meditation, and circumscribes his own unusual images in the material world.

Charme commands us to believe that imaginative meditation means walking backward through the refuse and telling visual stories to writers who never take notes, but not, he said twice, but not speaking to be recorded or smiling to be photographed.

Words are rituals in the oral tradition, from the knowledge of creation, little visions on the winds, said the old tribal scavenger to his students, not electronic sounds separating the tellers from the listeners. Landfill meditation restores the connections between refuse and the refuser.

Charme, mixedblood master meditator who tells that he walked backward down from Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota, is much more vain than astute about his photogenic face and emulsion visage. He has an enormous nose attached to his smooth face, and in his stare is the power of the bear.

Oh Shinnah Fast Wolf, autonomous mistress of metatribal ceremonies, started soughing on stage at the Unitarian Church in Berkeley under the sounds of automobile traffic, about the guardians at the heart of mother earth, while a disciple in sparrow feathers, bearing a pacific smile, held open the double doors for one more cash contribution to balance the earth at the fault.

"Shit, man," said Bad Mouth.

"She did not explain her identities," said Pink Stallion who was at the meeting, filled with cedar smoke and terminal believers, "but she said she was authorized to speak for mother earth."

Happie Comes Last, reservation born laborer in a healthfood cooperative, a horsewoman, and columnist for the *Mountain Meditator*, a critical tabloid on meditation and holistic healing, would have been the last cash donor, but there at the double doors, sorting through the cards and letters in her leather pouch like a marsupial, she found a free press ticket and a caricature of the refuse meditation leader. Flashing the ticket and caricature, she asked the disciple, as she moved beneath his feathers and outstretched arms, where was the refuse meditator sitting?

Charme sits over there, the disciple said, pointing with his chin and blond head; he is in the white pants, the one with the oil on his nose, in the back near the window.

Comes Last leaned back to gossip with the attractive blond disciple: Did you know that he walks and talks backward? He never answers interviews but in public places like this. No, the blond disciple whispered back over his shoulder, where are his private places? Martin Bear Charme, founder of the Landfill Meditation Reservation and the seminar with the same name, scooped the oil from his outsized nose with his dark middle finger, his habit once or twice an hour, and spread the viscid mounds over his cuticles. Sitting near the window, one would never know, watching his smooth hands in backward speech, that the refuse meditator was reservation born, once poor, and undereducated for urban survival.

"Right on, man," exclaimed Fast Food.

Nose Charmer, his tribal pet name on the reservation, hitchhiked to San Francisco when he was sixteen and settled in a waterfront hotel. He studied welding on a federal relocation program, but scrap connections bored him so he turned to scavenging and made a fortune hauling and filling wetlands with solid waste and urban swill. Once a worthless mud flat, his lush refuse reservation on South San Francisco Bay near Mountain View is now worth millions.

Charme and his legal advisor, Bicker Becker, have petitioned the federal government for recognition of the reservation as a sovereign tax-free tribal meditation nation, a place where laws and liens are intuitive. Petulant Becker, titular dean of the California Meditation and Levitation Law School, argues that even individuals in shamanic flight and astral projections should be recognized as duty-free ports.

There never was refuse like this on the reservation, Charme told his seminar, because on the old reservations we were the refuse, we were the waste, solid and swill on the run, telling stories from a discarded culture to amuse the colonial refusers. The blond disciple dropped his arms and his smile, and the double doors wagged closed on the traffic sounds. Oh Shinnah, her hair bound back in tight braids, cut counter shapes around her head in abstruse hand rituals and then snapped two match heads together four times, igniting a small cedar bundle of her on the floor.

Comes Last, smiling and nodding with embarrassment, broke through the silent aisles while the little chapel filled with thick, sweet smoke. Down the back row she cleared her throat and then perched on the last chair, not knowing that the old scavenger commanded the last place near the window, his escape distance from spiritual faults.

Chanting *wanaki nimiwin wanaki*, Charme scooped his nose oil once more while Oh Shinnah focused on the visions in her crystal ball, and then in perfect tribal trickster time he rolled with his chair past Comes Last in magical flight toward the window, a movement she later described in her column as *soaring backward on a shaman chair*.

Pink Stallion paused to tell us that he was there too, at the meeting, sitting near the shaman in the back of the chapel. He explained that magical flight was a common shamanic tribal experience, moving through other times and places, other lives and spaces in creation.

"Shaman understand the language, what was that word special languages?" asked Injun Time.

"Patois."

"Shaman understand animal and plant patois too, but what do the indian words mean, the ones you told?"

"*Wanaki* means peace and *nimiwin* means dancing, in the tribal language of the *anishinaabe*," said Pink Stallion. He continued reading.

The first time Comes Last called on the refuse meditator at his urban reservation he was sitting in a room filled with trash. She asked him about his place of birth and his theories on the mind, but he said nothing more than *wanaki nimiwin wanaki*. She asked questions four times before leaving his reservation.

Martin Bear Charme smiled, nodded his head four times backward, and then laughed, throwing his nose back like a bear at the tree line ha ha ha haaaa.

Looking up from her ball and turtle fetish, Oh Shinnah stopped her invocation on mother earth between the words *intuition* and *compassion* to explain that she had serious business on her mind front about and in her heart about mineral companies and progressive reservation governments, and, she said, we will not compete with the animals.

Pink Stallion added that several animals were walking around the chapel, panting, snorting, and thumping on the wooden floor, which interrupted the speaker.

"I was sitting near the window, in the back where Martin Bear Charme soared backward," said Pink Stallion. "A calico cat leaped through the opened window into my lap. Well, I was startled, but being around so many shamans, I pretended that cats come to me all the time." The truth is that Pink Stallion hates cats, but cats seem attracted to him.

Wanaki nimiwin wanaki ha ha ha haaaa, Charme throwing his voice backward from his escape distance window. Who would believe you were a meditator, tribal no less, Comes Last whispered out of the side of her mouth. She shifted from side to side on her perch. She is a bird who appears perched wherever and on whatever she sits. When she speaks she thrusts her lips out like a beak, giving rise to her sickle feathers, an avian illusion in the willows.

What does it mean?

What does it mean?

Wanaki nimiwin wanaki over and over.

Four skins lost in dreams ha ha ha haaaa.

Not foreskins, she said through her tense lips, indians never did circumcisions, tell the truth now, what does it mean?

"Shit, man, real indians never talk like that, man," snapped Bad Mouth as she shouldered her red pack. She slammed her chair to the table, stopped several windmills again, slammed her chair to the table, and then slammed the door when she left the resource center with her three urban sun dance followers.

Wanaki peaceful place, *nimiwin wanaki* dancing in a peaceful place ha ha ha haaaa, said the landfill meditator to the bird sitting near the window.

Where?

Landfill and summer swill.

Talk sense, Comes Last demanded, opening her leather-bound notebook. How are those words spelled? she asked.

D R A W K C A B N A M A H S

Mister Charme, she said, shifting her head to the side to see his nose, what does it mean, landfill meditation? Please in a phrase or two, speak slow now.

Unstable.

Unstable what?

Unstable in an earthquake.

Be serious, please.

Stable.

Stable what?

Stable on a windmill in a mindswell.

Never mind, she said, closing her leather notebook. Damn fool, what do you know about meditation? Nothing!

Refuse meditation cures cancer with visions. Some people clean their kitchens better than others too, said the solid waste magnate.

Mister Charme, please, you are speaking to a healthfood worker, she said, brushing lumps of leather from her black dress, not one of your meditation victims.

Charme scooped the oil from his nose and continued. Clean minds and clean kitchens are delusions, unrewarded altruism. When our visions are clean we seem to feel much better, but no less insecure.

Comes Last turned her head, avoiding the meditator, pretending not to be interested in what he was telling. Stop talking at me, she said, bouncing in her chair. But you listen so much better when you are not me ha ha ha haaaa. Pretend you are not interested.

Damn fool.

Once upon a time taking out the garbage was an event in our lives, a state of being connected to action. We were part of the rituals connecting us to the earth, from the places food grew through the house and our bodies, and then back to the earth. Garbage was real, part of creation, not an objective invasion of cans and cartons.

Refuse meditation teaches us to turn the mind back to the earth through the visions of real waste, the trash meditator continued. His voice distracted the celebrants sitting in the next row. Faces turned and scowled. The old scavenger smiled back and resumed his stories.

We are the garbage, the waste, we make it and dump it, to be separated from it is a cancer-causing delusion, he said, but with some doubt in the tone of his voice. We cannot separate ourselves clean and perfect by dumping our trash out back. The earth is a victim of our internal trash.

Pink Stallion pointed out certain ironies and the references to ideas derived from meditation and holistic health. "The earth has become a sacrificial victim," he said, "because the white man has lost his mythic connections with the earth, like families abandoned on the interstates."

Stop this now, Comes Last insisted. You made your fortune on trash, and now you are making me sick with it. Let me sit here now and not listen to you.

Sickness is one of the best meditation experiences. Think about being sick, focus on your stuffed nose, make your mind an unclean kitchen. Now, said the old scavenger, rather than hating to clean up the kitchen, making it smell different, get right down with the odors. Focus on the odors in the corners, take the odors in, you know, the same way we smell our underarms and feet, because we are the bad smells we smell separated from our own real kitchens in the mind.

What was that?

Never mind . . . and the clean words that part us from the real smells leave us defensive victims of fetid swill and cancer. Take on odors in the same way we take on what we fear, become the opposition, become the swill. Did you understand that part? Ha ha ha haaaa.

You are sick, what you need are some clean words in your head, said Comes Last, moving two chairs down the back row out of his bad breath range.

Cancer is first a word, nothing more, a separation without vision, he said, following her down the row. We are culture bound to be clean, but being clean is a delusion and a separation from the visual energies of the earth. Holistic health is a harmonious vision, not an aromatic word prison.

Listen, we are the dreamers for the earth, he said in a deep voice. Turning down the dreams with clean words, defensive terminal creeds, earth separations, denies odors and death and causes cancer.

The celebrants turned toward the old scavenger in the back row and told him to be silent. One woman wagged her hand at him, warning him not to speak about diseases during sacred ceremonies in the cedar smoke.

We are death, said the refuse meditator to the woman in the next row. Unabashed, he stood and spoke in a loud voice to all the celebrants in the chapel. We are rituals, not perfect words; we are the ceremonies, not the witnesses, that connect us to the earth. We are the earth dreamers, the holistic waste, not the detached nose pinchers between the refuse and the refusers.

Go to a place in the waste to meditate, chanted the refuse meditator. Come to our reservation on the landfill to focus on waste and transcend the ideal word worlds, clean talk and terminal creeds, and the disunion between the mind and the earth. Come meditate on trash and swill odors and become the waste that holds us to the earth.

Injun Time asked Pink Stallion to read that paragraph again. "The one about clean talk and terminal creeds. . . . That man must be a word skin."

Go to a place in the waste to meditate. . . Focus on waste and transcend the ideal word worlds, clean talk and terminal creeds, and the disunion between the mind and the earth. . . .

Pipe down in the back.

Oh Shinnah raised an eagle feather and told the mother earth celebrants that her feather made her tell the truth; should I not speak straight, the feather will tremble. Now listen, we live in a retarded country. . . . we vote for a peanut picker looking for a way to freedom and look where we have come. People are tearing up our land without examining it.

Hang with mother earth, she said, raising her fist; if the four corners tribal land is destroyed, then purification comes with a closed fist. If the electromagnetic pole at the four corners is upset, the earth will slip in space, causing the death of two-thirds of the population, no matter where you go to hide.

Oh Shinnah makes more sense with cedar smoke and fetishes than you do with all that double back talk about meditation, Comes Last declared, raising her chin.

Silence.

The lights flickered several times, and then out. The celebrants whispered in the darkness until the smell of cedar smoke in the chapel turned to the odor of landfill swill, or what Comes Last described in her column as a mixture of human excrement and dead animals. At first whiff the celebrants took cover in clean words, thinking the person next in row had passed bad air. But later, when the chapel filled with the scent of wild flowers, one celebrant allowed how terrible was the smell. While the others praised the passing of the bad odors, Comes Last, whose nose had not separated from the world of animals, smelled a bear in the darkness.

Listen ha ha ha haaaa.

Martin Bear Charme moved around the chapel in the darkness, from row to row and chair to chair, telling stories about terminal creeds. His voice seemed to rise and waver from the four directions. Words dropped from the beams, sounds came from under the chairs, and several celebrants were certain that the stories he told that night were told inside their own heads.

Listen ha ha ha haaaa.

Pink Stallion paused once more to explain how the author shifted to a different time and place. "We started out at a seminar, then moved to a church, and then to the landfill reservation, back to the church, and now to a place, as you will hear in a moment, named Orion, which is a town framed in red bricks and a constellation showing the figure of a hunter with a sword."

Terminal Creeds

Orion was framed in a great wall of red earthen bricks, said the refuse meditator. Within the red walls lived several families who were descendants of famous hunters and western bucking horse breeders. Like good horses, the sign outside the walls said, proud people keep to themselves and their own breed, but from time to time we invite others to share food and conversation.

Belladonna Winter Catcher, who was born and conceived at Wounded Knee, her traveling companion Catholic Bishop Omax Parasimo, and several other tribal pilgrims knocked at the gate. We are tribal mixedbloods with good stories and memories from thousands of good listeners. Open the gate and let us in or we will blow your house down.

Listen to this, said Belladonna who was reading the sign on the red wall: *Terminal Creeds are Terminal Diseases. . . . The Mind is the Perfect Hunter and Narcissism is a Form of Isolation.*

The metal portcullis opened, and several guards dressed in uniforms escorted the pilgrims through the red wall. The pilgrims were examined. Information was recorded about birth places, education and experiences, travels and diseases, attitudes on women and politics. The hunters and breeders welcomed the visitors to tell stories about what was happening in the world outside the walls.

The pilgrims followed the hunters and breeders through the small town to one of the large houses where dozens of people were waiting on the front steps. Introductions and questions about political views were repeated again and again.

Thousands of questions were asked before dinner was served in the church dining room. Bishop Parasimo was the first to shift the flow of conversations. He asked the hunters and breeders sitting at his table to discuss the meaning of the messages on the outside walls. What does it mean, narcissism is a form of isolation? Please explain how the mind is the perfect hunter.

Narcissism rules the possessor, said a breeder with a deep scar on the side of his forehead. Narcissism is the fine art that turns the dreamer into paste and ashes.

The perfect hunter leaves himself and becomes the animal or bird he is hunting, said a hunter on the other side of the table. He touched his ear with his curled trigger finger as he spoke. The perfect hunter turns on himself, hunts himself in his mind. He lives on the edge of his own meaning, the edge of his own humor. He is the hunter and the hunted at the same time.

The breeders and hunters at the table smiled and nodded and then turned toward the head table where the bald banker breeder was tapping his water glass. Belladonna was sitting next to the banker. Her nervous fingers fumbled with the two beaded necklaces around her neck.

The families applauded when the banker spoke of their mission against terminal creeds. Depersonalize the word in the world of terminal believers, and we can all share the good side of humor. . . . Terminal believers must be changed or driven from our dreams.

Belladonna could feel the moisture from his hand resting on her shoulder. He referred to her as the good spirited speaker who has traveled through the world of savage lust on the interstates, this serious tribal woman, our speaker from the outside world, who once carried with her a tame white bird. Belladonna leaned back in her chair. Her thighs twitched from his words about the tame white bird. The banker did not explain how he knew that she once lived with a dove. The medicine man told her it was an evil white witch so she turned the dove loose in the woods, but the bird returned. She cursed the bird and locked it out of her house, but the white dove soared in crude domestic circles and hit the windows. The dove would not leave. One night, when she was alone, she squeezed the bird in both hands, but the dove seemed content. She shook the dove. Behind the house, against a red pine, she severed the head of the white dove with an ax. Blood spurted in her face. The headless dove flopped backward into the dark woods.

We are waiting, said the banker. Belladonna shivered near her chair, chasing the dove from her memories. She fumbled with her neck beads. Tribal values and dreams is what I will talk about.

Speak up … speak up.

Tribal values is the subject of my talk, she said in a louder voice. She dropped her hands from her beads. We are raised with values that shape our world in a different light. . . . We are tribal and that means that we are children of dreams and visions. Our bodies are connected to mother earth, and our minds are the clouds. Our voices are the living breath of the wilderness.

My grandfathers were hunters, said the hunter with the trigger finger at his ear. They said the same thing about the hunt that you said is tribal, so what does that mean?

I am different from a whiteman because of my values, she said. I would not be white, never white. Do tell me, said an old woman breeder in the back of the room. We can see that you are different from a man, but tell us please how you are so different from *white people*.

We are different because we are raised with different values, Belladonna explained. She was fumbling with her beads again. Our parents treat us different as children. We are not punished. We live in larger families and never send our old people to homes to be alone. These are some things that make us different.

More, more.

Tribal people seldom touch each other, said Belladonna. She folded her hands over her breasts. We do not invade the personal bodies of others, and we do not stare at people when we are talking. . . . Indians have more magic in their lives.

Wait a minute, hold on there, said a hunter with an orange beard. Let me find something out here before you make me so different from the rest of the world. Tell me about this word *indian* that you use, tell me which *indians* are you talking about, or for, or are you talking for all Indians? And if you are speaking for all Indians, then how can there be truth in what you say?

Indians have their religion in common.

What does *indian* mean?

Are you so stupid that you cannot figure out what and who indians are? An indian is a member of a tribe and a person who has indian blood.

But what is *indian* blood?

Indian blood is not white blood.

Inventions, that must be what *indians* are, inventions, said the hunter with the beard. You tell me that the invention is different from the rest of the world when it was the rest of the world that invented the indian, right here on this land. We invented you and that must be why you hate us so much, because you have taken to believe in the invention. An indian is an indian because he speaks and thinks and believes he is an *indian* . . . The invention must not be so bad because the tribes have taken it up for keeps.

Mister, does it make much difference what the word *indian* means when I tell you from my heart that I have always been proud that I am an indian, said Belladonna. Proud to speak the voice of mother earth.

Please continue.

Well, as I was explaining, tribal people are closer to the earth, to the meaning and energies of the woodlands and the mountains and the plains. . . . We are not a competitive people like the whites who competed this nation into corruption and failure.

When you use the plural pronoun, asked a woman hunter with short white hair, does that mean that you are talking for all tribal people?

Fine Print leaned forward at the seminar table, moved his lips in silence for a minute or two and then asked: "What is all that shit about grammar, anyway?"

Most of them.

How about the western fishing tribes, the old tribes, the tribes that burned down their own houses in potlatch ceremonies?

Exceptions are not the rule.

Fools never make rules, said the woman with white hair. You speak from terminal creeds, not as a person of real experiences and critical substance.

Thank you for the meal, said Belladonna. She smirked and turned in disgust from the hunters and breeders. The banker placed his moist hand on her shoulder. Now, now, she will speak in good faith, said the banker, if you will listen with less critical ears. She does not want to debate her ideas. Give her another good hand. The hunters and breeders applauded. She smiled, accepted apologies, and started again.

The tribal past, our religion and dreams and the concept of mother earth, is precious to me. Living is not important if it is turned into competition and material gain. . . . Living is hearing the wind and speaking the languages of animals and soaring with eagles in magical flight. When I speak about these experiences it makes me feel powerful: the power of tribal religion and spiritual beliefs gives me protection. My tribal blood is like the great red wall you have around you here. . . . My blood moves in the circles of mother earth and through dreams without time. My tribal blood is timeless, and it gives me strength to live and deal with evil. Right on sister, right on, said the hunter with the trigger finger on his ear. He leaped to his feet and cheered for her views.

"Right on, sister," chimed Token White.

"Four skins win," said Touch Tone, nodding his loose head in agreement as he shot spurts of sacred water in the air with his red water pistol.

Pink Stallion continued reading.

Powerful speech, said a breeder.

She deserves her favorite dessert, said a hunter in a deep voice. The hunters and breeders do not trust those narcissistic persons who accept personal praise.

Shall we offer our special dessert to this innocent child? asked the breeder banker. Let me hear it now, those who think she deserves her dessert, thank you, and now those who think she does not deserve dessert for her excellent speech.

No dessert please, said Belladonna.

Fast Food said, "give it to me, then."

Now, now, how could you turn down the enthusiasm hunters and breeders who listened to your thoughts could you turn down their vote for your dessert?

The hunters and breeders cheered and whistled when the cookies were served. The circus pilgrims were not comfortable with the shift in moods, the excessive enthusiasm.

The energies here are strange, said Bishop Omax Parasimo up his sleeve. What does all this cheering mean? Quite simple, said the breeder with the scar. You see, when questions are unanswered and there is no humor, the messages become terminal creeds, and the good hunters and breeders here seek nothing that is terminal. Terminal creeds are terminal diseases, and we celebrate when death is inevitable.

The families smiled when she stood to tell them how much she loved their enthusiasm. In your smiling faces I can see myself, she said. This is a good place to be, you care for the living. The hunters and breeders cheered again.

But you applaud her narcissism, said the bishop to the breeder with the scar. His hands were folded in a neat pile on the table. She has demanded that we see her narcissism, said the breeder. You heard her tell us that she did not like questions, views; she is her own victim, a terminal believer.

But we are all victims.

The histories of tribal cultures have been terminal creeds and narcissistic revisionism, said the breeder. The tribes were perfect victims: if they had more humor and less false pride, the families would not have collapsed under so little pressure from the white man. . . . Show me a solid culture that disintegrates under the plow and the rifle and the saw.

Token White pounded on the table.

Pink Stallion stopped for a few minutes, looked around the table at the students, and then continued reading in a much louder voice to the end of the stories.

Your views are terminal.

Who is serious about the perfections of the past? Who gathers around them the frail hopes and febrile dreams and tarnished mother earth words? asked the hunter with the scar. Surviving in the present means giving up on the burdens of the past and the cultures of tribal narcissism.

Belladonna nibbled at her sugar cookie like a proud rodent. Her cheeks were filled and flushed. Her tongue tingled from the tartness of the cookie. In the kitchen the cooks had covered her cookie with a granulated time release alkaloid poison that would soon dissolve. The poison cookie was the special dessert for narcissists and believers in terminal creeds. She was her own perfect victim. The hunters and breeders have poisoned dozens of terminal believers in the past few months. Most of them were tribal people.

Fine Print cursed white people.

Token White strummed the sinew on her bow.

Belladonna nibbled at the poison dessert cookie, her polite response to the enthusiasm of the people who lived behind the wall. She smiled and nodded to the hunters and breeders who all watched her eat the last crumb.

The sun dropped beneath the great red earthen wall when the pilgrims passed through the gate. The pilgrims were silent, walking through the shadows. Seven crows circled until it was dark. Belladonna was chanting her words. My father took me into the sacred hills. We started when the sun was setting because Old Winter Catcher had to know what the setting sun looked like before he climbed into the hills for the night. The sun was beautiful; it spread great beams of orange and rose colors across the heavens. My father said it was a good sunset. No haze to hide the stars. He said it was good, and we climbed into the hills. It feels like that time now; we are climbing into the hills for the visions of the morning.

We walked up part of the hill backward, Belladonna said with her head turned backward. Then he told me that the world is not as it appears to be frontward, not then, not now. To leave the world and to see the power of the spirit on the hills we had to walk out of the known world backward. We had to walk backward so nothing would follow us up the hill.

My father said that things that follow are things that demand attention. Do you think we are being followed now?

No, said Bishop Omax Parasimo, looking behind.

When I do this we are walking and talking into the morning with Old Winter Catcher, she said, walking and talking backward down the road: *noitnetta ruo no sdnamed on htiw gninrom otni emoc ot tsrif eht*

Fast Food asked for a translation.

the first to come into morning with no demands on our attention

Shaman High smelled of wild flowers and bears and landfill swill when the teaching trickster stopped his stories, and then soared backward out the window in the darkness and laughed ha ha ha haaaa over the mountains and familiar tribal faces on the woodland water moons.

Pink Stallion removed his reading glasses, bundled his books and papers under his arm, laughed ha ha ha haaaa, and then walked backward from the seminar table in the resource center through tribal fantasies and backward through the whirr and rattle of windmills, backward from the present to his appointment with a blonde in his office next door.

The windmills whirred.

Backward through the door he slammed the door.

The windmills whirred.

The students and mythic memories from the stories hunkered out of time near the thin wall and waited to hear the familiar pleasure moans and sex sounds of the Pink Stallion mounting the resurrection of General George Armstrong Custer in the office next door. The Little Bighorn loomed in primal dreams of tribal vengeance.

The windmills whirred while the students shared new trickeries and terminal resurrections and turned from their remembered past to mount the blondes on campus for the last ride home.

Wild Intervention

ESCAPED TIGER KILLS MAN IN TBILISI

A man was killed by a tiger who escaped from a zoo in the city of Tbilisi, Georgia. The tiger was one of seven who escaped from the zoo following severe flooding in the former Soviet republic. In addition to the tigers, eight lions and three jaguars escaped from the zoo but eventually perished in the flooding.

Source: Vice News

NORTH CAROLINA TEENS INJURED IN SHARK ATTACK

Two North Carolina teenagers were attacked by sharks while swimming near Oak Island. Each victim lost an arm in the attack, one of several that have happened recently. Biologists were quick to proclaim that such attacks are quite rare stating that ". . . having a series of injuries so close to each other in time and space makes this unusual." They speculated that "it might suggest a single shark has been involved."

Source: CNN

ADDITIONAL SHARK ATTACKS IN THE CAROLINAS

Just a few weeks after biologists described shark attacks as being quite rare, three additional individuals were attacked. A 17-year old received injuries to his right calf, buttocks, and hands while swimming at Cape Hatteras National Sea Shore. A day earlier, a 47-year old swimming in the same area was bitten on his right leg and back. That day a man was attacked by a shark at South Carolina's Hunting Island State Park as well.

Source: CNN

BISON ATTACKS WOMAN ATTEMPTING SELFIE

A 43-year old woman was attacked by a bison at Yellowstone National Park while attempting to take a selfie. The woman and her daughter—who were standing 6 yards from a bison—turned her back on the animal and tried to take a photo with it. According to the National Park Service, "They heard the bison's footsteps moving toward them and started to run, but the bison caught the mother on the right side, lifted her up, and tossed her with its head." The woman was the fifth person this year injured by bison at Yellowstone and the third to be injured while attempting to take a photo with the animals.

Source: CNN

TEXAS MAN SHOOTS AT ARMADILLO, WOUNDED BY RICOCHET

An East Texas man was wounded after he fired a gun at an armadillo in his yard and the bullet ricocheted back to hit him in his face, the county sheriff said on Friday. Cass County Sheriff Larry Rowe said the man, who was not identi fied, went outside his home in Marietta, southwest of Texarkana, at around 3 a.m. on Thursday morning. He spotted the armadillo on his property and opened fire. The animal's hard shell deflected at least one of three bullets, which then struck the man's jaw, he said. The man was airlifted to a nearby hospital, where his jaw was wired shut, according to Rowe. The status of the animal is unknown.

CHIMP ATTACKS DRONE

In April, a chimp at the Royal Burgers' Zoo in the Netherlands swatted a camera-laden drone, knocking it out of the air. A television crew was hoping to use the drone to film chimps at the zoo. However, as soon as they started using the drone, chimps began collecting branches, positioned themselves strategically, and subsequently attacked the drone. The journal Primates studied the incident and concluded with the obvious: the attack was intentional.

Source: Christian Science Monitor

GOLFER DIES FROM BEE ATTACK

A 64-year old man playing golf at a northern Michigan resort died after being attacked by a swarm of bees while looking for a ball in the woods. The man was stung more than 20 times on the head, neck, and shoulders at Treetops Resort in Dover Township according to Michigan State Police Sergeant Mark Tamlyn.

Source: Reuters

CHIMPS AREN'T THE ONLY ANIMALS ATTACKING DRONES

The blog Schneier on Security has noted the proliferation of animal attacks on the drones and the subsequent posting of videos of the attacks on YouTube. com. Among the animals attacking drones are ravens, hawks, geese, and kangaroos. One attack by a ram disabled a drone, and when the operator went to retrieve it, the ram attacked the man flying the drone.

Source: Schneier on Security

BEAR SELFIES CAUSE COLORADO PARK TO CLOSE

A Denver, Colorado-area park was closed over concerns that visitors would be injured while attempting to take selfies. Brandon Ransom, manager of recreation at the park, reported that he has "seen people using selfie sticks to try and get as close to the bears as possible, sometimes within 10 feet of wild bears." The park's operators were concerned that people would be unable to resist bothering the bears in order to get the perfect Instagram shot.

Source: CNET

Reviews

Dixie Be Damned

By Neal Shirley & Saralee Stafford
AK Press • 280 pages • May 2015

Dixie Be Damned: 300 Years of Insurrection in the American South is the product of years of research by the folks who brought us the North Carolina Piece Corps, a zine distro with a focus on hidden tales of southern revolt and contemporary stories exploring the theoretical acceptance of violence. Pamphlets such as "*Politicians Love Gun Control*", "*I Will Not Crawl*" (excerpts from Robert F. Williams' *Negroes With Guns*), and "*Piece Now, Peace Later*" draw upon histories of struggle where the debate around violence and arms has played a pivotal role in either emboldening rebels who accept what is now referred to as a diversity of tactics or disempowering those who walk the line of pacifism. In my early years of being an anarchist, I considered myself a pacifist and ideologically found myself against the use of arms, mostly due to my fear of them and misunderstanding of the use of violence. "*Politicians Love Gun Control*" shook my political foundations and encouraged the sentiments that had already begun pushing me toward anarchy.

When I was initially approached by one of the authors to write a review of the book for *Black Seed*, I expected that it would be a stretch to try to relate a book of rebellious Southern history to a journal of green anarchy. I was wrong. I found this book at once to be an attack on popular notions of progress and history that, although permeating throughout radical histories, lend themselves to the story of civilization just the same. *Dixie Be Damned* features stories of outcasts and runaways who formed bands to attack plantation and slave society. Notably, they retreated to seemingly uninhabitable swamps and forests that could not be traversed by those who would hunt them down. It is the close ties to these "unforgiving" lands that give these rebels the upper hand in combating militarily superior forces, and it is this dependence on land that the State uses to crush its opposition by way of creating new ways to govern and harvest these lands.

Yet, a hole in these stories, specifically that of the Ogeechee Insurrection and the chapter on the Lowry Gang, must be addressed, considering that what is being discussed is a history of revolt against empire and colonization. The topic of indigenous people in the region goes hardly addressed throughout the entire book. Who were the indigenous people of this area? What were their names, and where did they live? What were their roles in any of these histories? The chapter on the Ogeechee Insurrection pays lip service to this topic, and the histories of the Lowries are explored only insofar as it paints a story of cross-racial solidarity, like when white store-owners bought obviously stolen arms and ammunition from runaway slaves or how the Lowries themselves seemed to be a tribe of castaways and escapees with an incredibly mixed background (runaway slaves, colony deserters, survivors of Indigenous genocide, etc). For a collection of histories that begins with the colonization of North America and that borrows terminology from Marx (albeit altered with Silvia Federici's expansion of "primitive accumulation"), I expected those stories to be highlighted more.

Another reoccurring theme throughout the book is the unusual blending of spiritual practices that unite large groups of rebels and furthermore instill a sense of cultural belonging across a large mix of identities and backgrounds. From the chapter "A Subtle Yet Restless Fire: Attacking Slavery from the Dark Fens of the Dismal Swamp":

> "The spiritual messengers were an opaque force, unregistered and unmarked by plantation society, but highly respected by slaves and maroons alike. Their religious orientation varied greatly, ranging from Christian Methodism to a variety of traditional West African folk spiritual practices and magic. These practices had evolved for over a hundred years in the Great Dismal Swamp, resulting in the blending of the strange mixture of Quaker ideas and Indian religion that had come earlier, with the spiritism and mysticism of more recent Black maroons." (pg. 43)

Spirituality has been a topic that *Black Seed* has made attempts to bring up in each issue, and this story brings up one such reason why I personally think it's an important conversation. Although the context can be seen as differing greatly from where anarchists and antagonists orient themselves presently, the lesson to be learned here is that there was a widespread acceptance of varying spiritual practices, and those practices had much to do with harboring a culture of attack and resistance to plantation society. In one example, songs were sung to portray and encourage feelings of revolt. In "Ogeechee 'Til Death: Expropriation and Communization in Low Country Georgia":

> "The songs were sung mostly in the present tense, with urgency. As Peter Linebaugh interprets, jubilee songs proclaim 'Now is the time. It is not a question of time being ripe, or of objective circumstances being ready.'"(pg. 77)

As an anarchist, I am more interested in how these beliefs, practices, origin, stories, and cultures can play a role in entire lives of revolt. The prominent early theorists of anarchism were arguably atheistic and eager to put down religion entirely in favor of a scientific-progressivism. While these sentiments may have led to a critique of institutionalized spirituality and religion, and rightly so, what would a rebellious spirituality look like? Looking back, we can see examples, and perhaps piece together elements that make sense to ourselves, individually. Furthermore, how would one do this without simply just stealing cultural identifiers from those in rebellion? I'm not interested in tracing a lineage of blood and ancestry to establish a legitimacy in who is allowed to practice what spiritualties, but how does one pick up a torch that was put down so long ago?

Another critique I have of this book relates to the definition of an insurrectionary activity. Numerous times throughout the book, too many to count, partisans of revolt and rebellion, acts of sabotage and attack, are all referred to under the umbrella of insurrection or insurrectionary. It left me with the question, who is an insurrectionary? What is classified as an insurrectionary act? In my understanding, an insurrectionary is not just simply someone who carries out an attack against physical manifestations of capitalism and politics, but someone who believes in a specific practice and theory of anarchism. And an insurrectionary act is not just any attack or uprising against a physical manifestation of the currently standing social order, but one that does not wait for the ripe moment or the correct amount of participants and acts on the basis of

the need for attack. Often throughout the text, the term *insurrection* is used to identify a months-long coordination or build-up of antagonism that leads to a great calamity of what I would refer to as a rebellion, while those who participated are referred to as "insurrectionaries." Through reading all of the stories presented in this book, it became easy to see that this word had become a catch-all term for any of the activities the authors wished to write about. Does writing an "anarchist-historiography" differ really so much from other histories, painting stories from the past with the brush we would like to see them with? The authors have set out to ask and perhaps even answer an impossible question, an effort I truly enjoy and hope to participate in myself.

Black and Green Review No. 1

Black And Green Press • 128 Pages

Kevin Tucker, best known for his *Species Traitor* journals and regular appearances on John Zerzan's *Anarchy Radio*, released a new journal this year called *Black & Green Review (BAGR)*. Having been largely without new Kevin Tucker writings since 2005, I was excited to hear about *Black & Green Review*. As soon as I could, I ordered a bunch of copies for my local infoshop and eagerly began flipping through one. I loved Kevin's writing style in the early 2000s as I was beginning to question civilization and technology, and I still do today, but much in his new publication falls short.

The main problem with *BGR* is that it's exactly what you would expect it to be. From the voices (Kevin Tucker and John Zerzan, among others who share their style), to the moralistic calls-to-action, to a tired glorification of hunter/gatherer ways of life, *BGR* is simply more of the same. The dream of the '90s is alive in *Black & Green Review*. It's difficult to say something new, to push the conversation further or in a different direction. As a *Black Seed* editor, I was a part of many conversations in which we asked ourselves over and over again "do we really have anything new to say?" We deliberated throughout the process of producing our first issue, trying to articulate the gap that we knew existed in green anarchist publishing. Since the end of *Green Anarchy* in 2008, there hadn't been a large–print–run green anarchist periodical, though there was a slew of interesting projects. We were trying to make sure that we weren't just making something simply because we could. It's hard to know whether we successfully avoided this pitfall. When *Black Seed* Issue 1 was published, I heard that it was received badly by Kevin Tucker. Because his rants mostly took place on Facebook, I heard about them second hand, but boy, did I hear about them, and from several sources. *Black and Green Review* was Kevin Tucker's response to what he percieves as *Black Seed*'s shortcomings.

Beginning with the opening editorial, Kevin reveals himself to be majorly out-of-touch with contemporary green anarchist publishing. His first paragraph ends with the statement, "things have been awfully silent lately." Aside from not mentioning *Black Seed* as a new green anarchist publication (which I tried not to take personally), Kevin had to overlook nearly all other projects, writings, and gatherings to make such a statement. *Desert*, published in 2011, turned much green and ecologically-focused anarchist thought on its head by asking what many feared to ask: "what if the collapse doesn't come?" Then there's the Dark Mountain project, a network of writers and artists who came together in 2009, attempting to use their media to grapple with questions about civilization and collapse. You can find an excerpt of their manifesto in our last issue. While Kevin (and probably most readers of *Black Seed*) have a bone to pick with organized religion, he of all

people, having been interviewed by them, should be well aware of the multiple editions of *In the Land of the Living: a Journal of Anarcho-Primitivism and Christianity* that have been produced in the last decade. And what of the *Bædan* journal? Issue Two in particular brings sources together into a coherent critique of gender-as-domestication previously unseen. His assertion of silence on the part of anti-civilization thinkers is not only insulting and inaccurate, but I believe it also sheds light on Tucker's bias. These are but a few examples; the theories related to green anarchy have been far from silent. Much anti-civilization thought has been put to paper in the last decade, it just hasn't been the kind that Kevin likes.

Anyone reading *Black Seed* knows that we are far more interested in asking questions than in claiming to have answers. That said, I appreciated the question at the end of *BGR*'s introduction: "how do we have discussions again that matter?" I want to know that too! Reading that as the project's purpose gives me a bit of hope that we may be complementary publications to some degree. I have my roots in anarcho-primitivism. I am largely sympathetic to anarcho-primitivism as a critique and take rewilding pretty seriously as a practice. I'm a sucker for that shit. So, when I read the main essay in *BGR*, "The Suffocating Void," I was immediately drawn in by Kevin's take on the effects of social media. I found myself underlining things, writing notes in the margins, getting excited about distancing myself from technology in a way that reminded me of when I first read Ellul, or Mumford, or Mander. As the piece wore on, however, I began asking myself something: was I excited because Kevin was saying something truly new here? Was he pushing his ideas to places they'd never gone before? Or was I simply reliving the same feelings I'd had while reading Mumford, who wrote *Civilization and Technics* in 1934, or Mander, who wrote *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* in 1978? It's not that I think these works are irrelevant—quite the opposite—I would that everyone read them. My point is that "The Suffocating Void" says nothing new, but is written as though it has the answers. Old ideas are important, as is synthesizing these ideas for a new audience; I largely agree with what Kevin is saying. Anything written in such grandiose terms, however, should have something groundbreaking to say. Sure, it updates the language, replacing the "automation" and "screens" of Mander and Mumford with social media and smartphones, but the argument remains the same. Yes, I think our generation faces a new and different attachment to technology; yes, I want as many reminders and cautions as I can take; yes, I want suggestions on obtaining that critical distance necessary for critique. However, "The Suffocating Void" came up short for me in these regards, not to mention at times erring on the side of sounding conspiratorial in its constant reference to "the domesticators." Just who are the ones doing the domesticating? Though we resist, are we not complicit?

Later in the journal, an essay by Four-Legged Human entitled "The Commodification of Wildness and its Consequences" left me with a bad taste in my mouth. In an attempt to elucidate the ways commodification pervades modern society, FourLegged Human ends up targeting pastoralists and poachers, seeming to blame them rather than acknowledging that survival in the modern economy has necessitated the abandonment of traditional ways of life for most of us on the globe, himself included. It's easy for us, whose societies were colonized in the distant past, to point the finger at those people for whom commodification is a recent development, but it's also quite hypocritical. Do I think it's awful that people are poaching rhino horns rather than living in hunter/gatherer bliss? Of course I do, but what if instead of filling their article with examples from around the world the author instead filled it with examples from their own life? The entire thing came off as more than a little-self righteous to me.

Probably the strongest piece is Autumn Leaves Cascade's "To Rust Metallic Gods." The piece details Western paganism from the Neolithic to present-day neo-paganism and Wicca. Not only is it well written and extremely detailed for such a short essay, it somehow combines historical detail with a personal tone and realistic suggestions obviously gleaned from the author's own practice. And you have to love an essay ending with the pithy epithet: "for ruins, not runes." I highly recommend it to anyone struggling with the pull of getting in touch with their European pagan roots. It's relevant especially in light of the conversations we've been having in *Black Seed* about spirituality with pieces like "Childhood, Imagination, and the Forest" and "The Continuing Appeal of White Nationalism."

Upon first picking up *BGR* and skimming through it, I think I gave a vocal "ugh" when seeing an article titled "The Ferguson Insurrection." Everyone has to have something to say about Ferguson, and most of the ones doing the theorizing are far removed from the action or the realities leading up to it. It's not that I think Ferguson is irrelevant, it's that so many people who were there—or who are closely connected to that struggle— have written thoughtful essays on their experiences. The pamphlets "Guns, Cars, Autonomy" and "No, We Won't Go Home" come to mind. If you'd like to zoom out and see Ferguson in a more theoretical light, I'd recommend checking out afro-pessimist thinker Frank Wilderson's interview, "We're Trying to Destroy the World," available on audio and in print. *Black Seed* has been silent on this subject. That silence may not have been the best approach (I believe it wasn't), but perhaps we were silent out of a fear of doing exactly what Kevin Tucker did: again, saying something for the sake of saying it.

I was and am still excited that Kevin Tucker is putting together *Black and Green Review*. I can only hope that through this project he finds a way to connect with those outside his insular anarcho-primitivist circle. First issues aren't easy, and I look forward to reading Issue Two, which should be out by the time this article is published.

On Killing the Undead: Issues 1 and 2 of Post-Scarcity Anarchism

Post-Scarcity Economics
postscarcityeconomics.wordpress.com
Issue 1: 33 pages • Issue 2: 31 pages

For some, Murray Bookchin was simply never relevant. Whether for his zany yet boringly liberal mix of ecological concern and technological optimism, his bizarre obsession with Classical Athenian democracy, his cantankerous screed *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*, or his late-life and ressentiment-fueled (yet entirely appropriate) eschewing of the label anarchist; some anarchists (including this one) never found Bookchin's ideas to have much life to them from the start. For many more, Bookchin was pushed further into the grave when he was taken to task by a number of anti-left or anti-civilization thinkers, including Dave Foreman, John Zerzan, and (most amusingly and thoroughly) Bob Black. One might have hoped that the man's actual death would mean the end of such utterances as "The modern tractor . . . is a work of superb mechanical ingenuity. . . . Large tractors . . . are likely to have air-conditioned cabs."[1]

But with the irritating tenacity of a revenant, he keeps rising from the dead. Bookchin's ideas received a shot in the arm with the recent militant actions of the PKK (The Kurdistan Work-

[1] Bookchin, Murray. "Towards a Liberatory Technology".

ers' Party), whose leader Abdullah Öcalan, after decades of armed struggle against the Turkish state, recently has begun advocating for a "Democratic Confederalism," drawing heavily on the Bookchin he has been reading while incarcerated. And Bookchinism has subsequently received what appears to be some youthfully exuberant theoretical engagement from the authors and editors of *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (PSA), with its insipid and revealing subtitle: *Influenced by Social Ecology*.

Being "influenced" apparently means depicting your patriarch in proud portraiture within the first two pages of both issues, coupled with reprinting his "What is Social Ecology?" in the first. This essay is seemingly meant as a framing piece for the first issue, if not the zine in general. With the laboriousness of tossing anvils, Bookchin devotes four paragraphs—more than half of the piece—to ensuring his apparently wide-eyed and unwashed reader grasps the elusive notion that social and ecological problems are related. It was a finding revealed through the subtleties of the dialectic, I am told. Undoubtedly groundbreaking in 1993—having been preceded only by Fredy Perlman, Chellis Glendinning, Voltairine DeCleyre, the aforementioned John Zerzan and Bob Black, the anthropologists Marshall Sahlins and Richard Borshay Lee…—the piece can only have appreciated in the twenty-two years since. More excitingly, a review of the piece primes the reader to appreciate the awe-inspiring power of sneer/scare quotes employed liberally by Bookchin, including, inexplicably, on one of his own arguments. The zine's authors will follow their forefather's tendencies toward irrelevance and poor writing: an enthusiastic sophomorism shines forth throughout the two issues via technological naïvité; creepily systematized prefiguration; trumpeting moralism; and an abundance of misspellings, punctuation errors, and incoherent phrases.

For people pushing a highly-organized, rational, and technopostivistic society, the *PSA* crowd appears awfully lacking in editorial oversight. The zines have a we-finished-it-at-4-AM-after-four-cupsof-coffee-and-a-couple-of-beers feel, with redundant, incoherent, or tautological sentences like "Anti-authoritarian collective property is a way of collectively managing that which is used by a collective in a non-authoritarian way." There are commas at the end of sentences and misspellings like "comradery." Exceeding Bookchin, sneer quoting is taken to its apotheosis, a practice beyond mockery that becomes reflected back on itself and collapses into total incoherence, as when one PSA author references "capitalism's 'dismal' history" and "disgusting 'entrepreneurs.'" Do the authors want to imply to us that capitalism's history is in fact illustrious, that the good name of entrepreneurship is being sullied by a few bad apples?

Moreover, the PSAs more than once play the part of the ingénue, presenting information or making suggestions that are appallingly naïve or inaccurate. One author, citing NASA and the UN, introduces them as "politically un-biased [sic] entities that merely collate data and information"—in a genuinely baffling statement, attempts at the expansion of capitalism beyond the planet Earth and the hegemony of economic globalism and nation-states are presented as politically neutral by a collective of anarchists (or is it "anarchists"?).

Similarly, another author opines that the "Featured PSA Project" of aquaponics[2] will provide a "closed loop, sustainable system that continuously *produces food forever, for free* [emphasis added]." They style this iteration of agriculture a "living ecosystem"; as opposed to the dead rivers,

[2] Aquaponics is a discipline of agriculture. The word is a portmanteau of aquaculture, the husbandry of aquatic animals, and hydroponics, the soil-less cultivation of plants in nutrient solutions. In aquaponics, these organisms are placed into a simulated, simple mutualism by allowing the excretions of the animals to feed the plants, who in turn ensure the animals are not poisoned by their own shit.

ponds, and wetlands, I suppose, living ecosystems are made with LED lights, plastic tubs, and glass houses. I would like to charitably assume that the PSA crew, with their techno-optimism, have considerably more technical/engineering knowledge than an anti-civilization wingnut like me (my computer might as well be powered by alchemically-bound machine spirits for all I know); but statements like this one read like parodies of technological religiosity. Plastics, electricity, rare earth metals, and so forth apparently drop from heaven, limitless and without the consequences of toxicity, drudgery, and land despoliation.

The author goes so far as to boast that although one might normally associate agriculture with "healthy soil, and lots of space for sunlight" (rather than topsoil loss and CAFOs[3], apparently), aquaponics "utilizes our understanding of nature[?] to allow the growth of plants without the need for sunlight or even soil." Such an alienated, humanist understanding of the Good is surely the stuff of Bookchin's conception of "the ecological use of technology" to "make man's dependence upon the natural world a visible and living part of his culture."[4] The human organism, a walking elaboration of soil and sunlight, sighs with relief as it can finally use its "liberatory" (I can't stop myself from using them now—it's so much easier than actually making arguments!) technology to put those tiresome things behind it. But perhaps I am expecting too much from people who self-reportedly "comprehend the emergent nature of our understanding of the natural world,"—they are, after all, presently fixated on comprehending *their understanding of the world*, which appears to be a rather poor one; they may think less reverently of aquaponics once they work toward comprehending *the world itself*. To be fair, I am struggling to comprehend their understanding of the world, too!

Only pages away is a paean to wave energy generators, again embraced utterly uncritically in spite of extant evidence that their installation entails "tremendous disturbance to the seabottom sediments" that "would result in the loss of habitats for marine infauna" and their generation of electromagnetic fields during operation results in "decreases in fertility of marine animals, . . . interference with migration and navigation, detection of prey or escape from predator, [and] chronic negative impacts that influence organism growth and/or reproduction."[5] Again, we see the belief that merely exorcising the demon of capitalism somehow redeems the industrial body.

It is implied in the way the *PSA* collective offhandedly say that they "aren't much concerned with precisely what shade of green [their] politics is [sic]" that they perhaps care only somewhat what the collateral damage is of achieving Bookchin's neurotic fantasy of portable, personal, self-creating factories.[6] Indeed, in a part of the "Glossary" section I had to read twice to confirm it was not a joke, there is a suggestion that the dream is now realized with the advent of 3D printers, which are hailed as a way to avoid "pay[ing] some money-grubbing capitalist for cheap plastic crap from China." Anarchy means you make your own cheap plastic crap, presumably so that you may identify with it more completely; I assume the alienation dissipates at some point when the self-creating factories are sufficiently widespread so as to become unnoticeable. Of course,

[3] Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations are one of the nightmarish manifestations of modern agriculture in which domesticated animals are concentrated in incredible densities and kept alive only through such grotesque measures as regular doses of antibiotics and antihelminthics and the creation of anaerobic lagoons, literally artificial ponds for their shit to fill.

[4] Ibid., Bookchin.

[5] Lin, Lan and Yu, Haitao, "Offshore wave energy generation devices: Impacts on ocean bio-environment." *Elsevier*, Acta Ecologica Sinica 32 (2012), pp. 117-122.

[6] Ibid., Bookchin.

an alienated, humanist project is exactly what the thankfully obscure *PSA* crowd is pushing, and they toss some anvils your way, "What is Social Ecology?"-style, to ensure this comes across unambiguously. We are told of a "universal humanistic conscience (what we know to be right and wrong) [sic]" that should be our guiding principle. I am still trying to locate this conscience so that I can have a listen too; perhaps I should contact NASA to see if they are willing to apolitically share any date they have collated on whether it is hanging about in the upper atmosphere somewhere. Though the *PSA* crowd do not say it explicitly, the invisible humanist amoeba that engulfs us all preaches utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is a subset of consequentialism, a set of ethics with a very long and rich history in Western philosophy. Put succinctly, consequentialists argue that the goodness or badness of an action should be judged only by the consequences of that action (rather than the nature of the action itself, the intentionality of the actor, the character of the persons involved, etc.); in the case of utilitarianism specifically, the best action is considered to be the one that maximizes collectively aggregate happiness, pleasure, or wellbeing and minimizes suffering. Casual and aphoristic ways of expressing these ideas are everyday phrases like "the ends justify the means," "we need to think about the common good," or "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few." Utilitarianism has been taken up by radicals, including anarchists, many times as justification for radically restructuring the world. The *PSA* crowd reveal themselves, however wittingly is unclear, as the latest in this tradition when they make statements like "[our] goal is maximizing wellbeing [sic] of all."

A full critique of utilitarianism is very far outside this review's scope, so I will confine myself to this pithy one. Thoroughgoing utilitarian decision-making would mean that the proper person would be constantly employing a hedonic calculus, going from this moment to that while trying to quantitatively maximize good times for the collective. Sentient beings take on the appearance of shifting clusters of pleasure and pain units, each contributing a small part to a net gain that must be pursued. Though more sophisticated utilitarians have acknowledged that the quality, and not merely the quantity, of experiences is important, the focus on numeralization and maximization remains intact, only elaborated.

This system is thus the gaze of the bureaucrat, reductionist and managerial, treating beings as fungible and experiences as standardizable. Besides the depersonalization and flattening of affect inherent in such a gaze, I find revolting any ethical system that would label my times of pain, sorrow, and despair as objectively negative and to be avoided at all costs, as I consider these to have been at least as enriching to my life as those of positive affect. It is unsurprising that the originator of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, was, among progressive/liberal pursuits, a legal scholar and a prison designer.

The PSAs gift us with a glimpse of what a concrete implementation of this moralist, technopositivist, urban, and globalized society might look like. In typical I-promise-we-can-manage-the-world-better fashion, the essay "Anti-Authoritarian Property Relations" (featuring the silly tautological sentence quoted above) begins with a nice promise that widespread adoption of PSA philosophy will mean universal wealth coupled with relief from labor, all of which will be non-authoritarian in its administration. Perhaps skeptical, we are assured that the negativity of authority is really only the product of specific institutional frameworks—like formal, top-down decision-making—and can therefore be addressed through a different formalization. By way of example, we are asked to consider the apparently harmless authority residing in relationships with "a teacher, a parent, an [sic] or an expert," of which we of course have only fond memories. Such hand-waving complete, it is only a short leap to the assertion that "collectives remain

non authoritarian [sic] by practicing participatory democracy." Again, a thoroughgoing critique of democracy is beyond this essay's scope (though I can certainly recommend Bob Black's "Debunking Democracy" for this purpose), so let this little one suffice. Democracy, ungenerously described, is the political idea that one should or should not do what most people tell them to do or not do—it is thus nakedly authoritarian in its raw form. It is, moreover, an "affair of worriers,"[7] a neurotic obsession with formal process as the gateway to liberation. Sophisticated enough to recognize these obvious issues, the PSAs assure us that they have evaded them, as "everyone retains self-management within the association and is free to leave the association at any time."

Free to leave, sure, but to go where? The PSAs imagine a world totally federated, agricultural, and industrial on a scale comparable to if not in some ways greater than what we have now. What place is there for those who do not want to be agricultural industrialists, who do not want a compulsory moral system? What about those for whom anarchy means living in very small groups, or even alone, and as part of their local ecology? The PSAs exalt wave energy generators and wind power as though these systems have not historically and are not presently destroying indigenous lifeways and contributing to toxicity. The benign face of participatory, sustainablity-oriented democracy is capable of the same assimilationist and expansionist tendencies as the more obviously ruthless one we inhabit now. Indeed, the PSAs promise us in their world there would be "rules without rulers," "which doesn't mean no authorities," and "graduated sanctions for rule violators," including "non-authoritarian rehabilitation or restraint" and "non-authoritarian therapy". Promulgating ideology is all in the naming, you see—if you say "non-authoritarian" one hundred times before bed each night, you will be free.

But what is most disappointing about these zines is not their crypto-authoritarianism or their seemingly non-existent editing—it is that the editors appear to have chosen to be in dialogue with their critics and contemporaries almost not at all. Aside from a few derisive jokes about anarcho-primitivism and libertarianism, the only anarchists they address in any circumspect way are CrimethInc., toward whom they give a familiar (and very Bookchinist) criticism of their alleged lifestylism (goddamn privileged kids personalistically dropping out) and some applause for moving away from it more recently. Much of what I critique them for here—the PSAs' moralism, humanism, democratism, and techno-optimism—is not new flak for Social Ecology, as I indicated above; I am merely specifying it to this particular articulation. But Bookchin's ghost struts about as though almost unaware of these issues.

A serious and good faith effort to revive Social Ecology would involve some response, or at least some recognition, of post-left, anarcho-primitivist, and other criticisms that have been fielded and to which there has yet to be an adequate response. Where is their defense of urbanism, organizationalism, mass movements, green energy, or democracy? Anarchist critiques of all of these are widely known, and, if perhaps not widely accepted, are certainly held by an active and significant minority of American anarchists.

So whom do the PSA see as their audience? Certainly, it is not merely the already-converted, given that their "goal is maximizing wellbeing [sic] of all" according to their "biopsychosocialecotechnological [...sic?] model of human behavior." Do they want to inculcate the People to the Right and True path before they are exposed to the defiling influence of anti-left/anti-civ anarchism and so feel no need to address these issues at all? Perhaps the PSAs can indulge me by

[7] The Invisible Committee, "They Want to Oblige Us to Govern. We Won't Yield to That Pressure.", *To Our Friends*. Semiotext(e), 2015.

addressing these questions and critiques in their next issue, or perhaps enough damning questions will amount to the decapitation and mouthful of holy wafers that Bookchin needs to stay in his grave.

— Bellamy Fitzpatrick

> Different people use different priority-setting systems to choose where to plant their spears, with the commonest being the simples - where can I reach and where do I love? For many, the answers to the questions of how and where to defend the wild will be obvious, the local agents of destruction clear, communities roused, places to be occupied available, stuff to be destroyed visible. The thing then is simply to act.
> — *Desert*

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Black Seed: Issue 5

a green anarchist journal

Various Authors

2017, summer

Introduction

Perhaps you thought we were gone? Two years feels like an eternity in these fast-too-fast times when epic conflicts have a full arc over a weekend, 140 characters creates volumes of commentary and opinion, a day seems like forever when you are refreshing a screen over and over. This project is the opposite of this spirit. Herein we hope to share themes that are fuller in scope, that merit reflection and contemplation. We intend to plant seeds and to care for them as they flower, mature, and decay. The half lives of our pleasures, concerns, and conflicts should be measured in decades and not in the blink of someones eyes or even the length of time the average radical stays active.

Welcome to issue five of *Black Seed.* If you have not seen or heard of us before let us introduce ourselves. We are a small collective of green anarchists who publish a paper-only (or at least paper first) publication intended to broaden and intensify our perspectives. We differ from green anarchist positions that precde us because we have a deep concern about positive political programs (however they are dressed up), the ability of our people to achieve them, and the efficacy of a revolutionary mindset in the first place. Pointedly, we feel as though the academic arts (anthropology first among them) are too mired in the gauntlet of what it takes to become a practitioner to take seriously. This is not to say that we aren't willing to learn about people, the past, or whatever but that the citation of sources, and the othering of people or their superior lifeways is not how we believe a green anarchist perspective begins. But it does begin, mostly by conversations with each other, with people who may also be anarchists but don't use the term. Our experience is that those who are most likely to share our attitude towards an earth first, anti-authoritarian, and anti-ideological perspective are people who are also indigenous. Indigeneity is a confusing smear of bodies, practices, and conversations that we know will continue to inform *Black Seed.*

This issue dwells on these building blocks. New editor Ramon and I write new manifestos contemplating what it means to be a green anarchist in this post-manifesto age, what it means to have an approach that prioritizes pacing and contemplation rather than one of being in such a hurry all the time. Of having big plans that always fall through unnoticed.

This issue also is concerned with the immeseration of daily life. How did we get here? How are we rising above the mediocrity of our times? Are we? *Black Seed* is quite concerned about the small things that reflect the cyclical way of the world.

What does it mean that the world is coming to an end, forever? Perhaps most importantly what is the role of violence in our movement (cough) today and in the ushering of a new one? Anarchists have always been the party of imagination but also of morality. Violence cuts through both of these gordian knots but to what end? These are the questions that *Black Seed* issue five attempts to answer.

Black Seed—An Old Green Anarchy by Aragorn!

The original idea of *Black Seed* was to be a spiritual successor to the magazine *Green Anarchy* (out of Eugene, OR, 2001–2008), taking from it an attitude, an anti-civilization type of total critique, and the legacy of a green anarchist perspective. While I would still maintain that our project lay in the same historical vein as *Green Anarchy,* the only editor of *GA* living in a city has made it very clear he does not appreciate the direction *Black Seed* has taken. (The others, living outside the city, have been privately encouraging of this project) This provides some space. Up until now we have attempted (in our way) to be respectful about how we treated the legacy we saw ourselves within. But if we are publicly declared outside of that tradition then let's make a clean break. Let us be forever done with the rhetoric and empty promises of the so called "anti-civilization journal of theory and action." Let us leave grandfather Zerzan to his mealy- mouthed mutterings about the state of the *NY Times* every Tuesday night, and leave his protege to the dusty histories of white-man anthropology and boring sectarian whittling projects. Let us consider a new green anarchist perspective in its grandeur rather than its failures.

If we restart a story about what Green Anarchism was we could begin with the writing of Elisee Reclus and his grand Universal Geography and tell a balanced story that passes through the broader ecology movement, the history of a Great Anarchism that died in Catalan, the thoughts of Murray Bookchin, and ends with Grandfather Zerzan and the catastrophe of post-pre-collapse civilization. This is a fine story and obviously we know it exists but our work is somewhere else.

For us green anarchism predates the term and is a way to talk about our politics (anarchist: no state, no exchange relationships, and a vigorous critique of daily life) and our spiritual life (green: earth-based, concerned with cycles not progress, not moral). For us green anarchism does not begin with a set of bearded European men but in the conditions of Turtle Island (North America). The turtle (Hah-nu-nah) is the earth, and is our life. A green perspective worth its name begins with the story of how humans came to this place. A place that was doing just fine without us. It begins with the stories that composed a social reality that was disrupted by visitors who have long outstayed their welcome. *Black Seed* hopes to be a place where those stories are remembered and shared.

A green anarchism set thusly in clay is about the direct experience of hearing a story, of being part of the continuing story. It prefers the face-to-face and the immediate. It does not process its relationship to small things (like the whole of nature) through the specialized jargon sets of the Western metaphysical project. Not biology or botany. Not anthropology or sociology. Not a history or historiza- tion of real living people. It can include the stories of those warriors engaged in the infinite war against the Great Black Snake of capitalism and the state, of colonization and genocide. It can also include the stories of our lives here on this Earth now. Those of us who live in the shadows of the Grey and the Black (cities, asphalt, and concrete), who root about in the weeds and offal of the shit-city, who survive.

This new old Green Anarchism, this elder god of many origins, is about survival in a world-not-of-our-creation, how to face its end, and how we would rewrite its story if we were to start over. To be clear, these are three approaches to a body of ideas we are calling Green Anarchism but we are only using that term to be generous about our own origins (and not because we think they are the best or most accurate terms to describe what we are talking about). In point of fact this new old Green Anarchism will be unrecognizable to others who have used and copyrighted the term. It attempts a base in and orientation towards Turtle Island (and not Ymir, Gaia, Yggdrasil, eight pillars, bhu, etc) and acknowledges its metis or amalgamated characteristics. This is not an exercise in a new geographical puritanism but in holding a position in a world that seems to have accepted a kind of postmodern pastiche that leaves out every individual experience.

A New Story

The start of our story, sadly, is one of a ship of Spaniards landing nearby and raising holy hell. Not only did they rape, slaughter, and enslave everything/everyone they saw. which was strange and awful but they then encamped and started drawing lines around our homes and hunting grounds. These lines were very important to them and were in fact the second arm of their strange religion of death. Death and property (eventually known as Capitalism) were their beliefs, which are impossible to reconcile with our lives: lives that are not abstract, are not filled with proclamations of vengeful gods and geographies, are lived in the here and now.

So we chose a different option. We saw these fragile little boats for what they were and we sunk them. It was a tragedy to see the metal-clad individuals sink to the bottom of the sea but we saved the rest. We saved those whose lot in life was the pull of an oar and to serve these who ordered boats around Turtle Island to rape and enslave. We saved the people and let the metal shod, technologically advanced, and civilized die. These enslaved travelers became part of who we were and not transmitters of their strange and foreign virus. They became us.

As the years went by the phenomenon of these boats and others like them became more and more common. As a result we had to increase the communication we had with the peoples of other islands and of Turtle Island more generally. This increased travel-as-a-form-of-life. This meant that our relatively stable social circumstances became more complex as we had to accommodate a type of self-defense that also included a bit more of a, dare we say, worldly component.

To defend against the new threat, which we later identified as European, we had to find a way to defend against their incursions. We did this by network.

Of course networking wasn't new to us. The shifting relations most of us had to the particular piece of Turtle Island we inhabited was a story of ebbs and flows, of tribal affiliation and disaffiliation, of rhizomatic relations. The difference was that rather than defense from people we now had to defend against not-people, against ideology made material, against little boats that came a long way to destroy us. Defending against the abstract was new to us.

As the years went by the nature of Turtle Island began to change, in some ways good and in some ways bad. Our borders, especially the Eastern Coastline, became hardened by people who became fascinated by conflict and the composition of not-people. Their neighbors began to take an interest in healing rituals and how to talk people down from a war footing. Others began to hear these stories and some sent their youth east to learn what this new composition of war (aka Clausewitzian war, Total War, inhuman war) was. This idea did not spread.

What spread was the idea that something like communication had to happen between people. This required an examination into what nodal relationships could look like. This required tribes and nations to formalize beyond what was ever anticipated.

Spiritual life, aka life, was also changed by this new era. The consequence of drowning these little boats and sinking metal-clad men was a great sorrow and obligation to the spirits. Equivalent contrition for each act of violence had to be borne by the people who committed it. The spirits demanded this much and it was important that warriors not learn to love violence as the metal-clad did. With every arrival and repulsion was a month of ceremony and cleansing. The rites had to be observed otherwise the difference between war and the performance of war (ie bravery by other means) could get confused.

Economic life, aka exchange, was also transformed. With the sinking of little boats came the reclamation of what items existed on those boats. Through this mechanism the people of Turtle Island learned about metal forging, the existence of horses (long since thought disappeared), books, and more. Stripped of weapon- ization, these items became curiosities and topics of long conversations into the night. The East Coast people became central to new sets of conversations about what it could look like to be people and what they had to offer The People. This changed the motivation for increased networking and travel and cross-pollination by complicating self-defense with new kinds of relationships based on interest in new ideas.

Over time Turtle Island became less isolated. It was no longer possible to destroy 500 nations by picking them off one by one. The power of the little boats decreased, to the extent that at some point these boats were allowed to dock and make their individuated cases for dialogue and survival. The people of Turtle Island became members of the world rather than subjects of it. The history of Europe shrank to the size of appropriate limits and their attempts at colonization. The history of Turtle Island became one of establishing clear boundaries while maintaining a healthy curiosity that was, and is, culturally appropriate.

A Future Change

The day after the revolution (ATR) we will sit and meet with our neighbors and explain our plan. This plan is largely described in the little book *bolo bolo* but let's get down to brass tacks. First step, our block. It contains about 30 households or about 75 people. If optimal bolo size is around 500, that would be about seven city blocks. Our superblock (bounded by major streets) is about 8x14 or about 15 bolos in size. Berkeley as a city is about 120,000 so roughly 200–220 bolos in size. Oakland, CA (our neighbor to the immediate south) is about 3.5 times our size and I imagine that over time the blurring of our bolo'bolo would disintegrate the historical line between the cities (which was only a hundred and forty years old anyway).

In the book there is a great deal of emphasis on counter-cultural continuity as the glue that holds together a bolo. In our hypothetical ATR scenario, on the other hand, human geographical happenstance at the end of property relations would be that glue. Perhaps over time and generations there could be a rise of lesbolos, alcholobolos, and the myriad of thought experiments from the book— but for this exercise the difficulty that would rise from this transforming into over 200 different bolos is enough of a stretch. Plus it would only be a small part of what the end of Spectacle would inflict everywhere at once.

A central part of the definition of a bolo (a group of about 500 ibu who live and depend on each other) is the idea that it would necessarily be materially independent. The end of exchange relations means an end to trading paper, credit, and coin for food. This means we have an immediate urgent problem to address, together. Obviously in parallel are all the problems of converting seven blocks' worth of former-consumers into ibu (individuals) and kana (households). Clearly our anarchism directs much of this conversation in that we would prefer to destroy organization, leaders, and bureaucracy (and those who enjoy these things) but getting down to it (planting in this case) would be rather important.

Logistics first. If seven blocks of 30 households can be chopped up it'd probably look like 30 times $1/16^{th}$ of an acre or 14 acres plus all the area currently covered by automobile detritus (25%). One bolo in the former city of Berkeley would probably have around 18–20 acres of land to structure (for kodu: agriculture, sibi: craft, and pali: energy). This means the first order of business (if you can pardon the term) is deciding whose home gets taken down, how to tear out the concrete etc, and how to build the remaining gano (homes) into structures that will work for 500ish socially-broken but socially-needy ibu. A related topic is that we will need at least 50–75 acres to feed everyone (which is a first principle of bolo'bolo) and as Berkeley is only about 18 square miles we have to do some math.

Two hundred bolo equals the land need of at least 10,000 acres. Eighteen square miles is 11,520 acres so there is a serious pinch there. This is a utopian exercise from the word go but if we are going to be frank about this green anarchist bolo'bolo exercise we probably have to commandeer the hills above Berkeley (which are largely empty and/or filled with trails, university research labs, reservoirs, and the bourgeoisie). This requires something like a tram or a low -power way to get people up to farmland for a portion of their day/lives. More thought about this is necessary but perhaps the problems will fade as the need for 6+ million people will blow away from the Bay Area along with capitalism.

The opposite problem is possible though. We likely have at least seven generations of global warming and other nasty problems associated with petroleum culture coming and the Bay has a naturally temperate climate, is near a natural Bay, the Ocean, and some reasonably-sized natural preserves that are desirable along several metrics. It could be that rather than getting out of dodge, many people will want to come here from the toxic agri-bowl of the Central Valley, the scorching hills and valleys of Southern California, or what could very well be the racist bolos of far Northern California and Oregon. Even an impossible utopia isn't immune to idiots.

The project of tearing down and rebuilding the bolo into the shape that makes sense for 500 would be an especially fun and interesting one. I have often thought that the structural limitation brought about by humans (in Turtle Island) mostly living in single family dwellings is one of the under-appreciated sites of abuse, limitations, and toxicity. I've never been a fan of the nuclear family model that necessitates the single family dwelling and I love the idea of what transforming it could look like. Dorms for (nearly) everyone from 13–30; yurts for honeymoon periods; multi-family environments with chickens and dogs. The ideas are limitless and could be fluid if we use materials more local than sticks, pressboard, and nails.

Similarly there are questions that come up around what our sibi (work, craft, industry) could look like. Obviously at the point of ATR we would still find use for wood crafting, shearing and refining wool, and other overlapping needs related to human-land-animal husbandry, but in the category of sibi are also conversations like "will we keep networked computer technologies around?" or "do the genetic labs have to go?" or "will the university have to burn entirely

or should some of it be saved?" These questions will be central, alongside how we do it (what organization looks like when it is no longer top down), how we will survive, and what will be the new principles (sila) of our new, fantastic, ATR world.

Even in this small drift towards talking about a green anarchist future world, you can see the biases and problems. I, in fact, come at a desire for green anarchy from counterculture and anarchy. I do not have any of the traditional baggage of family, job, or an identity wrapped up in this world. I have everything to gain by destroying where we have come from and accepting ATR as my new home. I have been rowing for the bulk of my adult life when I haven't been hiding entirely from boats and men wrapped in metal. When I dream of a future it doesn't include them.

This inflection on green anarchism also includes ideas that we are allegedly against. In this ATR we can imagine the windmills and long town hall meetings of Bookchin. We can imagine a local set of bolo hosting a traveling hunter-gatherer bolo and losing some of our people to the persuasion of their lifeway. I can even imagine living next door to a bolo that primarily believes in their own identity as laborers who are not as fascinated with the whole self-sufficiency life of our bolo. I can imagine desiring contradictions to all this nice, destructive, future ATR thinking.

Survival

There is no happy story about how we move from here to there. It is not possible to get there from here. This means that we do not spend our time practically planning on transitions from this life, from this world, to another. Instead we spend our daily lives on survival, on coping with the demons of Capital and State. We wait for paychecks, deal with commutes, and then sit at work waiting for the apocalypse, or just about anything else, to stave off boredom. We pick fights and flirts because the intellectual energy for either is about all that we have. We are not our best selves in the shadow of spectacular boredom, we are in fact just like everyone else.

As self-described green anarchists, revolutionaries, or whatever, we do not have unique resources to make our dreams a reality. Those who seem to have these resources also seem incapable of dreaming beyond their own pleasures and conservative impulses.

This is so true that it seems naive to believe that if we or our friends had the power to change the world that any of us would make different choices. I feel strongly that our most political of frenemies would make exactly the same choices that I despise from enemies, as evidenced by the name calling, bullying, and shunning they perform towards anyone who disagrees with them. Their future would be a nightmare for anyone who doesn't subscribe to leftist us-them simplification.

The *Black Seed* project, if we are brave enough to state it out loud, is to find a way to hold these ideas forward. We are the monks of this era, illuminating on sheets of vellum the hidden truths of this world. Power seduces, not corrupts. There is no good or evil in this world but a lot of mediocrity. The world we walk on is more important than the work we do. Relationships are better than ideologies. We attack out of love and not politics. Activism is the enemy of anarchy. Our enemies should be ignored and not engaged with.

If we are lucky, a future generation of people will come who love the idea of wild nature, complexity, and heresy and who have the power to inflict these ideas upon the idiots and politicians of the world. They will know what our illuminations portray and will not judge us for the fact

that we have settled for survival in this shitty world and did not instead choose the quicker end of taking on everything, everywhere at once.

What Does Green Anarchy Mean Today? by Ramon Elani

Compost, not posthuman.

~Donna Haraway

Evoking the spirit of Fredy Perlman, let us say that there is wild joy left to be had by those who continue to dance the circle dance. Green anarchy, as a framework for thinking, seeing, writing, acting, living, is and remains inspiring to many who desire a world of passion, freedom, and wildness. In this regard, however, it is vitally important to reframe and rethink in order for a particular set of ideas to feel dynamic and alive.

In this essay we present a vision for what green anarchy means today. First, we reject the dualism that defines anar- cho-primitivism. The world is far more complex than reducing everything to civilization or hunting and gathering. Second, we remain conscious and skeptical of the Western, academic institution of anthropology and its inheritance of colonialism, racism, and eurocentrism. Third, we acknowledge the importance of coming to terms with eco-extremism and engaging with the ideas in a meaningful way, regardless of whether we agree with every aspect of the movement. Fourth, we revisit some of the sacred concepts of green anarchy and question whether they remain meaningful in today's world. Fifth, we attempt to reignite interest in our history by re-engaging with some of the foundational documents of green anarchy. Sixth, we insist that sophisticated critical analysis is not the same thing as postmodernist obfuscation. The solution to a valueless, abstract, theoretical discourse cannot be reductive, one-dimensional, essentialism. Finally, we must understand that the world is different than it was twenty years ago. Global warming and climate catastrophe are no longer marginal ideas. As green anarchists we must decide what that means to us. We are no longer crying in the wilderness.

Black Seed was founded with the notion of maintaining some sense of continuity with *Green Anarchy* magazine as well as pushing forward and beyond, honoring the past and recognizing our debt to those who came before us, but also committed to vitality and growth. From the start *Black Seed* was very explicit in this regard, especially in terms of its grounding in the lived experience of those struggling to understand the world as well as the indigenous voices, which have not been stamped out and silenced despite centuries of attempts to do so. *Black Seed* reminded us that indigenous people are still here and they are still fighting. And even more, it forced us to confront the world not merely in the realm of abstract theories but as a lived reality.

Thus we continue to chart a new direction for green anarchy. We believe that the ideas deserve better than they have lately received. When there is nothing new to say, conversation becomes stale and devolves into narrow-minded bickering. Regretfully, this is exactly what has been happening over the last decade or so. Far too often green anarchist discussion devolves into dogmatic feuds and personal grudges. If people are not inspired, if they are having boring conversations, the horizon for life and action likewise appears bland and lackluster. If the conversation is so

narrow that it is only capable of promoting a select few authorized avenues for action then people will be easily discouraged. We know there are opportunities for meaningful engagement out there. It is likewise very clear that certain ways of thinking, discussing, and acting have reached a point where they can go no further. Part of the problem has been the terms of the discourse.

This is where the distinction between green anarchy and anarcho-primitivism is relevant. In the case of the latter, there is an unfortunate tendency to reduce the world, in its vastness and complexity, to a Manichean binary. There is only civilization and not-civilization. This critique is so totalizing that it leaves very little room for nuanced thinking or joyful action. Paleolithic-or-bust is not a compelling battle cry. The one thing that a totalizing critique is good for is dogmatism. If, as green anarchists, we dismiss agriculture, technology, cities, or any kind of mediated experience or symbolic culture, we simply won't have much left to do. And we will have to write off the experiences of the vast majority of human communities that have existed for the last several thousand years.

In illustrating the new kind of vision that we are promoting here, let us think of Donna Haraway, admittedly a surprising choice. In her current work, Haraway urges us to make kin and compost. This is to say, we have to derive our strength from the confluence of forces, experiences, and substances that surround us and occur within us. By doing so we can find our kinship with fungus, termites, jellyfish. We can learn to live like moss and be cousins to the wolves once again. Use everything! is the credo of the com- postist. We are not in the position to look back over thousands of years of human communities and blithely disregard everything that does not fit a prescriptive vision. If the experiences of a particular community teach us something important about how to negotiate a place for freedom and wildness in the world, we will not ignore them because they are agriculturalists.

Civilization is such a broad term that carries so many different kinds of meanings to different people. It can only ever be a massive catch-all label that we use for convenience. We cannot treat it as a scientific, objective fact. Civilization is imprecise, both linguistically and in reality.

In this devastated world we are compelled to muddle through ruins and fragments. There may not be a holy grail buried beneath the rubble but we have much to work with if we look. Does the modern appropriation of northern paganism by racists and nationalists mean that there is no value to be found in the eddas and the sagas, for instance? That is a lazy conclusion, just as it is lazy to denounce indigenous cultures because they practiced some version of something historians have called "slavery," while the cultures that informed the worldview of those very historians and anthropologists were responsible for largely wiping out those indigenous communities and imposing a brutal global system of colonialism and industrialism. Again, if the only positive vision of uncivilized life is restricted to communities that meet specific criteria established by a handful of authors, then we are left with very little.

As Haraway says *"we need stories (and theories) that are just big enough to gather up the complexities and keep the edges open and greedy for surprising new and old connections"*

The solution to a fractured world cannot be a rigid and unbending dualism. Donna Haraway is again useful here via the concept she is best known for, the cyborg. While green anarchist readers may immediately bristle at the use of term that is synonymous with technology, dehumanization, and militarism, it is important to note the subtleties of Haraway's conception of this figure. For Haraway, humanity has always been cy- borgian. To take it further, all life bears cyborg features. When a bear uses a stick to draw ants out of a hollow tree, it is absorbing something alien and external into its own composition. Life is a coalescence of differences and distinctions. What

does this mean? Simply put, we are never only what we are. The cyborg exemplifies hybridity as a condition.

As living, breathing, eating, shitting, fucking things, we are constantly absorbing and integrating the other into ourselves. As home to millions of microbes and bacteria, as the primary transportation system for countless species of viruses, we are and have always been much less than completely human. Ancient people understood that eating the flesh of an animal meant incorporating part of its spirit into themselves. This model for life and the world, as we shall see, carries with it radical potentialities for being. We are not who we think we are. We are, each of us, a multitude of things that explode in infinite directions and draw us constantly out of the borders of our being and penetrate beyond. We are a part of the multiplicity that we confront.

What does this have to do with green anarchy? In 1979 the editors of *Fifth Estate* wrote: *"Let us anticipate the critics who would accuse us of wanting to go 'back to the caves' or of mere posturing on our part—i.e., enjoying the comforts of civilization all the while being its hardiest critics. We are not posing the Stone Age as a model for our Utopia, nor are we suggesting a return to gathering and hunting as a means for our livelihood"* In other words, the green anarchist vision has always been a hybrid one. It has always been a position that is based on responding to the crisis of techno-industrial society, as well as looking at contemporary indigenous cultures and communities of the past. The world we live in, as traumatized and horrific as it is, is real. We are not creatures of the Paleolithic, who, by the way, were themselves very likely not entirely what we assume they were. We stand, here and now, against the domination of the techno-industrial world even while we are products of that world and inescapably influenced by it. We are strange, misshapen things. Partly this, and partly that. And we always were. Our challenge and our joy is born from this. To always be creating, dismantling. The cycles of decay and growth. There is no ur-moment. The symbol has always dwelt within us. Our claws and tusks are made for many purposes.

But we are also obliged to heed the ominous whispers in the darkness. There is a darker shade of green that runs through green anarchy, which we will not shy away from. It is a bloody vein that tracks through grisly pagan rites, the cosmic inhumanism of Robinson Jeffers, the savage violence of the primitive warrior, and the serene detachment of the daoist recluses. What these strands weave together is a vision of the world in which humanity does not sit upon a throne. We insist that the world was not made for man and as such the concerns of humanity and human society are not of primary importance. Following Jeffers, we must try to de-center our thoughts and our actions from the merely human perspective.

As the writers of the Dark Mountain manifesto put it, *"Humans are not the point and purpose of the planet. Our art will begin with the attempt to step outside the human bubble. By careful attention, we will reengage with the non-human world."* As green anarchists we must be sensitive to what it means "to step outside the human bubble." A vision of a world of spontaneity, joy, and desire, that boldly asserts a cosmic wholeness beyond human values will not resemble the kinds of leftist utopian visions that we are accustomed to. In his foundational "Primitivist Primer" John Moore writes *"Politics, 'the art and science of government' is not part of the primitivist project; only a politics of desire, pleasure, mutuality, and radical freedom"* In other words, the emphasis here moves away from traditional realms of social justice. Green anarchy is not about advocating for egalitarian politics.

This brings us to another point, which was always central to *Black Seed* and *Green Anarchy*, the role of anthropology. While it is certainly true that we rely on anthropological and ethnographic works to give us a picture of how many indigenous communities lived, as green anarchists, we

cannot ignore the racism and colonialism that inspired and made possible much of that work. Furthermore, we absolutely cannot put forward a vision for a way of life that depends entirely on the truth or accuracy of these historically-situated anthropological studies. If we put anthropology forward as our main evidence for being green anarchists, that means we are accepting a whole series of assumptions based in fantasies of cultural superiority, hegemony, and scientific objectivity, some of the very pillars of civilization that we oppose. Anthropological works are taken seriously because they are academic and scientific. Ways of knowing that our ancestors have relied on for millennia are dismissed because they are mystical or superstitious. This is an imbalance that needs to be corrected within green anarchy. If we argue and fight against totalizing systemic thinking but uncritically fall back on anthropology as the foundation of our position, then we have a huge problem.

As a corollary to this, the role of the primitive or indigenous themselves within green anarchy must be considered. Too often there is a tendency to reduce traditional peoples and communities into static, one-dimensional figures to be blindly or superficially emulated, rather than recognizing them as dynamic, evolving cultures with their own histories and stories, which have their own sense of how they fit into the larger world. Again, to correct this would mean being willing to challenge the values and truisms that we are often unaware of and engaging with traditional communities in the world today rather than losing ourselves in daydreams and fantasies of a long-forgotten world, one that bears little or no resemblance to the reality we and the communities we claim to admire actually inhabit.

As we have said, if green anarchy does not stay engaged and connected to the world it will become increasingly tone-deaf and meaningless, it will become nothing more than a parody; like arguments about which forms of social media are acceptable and which are not. Thus, picking up where *Black Seed* 4 left off, we must consider the question of green anarchy and its relation to nihilism and eco-extremism. This has become an extremely divisive issue over the last several years. Concurrently we have also seen a dramatic intensification of techno-utopianism on the left and a worrying growth in a kind of hybrid leftist vision of anarchy that enthusiastically embraces technology and utterly dismisses a nonhuman planetary perspective.

The bottom line is that there are no easy answers. *Black Seed* wants to remain with the trouble and continue to push through important issues that challenge us to our core. As we acknowledged in *Black Seed* 3, there are likely to be points of disagreement between some green anarchists and some nihilists. These disagreements are not insignificant but they also do not necessitate the kind of hostility and dismissiveness that have characterized much of the interaction between the two perspectives. The kind of energy and force that recent eco-extremists have shown both in their words and action clearly demonstrate what has been lacking in a lot of green anarchy over the last several years. Regardless of what individual anarchists feel about indiscriminate violence, nihilist eco-extremism has tapped into a current that resonates with many in the broader green anarchist community. Again, if we find an idea or a type of action challenging, we believe we have an obligation to dig into that discomfort and to engage with it, regardless of whether we end up agreeing with it or not. New paths can be charted, new formulations, new courses of action, new stories can be told. If, however, our resistance turns out to only be a vestigial form of leftist humanism then we have to consider other options.

Nihilist eco-extremism is also not the only other contemporary strand that can be woven into a broader green anarchist critique. We should be open to expanding our sense of what green anarchy can mean, rather than becoming increasingly dogmatic and myopic.

Let us ask together, can an idea or an action only work within a green anarchist perspective if it conforms to a fixed definition of what anarchism means? If the broad concerns and commitments are consistent, if there is even a marginal point of convergence that may give rise to inspiration and creativity, can we really afford to dismiss it because it doesn't fit into our own constructed identities? There is nothing free about that. The dominant form of anarchism that one sees, unfortunately, appears to have nothing whatsoever to do with freedom.

Sometimes looking forward and remaining engaged with the present requires a reevaluation of the past. Revisiting the history of green anarchy may also help us reorient, refocus, and revitalize ourselves. Once again, from his "Primi- tivist Primer" John Moore:

> *Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as anarcho-primitivism or anarcho-primitivists. Fredy Perlman, a major voice in this current, once said, "The only -ist name I respond to is cellist." Individuals associated with this current do not wish to be adherents of an ideology, merely people who seek to become free individuals in free communities in harmony with one another and with the biosphere, and may therefore refuse to be limited by the term 'anarcho-primitivist' or any other ideological tagging. At best, then, anarcho-primitivism is a convenient label used to characterise diverse individuals with a common project: the abolition of all power relations— e.g., structures of control, coercion, domination, and exploitation—and the creation of a form of community that excludes all such relations.*

And from the "Back to Basics" series of pamphlets put out by *Green Anarchy* magazine:

> *Originary considerations have to do with how human life used to be, with who we have been and, in some fashion, may be again. Such investigations give us things to look at, to reflect upon; not as a source of an ideology to impose, not some 'How It Must Be' dogma. In this unprecedented and fearful time, the question of practice is open. In fact, maybe one thing many can agree on is that something new is needed. It seems to us that examining the beginnings of this ongoing disaster is a worthy exercise. Do we not need all the help we can get?*

At this point, both of these passages were written more than a decade ago. A number of interesting issues are present here. First of all, we can see that even in its early days green anarchy was concerned about the same pitfalls that we address here. Namely, that we recognize the need to prevent green anarchy from becoming dogmatic, ideological, and prescriptive. We would do well to keep in mind John Moore's words, when he writes "At *best, then, anarcho-primitivism is a convenient label used to characterise diverse individuals"* As time goes on, the diversity of the ideas and individuals who adopt this label seems to be fading. It appears to have become more of a group affiliation and dogma. The people who are comfortable with the term resemble each other more and more (young disaffected white males) and their ideas become less and less distinguishable.

In the passage from "Back to Basics" we see the familiar call for something new, though it still remains unclear what is new. We can also see in the passages above a reiteration of the call to use everything available to us in seeking to develop responses to the world around us. John Moore felt that among new courses for action was the creation of

> *communities of resistance—microcosms (as much as they can be) of the future to come—both in cities and outside. These need to act as bases for action (particularly direct action), but also as sites for the creation of new ways of thinking, behaving, communicating, being, and so on, as well as new sets of ethics—in short, a whole new liberatory culture. They need to become places where people can discover their true desires and pleasures, and through the good old anarchist idea of the exemplary deed, show others by example that alternative ways of life are possible.*

It has been decades since Moore wrote these words and it is not clear that many such communities have been attempted.

Another point, which has been discussed in previous issues of *Black Seed*, is that there seems to be a growing lack of interest in action among green anarchists. In its early years green anarchy was largely defined by its commitment to militant direct action: animal liberation, black bloc tactics, arson, sabotage, etc. This raises the question, has the primitiv- ist project failed because it's been difficult for anyone to do much more than attend primitive skills workshops and fantasize about homesteading? Primitive skills and homesteading are, of course, wonderful and may be desirable to many. But it is difficult to claim that these choices have any relevance beyond one's own personal lifestyle; they simply do not threaten techno-industrial society. Again, there is a relationship between how we think and how we act. As we have said, new ways of thinking, talking, and dreaming can lead to new ways of acting and living.

In recent years an overwhelming amount of green anarchist writings and discussions have centered around domestication and rewilding. When *Green Anarchy* magazine put out their "Back to Basics" series, for instance, the pamphlet on rewilding was twice as long as any of the others. If we are serious about avoiding the lapse into an increasingly insular, marginal, dogmatic, and out of touch sideshow, let us not hold any idea above critique.

Let's be serious about asking ourselves if ideas, even foundational ones, are still playing the kind of inspiration and galvanizing role they once did. As the ancients ask, does this grow corn or not? Is rewilding, a concept ultimately born from the discourse of wildlife conservation (conserved by whom and for whom?), really an idea and path of action that challenges techno-industrial society? Perhaps the answer will be an affirmative yes. But if that's the case, let's really get into it without relying on the fact that for the past twenty years everyone has been treating the question as settled.

It also seems that green anarchists need to be mindful of the ways that these foundational ideas and core assumptions interact with notions of purity that are ultimately indistinguishable from religious ideas that are so often mocked and derided in green anarchist circles. This is not to say, however, that there is anything wrong with accepting the spiritual or religious implications of green anarchy. The old anarchist maxim "No God, No Masters" may need to be revised.

What's wrong with rewilding, or learning primitive skills? Absolutely nothing. For that matter, there is nothing wrong with homesteading, hunting, going off the grid, or any other kind of lifestyle choice. These are all great things. The point is that they do not threaten or challenge civilization or techno-industrial society. As green anarchists, we need to make sure that we make space for action and ideas that do threaten or worse. We need to stand with those who act, even if we as individuals choose not to. This is not meant to be read as an attempt to chastise. Our hope here is to open an exciting new chapter for green anarchy, one that is bold, alive, and dynamic. One that sees possibilities for joy, radical freedom, and profound kinship with the world.

We will not prevent the catastrophe from coming. It is here. It has been here, long before we acknowledged or named it. We need a form of critique and action that is flexible, honest, and sophisticated to keep up with the world. To end by making kin with Starhawk and ecofeminism, we conclude with a poem:

Breath deep.
Feel the pain
where it lives deep in us
For we live, still,
In the raw wounds
And pain is salt in us, burning. .
Flush it out.

Science is Capital by dot matrix

(new and improved version)

Atomization : to treat as made up of many discrete units

Empiricism : the theory that all knowledge is derived from sense-experience

Experimentation : the process of testing various ideas, methods, or activities to see what effect they have

Rationalize : to bring into accord with reason or cause something to seem reasonable: such as (a) to substitute a natural for a supernatural explanation of a myth (b) to attribute actions to rational and creditable motives

Causality : the relation between causes and effects

Methodological naturalism : an essential aspect of the methodology of science, the study of the natural universe. If one believes that natural laws and theories based on them will not suffice to solve the problems attacked by scientists— that supernatural and thus nonscientific principles must be invoked from time to time—then one cannot have the confidence in scientific methodology that is prerequisite to doing science.

> *Revolution can no longer be taken to mean just the destruction of all that is old and conservative, because capital has accomplished this itself. Rather it will appear as a return to something (a revolution in the mathematical sense of the term), a return to community though not in any form that has existed previously. Revolution will make itself felt in the destruction of all that is most "modern" and "progressive" because science is capital.*
>
> ~ Jacques Camatte

Science is a system of knowledge acquisition based on empiricism, experimentation, atomization, rationalizing, causality, and methodological naturalism and that is aimed at finding the truth. Theories— predictive hypotheses—are the basic unit of knowledge in this system. Science also refers to the bodies of knowledge stemming from this research.

Most scientists feel that scientific investigation must adhere to the scientific method, a process for evaluating empirical knowledge under the working assumption of methodological materialism (which explains observable events in nature by natural causes without assuming the existence or non-existence or the supernatural). Particular specialized studies that make use of empirical methods are often referred to as sciences as well.

Conversations about science get complicated since the word refers to distinct yet connected things. For example, physics is a science (a field of specialized studies) that is not always scientific (according to the above definition), since quantum physics moves away from the distinction between observer and observed that is fundamental to experimentation. However, to the extent that physicists reject the implications of that moving away, physics continues in the trajectory that science (as a way of thinking) has established.

As the modern problem-solving technique, it behooves anarchists to be skeptical of science. Science is so widely accepted that for many people it has in fact become synonymous with problemsolving. Even people who are critical of most other aspects of the culture we live in, find themselves reverting to science when pushed to defend their ideas, e.g. anti-civilization anarchists who refer to biology when attempting to convince about an optimal diet, or to anthropology to prove the superiority of their blueprint for future societies.

Of the various ways to critique science, the most fundamental addresses the scientific method, which emphasizes a) reproducibility, b) causality (that a thing or event causes another thing or event), and c) the relevance of things (material reality) over all else—more accurately, it emphasizes a specific perspective on material reality, the only perspective that science recognizes as valid, one with, for example, inactive objects acted upon by active agents. One problem with the scientific model is how it maintains and relies on a perspective of the world as a frozen (static) place. Also problematic is the idea that everything can be broken down into discrete, quantifiable parts, that the whole is never more than the sum of its parts. Underlying both of these perspectives is the premise that the best or only way to know the world is to distance ourselves from it, to be outside of it; that this distance allows us to use the world; that use is, in fact, the appropriate relationship to have to the world.

On a practical level there is the understanding that scientists are operating within a system that is based as much (if not more) on hierarchy and funding as it is on paying attention to what is actually going on around us. There are multiple accounts (even from conventional sources) showing that who is funding a study has a substantive impact on what the study discovers, from tobacco's impact on health to the possibility of restricting the spread of genetically modified organisms, but these examples are merely the most obvious.

The more subtle ones have to do with how we ask questions ("when did you stop beating your child?"), who we ask questions of (related to the questioner's access, biases, language, etc.), what questions we think to ask, and how we understand the answers we get, as well as what metainterests the questions serve (how are the assumptions of this culture fed and/or challenged by who asks, and how and of whom these questions get asked?). If scientists are seeking to discover or define truth-as-a-static, how does that search itself effect the world?

Western education predisposes us to think of knowledge in terms of factual information, information that can be structured and passed on through books, lectures, and programmed courses. Knowledge is something that can be acquired and accumulated, rather like stocks and bonds. By contrast, within the Indigenous world the act of coming to know something involves a personal transformation. The knower and the known are indissolubly linked and changed in a fundamental way. Coming to know Indigenous [ways of knowing] can never be reduced to a catalogue of facts or a data base in a supercomputer; for it is a dynamical and living process, an aspect of the ever-changing, ever-renewing processes of nature.

And on a philosophical level, knowledge is created from foundations that limit and construct it in specific ways. While on one hand science is a response to the superstition and hierarchy associated with religion, it also continues christianity's theme of a pure abstract and universal truth, separate from the sludge of everyday life, with scientists and doctors in the position of clergy that is, people who know more about us than we do. Some people believe in science (as something they don't understand that can solve their problems) in ways similar to how others believe in god. Some people cite scientific references the way that other people cite scripture.

Traditionally, science posits a neutral objective observer, a fantastical being to compare to any angel or demon: this neutral observer has no interest other than truth, which comes from informa- tion—information that can be trusted because it is found inside of laboratories or other managed locations, with carefully identified variables and carefully maintained control sets. The mystification of this awesome observer is only magnified, not ameliorated, by the addition of peer review, in which a body of knowledgeable colleagues examine the experiments and data to verify their validity. Added to the stories of peer review being compromised even from the perspective of proscience people, we now have information about researchers writing their own positive reviews and submitting them from catfish accounts. Currently people writing about science and scientists might admit that everyone has biases, but treat those predilictions, associations, and assumptions as if they're shallow, easily recognized, and—once recognized—easy to work around.

Science exemplifies this culture's tendency to specialize, and consequently to create experts, people who know every little thing about specific bits, but not how those bits interact with other things—clearly a result of thinking that is thing-based (vs. for example, relationship-based). So for instance, practitioners of allopathic medicine prescribe multiple medications to people, frequently without having any idea about how these specific drugs will interact with each other, much less any idea about how a person's feelings or other life experiences are related to their physical health.

In *The Origins of Authoritarianism,* Hannah Arendt uses the word scientism to express the logical extension of scientific thinking, which makes otherwise impossible moral or ethical questions (such as, "Can someone be worthless? And if so, can that person be euthanized?") easily resolvable. In other words, the inhuman aspects of totalitarian states are related to the reliance of those states on science as the ultimate arbiter of value: indeed, the idea that everything must be of measurable value is part of the scientific paradigm. In this way science takes on a role that religion has played in previous times, that of a state-sanctioned morality.

Fragments on Why Anthropology Can't Be Anarchist

By definition, anthropologists scientifically study groups of people—relation- ships, customs, behaviors, and social patterns. (The "scientifically" is what separates anthropologists from say artists, comedians… or just curious people.)

The history of anthropology is of civilized men and the occasional woman going to cultures foreign to them and reporting back about these cultures to their audience, including their funders. As scientists—with all the quantifying and rationalist implications of that word—anthropologists are responsible for interpreting primitive/Other peoples to the mainstream. To the extent that anthropologists are mediators between the civilized and the barbaric, they are also part of a cultural trajectory that includes missionaries, who historically have often been the first or second wave of a so- called civilizing influence.

Anthropologists, as well as other social scientists, extend the realm of science by making people's homes into laboratories, by presuming that it is possible and appropriate to engage objectively with people in cultures very different from their own (or even people from their own culture), for the purpose of distilling the most meaningful information. And, as with all sciences, what is considered most meaningful is part of an ongoing debate (with many unexplored and unquestioned assumptions), a debate ultimately framed by funders—from private grantors to

universities. Why do people get paid to study people? What do the funders get for their money? They get increased markets (in the form of the studied), increased control of existing markets (more information about what motivates people—thus how to sell more effectively), and more products (from tourism to books to drugs).

As a discipline, anthropology is compelling for a number of mostly obvious reasons, including that it provides a more holistic view of people than the views from economics, political science, sociology, etc. More significantly, it provides evidence that our options as a species are more varied than we are taught to believe. Because anthropology provides people (who become anthropologists) with a funded way to do interesting things and have interesting conversations, and the kind of people who want to find out about other cultures can be intriguing people, it is tempting to conflate the people, and their experiences, with anthropology itself. The experience of living among people who demonstrate really different life ways can also be deeply enriching for the individuals involved. There can even be books written that are illuminating for readers who are far away. But the impact of those experiences is at best a safety valve for a stultifying hegemonic society. Anthropologists, in other words, can have only good intentions, can care deeply for the people they're studying, and can produce things that imperialist-cultured people learn a lot from, but the benefits are far overshadowed by the negative consequences.

The study of people scientifically, the creation of experts, the context of meeting and learning about people for the ultimate benefit of corporations and increased hegemony, is inherently skewed and manipulative, no matter the intentions or integrity of the people involved.

In "Anthropologists and Other Friends," esteemed American Indian writer Vine Deloria Jr. refutes the possibility of exploring people in a vacuum. He describes the reciprocal creation that happens between agents of mediation (in this case, anthropologists) and the mediated (in this case, Indians). Deloria examines how the anthropologists, by having clear ideas about "what Indians do" (ie, who is Authentic) and by attending only to those Indians who are willing to act the way they're supposed to, encourage those Indians to continue acting in so-called authentic ways, which then reinforces the anthropologists in their definitions and expectations. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle—a closed loop in which people from two groups create and support mutual judgments (which they take as fact). Two of these judgments are "real Indians do specific kinds of rituals" and "real anthropologists are experts in the culture that they study." It is the very premise of purity, of a static identity (a premise required by science) and one that can be recognized by outside observers, that is so falsifying to experience and so limiting to the sort of information that studiers can gather about the studied. (This model of knowledge creates a similar dynamic between activists and the targets of their activism—leading people to embrace concepts like "real women," "the real working class," and "real wildness.") To the extent that an activist is interacting—in theory or practice—with abstractions rather than with actual relationships, to that extent activists become invested in maintaining the distance between themselves and what—or whomever they are attempting to save. And interaction with abstractions (vs. relationships) is what is required for things like funding and school credit; it is what makes a work scientific.

Anthropologists will always emphasize the difference between the studied and the studier. This tendency is also demonstrated by all people who want (for reasons of money or status, or both) to be experts on another group of people and it usually means reifying the studied, attempting to keep them distinct, pure, Authentic.

In *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology,* David Graeber encourages us to "break down the wall" between cultures studied by anthropologists (cultures frequently described by words like

"primitive" and "kin-based") and modern societies. He posits this wall as the belief that some inherent, essential shift occurred to create modern cultures as fundamentally different from previous cultures. He suggests that it is much more interesting and relevant to look at the ways that we are the same as the people being studied. While his point about the usefulness of the wall is unassailable, the more significant point is that creating and maintaining this wall is exactly what anthropology is for. As Graeber himself notes, it's anthropology when people are talking about "primitives," but sociology, political science, economics, architecture, psychology, etc. when talking about people like the studiers.

Science insists that we distance our- selves—both as groups and as individuals—from the rest of the world, so as to more effectively study and ultimately use it. The social role of anthropologists is that particular category of distancing that involves cultures that are different along specifically those "primitive" and "kin-based" lines.

While major paradigms (like science, like anthropology) will always have offshoots that grow in tangential directions (for example physics, as already stated, and some of the newer emphases in anthropology—moving away from the exotic, becoming more and more like sociology), these branches grow only to the extent that they are useful to the main body. It is also true that interesting people will want to test the limits of the tradition; to the extent that these people expect, and work for, recognition within the field, to the extent that they are judged by standards set within the field, to the extent that their work is used by corporations—then they are part of the scientific trajectory with all that that implies. Anthropology in particular has had significant shifts, on the one hand de-emphasizing studies of people far from western European culture, and on another, dealing with real world events like wars in the Middle East. This seems to be a response to a changing, increasingly mono-culture world, including increasing alienation from each other and ourselves, but perhaps that is a topic for a different essay. At any rate, I would argue that this means that anthropology becomes less and less anthropology, and more something else; that as there become fewer and fewer options for an exotic, un-tamed Other in the world, then the Others must be found closer to home, with developing ramifications. (There's an argument, for example, that this is one thread in the increase in the ethnocentric, racist violence that becomes increasingly visible these days.)

Regardless, it remains true that the only reason to stay distant from the Other, the whole purpose of an Other, is for control and manipulation of both the Other and the Same. Put extremely simply, Others are easier to kill (however that killing might look in different circumstances), and the easier they are to kill, the more both sides of the Same/ Other split are pressured to conform.

Anthropology, like the other sciences, is useful to the status quo in its ability to make the studied into objects that can be manipulated and consumed by the current system, and in its ability to increase control over the studiers.

Murder of the Civilized by Mallory Wuornos

> "*The Indians who rose up against the New England colonies in 1675 had been exposed to the merciless concepts of European total warfare and had the improved technology and tactics to inflict heavy losses on the white populace. In their desperate attempt to save their culture and to take back their lands, the Indians abandoned most of the self-imposed restraints that had limited the death and destruction in their traditional patterns of warfare.*"
>
> -Patrick Malore, *The Skulking Way of War*

> "'*Man,' whatever people think of him, is never anything more than a temporary bourgeois compromise.*"
>
> -Herman Hesse, *Steppenwolf*

> "*The lesser the motive, the better the murder.*"
>
> -Answer Me! Motto

There is a never-ending debate among anarchists of the left regarding what constitutes violence, what revolutionary violence is acceptable, and whether or not it will motivate the working class to rise against its oppressors. Nowhere in these banal conversations do people take the position that interpersonal violence is inevitable, or even desirable, as it is part of our nature. It puts into question social projects aimed at bettering the world. The Homo Sapien has always been a bad lot, there is no denying that. The earliest skulls dug up have shown evidence of blunt force trauma. Even if every person on earth (currently over 7 billion people) had all our needs met, we would still find reasons to bludgeon one another. There is no rescuing humanity from itself. Illusions of a peaceful and safe world come at a huge price. You merely need to look at the prosperity and peace (mislabeled freedom) of the West, compared to the constant battle for survival in exploited countries.

My obsession with cruelty among humans began at a young age. I grew up in a European country with a much longer history of empire building than the US, but of course that brutality was not in our school's curriculum (which centered around religious studies). I wouldn't learn about what empires and colonization meant until I was much older. What was etched in my mind were the endless horrors of the Monarchy, sadistic methods of torture, how to instill fear of all manners of deviance, and the equally cruel methods of execution (which attracted huge crowds to see the gory spectacles of be-headings, hangings, and—most horrific of all—the burnings). Along with these nightmarish tales came stories of the misery of peasant life and the diseases that spread quickly in cities that grew more and more populated and filthy. I was fascinated by the black plague and other diseases that came with industrialization. Along with these gruesome history lessons came the implication that our society has progressed, materially and spiritually. And again, no mention of the brutal subjugation of and robbery from people in far away lands.

Most anarchists believe monsters are a product of society, rather than a uniquely human problem that no utopia, no matter how well prefigured, could ever banish. Anarchists shy away from being called terrorists when we should be accepting that label with open arms. Instilling fear in your enemies when they are much bigger and more powerful is an age-old military tactic for a reason. But lately there has been a reaction against any notion of individual power and the incomprehensible violence it can sometimes take the form of. "Edgelord" is now a common denigration by leftists and others who desire a social revolution for those who talk about the human impulse towards violence and cruelty and what that means for those who believe in a social revolution. In the words of author Christian Fuchs, "the exclusion of killers from humanity makes our world a phoney planet where every serious discussion of violence is repressed." This is especially true in times where there is a real fear of terrorism and power-hungry authoritarians.

> "*We are all murderers to a greater or lesser extent.*"
>
> -Octave Mirbeau

We live in a world saturated by violence, but for most people it is distant and mediated. Despite all the evidence to the contrary—live-streamed suicides and murders on social media, police killings shot on body cameras or civilian cell phones, or the various acts of anti-social violence experienced in the cities and towns—the civilized want to deny that they themselves are capable of cruelty. Those who do violence are the barbarian others, beyond the gates, on the other side of the tracks. Most of the physical violence inflicted on people won't be seen or felt by those living in prosperity (barring a natural disaster or painful death), who are as removed from this violence as the drone operator sitting safely in a container in Nevada. It's as invisible to them as the cancer growing in a child's lung from the choking industrial smog in far away places and as the violence perpetrated within a stone's throw of Hollywood against those on Skid Row (to those who never have a need to go there).

Like alchemists, anarchists think they can turn shit into gold if only enough people will rise up. The people will revolt and bring on the socialist utopia. Anarchists might envision this magical leap happening through violent actions but the nitty gritty of political violence isn't clear. How will people be targeted? Who will be up against the wall? How do you eliminate a global capitalist system that so many humans now rely upon to eke out a miserly existence, without increasing suffering? Would anybody be capable of dropping the blade of the guillotine in this age? It's very messy. Those who take the war against society seriously will be denounced by the very same people who believe in the overthrow of the ruling classes, as if a spiritual awakening will bring about their new world. Remember, utopian attempts have notoriously had effects opposed to what their dreamers envisioned.

The belief that humans are inherently peaceful creatures, enlightened through our reason. is still a tightly-held belief, even for anarchists. There are far too many who would have us also forget those who bombed, assassinated, and plundered until their deaths. A common question among revolutionary anarchists is, why are anarchists so weak? Despite the revolutionary platitudes glorifying violence against the ruling class, the cops, the state, fascists, and every other form our enemies can take, the threats ring hollow for all but a few. Pointing out the brutality that would be necessary to accomplish this task is not macho posturing, it is an observation of the failures and excesses of revolutions. This is why the actions of the lone wolf will always, despite their vileness, be important: they aren't waiting for a critical mass of "power from below."

They take power in their own hands. Sometimes this looks very ugly but at its core is always a desire for freedom.

Like a lion in a zoo, our freedom only extends to a concrete fence, making whatever small patch of grass she has to stretch out on seem even more pitiful. Being wild and free in the midst of mass society looks more like attacking anything and everything in the most vicious way possible. To seek freedom means making people, including ourselves, uncomfortable through attacking long-held beliefs, such as those telling us we deserve to be safe and that human life is more important than anything else.

What I call ecologically-motivated murder is more likely to be equated with fascist ideology (the volkisch movement has been researched extensively) than are "lone wolves" who have no clear ideology to explain their disturbing actions. These loners can only be degenerates. Society, including many anarchists, would rather forget its demons, but lately it seems that pessimism could be making a comeback, much to the chagrin of those doing positive social work. Few accept those existing on the fringes who are likely to be more apolitical and morally objectionable to a majority of people, but whose actions reverberate through society in a powerful way.

Cruel and violent people who transgress civilized boundaries, such as the rules of war, are not marketable to the masses, making them irrelevant to anyone who wants to brand anarchism as a cure- all for society's ills. There is a notion that the viciousness of society is a side effect of civilization, rather than something innate in humans. Those who want to keep anarchy palatable to broader society quickly distance themselves from acts of savagery, and severely compromise anarchist principles (for example working with nationalists). Yet it takes savagery to successfully attack a much larger and stronger force, to instill fear. and to become offensive rather than reactive. Like George Bataille, I also believe we need a thought which does not fall apart in the face of horror.

One of the only Amazonian tribes to successfully fight off the Spaniards knew they had to match the ferocity of the invaders. And match them they did, by using the Spaniards' own torturous method of execution. In the jungle the Shuar were used to moving to avoid conflict, but a man named Quirruba had a better idea. He gained followers who swore secrecy and ordered them to seek out as much gold as possible.

When the Governor of Logrono arrived in their area, they stealthily approached at midnight. One account reports that an army of over 20,000 Shuar surrounded and conquered the settlement, slaughtering the Spaniards in their homes before they could come together. Quirruba entered with troops carrying the gold they had amassed and the tools needed to melt it down. After everybody besides the Governor had been killed, they told him to prepare to receive the tax he had prepared:

> "*They stripped him completely naked, tied his hands and feet; and while some amused themselves with him, delivering a thousand castigations and jests, the others set up a large forge in the courtyard, where they melted the gold. When it was ready in the crucibles, they opened his mouth with a bone, saying that they wanted to see if for once he had enough gold. They poured it little by little, and then forced it down with another bone; and bursting his bowels with the torture, they all raised a clamor and laughter.*"

It would be amazing to see earth shoved down the throats of mining executives, or hot oil poured down the gullets of oil executives, giving them only a small taste of the excruciating pain

they have caused so many others. Unfortunately we don't live in the time or the world of the Shuar's fierceness. We are taught from an early age not to solve problems with violence (unless, of course, you are a nation), and history likes to portray all "social progress" as a more or less peaceful expansion of the enlightened civilization of the West. But there are still Quirrubas' in the world who disregard the rules of engagement and fight on their own terms.

John Linley Frazier was a typical middle-class American in the late 1960s. He had a wife and good solid work as a mechanic until he discovered drugs and the hippie subculture. Along with his new lifestyle, he also got interested in ecology. Suddenly, on orders from the Almighty, the mechanic stopped driving and quit his job, explaining that he would no longer contribute to the death cycle of the planet. As you can imagine, his new found love of Nature put a strain on his marriage. He left his wife and moved to a hippie commune, where he proceeded to scare the fuck out of his fellow hippies. They saw him as paranoid and volatile, something that, post-Manson, most in the counterculture were desperately trying to distance themselves from. Wandering from commune to commune Frazier began living what one article described as the lifestyle of an Aquarian Age hermit, and moved into a six-foot-square shack in the woods, (predating by decades Ted Kaczynski's similar retreat from society) not far from a prominent ophthalmologist, Dr. Victor Ohta.

Dr. Ohta had also not ingratiated himself with the local hippie milieu. He flaunted his wealth: a Rolls Royce and a Lincoln Continental, expensive clothes and jewelry, sons enlisted in the best private schools, an opulent mansion designed by a student of Frank Lloyd Wright.

On the 19th of October, 1970, it burned to the ground.

As the firefighters made their way up the two dirt roads leading to the property, they found both blocked by Ohta's vehicles. After they had cleared the obstacles and reached the house they made a horrifying discovery: floating in the swimming pool were the bodies of Dr. Ohta, his wife, and their two sons, aged and 12. The doctor's secretary (a wife and mother of two herself) and the family cat were not spared either. They had all been shot execution style, one bullet each, with the exception of the Doctor, who received four.

Frazier had entered the mansion and found Dr. Ohta's wife Virginia alone. Holding her at gunpoint with her own .38, he bound her with one of her colorful scarves and waited. One by one the rest of the family along with Ohta's secretary were taken hostage and bound with the same luxurious scarves. Moving them outside next to the pool, the doctor was given an ultimatum: burn your house to the ground and renounce your materialism, or die. The doctor couldn't part with his worldly goods, and like an avenger for the forest that had once lived where he was standing, Frazier executed them all and tossed them in the pool. In the midst of the bloody carnage, Frazier sat down at the doctor's typewriter before lighting the mansion ablaze. The note would be found under the windshield wiper of one of the cars.

> "*Halloween, 1970. Today World War will begin, as brought to you by the People of the Free Universe. From this day forward, anyone and/or everyone or company of persons who misuses the natural environment or destroys same will suffer the penalty of death by the People of the Free Universe. I and my comrades from this day forth will fight until death or freedom against anyone who does not support natural life on this planet. Materialism must die, or Mankind will stop.*"
>
> -Knight of Wands, Knight of Cups, Night [sic] of Pentacles and Knight of Swords.

In the end it was the local hippies who squealed on Frazier, who—even while locked up—continued to make people uneasy, showing up to court with half his hair, half his beard, and one eyebrow shaved off. Despite his odd behavior and bizarre crime, he was declared competent to stand trial and received the death penalty. After California put its executions on hold, his sentence was commuted to life in prison. He was found hanging in his cell on August 13, 2009.

A more contemporary ecological murderer is Adam Lanza. I know that to even mention him is a cardinal sin among morally righteous anarchists. He is the person who killed multiple people, most of them children, at his former elementary school. On December 10, 2011 he wrote on a forum he frequented: "I should call in on John Zerzan's radio program about Travis. I'm really surprised that I haven't been able to find anything he's written or said about the incident, considering how often he brings up random acts of violence. It seems like Travis would be a poster-chimp of his philosophy." [added emphasis] In his call to John Zerzan's weekly radio show, Adam Lanza, who Zerzan described as being very articulate, discussed the effect domestication had on Travis the Chimp, who after ripping a woman's face off in 2009 went on a violent rampage that only ended after the police unloaded their fire power on him:

> "*Travis wasn't an untamed monster at all. Um, he wasn't just feigning domestication, he was civilized. Um, he was able to integrate into society, he was a chimp actor when he was younger, and his owner drove him around the city frequently in association with her towing business, where he met many different people, and got along with everyone. If Travis had been some nasty monster all his life, it would have been widely reported, but to the contrary, it seems like everyone who knew him said how shocked they were that Travis had been so savage, because they knew him as a sweet child. And there were two isolated incidents early in his life when he acted aggressively, but summarizing them would take too long, so basically I'll just say that he didn't act really any differently than a human child would, and the people who would use that as an indictment against having chimps live as humans do wouldn't apply the same thing to humans, so it's just kind of irrelevant.*"

A year later, Lanza's crime sent shock waves through the nation. Zerzan had little to say about the incident. It was of course portrayed as another tragedy of civilization, and not as a natural response to an unnatural way of existing in the world. Like Travis, we were raised to be something we are not. Also like Travis, some humans escape the world of the civilized through acts of uncontrollable violence.

He left no manifestos and has been essentially erased, probably due to his immorality. While Zerzan said little to nothing about the nature of the shooting, society (including anarchists!) as usual in their desperate search for answers zeroed in on the easily digestible explanations of access to guns and mental health care. When tragedies occur, the liberal mask of many anarchists' politics reveals itself as they also cry for the safety of answers. Lanza had demonstrated his interest in anti-civ ideas, not only wrestling with the ideas, but putting those thoughts into terrible action, yet people still seem mystified as to why anybody would do what he did.

People who cared to read what he wrote, knew exactly where Adam was coming from when he opened fire in that classroom. He couldn't have been any clearer about his motivation. He was the embodiment of Travis the Chimp, Tyke the Elephant, and other beasts who viciously cast off their shackles, their violent rebellion ending with their own deaths. Like skirmishes in

wars long forgotten, there is mass cultural amnesia surrounding these acts of hostility toward the civilized. The town of the elementary school destroyed the school (building a new one over it), and also razed the house that Lanza had grown up in. Apparently unsavory people had begun showing up at the site. Perhaps some of those people listened to Zerzan's show and were making a pilgrimage to pay their respects. The erasure of Lanza extends to his Wikipedia page, which redirects to the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting page. This is true of personal wikis for many other school shooters as well.

Attacking innocents is incredibly taboo. Even to admit you understand, much less are sympathetic to, the actions of people like Frazier or Lanza, will cause you to be shunned. This is especially true when the taboo against the killing of children is transgressed. Everything must be palatable to the masses. Nothing is more sacred to the masses than children, who represent hope for the future of the human race. But that future will no doubt be as horrific in its banality as the world now. An article in Newsweek summarized Adam's motivations (adding of course that this way of thinking is deranged):

> "*children were indoctrinated from a very young age to become part of a sick machine that was self-perpetuating. They were manipulated to live unhealthy lives. In Adam's deranged world-view, they were already doomed to live in a joyless world that would use and abuse them. By killing them, he'd be saving them from the hell he was enduring.*"

Both Frazier and Lanza's messages were clear to those who understand, but mystified everyone else: humans have, to their detriment, completely removed themselves from nature and through the ways of civilization we have all been imprisoned. Frazier's fury came from a transcendent moment where he saw the obscenity of materialism that we are bound to while Lanza saw how we are shaped from birth to accept this fate and enjoy being caged. Like warriors before them they refused to see humans as more valuable than other life on earth and had no moral qualms about extinguishing lives no matter how young and innocent. In fact, they may be seen as having acted from a place of kindness, as suggested by Adam Lanza's very personal killing of his mother before he left for the school. In his mind he wasn't deranged; he had been pacing his cage his whole life, until he could pace no more. Then he pounced. We are all capable of nurturing and compassion, but we are also capable of the most horrific brutality, given the right conditions. These instances of cruelty, whether from long ago or in our lifetime, shouldn't be swept under the rug. They are not horrible abominations that we must do everything to forget. They are human responses, maybe one of the last meaningful human actions we can observe, which is perhaps what terrifies people so much. As Fuchs observes, "Deep down in every one of us there is a ruthless primal killer inside. Perhaps this is the fundamental truth from which all censors, moralists and inveterate optimists flee in panic." Let us not flee in panic from our own impulses, but learn from them and come face to face with society, its warts and all.

Smiles on the Tiles by Jack Diddly

"FUCK!!!" The primal and anguished cry emanated from the refrigerators in appliances, followed by a loud thud. It was just Brad again…Brad resembled George Wendt from the "Da Bears!" '90s SNL sketch. He was from Chicago, and of course a diehard Cubs and Bears fan. He'd worked at S-Mart for almost ten years, and had increasingly begun to unravel. He'd go off into the rows of fridges to vent, sometimes pounding them with his meaty fists.

I didn't hold any of this against him. I knew how he felt. I was a refugee from back east. I'd moved to the west coast several years before, mostly in a vain attempt to escape politically motivated harassment. I'd gotten involved in anarchism through punk rock. Exposure to bands like Crass and Millions of Dead Cops had molded my worldview. The events after 9/11 had motivated me to become more politically active. I had hooked up with a network of Anarcho-Communists, a Platformist federation..I was also active in antifascist activism. I was doing prisoner support for a Palestinian detainee. He was locked up without charges in the hysteria following the attacks in New York and DC. I'd grown up in the suburbs of Baltimore, but had gone to college in a small town in Pennsylvania and, until I moved west, I had never left. It was a right wing town that didn't appreciate the presence of agitators in their midst. My name had appeared in the local media more than a few times because of an anti-ICE demo we'd planned.

My mental health, which was never great to begin with, had taken a turn for the worse in October of 2005. I had broken off with most of the ancoms by then. They'd had one of their conferences in Baltimore that summer, and I'd completely blown it off. I had suffered through one in Philly, and that was enough. It was excruciating. Over 12 hours of arguing and quibbling over workerist minutia and theory, and that was only day one… I'd sat there and endured it to be a team player. I'd gotten some calls from Philly antifa about this or that bonehead show that was supposedly happening, but had let them all go to voicemail and never responded. People had started walking by my house at night and yelling profanity and abuse. They were kicking over my garbage cans, following me around on foot and as I drove through town. A sadistic woman had been brought in to the corporate bookstore where I worked for the sole purpose of driving me out. I'd been talking to some of my coworkers about attempting to unionize through IWW and UFCW. Someone had ratted me out to management. All of these factors combined to zap my already highly neurotic brain. I'd let my appearance and hygiene go (more than normal).

I eventually had a massive nervous breakdown. I was shaking. I couldn't sleep. After quitting my job at the bookstore, I was pacing back and forth through the house. I ended up admitting myself into the psych ward at the hospital in town.

As I was being admitted, I had to linger in a hallway where they had cells for psychiatric holds brought in by the cops. I waited by one cell where the occupant had smeared his feces all over the window. I found most of the staff to be callous and uncaring. I tried to pathetically escape from the less secure unit and was put in a higher security wing with more chronic and serious (mental) cases. When I first entered the day room there, I was greeted amiably by a Hispanic chap who stuck out his mitt for me to shake. I immediately regretted this when I felt a sticky film on

his palm and fingers. I later saw him skulking around the unit with his hands jammed down his pants. I was told that he'd been admitted for chronic masturbation, to the point where it made it impossible for him to hold down a job and function in society. Needless to say, I washed my hands very thoroughly. I was later brought into a room with a severe woman with a French accent, spectacles, and her hair in a bun. She looked about 60. She interrogated me for awhile about my political views and other things. When I was being transferred to another area, I glanced at a clipboard with my chart on it. There was a note on there from this woman thanking the hospital staff for allowing her to interview me. At the time, I thought she was probably from Homeland Security. She stated that I displayed "homicidal ideation." News to me… After these preliminaries, I was placed in the ward with the other patients. One teenage girl was in for her third or fourth suicide attempt. A middle-aged man who looked like he'd listen exclusively to classic rock and vote Republican was there with a bandage on his hand. He had punched through the windshield of his car in a fit of rage after his wife had left him. A young black teen was in a wheelchair. I found out that she had shot her boyfriend. It was in the paper that another patient read aloud while she wept softly. The most interesting of the lot to me was one of my roommates. Can't remember his name, but he looked to be in his late 40s. While the rest of us wore street clothes, he wore a hospital gown every day. He was bearded with longer hair. He didn't say much, and he usually sat in the common area and watched TV all day. We had a hall meeting with one of the shrinks, and he asked us what we'd like to do if and when we got out. His response was: "Take off!" I found out that he'd been in and out of the state hospitals many times, and was awaiting transfer back there. I often snore. One night I awoke for some reason, and he was quietly chanting "Kiiillll Jaaccckk".

He was unhappy about my snoring. He repeated this a few times. Needless to say, I didn't sleep very well after that…

A few years elapsed, and I had left Jess, my partner (in crime), and had met and married Kim in a whirlwind romance. Her brother lived in the Northwest with his wife, and through a series of phone calls and letters, we had decided to make the trek across the country, partially in a vain attempt to escape my ongoing persecution. A COINTELPRO- style smear campaign had begun in earnest in late 2005, and had made things rather difficult for me in that backwater town of 50,000. I had no way of knowing that the same slimeballs, fully aware of my intention to relocate, had already initiated similar corny tricks where we were moving to. We arrived in October of '08, and things didn't go well. Her brother and sister-in-law were intolerable. We were staying on their couch in an expensive trendy flat. They fought constantly, and both lost their relatively high-paying jobs not long after we arrived. We endured four months of hell living with them and desperately looking for any job. I finally tried a temp agency, and got placed in a position at a carpet cleaning business. I drove around all day in a van with a born-again Christian who was in his early fifties. I screwed a few things up, as Im wont to do. I didn't hook the hoses up correctly. I accidentally tracked some dirt from my boots on a rich lady's white carpet. In a surreal moment, my co-worker got rather heated, angrily denouncing me because I said I liked the Phantom Menace Star Wars film. "Jar-Jar Binks" was racist, you see. After that disaster, I entered a new level of hell as a canvasser. Out of extreme desperation, I became one of those annoying idiots who stand on street corners and harass hapless pedestrians for donations. My cause was the California gay marriage initiative. A coworker and I stood outside of a yuppie grocery store all day and pestered shoppers for money. If you didn't make your quota more than a few days in a row, you were very sweetly and kindly asked to seek opportunities elsewhere,

and please don't let the door shut *hard* on your way out..There was a core group of die hards who had somehow lasted there quite a while. I found out later that they had been fabricating credit card numbers and donations somehow. They all were eventually purged as I had been. The smiley-happy-cheerful coordinator told me "This job's not for everyone." My wife and I applied at fast food places, anything. We wound up hitting the shopping mall when Burger King and Popeye's Chicken snubbed us. I submitted a resume to a place in the food court called Hot Dog on a Stick. You had to wear this goofy multi-colored uniform and hat, just a bit less ridiculous than Judge Reinhold's in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High.*

I turned out not to be Hot-Dog-on-a Stick material. I told myself I was overqualified. The situation with the in-laws had hit critical mass. Kim and I pondered our options. This whole west coast adventure had turned into a nightmare. Her 2001 Nissan Altima was in their garage. We seriously considered getting in, putting on our Supertramp greatest hits CD, turning on the engine, and going to sleep. Another plan was to make our way down to Arizona to link up with her other brother, Ben. He worked for the Renaissance Faire and traveled around the country year-round. We had sold the car in the interim, and one day we struck out south for AZ, on foot. I had one of those big backpacks you see on oogles. We had her little terrier Tyson with us. It was a nice day, and the walk was pleasant at first. We wound up following the river, then an unused rail line. We came to a bridge and thoughts of "Stand By Me" came to me as I looked at the precipitous drop if we should slip or trip. There was no railing or anything to stop us if we were to fall. It was only a bit wider than the track. I had my wife go first, so I could grab her or the dog if anything should occur. Before we got halfway across, she had started crawling on all fours and was hysterically crying. I don't know what we would've done if a train had suddenly come round the bend. Well, we would've died. After that wonderful experience, we came upon a rail tunnel through a large hill. It was this large black hole. Alarm bells went off in my brain as we stood there in terror. It was either go through it or retreat back over the hell bridge… I fished a flash light out of my pack, and it flickered as I flipped it on. We cautiously entered and saw evidence of past human habitation via the dim flashlight bulb. Graffiti ("JIMMY'S A FAGET"), shopping carts, plastic Steel Reserve 40 bottles, human feces, empty cans of Spaghetti-Os. I hoped and prayed with every atom of my being that any inhabitants weren't still home. Every horror movie I'd ever seen came flooding back to me. The wind through the tunnel, dripping water, and our own footsteps were all we heard as we made our way through this seemingly endless black void. Kim was gripping my right arm so tightly that I started to lose feeling in my hand. Halfway through, we saw a mattress with what looked like a large pool of brown dried blood on it. My wife had her face tightly pressed to my chest by then. One solace was that Tyson seemed unconcerned. I thought that he'd notice any dangers before wedid. Finally, after twenty minutes or so of white-knuckling it, we came out into the glorious light. We danced, laughed, and hooted, in celebration of not being murdered in some hideous way. After walking most of the day, we'd only made it to the suburbs south of town. After spending the night shivering in the woods, we shamefully negotiated a return trip to her brother's through Kim's mom. That same day, I got a call. I had gotten a job…

I got a call from Mary, the S-Mart HR person. Could I come in to fill out some paperwork and do my drug screen? I had gotten some Niacin pills from Timothy (not Tim), my brother- in-law. My in-laws and wife smoked weed 24/7, so it was difficult for me not to. It felt almost rude to decline. The niacin pills were terrible, but supposedly cleaned up your urine before testing. 10 minutes after ingestion, your face would turn bright crimson and you'd have serious hot flashes.

Sweat would ooze from your pores, and I suppose this is how it worked. I passed the test… I had to go twice because another idiot, Judy, sent me on an extended bus ride to the testing facility without the proper documents.

I've been at S-Mart for several years now, and have had some truly hellish experiences, of course. A big part of my job is getting customers to sign up for our Citigroup MasterCard, with 25% interest rate. I get between $2 to $4 per application. My first few months in, I had a very large guy in his twenties sign up. He got approved, then suddenly became unhinged. As an incentive for applying and getting approved, the customer gets $15 off of their first purchase with the card. I explained this to the cretin, but he started babbling about how I "lied to" him. He bellowed at me, "You're retarded! You're a nerd!" I looked up at him (he was about 6'4), and calmly said, "The only person being retarded right now, is YOU." This really set him off, and he started following me over to Home Electronics. He wound up being ejected by security. It's amazing I haven't been fired yet. I have a tendency to act out when feeling bored or put upon. I've asked out customers at work. I told another guy to shove a shop vac up his ass. He promptly ran over and tried to get me fired. I've come into work completely stoned and/or drunk. One of my previous supervisors, whose dad was a state pig, attempted to get me terminated because I "smelled like marijuana" and I had physically threatened a particularly odious co-worker in front of the store. I've been sober now for over 3 months.

I grew up in a bourgeois environment. Went to private Catholic schools for several years until I was asked to leave in middle school. Grew up in a big house with a swimming pool in white-flight rural Maryland. Since the early '90s, I've been on my own. I failed out of college in '93. I've worked as a day laborer, janitor, factory worker, night stock boy in a grocery, warehouse drone, you name it. All of the ancoms and communists who fe- tishize the working class or workers make me laugh. My experience with the working class has been far from romantic. I've worked with some really cool and chill folks, but many (or most) have been a bunch of snitches and worms who would sell me (or you) out at the first opportunity. Their worldview(s) are and were pretty horrifying too. I had a redneck who worked at the grocery store feel the need to tell me– unprompted–on the first day that he "hated ALL niggers" and wanted to "throw them in a huge hole and cover it up." A woman at the box plant wanted to "nuke the Middle East" and "kill all Muslims." I could go on and on.

We have these idiotic morning pep rallies before the store opens. They alternately praise and chastise us for our performance. They were forcing us to recite what I would call a "cult chant" at the start. The manager would say, "Why are we here??" And we would bleat in response, "To serve, delight, and engage our members while they shop their way." I would refuse to say it, and even started using my hand as a puppet, my fingers silently mouthing the words in lieu of speaking them. We had a store manager from Germany three or four years ago. She would yell, "Vy aw vee heer?!" She'd get really excited, point her finger in the air, and say, "You must WOW the member!" But it would come out : "You must VOW ze memba!" I mocked her relentlessly behind her back, with sieg heils and nazi references, of course, and I'm pretty sure my coworkers told her. I made the mistake of friending some of them on Facebook, but soon had to block them when I discovered they were showing or forwarding some of my more colorful posts to management. Our current store manager, Melissa, is Mrs Perky Pants. She talks in this "Valley Girl" speak. She sounds sorta like Will Smith's sister on *Fresh Prince of Bel Air.* She introduced herself on the first day as a "perfectionist" who doesn't "tolerate failure." We grinned at each other because we all knew she was in for a very rough ride. She then proceeded to inform us that her husband was a

cop. “I LOVE the police!” I felt my sphincter involuntarily tighten and a thin sheen of perspiration start on my upper lip.

S-Mart has been around since the late nineteenth century. With so many consumers shopping on Amazon and other online retailers, traditional “brick- and-mortar” stores aren’t faring so well. S-Mart has been experiencing what’s referred to as “corporate failure.” They’re hemorrhaging money. Recording losses every year in the millions. Their CEO is a former hedge fund guy who has been systematically dismantling and selling off the company’s assets. He’s been closing less profitable stores and selling the buildings. S-Mart’s tool line was sold a few months ago. My store was featured in the local paper as one slated to close last December. We’re still open, but the store looks like shit and staffing/hours have been cut to ridiculous levels. Sometimes it just me for hours alone on my floor, attempting to run appliances and hardware, the phone constantly ringing, customers walking out in a huff. We eliminated our electronics department. One happy development is that right now, we have no “loss prevention” or store detectives. They would catch shoplifters, junkies, tweakers, and just poor folks. I’d often see cops taking some poor slob out in handcuffs. They mostly watched us, and there are cameras all over the sales floor and store. They would rat us out for any trivial thing. Management goes in the camera room to spy on us or check the video from earlier in the day to nail us for something or other. I often see and have witnessed kleptomaniacs going down the escalator with tool sets, drills, even bicycles, and pretend not to notice. We have one security clown in our store who floats between two locations and is like a band aid on a severed limb. The other day, he ran upstairs and shouts, “Did you see two black guys come up here?!” There’s been so much thievery since they cut LP, that whole walls are almost empty in the tool area. I see the same speed freaks with sores all over their faces come upstairs two or three times a day to pilfer a tool or headphones. All we can do is laugh about what a joke our store and this company is. It deserves to go under, for the shitty pay and benefits, and the way they treat their employees. They took away our meager employee discount in January. I get emails from corporate and “Eddie,” the CEO. They talk about S-Mart’s “transformation.” A particularly amusing recent email discussed how they’d made the “tough decision” to lay off 130 workers in their Midwest corporate offices. Morale is at an all-time low in our store. Melissa still trots out in the morning and gives her motivational spiel. “Smiles on the tiles today, guys! I wanna see smiles on the tiles!”

The Bones of Mayuk by S-kw'etu'?

The bones of Mayuk, the grizzly, lay strewn amongst the bones of the forest that once had been her home, the same forest where, not long ago, a small group of people (including myself) stood up against the governments, the corporations, the Indian Government, and their agents the RCMP. We had tried to protect this forest and failed.

Mayuk, like the trees that once stood here, is now no more, her destruction is irreversible, as is the effects of this forest and these types of clear-cut logging practices, which are causing landslides, which are destroying the watershed, which is eliminating fish-spawning habitat along with the habitat of so many other species, including our own.

Presently governments, corporations, and their agents, are working together to destroy the water, air, and food, which is beyond foolish. Despite the evidence that this is our reality, many people still argue that this is an unalterable necessity because of economics. Those people frighten me as much as the compliant who choose to follow, never think, and who are always silent.

The strewn remains of our fire is the only evidence that this is the same location where a beautiful forest full of life and complex ecosystems once thrived. Now those stones sit next to one of the far-too-many ugly clear cuts that scar occupied Native territories. Technically the clear cutters leave a few trees standing so they can deny what they are doing: clear cut logging in forbidden areas so they are loophole clear cuts. The trees that remain standing often fall without the support of the forest. The logging practices that have been creating issues with the waterways, fish habitat, and water quality have—despite a great deal of effort to stop them—continued unabated since 1969. Almost fifty years of struggling against the system for the basic human right to clean water has only resulted in evidence of a sickness that impersonates a democracy, and with no effective environmental land steward ship, much less any concern for the health and well being of the citizens it claims to to protect.

On a clear December day a few years ago, I sat alongside my family members and participated in a ceremony beside that fire. Our spiritual ceremony was interrupted rudely by agents of the crown, the RCMP, who tend to show up when a corporation is paying for a civil order but refuse to act whenever a person is being subjected to criminal activity, violence, or abuse. We weren't surprised; the fact that they had long planned to log that area was not unknown and the community had been rallying against the logging for half a century to no avail.

Sadly the fact is most if not all of the people who rely on these resources to survive do realize the horrible situation they face but are completely flummoxed, or so they claim, when it comes to what to do about it. They attempt to work within the system believing that the systems have been put into place to prevent and protect them and eventually all they discover is that their systems are simply convoluted and pointless. The established environmentalists fail because they refuse to acknowledge colonialism, or the genocide they too willingly participate in. They do not understand that they have no treaties here, yet are willing to promote the rights of the corporation over the rights of the people, which is how British Columbia came to be; they believe a crown

trade monopoly trumps the rights of the existing nations. What they fail to understand is that they to have no rights and they are the ones who will suffer the consequences, not the corporations.

Moratoriums, law suits, petitions, and bringing up the issue at the legislature all have had no impact; they continue to sell our timber, our minerals, our fish, our water, and even our land despite the fact that our land is unceded and no treaty exists between our Nation and the foreign one destroying our territories. They continue to apply European names to our territories, waterways, lands, and peoples while blatantly denying that white supremacy is the underlying problem. Anything and everything is being sold off to any and all comers without any consultation with the communities, native or non-, and this is just how it has always been since colonization. Nothing has changed, we have just as few rights as Mayuk and the rest of the life that has long been part of our territory.

Before the RCMP arrived that December day there were many unhappy people in the area, some were members of local environmental organizations who have long fought this issue. Most simply represented themselves. Most would think that different people all being threatened in a similar manner would serve to bridge the gap and give us the opportunity to heal and move forward together to positive solutions, but that is not what is happening here. Solidarity is not happening and equality is nowhere to be seen.

After the RCMP arrived most of the home-owning non-native environmentalists over the age of thirty—which was the majority of the group—ran off and hid in the forest, and the professional, fund-raising, grant-collecting environmentalists led the way. They left elders, disabled, and youth to fend for ourselves. This happened because older Canadians are not well educated as to their civil rights and right to protest; they also mistakenly believe that an arrest on a civil injunction will result in having a criminal record, losing their jobs, and all such other nonsense. Basically they fear the economic impact because they are human beings under complete monetary control.

Those of us left, including a seventy nine year old elder, were outnumbered by the RCMP. The police are often predatory in nature, they are opportunists, and I did witness some violence due to their involvement. An older residential school survivor was brutalized, as were most of the youth. I witnessed one slight young man being torn right out of his shoes by thug cops.

Once the RCMP had the young people taken away, their senior officer came to the sacred fire where only native women sat and politely addressed the elder Xwu'p'a'lich asking her to leave the site. She looked him directly in the eyes and responded, "You know I can't do that." and so began a stalemate that was very long—and I imagine very expensive considering how many officers were present. The officers ceased their arrests and simply stood in the cold waiting for instruction, the logging operator was present as well, waiting. The ceremony continued, the negotiations continued long into the day. This is a right by tradition and it is also a right Canada has given us and is supposed to respect, but does not.

When they removed Xwu'p'a'lich from the mountain later that day they arrived to find a large crowd outside the station protesting against the shameful act of removing an indigenous elder and respected member of their community from her own land. The police were pretty uneasy about what they had just done, the truth is they are not well-loved at the best of times, not by any rational people at least.

Later in the day some of us were released but kept under police surveillance. This civil order was very expensive and a waste of energy: tailing octogenarian volunteers on their way to their knitting for the homeless group. These resources would better serve by protecting us from dangerous people who cause harm in the community. Policing is a novel concept, but here it is only

a concept. This is a corporate system that fears repercussions for the conditions it creates, which is misery and nothing more.

Not long after in occupied Vancouver a judge found in our favor and the police had to back off. At the trial the crowd in the courtroom refused to stand for the judge who represented the queen, but did stand for the elders who came to defend the land defenders. No local justices would sign this order, but they finally found one in a place called Vernon, which is a considerable distance from here. The accommodating justice who would sign an order that violated native and citizens rights also acted against the Secwepemc people when their unceded land was being developed during the 2004 Sun Peaks Resort protest, again on unceded indigenous territory.

Presently there is another blockade, it has been active for a month, and once again it is being manned primarily by elders and disenchanted youth who have voluntarily come to stand for the native elders. The youth make camps at the blockade and live on site, out doors, in the cold and wet, only coming off the mountain to get supplies or for work. Neither they nor the elders are professional environmentalists, who are home owners and very comfortable allowing the most marginalized people to put themselves at risk on their behalf.

What I am witnessing is the deep divide between younger and older Canadians. The youth are far more aware, they understand that it is about racism and colonialism; they are also marginalized people, unlike their parents. The youth of today are aware that their country is economically and morally bankrupt and they have been condemned as corporate slaves in retail and service industries, earning less than they need for the essentials of life. So far there has been no injunction against this blockade, the last company backed down and we hope this one will consider the risk and expense of pursuing legal actions not viable at this time—this is highly likely with the economic realities as they are. We may be fortunate enough to avoid another confrontation with the RCMP.

The logging has created ongoing land slides, and also is one cause of dropping water levels. At this point the salmon cannot return to spawn. The other cause is that there are simply too many people using too much water from the same source that the salmon use to spawn.

Illegal land development has had a catastrophic effect. The populations grew considerably when the economy was at its peak in the mid 2000s, before the collapse in 2008. That population growth inspired more development than the water supply could possibly accommodate. Combined with the changes in weather patterns—less snow in winter along with long and very dry hot summers—the coastal region is now experiencing serious water shortages. Just as the economies collapsed in 2008, the Canadian housing bubble inflated, the value of homes here increased seven percent, which resulted in a ten percent more revenue going into government coffers. This increase in property value, although created by disreputable banking types, also inspired many shady corporate types to begin acquiring, logging, and developing more and more land including the watershed; it is all on the development block. The target consumer for this highly priced real estate—in a community where clean drinking water is not available and everything else is in short supply—are retiring Canadian seniors. Mostly these consumers have failed to materialize, however the development plans—much like the plans for pipelines and fracking—con- tinue unabated.

Garbage and other items people no longer have a use for often find their way into the creeks, streams, and rivers. While walking the dry creek bed where the salmon used to spawn I found an automobile that had lain there for years. Not that far from that spot a contractor has thrown contaminated materials, asbestos, and all of the government paperwork, next to the watershed.

Further down the road there is a couch in a stream. Basically you cannot turn around without finding more illegal dumping. The smell of motor oil is not uncommon because that is how it is disposed around here. The residents of the coast are doing just as much to shit on their own plates as the government and industry; they have the same contempt for the Mother Earth and other life forms as they have towards native people. Personally when I am on the coast I do not drink the tap water—actually I do not trust it anywhere.

Canadians have long begrudged the "special benefits" that native people receive. Most of the violence, hostility, and racism we endure is from envy over fictional benefits, things that native people do not actually receive. We are far less discriminatory on our occupied territories than the settlers who live in the nice houses in the nice neighbourhoods, yet they are sharing the same rez water as the natives who live in a shithole ghetto that sits between the power lines and the open pit mine. Many other settlers on other territories are beginning to experience the same special benefits as the indigenous people: poor water, poverty, inadequate health care.

So at long last we will soon have equality and they will no longer feel so excluded. What can one expect when even for such horrendous crimes as the ones at the residential schools, no effort is put towards prosecuting the offenders, many of whom remain at large in our communities today. We cannot expect justice or concern, that is for sure.

The fact is there is more than adequate water, it falls from the skies regularly. However, even in this dire situation I see no evidence of rain water collection. Even though the salmon can no longer return I have found no evidence that the department of fisheries has had any involvement at any point during the forty seven year problem„The people who rely on fishing for their living have seen no evidence either. Even though the salmon cannot return, the people who fundraise on behalf of the salmon who spawn in that creek continue to gather money. Never do I hear a word about the illegal dumping, nor do I see much effort to clean it up. I am pretty sure petrodollars are not edible, drinkable, or breathable, however they seem to be the only thing most people are concerned about, even people in the environmental movement.

There are fundamental systems in place that predate any that human societies have created. These systems cannot be ignored in favor of fantasies we have been foolishly creating. Our existence relies on these systems continuing to provide us with the elements we all need to survive, clean air, water, and food. These things are in very limited supply and it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to protect and conserve our precious resources. Failure to do so is an act of suicide.

My Mind Below this Beautiful Country: Talsetan Brothers Share Their Stories of Land Defense and Indigenizing

Interviewer: Goat

This conversation was recorded in the recently constructed Healing Center at the Unist'ot'en Camp. For the past 6 years, the Unist'ot'en clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have been occupying their traditional territory and preventing government and industry from entering the land to build pipelines that would transport tar sands and fracked gas to the global market. The Unist'ot'en Camp has served as a site of inspiration where land defenders from disparate regions can meet, network, plan, learn from the Unist'ot'en strategy, seek wisdom, and heal.

Days at camp are spent tending the infrastructure of the site, being with the river that has been protected as a result of the imagination and responsibilities assumed by the Unist'ot'en, conversing, cooking, and laughing. Nights are spent beneath the stars, huddled around a fire with fellow comrades, sharing stories, planning, and laughing. While I was at the camp this winter I met Ishkadi and Lo 'oks, Tatsetan Brothers who are regular occupiers and visitors of Unist'ot'en, and whose territory is 4 hours drive north from there. They had stopped over at camp en route to their land. One night as some of us were drinking tea and eating snacks, they began to share stories about their home, their language, and their work defending their territories from industry. Several of us stayed up late into the night with the brothers, riveted by their stories and their particular cadence as a duo. What is printed below comes largely from what they shared that night. This conversation was made possible in part by the unique space created by the Unist'ot'en where indigenous and settler radicals can encounter each other and share their stories.

"I Like Devil": Pop Culture, Punk, the Church, and School on the Iskut Reservation

Ishkadi grew up colonized on Iskut Indian Reservation No. 6, in so-called Northwestern British Columbia, in Tahltan territory. He has been involved in direct action and blockades in defense of his people's territory for over 10 years. He is pursuing the reclamation of his indigenous identity.

to'oks was born in a hospital outside of Tahltan territory. He grew up pursuing guidance and wisdom from his elders, especially his grandma and grandpa. In his spare time he is crafting a diabolical scheme to dominate the world. He calls it "World Peace." Ishkadi and to'oks are brothers and they are the two youngest speakers of Tahltan in the world, of which there are currently less than 30 speakers.

to'oks—to'oks ushye. Tlabane nasde. Tl'abanot'in sini ja'. My name is to'oks. I am from Tl'abane. And I am Tl'abanot'in.

Ishkadi—Ishkadi ushye. Ch'iyone es-datsehi. Tl'abanot'in sini ja' Talsetan sini ja'. My name is Ishkadi. I am Wolf Clan. I am Tl'abanot'in of Tatsetan people, what they call Tahltan. We grew up in a reservation, ind res no. 6. The iskut first nations. We were contained there for most of our

lives. Pretty much what we know is res living. We grew up with our grandparents who didn't let us forget what we are. They always told us, "don't be white. Don't forget where you come from." Not necessarily saying we come from the res. They brought us out. They gave us tools to survive on the territory, living on the land, and they also taught us culture and language.

t—For me I had a good vocabulary growing up, but I never could find or understand "colonization" as a concept growing up. Like I could see it, but I couldn't make it out. My whole vision as a young boy was to grow up back on the land and to not live in modern day life. Living out in the woods was exotic to me, it was something that we never did in those days. And it was something I wanted to pursue as I got older. And I looked up to my grandparents because they are the closest window I have for that path. They are the ones who helped me along with that path from the beginning.

I—Yeah, it all has to do with, it came in stages. As a youngster I had no clue about it.

I never really sought out particularly decolonization, I never really quite understood anything. We grew up contained in a res, but we also had small increments of going out on the territory for days or weeks. Then we came back to the res. But I've always been looking for something. When I was a kid playing with my older brother and our cousin, my older brother would always choose to be the good guy, and to'oks was a sidekick, like he was a supporting character in our games, not a main character, and I was always the bad guy. So as early as that, I never went what was the so-called "good path."

t -Yeah, our older brother had access to a lot of music and we would listen to music he listened to. And one of the bands he liked was Guns N Roses and at that point we shifted from the good side to the bad side. (laughing…) We never really said like, "We are gonna be bad all the time", but it was something cool, like we can't be good all the time.

I -There was something attractive about that to us because we would always ask our friends, and we were just kids, and we would be like, "Do you like angel or devil?" They all said angel and me and my brother would be like, "No we like the devil!" (laughing…) That appealed to us. That kind of mentality was just inborn.

Now, reflecting on it that was part of us transitioning into what they call "decolonization." And it all started with pop culture. We grew up with pop culture. Everything about us. Like we can recall movies and seedy movies we saw that challenged society. We listened to music that was abrasive and was good and a lot of people would say, "You can't dance to it" and we didn't care, it was something else. Eventually, as we got older, in our age of self-assurance, we were still pretty colonized in a sense, meaning things were still Biblical. In my case I went completely against religion. That was the thing I went against, and everything about me was like, Fuck Jesus and Fuck the Bible, and everything, it was a different dichotomy, in a sense it was decolonization, but it wasn't targeted at anything, it was just basically aiming my target at Christian religion. Then I came up with so many different rationales, like they burnt so many witches in Europe, and killed so many people in all these places, but I had no clue what they had done to indigenous people. That's what I was missing. But I still looked for other things in Nihilism and Anarchism and Satanism, and all these different things that wasn't Christianity. But because we grew up with Christianity, I went against it within the rules.

t—My thing was trying not to do the same thing everyone else was doing. I've always wanted to do something different than everyone else. During school, colors of clothing was a big thing. Girls had their own thing that was colorful, and all the colors the guys had were black, or white if you were trying to be preppy. All the colors were really plain. The jeans, black jeans, black or

blue jeans. All predictable. I settled on gray. That became something that fit me: gray. I've always preferred something in the middle of something. Everything was always medium. Like I would have medium shirts, medium pants, and gray always seemed to be a color to stick by because it's between everything. Instead of sticking to one side, I observed all sides. When I was young I would ask my parents, "Why do we have to go to school?" "So you can learn," they would say. "Why do we have to learn?" "To get a job." "Why do you need to get a job?" "For money." And I remember being a toddler asking my parents that and when I got older I would ask my teachers and guidance counselors that and the answer was always the same and that goes with everybody. It was all the same. And I didn't want my life to go in that direction. And by the time I get to the end of high school everyone was graduating-

I—And we were taken by that whole ethos, and it kind of started to change when we ventured off of everyone else's music. And we went into kind of a metal phase. This was long before the internet, this was underground stuff. Back at home, no one knew about black metal, death metal. This was strictly our thing because only we knew about it, no one else had that. And the thing that was cool about them and all these other metal rockers and punk rockers was that they had no jobs and they said Fuck the System Fuck Society and Fuck Jobs and we were really taken by that. And we were kids and we hated that stuff. We didn't want nothing to do with it. We hated school. That was another part of our decolonization, was getting away from school.

t—Yeah, when we were in high school, we struggled with marks to pass, eventually we both gave up-

I—Not quite giving up, we resisted…

t—We revolted. I don't want to write an essay on something I wasn't really interested in. If a teacher gave me something to do, I'm not going to be interested in it because a teacher is telling me what to do.

I—Exactly. And we hated when people told us what to do. That is one of the reasons why we hated the church and everything.

t—I remember our cousin who had a girlfriend and he was about to graduate, and he told us later on that his girlfriend said, "Just think after we graduate we'll just be workin' for the rest of our lives." And he told us that and we said, "Fuck…" like, that's a scary thought! (laughing…) That was like the worst thing to do! I didn't want that, but it was like, we all have to do it. And if you don't go down that road its gonna be dark and sad, you gonna be an addict, you gonna have a bad life, you not gonna have good health, and you won't sustain yourself and you most likely will die of starvation or whatever.

I—We stayed true. We've had dreams of becoming something bigger, better, not being in the system. But eventually the system was all around us. Like we worked, that

was the worst thing I did. That was the worst thing I did, I thought "I look stupid." I felt stupid. We spent the better part of our years getting paid pretty much, doing stuff in the system. Giving the government numbers for non-indigenous people. Every job I've had its always gone against my principles, every one of them. It's pretty much just grunt work, at the bottom, giving data, numbers or whatever, if it wasn't making white people rich, it was serving white people for their recreation times. It was always like that, the only way we could get money is that way. I used to be employed for the Tahltan Fisheries. When you think about the Tahltan Fisheries you think,

The Tahltan manage their own fisheries, but in reality they're just employing Tahltan members in this field-and we were doing pretty high level stuff, and getting paid and all-collecting data like measurements, scales from fish, DNA samples, and you count them. So all those num-

bers, they're not Tahltan numbers. You give them to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. That's Canadian, that's a Canadian Department. This is the reality that we all grew up with and I didn't like doing shit for the Canadian Government, and there are a lot of principles I broke just to get paid. It went from that work to hunting guide outfitters and these rich white people would come visit our territory and they pay the guide money and they take them out on a hunt to get trophies, the biggest males of whatever, and me and my brother would do the same thing and we would pretty much make fires to guide the tourists, and it was fine. It was outside, it was physical work, it did us better in the long run because at that time we were still getting paid by the man. That's what we hated. This system meant the man. And not just any man, it was like the white man, the patriarchal male.

t—It wasn't just the man. The image of the man was a white man who was above all.

I—It wasn't like a woman. A patriarchal woman is different than a patriarchal male. And at the same time we developed a critique of the macho man, and we know them as bros now. We were homophobic in our teenage years but we grew out of that in our later years.

t—We quickly grew out of that in our early teens, because of our exposure to television which gave us insight to what was happening in the world, like Women's Liberation, and the acceptance of homosexuality and all of those things, we had access. We understood what was going on the world. In the location where we lived, television was a big deal. Iskut had many channels while other towns hardly had much television. Because we had television with many channels we had access to learn what was going on outside our world.

I—So you add pop culture, and the fact that to'oks and I are two like-minded individuals, and another factor is our ability to think, and another factor is our ability to converse with each other. So we developed a sense of difference and we went against every homophobe out there, and we went against Christianity and religion, and we even went against capitalism even though the jobs we did, every job we did was pretty much capitalism. Whenever the money came from a rich person on their vacation, it was never quite indigenous owned money, and if it was indigenous owned—they didn't own it. They were just underlings of another person that owned it. This was us in the system. We tried to make the system work in our favor and it never quite did because it was everywhere, so our path of decolonization was more internal from then on, like in our early 20s-

I—We had two choices: we can finish school, go out, continue school, or get a job… t—'Do well!'

I—be a part of the system, or we can stay back, quit school, and just live the common res life, we can go look for bootleg 50 dollar bottles everyday, go look for some job destroying our territory, go do all the drugs we want, and that would be our life. And we didn't want to take any of those routes, those were just like dead end routes to us, so we decided to-

t—But it separated us from all the other things we were tied to, once we had to go to school its kind of like you're tied to do work, and not doing what we want to do. And our friends kept going on doing their own thing, and within the community we stayed away from them. So we were isolated from our friends in our community because our interests were different. And some of them stayed, some moved elsewhere, and would come in and out.

I—Some of them are really active members of society.

Teenagers hanging with their Grandparents: Reconnecting with Language and Life

t—And what we always ended up doing is just going to our grandparents. We would always pay visits to our grandparents all the time. Because that's the only thing to do. And not only the

only thing to do but the only interesting thing to do. Because that's who we come from and we learned a lot from them. Growing up, we were around them, so they were people to hang around with and help and they taught us a lot of things. So going to our grandparents was a refuge from everyday life.

I—There was a point when to'oks started learning to speak the language and I started later, but it was really hard to get our grandparents to teach us at first because of the reservation mentality. The thing with the reservation is the colonizers separated people from the land to keep them away from the land and they contained them in the res and used that system to keep them away from the resources that were on the land that they want to exploit, and they kept the Indians, us Indians, away from the settlers that came to occupy the territory and then on top of that they created laws that prohibited us from being Indian, with the Indian Act, and then they created Residential Schools, and they took kids away from the community into residential schools, and the reason the residential schools were created was to kill the Indian in the child. That was the plan from John A. McDonald, the guy on the Canadian 5 dollar bill, he developed a lot of these systems, he was a white supremacist and his whole model was to kill all the Indians. And then these kids went to the residential schools and they had to have their hair cut, and hair is a big deal to indigenous people, they had their hairs cut to suit the colonial mold. They gotta look presentable, be good Indians, and they told the kids they can't speak their language, and it's like a no good language, a primitive language, they instilled that it was bad to speak that language and on top of that they were prevented from singing their songs. Priests and teachers and the whole government really enforced this policy. Those kids grew up thinking it was bad to be Indian and then, if they were lucky, they would get to go back home, for the summer. Their home was on the reservation, and on top of that they had laws right up until the 1940s that said the Indians couldn't leave the reservation, they had a curfew. In their own home they were told that they were not to go out. So the generational affect of Residential Schools and the Reservation System is traumatic nowadays because people think it's just only the Residential Schools and day schools and such. With day schools, our uncle would tell a story that Indian agents, priests, and RCMP officers came to our grandpa's house and said, "If you don't put those kids in school, we're gonna arrest you" Uncle John remembers all his siblings right there, and grandma was taking it in and she had to take her kids to school. This was from when our great grandfather was keeping our grandfather in the trap lines, away from the Residential Schools. And so they caught up with his kids, and they were mistreated in day school too. My dad and mom would tell us stories. So you've got the education system there that would tell the Indians that they were bad, but the reservation system itself is just as bad. It's keeping Indians from our territory to the point that when we go camping, we called it camping. Our grandparents never called it camping; it was going to Buckley Lake. It was going to, wherever. Like, certain spots of the territory. And in our language, we would never learn that, "going camping" The word for going camping could be loosely translated as, "going to live there, going to lay down there, going to sleep there" It's like I'm gonna live there, I'm gonna stay there.

t—There's a whole different concept of home, and living. Home is not just a house.

In our language, [home] involves the whole territory, that's what keeps you living.

The whole territory provides the food you eat, the water you need to drink, and if you don't take more than you need you could sustain yourself forever. Living is another thing. When you say "I live over there" in English, you're pointing to a house where you go to sleep. But in our language, we say Nasdeh, which means "I'm going to bed", or "I stay here." Because our people

were nomadic, every night was a different place we stayed. They never stayed in one place year-round. Every night is a different country, throughout the whole territory. And so your nights are spread out through the whole territory. So if you go to say 'I live over there' it translates to "I stay there" like "I'm staying the night.' It's a nomadic language, from a nomadic lifestyle. If you come into a village, and you make a tent in one spot, and then everyone else has their tents in their spots, and you meet your friend and they say Da da nande, it means like 'Where you stay,' it means you're pointing at a tent, "I stay over there, I live over there" 'Cause it's only for a short time, then you're going to have to move on. You are constantly moving on; you never stay in one place.

I—It's still that captive curfew mentality that our people go through. The colonizers put everything on that reservation, the funding, the unhealthy foods, all the water, whatever, it's all there, the housing, the medical, the education, all that, it's still that we need it. We need those jobs.

The aid, social studies, science, English, math. We need to speak English, we need everything that the colonizers say, that's what the reservation represents.

t—It gave all of us the things we needed to live, like education, go to school and get a job to earn money. Everything is there, and we lost our knowledge of how to do all of that on our own land. We lost our medicines to heal us.

I—It wasn't lost, it was taken from us.

t—It was taken, and it hasn't been practiced, so instead of learning it ourselves we go to a clinic because it's convenient.

I—And it's free, that's the whole thing. That word is a big thing in this capitalist society. Now that Indians get "free medical," "free education." The Indians get "tax-free" gasoline and tobacco. And everybody says, "Oh wow it's free!" ya know? Really, that's just a colonial tool to use to keep the Indians from being Indian. The colonizers have done their job really well, the system is perfect to trick Indians into thinking like that. This is what makes us different, we can rationalize that, to us that is not cool, it's not right, and this is what makes us want to be different. We've always had that sense of doing something else, not fitting in with the status quo of what we were supposed to be doing. When we learned our language, that was a huge thing. That opened up a lot of doors because we realized after speaking the language of our grandparents and our ancestors, we opened up a whole different doorway of lifestyle and way of living. It was a completely different thing because we grew up white, I'll say that all the time, "when I used to be white" Because that's what colonialism is, that's what the reservation is, what the education is, that was everything that we've been spoon-fed ever since we were kids. That's what that is, that's the affects of colonization. Then you've got two choices; go to school and become pretty much white. When we were younger, our elders would say, "Oh that person turned white." Meaning that they're making money, they're rich, they're doing well in society, they're the ones we would refer to now as sellouts. They come back all pompous, they come back all arrogant. Oh look, they made it! That's the thing, they feed off of other people who look at them and say, "I'm proud of you, I look at you and you make me proud." Other people, who have not done that, would look up to them as proud, hard workers. Even people who would go to work in the mines, and when they buy a new truck for themselves, everyone looks to them as higher ranking in our reservation, a hard worker. So having a brand new truck means you're a hard worker. And that just shows how far, how deeply, the colonial situation is, how perfect that they made it. Now we don't need Indian agents to come into the reservation. Our own people can colonize ourselves too. As we

grew up, hearing the same thing with our friends, "You look too Indian, you're acting too Indian." That was a common thing. So the biggest thing that we did was starting to learn our language, and our grandparents were really well versed in our language and the culture and everything. We were lucky to have them around 'cause they could explain specific words, specific concepts, and everything. So we got a greater, indepth look into how they see the world. And it opened our eyes up, spiritually, emotionally, and everything like that. It really helped us heal, really heal, in a way that was far different than any seminar you could ever do. (laughing…)

t—Not only just learning the language, but our grandparents, just from their whole lives, what they grew up with, stayed with them their whole lives. And what they wanted to tell us or teach us, they would tell us very sternly. One time, a person had passed on, and we didn't know what to think about it, so we went to visit our grandparents. Our grandpa asked us,

"You went to see the family?"

"Well, no…"

"Are you going to? Regardless of what a person has done in their life, no matter who it is, you respect them when they pass."

He told us to go over to the family. When we went there, everyone thanked us for coming. That was a great move,

I thought that things were gonna be different but it wasn't. It showed high honor on us, of our presence being there, that changed my thinking of how our people thought as well. I always thought that everyone was against each other, but when we did that, it changed their thinking of us, and our thinking of them as well.

The Erotic Life of Stones by Dominique Ganawaabi and S0ren Aubade

> "*The uncertain, unsettled condition of this science of Cetology is in the very vestibule attested by the fact, that in some quarters it still remains a moot point whether a whale be a fish. In his System of Nature, A.D. 1776, Lin- nwus declares, 'I hereby separate the whales from the fish'*"
>
> Moby Dick

What do stones want? What do we make of their insistent silence? There is a marked quality of difference in our existence and theirs but stones know something of the unfulfilling, predictable routines of daily life. For some of us finding meaning means being receptive to the language of phosphorescent trails left below the surface. If stones have desires they are likely to be as resistant to being expressed in words as ours are.

In Melville's novel the science of classifying whales is shown in an unfinished state because scientific investigations are always insufficient, cursory, and in process. Ish- mael feels that the study of cetology should be left uncomplete like the "Cathedral of Cologne." When we ask about the significance of the sea all rigid systems will eventually fail us. Even as we cast our nets the whale has already evaded capture. When the perceived world is torn from the worlds of our bodies and our intersubjectivity, we risk losing full participation in it all. But, if our purpose moves beyond detached inquiry to attunement with the sediment, we can embody the wildly civilized and primitively sophisticated. We can take human form to become flora.

During the Precambrian era, a major uplift occurred when two continents collided. The intensity of the pressure caused sedimentary rocks to turn to metamorphic rocks, magma to rise to the earth's crust and the land to fold, break and tumble until it became the Black Hills. Volcanic activity contributed to the rise of the Northern Hills but to the south, massive sheets of granite intruded the preexisting beds of sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, including 2 billion year old quartzite, phonolite, and, most notably, dark, bountiful rhyolite. The granitic pegmatites that thrust into their elders were rippled through with crystals— quartz, feldspar, and beryl.

According to Lakota storytelling when the world was created everything was at peace. Every creature was a contented vegetarian. At some point the bison began to think they were the strongest and decided to kill the people and eat their meat. The humans said "That>s not right we should hunt you instead, it's only fair." To settle the matter a great race was held. During the race, to decide who could consume whom, a track became worn down and created the boundaries of *Paha Sapa* (the Black Hills). We all know who the victors were. We won our right to eat flesh.

1.8 billion years of watery caresses reduced this jumble of angles to rocky hillsides and clastic pebbles, sand, and clay, which in turn solidified into outlying beds of sandstone, spreading itself over the Dakota formation, the primary rock formation of the area, also sandstone, but born of sand from different rocks.

> "*As one group replaced another over the last several centuries, these locations [in the Black Hills] continued to be recognized as sacred locales and to operate within a system of ethno-astronomical and mythological beliefs. The falling star myth cycle clearly illustrates a belief in a dual universe, wherein star people in the sky and humans on earth occupied analogous and sometimes interchangeable roles"*
>
> Mirror of Heaven

For the Lakota, like many traditional cultures, the line between the earth and the sky is undifferentiated or even nonexistent. Looking up at the constellations, we can still find any pattern we are open to sensing. We can see one star as dried willow or a buffalo rib. One thing can contain a duality or be tri-fold. Animism—from *Anima.* the Latin term for life—signals the existence of spirit in all objects and phenomena. By this definition the stones are still breathing. We can have fervent threesomes with the clouds and mountains. We can be penetrated by deer antlers or dissolve in newly forming rivers.

If life is defined by death, reproduction, or movement, at what point does a hill become an orgy?

Love is open to interpretation like all experiences. Trying to define it with the precise use of language can never guarantee an exact answer. As with attempts at understanding the leviathan with Cetology our conclusions will always be incomplete. The erotic life of stones remains obscure to the scientific gaze.

Much more recently after the formation of the Black Hills, just 40 million years ago, on the other side of the same land mass— a crescent of granite mountains were born. They pushed themselves up above sea level, as the land between them fell below it, creating the Columbia Basin. Many volcanoes erupted into the basin, spurting lava over and over again, flooding it with a thick layer of igneous rock— the Columbia Plateau. This flood of rock spilled the inland sea out into a river, slowly parting the mountains and dampening valleys.

Love takes the forms of agape (God), platonic (Friendship), or eros (Passion). Other times it is desire in a general sense. From *philos* we get philosophy, the love of wisdom or of knowledge as if these are necessarily equivalent. *Philia* from the greek denotes friendship. In this sense the use of words like pedophilia, or "friend of boys" could seem euphemistic. We know what one means by the cliche "I love the sunset," but what if they intended to say "I am unbearably aroused by the Sun's rays," or "the ocean gets me so wet?"

38 million years later, the Ice Age brought massive glaciers, ranging in height from 5,000–10,000 feet past the Okanogan Valley. This dam of ice trapped the river channels, causing more water to flood into the Columbia Basin. With the original channel buried in ice, the Grand Coulee began to form. How this happened and the length of time it took remains a mystery. Some geologists believe a succession of floods carved it out, while others claim the Columbia River itself slowly eroded it away from the mountains in its search for a new path. It is impossible to know for certain.

The old Cascade mountains rose up from the earth, but were unable to stop the river's search—a deep ravine, the Columbia River gorge, was formed. Whereas ice can halt the flow of water, rocks are destined to acquiesce to it.

In Colville Indian mythology, Coyote wanted to help his friend Kingfisher who wasn't having much luck catching salmon. Four sisters had set up a trap preventing any big fish from swimming up the river. He changed into a small wooden bowl and floated on the water until he got caught

in their trap. The sisters lifted the bowl from the river and used it to hold leftover fish. The next morning the bowl was found empty. At this point, one of the sisters became angry and threw a stone at the wooden vessel. On impact it turned into a baby boy. The sisters decided to keep the child because he would grow up and be helpful to them. When the sisters left to find berries the coyote changed into a man and started digging up the dam they had created to catch fish. Ever since then there have been new rocks and rapids in the Columbia River basin. Coyote had changed its course forever.

Arousal by thunderstorms is a little researched paraphilia. *Ichthyophilia* is the sexual attraction to fish. When bears masturbate they often fantasize about inflexible park rangers or lust after zookeepers in captivity, much like human prisoners imagine guards in leg irons, or how the bourgeoisie play with the idea of being possessed by sinewy lumpen beasts. Ecology is a love for living systems. But, when we speak of pleasure, suffering is never far from our lips. Love almost always conceals a will to sacrifice. Eco-extremists like *Reaccion Salvaje* communicate this when they seem to say "Fuck the World!"

Near the end of the Ice Age, volcanic cones formed the high Cascades. As the ice dams of the glaciers began to thaw and break apart, lakes as far as Montana broke free and washed over the mountains and the Columbia Basin, carrying with them large boulders and flooding the area in 400 feet of water, icebergs, and sediment. After the ice finally, fully melted and the floods ebbed, the river was able to return to its former bed, but the channeled scab lands and large coulees remain, torn through by cataclysm.

It is sometimes said that nihilists are masturbators. Instead of getting on with the hard work of existing the unbeliever revels in an empty space that absolutely nothing can fill. Nietzsche's *die liebe zum leben* (the love for life) is offered as free of contradiction, but where is the instrument of love located if not the mind, the flesh, or the will? Physicist Erwin Schrodinger defined life as that which "delays the decay into thermodynamical equilibrium (death)." One popular definition of biological life is that it's a sexually transmitted and inevitably terminal disease. Organic life is resistance to disorder (to order?) in the final instance.

The tribal trickster in native storytelling also affirms life, but almost always while upsetting the peculiarity of communal stillness. A story from Gros Ventre mythology describes how *Nixant* came upon an Elk-skull while he was going along (like he always does). He noticed some white mice dancing inside. In some versions told to anthropologists he wanted to stick his head inside so he could dance with them, in many others he inserted something else and it got stuck. He may be used to changing into water-monsters to grab young girls but sometimes he gets caught. Spider acts like he does because death is unknowable to him, this is not always the case for us but we can still learn something about avoiding the embarrassment of getting snared. The desire to have others take our inclinations as universal is a wish to make frozen the constant movement in this moment preceding the void of non-life, to try to hush a screaming world into silence. If the political pessimist finds love privately in a clenched fist, social anarchists live to jerk-off on other people in the streets. The indigenous erotisim of trickster sexuality leads us to question who and what we should be defiling. Did the Cascades and the Columbia River consent to be bound and ravaged by glaciers? Are they proud to have survived their traumatic past or the beauty born from it?

The Ho-chunk trickster speaks about his sexual organ in the third person. His parts are more like individuated personas than the components of some discrete self reflective creature. Trickster is enacting a new game for humans to play that we could tentatively call hierarchy. In the space of

these stories the tribe is becoming a body-like form that circles towards a hardening unity. The tricky-one *Wakjunkagas* sense-of-self is constantly fractured and his body is in metaphysical conflicts with itself. Always driven to feed his insatiable lust he wears a stone around his neck in order to get hard. When his penis is eventually severed the plants arrowleaf, *tokewe- hira, pqxe,* pond lily, and dog's tooth grow from his phallic root. Egoists sometimes gesture towards a self devouring urge to an expanding union that the Ho-Chunk "being of reversals" might recognize. To be clear we can become clowns in this world but never incarnate the trickster's irreverent flesh.

Individualidades tendiendo a lo Salvaje recently left an envelope containing an explosive device that was found by a young girl in Mexico City. Their communique expressed a desire for ever growing attacks on the social fabric in all directions. "May explosive love letters proliferate!" The love of the unhuman is a welcomed novelty in anarchist spaces but if we really want to be done with humanism, why not consider setting the ancestral forests aflame and blowing up the sacred mountains as well?

Although we inhabit the same streams and valleys, the different origin stories we draw from have a defining influence on how we perceive our world and what we are drawn towards. As coyote we are always starting anew. When we see the trickster he is always in midstep. The clown is a constant state of predicament. Omaha rabbit anally impregnated Iktinike when they became *winktes* (two-spirits) for a day. Stones transform one another. Cliffs turn to sediment. As we create our star maps we play them out and become part of them. We are always redrawing them, because the constellations are constantly shifting. What tales have we heard and which will we retell?

When we discover an unknown star we might find a path to the former world.

In Moby Dick, the savage Queequeg is from a place that is not on any map, because "true places never are." Melville's native wants to experience more from civilized society than the taxonomy of captive whales. The boundaries and borders of the New World and the Old World are drawn only by our navigational markings. They do not exist on any chart. Humans are animals. Cetacea can still be fish. Stones can fuck. When we cross oceans we can be sailors, boats, whales, or currents. In our search will we become salmon who shatter themselves on concrete dams, or warriors who throw ourselves from the Nochixtlan Rock to crash onto the conquistadors below, or something else entirely?

Suggested reading:

Cataclysms on the Columbia. John Eliot Allen and Marjorie Burns with Sam C. Sargent

Living Sideways: Tricksters in American Indian Oral Traditions. Franchot Ballinger

Mirror of Heaven: Cross-Cultural Transference of the Sacred Geography of the Black Hills. Linea Sundstrom

Transmotion. Gerald Vizenor

The Way of the Violent Stars *by Ramon Elani*

> "*I hate the word peace, as I hate hell."*
>
> -William Shakespeare

> "*I shall try to make plain the bloodiness of killing. Too often this has been slurred over by those who defend hawks. Flesh- eating man is in no way superior. It is so easy to love the dead. The word 'predator' is baggy with misuse. All birds eat living flesh at some time in their lives. Consider the cold-eyed thrush, that springy carnivore of lawns, worm stabber, basher to death of snails. We should not sentimentalise his song, and forget the killing that sustains it."*
>
> ~J.A. Baker

As green anarchists and anarcho-prim- itivists, we have utterly idealized indigenous or so-called primitive people. In doing so we have failed to understand precisely the reason we should follow their path. Most discourse around primitive life is drawn from western anthropology, though from the conclusions most anarcho-primitivists and green anarchists have drawn, it is clear that very few of them have actually bothered to read the texts they are referring to. Even given the Eurocentric bias of most anthropologists, those texts paint a much richer, more complex, and more conflicted view of primitive life than one finds in the vast majority of anti-civilization writing and discussion.

The most egregious assumption is that primitive life is supposed to be happy and easy. This is, of course, drawn from notions of primitive abundance and leisure. The fact, however, that individuals in primitive communities only worked for a very small amount of time per day does not mean that there were not other difficulties and hardships to be faced. Anarcho-primitivist and green anarchist writers suggest that modern humanity's neurosis and pathology is entirely a product of the alienating forces of techno-industrial society. Indigenous communities now and in the past had their own ways of understanding and addressing anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Of course, it is likely that they experienced these conditions differently than we do or to a lesser degree but clearly they still exist regardless. To avoid essentializing primitive or indigenous lifeways, we must understand that they experienced as broad a range of emotional states as we do. In other words, the old assessment that ancient hunter gatherers were happier than we are is irrelevant and likely untrue. It is important here to acknowledge the distinction between the terms anarcho-primitivism and green anarchy. While green anarchy presents a wide range of conceptual apparatus for confronting techno-industrial society, Anarcho-primitivism dogmatically insists on a prescriptive vision of non-civilized life. For anarcho-primi- tivists, the only communities that count are ones in which no power structures or symbolic culture exist at all. In this vision, since there is no oppression of any kind or rupture with the non-human world, there are no social or existential problems. It is, of course, unlikely that such a community has ever existed.

Primitive life certainly involved hardship and suffering. Contrary to much received wisdom, violence was universal among primitive communities and remains so in those that persist to this day. Primitive life was also not a leftist utopia of perfect egalitarianism. Of course, the fact that pain, suffering, trauma, and tragedy was always present does not mean that joy, happiness, and pleasure were not also always present. Perhaps it is so, as I believe, that the very presence of ubiquitous violence and struggle intensified the feelings of happiness, contentment, and satisfaction that ancient people experienced. But in the end, this is neither here nor there. The point is that primitive life is superior to our own because its impact on the biosphere was minimal and people lived in close contact with the non-human world; that is the only reason and that is sufficient.

People who do not know what it means to fight cannot understand violence. They fear it because they have never experienced it. Aside from posturing and play acting, most anarchists and activists have never experienced violence. This is not to say, of course, that many of them have not been brutalized by the police, etc. Fighting with an enemy is not the same thing as being ruthlessly beaten by an anonymous employee whom you cannot strike back against, or harassing racists and idiots in the streets.

The violence of the mob, of the masses, is a different beast entirely. It is more akin to being crushed by a blind stampede of herd animals than anything else. Traditional people understood the need for ritual combat, for battle enacted under the strictest and most sacred terms: tt make a square within staves of hazel, to tie your strap to a spear plunged into the dirt.

Among the ancient people of Scandinavia the power of the state was weak and in the absence of a police or military to enforce the law, individuals resorted to ritual combat to resolve conflicts without disrupting the community as a whole. This practice, known as holmgang, involved the voluntary participation of both combatants and stipulated that the source of the conflict must end with the conclusion of the duel. In other words, the rules of holmgang were designed to ensure that other family members did not get caught up in the feud.

Moreover, holmgang did not require one of the two combatants to die. In many cases the drawing of first blood was considered sufficient to determine a victor. Unsurprisingly, the practice of holmgang was outlawed in the early 11th century as Christian law stamped out pagan ways of life and hegemonic power grew in the region.

Even in such classic works of anthropology as Stanley Diamond's In Search of the Primitive, we find a picture of traditional life that fully embraces violence. Diamond writes, "the point is that the wars and rituals of primitive society (and the former usually had the style of the latter), are quantitatively and qualitatively distinct from the mechanized wars of civilization." This is to say, the type of violence, the experience of the violence, makes an enormous difference. As critics of civilization and techno-industrial society we have inadequately accounted for this. Violence and war are not to be feared or condemned. It is the nature of the violence that must be interrogated and reconsidered.

The custom of counting coup, practiced by the tribes of the American Plains, is an important historical example to cite here. To count coup means to demonstrate one's bravery and courage by achieving a number of increasingly difficult feats on the battlefield. As George Bird Grinnell observed among the Cheyenne and Crow, "the bravest act that could be performed was to count coup on—to touch or strike—a living unhurt man and to leave him alive" Joe Medicine Crow, the last war chief of the Crow Nation, achieved this feat a number of times as a soldier during World War II. Among his many achievements include disarming and fighting an enemy officer in hand-to-hand combat, as well as stealing 50 horses from a German battalion and riding off while

singing Crow war songs. According to his obituary, Medicine Crow felt war to be "the finest sport in the world."

As ancient people understood well through their war cults and warrior societies, there is tremendous wisdom and meaning to be gained through violence. In the first case you learn that pain is just another sensation in the body, it does not need to be feared. In the second case, to stand proudly against another, an equal, is to test yourself in a way that we have little ability to replicate. It is a form of physical relationship with another that is unique. You learn that you are strong, that you are skilled. You also learn that there is strength in the other. That sometimes your strength and your skill are insufficient and you strive to make yourself stronger. You learn about the world, about the nature of life, grounded in the body. Modern humanity is utterly separated from this. To return to Diamond: "war is a kind of play. No matter what the occasion for hostility, it is particularized, personalized, ritualized. Conversely, civilization represses hostility in the particular, fails to use or structure it, even denies it."

The violence that we experience, as modern, civilized humans, that we perceive around us in countless ways, brings nothing but trauma. It is utterly, radically distinct from the violence of the primitive societies. It is depersonalized, sterile, and more destructive on a previously unimaginable scale of magnitude. In techno-industrial society we experience the violence of the police, the violence of men against women, the desperate random violence of humans driven to madness and hopelessness, violence against minorities, violence against the poor, and most importantly, no matter where we are, all around us, every single hour of every day we experience unspeakable degrees of violence against the earth.

Moreover, the soldier is not the warrior. The warrior longs for meaning, for connection with the cosmos and himself. The soldier is an automated, anonymous employee. It searches for nothing. It kills because it has been programmed to kill. It has no joy, no sorrow, no thought of what it does. When such emotions do occur they are shoved deep into hidden places in the soul and when they break out they cause insanity and horror. The violence of the soldier is the violence of the machine. It is a bloodless kind of violence, a violence that erodes the soul, no matter what it does to the body. Those pitiful beings that serve as the instruments of the brutality of the machine understand nothing, they are numb and insensate. They are appendages of the thing that annihilates. They have never felt the challenge of facing a foe who is trained and prepared for them, to be joined in valor. They execute. They bomb. They murder. Existentially, they count for nothing. Their lives are nothing.

Peace is understood as little as battle. Peace is not synonymous with joy, nor with righteousness, nor with abundance. Peace has only ever been achieved through history's greatest atrocities. Peace has only ever meant power to the victor and misery and degradation to the vanquished. We, in the heart of technoindustrial society, are experiencing what peace means. A life devoid of joy. A sterile life. A non-life. And worse still, it is a life maintained perpetually by the slaughter of those on the fringes of our world. As the world-machine continues to expand outward, more and more will be pacified and brought within our life of shopping malls, endless highways, obesity, sickness, despair. And peace will reign. Peace, peace, peace.

What do we long for? A life of joy and passion. A life that is alive, throbbing with blood. A world that pulses with vitality. Do we want the icy porcelain bodies of mechanized gods? Or do we want living animal bodies that break and heal and decay and die? The latter is the body that is shaped by violence, by suffering, by hardship. Just as it is shaped by joy, pleasure, and robust health. Ancient people did not live a life without pain. They suffered acutely and they

experienced joy acutely. We experience neither truly. What would you choose? Who would not trade this world of atomic bombs, environmental annihilation, and mechanized dehumanization for a world of primal war?

But let us be clear: the world we have is the world that exists. And wishing will not make it otherwise. Moreover, the skill, courage, and strength of the warrior will never defeat the impersonal mechanized destroyer.

In our greatest manifestations and noblest moments, we are beasts. The myth of human exceptionalism has poisoned us to the core. There is nothing wrong with being animals, in fact it is a far greater thing than the fantasies that humans tell themselves about their supposed superiority. Anything good that has come from human action or thought has come from our animals nature. The evil and vileness we do, contrary to received wisdom, comes the part of us that no other animal shares. To understand this means to understand that the world of beasts involves its own kind of brutality. When lions slaughter hyena babies, it is not because they are hungry. We dislike this because of our human moralizing. We easily perceive that "nature, red in tooth and claw" is not the whole story. But it is an inescapable part of the story.

The only way for humanity to make itself immune to violence is to allow the creation of a vast authoritarian system that protects individuals from personal violence through the endless impersonal violence of the state. If you can't protect yourself, you will rely on someone else to protect you, whether you realize it or not, regardless of the cost. Humanity is capable of radically limiting pain and suffering. We can live longer and longer. We can cure diseases. We can create enlightened societies with relatively low rates of violence. All of these things come at the cost of the earth, the things of the earth, and our connection to the earth.

Posing a vision of humanity without hardship or suffering denies the reality of the wild world and it distracts us from what is truly important: not the avoidance of pain but our unity with the myriad things and spirits of the world. The strength and the future of the human race lies only in its ability to show proper reverence to the gods of the earth.

The Catalog of Horror by Abe Cabrera

"*Climate change specialist predicts human extinction in 10 years"*

"*Humanity driving 'unprecedented' marine extinction"*

"*Arctic ice melt could trigger uncontrollable climate change at global level"*

Etc.

People are numb. They get so much bad news, economically, socially, politically, and environmentally, it just rolls off of them now. Human beings used to be equipped to handle lots of personal crises: injuries, animal maulings, lack of food, tribal/band warfare… The most severe crisis that modern humans (now over seven billion of us) no longer face is the painfully high infant/child mortality rate. In some cultures, children weren't even named until they were of an age when their chances of survival were favorable. Our hardware is equipped for that sort of tragedy: it hurts but we can pull through it. But the death of a planet, of entire species, regions of the Earth, and potentially billions of people? That's preternatural, that's the Kantian sublime. That's above our pay grade, for the wages of humanity is ultimately personal death.

To Jesus, that problematic primitiv- ist of first century Palestine, is attributed the saying, "no prophet is accepted in his own country." The prophets of old, like the contemporary prophets, often had only bad news. And not just bad news: bad news that came down to an ultimatum: change or else. The prophets of the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Hosea, etc.) warned God's people that they had to turn away from injustice and embrace the Lord's ways. or the Lord would stop fighting their battles for them and they would end up captives in a faraway land. Their cities would be leveled, and their wives would be made widows and their children orphans, and so on and so forth. Just like today, people didn't like the prophets: some were stoned to death, others were sawed in half, others faced great hardship on the run in desert places.

That great envoy of God in the Christian Bible, Jesus, also taught people to turn from their ways, and gave the same ultimatum. In this case, Jesus warned of the Romans coming and destroying God's temple, sacking Jerusalem, and casting God's people once again to the winds. The first followers of Jesus after his crucifixion thought that his second coming was just around the corner. This even had ecological implications, as Paul proclaimed in his Epistle to the Romans:

> "*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travai- leth in pain together until now.*"

The famous last book of the Bible, The Apocalypse, shows the meek man of Nazareth returning to judge the wicked world by fire.

But the eschatological message of Jesus was quickly co-opted to make it friendly to imperial aims. Within a few centuries, it was re-tooled and weapon- ized to create the official ideology of the wealthy and powerful, with illustrious churches and "Jesus Christ Conquers" engraved on battle shields. The coming of the end times that Jesus proclaimed only served as a battering ram to conquer the rest of the world. If this could be done with the book and the Cross, so much the better. If that didn't work, there was always the sword and the torch. The same attitude (minus the cross) was taken up by some upstarts from the Arabian peninsula in the seventh century who also weaponized God's word of judgment and mercy (for those who repent) and who made conquest a sacred duty.

Fast forward through the centuries, and we will see a whole litany of names of those who railed against the worldliness of what Christianity had become: the Gnostics, the Manicheans, the Bogomils, the Albigensians, the Spiritual Franciscans, the Jansenists, the Diggers, the Puritans, the Shakers, etc. etc. In the spirit of the original prophets, these groups believed that the world was evil and doomed, and they shouted their message from the rooftops. And like the prophets, they were persecuted, because people still didn't like hearing bad news.

This cosmic indignation passed from belief into unbelief, first notably with Thomas Malthus and his theory of population, and then, in the popular imagination, to Karl Marx and his theory of revolution. A disputed doctrine within Marxism is the immiseration of the proletariat, that is, as the productive forces under capitalism develop, the conditions of the working class must grow worse. Along with this is the theory of economic crisis, which leads inevitably to social conflict and war. Some of the most brilliant minds of their time were in and around the largest Marxist party in the world at the turn of the 20th century, the German Social Democratic Party. One of its most famed prophets, Rosa Luxemburg, issued a modern variation of the ultimatum of old: "Socialism or barbarism!" Yet this party, like the nascent Christian church before it, renounced and retooled the message of crisis and killed its own prophets (including Luxemburg). In the meantime, further east, Russia would take up the banner of Marxism, fight a bloody civil war to defend it, and use an ideology based on societal collapse to create its own bloody fundamentalist regime. All of this with the benefit of modern machinery (to paraphrase Lenin, savagery plus electricity).

And we could go on: fascism in Italy, National Socialism in Germany, anarchism in Spain, all the way up to the environmental movement and the modern day Cassandras of the scientific community. The point of bringing all of this up is what I stated at the beginning of this essay: human beings are ill-equipped to deal with social and environmental crises. That is why collapse happens. And citing all of the historical examples shows that the problem, along with the understanding of the problem, is not new. Humans seem to need some sort of mediating narrative or myth through which to view this problem: God, sin, judgment, science, human nature. just to name a few. These narratives allow them to grasp the problem, but through a glass, darkly. They smash problems down to a human size so that they can digest them, and even "do something" about them, but in the process they also distort them. At best, they are well-drawn maps for an unruly and unexplored territory.

The fundamental misunderstanding here is epistemological. Here I must spell it out clearly lest people not get the point:

Understanding gives the illusion of control.

The fundamental doctrine of the modern mind is that if one has all of the information there is to know about something, one can have complete control over it. And, conversely, if one acts with

understanding, the right outcome always occurs. All knowledge that doesn't give control, that doesn't show how to utilize one's means to obtain the best outcome, is not knowledge worthy of the name.

The categorical imperative is simple in this case: give people the information, all the information, and they will act on it. This is what birthed the Green Movement, anarchist or not. Show the people how much the environment is hurting, how much civilization hurts people, how awful civilized life is, and they will wake up and oppose it. Ideologues cite trends such as increased recycling, emissions regulations, electric cars, and the like, as examples that this approach works. Just a few more campaigns to enlighten and inform, and maybe, just maybe, we'll save the Earth and destroy civilization. Just one more issue of the Catalog of Horrors will finally get people to rise up, never mind that this tactic seems to date from the dawn of civilization itself.

I don't completely blame the average person for going about their day while the world falls deeper and deeper into environmental crisis. But I don't let them off the hook either. The leftist wants to have things both ways: he or she wants to place all power in "the People," yet blame all ills on a tiny minority that the People could easily defeat. Which one is it then? Could it be that people aren't the knowledge machines that modern activism expects them to be, that they just want to get through the day and not be bothered with questions above their paygrade? Could it be that not everyone can be bitten with the bug of concern for the Future, that such a preoccupation is by no means universal? Could it be that even those who are driven to make a better Future for their children have only a dim and partial conception of what that could possibly look like?

I do not fault those with the prophetic impulse, that animal hide-wearing feral thirst for justice that roams around the edges of society. I share this impulse, but I have long ceased to want to preach to people to repent and turn from their evil ways. Even if the prophet's voice crying out in the wilderness is only crying to itself, let the voice cry anyway. Let the prophets rise up, even if only for vengeance, as it is written:

> "*Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.*"

Revolutionary Dissonance: Why Eco-Extremism Matters for Those Who Most Hate It by Bellamy Fitzpatrick

> "*[...] we no longer take the position of being 'defenders' of wild nature, nor that of 'anticivilization,' 'primitivists,' nor any of the other terms that you have heard applied to us. We have positioned ourselves as the enemy of the human being [...]*"
>
> ~29th Communique of Individualists Tending Toward the Wild

> "*Like any other deluded, sociopathic tyrant, these individuals have declared themselves above reproach, critique, reason, or accountability. They have appointed themselves judge, jury, and executioner [...] As absolutist authoritarians, [...] they think and act like the State.*"
>
> ~Scott Campbell, "There's Nothing Anarchist About Eco-Fascism"

One's take on Eco-Extremism—the militant anti-social and anti-technological tendency embodied by such groups as ITS (usually rendered in English as "Individualists Tending toward the Wild") and the now-dissolved RS ("Wild Reaction")— has become something of a litmus test in the North American radical milieu. It is a sad symptom of adherence to the present technological infrastructure that far too much theoretical positioning—and posturing—takes the form of ingesting a few media bits on people we have never met who are doing things in places we have never been and subsequently solemnly assigning them our self-important thumbs-up or -down for all to see.

Our discourse and thinking can be much more subtle than this dualistic trumpeting: why not ask, *What can we learn from this? How does its presence reflect on us?,* regardless of whether one has affinity or projectual resonance with it?

"Choosing Sides": To Condemn the Wrongdoer and the Non-Condemner Alike

The Eco-Extremists' (EEs') approach of "indiscriminate attack"—that is, the commitment of violent actions that seriously risk harming not only their intended target(s) but also any passersby—has made the EEs infamous and brought them widespread condemnation. Undoubtedly amplifying their odiousness for their critics is the the frequently braggadocio-filled and mocking rhetoric of their communiques, which have more than once highlighted their contempt for humans at large, who are in their eyes all to some degree complicit with the destruction of what they term

"Wild Na- ture".[1] Increasingly since their inception, the EEs have moved away from their beginnings as a sort of fringe splinter of anti-civilization anarchism still interested in a project of liberation, and toward a theological/spiritual war on humanity that they identify as an extension of historical indigenous Mesoamerican struggle against colonization. Beginning in 2012 and especially in the past few years, they have espoused a jeering hostility to anarchists and nearly any anarchist ideas, including notions of liberation and others they themselves formerly held.[2]

At the time of writing this piece, the most recent actions of some EEs have reached their misanthropic zenith: the killing of a hiking couple, simply because their presence in "semi-virgin nature" was an offense, and the killing of an intoxicated woman on the street because she was, in their words, "Only another mass of flesh more, only another accursed human who deserved to die." ITS, the sect of EE claiming responsibility for the killings, has indicated in word and deed a decisive turn toward being the self-styled enemies of all human beings, whom they see as irredeemable and compare to a virus infecting the Earth, worthless to anything but itself and fit only for destruction.[3]

Correspondingly, the condemnations of EE by prominent voices in the North American anarchist milieux have upticked, wandering into confusion and incoherence in some cases highlighted here.

That self-described "digital community center" of "revolutionary thought and action"[4] known as *It's Going Down* recently ran an article labeling EE as "Eco-Fascism" in the title and, later, as un- adjectivalized fascism in the last sentence of the article. Besides these two mentions, nowhere else in the article is there any discussion of *fascism*, any definition of it, or any explanation whatsoever of how it relates to EE.[5] If the reader is troubled by what seems to be snarl words in the place of analysis on IGD's part, they are assured that it is best not to think about it too hard, as at the piece's climax it is piously declared, "It is the peak of colonial, racist arrogance that those from the safety of their U.S. or European homes feel comfortable debating the finer points of an ideology that amounts to brown people killing other brown people."—a bizarre prescription that would morally preclude one from analyzing, among other things, a huge swathe of the world's nation-states and their discontents. Through ignorance and humility comes virtue, apparently—and revolution works its way in there somehow, I imagine, if we just refuse thought sufficiently. Correspondingly, they condemn Little Black Cart, among others, for the publication of *Atassa,* a journal discussing EE. One is left to assume that IGD themselves are exempted from their anathema of "colonial, racist arrogance" when they repeatedly and excitedly discuss the happenings in Rojava because their coverage does not quite amount to "debating the finer points" of the matter.

In a similar vein, *Anarchy Radio* has featured EE as a target of John Zerzan's habit of near-weekly denunciations of enemies, and he fulminated in a recent episode that involvement in the publication of *Atassa* was "a new low" for this author and his podcasting cohort.[6] And even before

[1] One among many examples of this tone and content is in the piece "Our response is like an earthquake: It comes sooner or later", available at anarchistnews.org.

[2] "'Old ITS' and 'New ITS'", *Maldicion Eco-Ex- tremista* (weblog at maldicionecoextremista. altervista.org), May 8th.

[3] "29th Communique of Individualists Tending Toward the Wild", *Maldicion Eco-Extremista,* May 7th.

[4] "About", *It's Going Down,* <https://itsgoing- down.org/about/>

[5] Through such epithetic usage, "fascism" has of course been almost entirely bleached of meaning; yet one would think its meaning is not yet *so* exhausted that it would still, at minimum, require statism, which ITS, whatever their other faults, are obviously not embodying in either thought or action.

[6] Zerzan, John. *Anarchy Radio,* 02/14/17.

the recent killings, the selfdescribed editor-in-chief of *Black And Green Review* publicly wished death on the EEs.[7] Both have followed suit in inexplicably employing the "fascist" epithet, with similar incoherence. In accordance with the slogan of *It's Going Down,* the atmosphere is clearly one of "Choosing Sides", wherein anything short of overt moral condemnation is seen as insidious complicity. *Jaccuse...!*

Neither Apoplexy Nor Cheerleading: Another Take on Eco-Extremism

What is erased completely as a possibility by this frenetic binary approach is to simply try to understand the tendency, contextualize what is occurring, and reflect on how EE is the offspring of extant radical tendencies—including, perhaps uncomfortably, one's own.

In seemingly the most unpopular position of all, I have no moral opposition to political violence; instead, I am deeply dubious about its viability given the historical record. Revolutions have always been mere reconstitutions of civilizations, and they have failed to deliver in even the most promising moments: in Haiti (then the colony of Saint-Domingue) 1791, when huge numbers of African chattel slaves rose up as part of a patchwork revolutionary army that, incredibly, fought off the armies of England, France, and Spain, a victorious new Haitian regime immediately became a new elite with a new State and a new slavery[8]; in 19th-century England, when the land and the very fabric of experience were being mutilated for the first time by industrialization, no widespread uprising manifested, despite rumblings of one.[9] Similarly, assassinations can fell particular foes at particular moments; but they fail to damage, and may in some cases even strengthen, the reified social roles occupied by their targets, many of whom are easily replaced. Political violence tends toward the continuation of politics-as-usual by other means.

The EEs, in spite of their extreme actions, appear to essentially agree with my above analysis: they have dismissed revolution in the strongest terms, and, despite their efforts at the assassinations of specialists, they have repeatedly insisted on their disbelief in the effectiveness of their own actions in creating significant change in the world. Their actions thus constitute an odd, self-conscious performative contradiction: *it is useless to attack, yet we see no option but to attack—we see no option but the embrace of violent futility.*

Granted, an urge to destroy is eminently understandable when one looks unflinchingly at our shared world. For many, much of the time, life seems a wasteland. Beautiful, inimitable lifeforms are disappearing at a rate one thousand times faster than average, each one gone forever.[10] From an ecological, anti-humanist perspective, the truest *progress* of civilizations has been their increased pace of denuding the biosphere and their reduction of the human being from a creature that interfaces with the nonhuman world as kin to one increasingly dependent on and familiar only with tech nological prostheses. And, most painfully ironic of all, and which the EEs have

[7] "IGDCAST: Civilization, Climate Change, Resistance, Hope", *It's Going* Down,01/16/17.

[8] Davis, David Brion. *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation.* Vintage Books, Random House LLC. New York, New York: 2015.

[9] Sale, Kirkpatrick. *Rebels Against the Future: The* Luddites and *Their War on the Industrial Revolution: Lessons for the Computer Age.* Ad- dison-Wesley Publishing. Reading, MA: 1995.

[10] Jurriaan M. De Vos, Lucas N. Joppa, John L. Gittleman, Patrick R. Stephens, Stuart L. Pimm. "Estimating the Normal Background Rate of Species Extinction." 26 August 2014. *Conservation Biology,* Volume 29, Issue 2, April Pages 452–462.

never tired of pointing out, this crisis is a product of *mass submission*. In a communique, the EEs quote approvingly the words of anarchist prisoner Kevin Garrido:

> "[…in] *humanity I find the most civilized target (myself included). These are the ones clinging to progress and who devote themselves to destroying the untamed, all for the filthy and dis- gustingplastic called money."*[11]

When I first read the above passage, I was immediately reminded of similar sentiments from early 20th-century individualist anarchists like Renzo Novatore and Bruno Filippi, who made obvious their contempt for what they saw as a voluntarily submissive proletariat. For both the individualists and the EEs, there is the fiercest possible refusal to victimize people and to instead insist on seeing them as complicit in our crisis, whether as Ar- endt's Eichmanns, bureaucrats and technicians who are routinely rewarded for their small roles in unleashing the next horror on the world, or simply as slaves too tired, fragmented, and unimaginative to do anything but keep their heads down and shuffle along. The major difference between the two is that for Novatore, Filippi, and others, contempt for the majority of humans and fantastically violent actions were adjuncts or ingredients to a project of individual and small-group liberation, not an end in themselves. Moreover, the individualists had a fierce respect and love for those who refused submission and chose freedom. But for the EEs, such hatred of most human behavior, and its explosive venting, becomes praxis unto itself, seemingly because they see no other options and refuse the possibility or desirability of liberation.

Indeed, the thoroughgoing anticivilization analysis[12] can very easily become paralytic. What does one *do* about the enormous and fundamental causes of our crisis—mass dispossession, agriculture as subsistence, and reification—and what does one furthermore do about the glaring fact that the vast majority of civilization's slaves are and always have been leagues away from sharing one's anticivilization perspective? In holding an anti-civilization critique, there can be an overwhelming feeling of facing an invincible, immortal, and abstract enemy; and thus it is that so many answer *What is to be done?* by lapsing into a passive stance of hoping for deliverance by catastrophe, or even into abject defeatism. Living day after day in a bleak slavery while being acutely aware of it entails an unbearable tension, and it is eminently understandable, however mistaken, that one might break that tension by declaring war on the world at large.

Ajajema's Holy Warriors: Eco-Extremism as Revolutionary Theology

In doing so now at the highest level—by murdering seemingly any human and declaring them culpable and deserving of such a death—the EEs have effectively completed their aforementioned six-year passage from a praxis of liberation to one thoroughly partaking of *theology*, as has even been observed in a very different valence by one of the editors of *Atassa*.[13] Their theology manifests in at least two themes that have been repeated across a diversity of EE communiques: that

[11] "I hope that an infinite number of bombs explode against the citizenry", *Atassa: Readings in Eco-Extremism* (from the weblog atassa. wordpress.com). 12/03/16.

[12] Although at least some EEs have recently distanced themselves from the label "anti-civilization" in favor of out-and-out misanthropy, the tendency evidently influenced them and brought them in part to where they are now.

[13] "Of angels and cyborgs", *Wandering Cannibals: An Eco-Extremist View from the U.S. Southeast* (from the weblog wanderingcan- nibals.wordpress.com). 04/14/2017.

they do not aim to convince or justify themselves to anyone, and that they have no hope of significantly changing the world through their actions.

While the large volume of lengthy communiques makes the EEs' claim of being *entirely* uninterested in justifying themselves or convincing anyone rather difficult to swallow (as I will expand upon in a moment), the EEs can surely not be accused of attempting to politicize the everyperson with passages like this one: *"Let it be known, we have invoked the accursed spirit of the Kawesqar, Aja- jema [...] It awoke furious and full of hate for what the modern human has done to the Earth [...] It has whispered in our ear that humans deserve death for offending the wild with every breath. We respond that we feel the same way. [...] The hyper-civilized human race is beyond help, it cannot be saved. Joy bursts our hearts each time wild nature manifests itself against civilization with ferocious natural disasters [...] And if tomorrow we are the ones who are destroyed because of the wild, know that we will succumb with great satisfaction."*[14]

Despite their many references to egoist and nihilist strands of anarchism, including quite recent ones concurrent with the above, this is plainly a holy war, *not* a deconstruction of civilization through individual liberation. I see no room for a praxis of individual or small, intimate group liberation in conjunction with such an ascetic, semi-suicidal religious imperative, something that the EEs in other places acknowledge. Instead, there is a divinized moral demand for a self-sacrificial struggle. At best, the individual might receive the satisfaction of personal vengeance against civilization, itself an abstract moral indictment of the world at large.

Moreover, it is only through misanthropic distortion—misanthropy itself being a convoluted form of anthropocen- trism, in which reified Humanity trades the role of the lone hero for that of the singular villain—that one can imagine a deity of Nature angrily calling for the deaths of all humans. Humans are part of the world, part of the *bios*, one group of organisms among many whose uniqueness possibly lies more in its unusual anxiety with itself than in anything else. Insofar as one accepts the paleontological consensus, humans are not the first organisms to help bring about a mass extinction; we may reasonably speculate that they will not be the last, either. The first and fourth mass extinctions were caused in part, respectively, by cyanobacteria, the first photosynthetic organisms, and methane- producing bacteria. In tragicomic irony, the third mass extinction is believed to have been caused in large part by climate change and eutrophication caused by the first trees, those indispensable creatures of ecological iconography.

If Nature were a coherent, conscious entity, it would not be a Gaia, a loving mother who creates all of her children in a careful balance and loves all of them; nor would it be an Ajajema, a punishing father who hates particular children for upsetting that order. Instead, it would be Medea, who creates children and later decides to kill them on a whim[15]; better yet, it would be a Blind Idiot God, who is enormously powerful yet not even aware of itself or what it is doing.[16]

Wreaking havoc on the biosphere is something that oddball organisms do periodically. Observing this fact is not to excuse it or say that it is not something worth resisting—indeed, I absolutely believe it *is* worth resisting—but it is an act of profound sanity and necessary critique to recognize that humans are incontro- vertibly a part of the biosphere no matter what we do and to thus escape from these ideological moral absolutes upon which every crackpot revolution-

[14] "30th Communique of Individualists Tending Toward the Wild", *Maldicion Eco-Extremista* (from the weblog http://maldicionecoex- tremista.altervista.org). 05/18/2017.

[15] See the Medea Hypothesis of paleontologist Peter Ward.

[16] Yudkowsky, Eliezer. "An Alien God", *Less Wrong* (from the weblog lesswrong.com). 02/11/07.

ary scheme depends. As I have written at much greater length and depth elsewhere[17], the belief in Absolutes is the necessary basis of slave ideologies and has no place in any thoroughgoing project of liberation.

As for their claims of no hope, it seems plainly to follow from an absurd mission of killing all humans that one is bound to fail (after all, like every pest, there are too damn many and the fuckers breed far too quickly!). Moreover, the deliberate killing of seemingly almost completely random persons, whom the EEs imply they know next to nothing about, and who in all likelihood have *less* complicity than many in our crisis, is an action so obviously far removed from even their erstwhile goals that one is left to wonder whether the EEs were more interested in some spiritual act of self- Othering via purposeless murder than anything else.

What, therefore, do the EEs, with their self-serious divine mission, really *want* with their aforementioned performative contradiction of insisting both upon the necessity of action and the uselessness of action? They seem to achieve nothing quite so much as a more selftransparent, and a more depressed and self-loathing, form of revolutionary militancy: they live ascetically and dangerously, they perform direct actions and then publicize inflammatory communiques, they assert the necessity of action and denounce dissenters and critics as cowards and weaklings, they identify themselves as the inevitable historical product of a corrupt humanity, they declare the current human as insufficient and flawed and pursue a transformative praxis of moral purification through violence—the primary differences between them and their critics cited above are their anti-humanist individualism, their currency of enraged misanthropic despair in place of defiant utopian hope, and their self-transparency about their own theological analysis. Shorn of a revolution, they nonetheless display its trappings.

Revolutionary Dissonance: The Failure of Eco-Extremism's Most Eager Critics

If, as claimed above, it is a remarkable testament to the seduction of morally dualistic analyses that the mere publication or discussion of EE texts is taken as a championing of their position and actions, it is an even more noteworthy instance of ideological blinkering that the revolutionary—and crypto-revolu- tionary[18]—critics of EE cannot recognize their morbid reflection in their foes and cannot learn from them. For one—as has been pointed out in considerable detail in the much-maligned *Atassa*[19]—to be any kind of revolutionary is to be for indiscriminate violence, however convolutedly.

Only the most guileless North American insurrectionary anarchist—who selfconsciously strives to increase social tensions, who champions and joins in riots and ruptures, and who dreams of creating ungovernable zones that become com- munes—can believe that achieving their stated goals to any substantive and lasting degree would not necessarily entail enormous, protracted violence against not only State, paramilitary, and volunteer militia forces, but also huge swathes of the citizenry who would be, at best, ambivalent and, more likely, terrified

[17] See *Corrosive Consciousness: A Critique of Anarcho-Primitivism* from Enemy Combatant Publications.

[18] For more on how Anarcho-Primitivism is a closeted extreme-Left (rather than anti-Left, as its adherents claim) revolutionary ideology, as well as how all revolutionary ideologies have their origins in theology, again see my *Corrosive Consciousness: A Critique of Anarcho-Primitivism* from Enemy Combatant Publications.

[19] "Indiscriminate Anarchists", *Atassa: Readings in Eco-Extremism.* LBC Books. Berkeley, CA: 2016.

and opposed to such a (crypto-)revolution. In such a scenario of their dreams, precisely the same everypersons whom the EEs openly malign and now openly kill would become counter-revolutionaries that the revolutionary, insurrectionary, and/or primitivist anarchist would have to malign and either kill or subdue if they were not to falter in their imagined uprising. In this way, the EEs are more honest with themselves and their critics than the (crypto-)revolutionaries.

Feverishly, and very publicly, condemning EE allows their critics to safely blind themselves to that uncomfortable morbid reflection. It is easy and popular to slag as "sociopathic" people who have killed hikers and an intoxicated woman in the name of an unfamiliar, long-dead god. After all, what does indiscriminate violence look like when it is unvarnished by paeans to the everyperson and ensor- celling rhetoric about a post-revolutionary world? It looks quite ugly. One can thus avoid thinking too critically about one's own carefully veneered calls for righteous, revolutionary violence, which sound almost benign and more closely resemble the tragicomic history of civilizations with which most of us are comfortably familiar.

To be unable to engage in nuanced analysis that eschews moral judgement in favor of asking what the emergence of EE means about our current crisis—exis- tentially, strategically, and in terms of the radical milieux—**and** to unequivocally condemn those who do, is a sad comment on the critical capacity of much of the North American radical milieux. Canned dismissals reign supreme, as too many willingly surrender their critical capacities in favor of listening to, or being, competing theologians endlessly slagging one another.

Animals Attack!

We share the following events not as an attempt to speak for our non-human friends or the earth, but rather in recognition that we are not alone. There are those who have been against civilization from the start. We share their passion and howl alongside them in rage. We do not aim to merely celebrate these acts of violence and certainly do not wish to condemn them. When "wild animals" attack campers, they do so because their homes and being are under pressure of annihilation. These stories function as an acknowledgment of the ongoing war of the civilized versus the wild, sometimes spectacular and sometimes mundane, but always a war.

You Fuck With Us…

An elephant cow crushed and killed a South African big-game hunter in Zimbabwe last week, falling on him after she was shot. That elephant picked up Botha with her trunk, and one of the hunters shot her, causing her to collapse on top of Botha. The elephant and Botha were both killed.

The New Normal

A seven-year-old boy needed hospital treatment after he was attacked by a flock of aggressive seagulls. Thomas West was eating a doughnut when the first bird knocked it from his hand.

It clung on to the terrified lad as blood oozed from a cut to his finger—and four other gulls dived in.

Thomas's dad, Gary, 37, said: "Thomas was holding his food normally and the gull came from nowhere out of the sky."

Life Versus Drones Tigers 1, Drone 0

A streak of Siberian tigers in China turned a drone into a chew toy following an impressive hunt and takedown of the tiny aircraft. At least 10 curious tigers chased after the drone as it buzzed around a snow-covered sanctuary in the Heilongjiang Province in northeast China, according to stunning video posted on YouTube by CCTV+. The video shows the cats stalking the machine and one quick kitty suddenly pouncing on it, sending it crashing to the ground. The tiger then chomps at the machine, as others crowd around, before backing away when it starts smoking.

Zebra attack! With Crowd

The enraged equine at the Chimelong Safari Park in Guangzhou, China, bit the man, identified as Li, in the arm and dragged him along the ground into bushes to the horror of tourists. Several of his colleagues chased after the beast to save Li, who suffered only minor injuries during the two-minute ordeal. It was unclear what prompted the zebra to go haywire.

Too Much Handling!

Two zoo keepers were seriously injured after they were mauled by a lion they were prepping for a photo shoot in Japan, according to a new report. The caretakers were giving a bath to the 10-year-old male lion inside a cage at Shonan Animal Production in the Japanese city of Nar- ita on Monday morning when the beast went wild and attacked them, the *Daily Mail* said. The feline began chomping on the faces, heads, and legs of the unidentified workers. The victims suffered

"severe" wounds but were conscious after the attack, The *Mail* said. The lion tried to make a break for it, but his chains prevented him from escaping.

On the Loose

More than 20 residents of Raiganj, India, were injured while trying to subdue a wild leopard that ran loose in their town. The giant cat was eventually caught, but only after evading capture multiple times.

Come and Play

Footage shows a sea lion grabbing a little girl off a dock and pulling her underwater. The kid was feeding the male sea mammal bread crumbs near the water near Vancouver, Canada, on Saturday, but when she sat down on the edge of the jetty, the huge creature tried to make a meal out of her—grabbing her dress in its jaws and dragging her into the water.

It Only Consented to a Peck

Authorities say a Florida man leaned in to kiss a rattlesnake — but got bitten instead. News outlets report the unidentified man was bitten on the tongue Tuesday in the Bostwick area and had to be airlifted to a hospital, where he was listed in critical condition. WTLV in Jacksonville quoted a friend of the victim as saying that he had been drinking while handling the seemingly calm eastern diamondback. But when he moved toward the reptile as if to kiss it, the snake bit him.

Infamously Bad Dental Care

An infamous pair of lions gobbled up nearly three dozen people because their teeth were too rotten to tackle anything but "soft" humans, according to a study released Wednesday. The big cats were, at one time, believed to have eaten as many as 135 people over nine months in 1898 in the Tsavo region of Kenya, before they were shot dead. For years, the behavior of the Tsavo lions baffled scientists, who assumed that the animals resorted to eating humans—a meal not usually on their menu- because they were starving, according to *Science*. But the new study by *Scientific Reports* shows the African lions suffered from serious tooth decay, and ate around 35 "soft" humans because they were simply a more convenient — and less painful—way to enjoy a meal. Healthy lions normally feast on animals such as antelope, zebra, and water buffalo.

Eco-Extremism or Extinctionism by John Jacobi

I have up until now regarded eco-extremists as those with warrior spirits—people who value the wild as I do, but who feel compelled to fight in response to the degradation of the wild. Not everyone has this urge. Just like men of civilization can choose to raise a family, join the military, or run for local government, men of savagery have many different paths available to them—and only a few options will align with their general character and disposition, still fewer are suited to their conditions. A single mother in the U.S. might engage in conservation, a bachelor in the Democratic Republic of Congo may sabotage oil rigs. Neither can be called *the* calling of the wild will. They are simply expressions of the same spirit. And some of those expressions are, understandably and *justifiably*, violent.

But eco-extremism has recently made yet another ideological turn, and with the turn I have to dispose of my former tolerance, at least toward large factions of the eco-extremist "tendency." They have become extinctionists. They argue that they care for the wild, that humankind will invariably harm wild nature, and that humankind must therefore go extinct. This is a ridiculous philosophy, and while what follows will explain the reasons why, I am not at all thrilled I have had to write them out. Only a subset of extinctionism's philosophical formulations, usually pessimistic and nihilistic, are philosophically interesting (see *Better to Have Never Been* by David Bena- tar); but the ecological formulation—that humans should go extinct for the sake of wild nature—is *never* good philosophy. And explaining why entails a lot of nitpicky philosophical talk that readers are probably not going to very much enjoy. Nevertheless, because it is a recurring problem even in the mainstream ecological movements, it is necessary, it seems, to disally myself with it.

Eco-Extremist Strategy?

There is a catch, though. Recently it has become popular to refer to eco-extremism as though it is a single, albeit loose, ideological formulation. This is probably not the most accurate way to view all the terrorism that has gone under that name. Our understanding is improved if we forsake, for a moment, the label "ecoextremist." At the beginning, there was only the terror cell *Individualidades Ten- diendo a lo Salvaje* (ITS). As their later incarnations explained, the early group consisted of "anarchists, liberationists, and Kaczynskists." In other words, ITS was not a representative of a single ideology so much as a group of people with widely divergent ideologies who found a common place of overlap, a nexus for common action. As the network grew, and terror cells formed in Europe and all over South America, this loose basis for affinity—or "complicity," as eco-extremists like to say — continued to typify the tendency. Some terror cells don't have a shred of ecological thought at all. For example, the nihilist terrorists in Italy speak in incomprehensible poetry and prose about a great existential Void. And, as I just pointed out, there

seems to be a division now between the anti-civilization terror cells and the extinctionist terror cells. But, despite their different ideologies, the cells have found it useful to or ganize themselves into a network that is unified only in its absolute opposition to civilization, progress, humanism. More concretely, each cell must agree to attack cities, techno-industrial infrastructure, and anything, human or non-human, that makes production of these targets possible.

I do not think even the eco-extremists see it this way, but I tend to interpret their network as an incarnation of some of the fears terrorism analysts expressed during the heyday of the superterror controversy. In short, the superterror theory is the idea that religious and ethnic terrorism would supersede the political terrorism of the 70s, and that combined with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, this creates a volatile situation: groups unbridled by the typical norms of morality, inconsiderate of human welfare in itself, and willing to wreak massive destruction with their newfound power. (This, the analysts noted, was quite different from political terrorism, which seemed to cause the least amount of harm for the most amount of media attention.) In many ways, this aspect of the superterror debate was and still is overemphasized.

More interesting, analysts warned of a convergence of ideologically distinct criminal organizations, networks, and cells. Jihadis and Mexican cartel gangs, for example, might work together to infiltrate U.S. borders (and they now almost certainly do). Or perhaps distinct strains of terror could join up with a common end in mind, even if they expected to go their separate ways later. This strategy is available to many forms of ethnic terrorism, the analysts note, because unlike Marxist political terrorism, which was inherently internationalist, ethnic terrorism usually sought autonomy for a small region.

If many different regions fighting for autonomy fought together, they could harm a common enemy and continue to let their allies run their regions as they see fit.

Eco-extremism has a lot in common with the religious and ethnic terrorism noted by the superterror theorists. Many strains of ecological thought have repeatedly been pegged as religious in nature (see, e.g., the work of Bron Taylor). And while ecoextremists have no concern for collectivist notions of ethnicity and nation, simply replace “ethnic group” with “individual” or “small group” and you have the same strategic opportunity: many different individuals and small groups fighting for their autonomy, and joining together to strike at a common enemy.

None of this sounds particularly ineffective to me. Indeed, it seems like one of the few strategic options available to an eco-terrorist with eco-extremist beliefs. However, it makes the terms of my critique a little different from what might be assumed. I am not critiquing everything that has been called “eco-extremism.” Rather, I am critiquing an ecological tendency within the superterror network. And this I do only because I want to make clear, in light of my earlier tolerance of the group, where my beliefs are and are not similar to theirs. There are two possible repercussions of the differences. It could be that the non-extinc- tionist ecological strain of eco-extremism will continue unabated; that extinctionism was only absorbed into the network just as the nihilist Europeans were. If this is the case, then my critique of ex- tinctionism is largely irrelevant to my attitude toward the network as a whole. I do not have an opinion one way or the other in regards to the allies the non- extinctionist eco-extremists decide to make in their reactionary battle against civilization. But if the non-extinctionists have in fact converted to extinctionism, then there is no longer anything of value, to me, in the eco-extremist network. No one there would be acting in the name of values I hold in common.

Human Values or Divine Values?

A problem with some forms of ecological extinctionism is that they incorrectly identify something other than the individual as the root of moral force. It is exactly what Judeo-Christians do: God is good and has given us a moral law, so to do good we must follow the moral law. Replace "God" with "wild nature" and you have ecological extinctionism. But this is clearly wrong. There is no absolute moral good; "good" is a vague word that individuals ascribe, not gods.

In other words, the source of human values is human beings themselves—their natures or their wills. Collective moral rules are simply ways of accounting for differences in moral opinions, for the sake of cooperation or coercion. And there is no absolute measurement of goodness; to even want that is borne out of weakness, a taught mistrust of the self, an inculcated desire for one's own presence in the world to be validated by some higher authority. Note that there are good philosophical arguments to be had on this topic but those are for a different essay.

Nihilist or Environmentalist?

I care for the wild. How do I act on these values in this world of many different movements, tendencies, ideologies, moralities? There is no clear answer. Paths forward will always look somewhat foggy, and I'll only be able to figure things out by placing my bets and acting. Still, I can sharpen my image of the paths before me by simply looking at my situation.

Some ecological extinctionists argue that the situation as a futile one. No human will ever stop harming the wild. Therefore, if we care for the wild, we must make all humans go extinct. If this is true, then the eradication of *most* of humanity may very well be *logically* justified (though there are problems other than logic here). But the eradication of the individual who holds the values cannot be justified on the same grounds. The wild is valuable to the individual because his will requires wildness to flourish—just like it requires social relationships, food, etc. If he wants to extinguish his *own* life, he can only justify this desire, potentially, with the reasoning of the pessimistic and nihilistic philosophers, who claim that the will's drive to flourish is impossible to satisfy, the cause of the deep pain of existence. But this is not environmentalism, it is pessimism or nihilism.

All Humans are Bad or Most Humans are Bad?

How seriously, really, can we take the idea that *no* human will *ever* act appropriately as a reason to be against their existence? All philosophies are imperfect representations of our own beliefs. Applied, these beliefs invariably have grey areas, exceptions, caveats. No one ever fulfills a moral ideal. Further, there is a vast amount of evidence that at least some people care very deeply for the wild and live in wild conditions quite fine: remaining hunter/gatherers, pirates, etc. Eco-extremists themselves recognize this. Some of them write:

...we know that there are individualists like us somewhere in this beautiful Earth, and we know that they are very few, these acts are an echo that comes to them, which perhaps inspires them to carry out attacks like us.

If this is true, what does their do they mean when they say they are against the human? Either they have contradicted themselves, changed their mind, or expressed themselves badly. I can discern no other possibility.

Concerned or Unconcerned with Personal Wildness?

Finally, eco-extremists sometimes say that they are against *humanism*—the belief that all humans are part of a moral community, that they should respect every member of that communities' rights and get along in peace. They are right that this ideology is the dominant one of global civilization: preached by the UN, NGOs, universities, some corporations…

The eco-extremists say that they are against this morality because it implies disdain for the natural human. In order to enforce it, you must have civilization infrastructure and you must instill humanist values into human beings through education, indoctrination, brainwashing. There is a lot of evidence for this view (see, e.g., *The Civilizing Process* by Norbert Elias or *Civilization and Its Discontents* by Sigmund Freud).

This perspective implies that ecoextremists are concerned with preserving their natures against the modifications of technological society, perhaps even restoring them to whatever extent may be possible.

But when they argue for extinctionism, they contradict all that. And if they aren't concerned with conserving and restoring their own wildness, that is, living outside the bounds of civilization to the extent possible, then what is the point of defending the wildness of non-human nature? I say the wild is valuable because I value it. Why do eco-extremists say that the wild is valuable? If they can't come up with another good justification, then their reasoning for extinctionism ("humans destroy the wild") not only won't have any force—it can't have any force.

Final Thoughts

All that said, I agree with the general thrust of the eco-extremist argument. Vast amounts of humanity, possessing no conscious malice, are nevertheless no better than enemies of wild nature. They will not give up their comforts, will forever acquiesce to higher authorities like the state, etc. And, as we can see in regions hit with natural disasters or technical regression, nature's attitude toward these people is fierce. Those who say they support this reclaiming of the land, this transition from artificial to wilder conditions, need to be able to tolerate the ferocity, perhaps even become possessed by it themselves.

But our discourse, if it is to accurately assess our situation, needs to acknowledge the presence of a small group of people who are willing to embrace the wild. They may not have the ability to survive, and they may not survive even with the ability, but that is the meaning behind that most appropriate battle cry, is it not?—"live wild or die!"

I, like the eco-extremists, speak in public only to reach these people. I do not try to convince people who do not already feel the call of the wild to come with me into the wild. Many people are interested in the ideas, and I don't mind talking to them about it, but I am wholly aware that their way of life, and their unwillingness to abandon it, is precisely why the wild nature I care about is being so thoroughly destroyed.

All these facts can be explained without recourse to extinctionism. The eco-extremists, then, have to decide: do they do what they do because they hate the human (for whatever reason), or do they do what they do because they love the wild?

Anti-Social Attack!

> *Hurry up and bring on your electric chair I want to leave here and take a nose-dive into the next world just to see if that one is as lousy as is this ball of mud and meanness. I am sorry for only two things. These two things are I am sorry that I have mistreated some few animals in my life-time and I am sorry that I am unable to murder the whole damed human race.*
>
> -executed killer Carl Panzram

Every day, every hour, every minute people get fed the fuck up with the world and lash out at society. Sometimes funny, often brutal, always strange. From property destruction to murder and everything in between, here are the best of the worst.

Facebook Live: The New Faces of Death

Back in the days of VHS the morbid and curious could find the infamous Faces of Death series sitting on the shelves of their local video store. With the advent of the internet a whole new world opened up for the exploration of violence where early websites like Rotten.com exposed even more people to both the real and fantasy spectacle of death and suffering. Fast forward to today and there is a new revolution for the mediation of pain: brutality streamed live right to your screen. Of course this is not what it is supposed to be broadcasting and with every nightmare streamed Facebook has to remind everybody that these horrors are unfortunate, calling the events "extremely rare". These so-called anomalies include the following:

In Chicago thousands of people watched as a schizophrenic man was mentally and physically abused, even communicating with the torturers.

Easter Sunday a 37-year-old children's counselor in Cleveland, Ohio filmed himself killing a man at random before turning the gun on himself after an extensive manhunt.

A 21-year-old robbery suspect was streaming live when he fell seven stories to his death.

A 33-year-old musician in Memphis lit himself on fire and ran into the bar in an effort to set his ex-girlfriend on fire. The application of the fuel and his self-immolation are caught in closeup on video.

A 12-year-old filmed her own hanging.

A man in Thailand video-ed himself hanging his 11-month-old daughter.

Black Jesus Has Risen

A man in Fresno, California claiming to be "black Jesus" went on a shooting spree killing 4 random white dudes. The cops using their brilliant detective work (looking at social media posts) observed "he does not like white people" and had "anti-government sentiments."

The UK and Ireland's Anti-Social Menace

Both Ireland and the UK have always had a mean streak with their hooligan subcultures and recently a new moral panic has arisen in both respective countries with numerous town's youths receiving warnings. In a few counties in Northern Wales, a dispersal order was put into place "from 5pm 26/5 to 5pm 29/5." Across the pond in Ireland police are conducting "high-visibility

preventative patrols" in West Belfast in an effort to stamp out anti-social crime. The community representatives say residents are "being tortured by youths involved in drug activity, car crime, criminal damage and street crime." Tourists are frequently robbed. Of course it is snitches in their own so-called communities that have been calling to make complaints, fearing for their safety.

Arsonist Targets Cars Outside Church

In San Bernardino, California somebody set fire to numerous cars in the parking lot of a church before running away from the scene of the crime. Police have yet to find a suspect or a motive.

Neighbor Denies Children Happiness

Video has surfaced online of a "neighborhood grouch" unplugging a bouncy castle at a one-year old's birthday party. This is the feel good news we need in a time like this.

Shooting Rampage in Mississippi Kills Eight

After a domestic dispute a man went house to house killing people, including two boys and a deputy sheriff. He told press "I ain't fit to live, not after what I done," and "Somebody called the officer, people that didn't even live at the house. That's what they do. They intervene… They cost him his life" (referring to the Deputy). "My intentions was to have God kill me. I ran out of bullets," he said. "Suicide by cop was my intention."

The World Without Forms by Rhyd Wildermuth

I said to a friend, we see the darkness, and some go in.

It is the Abyss.

We have to find out what is there, to find out if there is meaning. And we see only the abyss. And some go mad. And some never return. And some—

And some, I said, come back wielding light against that darkness. Seeing nothing, we bring back fire, we light lamps, candles, torches. We hold light that isn't ours, as how else would any else see?

Terror often greets the far-off glances on the faces of those who return from the Abyss. The lone wanderers who walked boldly into the darkness past the boundary of fire- or street-light, the mad poet, the uncouth heretic, the unshowered witch: their reckless journeys are not celebrated when they return.

Like the ones who walk away from Omelas,' they did not know to where they were going, only somewhere not-here, not the streets full of opulent wealth and the joyous cries of liberation made possible by a founding horror. But unlike in Le Guin's story, the city is the world, and there is nowhere else to go except back to those same streets, their eyes no longer glinting with the shallow laughter of civilization but nevertheless lit with fire.

It is their own fire, and it is a fire others are right to fear. It is a fire that can reforge the world.

I am what some might call an Egoist. I can also be described as a Nihilist, a mystic, an esotericist, a witch, a Pagan, an Anarchist, and also a Marxist. None of these labels actually mean anything— they are only useful when attempting to speak as the locals speak, to use the prescribed language of Capitol/Capital, treating words that stay with the same fetishism which Marx ascribes to com- modity-qua/cum-currency.

It is generally easier to list what I reject (for those of you checking-off boxes on mental clipboards) than it is to begin the litany of what I embrace. Few have the time: there are stories that must be told for each thing before they can be understood, and such narration seems mere obfuscation to those for whom re- ductionism and essentialism (as endemic to the American 'left' as it is to the 'right') are unconscious requirements to get at the 'truth.'

I will tell you what I do not like. I do not like racism or racialism; I do not like gender or genderism. I do not like property or propriety, nor do I like borders and what they define. Also, Capitalism and Liberal Democracy and Empire are my least favorite things in the world, along with their shadow, fascism.

Here, though, I should remind you: "fascism" means nothing at all. It is a word invoked by people overcome with a strong urge to shore up the ruins of Empire by recourse to even more tenuous concepts with even less material basis: Tradition, Race, Gender, Morals, the Nation. Though the words are mere sounds we make with our throats or symbols printed with ink or displayed on screens, they each serve to outline vaguely (and by their vagueness gain more power) ideas which nevertheless have great power in the realm of the human social.

Max Stirner called these ideas "spooks." Others would call these 'constructs.' I prefer to name them spectres or Egregores. They are also the mythic, and it's the realm of the mythic I understand best, which is also the realm the fascists are trying to take from us.

Spooks That Kill

Carl Jung gave a speech in 1936 in which he suggested a "Wotanic spirit" had begun to inhabit the National Socialists, as if the people had become possessed by a god:

> "*Perhaps we may sum up this general phenomenon as Ergriffenheit—a state of being seized or possessed. The term postulates not only an Erg- riffener (one who is seized) but, also, an Ergreifer (one who seizes). Wotan is an Ergreifer of men, and, unless one wishes to deify Hitler—which has indeed actually happened—he is really the only explanation.*"

Jung invokes his theory of gods as pre- and un-conscious archetypal drives to defend his thesis, but like much of the rest of Jung's work, it's always unclear whether he believed there was not really a god there. But Jung does not quite mean what we generally think of as a god. Wotan is a "buried drive" within the Germanic people, one which essentially haunts the 'race' until it becomes manifest.

> "*Because the behaviour of a race takes on its specific character from its underlying images, we can speak of an archetype 'Wotan.' As an autonomous psychic factor, Wotan produces effects in the collective life of a people and thereby reveals his own nature… It is only from time to time that individuals fall under the irresistible influence of this unconscious factor.*"

Jung's racial essentialism here is tragic and prefigures the biological and genetic essentialism which now dominates Western thought. However, the concept of a mass possession by an unconscious form fits incredibly well with what we know of Nationalism.

Consider the World Trade Center attacks in 2001 in the United States. After the attacks, people experienced (and were diagnosed with) trauma from watching the explosions on television, so much so that some (including otherwise sane and clear-thinking friends of mine) for a little while believed they had either been present at the event or had a close friend or family member within the destroyed towers. Worse, many otherwise virulently anti-war people suddenly regained national 'pride,' literally waving flags with such civic devotion that one would have thought their life depended upon it.

Devotion to the Nation after such traumatic events often takes on both a religious quality (similar to that of evangelical Christians) while displaying symptoms of mass hysteria. The Nation appears to haunt the actions of the individuals, manifesting and reifying itself as if by possession or seizing.

What Jung noticed regarding the possession of the German people by "Wotan" is this same process. And while one need not believe it was Wotan who possessed his people (I do not—I've asked Wotan myself), Jung's assertion that a mythic force can operate on the psyche is hardly a unique idea. The same function was described by Max Stirner as 'spooks,' ideological and philosophical forms which exert influence when they are unconsciously accepted as really-existing.

Spook, Spectre, Egregore Jung's theory of archetypes—as well as Stirner's theory on Spooks—may have been influenced by an occult theory regarding near-deific spirits known as egregores. An egregore (greek for 'watcher') is a spirit composed of the memories, knowledge, personality, and intentions of a group, which either arises organically from the activities and interactions of the group or is constructed willfully by the group.

Egregores could be called "group minds," though they exist autonomously (like Jung's archetypal Wotan) and maintain the cohesion, survival, and collective identity of a group beyond the individual goals of each member. Unlike an archetype, an egregore does not spring from the unconscious/pre-conscious mind, but rather the myriad actions and interactions of those within in. Unlike a god, an egregore is not something one worships or necessarily invokes. They can be constructed, but after their construction the apparent life they take on is much more complex than what they were constructed to be.

A more accurate explanation may be to say that they are real-ised; brought from the realm of infinite possibility, the world without forms, into the more finite realm of social existence. Yet another theory is that they become inhabited after- the-fact by pre-existing spirits, similar to the way many animistic cultures build shrines as houses that benevolent spirits (or fairies, etc.) will want to move into.

Like Jung's Wotan and Stirner's Spook (and to some degree Derrida's Spectre), the Egregore describes the apparent realness of a thing despite its disconnection from the material world. There is no "there" there, and yet it functions always as if there were, manifesting itself in the actions of those who live within its realm of influence or meaning. And it thus acts also as if it were a god, making demands upon its followers who constantly (and often unconsciously) manifest its existence.

This same process has been described by other means by post-colonialist theorists. Dipesh Chakrabarty, particularly, proposes in his introduction to Provincializing Europe that it is precisely European exceptionalism that prevents us from seeing how those of us in Liberal Democratic societies still *"inhabit these forms even as we classify ourselves as modern or secular."* Similarly, Frantz Fanon and James Baldwin speak to the way that belief in whiteness and its psychological manifestations seem to inhabit those who, in Baldwin's words, "believe they are white."

One need not necessarily accept a supernatural explanation for the way the mythic manifests as-if it is real in order to comprehend this idea. Benedict Anderson's formulation of the Nation as an 'imagined community' also points to the same mythic and Egregoric functioning. For him, the Nation is a modern constructed form creating an indefensible (yet fully-manifest) sense of (false) horizontal kinship with complete strangers, as Anderson says, making "*it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people not so much to kill as willing die for such limited imaginings."*

America exists; yet we cannot point merely to the constitution of the United States, nor to its government and institutions, soldiers and politicians and police, and say: this is America. America exists within the psyche of Americans, constantly reproduced through self-description and unconscious acceptance of its goals, desires, and inevitability. America is an egregore, a god-form, inhabiting the psyche of its individual constituents, like Jung's Wotan: "*. an autonomous psychic factor, …produc[ing] effects in the collective life of a people.* "

The Fascists Know What We Prefer To Forget

Race, Gender, and all other identity categories function this same way. Gays imagine themselves part of a gay community, yet there is no such thing, only an imagined kinship with people who just happen to like sex with people who have the same genitals as themselves. A horrific attack on people who call themselves gay (such as the Pulse massacre in Orlando) thus manifests in individual gays elsewhere (as was the case for myself and many of my gay friends) as an attack on us as well.

We see this egregoric manifestation even stronger in whiteness. Whiteness has no material basis, yet it does not need one to manifest through the social interactions of humans. Whiteness 'possesses' the white person, and appears to inhabit their interactions with people possessed by other egregoric racial categories (Black, etc.) regardless of their oppositional nature. In fact, the conflict and tension between egregores only further refines and entrenches their influence and power.

Neither the conservative Right nor most of the liberal or radical Left challenge these egregores. Instead, they strengthen and re-invest these egrego- res with power by insisting they are real and meaningful fields of social struggle (regardless of their final goals). We see this most tragically on the Left, which generally accepts the constructed nature of identities, yet also insists identity is a valid (if not foundational) field of political struggle.

Consider the problem of Gender. Most Leftists accept Judith Butler's proposition that gender is performative, not essential or biological (likewise the Egoist position). Yet, particularly on the "Social Justice" Left, essentialism and a fear of straying too far from Liberal Democratic forms creates a contradictory position, seen particularly in the arguments around trans women. On the one hand, Leftists insist Woman is a constructed category, yet then orient their politics towards asserting that trans women are women. That is, Woman is constructed, but in order to liberate another constructed category, they insist trans women (as category) are absolutely (essentially) part of a woman (as category), making both categories essentialist. Similarly, maleness is a category that the Left generally seeks to make irrelevant, but then the Left reduces men to an essential category in which every man essentially causes exploitation, violence, and oppression ("#YESALLMEN").

Even if it were only the Left attempting to define the boundaries of these egregoric categories, we would find ourselves in an interminable deadlock. Unfortunately, there is a much stronger and less self-conscious current which already understands the great power these egreg- ores have over the actions of humans.

A brief glance at the Nazi project is probably sufficient for us to grasp how fascism not only is more comfortable with the egregoric nature of these concepts, but also understands how best to manipulate them. Nazi theorists (social, occult, legal, scientific, etc.) cobbled together a new mythic reality for Germany quite quickly. Tibetan and Hindu spirituality, Nordic and Germanic folklore, and general occult studies as well as previously oppositional and antagonist political, social, and scientific forms all became part of the egregore of Nazism, seizing the mythic imagination of a (likewise mythic) Nation.

Consider: before the Nazis, the Aryan race was a mere fringe scientific theory. During the Nazi ascension, the Aryan race was a thing, alive, 'self-evident.' So, too, Germany itself: suddenly a nation created only three decades before arose fully-formed with an ancient history as if it had always been there.

Did the Nazi theorists actually believe their own mythic creation? Or were they consciously creating something new? It's impossible to know. The same question could be asked of Lenin and Stalin: did they really believe in the existence of the Worker?

Or more controversially regarding the identity politics of the Left: gays did not exist as a category in the 1800's, nor did trans people. When the political cate- gory/egregoric identity of Gay and Trans arose, suddenly they were self-evident, alive, meaningful, and strangest of all: 'true.' Did those who constructed gayness and trans identity know they were making something up? How many who embrace these identities (unless they've really read Foucault) even realize that they do not stretch back into prehistory, let alone before the 20th century?

The point here is not to unravel the nightmare of Left identity politics, only to show how Leftists unconsciously do the same thing that fascists consciously do. Leftists construct identities and egrego- res without any reference to the material world, yet then quickly accept them as if they have always existed, just as a Nationalist embraces the Nation and a White Supremacist embraces the White Race.

Leftism (and anti-fascism) as it currently exists is thus insufficient for combating the mythic power of fascism until we acknowledge how much of this mythic, egregoric power we've not only ceded to fascists, but then clumsily mimic.

The World Without Forms

An essay in March of 2017 by Alexander Reid Ross recently warned against the danger of fascist intersections with "Post-Left,' Egoist, mythic, and anti-civi- lizational thought. What these "potential intersections" with fascism all have in common, however, is a rejection of the egregoric spooks over which the Liberal- Left and fascists are currently warring. Also, they all have at least an apparent understanding of the mechanisms by which the egregoric functions, and they each assert the freedom of the individual over these forms as a primary goal.

Ross's essay suggests that these positions seem close to the border past which all is fascist. That apparent proximity, though, is not what he suspects it to be. Rather, the extreme distance of most Leftism from the mythic—and its long complicity with Liberal Democratic secular exceptionalism—makes these non- and anti-fascist positions seem 'close' to fascism.

Leftism—especially American anti-fascism—has been so lost in the world of identities and forms that it has forgotten that they are only merely that: forms. Thus, any who reject the world of forms, or create new ones, will be seen as immediately suspect.

Were the current forms (Liberal Democracy, Capitalism, the Nation, Gender, Race, etc.) worth keeping around, then this error would not be so catastrophic. Some are certainly anti-fascist only because fascism threatens Liberal Democracy, and perhaps it is no longer true to say that Leftism (at least in its American iterations) is anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist any longer, regardless of how much it claims otherwise.

If, however, we are anti-fascists because we are also pro-something else, something besides the current egregoric forms which lead only to exploitation, oppression, and the destruction of the earth, then we must stop looking away from the mythic power we have ceded to the fascists.

We can see how we've done this by looking at one of the symptoms that antifascists use to diagnose whether someone is a fascist: the Black Sun. Though proximity doesn't prove causation,

this is generally a good rule of thumb. However, little to no attention is ever given to why fascists invoke the Black Sun.

The secret of the Black Sun is actually quite simple, and it's one that fascists do not own. Stare at the sun in the sky and something odd happens. It appears first to turn deep red, and then goes black and starts to spin as your retina burns. It also sears itself as an after-image, lingers there for hours (if not days), and creates the perception that there is actually nothing behind the sun. It appears to go flat as it moves, revealing a deep Abyss as if all light and all reality is merely a black hole.

I do not suggest every white boy and girl who uses an image of the Black Sun as their iPhone background has experienced the same mystical transformation that medieval alchemists name nigredo; nor do I assert that it is an Abyssal truth limited to mystical traditions or European-derived thought (the Sufis and many animist traditions describe a similar experience). Still, it should intrigue us that in at least one fascist strain, a rite exists which inducts the initiate into the nihilist/spiritual "world without forms."

From that world, through such an initiation, it is easy to transcend societal restraints and enter into the pre-formal realm of perception. Outside the constraints of socially-constructed identity and morality, any new thought is possible and any new form is acceptable specifically because 'possible' and 'acceptable' no longer apply. More so, the experience strengthens the will of the initiate: the vision was survived, the mind intact.

Those who've studied and felt the inebriating mix of mythic power and indomitable will evinced by fascists like Jack Donovan and the Wolves of Vinland will understand my meaning here. Donovan has been able to create an intoxicating, egregoric, mythic conception of the world, cobbling together fragments of the past with terrifyingly violent new ideologies which are pristine in their coherence. There is raw, seductive, violent power here that functions on the 'primal' (pre-conscious, libidinal) level against which anti-fascists have no other defense except no-platforming.

Reclaiming What We've Thrown Away

If I here seem full of praise for something so horrifying, it is not because I am, but because you may have become so separated from your own mythic power that you've forgotten you can shift these forms the same way the fascists do, except towards a more affirming and fair world rather one of hierarchy and hatred.

I suspect we shun this power for two reasons. First, anyone returning from the Abyss with such mythic visions, transcending the egregores by which the rest of us are ruled, will always be initially marked as a heretic or an outcast. Only when we find others who have seen the same things or who find meaning in these new dreams can such mystics find acceptance.

The other reason? We've so long ago ceded to others our power to make the world that we are more happy to leave such delvings to the fascists than realize we are complicit in our own enchainment.

The world without forms, where we can again reclaim our power, is what Stirner and the Egoists embrace. It is also what Bataille sought, as did his close friend, the Jewish mystic Walter Benjamin. From that world we see both the infinite possibility of human liberation and the infinite

delusions under which we have for too long struggled. It is also where we can learn how to be Walter Benjamin's "real state of emergency" which will eventually make fascism untenable.

The Nation is a false thing that only has power because we give it power. Gender, race, class, religion, morals—even the self itself—are all constructs. Civilization is a spook, one to which we are always subject because we believe there is such a thing as civilization, because other people believe there is such a thing as civilization, and because all of us fail to remember that civilization is just an idea in our heads that causes us to cohere around it and give it more power. Thus, the fascist who warns that civilization is under threat from Islam, or trans people, or Cultural Marxism—as well as the Liberal-Leftist who warns that civilization is under threat from fascism—are both still merely fighting for control over the egregore of Civilization.

Any anti-fascism which seeks to break not only the power of the fascists but also the power of the forms the fascists wish to control must first refuse to accept the forms themselves.

Race, Gender, the Nation, Civiliza- tion—these are not our forms, they are forms that enchain us, they do not exist in the world we wish to build, and we must stop pretending otherwise. Instead, we must make new forms while always conscious that they are only just forms, forms we can change at will because it is our will which births them.

We must also refuse to cede the mythic—and the embrace of the self—to the Fascists. Contrary to Alexander Reid Ross's warning, the 'post-leftists' and the Egoists and those who've read Bataille, and also those who've read Baldwin or Fanon or Chakrabarty, and especially all those who would dare walk past the forest's edge in darkness and find there new truths, regardless the consequences—it is to them where we must look for the rituals which will free us all.

It is they, and the magics they find, which can finally help us exorcise fascism's spectre from our world.

Uncivilized Artists, Violent Aesthetes by Linn O'Mable

> "*There is much magickal appeal in aesthetics that arouse and intrigue yet evade so-called logical explanation for their appeal, i.e. simply finding something to be beautiful, for no reason, and from nowhere.*"
>
> ~ Liber Nihil

Civilization is hideous, and few of its faces are more repulsive than the city. Steeped in sickening fumes, cities present themselves as nauseating confluences of cement and cable, brutalist filth. Walking amidst the smog and trash, ears battered by claxon and engine-roar, I am repulsed. My being yearns for something better, and my mind—disconnecting from my body—wanders in search of the vine- lashed landscapes populating my dreams.

I reject the idea that we ought not fetishize so-called nature, that by idealizing it we only alienate ourselves from it further. I've spent enough time with trees and oceansides to know that they are beautiful, to develop a fetishized Dream of earth; I would like little more than to reconnect with soil and river by luxuriating in this beautiful, decadent reverie. Idealizations of nature are in some ways farcical and fantastic, but they are also gateways to be passed through, ladders to be climbed and then kicked down from new heights. As I embrace a false division between earth and human, I acknowledge the depths of my alienation; in my life, the divorce of humanity from its aboriginal habitat has been all too real, and I wish to dissolve this split by way of rapturous embrace. Perhaps my idealizations will fade or transform if I am ever fully surrounded by what I wish to be surrounded by (groves, water, ivy). So be it. Until the night comes when I find myself ensnared by the green thicket, I propose centralizing anti-civilization aesthetics in our lives and projects, embracing a violence against the domination machine informed by the relentless pursuit of beauty. Do we want to be encompassed by trash heaps or rolling meadows?

*

This piece revolves around aesthetics, so I want to clarify what the word means to me although I do not have a clear definition. I use it gesturally and my understanding of it is comfortably cloudy at the edges, an amalgamation of various definitions encountered throughout life. To think of aesthetics is, for me, to think of clusters of qualia, indescribable sensations and sensuality, gradients of beauty and ugliness, pathos, expressiveness, impossible juxtapositions of sensory impressions, transcendent experiences, what people typically call art, and much more—not to mention the processes of forming judgments and drawing out values about all of the above. Civilized humans love to focus on their own product-objects when they talk about aesthetics, but I am additionally interested in the aesthetics of the non-human world and of lived experience itself (inner and outer).

To view the world through an aesthetic lens means, I think, to reference constellations of thoughts and values as we appraise our lived experience: contingent, personal metrics about

what is attractive to us, what any given stimuli feels like and stirs within us. In this way, all of our worldly experience undergoes some kind of aesthetic evaluation, conscious or not, and therefore aesthetics inform our entire worldview, whether we want them to or not. For me, these values are ineffable and inexplicable, having emerged from the mysterious primordiality of living. I can neither explain nor expel them, yet they have curious resonance.

*

I was working under Walmart's fluorescent light when this idea first took hold in me. (Department stores, like cities, may also epitomize abrasive ugliness.)

My goal at work was always to keep thoughts fully detached from what I was doing with my body, in this case through a steady drip of podcast audio wired from pocket to ear. As I shelved another box of Great Value macaroni (dark coal of civilization), Free Radical Radio cohost Rydra made a remark that stayed with me for a long time—I'll quote:

"*For me, I really feel like at its core, anti-civ (and this is gonna sound bad to a lot of people, but I don't think it needs to) can be a purely aesthetic preference—I don't need to infer what human nature is, or if there's a right way to live, or if people did something for billions of years… all of that stuff may be true, it may have happened— who knows? I don't know. I don't have the answers to those questions. I can say that's likely true. I can say it's likely that for 99.9% of human history, y'know, people lived a [certain] way— but the [most important] thing… is just that I don't fucking like cities. I don't like the structure around it, I don't like the fact that resource extraction is happening to create these things, I don't like pollution, I like being able to swim in the ocean; on a purely aesthetic level, [with regard to] my preferences for what I want to see with my own eyes and feel and hear and smell, I am not interested in civilization. It's that easy.*"[1]

Those words lingered, sedimenting. Time passed and the concept of mounting an aesthetic argument against civilization became more and more alluring, resonant. Months later, I would be walking through the rain in London, holding my breath to avoid inhaling motor fumes and staring down the sidewalk, thinking: I do not like this place; the ugliness drains me of life; the mechanisms by which it operates are profoundly grotesque. I do not wish to be here—and further, I wish this place were entirely transformed, so that something more beautiful could take its place, so that grasses and oldfields could grow and proliferate. I do not think these are unreasonable desires.

*

In my youth politics were of little interest to me, seeming alien, ugly, and out of my hands. Evading the political, I much preferred to plumb inner worlds, until the day I stumbled onto the proselytizing of Noam Chomsky. I found myself dragged down a rabbit-hole, suddenly awake to the horrible nature of this world, suddenly anarcho-syndicalist, and suddenly leaning into an asceticism as severe as that of the monkish Noam himself. I could hardly bring myself to do anything artistic while there was such boundless pain around me—after all, I was one of the only ones who could do anything about it. I was an Anarchist. Aesthetics were off of the table and out of the question, shoved into the corner of my mental room to wither and catch dust as I got down to the business of saving the world.

[1] Bellamy Fitzpatrick, Cosmo Rydra. *Free Radical Radio,* "Episode 75: FRR Destroys Strawmen That Are Ugly To Them". Quote at 00:26:00. http:// www.freeradicalradio.net/2015/03/16/episode- 75-frr-destroys-strawmen-that-are-ugly-to-them/

Eventually I adopted post-left anticivilization theory as my primary lens of viewing the world, but even then Rydra's sentiment was somewhat revelatory to me as I toiled in that Walmart. Anarchic anti-civilization aestheticism could go far in resolving the tension between the anesthetized political direness I had previously embraced, and my lifelong fascination with the beautiful. I imagine this might be true for others. Politics are generally quite ugly, rife with protests and dumb slogans, tacky signs on sticks, and senate meetings. Moonlight, summer's wind, the infinity of oceans, leaves in early autumn—I will orient myself towards these things, eschewing dingy political processes and endeavoring to collaborate with like-minded others. I dream of laying waste to mechanics that perpetuate ugliness so that I may better venerate moss. To embrace this more directly is the aspiration of my proposed aestheticism.

I am not suggesting an abandonment of politics entirely. This is partially because the word is slippery, but I also feel that its wholesale rejection may be overkill. (Better to cannibalize politics and discard the rotten flesh.) What I want is a shift in focus away from the polis and its manifold inhabitants—not to mention debates with those who will never agree with us—to the ravenous pursuit of beauty as an end in itself. To relinquish designs of control seems prudent as collapse seemingly sets in and climate chaos takes hold. The world's cities will not be saved, and the sooner Leviathan falls the better; to fetishize forests and ruins will only soften the destructive blow of collapse, render it more ecstatic. And if collapse never comes, then let us still carve out beautiful lives for ourselves and those we love.

*

Civilized people like myself have, to various extents, pornified views of the world. Our senses are dulled on plasma televisions and polygons, stereo systems and cheesecake. How can an earthen life compete with movie theaters, death metal, and the Louvre? (Forests can seem gray and dull next to a perfectly manicured synthetic experience in sixteen million colors.) I don't actually think earth can compete, or, more importantly, should. For me, reconnecting with a deep-seated (but malnourished) appreciation for the natural world is an important project, glutted as I have been on film and the music of high technology. I think the anarcho-primitivists are right in that so-called rewilding ought to be high on our to-do list. For those who love art as it is now (the art of music, of painting, of cooking, of cinematography) a critique of civilization will always be deeply and profoundly contradictory. This is not to say we should strive to puritanically purge ourselves of civilized fascinations (let us more simply acknowledge our origins and move on), but most of the art I know and love was built with tools and materials of civilization—piles of wiring, paper and ink, fossil fuels, and gallons of vibrant paints. I would like to expand my sphere of experience outwards and away from all of that. This tension may not be fully resolvable, but it is worth grappling with. At times I conceptualize success in this struggle as a return.

Pornification involves a contradiction: how can civilized life be both profoundly ugly and disastrously over-stimulating in its luster? I think the answer lies with specialization, compartmental- ization, and sacrifice—in a word, economics. Art is typically a product dangled in front of us as a reward for work. We drag ourselves through gray worlds of toil and cramped apartments, hideous lives, in order to revel in demarcated aesthetic experiences delivered via Netflix subscription and concert hall, sterilized episodes of consumption with which we have little interaction (or, alternatively, highly controlled and programmed interaction). These are largely passive, flat experiences in which our role is simply that of a user, a spectator. Sometimes it works and the art is wonderful to us—I for one do love some art feverishly, after all—but the cost is high. If we conceptualize art, in its manifold iterations, as one of the ends of civilization

itself, then civilization itself is the cost of art. Everyone works in the machine so that everyone else can work in the machine, and consume art occasionally. I am simplifying, but I hope my point resonates.[2]

So we are offered these aesthetic experiences as rewards for enduring our numbing, slavish, ghastly lives, but these experiences have a way of weakening us and indenturing us to the machine. We become like addicts and for many of us the beauty of sunlit mountains and toadstool-dappled ponds becomes harder and harder to perceive or care about.

If people are afraid of destroying civilization, perhaps this is an important part of why. We do not want to give up the music we listened to when we first had sex, the movie that showed us a new kind of beauty, the video game with which we connect to our handful of friends and escape this drab place. Indeed, we rely on these things so as not to break down beneath the ugliness of it all. I share this sentiment, and I will probably cling to my music collection until the day the power goes out. But if we could somehow attain our wildest dreams of overthrowing this awful machine (or, at least, escaping it), I suspect that wonderfully new, beautiful experiences might come pouring in. This possibility is worthy of unconditional exploration.

An uncivilized life could be full with adventure and beauty of a different kind than we've been made accustomed to. This is what I want: a life that does not need the drug of civilized art to be bearable, a life that is encompassed by tree and vine and lake and moon, a life suffused with ambient, vitalic beauty. I want to be able to jump into the ocean on a whim, or climb a tree to watch the sunset on any twilight. I want to bathe in rivers with loving friends and forget myself on forest floors. I want to make poetry and music with whatever I can, draw with sticks and stones, and luxuriate in inner worlds with no oppressive weight boring into me, without feeling like my art is worthless as anything but a product. I want to free my imagination, and I want other people to be able to do the same, most especially those I love. Further, I simply want to be surrounded by less of the anthropogenic: less that is human and more that is dirt, fur, leaf, and water. These are wild dreams; I do not expect to fully realize them, but they inform my life as objects to be striven for. And to me they are all wildly aesthetic.

I do not require any sect to validate these concerns. When I am honest with myself I realize that my sense of beauty and my aesthetic desires are mine alone, untethered to (but not unaffected by) ideologies and value systems, often defying logic and the political. As a knot of ineffable, irreducible feelings, my aesthetics demand no justification, indeed cannot be justified or reasoned with*. The idiosyncrasy of these passions makes them strong, and I use this strength to fire my projects and guide my life, seeking the beautiful in everything I do, and fighting to eradicate the vileness haunting my lived experience.

[* *note from above:* I think there are threads to unravel in this sentiment. Although I feel strongly about my aesthetics, I also feel that they are temporal, necessarily contingent, mutable; this leads me to wonder about others and about the formation processes of aesthetic values. Is it possible to disrupt, redirect, transform the aesthetic sensibilities of others? To what extent can aesthetic values emerge from non-aesthetic modes of valuing? Having no satisfying answer, I would like to see speculation and experimentation attempt answers to these questions. Clearly aesthetic inclinations can and do morph—accruing, dissolving, fluctuating, reshaping—but what-

[2] Other dangled carrots include vacations, luxuriant lives of wealth, fine dining, etc.-which are all, to some extent, aesthetic prizes. All of this does not account for the allure of power, or other various perks of success in the civilized world; nor does it account for punitive measures used to herd us along. The array of conditions securing our predicament is vast!

ever excites these processes is nebulous and usually met with a typical human resistance to change. Attaining some foothold in understanding all of this may be beneficial to our projects, I think, but I personally doubt that I will, or can, ever understand these processes and properties in their entirety.]

Let us aestheticize ruins. The uncivilized world could be a gorgeous patchwork of toppled ivy-laced chapels and bonfires. Stars pouring through a clearing in the summer's thick canopy could be more beautiful than any painting. Let us destroy dark factories and insipid schools, foul shopping malls and unsightly power plants, for the eviscerated icons of this Leviathan will be truly beautiful to behold. As we disturb the synthetic anti-soil of this astroturf world, let seeds take hold, let weeds grow, let vines overtake, let berries fall and let new hawthorns sway. We need not deny our lust! I say we embrace our desires, ensnared as they may be in the pursuit of viridian ecstasy, and become uncivilized artists, violent aesthetes.

Friends of mine have land where they are establishing a forest garden. After a day spent with them, planting and walking through the woods, I have noticed something special that happens when I close my eyes to go to sleep. In the black ether, I see plants growing, stalks burgeoning, ivy twirling: beautiful magic that I could not have anticipated, like sprouts poking out from seeds planted deep in the soil of my mind. I wonder what else might come of a life suffused in that beauty— radiant, verdant life.

Resilencing: Social Injustice by John Clark

Continued from Black Seed issue 4 (full text included here)

A few weeks ago, New Orleans went through the ten-year commemoration of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. In fact, there were several quite divergent modes of commemoration. At one end of the spectrum there was the Tenth Annual Katrina March and Second-line, the most serious political event of the day, which sponsored speeches and performances at the site of the levee break in the devastated and still depopulated Lower Ninth Ward. It had a significant turnout, though certainly under a thousand participants.

At the other extreme was the Krewe of O.A.K, which practiced a kind of "commemorating by not commemorating" in its annual Mid-Summer Mardi Gras parade and celebration. O.A.K. stands for "Outrageous and Kinky," in addition to "Oak St.," its starting point at the Maple Leaf Bar. The parade, noted for its wild costumes and zany ambience, attracted perhaps 10,000 to this Carrollton neighborhood event. According to the *Times-Picayune*, the Krewe chose the theme "Tie Dye Me Up," to evoke the famous "Summer of Love," and "bring good vibes to this annual parade." It added: "No mention of the 'K' word, please."

Most of the "Katrina10" activities fell somewhere between the two extremes, but tended more in the direction of the Krewe of O.A.K., in that they were overwhelmingly in a *celebratory mode.* This was certainly true of the official commemoration that was sponsored by the city administration and local businesses. It focused on recovery, economic and educational successes, and, above all, the remarkable "resilience" of the local community. It presented an upbeat official narrative that erased many of the ongoing problems and tragedies of the city, in addition to effacing many of the most significant struggles and achievements of the community, when these did not fit into the official story. The major concerns here will be this official narrative, which pictures the city's post-Katrina history through the distorting lens of a politics of disavowal, and the many realities that this narrative disavows.

What then, is "disavowal?" It is in fact something that is quite common in everyday experience, and which we have all experienced many times. We often face two psychological processes in which truth is negated. One of these, which is called "denial," is a defense mechanism in which the truth can never be consciously recognized or spoken. Denial is *silence.* The other process, which is called "disavowal," is a defense mechanism in which the truth is at times recognized or spoken, but is systemically forgotten or silenced at every decisive moment, when it really counts. Disavowal is *re-silence.* The Hurricane Katrina Ten-Year Anniversary has been primarily a celebration of disavowal and re-silencing.

RESILIENCE KILLS

Much of this re-silencing has gone under the banner of "resilience." While this term has been used throughout the post-Katrina period, it has become a kind of watchword and rallying-cry for the official commemoration and the politics of disavowal that it expresses. Even beyond its

ideological uses, it is in some ways a strange term to use to describe post-Katrina New Orleans. Resilience is defined as: "The capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape" and "an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change."[1]

Neither of these definitions describes post-Katrina New Orleans terribly well. As for the "strained body" part, consider this. If someone had a serious accident or disease and after ten years is alive and doing tolerably well—except at only three-fourths of his or her original size—we wouldn't think of that as the most admirable of recoveries. There are also problems with the "easily" part. Harry Shearer deserves much credit for defying the forces of complacency and self-satisfaction and boldly popularizing the term "the Big Uneasy."[2] Whether New Orleanians have fully recovered or not, the last ten years have not been particularly "easy' for most of them. Maybe these long years weren't so hard for those who have had the good fortune to be extremely wealthy, delusional, comatose or dead. But for a large segment of the rest, they have been difficult and even excruciating.

But the major problem with the term is its ideological use. In Post-Katrina New Orleans, "resilience" is associated with tendencies toward regression and mindless compliance. The voice of resilience says, "Congratulations, you're still here! (Those of you who are still here)," and asks, "How about doing a second line, or cooking up some gumbo for the tourists?" It asks, a bit more delicately, "How about making their beds, cleaning their toilets, serving their food and drinks, maybe even selling them some drugs, and doing a special dance for them at the club." It urges, above all, "Be resilient. Be exactly what you are expected to be."

The ideology of resilience ignores the extraordinary creative achievements and visionary aspirations of New Orleanians in the post-Katrina period, and celebrates survival, bare life. It focuses instead on the community's continued existence as a site for imposition of corporate-state hierarchically-formulated development plans. All the complements to the people of New Orleans for being resilient are a bit condescending and demeaning. After all, it's not the greatest tribute to people to complement them on their ability to survive. "Thank you for not just giving up and dying *en masse*. If you had done that would have been somewhat of an embarrassment to the greatest country in the world."

The real post-Katrina story is not a story of resilience. More on this later, but if you want to see the real post-Katrina story, check out the film *Big Charity*.[3] It's an account of heroic courage and dedication to saving lives and caring for the community. It's a story of crimes against humanity that are systematically repressed and forgotten. If you want to see the real post-Katrina story (in this case, of the larger region of Southeast Louisiana), check out the film *My Louisiana Love*.[4] It's the story of passionate struggle for the beloved community and the beloved land. It's another story of crimes against humanity, and also against nature, that are systematically repressed and forgotten. Both sides of this story, the nobility of struggle and dedication on the one hand, and the criminality and betrayal on the other, are lost in the fog of resilience. They are lost in the resilencing process. They are lost in the Official Story. It is versions of this Official Story that were presented by former President Bush, President Obama, and Mayor Landrieu as part of the official Katrina commemoration.

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[1] "Full definition of Resilience" in *Merriam Webster Dictionary*; online at http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience.

[2] See the website for his film *The Big Uneasy*; online at http://www.thebiguneasy.com/.

[3] Website for *Big Charity: The Death of America's Oldest Hospital*; online at http://www.bigcharityfilm.com/.

[4] Website for *My Louisiana Love*; online at http://www.mylouisianalove.com/.

THE OFFICIAL STORY: THE BUSH VERSION

According to Former President George W. Bush's typically blunt and non-nuanced judgment, "New Orleans is back, and better than ever." In fact, he is *amazed* by what has happened in New Orleans. This is not so astounding, since he specializes in being amazed. He was amazed by the atrocities of September 11, 2001, claiming that "nobody could have predicted" that there would be an attack on the World Trade Center—though about ten years before there had been an attack on the World Trade Center. Hint! He was amazed by the post-Katrina flood in 2005, exclaiming that no one could have "anticipated the breach of the levees"—though several experts actually did, and it had already happened in recent memory during Hurricane Betsy.[5] Hint!

So we should not be surprised, much less amazed, by Bush's reaction to Post-Katrina New Orleans in 2015: "Isn't it amazing?" What amazes him is that "the storm nearly destroyed New Orleans and yet, now, New Orleans is the beacon for school reform,"[6] But what alternative universe does he inhabit? On Planet W, "the storm nearly destroyed New Orleans?" But what storm? Hurricane Katrina didn't hit New Orleans and even what missed New Orleans had lost much of its force by the time its winds came our way. The disaster was not a storm, but rather flooding caused by criminal governmental and corporate negligence. Furthermore, over a quarter of New Orleans was not damaged at all by the storm and flooding and most of the rest could have recovered relatively easily given a reasonable level of response and support.[7] What should be truly astounding is that the victimizers of the city made the recovery so difficult for the victims. Also, Bush should also not be amazed by the quasi-privatization of the school system, since his own administration was responsible for promoting exactly the kind of predatory opportunism and disaster capitalism that produced that system.

Does Bush remember *anything* about what actually happened? Please excuse the foolish question. Of course, he has no idea, and he's counting on everyone else to forget, if they ever knew. As he twice implores of his listeners, "*I hope you remember what I remember*." This recalls the delusional wife-killer Fred Madison in *Lost Highway*, David Lynch's classic story of monumental forgetfulness. As Fred announces, unconsciously diagnosing his delusional rewriting of history, "I like to remember things my own way." Similarly, Bush's voice is the voice of denial. Never even reaching the level of *re-silence*, it is just dumb silence about anything that counts.

[5] Hurricane Betsy was a larger hurricane than Hurricane Katrina and hit New Orleans directly, with the passing slightly west of the city..

[6] Cain Burdeau and Jeff Amy "George W. Bush Visits Disaster Zone, 10 Years After Katrina" (Associated Press, Aug. 28, 2015); online at: http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_KATRINA_BUSH?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT.

[7] It is significant, and not widely known, that 28% of housing units in the city were not damaged, and 58% were not damaged seriously. See Rachel E. Luft with Shana Griffin, "A Status Report on Housing in New Orleans after Katrina: An Intersectional Analysis" in Beth Willinger, ed. *Katrina and the Women of New Orleans (* New Orleans: Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Dec. 2008); online at http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jd9AwzZZSWgJ:https://tulane.edu/newcomb/upload/NCCROWreport08-chapter5.pdf+&cd=8&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us.

THE OFFICIAL STORY: THE OBAMA VERSION

Curiously, the same day that Obama visited New Orleans I got an email from him saying, "Let me be perfectly frank — I'm emailing to ask you for $5…."[8] My first thought was, "Why don't you pass by so I can give you the $5 in person! That would give me a chance to be perfectly frank too, and explain how things in post-Karina New Orleans are not quite as rosy as you've been painting them to be." I was about to send the email to Air Force One, and then it occurred to me that Obama's problem is not really a lack of information, as his Katrina speech in fact confirmed.

Admittedly, Obama's speech was infinitely better than the ramblings of Bush, whose unfortunate native tongue is English As a Second Language. Obama usually manages to combine a certain amount of intelligent and lucid analysis (even if it is often intelligently and lucidly deceptive) with a calculated folksiness aimed at mitigating any sins of excessive sophistication and erudition.

Folksiness prevailed in his Katrina anniversary address, which gets the award for more clichés per sentence than any speech ever given here, and perhaps anywhere else on Planet Earth. In just the first paragraph, he managed to dispose of many of the obligatory local references, including "Where y'at," "the Big Easy," "the weather in August," "shrimp po' boy," "Parkway Bakery and Tavern," "Rebirth," "the Maple Leaf," "Mardi Gras," and "what's Carnival for."[9] Fortunately, somebody caught him before he told the crowd "jockamo fee nané."

But the agenda was basically about re-silencing. Obama enthusiastically promoted the neoliberal corporate capitalist project, including the quasi-privatization and de-democratization of the local schools. He actually citied some damning statistics about child poverty and economic inequality in New Orleans. And he noted that the city "had been for too long been plagued by structural inequalities." "Had been" before Hurricane Katrina, that is.

But this brief moment of quasi-recognition was lost in the deluge of upbeat generalization. He told the city that "the progress that you have made is remarkable" in achieving, among other things, a "more just New Orleans." In case we didn't get his point, he added, "The progress you've made is remarkable." So we are told that post-Katrina New Orleans is not only a model of opportunity for entrepreneurs and developers, as the Chamber of Commerce will enthusiastically inform us, but also a model for *progress in justice*.

Obama's voice is clearly the voice of disavowal. He knows the truth, and he can even tell you that he knows it. But this truth is consigned to footnotes and asides to a larger ideological pseudo-truth that is to be the focus of our attention. The truth is there only to be strategically forgotten. The dominant discourse remains the verbose but empty speech of re-silencing. So much for *les Menteurs en Chef*.[10]

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[8] Barack Obama, "important (don't delete)." An email from Barack Obama at dccc@dccc.org to John Clark at clark@loyno.edu (Thu 8/27/2015 11:59 AM).

[9] "Transcript of President Obama's Katrina speech" in *NOLA.com* (August 28, 2015); online at http://www.nola.com/katrina/index.ssf/2015/08/transcript_of_president_obamas.html. The phrase "jockamo fee nané" from the song "Iko, Iko" is a universal favorite, but it is not generally known that it was an invitation by Mardi Gras Indians to their rivals to engage in a certain humiliating act. See "If You Don't Like What The Big Chief Say…. (An Interview with Mr. Donald Harrison, Sr., Big Chief of the Guardians of the Flame)" in *Mesechabe: The Journal of Surre(gion)alism* 8 (Spring 1991); online at https://www.academia.edu/2948272/An_Interview_with_Mr._Donald_Harrison.

[10] "Lying Chiefs of State," which recalls the Chef Menteur Pass in New Orleans East, which, according to one story, was named by the Choctaw "Oulabe Mingo," or "Lying Chief,' after the French colonial governor.

THE OFFICIAL STORY: THE LANDRIEU VERSION

Next, the local political and corporate establishment, led by mayor Mitch Landrieu, joined in the celebration. For the anniversary, Landrieu and Walmart, along with other corporate entities, co-sponsored a "Citywide Day of Service." It's unfortunate that the community couldn't organize a large-scale volunteer effort itself, as it did after Katrina, when our state and corporate masters largely abandoned the city, except as opportunities for incarceration and then exploitation emerged. The mayor's version of a "Day of Service" was four hours of service projects in the morning, followed by an hour of speeches and celebration, and then a break, before three more hours of speeches and celebration.

From Landrieu's perspective, there was much to celebrate. On his "Katrina 10: Resilient New Orleans" web site he claims that the Katrina disaster turned out to be a positive opportunity and as a result "New Orleans has turned itself around and has built the city that we should've built in the first time."[11] Presumably the city had to wait 287 years for the current experiment in neoliberal social engineering to arrive. Landrieu's boosterish assessment of Post-Katrina New Orleans can be summed up in his depiction of it as "America's best comeback story." In a blatant attempt to mislead readers, he boasts that "the New Orleans region has now returned to approximately 95 percent of its pre-Katrina population."[12] In fact, as a recent report shows, "New Orleans is now at about 78 percent of its population before the storm" and the recent growth rate has been 1.4%.[13] Aggregating the population with surrounding parishes is a transparent ploy to confuse the public.

Many have not come back to New Orleans because of lack of opportunities here and because the dominant model of development has created obstacles to their return. To make them disappear through fake statistics is an outrage. Landrieu obviously didn't grasp the ludicrous but painful irony of calling the post-Katrina era, in which almost a quarter of the population did not return, "the best *come-back story*" in U.S. history!

Landrieu's voice is the voice of denial, deception and delusion. Let's be explicit about what is denied, silenced and re-silenced.

RESILENCING: SOCIAL INJUSTICE

New Orleans, this city that has, according to Obama, made "remarkable" strides in becoming "more just," is second on the list of U.S. cities with the most extreme economic inequality, and the gap between rich and poor has been increasing.[14] The level of economic inequality in New

[11] Polly Mosendz, "New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu on the 10th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina" in *Newsweek* (August 29, 2015); online at http://www.newsweek.com/new-orleans-mayor-mitch-landrieu-10th-anniversary-hurricane-katrina-367046.

[12] Mitchell J. Landrieu, "About the Project," in *Katrina 10: Resilient New Orleans*; online at http://katrina10.org/about-the-project/.

[13] Jeff Adelson, "New Orleans area population still growing post-Katrina, but slowly: Post-Katrina increase slows to a plateau," in *The New Orleans Advocate* (March 28, 2015); online at http://www.theneworleansadvocate.com/news/11941581-172/new-orleans-area-population-still.

[14] This is according to a Bloomberg analysis, "Most Income Inequality, U.S. Cities," on *Bloomberg Business* (updated April 15, 2014); online at http://www.bloomberg.com/visual-data/best-and-worst/most-income-inequality-us-cities.

Orleans is comparable to the rate in Zambia.[15] It has very high levels of child poverty in particular and widespread poverty in general. Recent studies have shown that 39% of children in New Orleans live in poverty, which is 17% above the national average, and childhood poverty has been increasing since 2007. The 27% poverty rate for families is also very high compared to other U.S. cities and by historic standards for New Orleans. The Jesuit Social Research Institute recently issued a report showing the shockingly high cost of living compared to income in Louisiana, but especially in the New Orleans area, which has seen skyrocketing property values and rents.[16] In addition, despite heroic efforts by local groups, homelessness has remained a severe problem in the city.

We must not forget the over 100,000 citizens of New Orleans who have never returned, many because of lack of recovery support and the vast proportional increases in cost of living for poor and working class people. The replacement of public housing by mixed-income housing that displaces most former residents has also contributed to a process that should be recognized as a form of ethnic and economic cleansing. There has also been a 55% decrease in public transportation service as of 2015, and the budget of the Regional Transit Authority was still almost 40% below its pre-Katrina level in 2013.[17] New Orleans was once appreciated by locals and newcomers for its combination of *joie de vivre*, rich culture, and modest cost of living, especially for housing. But this financial accessibility disappeared in the post-Katrina housing crisis and the drastic cutback in affordable public services.

The struggle over housing was a crucial one (and one in which I participated actively for a long time). However, the movement unfortunately fell under the influence of narrow leftist sectarians who suffer from fetishism of the state.[18] The result was a one-sided obsession with the less than 5% of pre-Katrina units that were in public housing and an almost complete neglect for the half of all housing consisting of commercial rental units, not to mention a lack of concern for the less privileged home owners who were struggling desperately for just and adequate compensation for damages. Almost 52,000 of about 79,000 seriously damaged housing units were rental property.[19] The vocal activist focus on public housing divided the citizenry and played into the hands of developers and their bureaucratic allies, who quickly developed plans to reengineer both public housing and the housing market in general for purposes of profitable ethnic cleansing and gentrification. The possibility for a broad-based movement for housing justice was lost and the result has been ten years of continuing injustice to renters in particular.

Another area of acute injustice in post-Katrina New Orleans has been health care. Medical services collapsed after the disaster, have continued to lag in some areas, and have remained in a state of crisis in others. Mental health care and addiction treatment have suffered the worst. Emergencies related to mental health, alcoholism and drug addiction are all most commonly

[15] Robert McClendon, "New Orleans is 2nd worst for income inequality in the U.S., roughly on par with Zambia, report says," on *NOLA.com* (August 19, 2014), online at http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/08/new_orleans_is_2nd_worst_for_i.html.

[16] Jesuit Social Research Institute, "Too Much for Too Many: What does it cost families to live in Louisiana?" in *JustSouth Quarterly*; online at http://www.loyno.edu/jsri/too-much-too-many.

[17] See Ride New Orleans, "The State of Transit Ten Years After Katrina"; online at http://rideneworleans.org/state-of-transit-ten-years-after-katrina/.

[18] Legendary activist and cofounder of Common Ground Malik Rahim once replied to such sectarianism (at a US Federation of Worker Cooperatives national conference in New Orleans) that the goal must be the replacement of so-called "public housing" with democratic, resident-controlled community housing.

[19] See Luft and Griffin.

treated in the same manner, by consignment to Orleans Parish Prison. Furthermore, one of the great tragedies of the neoliberal re-engineering of New Orleans was the fraudulent condemning and closing of Charity Hospital and the deliberate destruction of a historic mid-city neighborhood for the sake of lucrative opportunities in developing its replacement. Charity could have been returned to service within days when it was most desperately needed, immediately after the disaster. The story of its permanent closing is rife with lies by the Jindal administration, and involved literal sabotage of the closed facility in an effort to secure FEMA funds for a new medical center. The public was duped out of $283 million dollars by deception and disinformation that disguised the fact that the old hospital could have been successfully adapted to fulfill current needs.[20] In addition, it is likely that many lives were lost and a great many people suffered needlessly as a result of this criminal injustice.

All of these injustices have been part of the neoliberal engineering process that has gone under the rubric of "New Orleans as a Boutique City." This concept was met with considerable contempt in the early days after Katrina, but it has returned repeatedly with a vengeance. Recently, Sean Cummings, a prominent real estate developer and CEO of New Orleans Building Corporation, boasted that "the city is a magnet again for new talent and new ideas, co-creating a new New Orleans." Cummings disingenuously explained that "a boutique city stands for something. It's original. It's authentic. It's one-of-a-kind."[21] In fact, this isn't what it means at all. New Orleans already stood for something, was original, was authentic, and was one of a kind. Creating a "new" New Orleans is based on a quite different agenda. To make it into a "boutique city" means that it will be marketed to more affluent tourists, to new residents from the entrepreneurial and technical ("Silicon Bayou") sectors , and to wealthy buyers looking for a second or third home in a town with appropriate entertainment and shopping opportunities.

RESILENCING: THE EDUCATION DISASTER

Post-Katrina New Orleans has gained considerable notoriety as the site of one of the nation's most far-reaching experiments in the destruction of a public school system and its replacement with a network of charter schools. Andrea Gabor, in a brief analysis recently published in the *New York Times*, discusses many of the problems with charter schools in New Orleans that critics have long found to plague such schools everywhere.[22] The general case against these schools has been argued convincingly, indeed devastatingly, by Diane Ravitch in a series of articles in the *New Review of Books* starting with "The Myth of Charter Schools" and in her book *The Reign of Error*.[23]

[20] See the "Save Charity Hospital" website; online at http://www.savecharityhospital.com/ for extensive information on these issues. The film *Big Charity* is a good introduction to the entire story of deception, betrayal, and criminal opportunism. Spike Lee's *If God is Willing and the Creek Don't Rise* also covers many of the Charity Hospital issues well. See the website for the documentary online at http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/if-god-is-willing-and-da-creek-dont-rise.

[21] Oscar Raymundo, "New Orleans Rebuilds As a Boutique City" on *BBC Travel* (11 February 2013); online at http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20130207-new-orleans-rebuilds-as-a-boutique-city.

[22] Andrea Gabor, "The Myth of the New Orleans School Makeover, in The New York Tims (Aug, 22, 2015); online at http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/23/opinion/sunday/the-myth-of-the-new-orleans-school-makeover.html?_r=2.

[23] See the *NYRB*'s Diane Ravitch page at http://www.nybooks.com/contributors/diane-ravitch/ and her book *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014).

Gabor applies many of these same arguments to the New Orleans case. She notes the discriminatory (a euphemism for "racist") nature of school reform. She cites "growing evidence that the reforms have come at the expense of the city's most disadvantaged children, who often disappear from school entirely and, thus, are no longer included in the data." Even establishment education figure Andre Perry, one-time CEO of the Capital One-University of New Orleans Charter Network, admits that "there were some pretty nefarious things done in the pursuit of academic gain," including "suspensions, pushouts, skimming, counseling out, and not handling special needs kids well." In other words, the case for charter schools depended in part on injustices to the less privileged students: those who in reality have the greatest needs, and who, from the standpoint of justice, deserve the most attention.

Gabor points out the questionable nature of claims for high performance by charter schools. She observes that studies ignore the fact that many disadvantaged students have been excluded from high-performing schools or from schools entirely and do not appear in statistics. She cites a recent study that concluded that "over 26,000 people in the metropolitan area between the ages of 16 and 24 are counted as 'disconnected,' because they are neither working nor in school." The Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives was forced to retract, due to flawed methodology, a study that concluded that the re-engineered New Orleans school system had "higher graduation rates and better test scores than could be expected, given the socio-economic disadvantages of their students."[24] The biggest innovation introduced by charter schools may be that cheating on tests and reports, a practice once restricted to naughty students, has now become official policy.

However, the biggest flaw in defenses of charter schools in New Orleans is that they are based on comparison with the neglected and underfunded pre-Katrina school system. They do not consider what would have been possible if the same kind of support and resources that have been lavished on charter schools had been devoted to creating a just, democratic, community-controlled school system that is dedicated to the welfare of every student and every neighborhood in the city.

RESILENCING: THE MIGRATION DISASTER

In the midst of global turmoil over this issue, not a single politician was able to even speak the word "migrant" in relation to our city's recent history. As is often the case, *the truth is too big to be noticed.*

I grew up hearing New Orleans called "The Gateway to the Americas,"[25] a term that was popular during the long tenure of Mayor deLesseps "Chep" Morrison. It was only much later that I heard the story of United Fruit Company and the part of the history of plunder of Latin America that was directed from board rooms in New Orleans. I discovered that New Orleans was a gateway to the exploitation of those *Other Americas* that are excluded from the official definition of "America."[26] This aspect of history is, however, systematically forgotten.

[24] Jessica Williams, "Tulane's Cowen Institute retracts New Orleans schools report, apologizes" at *NOLA.com* (Oct. 10, 2014); online at http://www.nola.com/education/index.ssf/2014/10/tulanes_cowen_institute_retracts_report.

[25] New Orleans aspires to regain that image, as a recent editorial story in *New Orleans Magazine* recounts. See "Rebuilding the Gateway" (June 2015); online at http://www.myneworleans.com/New-Orleans-Magazine/June-2015/Rebuilding-the-Gateway/

[26] See Stephen Duplantier, ed. *The Banana Chronicles*, an entire special issue of *Neotropica* magazine devoted to the story of the United Fruit Company and the exploitation of Central America; online at http://www.neotropica.info/.

Another forgotten reality is the fact that in many ways, New Orleans, "the Queen City of the South," is a *northern city*. This is true geographically. Our city lies at the northern edge of one of our great bioregional points of reference, the Western Mediterranean Sea, consisting of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.[27] This is also true culturally. We are a northern city because of our position at the northern edge of Latin America. Louisiana was for its first 121 years part of the French and Spanish empires, and New Orleans, in particular, has never entirely lost its Latin character. It is becoming more Latin once again.

Thus, we might have thought that the city would celebrate the renewed ties with Latin America that were created when Latino and Latina workers came to rebuild the city after the Katrina disaster. In reality, government and business gave at best an ambiguous welcome to these workers, even when they were most desperately needed. The authorities then either abandoned them, or redirected their attention to disposing of them. The local administration still gives lip service to the efforts of these workers in rebuilding the city, at least on ceremonial occasions. However, it does little to address their problems, while creating additional ones, and at the same time facilitating attempts to expel them from the city.

This treatment has been outrageously unjust and intolerable. For the past ten years, migrant workers and their families have been, and still are, subject to wage theft, dangerous health and safety conditions, housing discrimination, police harassment, arbitrary arrests, ethnic profiling, predation by criminals, terrorization by authorities, and subjection to demeaning tracking with ankle bracelets. In the early years after Hurricane Katrina, while migrants were hard at work rebuilbing the city, they were commonly called "Walking ATM's," since they were regularly preyed upon by thieves and had no recourse to a legal and penal system that was only interested in criminalizing the victims.[28] A recent interview with representatives of the Congress of Day Laborers (Congreso de Jornaleros) from WHIV radio's Katrina coverage is an excellent introduction to the experience of migrant workers and their families in post-Katrina New Orleans.[29]

We need to rethink that history and begin to celebrate New Orleans again as "the Gateway to the Americas." We just have to remember one thing this time: *A gateway opens in both directions.*[30]

RESILENCING: THE INCARCERATION DISASTER

Randolph Bourne famously proclaimed, paraphrasing Hegel, that "war is the health of the state." What is usually forgotten is that war on its own citizens is the highest expression of the state's health. After Katrina we in New Orleans got to see what the state is like when all

[27] The other great bioregional reality is, of course, the Mississippi River, and this is what makes us also a geographically southern city.

[28] When one looks carefully at the perseverance and determination of these migrants in the face of struggles and extreme hardships, they make the locals look a lot less resilient by comparison.

[29] For information on the Congress of Day Laborers, a project of the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice, see http://nowcrj.org/about-2/congress-of-day-laborers/. For the WHIV interview, see "Mark Alain and Congress of Day Laborers" (Aug. 29, 2015) on WHIV radio; online at https://soundcloud.com/whivfm/sets. During the program, Dr. MarkAlain Dery interviews Brenda Castro and Santos Alvarado, representatives of the Congress of Day Laborers on the Katrina Tenth Anniversary. WHIV was founded by Dr. Dery, medical director for the Tulane T-Cell Clinic, and his coworkers. It is dedicated to "public health, human rights and social justice," and is New Orleans' only full-time grassroots community radio station.

[30] A clear recognition of the injustices done to migrants is so difficult for many because it necessarily leads to a questioning of the very foundations of nationalism and imperialism.

its mitigating qualities collapse and it is reduced to its essential repressive nature. This is the "minimal"—but maximally brutal—state. The state as a state of war against the people.

It is important that we remember the terroristic conditions that prevailed in a city with a penal system (the state's essential moment) and no legal system (the state's inessential moment). This is what existed in New Orleans during the post-Katrina "state of exception."[31] This period was a state of "exception," not in the sense that it varied in principle from the normal and unexceptional. It was "exceptional" only in the sense that the normal reached a level of intensity that it made it so conspicuous that it could not for a certain period of time (before resilencing) be ignored.

But resilencing has followed. Thus, we must remember. We must not forget the prisoners who were trapped in Orleans Parish Prison in the rising floodwaters after Katrina, or herded away to spend countless hours on overpasses in the hot sun. We must not forget the horrors of the makeshift Greyhound Station Prison, "Guantanamo on the Bayou," where prisoners were put in outdoor wire cages, made to sleep on concrete floors, in oil and diesel fuel, where they were harassed and intimidated, and controlled by shootings with beanbag rounds.

We need to remember the subhuman conditions at Hunt Correctional Center, where inmates from OPP and victims of often arbitrary mass arrests after Katrina were herded together indiscriminately. Where they were thrown naked in bare cells, sometimes with hardened criminals or schizophrenics as cellmates. Where they were then given nothing to wear but jumpsuits, and nothing to read for over a month. Where they were often kept in cells for twenty-four hour a day. Where mattresses were taken away every day so prisoners could only sit or lie on concrete or metal. Where loud bells were rung every 15 minutes, every day, all day, in disciplinary tiers. We must remember the intimidation of citizens into forced labor with the threat of being sent to Hunt. We need to remember the period in which there was widespread police repression while racist vigilantes were allowed to terrorize some neighborhoods. We must remember the period in which power as domination was allowed to reveal its true face. The period in which *archy reigned supreme*.

Finally, we must remember one of the most horrifying of the realities that have been silenced, not only in Katrina commemorations, but in the everyday world of Big Easy business as usual. This is the brutal fact that New Orleans has for all these years been the world capital of "incarceration," which is merely a sanitized, Latinized term for the caging and torture of human beings. We must not forget that the United States leads the world in incarceration, that Louisiana leads the United States in incarceration, and that New Orleans leads Louisiana in incarceration. We must remember that in some ways incarceration in Louisiana has been the continuation of slavery by other means. We must never forget the murderous nature of a carceral system that destroys generations and destroys communities. This is a stark post-Katrina reality that no politician dares mention or commemorate.

RESILENCING: THE ECOLOGICAL CATASTROPHE

Beyond all these forms of resilencing lies the most extreme form of post-Katrina disavowal, and disavowal regarding the fate of New Orleans itself. This concerns the social ecology of the

[31] For an excellent survey of post-Katrina penal and legal issues, see Sideris, Marina, "Illegal Imprisonment: Mass Incarceration and Judicial Debilitation in Post Katrina New Orleans" (Berkeley: University of California Berkeley, 2007); online at http://www.law.berkeley.edu/library/disasters/Sideris.pdf.

city in relation to entrenched and accelerating global social ecological trends. No meaningful discussion of the future of New Orleans can afford to ignore the continuing loss of coastal wetlands, the implications of the accelerating rise in sea level, and the very real possibility (and long-term inevitability) of a much more powerful hurricane than Katrina hitting New Orleans directly. The specter of doom, indeed, highly likely doom, hangs over the city and it cannot be exorcised by denial, by disavowal, or by any amount of happy talk by politicians and corporate executives.

The depth of ecological disavowal was highlighted in a Katrina anniversary segment of the public radio program "On Point" Never during the hour-long program was the severity of the global ecological crisis and its implications for New Orleans really explored. However, I was struck in particular by an exchange with Dr. Paul Kemp, a Coastal Oceanographer and Geologist at Louisiana State University.[32] Kemp is one of the major advocates of Mississippi River diversion to create coastal wetlands. Paul Kemp is a good guy, standing up for the region, and, in particular, for the need to restore the coastal wetlands. But this is what makes his comments in some ways so troubling, since they also reflect the larger dominant ideology of disavowal.

Kemp didn't take on directly the details of how we are to cope with something between the three foot rise in sea level commonly accepted, and the ten foot rise recently suggested by a team headed by James Hansen and sixteen colleagues.[33] Furthermore, a rapid melting and collapse of large segments of the Greenland or Antarctic ice sheets would produce a much more rapid rise that would be devastating to coastal areas near or below sea level. The melting of the Greenland ice sheet would produce a twenty-foot rise in sea level, while that of the Antarctic ice sheet would produce a sixty-foot rise.[34] Most scientists believe that such effects will not be seen until into the next century.

Somehow, few think of a century as a comprehensible time span that has practical, concrete relevance. Even in relation to a three-hundred year old city. One might learn something from the ancient Hebrews, who posed the possibility that "the iniquity of the fathers" might be "visited on the children, to the third and the fourth generation."[35] Or from the Vedic Sages, who in the *Rig Veda* suggested that "the older shares the mistake of the younger"[36] Or from the Native Americans, who suggest that we consider the effects of our actions on the seventh generation. Or from the ancient Buddhist doctrine of karma, which, in literal terms, means taking responsibility for the way in which all the causes and conditions in which we are implicated have enduring consequences.

Kemp and others point out that if we can rebuild wetlands, to a certain degree the land will rise with sea level rise. And it is indeed true that in many ways our coastal wetlands are more ecologically adaptable than other kinds of coastline. However, such restorative approaches can only offer long term hope if global climate change is addressed much more effectively than nation-states and corporations have done or are indeed structurally capable of doing. If the worst scenarios

[32] "On Point" (August 26, 2015); online at http://onpoint.wbur.org/2015/08/26/new-orleans-10-years-after-katrina.

[33] J. Hansen et al, "Ice melt, sea level rise and superstorms: evidence from paleoclimate data, climate modeling, and modern observations that 2 ℃ global warming is highly dangerous," in Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss., 15, 20059–20179, 2015; abstract online at http://www.atmos-chem-phys-discuss.net/15/20059/2015/acpd-15-20059-2015.html.

[34] National Snow and Ice Data Center, "Quick Facts on Ice Sheets"; online at https://nsidc.org/cryosphere/quick-facts/icesheets.html

[35] Numbers 14:18.

[36] Thanks to Quincy Saul for this reference, and many other helpful suggestions concerning this discussion.

occur, as they are likely to, given the persistence of the dominant global economic and political order, such projects will be no more than futile gestures in the long run.

Kemp concedes that "In a very large storm we are not going to be able to keep all the water out," but explained after evacuation there will be "teams" that will "make sure that the property will be protected. The host, Tom Ashbrook, asks the incisive question: "Is New Orleans going to be around as we get higher sea levels?" But Kemp evades this question. In a conspicuously off-point response, he explains that the city's "original defenses" were vegetation and that "the marshes and swamps provided protection against surge and waves." He notes that "we have a big river to work with," implying that these traditional defenses will once again protect the city in the same manner that they once did, if we work diligently on coastal restoration.

But the current threats are of a different order from those faced when our "original defenses" did their job so well. In 2002, the *Bill Moyers' Now* program did a piece that outlined starkly the dangers to New Orleans posed by what has long been called "The Big One."[37] In the segment, Emergency Manager Walter Maestri points out that a direct hit from a major hurricane that stalled over the city could fill up the natural bowl between the levees and put twenty-two feet of water even in the relatively high ground of the French Quarter. Maestri also remarks that when his office participated in a mock Hurricane emergency[38] and saw projections of the effects of a major hurricane, model storm "Hurricane Delaney," on the city "we changed the name of the storm from Delaney to K-Y-A-G-B … kiss your ass goodbye … because anybody who was here as that Category Five storm came across … was gone."

An exchange from the interview is instructive. Daniel Zwerdling asks, "Do you think that the President of the United States and Congress understand that people like you and the scientists studying this think the city of New Orleans could very possibly disappear?" This is basically the same question that Tom Ashbrooke posed thirteen years later. But note the difference in the answer. Walter Maestri replies, "I think they know that, I think that they've been told that. I don't know that anybody, though, psychologically, you know has come to grips with that as — as a — a potential real situation." They know, but they cannot *act* as if they know. In other words, they respond to the situation through disavowal.

This kind of brutal realism is refreshing, and quite necessary, since our response needs to be proportional to the true magnitude of the problem, and we have cope with the fact that we are normally unable to respond in this manner. The documentary also included discussion of a proposal to build a large wall around the older parts of the city that are above sea level (more or less the quarter of the city nearest the river that didn't flood after Katrina), with huge gates that would be closed in times of heavy flooding, abandoning most of the city to destruction. This rather dramatic scenario may not be the correct approach, but at least has the merit of taking the long-term threats seriously. Taking possibly catastrophic future sea level rise seriously would require an even more ruthless sense of reality.

There is a fundamental obstacle to clear recognition of our true ecological predicament. If one really grasps the problem, one is forced to admit that the only sane, rational and humane response to such a problem is to take action that gets to its roots. This means becoming part

[37] "The City in a Bowl" (Nov. 20, 2002); transcript online at http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcript_neworleans.html. Excerpts from the original documentary are included in NOVA scienceNOW, "Hurricanes"; online at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/education/earth/hurricanes-new-orleans-threat.html.

[38] Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness exercise on 18 June 2002; see GlobalSecurity.org, "Hurricane Delaney"; online at http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/ops/hurricane-delaney.htm.

of a local and global movement to destroy the system that is producing the catastrophe. Faced with this crisis of conscience and crisis of action, most who are not already lost in denial will succumb to the path of disavowal and try strategically to disremember what they have learned about the crisis. Fortunately for them, their path of bad faith will be supported an entire world of systematically distorted discourse and practice.

RESILENCING: DISSIDENT VOICES & THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

The final important thing that has been denied and disavowed, silenced and resilenced is in fact the most positive thing that came out of the disaster. This is the story of the community self-determination, collective creativity, mutual aid, compassion, and solidarity that arose out of the devastated city. This story is perhaps told best in scott crow's book *Black Flags and Windmills* and in Francisco DiSantis and LouLou Latta's *Post-Katrina Portraits.*[39] It is a history that is obscured, minimized and even negated by the ideology of resilience.

Resilience is in itself merely an objective quality of a being, usually an organism or an ecosystem, and, by extension, a person or a community. It is not a moral virtue deserving of praise, though it is absurdly treated as one according to the resilientist ideology. The actual moral qualities related to resilience include diligence, perseverance, dedication, determination, and courage. Diligence or determination, which implies steadfastness and fortitude in the face of adversity, is in the Christian tradition one of the "seven Heavenly Virtues" that are counterposed to the "Seven Deadly Sins. Similarly, both *Adhiṭṭhāna* or resolute determination, and *Vīrya* or diligence, are among the *pāramitās*, or "perfections" in Buddhist ethics. And courage has been one of the cardinal virtues since the time of the ancient Greek philosophers.

A community needs a measure of resilience merely to survive. However, it needs *resolute courage* in order to break the chains of illusion and domination so that it can become free and self-determining, so that it can flourish and realize itself. The Katrina catastrophe loosened those chains for a moment, and the spectacle of the abject failure of the dominant political and economic system, and the flowering of grassroots mutual aid and solidarity inspired the beginnings of a movement to shake them off entirely.

In the wake of the Katrina disaster, Common Ground Collective volunteers talked about "a crack in history" or "a system crack" that had opened up, so that something new could emerge. A new world was emerging out of this fissure in the old, a new world based on values such as community and solidarity, care for one another, and care for the earth. If one reflects on these basic values, it is apparent this "new" world is in many ways a return to the very ancient idea of the beloved community.[40] It is a return to the commons, a world in which all our ancestors

[39] scott crow, *Black Flags and Windmills: Hope, Anarchy, and the Common Ground Collective* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2014). *The Post-Katrina Portraits* consists of images of survivors and volunteers sketched by artist Francesco di Santis and accounts of their experiences written by the subjects. A collection was published as a large format art book, *The Post-Katrina Portraits, Written and Narrated by Hundreds, Drawn by Francesco di Santis* (New Orleans: Francesco di Santis and Loulou Latta, 2007) and can also be found online at https://www.flickr.com/photos/postkatrinaportraits/show/. See also Part V: "New Orleans: Common Grounds and Killers," in Rebecca Solnit, *A Paradise Built in Hell*: *The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), pp. 231–303.

[40] This idea goes back two and a half millennia to the Buddhist concept of the *sangha* and two millennia to the Christian idea of the community of *agape*. In American history, it had its explicit roots in the thought of idealist

once lived. Just as the Peoples Hurricane Relief Fund and others fought in the name of a "Right of Return" to New Orleans, we need to be inspired by a "Right to Return" to the freedom of the commons. It was this spirit of the commons and the common that inflamed tens of thousands of (primarily) young people who came to New Orleans as volunteers, and sustained many thousands of local citizens who refused to leave or who returned quickly in order to serve and to save their own beloved communities.

The ideology of "resilience" is part of the process of paving over the crack, silencing the voice of insurgency. But not everyone looked to the Katrina anniversary as an opportunity to forget this history. In addition to the Tenth Annual Katrina March and Second-line[41], there was the Common Ground Collective Ten Year Reunion[42] and the Fifth Annual Southern Movement Assembly.[43] All of these dissident commemorations carried on the spirit of the post-Katrina radicalism, looking back to a history of grassroots struggle and communal creativity and forward to a future that will not only remember but also continue that history.

Almost ten years ago, reflecting on the scenes of post-Katrina destruction and on the recovery communities that were also emerging as communities of liberation and solidarity, I made the following hopeful observation:

"At the same time that the state and corporate capitalism have shown their ineptitude in confronting our fundamental social and ecological problems, the grassroots recovery movement has continued to show its strength, its effectiveness, and its positive vision for the future. Most importantly, within this large and diverse movement, some have begun to lay the foundation for a participatory, democratically self-managed community based on mutual aid and solidarity."[44]

I took as the prime example of this communitarian creativity the work of the Common Ground Collective, which, I said,

"operates several distribution centers, two media centers, a women's center, a community kitchen, several clinics, and various sites for housing volunteers. Its current projects include house gutting, mold abatement, roof tarping, tree removal, temporary housing, safety and health training, a community newspaper, community radio, bioremediation, a biodiesel program, computer classes, childcare co-ops, worker co-ops, legal assistance, eviction defense, prisoner support, after-school and summer programs, anti-racism training, and wetlands restoration work."[45]

Fragments of this emerging community of liberation and solidarity have endured and some have even grown and developed. True, this transformative vision has remained, as of today, largely unrealized in the face of the forces of normalization, cooptation and resilencing. Yet, many

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communitarian philosopher Josiah Royce, and came to fruition and concrete actualization, as is well known, in the communitarian liberation theology of Martin Luther King. Before any of this history started, it was already implicit in the way of life of indigenous peoples everywhere.

[41] "New Orleans Katrina Commemoration" Facebook page; online at https://www.facebook.com/thekatrinacommemoration

[42] "Common Ground Collective 10 Year Reunion" Facebook page; online at https://www.facebook.com/events/774116122702802/

[43] Anna Simonton, "Amid Katrina Commemoration Spectacle, a Southern Freedom Movement Takes Shape" in *Truthout* (Sept. 1, 2015); online at http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/32590-amid-katrina-commemoration-spectacle-a-southern-freedom-movement-takes-shape

[44] John P. Clark, *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 210.

[45] Ibid, p. 211.

in New Orleans, indeed a growing number, still strive to realize this vision, and seek to learn from our traumatic history a way beyond the chains of illusion and domination to communal freedom.

Perhaps the solution to our impasse is simply a matter of recognizing the obvious and acting accordingly. We need to admit that the disaster is permanent, and that it is of world-historical, indeed, earth-historical proportions. It seemed like a miracle that ten years ago, in the midst of devastation and abandonment, tens of thousands of volunteers could come together in post-Katrina New Orleans in a spirit of communal solidarity. Can there be a miracle today that is proportional to the magnitude of our challenge? The Earth itself, the *Oikos*, is our Common Ground. Our Time in History, the *Kairos*, is our Common Ground.

In a sense, I must ask today exactly the same question that I asked myself and others in the months after the Katrina disaster. In the Spring of 2006, I wrote an article that probed the psychological and ontological depths of devastation, and posed the political, and ultimately existential, question, "Do You Know What It Means?"[46] This is still the question. Will we put the disaster behind us, even as it continues and indeed intensifies at its deepest levels, or will we finally learn its lessons? Will we finally learn how to think and act: for ourselves, for the community, and for the Earth?

The rest is resilence.

[46] John Clark, "New Orleans: Do You Know What It Means?" in *New: Translating Cultures/Cultures Traduites* 2 (2006); online at https://www.academia.edu/2559184/_New_Orleans_Do_You_Know_What_It_Means.

The Planet Attacks!

The condition of the biosphere continues to erode. Human society continues to expand, leaving devastation in its wake. Climate crisis is no longer a fringe idea and yet the vast majority of humanity turn their backs on what it has wrought. There will be no ghost from the machine that will magically restore what has been lost. Extinction is not a metaphor. We will not rip out our eyes, like Oedipus in horror of what he has done. We will be strong, staring unblinking into the abyss, until we see the monster looking back at us.

An Ocean of Bones

The terminal condition of the Great Barrier Reef has been well-documented. It is now becoming clear that coral reefs all over the world are in a similar state of collapse. Over 70 percent of the world's reefs are now threatened due to bleaching, the process by which rising ocean temperatures cause the protective algae the covers the reefs to disappear. Exposed and unprotected, the reefs quickly die. There is no solution to this problem. It is not caused by direct human interference, it is no longer a matter of reducing pollution or carbon. The planet has moved into a hot phase and we have to confront what that means.

Salmon Boy Eats the Stars

Half of the species of salmon in California are on track to become extinct within the next fifty years, according to the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences. California has one of the most diverse salmon populations in the US. The future of California's salmon is largely threatened by the state's vast water infrastructure, required to sustain the enormous human population in a region with limited access to water. Because of these dams and levees, 95 percent of migratory salmon species are no longer able to travel to their ancestral spawning grounds, which they have been traveling to for 50 million years.

Doomsday is Not Enough

The Global Seed Vault, buried deep inside a mountain on an island in the arctic circle, was designed to protect some of the most valuable food crop seeds for human use in case of massive global disaster. The Vault, which opened in 2008, was built to be protected by the deep permafrost but scientists are now reporting than staggeringly high arctic temperatures have jeopardized the projects success by melting much of the permafrost and flooding the vault. The catastrophe, it appears, has already arrived.

The Wasteland

As the mainstream news and politicians continue to fan the flames of fear and paranoia around North Korea's desire to develop nuclear weapons, the Western Hemisphere's biggest nuclear waste site at Hanford in Eastern Washington is currently leaking highly radioactive chemicals due to a collapsed tunnel containing waste from its plutonium extraction program. For decades officials have been warning about weakening infrastructure at Hanford, which produced the nuclear material used in the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki at the end of World War II. The tunnel, which collapsed on ay 9th, contains some of the site's most powerful radioactive material, was being held up by rotting wooden beams more than 40 years old. As it is, damage from the leak

to the surrounding area appears to be minimal, though officials have said that if it had happened to be a windy day, radioactive particles would have been blown over all of Eastern Washington. This demonstrates how precarious our position is, all it takes is for the wind to blow the wrong way, and its all over.

Methane is the new CO2

The appearance of hundreds of mysterious bright blue lakes in Siberia is a potent reminder that CO2 may not be the most dangerous contributor to global warming for much longer. Siberian permafrost currently keeps billions of tons of methane, 30 times more effective than CO2 at storing heat in the atmosphere, locked up and frozen. For years scientists have feared that as global temperatures rise, the permafrost would melt and release these gases. These blue lakes, caused by algae attracted to the methane, are evidence that this has in fact already occurred.

An End to Hope

While the vast majority of the human race refuses to engage with the idea of climate catastrophe in any meaningful way at all, even some of the attempted solutions that have been proposed have now been determined to be ineffective. More and more scientists are arguing that none of the "large-scale land-use and technical solutions" that have been proposed would not succeed in mitigating the effects of climate change. For years there have been theories that global warming could be ameliorated by constructing biomass energy systems that would suck carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Central to that plan would be the establishment and maintenance of massive forest plantations that would capture and store the extra carbon and could be later used for fuel in facilities that would filter out the carbon and store it deep underground. This plan has been proposed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), despite the fact that scientists agree that there is no way to successful implement such a plan and that it is doubtful that it would solve the problem in any case. The resources and materials required to plant such massive amounts of trees would put an enormous toll on the ecosystem and without the technology to burn biomass without rereleasing the carbon into the atmosphere, which currently does not exist, the plan is meaningless.

Fear of — Black Snake

Indigenous communities and environmentalists, who have expressed concern over the construction of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline for years, have had their worst fears confirmed as a leak in the pipeline has already been reported at a pipe station in South Dakota in April. While the leak was modest, construction of the pipeline has not even been completed yet and it is impossible not to see this leak as the first of many. One of the attorneys fighting against the pipeline stated: "Pipelines leak and they spill. It's just what happens." There is no satisfaction for the anti-DAPL activists in saying 'I told you so' but it confirms how dire this situation is for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the millions of people whose drinking water is at risk.

Against Self-Sufficiency, the Gift by Sever

The Blank Slate

Going toe to toe with the forces of law and order… grappling with the exhausting necessity of destroying civilization… hungering for something more as the diet of riots and insurrections proves to be a shrinking buffet of diminishing returns… sooner or later, all of us pose to ourselves the question of opening up a wild space, where we can be nourished through a healthy relationship with the earth, creating a community that might serve as some kind of anti-civilization.

Maybe we reach this point after years of bruising our knuckles banging on a brick wall. Maybe we come to a strategic analysis of the shortcomings of the big social revolts around us. Maybe when we make our first conscious acts of rebellion, we take one look at what's called "struggle," based as it is in protests, acts of propaganda, and illegal confrontation, and decide it's not for us. Or maybe the attempt to create some kind of community or build a material self-sufficiency is the first step in our radicalization, to be followed later by acts of confrontation and sabotage.

Those of us who do not come from colonized communities—or more precisely from those who were colonized so long ago and so completely that we no longer have any living memory of it—of- ten admire the struggles of indigenous people. From our outsider's perspective, which is generally exoticizing and maybe just as frequently annoying, it seems that indigenous communities fighting to regain their lands and their autonomous existence have something that we lack: ground to stand on, a certain relationship with the world, perhaps.

It's very possible that I'm wrong, but what is certain, in any case, is that we "rootless ones" feel this absence, and it defines much of what we do. We suffer the predilection not only for abstraction that is widespread in Western culture, but also the material and the historical need to start from scratch if we aim to break with the festering civilization that created us.

The Blank Slate is an old and perilous myth in our culture. It is the God born of a Word, the freedom that means being unencumbered by relations with the world, the mathematical equality from which good things supposedly arise.

The suffering caused by the Blank Slate can be seen in Year Zero revolutions,1 in utopias founded on stolen land, in perfect ideas imposed at gunpoint.

The Community

Forming free communities is one of the most common methods people from the West use to break with capitalism and create a new world. The Anabaptists took this path to escape religious domination and break the stranglehold of feudalism and a nascent capitalism. The early socialists did it with their utopian communes. Jewish anticapitalists did it with the kibbutzim. The hippies did it with the Back- to-the-Land movement. A variety of groups, from MOVE to the Autonomen, did it with urban communes. Anticapitalists are doing it today in manifestations as diverse as

squatted villages in the Pyrenees and the Alps, or Tarnac in France. And there is also the steady stream of radical retirement to the countryside.

Such a longstanding, multifaceted tradition of struggle cannot be lightly dismissed, whatever criticisms we might have. The failure, so far, of all these many attempts—to "leave capitalism behind" or to serve as a springboard for attacks on the infrastructure of domination or to plant a seed for a new world or whatever their specific pretensions were—is mirrored by nothing less than the failure of all the other methods we have tried out to liberate ourselves. Failure is our common heritage, so ubiquitous that it hardly constitutes a big deal or a mark against us. Understanding the relationship between what we do and our failures: therein lies the gem.

The varied attempts to create liberated communities cannot all be measured with the same ruler, but one failing that crops up pervasively in our present context is worth mentioning. Nowadays, most people who have grown up with Western cultural values don't even know what a community is. For example, it is not a subculture or a scene (see: "activist community" or "community accountability process"), nor is it a real estate zone or municipal power structure (see: "gated community" or "community leaders").

If you will not starve to death without the other people who make up the group, it is not a community. If you don't know even a tenth of them since the day either you or they were born, it is not a community. If you can pack up and join another such group as easily as changing jobs or transferring to a different university, if the move does not change all the terms with which you might understand who you are in this world, it is not a community.

A community cannot be created in a single generation, and it cannot be created by an affinity group. In fact, you are not supposed to have affinity with most of the other people in your community. If you do not have neighbors who you despise, it is not a healthy community. In fact, it is the very existence of human bonds stronger than affinity or personal preference that make a community. And such bonds will mean there will always be people who prefer to live at the margins. Whether the community allows this distinguishes the anti-authoritarian one from the authoritarian one.

A group of anarchists or socialists or hippies who go off into the mountains to live together will end up hating one another. It is the very presence of disagreeable neighbors that teaches us to appreciate the people we have affinity with. An "anarchist community" is an odious proposition.

Circled Wagons

Today, the rural community as an anticapitalist project is often motivated by the search for self-sufficiency. People who hate this civilization want to recover their power to feed themselves, to heal themselves, to relearn the skills necessary for sustaining life. A worthy proposition, on the face of it.

Self-sufficiency might take on individualistic or isolationist tones—as when a single tiny community tries to meet its own needs—or it might constitute a more collective project—as when a network of communities try to meet their needs together. It may contain the absurd belief that we can get rid of capitalism by creating an alternative to it, turning our backs on it, or it may be a modest attempt to live better and more deliberately as we participate in multifaceted struggles against civilization. In any case, the very construct of the idea will tend to push us in a direction that, even if it does not represent a fiasco, at the least constitutes a missed opportunity.

Every course of action we take comes back to us as representation, when we talk about it and reflect on it. This representation often exists as a visual metaphor that in turn suggests a strategy.

Self-sufficiency is a circling of the wagons. We imagine it as a breaking off of relationships, the end of a dependency, the bearing of our own weight, the closing of a circle. Some of these visual metaphors and the strategies they encourage are benign, an average mix of advantages and disadvantages. Others feed directly into a pioneer machismo. But in both cases, they have too much in common with a puritan idea of productivity and independence, and with the myth of the Blank Slate.

A community based on self-sufficiency might get "walled in together," true to the original meaning of the term (see: munis). Etymology is not deterministic, since meaning is alive: contextual, fluctuating, and resourceful. In this case, community's etymology can come to us as a gift, a warning of what might come to pass if we are not careful.

We never bear our own weight, and to speak truthfully, we never feed ourselves. It is the earth that feeds us and bears us up. Everything we have that makes life possible is the result of a gift.

The Gift

What we truly need in this war against civilization, this war for our lives, is not to break off relationships but to create more abundant relationships. We do not need communities with pretensions of self-sufficiency, living off the product of their own labor, hacking their means of subsistence out of the womb of an inert and passive earth with the sweat of their own brow. We need communities that ridicule the very ideas of labor and property by reviving reciprocity, cultivating the gift, and opening our eyes to the worldview that these practices create.

The earth gives us the gifts we need to survive, if we go looking for them, and we can give back to the earth, with our waste, with our love, and when we die with our very bodies. Wanting to live reciprocally is an admirable purpose, and a project that can give us strength in our struggles. In order to cultivate these gifts, we will have to relearn many traditional skills that capitalism has stolen from us. In this regard, the practice of the gift seems equal to the practice of self-sufficiency. But instead of a miserly self-nourishment calculated to close off dependencies, we can foster a rich web of interdependence through an active generosity that erodes capitalist scarcity and alienation.

When you have a garden, you have abundance. The same is true if you have a skill that enables you to perform acts of art and creation. The moment you start to sell this abundance, or to limit it in order to divert energy to meet all your other needs within a closed circle, scarcity is born.

Instead of a closed circle, the gift is a subversive invitation to abandon capitalism and the worldview it inculcates. This is true whether the gift is a basket of tomatoes from your garden, mushrooms or calendula you have gathered, a day spent measuring and cutting door frames for a neighbor's new house, or an afternoon taking care of a friend's children. Reciprocating gives us pleasure, and through the open circle of the gift we form an exp an — sive web of complicities and relationships through which we can nourish and support ourselves. Rather than fleeing the cities, going back to the land in a mutiny destined to isolation and failure, the practice of the gift allows us to return to capitalism's terrain—and all the people held captive there—with forms of abundance and sharing that encourage further struggle.

Finally, the fundamental idea of reciprocity and bounty is incompatible with the exploitation of nature, whereas projects animated by self-sufficiency often give rise to pioneering and productivist attitudes.

In the city, in the country, and in the mountains, wild nature and struggle against civilization are ever-present possibilities. In those inevitable moments when we seek some respite, when we try to nourish ourselves as a form of struggle, and when we attempt to find a niche that could allow us to form a healthy part of a web of living things, the way we understand our goal and the vision it fits into will have a great effect on what we reap.

The sharing of gifts seems like a simple gesture, but in truth it is a rebellious practice and a kind of relationship with the world that, if followed to its conclusions, will spell the abolition of property, the throwing down of walls and fences, the destruction of every law, and the liberation of every slave. All it requires is the boundless daring, desire, and generosity to break with the isolation, the insecurity, the misery, the loneliness, the addiction, and the fear that constitute our culture.

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Editors: Ramon Elani, Aragorn!, dot matrix http://blackseed.anarchyplanet.org (website down as of this upload) Thanks! the old *Black Seed* collective, HP Wombat, Brendon Holt, Dougie Frankenfurt

Black Seed: Issue 6

Songs of Creation & Destruction

Various Authors

2018, summer

Welcome to Issue #6

The sixth issue of Black Seed continues an effort to challenge and expand the meanings of both Green and Anarchy. As *editors and contributors, we not only wish to reject notions of the state and capitalism, but seek perspectives that are earth-focused, unexpected, or inhuman.*

The binary of the Fearsome Sky God and Sweet Mother Earth is a historical fallacy. If we seek to speak of the earth, let it not be in language perverted and twisted by narrow-minded gender ideals, but in language that rejoices in the cruel glory of the natural world.

The preceding is from the call for submissions to this issue. Even beyond this issue and this theme, this callout stands as a marker for our continuing efforts to live and imagine differently in a world that has seen and foiled many previous such efforts.

Ambiguity is one word for the reality of things that cannot be said to be good or bad, or even good *and* bad, but that exist orthogonal to that polarity. Is a mother who kills her child bad or good? Can you call her good or bad if she's a slave and her child will be a slave too? What if she's attempting to keep older children alive by killing her most recent? These are only a few examples of real decisions that real women (and families) have made and will make, and they point to the two branches of this issue's theme; one that reflects on earth as a mother, and the other on mothers as primarily nurturers.

Our cover image for this issue, a photo of one of the two destroyed dams on the Elwha River, speaks to some of the ambiguous terrain we're exploring. At face value, the destruction of the Elwha dams is an incredible and rare success story. Decades of struggle through legal and less- or not-legal means were finally successful. Dams are one of the most significant interventions in indigenous subsistence practices, and the removal of these two has meant a remarkable resuscitation in the ecosystem of the river, with birds, salmon, native plants, all coming back with almost unbelievable speed. And yet, there are more complicated ramifications. First, it signifies a struggle that was successfully pushed through the apparatus of the state. For those of us who recognize the structural and perspectival limitations of fighting by the rules of the current system, this step towards a balanced ecosystem will be two steps back if it's seen as a reason to use the tools of the system.

As significantly, one reason to build dams is for energy production. Given the scale of the (ever- increasing) demand for energy, there are no good options—to the extent that sincere and passionate environmentalists have promoted nuclear energy, despite the toxins lasting for thousands of years, because *everything else is worse*.

We celebrate the victory of the Elwha River, while keeping clear in our mind that *that* victory, *that* ecosystem's return, can only come at the cost of other ecosystems. That is the way of the civilization that surrounds and informs us. That victory is both real and not real, in a world in which floating continents of plastic and miles of fishing nets denude the oceans, in which ongoing oil-spills in Africa have no one even attempting to clean them up, in which toxic waste is buried or dumped offshore by the multi-ton load, etc. The very real successes happen in a context of overwhelming poison, misery, and extinction, and cannot be said to offset them.

The goal of *Black Seed* is to look at all of it, not to hide from or over-emphasize the bad or the good, or the things that are neither or both, to see humans, to see ourselves, as small, overly-loud parts of a whole that was doing better when we were quieter, and to consider how we can loudly remember, or learn, to be quieter again, in a civilization that promotes the equation of silence with death.

The Leopard's Grammar/ Iron Tree Blooms in the Void

by Ramon Elani
For Avalon

> *It was because the children of the Empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the Northern forests who were.*
>
> -Thoreau, "Walking"

To speak of green anarchy, to attack or denounce civilization and industrialism, without speaking from a mystical place, a sacred place, is to speak with a mouth full of ash. Proper reverence for the gods, spirits, and forces of the earth is at the very heart of our critique. To re-emphasize and strengthen this connection, to re-affirm that what we are about is in essence a religious crusade, is to lead the green anarchist position forward. Do you deny the gods? Guess who else does that? The engineers of the state, the capitalists, the industrialists, the humanists, the ones who will sacrifice the world itself to serve their own ambitions toward godhood. As soon as humanity, in the infancy of the Enlightenment, declared its independence from the gods and the world of so-called superstition, technoindustrial society was born. Those who seek to define a sense of the world in which humanity does not occupy the sole position of power without basing their position in the nature of the sacred are grasping at straws. It is an incoherent position because it has no foundation on which to stand. In this regard, technoindustrial society is correct: if there is no god(s) than why should humanity not exploit the cosmos as it will?

Leave the earth a withered husk and dream of worlds beyond to scour. For as long as the green anarchist trend has existed, we have venerated the memories and lifeways of those who lived and still live without civilization. And for just as long, we have neglected the fact that those communities, without exception, based their entire existence upon a spiritual conception of the world. There is not, and has never been, a community of people that lived outside of techno-industrial society that did not see the gods in the sky, in the dirt, in the stones, rivers, trees, and creatures.

Thus, let us proudly return to such a vision of the world.

No longer picking and choosing the elements of primitive life that appeal to us and neglecting those that threaten our modern, Enlightenment morals and assumptions, which continue to dominate the thinking of too many, that say that the world of spirits and gods is superstitious and irrational. We do not get to venerate the ways of ancient people on one hand and then dismiss them as simple-minded and ignorant on the other because they believed that powers and deities ruled the world. Make no mistake, the ideology of techno-industrial society is nothing if not secular. And by rejecting the world of the gods and spirits, we put ourselves on the side that we claim to be fighting. Let us clarify further: when we speak of gods and spirituality, we do not

speak of the world-denying Abrahamic religions, though even within that repressive tradition there are ways that the old gods filter through via the gnostics, the sufis, and the cults of the saints, among other mystical strands.

In articulating a spiritual basis for green anarchy, we put ourselves back in conversation with some of the our own most foundational and influential thinkers. Moreover, just as we will seek to no longer mould the examples of uncivilized communities to meet our own secular tastes, we will find that the roots of our own intellectual tradition were utterly committed to a spiritual understanding of the world. For Gary Snyder, "the poet laureate of deep ecology" and one of the most powerful theorists of "the wild," zen buddhism and indigenous spirituality formed the core of his understanding of the world. In 1973, he described himself as a "Buddhist-animist" or "Buddhist-shamanist." However, and this point cannot be overstated, the spirituality that I propose as a basis for contemporary green anarchy and the spirituality that Snyder promoted, as we will see in what follows, is not of a kind that takes us away from the world to a place beyond the stars. It is not a spirituality that is above nature. It is not a spirituality that teaches humanity that this is not our home and that our true destiny resides in the world to come. It is a spirituality that is immanent, it is instantiated in the world we live in. It is a spirituality that is alive in every fern, in every rock, in every flying, buzzing thing, in every grain of sand. Like the indigenous communities that we are right to venerate, we must rediscover that the universe is animate, vibrant, and alive, with thought and will and spirit. What is at stake in this spiritual understanding of the world is nothing less than connection and relation. This is what we have lost as we have increasingly denied the spirit world. And once again, we must emphasize that the monotheistic religions have not necessarily sought to repair this lost sense of connection. As Snyder remarks in a conversation with philosopher Bron Taylor: *Interrelatedness is a common-sense observation… What's not common is the mind-body dualism that begins to come in with monotheism. And the alliance of monotheism with the formation of centralized governance and the national state, that's what's unnatural, and statistically in a minority on earth. The [most common] human experience has been an experience of Animism.*

For Snyder, an animist spiritual orientation was linked to a critique of the state. While Snyder's relationship to anarchy as such might be debatable, it's clear that he was utterly opposed to the state formation.

In his 2010 book *Dark Green Religion,* Bron Taylor argues that radical environmentalism is fundamentally a religious movement, despite the fact that many individuals who identify themselves that way are explicitly hostile towards religion or supernatural phenomena. Taylor perceives a number of different tendencies within a broader spiritual, environmental orientation. He writes: *the first two types are forms of Animism…one supernatu- ralistic and the other naturalistic.* Taylor refers to the other form as *Gaian Earth Religion…a shorthand way to suggest holistic and organicist worldviews.* This type also expresses itself in supernaturalist or naturalist variations. The two sets of distinctions here are significant. Animism, according to Taylor's definition, refers to the perception of consciousness, vitality, soul, or breath in natural entities. This kind of "spirit" may exhibit supernatural power or not, as the distinction between naturalistic and supernaturalistic demonstrates. What Taylor calls "spiritual animism" is the belief these energies or consciousnesses contain "some immaterial, supernaturalistic dimension," while "naturalistic animism" denies or is at least skeptical of these immaterial qualities but nevertheless seeks some form of understanding or even communication. In this latter form, we can say that there is an emphasis on respect for the animistic world, if not outright reverence. We might think of this

distinction as respecting a tree because it is a tree, and thus alive and containing some kind of vital essence, as opposed to giving reverence to the tree because it contains a particular kind of spirit that may offer boons in exchange for sacrifices. Taylor identifies Gary Snyder firmly within the tradition of spiritual animism, for example.

What Taylor terms Ga- ian Earth Religion is based in the belief that the universe or cosmos itself is *alive or conscious, or at least by metaphor and analogy to resemble organisms with their many interdependent parts.* Thus, this tendency is inclined to think of the natural world as a whole, either in scientific terms or not. The supernaturalistic variation of this tendency is explicitly invested in the notion that the universe itself has some kind of consciousness or soul. Taylor identifies this type of conception within conventional ideas of "God" or the Ve- dic "Brahma." Taylor also points out that this model is especially powerful within the so-called New Age movement. Ga- ian Naturalism is Taylor's term for the conception of a holistic universe that is nevertheless perceived and engaged with via scientific analysis rather than explicitly spiritual metaphors and concepts. However, as Taylor points out, even those who adhere to this perspective most often express their feelings of *awe and wonder when facing the complexity and mysteries of life and the universe* in the language of the sacred. Taylor identifies James Lovelock as a prime example of the Gaian Naturalist type. Lovelock, throughout his career, has emphasized that the basis for his Gaia theory lies in the scientific realm. Taylor writes, *Lovelock emphasized that for him Gaia is a metaphor, not a sentient god.* Indeed, Lovelock consistently identified himself as a scientific agnostic. However, as we shall see, these distinctions are muddier than they appear. While Lovelock argues in favor of a scientific understand of a holistic and sentient universe, he acknowledges that *if we could revere our planet with the same respect and love that we gave in the past to God, it would benefit us as well as the Earth.* Taylor's analysis of what he calls "dark green religion" becomes especially relevant to our purposes when he discusses its articulation among radical environmentalists.

Taylor dedicates the better part of his chapter on Radical Environmentalism to a discussion of William "Avalon" Rogers, who committed suicide while in jail for the infamous 1998 ELF Vail action. We should pause here for a moment and acknowledge that the lesson of Avalon is one that contemporary green anarchists would do well to remember. Years of squabbling about agriculture, symbolic culture, and rewilding has not honored the memory of this courageous man. For the moment, let us simply say that in urging green anarchists to embrace the latent spirituality of our position, I also urge us to return to Avalon.

In *Mountains and Rivers Compel Me,* Avalon's photocopied compilation of essays, poetry, and art (which he distributed freely), he writes that his goal is to urge activists to abandon "human chauvinism." At this point, it is not clear that green anarchy, broadly speaking, has succeeded in this. Among other influential writers, Avalon also included essays by Vine Deloria, arguing that Christianity was responsible for waging a war against the cosmos and that only a return to an indigenous, that is to say animist, worldview could save humanity. The works of Edward Abbey and Dave Foreman also feature heavily in Avalon's compilation. Both thinkers are paradigmatic of the naturalistic tendency, emphasizing the sacredness of the natural world but ending their critique somewhat before arriving at a fully supernatural position. In an interview with Bron Taylor, Foreman remarks

> *It's very difficult in our society to discuss the notion of sacred apart from the supernatural, I think thats something that we need to work on, I nonsupernatural concept*

of sacred; a nontheistic basis of sacred. When I say I'm a nontheistic pantheist it's a recognition that what's really important is the flow of life, the process of life.

Edward Abbey's works also demonstrate this insistence upon a notion of the sacred, albeit in naturalistic terms, as a guiding principle for environmentalism.

Radical environmentalism presents a key formulation of "dark green religion" in terms of its ambivalent apocalyptic perspective. On one hand the end is coming and it will involve immense human and non-human suffering; it may come quickly, it may unfold slowly, but it is unstoppable. On the other hand, the end, however it is conceptualized, will involve the breakdown of the anthropo- centric techno-industrial world, which is responsible for the loss of contact with the natural world and the extinction of countless species. The millenarian orientation of the "dark green religions" can be understood in terms of hastening the collapse or bringing about the rapture in Christian theology. The collapse of techno-industrial civilization is seen as imminent and thus we are in the position to give it a final nudge. In 1986, for instance, Edward Abbey stated his belief that industrial civilization would not last another fifty years.

Having seen some of the ways that a spirituality, whether naturalistic or su- pernaturalistic, has informed many of the foundational concepts of thinkers within and around green anarchy, let us focus on the example of Gary Snyder.

Forget wild plants, their virtues lose dream-time.

It is the spirit that ties us to the land. In his seminal 1990 collection *The Practice of the Wild*, Gary Snyder writes:

For a people of an old culture, all their mutually owned territory holds numinous life and spirit. Certain places are perceived to be of high spiritual density because of plant or animal habitat intensities, or associations with legend, or connection with human totemic ancestry, or because of geomor- phological anomaly.

The spirit dwells in the land. Features of the landscape, animal and plant species have meaning beyond what is simply perceived by the confessedly inadequate human senses. But we have other senses, as well. Ones that have withered from neglect. Contemporary green anarchists are no less likely to laugh at the idea of talking to trees than those who blindly follow the ideology of the techno-industrial world. What does it say about us that we refuse to accept the common beliefs of those who came before us? We may be tempted to dismiss such stuff as hippie new age nonsense and hokum. But in doing so, we may as well abandon the entirety of our convictions regarding the path of humanity and the natural world. If the trees do not speak to us, we must begin to ask if the fault lies not with us, who no longer address them. As Snyder writes: *If we are on the verge of postcivilization, then our next step must take account of the primitive worldview which has traditionally and intelligently tried to open and keep open lines of communication with the forces of nature.* As green anarchists, it is not clear that we have yet taken this step. The old anarchist insistence on denying the gods puts us at odds with both the indigenous worldview and the cosmos.

Down with demonic killers who mouth revolutionary
slogans and muddy the flow of change, may they be
Bound by the Noose, and Instructed by the Diamond

Sword of ACHALA the Immovable, Lord of Wisdom, Lord
of Heat, who is squint-eyed and whose face is terrible
with bare fangs, who wears on his crown a garland
of severed heads, clad in a tiger skin, he who turns
Wrath to Purified Accomplishment.

It is clear that anthropocen- trism is the root of the industrial and techno-industrial worldview.

We can frame this as humanism or human exceptionalism. In any case, it comes down to the same thing: a vision of the universe that places humanity above nature or the world. Where in ages past, indigenous people saw spirits, deities, individual entities populating the world, techno-industrial society sees the world as having one species and then a lot of raw material, aesthetically pleasing or displeasing scenery, gross things, cute things, and food. To say that the world is spirit neither denies the materiality of the world nor posits an anthropocentric perspective. The things of the spirit are not intangible, invisible specters, not wholly anyway. Perhaps they have this form as well. But the spirit and the land are one. They are intermingled, interpenetrated. The stream that I see is the stream but it is also more than what I see. We may call what that otherness is by different names. There is an intelligence there, an agency, an identity.

But let us pause here, for a moment. Just as the bland secularism and denial of the gods by most anarchists takes us further away from the proper reverence of the land and accurate estimation of indigenous communities, we must also be wary of positing a return to a lost innocence. This position likewise takes us away from the world that is and puts us into the realm of delusion. The world is what it is. We are no longer what we were ten thousand years ago. What we are now, who can say? The passage of ten thousand years may not be long in geological terms but in terms of human life and society it is not nothing. There is an even more profound point to make, however, which is that there was never innocence in the world. Not among animals, not among early humans, not among the grinding might of the glacier, not among the flaming stars. In reconsecrating our bonds to the gods of the earth, we do not seek to return to some idyllic childhood of our race. To paraphrase Robinson Jeffers, it was dark already when humanity first walked upon the earth. The bonds between humanity and the earth were always, and always must be, honored with blood, without the bourgeois moralism of the Enlightenment. No, there was never innocence. Perhaps there was wholeness or a greater sense of connection to the spiritual, animate earth. But such gifts were bestowed by putting humanity in its proper place, among the other creatures that crawl through the dust. The strength of the non-industrial world is not that it is egalitarian, peaceful, or kind. Its strength is derived from properly estimating the worth of humanity, which is to say, very little indeed. This is not to say that equality, peace, and kindness are absent from the course of human history. They will always have their moments.

"*No need to survive!*" *"In the fires that destroy the universe at the end of the kalpa, what survives?"—"The iron tree blooms in the void!"*

Innocence. How long has this idea perniciously invaded our vision of the world? The world is innocent and humanity is wicked. Within humanity, moreover, the civilized are wicked and the primitive are innocent. It is time to dispense with this nonsense once and for all. The innocent is the simple. To be innocent is to lack proper understanding. To be innocent is an enviable though ultimately untenable position. The innocent is so because he does not know. He is naive and gullible because he doesn't know any better. He is innocent because he doesn't have language,

because he doesn't have culture. He is innocent because he does not make war, because he does not eat the flesh of animals, because he does not dominate his fellows or the earth. To conceptualize those we admire and seek to emulate in such terms is to reduce them to being ahistorical, one-dimensional, and childlike. In other words, we reduce and simplify them in order to feel better about our own wickedness: "Nothing makes one so vain as being told that he is a sinner." Those who would find an idyllic primeval past full of brainless saints would do well to look at the literature of the architects of modernity, colonialism, and empire and find their poisonous words repeated back to them.

If we acknowledge agency among the other we must acknowledge its capacity to act as it will, not as we would prefer, according to our moral assumptions. The entities and forces of the world will act however they choose. They do not give a damn for our ideas of how one should act. The techno-industrial world cannot grasp that it is not the moral compass of the universe, no matter how radically it has been proven to be morally bankrupt. If we prefer to view the world and its spirits as techno-industrialism does, as inert bodies, dumb and senseless matter, as so much material that must be ordered and arranged by our enlightened hands, then by all means we should continue to ascribe the same level of agency to them as we do to our children.

> *From "King" project a law. (Foxy self-survival sense is Reason, since it "works")*
> *and Reason gets ferocious as it goes for*
> *order throughout nature—turns Law back on*
> *nature. (A rooster was burned at the stake*
> *for laying an egg. Unnatural. 1474.)*

Re-acknowledging the spiritual vitality of the world may force green anarchy to reexamine some of its current preoccupations. On some level, this may account for the hesitation of so many anarchists to embrace a properly spiritual orientation. Too many are unwilling to let go of the struggles for equality, justice, and freedom. To truly dehumanize our perspective means changing our response to the sufferings of humanity. If we truly seek to renounce an anthropocentric view of the world, we must unfortunately recognize that equality, justice, and freedom are unknown to the spirit of the cosmos. Reason, rationality, and the others are not to be found on earth, other than in the dreams of the same modern, Enlightened consciousness that enslaved and massacred half the world: the same consciousness that gave birth to industrialism. Again, let's be thorough—to deny the existence of a world without suffering, exploitation, and cruelty is not the same thing as sanctioning, promoting, or celebrating the horror and vileness of the current state of humanity. We may be able to trade certain types of suffering for others. And doing so may constitute more than a quantitative difference. But as long as solving human problems—whether disguised or not beneath layers of superficial variation—remains the primary orientation of green anarchists, we will continue to maintain and reinforce an anthropocentric consciousness. Regretfully, we would be better off sitting on the mountaintop and dedicating our lives to prayer than trying to fight the battles that so many are preoccupied with. In the words of Dogen: *The imperial power has no authority over the wise people in the mountains.* These are understandable battles, perhaps. Worthy battles, perhaps. But nonetheless, battles that will bring us no closer to what we claim to seek. Perhaps with prayer and meditation we can return to the spirit of the world: *knowing that nothing need be done, is where we begin to move from.* There is no doubt that we stand in the

midst of the Kali Yuga, the age of vice, of quarrel and contention, and the bull of dharma stands upon one leg alone.

Death himself,
(Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor) stands grinning, beckoning. Plutonium tooth-glow.
Eyebrows buzzing.
Strip-mining scythe.
Kali dances on the dead stiff cock.
Aluminum beer cans, plastic spoons, plywood veneer, PVC pipe, vinyl seat covers,
don't exactly burn, don't quite rot,
flood over us,
robes and garbs
of the Kali-yuga
end of days.

To evoke the Vedic goddess Kali here is not coincidental, for she represents a conception of mother nature or mother earth that provides an important corrective to the ways that mother earth or nature has been imagined in technoindustrial society.

It is not surprising that contemporary society is inclined to view the earth as a mother, given the dysfunctional ideas we have about motherhood. Within a patriarchal society, the mother is deprived of all power. The awe-inspiring power to create life is relegated to a figure of domestic servitude. She is expected to love and provide endlessly for her children. She is expected to be selfless, to ask nothing in return, to give and give, without ever thinking of herself or her needs. When we think about this as a model for our relationship with the earth, much of the basis for our exploitation of the natural world becomes clear. It is not that conceptualizing the earth, or nature, or the wild in terms of the mother is a mistake. It's that our ideas about what constitutes motherhood are so severely flawed. In the vedas, Kali is simultaneously creator and destroyer, war goddess and nurturing mother nature. She is loving as well as terrifying. Moreover, the worship of Kali demonstrates an awareness of the terrible aspect of mothering, as well as the nurturing. What would it mean if we brought this kind of awareness to our conceptions of the natural world? First of all, as we have said, it would mean that we acknowledge how small and trivial humanity truly is. We are not our mother's favorite child, only one among billions. She does not bestow special favors upon us, certainly not without receiving offerings from us, which she has not received in a very, very long time. We are not exceptional, other than the childish petulance with which we ruin things. Secondly, it would mean that we understand the proper role of fear and terror in the wild world. Given the fact that humanity has made its own world, cut off from the wild, it has been a long time since we experienced the kind of fear that we were made to feel. The only fear that humanity now faces, by and large, is the solitary fear of its own madness. It is right for human beings to feel fear in the face of the awesome powers that stand above us. The leopard, the storm, the mountains, the dark woods, the reeking swamps. It is right to be afraid of these things. For fear is the twin of love. And what we do not fear becomes deprived of agency, passive and inert material that we can heedlessly exploit and squander.

Not all those who pass

In front of the Great Mother's chair

Get past with only a stare.

Some she looks at their hands To see what sort of savages they were.

In regards to the dual nature of the mother, as creator and destroyer, that informs our sense of the earth and the wild, Snyder points us to Thoreau's 1851 essay "Walking." In that classic piece Thoreau writes of *this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard.* We also know, however, that leopards occasionally devour their own children. Thus, this metaphor is even more apt than it first appears. Affection and violence are not mutually exclusive. Love and terror. Thoreau continues: *the Spaniards have a good term to express this wild and dusky knowledge, Gramatica parda, tawny grammar, a kind of mother-wit derived from that same leopard to which I have referred.* Humanity is inarguably a child of the cosmos. This does not protect us, however. For the spirit of the world is armed with stabbing teeth and ripping claws. In the dreamtime, this truth was known by all. For the gods walked the earth then and were armed with fearsome weapons indeed.

We know that the spirit world exists, because we see it in our dreams. Our hidden parts, the parts that have been sealed shut by techno-industrial society like an oyster protecting the pearl within, remain connected with the spiritual nature of the world. It is within the unconscious, within the world of dreams that we confront the self that is beyond the self. And is this not ultimately the lesson of spiritual and mystical traditions? That all is one, all is not human. For that matter, human is not human. We are in the rock, tree, beast, and insect. And they are in us. For all is one, and that one is the spirit. Snyder puts it thus: *the world is our consciousness, and it surrounds us. There are more things in the mind, in the imagination than "you" can keep track of—thoughts, memories, images, angers, delights rise unbidden. The depths of mind, the unconscious, are our inner wilderness areas, and that is where a bobcat is right now. I do not mean personal bobcats in personal psyches, but the bobcat that roams from dream to dream.*

To dehumanize the human perspective, as Robinson Jeffers urged, requires finding that the true essence of humanity is not as human but as part and parcel of the cosmos themselves. We are less than the storming waves, less than the thundering storm, less than the bear, and the oak. But we are also a part of them all. The wilderness is the place where these truths become self-evident. And yes, it is no coincidence that the city is the heart of the techno-industrial world and the temple of humanity's worship of itself. The spirit of the world, the wilderness still pulses through us. Stalking silently through the jungles and dark forests of the soul, like a bobcat, a leopard. We are not what we think we are, not as individuals and not as humans.

The dream-world, the world of the unconscious, the spirit world, the dew- drop world has been understood in various ways by pre-industrial communities all around the world. This is the world that we must seek. It is not above or beyond the world that we see but it is deeper and richer. We once dreamed with the trees, rivers, and stones. But now, for too long we have dreamed our own lonely dreams, constructed by the awful logic of the techno-industrial world. For Gary Snyder, the indigenous American spiritual perspective still remains central. It is etched into the landscape, into the earth. It is still alive among individuals and communities that persist. He writes, *the possibility of passage into that mythtime world had been all but forgotten in Europe. Its rediscovery—the unsettling vision of a natural self—has haunted the Euro-American people.* The

mythic world cannot be expunged, no matter how grievous the sins of our culture. And our connection to that world cannot be severed. It can go dormant and be forgotten but I will persist in my belief that there are powers which can awaken it. To sit in the stillness of the forest—if one can manage to put aside the chatter of the human world—is to touch that power, to gaze into the heart of the raging seas, to feel the thunder on the moun- taintop. I mistrust anyone who sincerely claims that they do not feel the pull of that other world in those moments and a host of others, both dramatic and simple. To borrow Snyder's phrase, there is a "ghost wilderness" that drifts like mist over the world we have built.

For those who have not swallowed the poisoned pill of techno-industrialism, envisioning a world animated by spirit is as simple as acknowledging that consciousness is not unique to humanity. This consciousness is what is meant by "spirit." In many cases, the word itself is the same. Among the Inupiaq people of the Bering Sea, Snyder tells us, as wth many other communities around the world, shape changing is a common enough occurrence. Animals change form, humans change form, as do rocks, mountains, rivers and other entities. In Inupiaq animal totems, however, it is common for a small human-like face to be carved, stitched, or hidden somewhere on its body: *this is the inua, which is often called 'spirit' but could just as well be termed the 'essential nature' of that creature.* We are not to assume, however, that this practice demonstrates that all things are essentially human. It is simply meant to reflect the belief that all things contain a spirit or consciousness that is maintained and consistent no matter how much the outward form changes. Humanity is not alone.

The ultimate, unforgivable crime of techno-industrial society is godlessness and denial of the spirit. When traditional people killed animals and consumed their flesh, they did so in reverence of the life they had taken and with respect and love for the spirit of the animal. One only has to look at the modern meat industry to see how utterly we have denied the existence of any such spirit or consciousness. While among many indigenous communities it was considered impolite even to point at a mountain, technoindustrial society bulldozes mountains to the ground to strip out the ore within. One does not act in such a way towards another consciousness. And confronted with a world denuded of all spiritual life or consciousness, humanity strips those away from itself as well. Once you are in the habit of denying life, it's hard to stop. So, imagining the world to be barren and lonely, we deprive this or that group of humans until we literally stand alone. And this will be our future.

Returning again to Kali and the figure of the wrathful mother, the giving of gifts and offerings consecrates our bonds to each other and the world. We do not acknowledge the other and so we do not honor the gift exchange. We give nothing to the earth, to the animals, plants, rocks, dirt, wind, and waters. We offer them nothing because we do not recognize them. And so we likewise receive nothing from them. Again, according to the logic of techno-industrial society, humanity is right to view the cosmos as devoid of spirit. In the end, our stinginess harms us the most. We hoard what we have and in the end, are poisoned by it. The worship of Kali demands offerings and austerities and sacrifices. Gifts are given and received. But this is hardly a capitalistic sense of exchange. Gifts and offerings do not have a perceptible exchange value. We give what we have and we receive what the goddess chooses to bestow upon us. It may be what we want, it may not. But according to the wisdom of those powers above us, it is always what we need, whether or not we recognize it. The importance of this relationship is in acknowledging the spirit or consciousness of non-human entities and in recognizing the small, but no less significant part in the universe that humanity plays.

Gary Snyder offers us little as far as action and praxis. This is not a coincidence. The more we search for paths to follow, the further we are from the way of the world. We have only to effortlessly grasp the meaning of things and leave it at that. As it is written in the daodejing: *a path that can be followed is not a spiritual path.* Let us leave things to the spirit of the world. In the end, this is the way to ultimately renounce our anthropocen- trism. If humanity is not the culmination of the natural world, then why should we assume that the world is ours to save. It will not be saved by us, no matter what path we try to follow. Our delusions of control will only become reinforced in the process. If we are gods, as technoindustrial society tries to convince us we are, then the world is ours to exploit or to save. But if we reject the idea that humanity is the center of the universe then *it would be presumptuous to think that Gaia much needs our prayers or healing vibes. Human beings themselves are at risk—not just on some survival of civilization level but more basically on the level of heart and soul. We are in danger of losing our souls.*

We don't understand what we are, what we are made of. We don't understand that this world that we treat as the backdrop for our petty dramas and squabbles or as material for our conquests, is alive with spiritual energy and myriad entities and powers. We would not be able to ignore this fact if we threw ourselves into the fearsome and aweinspiring heart of life. Once, we could perceive the leopard's grammar. The law that says, "I will eat you. I will devour you. For you are weak and I am strong." Techno-industrial civilization denies the law of the world. The spiritual life of our ancestors taught us to honor the law: *the archaic religion is to kill god and eat him. Or her. The shimmering food-chain, the food-web, is the scary, beautiful condition of the biosphere.* If we wish to recover what has been lost, what has been taken from us by techno-industrial society, we must look inward to find it. We must rediscover that we exist as spiritual beings in a living world that is simultaneously alive and divine. What is needed now is reconsecration, for there are no longer any paths for us to follow. Let us proudly declare to the mountains and the rivers: we renounce the cult of humanity, we renounce the world of technoindustrial society, and we bind ourselves in reverence and service to the gods.

> *in the service of the wilderness of life of death*
>
> *of the Mother's breasts!*

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Speech of the Nameless

by Dominique Ganawaabi and Soren Aubade

One evening in the month of September 1731, a girl nine or ten years old, pressed, as it would seem, by thirst, entered about twilight into Songi, a village situated four or five leagues south of Chalons in Champagne. She had nothing on her feet: her body was covered with rags and skins: her hair with a gourd leaf; and her face and hands were black as a Negro's. She was armed with a short baton, thicker at one end than the other, like a club. Those who first observed her, took to their heels, crying out, "There is the devil."

The History of a Wild Girl, 1768

*** The Wild Girl of Champagne

The story of Marie-Angelique Le Blanc is one way to talk about of the potential consequences of escaping from civilization. She captivated the French imagination of the time, in part because her life took place against a backdrop of the socio- psychological implications of leaving the confines of the Old World. The success of mapping out the previously unknown spaces at the edges of Christendom entailed a kind of confirmation of a certain worldview but it also meant that Europe was being Othered in the way it usually managed to deflect.

Her story is that of young girl who survived alone while crossing expanses of untamed forest for an unknown number of years. Some reports at the time stated that she protected herself from wolves with a wooden club or a sharpened stick. She was said to subsist by catching frogs and butchering rabbits with only her fingernails. Marie-Angelique would become the darling of some Enlightenment intellectuals who would eventually teach her to read and write. Her tale, seen as partially a hoax by many scholars, is typical of the very old and far-reaching narratives about "wild children." She was rumored to be from the Fox tribe of the east coast of North America or perhaps indigenous to the Caribbean islands before sailing to Europe in order to become a servant for a nobel woman. Speculations about her ethnic origins are important here because meeting the peoples of the Americas posed new challenges to "Western" thought around the concepts of language, human nature, and the distinction between savage and civilized. The European self had to come to terms with seeing its reflection in the mirror of the Indian.

She did not begin to reflect till after she had made some progress in her education; and that during her life in the woods, she had scarcely any other ideas than a sense of her wants, and a desire to satisfy them. She has no remembrance either of father or mother, or any other person of her own country, and hardly any of the country itself, except that she does not remember having seen any houses there, but only holes under ground, and a kind of hut-like barracks.

The idea that a child could live alone in the wilderness without the protection of social armor or language to guide her choices must have seemed almost supernatural to the rationality-reverent men who examined her. Native people were often viewed as childlike creatures in comparison to the sophisticated Christian races. They appeared to be mouthing words, but were they really speaking?

Le Blanc pretends to remember that aboard the ship in which she was transported, there were people who understood her language, which was nothing but shrill piercing cries, formed in the throat, without any articulation or motion of the lips. There were some strange characters engraved on her arms, which might have led to a more particular discovery of her nation.

If Marie-Angelique were a Native American it could help explain how she managed to survive the harshness of the forest beyond Champagne. Indians were said to possess an innate ability to live off the land. Like in many other cases of feral children, intellectuals would rejoice in the potential to gain useful knowledge from tragedy. Recent cases are seen through the lenses of medicine, developmental psychology, and linguistics. But if the cause of separation is now understood as neglect or autism, the goal of learning as much as possible for universal benefit is still present. There is always an attempt (often a failed one) to reintegrate the child into society.

The weaning of her from feeding on raw bloody flesh, and the leaves, branches, and roots of trees, was the most difficult and dangerous part of her reformation. Her stomach and constitution, accustomed to raw food, full of its natural juice, could by no means endure our artificial kinds of food, rendered by cookery, according to the opinion of several physicians, much more difficult to digest.

An earlier religious debate before the Council of Valladolid sought to decide if biblical and canonical ideas would justify the existence of encomienda practices of forced labor in Spanish colonies. Philosopher Juan Sepulveda argued, in the tradition of Aristotle, that certain peoples were natural slaves. The Bishop of Chiapas, Mexico—Bartolome de Las Casas offered a different reading on sacred texts to say "All the World is Human!"

We can imagine early explorers seeing in the New World a kind of realization of Eden and the abyss: its inhabitants as either demonic cannibals or moss-covered cherubs. Hobbes and Rousseau said as much in so many words. Lost children are fertile ground for proving the validity of pre-figured hypotheses using now- observable Apparitions. Those of us who still seek refuge in the hope of an Outside could try to listen to the language of these *infantes sauvage*, but maybe not in the way other adults have tried to hear.

Wildness has enchanted the European imaginary for centuries. Wild men were central adornments of medieval tapestries. Feral children were shuttled from court to court and viewed as fascinating oddities. Theologians debated whether or not they had souls. It must have been this dramatic distinction between human and animal, civilised and boorish, those who speak and those who remain silent, that inspired such a mixture of infatuation, terror and disgust for that which is neither, or both. The Other is always obscured and mysterious, and often lives between worlds.

My Shadow Will Not Speak for Me

> *I am immune from sanity or insanity—I am an empty present box all unwrapped for somebody else's disposal. I am a throw away egg shell with no life inside me—For I am not touchable but a slave to nothingness.*
>
> June and Jennifer Gibbons, September Poems

The Gibbons sisters were born in 1963 in Barbados, before their family moved to Wales. Identical twins, the only black children in their community aside from their own two siblings, trying

to translate their rapidly spoken Bajan Creole into a drawling southern English accent—they must have seemed out of place, to say the least. They were bullied and isolated at school, both by teachers and peers. Their sad, enigmatic story is quite different from that of many so-called feral children, in part because of their brilliance, but also because they were feral while still living within society.

Perhaps the most widely publicized stories of selective mutism, June and Jennifer showed no signs of developmental disability at any point. They actually showed exceptional intellect and talent—their fluency in written English far surpassing developmental standards for their age. However, rather than assimilating into the culture and community that so pointedly rejected them, they chose silence. Compelled within the depths of Kaspar Hauser's cellar, towards each other, towards them- selves—June later stated, *We made a pact. We said we weren't going to speak to anybody. We stopped talking altogether—only us two, in our bedroom upstairs.*

It is estimated that as many as half of identical twin pairs develop some form of twin language for a time. June and Jennifer developed not a rudimentary language, but a rich and highly complex one indecipherable to any outsider. In the process, they began to develop their own culture and morality. When they were eleven, their family moved to an even more conservative town, somewhat infamous for its racism, and their isolation deepened.

An attempt was made to separate them on the recommendation of a speech pathologist when they were 14. At this point, they had not spoken to anyone except the other for at least six years. And yet when forced into treatment centers away from one another, both would call their case managers on the phone, speaking English, promising to speak more if only they could be reunited. After two years, their family, doctors, and therapists gave up. They returned home at age 16.

What happened next is rather spectacular. The twins began writing manuscripts for novels, eventually self-published, eroticizing their profound love of Americana, crime, and transgression. In *The Pepsi-Cola Addict,* depicting the life and downfall of a boy from Malibu hopelessly addicted to Pepsi, June's hero contemplates suicide, but his best friend talks him out it. *That's the easy way out Preston, and as the Indians say, any time's as good as today to die.* Jennifer's *Discomania* echoes similar themes of addiction, desperation, and the mythical life of an American teen, in a land full of attractive youth with multicolored skin and a thousand convenience stores waiting to be robbed.

They played elaborate, ritualistic doll games, spending hours recording birth and death ledgers detailing the genealogy of the doll clan, all the while communicating with whispers, clicks, and eye movements that unnerved onlookers to the point that some described them as being possessed with each other. They also met three American boys—white boys that "looked like Leo DiCaprio." They began drinking whiskey and sniffing glue, and discovered that under the influence, they could talk to the boys. June wrote upon watching her sister lose her virginity:

> *Something like magic is happening. I am seeing Jennifer for the first time like she is seeing me. I think she is slow, cold, has no respect and talks too much; but she thinks I am the same. We are both holding each other back. …There is a murderous gleam in her eye. Dear Lord, I am scared of her. She is not normal. She is having a nervous breakdown. Someone is driving her insane. It is me.*

The girls became increasingly interested in theft and destruction. They attempted to join a gang only to be rejected—then plotted to start their own gang. They began smashing windows

at random, stealing bikes and glue, only to call the police and flee before capture. They plotted to make bombs. They burnt down buildings. June wrote in 1981:

> *All this week I've wanted to burn down the tractor store in Snowdrop Lane. I burned it down today—with the help of J., of course. It was the biggest night of my life. We climbed over a barbed wire fence. The sky grew blacker and it started to rain… All the while, my lovely glorious fire was licking its way through the roof, and the thick smoke filled the night sky. It was a picture which will live in my mind for ever—oh what a sinful, evil, selfish mind. I know the Lord will forgive me. It's been a long, painful, hard year. Don't I deserve to express my distress?*

Shortly after this, they were caught by a beat cop nearby. After lengthy judiciary proceedings, they were sent to the infamous Broadmoor Hospital for the Criminally Insane. By far the youngest patients, they underwent years of turmoil and heavy medication. Jennifer developed tardive dyskinesia. They lost interest in writing novels, playing games, and drawing pictures, but maintained diaries. Despite being hailed as the "Queens of Broadmoor" by fellow patients, their diaries reveal an increasing level of desperation, pain, and animosity towards each other. They were separated often. Hospital records detail many eerie instances in which they seemed to act in tandem— one day June attacked a nurse while Jennifer attempted suicide in a different ward; they were often observed to be sitting with the same posture and affect simultaneously, in different rooms. After 14 years of torture, they chose their long-standing pact since childhood: if one died, the other would speak, and live. June wrote:

One of us is plotting to kill one of us. A thud on the head on a cool evening, dragging the lifeless body, digging a secret grave. I'm in a dangerous situation, a scheming, insidious plot. How will it end? …I'm in enslavement to her. This creature who lounges in this cell, who is with me every hour of my living soul.

> *We have become fatal enemies in each other's eyes… We scheme, we plot, and who will win? … A deadly day is getting closer each minute, coming to a point of imminent death like hands creeping out against the night sky, intentions of evil, blood, a knife, a mincer. …I say to myself, how can I get rid of my own shadow? Impossible or not impossible? Without my shadow would I die? Without my shadow would I gain life?*

And yet their bond was undeniable, unbreakable, insolvent:

> *(…) locked in*
> *locked up*
> *creating stories*
> *inventing life*
> *you and me*
> *you are me*
> *I want to find a part of me*
> *that doesn't belong to you*

After lengthy discussion recorded in their diaries, Jennifer volunteered to die. A few days later, she was overcome with an inflammation of the heart, without any previous signs of illness nor signs of poison, undue stress, self-injury or foul play. And her sister began to speak. An excerpt of June's poem is inscribed on her sister's grave:

We once were two

We two made one

We no more two

Through life be one

Rest in peace.

Photographs of them together at Broadmore show them as smart, eccentric, beautiful young women wearing turbans, silver bangles, elaborate makeup, and slight, strange smiles. They seem to exemplify a tense synthesis between the ultimate modesty and an ultimate, burning expletive—forever foreign in all worlds but their own.

A House of Skin

The 'Other Half' is the word. The 'Other Half' is an organism. Word is an organism. The presence of the 'Other Half is a separate organism attached to your nervous system on an air line of words can now be demonstrated experimentally. One of the most common 'hallucinations' of subject during sense withdrawal is the feeling of another body sprawled through the subject's body at an angle... yes quite an angle it is the 'Other Half' worked quite some years on a symbiotic basis. From symbiosis to parasitism is a short step. The word is now a virus. The flu virus may have once been a healthy lung cell. It is now a parasitic organism that invades and damages the central nervous system. Modern man has lost the option of silence. Try halting sub-vocal speech. Try to achieve even ten seconds of inner silence. You will encounter a resisting organism that forces you to talk. That organism is the word.

- William Burroughs, *The Ticket That Exploded*

What does it mean to be physically naked? What does it mean to be intellectually naked, without *lingua franca*? What does it mean to be naked in the eyes of society? Where is the Eden in which we are innocent, unashamed, and free? Language ties us to each other but it also leaves lacerating marks.

Herodotus tells the story of a king of Egypt who had two children brought up together, but in silence, reared only by a goat. After two years they held out their hands to the man responsible for the experiment in education, and said to him "beccos." The king, who knew that in the Phrygian tongue "bek" signifies "bread" concluded from this that Phrygian was a natural language, and that the Phrygians were the most ancient people of the world. The scientific method seems cruel when applied to humans, especially when its conclusions are lacking.

The life of Ishi provides another twist on the Wild Man motif. He was said to be the last of the Yahi tribe that was vanishing in the midst of Gold Rush expansion into California. Instead of being a child denied inclusion into communal structures, he was purported to be the sole member of his society. Anthropologist Arnold Kroeber, father of science fiction novelist Ursula

K. Le Guin, held him as a living museum specimen at the University of California. While living on campus he was constantly ill due to a lack of immunity to society. Le Guin drew considerably on anthropology in order to create the visions of believable, desirable societies that populate her work. She was silent about the existence of Ishi for the most part. In one short note about Ishi she says that her father gave him his name (meaning "person,") because the Yahi held a taboo against speaking one's given name or the names of the dead. We know now that his gestures said something to the world around him, even if ethnology collapses when focused on an individual.

> *[Ishi] demonstrated his tool- making and hunting skills, and spoke his tribal stories and songs. Newspapers frequently referred to Ishi as the "last wild Indian," and the press was full of anecdotes referring to Ishi's reaction to twentieth-century technological wonders like streetcars, theaters, and airplanes. In his writings, Waterman respectfully noted Ishi's 'gentlemanliness, which lies outside of all training and is an expression of inward spirit,' and the records of the time reveal much mutual respect on the part of Ishi and his scien- tist-observers. Each weekend, hundreds of visitors flocked to Parnassus to watch Ishi demonstrate arrow-making and other aspects of his tribal culture.*

After just a few years living at the University, he died. Ishi's brain was donated to the Smithsonian for further study after his death in 1916. A living museum specimen, and then a dead one, preserved in a bell jar.

A century later, a postmodern experiment is being conducted on those not quite dead, not quite alive, under the banner of Humanism.

Hogewey is a quaint village, home to some hundred and forty people. At a quick glance, a traveler might not notice much different from any other small Dutch community, but soon would begin to realize that this village is completely unlike anything else in the world. First, no travellers pass through, since Hogewey is enclosed by walls with locked gates. Second, although there are shop clerks, landscapers, and baris- tas of all ages, the residents are very, very old. Hogewey is being heralded as a great advancement in the field of care. It is a village, but it is also a care facility. It is also a rather nightmarish vision of life without sentience.

The residents of Hogewey each have their own apartment, filled with personal touches and tasteful furniture. They all suffer (or perhaps are blessed with) advanced memory loss. The streets are lined with cafes, markets, and shops where no money is ever exchanged. The friendly girl at the hair salon is not only a hairdress- er—she is a nurse, ready to administer medical assistance if anyone has a stroke or a fall. Everyone is either a caregiver or aide of some kind with specialized training, or a resident suffering from dementia. The citizens of Hogewey do not know that they live in a care facility, that they are being monitored at all times by security cameras, that their lives are being engineered for them, or that at any sign of confusion or anxiety, someone is waiting to guide them through the next moment so that they can forget the last. It is kept secret from them. They live much longer than similar patients in more clinical or institutional environments. Their families say that they are much happier, that this affords them at least the illusion of independence and dignity. No shadows dance on the walls of this cave— just the flicker of smiling faces in soft, diffuse lighting. They live in a perfect world, where all edges are blunted.

Oikophobia is a term derived from psychology to describe the fear of the home, especially of household objects like armchairs or kitchen instruments. Conservative writer Roger Scruton uses it to critique what he sees as the left's tendency to reject aspects of the Western project

such as respect for political authority, homeland, traditions, etc. The concept of oikophobia exists alongside xenophilia, an inversion of xenophobia where progressive actors express a love for things outside of their cultural borders, as solutions to all kinds of anxieties. Examples from the Vietnam war era include the attraction to the religion of the east: Zen meditation, tantric sex, and martial arts. Today, conversion to radical Islam is popular in some subcultural circles.

In the 1960s efforts were made to negate "both the common culture of the West, and the old educational curriculum that sought to transmit its humane values." This disposition has grown out of, for example, the writings of Jacques Derrida and of Michel Foucault's assault on bourgeois society resulting in an "anti-culture" that took direct aim at holy and sacred things, condemning and repudiating them as "oppressive and power-ridden."

Another example of oikophobia is the hippie back-to-the-land movement that arose after the failure of the anti-war counterculture. This utopian urge was preceded by Anabaptist communes, such as the Bruderhof community (formed out of the German Youth Movement), which drew inspiration from Nietzsche's ideas about creating new transcendent values. They longed to "get back to nature." There is an affinity here with early anarchist experiments in living life outside of social mores. Anarchists at the time responded to industrialisation and modern warfare with nudism, vegetarianism, nature walks, and free love.

Multi-generational nudism was justified by the idea that children were equals with adults and did not need to be shamed for, or protected from, their natural state. John Henry Mackay, an Individualist Anarchist influenced by Max Stirner, is most known for writing *The Anarchists* in 1891. He also wrote about his love of boys age fourteen to seventeen under a pseudonym in *The Hustler: A Book of Nameless Love*. The desire to create a life outside of the one we were thrown into will always have an aftertaste of the dread and wonder of the forbidden.

Those of us who take on rewilding as an existential solution are faced with the possibility that our ability to imagine new worlds is in some way defined by the reality we emerged from. What would it be like to walk alone through the woods for ten years? To hear passing from our unnamed lips only strange new utterances? To feel our feet and hands harden, our fingernails sharpen, and our teeth able to chew through raw scavengings? Could we ever walk far enough to avoid the fates of Ishi, June, or Marie-Angelique, or would we be returned to society, no longer as humans, but as rare specimens? Would we become animals only to die in zoos?

Our desire for an Eden may inspire us to search for the Other within ourselves, but our fear of the Self may drive the utopian impulse. And to further confound our search for the keys to paradise, our ability to imagine such questions is, inherently, tied to the same aptitude that allowed us to name our kings and nation states in the first place. When we envision a world in which we can walk no longer burdened by our own humanity, a path to escape the poisons and prisons of modern society, we do so using that which makes us so horribly human. We ask a question. We use words. We name ourselves. Instead, let us pray our names be unspoken.

The Enemy, Life Itself: an exploration of sex negative sentiment

by coolsquid

sex isn't revolutionary

Okay. Try to think of the most normal thing imaginable—not in your own existance, but as a societal whole. The most socially acceptable, commonly-held thought, concept, or idea. Do you imagine the grocery store? Middle-class 40-somethings? Holding a steady job?

Maybe broaden your perspective beyond human society: the most common, normal thing for any thing on the planet. Sunlight? Air? No, plenty of things live without that… Movement? Sort of? I mean, if you qualify it by counting "internal" movements, sure…

Anything/everything has, guaranteed, at least one thing (and possibly only this one thing) in common: life itself. Every organism manages to be alive, continue existence, and ensure things beyond it will exist. It maintains, it devours, it expels, it goes on. At this point in life's development, reproduction is the #1 thing required for it to continue replicating itself into infinity. So, sex: arguably the most disgustingly normal thing on the planet.

It's baffling that this process of life and its replication constantly surrounds us, with no escape in sight. We *must* eat, we *must* shit, we *must* breathe, we *must* be born, etc.—life is far more oppressive in its demands than any other civilized structure, but for some reason most of us are content with its control over us—celebrate it, even! It seems that the only way to escape its unending crushing demands is to figure out how to live forever (to die would be to give in to the cycle of life, not a defiance of it).

A brief explanation of what "sex" means in terms of this article: an act of penetrative reproduction, or an act simulating such. Let's say… anything involving genitalia, penetration, and orgasm. I'm talking primarily "straight" sex, but honestly, feel free to imagine the best sex you've ever had and maybe it'll still fit into this critique. In addition, I can only critique reproduction from a human lens; while the ongoing existence and reproduction of all life is incomprehensible and repulsive, I can't claim to understand how or why oak trees, sea anemones, chanterelle mushrooms, red ants, jellyfish, et al, reach understanding of this concept (as much as I would like to, because frankly, jizzing wildly into the sea or dispersing my clones through fruiting spore bodies sounds way more appealing).

For all the shame and stigma that supposedly surround sex, people sure do manage to keep having babies, and continue to do so even under the most repressive of conditions. Current society engineers every way possible for two people to breed, with social structures built around making that possible (and then chained to that structure). Latex and pharmaceutical industries allow for plenty of ways to prevent life from being born—per- haps to keep us well practiced?

Anarchists and queers everywhere seem joyous at our new, oh- so-progressive, sex-positive culture. By acknowledging and pursuing our physical desires, we're embracing our "true" primal animalistic selves, fucking and frolicking as we please. As if performing such a mundane, everyday occurrence can somehow be a revolutionary act, or anything more than a byproduct of biological impulses at best, and a set of social roles/obligations at worst. Everything everywhere is desperately trying to get laid, so why would "doing it" be considered radical?

Sex is mandatory for the ongoing existence of civilization: having babies is a requirement for society to continue. Denying sex becomes the marginal act. (Though if reproduction is how we've determined whether or not something is alive, I wonder, does civilization, as a concept, count as a living being as it replicates itself across the planet? Has civilization fucked us?)

sex as identity, identity as coercion

Sexual reproduction, by basic physical requirements, requires a catastrophically enormous imbalance of power. One individual in a pairing is inevitably saddled with the immense resource deprivation required for giving birth, while the other must give up nothing of itself, is allowed to remain weak, lazy, and is left with nothing other than a false sense of superiority. These power dynamics are born of biology (if biology means nothing more than a relationship with one's physical state, not practice of science or a generalization). It's a wholly individual experience and yet, also entirely the opposite: it's environmental, as our boundaryless bodies alter in response to everything surrounding us. Those with functioning wombs live in a different biological reality where threat of pregnancy (and all the horrors that come with it) looms over not just sexual interactions, but how we consider and move through the world. If one doesn't value life or the continuation of it, the ability to give birth can be nothing but punishment. Motherhood be damned.

Society took hold of this already- inconvenient bodily function, adding more and more conditions, obligations, expectations, and disadvantages to those cursed with birth bowels. From the regrettable moment that a child enters into the world, physical traits determine the course of someone's lived experience—gender and social roles were born to fit into this already-existing "biological" box. To quote James Carse's *Finite and Infinite Games* (emphasis mine),

> *It is [] somewhat misleading to describe society as a regulator of finite sexual play. It is more the case that finite sexuality shapes society than is shaped by it. Only to a limited extent do we take on the sexual roles assigned us by society.* Much more frequently we enter into societal arrangements by way of sexual roles. *While society does serve a regulatory function, it is probably more correctly understood as* sexuality making use of society to regulate itself.

Identity within society is formed by the sex you have. Sex begat gender. The penetratee risks violation, death by childbirth, having resources exploited by force or otherwise—the womb is a resource to be colonized by life. Babies are born, the circle repeats—life hijacked society to replicate itself! People who gave birth became women; those who impregnated became men. For some reason people fight to maintain these basic roles over themselves (radical feminists and MRAs both see benefits and argue for the importance/validity of their biology). Others find new and creative ways of applying womanhood and masculinity that are inclusive of all sorts of different biological realities. Both seem like disturbing, undesirable outcomes, and rather than

replicating these biological power dynamics, it seems preferable to abolish them from our bodies completely. There's nothing deeper to be found at the core of sexual roles than a social function based on physical reproduction capability, and rarely if ever do acts of penetration do more than replicate the existing power differential (whether vaginal birth canal or sperm-producing penis involved or not). Defy the tyranny of physical existence, defy the urge of biology— there's an infinite body waiting to be touched, with modes of pleasure that negate socially-prescripted roles upon our bodies.

Birth control, from the pill to condoms, remove the greatest fear of sex (i.e. reproduction/disease), thus the role of subjugation and power exchange continue to emanate outwards from the physical form without personal penalization. Frankly, the clitoris must be some kind of trick, engineered towards the downfall of all uterinekind! Orgasms and pleasure sneakily lure people into reckless acts, reproducing unfavorable power exchanges or accidental conception. While orgasms themselves certainly aren't invaluable, the fact that many (queers included) stick to societally-prescribed positions and replicated reproductive functions such as penetration in any orifice in order to achieve release is nothing short of soul-crushingly disappointing. Even if children are not a goal or possibility of intercourse, production if not reproduction is almost always the focus of sex in the form of orgasm. Humans replicate an industrialized version of pleasure with a set goal/product at the end result, and value placed on the quantity of orgasms is produced. Rather than bring the factory home to our lovers, we could do away with systemized gratification entirely.

Any animal occasionally forced to carry young should do everything it can to avoid sex. Ducks grew labyrinthine vaginas; water-spiders developed literal shields to cover their genitals; dragonflies play dead; sharks, elephants, snow leopards, guppies, elephant seals, dolphins, baboons (pick an animal), flee or form gangs to prevent copulation. Those who eat their penetrators don't seem to fear it quite as much, maybe because the resource exchange is more equal. Birth-giving animals outside of humans often appear drab and unimpressive in correlation with their sperm-giving counterparts, because being seen as sexually viable ISN'T AN ADVANTAGE, but rather makes their lives more difficult. Creatures with both sets of genitalia such as snails will literally fight with chitin- ous knives over who gets to leave un-pregnated. Meanwhile, humans create entire industries based on finding sex, and seem to do little more with their lives other than seek it out!

As we've seen, life goes on, despite the resistance of those responsible for birth. Coercion is integral to sex across the animal kingdom, including humanity—where we futilely attempt to give consent using abstract symbols known as words.

Rape is not a product of civilization, but a norm of the biological reality of birth. Rather "[r]ape's violence and transgression is not aberrant but rather a defining aspect of sexuality… *Normative, civil sex is only one part of a system that has rape as its basis, as a central operating principle. The imagined integrity of the perfectly consenting subject amounts to little more than a regulatory principle of rape, a purity to be defended against a threatening Other" (Undoing Sex: Against Sexual Optimism* by c.e.).

This is the origin of the existence of woman—to be penetrated/impregnated, to have power asserted over them, and agency denied, for the sake of life. The fear of rape is the fear of being treated as a woman, of being used as a utility. And attempting to heal from this process as a socialized woman becomes another trau- ma—it's alienating to extrapolate the experience of an assigned role on to myself. What happened didn't happen to me—it happened to all women. It

didn't happen to me because of anything other than a common, natural practice. The circumstances around it have nothing to do with me as an individual. (Authors Angela Carter and Octavia Butler both tackle this subject remarkably—they both understand rape is a function of their everyday selves, not some horrific evil or virtue signal to villainy.) Society's constraints on the one who is raped are the true torture. Civilization blocks us from the physical and psychological acts that would relieve this trauma—slitting the throats of those who hurt us over a clear pool, so they can watch themselves die, for example, or releasing the energy in some trembling, overwhelming shake, as do gazelles who have just escaped death. We can't fight back or even run away in any meaningful capacity within existing social structures that keep us trapped inside roles where this is encouraged practice.

Sex is the core way in which we enter society. Gender has been built out of the tyranny of biology. The way out is to deny both by negating the acts defining sex, most especially the sex acts leading to or alluding to reproduction.

***sex as self-destruction

This piece began with discussing how reproduction is absolutely critical for maintaining social order—but any piece of philosophy or ideology wouldn't be complete without embracing its glaring and disturbing contradictions.

One would think that by advocating for the end of sex and therefore reproduction, I'm merely reflecting ideas behind anti-natalism: that we should stop breeding in order to let the human race die out, since it would be far better (for whom or what, exactly?) if humanity became extinct. And yet—it seems obvious that the more people we create on the planet, the more resources we extract/consume for population growth, the less likely our chances of survival. Perhaps reproducing until life is no longer possible is the best way to bring about our own extinction.

Many environmentalists (and, I suspect, green anarchists) hold James Lovelock's Gaia theory as a given truth: living organisms form a selfregulating and synergistic system that maintains and perpetuates the conditions for life. Gaia, the nurturing, all-caring earth goddess bestows her benevolence upon all living beings, and we exist within her grace. And yet—all but one of the past mass extinction events have been caused by some microbial creature or another reproducing to such a dangerous degree that it wiped itself, as well as most of its fellow living beings, off the face of the planet forever (at least, if you believe the stories science has to tell, which I, like everyone else, only choose to do when it serves my purpose). Enter Medea, murderer of her own children, and her hypothesis: that life on the planet ultimately leads to the end of conditions favorable to life's existence. Life destroys life.

Organic life has repeatedly caused the collapse of the biosphere (on a regular basis, on a small scale), and on at least one occasion has almost extinguished it entirely. When cyanobacteria first figured out photosynthesis, the sudden influx of oxygen (still considered a poisonous gas by the way) eradicated enough of the existing life at the time that we *still* find it notable. Twice, photosynthetic creatures consumed so much carbon dioxide that they induced a "snowball Earth" that made the planet nearly uninhabitable by anything. Nice try, y'all, maybe third time's the charm.

So is this perhaps why we find sex—undoubtedly a repulsive, dangerous practice—so desirable? Because we are driven to bring an end to ourselves and everything else? Is this the real urge of reproduction: the will to die? We are slaves to life, helpless towards the drive towards destruction. We can't help being alive. Unable to break our link to life, completely obsessed by it—with no way to oppose it.

Humans, I wish you luck in being the first multicellular organisms to abolish all life on earth. Fuck to negate all life on the planet. Also props to everybody out there reproducing asexually, holding it down for the rest of us. If we insist on pursuing sex, let it be for the revolutionary purpose of destroying life itself.

Eleven Ways to Kill a Child

by Mallory Wournos

This piece is dedicated to all those who have paid the ultimate price and all those currently incarcerated for transgressing one of the most fundamental identities to carry society on into the future: that of the parent.

"Infanticide is typically regarded as not only intrinsically wrong but more so than almost any other action, not excepting the murder of an adult or an older child. It is important to note, however, that a majority of human societies in the past have openly accepted infanticide and have not regarded it as morally problematic."

Reconsidering the Ethics of Infanticide

During the Middle Ages in Portugal, a group of women known as "Weavers of Angels" made their living "taking care of" newborns that excessively burdened families. After smothering them, they would tell the community they died due to high fever. There's little doubt their neighbors knew the truth, but treating the death as resulting from natural causes helped to dispel whatever collective guilt may have lingered. These incidents, however common, are now looked down upon as primitive practices that don't deserve attention. Even those who claim to be live in total opposition to society and its demands on our bodies often hold these beliefs. In bringing these types of taboo subjects out of the shadows, perhaps more people can re-evaluate their moral reactions to what most see as incomprehensible. The story of the Weavers of Angels and others like it has shown that despite its discouragement universally, it hasn't always been the scandalous aberration it has become today. Even during times of severe penalties leveled against the concealment of pregnancy and infanticide, there has always been support for parents that take this course of action, whether that came in the form of helping to conceal the crime and/or providing material assistance.

Peruse any zine fest or anarchist bookfair and you will notice a plethora of materials on D.I.Y abortions and the politics of women's health and bodily autonomy. In killig her child, a woman declares her sovereign power over her body, and the body of her child, yet noticeably absent from any of these radical publications are discussions of late-term abortions and infanticide. Infanticide is a rare taboo topic that is not deliberately omitted due to the discomfort it invokes in others (though this is certainly a factor); it isn't discussed because the majority of people in the United States and other rich nations simply don't believe it exists anymore, and when they are discovered the case is written off to its own peculiar circumstances. For society at large, any occurrence of child killing is an abhorrence and the work of mental illness for the secular or, for some, the devil.

The reasons for this invisibility are simple: today there is a wide belief in the easy accessibility of all other options, which include everything from contraceptives to adoption. However, as so many can attest, not everyone even has access to condoms and other contraceptives, let alone abortion services. In the U.S., a battle was waged by the evangelical right and abortion doctors

experienced a wave of terrorism and political attacks; the result is there are less than 10 doctors that are able and willing to perform the late-term abortions and it is extremely difficult to meet all the requirements. Even the most ardent feminists vocally supporting of women's rights in general have a hard time defending late-term abortions and are often morally opposed. They certainly won't be advocating for a woman's choice to kill their children anytime soon. The perception by the public that (in the West) there are these ready options available makes the killing of children a particularly shocking and sensational crime. Often the most "at-risk" are, of course, low-income, single women and teens, many who have become pregnant through rape or naievity, as well as suffering in abusive relationships (in the past it was domestic servants who were constantly faced with rape and sexual exploitation from their masters). These are the girls and women who are condemned with long prison sentences (even when others are sympathetic) and the shame imposed on them from society for committing what is considered one of, if not the most heinous crime one can commit.

Destruction occurs among many living organisms including primates and other mammals. Hardly a recent phenomenon, infanticide has been around as long as the human story. Anybody who knows simple biology should have no trouble figuring out why our ancient ancestors would have destroyed their offspring. As nomadic peoples that carried little and were constantly on the move for nourishment, only one baby could be nursed and carried at a time, until it became old enough to walk alone. This meant babies born before their siblings were weaned would be sacrificed for the survival of the tribe. Infanticide was born out of practicality. It wasn't until the coming of the missionaries and Christian values where the savages were told it was a sin that would send them to burn in the eternal lake of fire that these practices decreased in frequency, if they were not completely wiped out. Of course, infanticide was just as common in Christian Europe right up until the 19th century, albeit for different reasons, one of the biggest being illegitimacy.

The helpless and innocent

What makes children exceptional and the killing of them so much more heinous than the killing of an adult? For one, Christianity still manages to seep into popular consciousness its command for humans to go forth and multiply. Secular society has its own logic which puts significant value on children. Marked by an obsession with progress and growth, a stagnant or dwindling population signals a decline in economic stability and optimism for the future. Those cute bundles of joy are dollar signs. They are consumers from the get go (if the family has the means), and will eventually become adults who will consume even more and toil away to keep the economy afloat, entering into a while making others pockets even fatter. Similar to animal abuse, the helplessness of a child also plays to people's emotions, along with notions of innocence (if they are white this is especially the case) and as an image of hope. Perhaps this child will cure cancer or become a famous celebrity, or even the next president.

The submissive woman and the myth of the mothering instinct

Infanticide also disrupts common societal expectations of women, which makes it a powerful act of subversion, and an aspect of a "fallen woman," one who is morally corrupted, and

extremely dangerous to the state and the status quo. Women were turned into "well-constructed folk devils" who defied expectations that women are naturally inclined towards submissiveness and nurturing. Thus, mental illness came to be used to rationalize the sudden turn to wickedness, to rationalize their fall from grace.

Value Systems that Lead to Tolerance or Persecution

In the past, infanticide in many places reflected a different set of values, one of balance and comfort with death. In Japan, a number of sources have shown a "popular tolerance of infanticide in parts of Japan between the 1540s and the 1870s." In their first description of Japan in 1548, Jesuit priests reported that women there "killed their newborn children without any social censure." Unlike other places where single women were the most likely to do away with their progeny, here it was primarily married couples from all classes. What allowed women to openly commit infanticide was the view that newborns were not yet fully human, which happened gradually as the child grew more independent. They were likened to radishes that had to be thinned out for the benefit of surrounding plants (mabiki), or thought of as simply "sending a child back" (kogaeshi) to the spirit world (these beliefs would certainly be looked down upon in a Western secular society, one reason to reconsider spiritual practice and the values they can impart and help us navigate this awful world we find ourselves in). Birth, and by extension infanticide and abortion held little ontological significance.

By the 12th century, however, foundling homes had appeared to take in the growing numbers of unwanted offspring being dumped in the streets and riverways. Of particular concern at the time was the fact that the children had been killed before they had been given the baptismal rites. Many believed that foundling homes 'deliberately commit[ted] vicarious murder' due to their extremely high mortality rates. If death didn't come at the hands of the mother or a midwife, it would happen under the auspices of charity.

Despite its continued practice, its relevance to women, and its transgression of motherly values (which proclaim the family as the ultimate achievement for anybody with a uterus), infanticide seem to unworthy of discussion. Taboo topics such as this will have people question your sanity, and/or immediately dismiss you as *edgy*. With both physical and mental healthcare in their current abysmal state, it is ludicrous to stay silent about late-term abortions and infanticide. This article's title is only slightly tongue-in-cheek; more, it is a challenge to the morals that seek to convince us that all human life is intrinsically sacred.

SO, YOU WANT TO KILL YOUR CHILD

From the quick and painless to the drawn out and cruel, there are numerous ways to terminate the growth of unwanted offspring. In places where there would be scandal if people knew your business (and they would), people came up with creative ways to avoid suspicion. Family members and midwives can declare the child stillborn, and in some cases if you could prove you had prepared for the child with clothes and blankets you could also clear your name, as it was seen as proof that you desired to keep your baby. In general, fellow town and country folk had a great deal of sympathy for women accused of infanticide and would be hesitant to press charges, or mete out only a lenient punishment.

1. Smothering

Cutting off the airways of babies either by placing the hands or an object such as a pillow over their face has been an extremely common method for much of recorded human history. Often this was performed by a midwife who "knew the ways to produce a "quiet 'un." Until modern forensic science brought about technologies that could detect whether or not pressure had been applied to restrict breathing, it would have been difficult to determine whether the child died of natural causes or was killed intentionally.

2.Strangulation

Both smothering and strangulation work by cutting off the airway, but bruises have always been evidence of a crime. If the child is newborn, this can be passed off as the result of an umbilical cord around the neck, yet another way deaths were passed off as natural.

3.Drowning

In the past, so many children were dumped in waterways that their bodies were said to clog rivers near heavily populated areas, and were constantly being fished out. Many babies just happened to be born on washing days, stillborn in tubs of water. It is clearly still a convenient method of ridding yourself of unwanted offspring. In 1995 a woman Susan Smith would claim a black man kidnapped her children. Smith's two sons, 3 years and 14 months, were dead in her vehicle at the bottom of a lake. The black man, of course, was fictional. The case became a media circus and so many people traveled to visit the ramp she drove down, that it was removed, like so many mundane memorials that seem to hold collective trauma. Another modern occurrence that ignited public fury was the case of Andrea Yates. In 2001, she took her five children one by one, the youngest of them 6 months and the oldest 7 years, into their bathroom and drowned them in the bathtub. After each child died, she took them into their rooms and laid them in their beds. The last child tried to run, after seeing a siblings floating in the bath. She caught him and dragged him into the bathroom, completing her mission. Many people find it hard to have much sympathy for a woman who could be that callous, even if they believed that she was suffering from postpartum depression at the time, or had homicidal ideations due to the anti-depressant Effexor.

4.Burying Alive

In some cultures this has been a method of population control. In the Northern Cape of Africa, until missionary interventions, the San and Khoi would kill children who were born while another was still at the breast by burying them alive in a shallow grave or leaving them to be predated upon (see abandonment).

5.Poisoning

Herbs are another old method of midwives and others who use abortificants. While often used to expel a fetus with concoctions that are still of value today, they have also been used to send newborns, infants and older children to early graves.

6. Abandonment

Recorded by the Chinese as early as 2000 B.C., abandonment has been a popular method of infanticide since time immemorial. At times the abandonment of children became an epidemic, leading to foundling homes and laws guaranteeing anonymity and immunity from prosecution if the newborn is left at the door (usually before it reaches a certain age). Often the parents of the child abandoned it in hopes that a traveler would stumble upon it and take it in. Otherwise, it would die of exposure or predation. Abandonment of children is a fixture in myths, folklore, and fairy tales, including Hansel and Gretel and Romulus and Remus, who were raised by wolves.

For those who were found and taken in, it was not unusual for them to end up in a cycle of abuse and exploitation.

7. With a weapon

The use of weapons tends to be more opportunistic than premeditated. Women in pre-modern societies would be well acquainted with butchering and would have considerable knife skills. One example of this kind of death is the tragic case of Margaret…a runaway slave who, after being hunted down and cornered, slit one of her children's throats. She was grabbed before she could kill the second one. Obviously, in these cases, one can't really speak of Margaret having a choice. Her decision meant sparing them the humility and suffering of a lifetime of slavery. It is little surprise that she reached for that blade.

8.Tossing in the Trash

Melissa Drexler was enjoying her high school prom when her water broke. She went into the restroom and delivered her child into a toilet, and then cut the umbilical cord with the metal side of a napkin bin. If you were around when this happened in 1997, chances are you heard about the "prom mom." Drexler's case certainly wasn't the first nor the last of its kind. As long as there've been garbage piles, they've been convenient places to dispose of newborns and small rotting corpses.

9. Crushing the skull or breaking the neck

Our closest primate relatives have been witnessed using rocks to kill other male offspring in this manner, and it is likely, along with abandonment, the oldest method of what one could call early family planning.

10. Throwing off a cliff

The ransacking of cities in antiquity in some cases led to the mass suicide of the people on the losing end. Faced with becoming slaves to the invaders, rape, or death, women often chose death and took their children with them, the easiest way to do this was with the help of tall and rocky cliffs.

11. Neglect

Deaths due to neglect can be caused by starvation, unchecked injuries, exposure to diseases, or poisoning from drugs or household products; all particularly cruel and painful ways to pass. Sexual and physical abuse of children in foster homes and other shelters is frequent and trauma is no less painful than physical wounds, and can lead to death by suicide. Often kids die by a beating gone too far, like the 6 year old boy in Florida who was beaten to death over a cookie.

One of the worst cases of child abuse and neglect occurred recently in California. A 17 year old escaped her house to alert a neighbor that she and her siblings were being held captive. Discovered in the house were thirteen children, aged 2 to 29 (seven were legally adults) where they were brutally tortured by their parents. They were allowed just one meal a day, and a single shower a year. They lived in a filthy house; the dogs were kept healthy while the victims were subjected to horrific psychological and physical abuse. And what does freedom mean to them now? According to the blissful reporting of numerous media outlets the older children are "watching Harry Potter movies" "using Iphones for the first time," and "skyping" with their siblings in foster care. Most of the articles giving updates on the children's well being focus specifically on their introduction to modern technology, which, we are told, we take for granted. Is this freedom worth the long years of suffering they lived through, which will no doubt affect them the rest of their lives? Might it have been better to have never been born or ended it early?

An Evil Act

> *The accusation that some despised group regularly captures members of the subject's group, preferably children, murders them in terrible bloody fashion, and uses their blood in some magical and/or cannibalistic ritual, has been so widely applied through history that it has been given a specific name, 'the blood libel. ' Greeks and Romans and later Christians applied the libel against Jews, Protestants applied it to Catholics and vice versa, and both charged Masons with it. Knights Templar, Christian heretics, Gypsies (Roma and others), Native Americans, Mormons, Africans, members of African-based New World religions, neopagans, Communists, and colonists, have been among the groups so charged.*
>
> Encyclopedia of Infanticide

The idea that infanticide was the work of the devil has, of course, led to many groups of people being demonized as child killers and cannibals, witches, devil worshipers, and other representatives of evil. Nowadays, questions about issues related to infanticide-such as overpopulation (which some call a myth–arguing that if the supply chains were better, there would be no need to have natural checks– which they say either stems from racist ideology, or leads to it in the form of eugenics), or on what would we do in a society with no technology to keep infants alive–lead to suspicions that you are an advocate for genocide and racial cleansing. You might also be called ableist if you question how one would take care of those children who have historically been terminated, and are still terminated today through abortion, due to their scant chance at living a full life. Anybody who has ever had to take care of a severely handicapped child knows the immense sacrifice one has to make to provide for someone who will never be able to take care of themselves. Most people, being the humanists they are, cannot accept that some people cannot live without the kind of system we live with today.

> *...there always will be some who refuse to deal openly with the children they have conceived. These women, who bear and dispose of their children secretly, occupy one far end of the spectrum of maternal behavior. But it is less useful to think of them all as monsters than to see most of them as women in the grip of a fear and denial and despair that the rest of us are lucky never to know.*
>
> *Can we summon the grace to see it this way? That there are circumstances in which a woman may experience a baby as a profound disaster is, of course, one of the same truths that animate the politics of abortion.*
>
> Marjorie Williams

What is lost in conversations when certain topics aren't open for discussion so as to reassure the politically correct? How does this affect women and others who have to make difficult decisions regarding their bodies and reproduction? While this piece has been about infanticide, it is a lens for examining our value systems. Does our value system put more importance on birth and childhood than death? What are the limits of freedom? What is okay to talk about (not talking about "bad things" doesn't make those them go away). Dismissing the interrogation of taboo and subversive practices as the terrain solely of edgelords insults those sitting behind bars, many of them young, ill-prepared teenagers with no support. Infanticide was certainly relevant to them,

and perhaps if more were honest about the trauma of birth and the constant pressures to get married and start a family, the critics would be more willing to accept the moral ambiguity and difficult questions raised by infanticide and other actions deemed morally depraved.

The massive human population is faced with unprecedented global catastrophe of our own making. More and more people who would never have thought to commit such a terrible deed will be caught in situations where they are moved to do the unthinkable. Things will be seen and done that may bring about revulsion, guilt, and shame. These people could instead be viewed as empowered sovereigns making difficult decisions during trying times.

For educational purposes only. The author of this piece cannot be held responsible for any deaths influenced by this article.

In Thine Image: The Gnosis and Narcissism of High-Tech Escapism

by Val Storm

It is beyond the scope of this article to extrapolate the history and practice of science both privately and academically and to elucidate just what might be driving this allegedly pure and benevolent, humanistic curiosity, this global media stage show. I recommend skimming the first chapter of *The Forces of Production* by David Noble, which covers the intriguing time period between the Depression and the Cold War up to the hilarious formation of the National Science Foundation. However, let it suffice to claim that science is driven and funded by a desire for militaristic supremacy, market power, delusions of grandeur, and all kinds of characters, ideas, and behaviors that can break down to myriad inhumane and anti-social end uses. -V.S.

The Censorship of Self-Control

Mindfulness glares at you while you wait in line to purchase your organic produce. The magazines of the fully conscious and *productive* members of late capitalism proclaim to tell you how to unlock yourself from the chains of suffering. For after all these are scientific breakthroughs, life- hacks, and ancient wisdom, "We have the technology!" It is a trend that has grown since the "conscious consumerism" movement of the 1970s through the romanticism of the techno-utopian Whole Earth scene, and now blossoms in the glut of affluence in the liberal-intellectual pockets of a most dreary and violent society.

The ideology, like that of science at large, sets its sights against chaos and entropy, against the inhumanities of the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, to establish an anthropocentric and benevolent Order. Not only upon Nature (its cruel weather and dangerous beasts), but upon the Nature of Self, our tortured and unclean flesh. But, when after the death of god did we get Stockholm syndrome? Perhaps god never really dies, or perhaps the death of god remains an attribute only of certain territories and an inevitability in others.

Mindfulness, similar to Transhumanism (or Human+) would like to extend the reach of scientific control to the biological processes that inaugurate the world at every moment: our bodies, our thoughts, and our emotions, resulting in limitless happiness, health, and cognitive abilities. Without yet dissecting the latent spiritual values of this rather frightening eschatology (for to them it is imminent) there is one simple assessment that deserves immediate attention. In the statement, "if only my moods and emotions—my mind— could better suit me," there lies a curious problem. In humanity's apparent wish to subdue the world with order, to make it kind and hospitable to us—to force humanitarianism on the cosmos—our very bodies do not fail to be against us. Our bodies are too dumb, too emotional, too sexed, too human… and for that, they must be ordained with or consecrated to our new values.

This scientific Gnosticism implies that even our bodies are not ourselves, that we lie somewhere beyond the betrayal of matter. It is hard to discern if scientists have not all along been driven by the desire to establish control over chaos: Promethean man vs. the cosmic undoing. Tragic and comic then is the obfuscation of values: chaos is bad and order is good. Heat death is chaos and crystallized order is the epitome of humanity. However, all of this binary thinking has left out a small, yet prized, piece of experience: creativity. No doubt humanitarians love the arts, but what have they to do with order, how does order serve them? Does not the dark, chaotic, impulsive, creative nature of some thinking disrupt this agenda? When lauded by critics, chaotic impulses acquire the status of art, and become sanctioned by our standards of truth and beauty, but the creative and chaotic white noise of our emotional weather patterns and the bane of moods are not so fortunate.

Intoxication Sin Ambiance The Museum is not the hall of evaporated actual moments—light scattering through leaves on the grass, what people actually say and do, or the perception of these things. The Museum is made up of virtual halls of narratives that tell us about ourselves and the world. Whether or not these narratives tell us anything of substance is another matter, but let The Museum be where people create histories and people view, select, and respond to histories. The Museum is the primordial virtual reality. The Museum is a product of deciding what things are. The Museum is a vocabulary, and a vernacular, and the symbols that overlay the night sky. Or put another way, it is memory weighed against language.

However, The Museum is untrustworthy in that it makes its way to us by means of others, who may have no care to contemplate the things we do, to live by the same calendar, or to attribute beauty to what we do, and who have not yet proven they do not wish to exploit us (because, let's be honest, humans are exceptional exploiters, and this might become important). The Museum differs from *the now* in that it is a retreat from *the now* that establishes connections to value. The Museum produces the Fascist and the Philosopher, the Master and Servant, the satiation and the appetite of ontology, us asking questions: "Hm, what is this about? Let us stroll through this wonderful installation and glean for ourselves something about the world that we can know."

The Museum is the archive of concepts; as we allow ourselves sequences of information, and hold them, and enter a state of beholding information, we enter the Museum. Concepts are a form of technology, a modular marketplace of vistas and their cortical geometry. As one spends more time in The Museum one acquires the technology of real value, words such as truth and beauty, that must be true and must be beautiful, for there are no other ways to apprehend these elements other than their value. Further, truth and beauty—eventual outposts of conceptual understanding—imply by their very nature as concepts, an order and a language of thought. The life and transmissibility of an idea determined by its value. We weigh information by them, "What truth lies here, and what beauty?"

Truth and beauty are our meager defenses against alienation. They are some kind of primordial affirmation, gateway drugs to consensus and thus, society. Nothing walks into The Museum alone, one must dream The Museum and dream of consensus. Truth and Beauty presuppose society in their nature, for beauty is not in the eye of the beholder but in the passage of one eye to the next, and truth is only a thought until it repeats in another entity. In this thinking The Museum gives rise to an aesthetics of consciousness, which in turn manifests a globalized aesthetics of action, in that it even claims a unified view and criteria of human thought. However, to engage with The Museum and to engage in viewing the world through narratives is to also accept "fake news" (read: all news), to accept brainwashing, revisionism, and that we may brainwash our-

selves, to the ends of further tailoring your taste and confining you to halls in which experience of The Museum, self, and selected histories all mingle and carry one off into psychoses. None of this is a problem, for psychoses are mere individuations and patterns of mood and a hierarchy of concepts, roads paved in inner-experience. Isn't our world made of these groping stories? And looking at The Museum from a distance it appears like an endless multi-dimensional anthill full of ghosts roving in currents.

Narcissus vs a Liquid Crystal Pool

> *As I write these words, a square of cool, intoxicating light enters through my window and is inscribed in my pupils, my desk extends out to a new set of friendly tools that appear as floating symbols and leaves off at the stars, my desk is a spaceship for my mind that opens unto a liquid crystal cosmos in serotonin releasing violet and lavender. I am at Mission Control. I am on the bridge of my dream machine...*
>
> Anonymous User

It is easy to see how the optimism of early Silicon Valley tinkerers, eager to get rich, mingled with the thorough research and capital of their initial employers within the post-war military-industrial-education complex and led to all the breakthroughs that produced this peculiar view of the infinite: the endless expanse of technological conveniences and media tools catering to both producer and consumer, to developers and users, to engineers and. all the people with their eyes glued to Facebook at the library waiting for the information of the world. Only slightly—technically—different is illusion of the 1984 themed PR campaign: in the Marxist imagery of the industrial laborer, the smashing–through the screen–the face of the dictator. The hacker myth born: the end of centralized power, the democratization of information. Out decades from this gold rush—a virtual-reality, user- centered arms race—to sell us access to information, over half a century from the post-war warnings of elite scientists and historians that were outraged at permanent military and industrial occupation of academia and the private ownership of patents developed with the aid of public money, over a century (if not galaxies) from Marx... At the desktop we can read all about these events, if we know where to look, we have the technology to get all the information we desire and–quite often–so much more that we've trained ourselves to block things out.

We don't need to strap phones to our heads with 3D glasses to achieve virtual reality. VR is here, and it has been here. Concepts of immersion, integration, and symbiosis have been implemented to great effect consistently through the development of personal computers and operating systems. The personal computer speeds through The Museum, allowing a rapid intake of text and image (hypertext). The mind and the mirror, in a spiraling ascent of love, reifying what our humanity is: our consciousness. Yet, where are we when we haven't entered the halls of The Museum?

Towards An Atomic Weight of Belief

Our love of our consciousness has led some to dream of uploading a consciousness into the cloud, or nanotechnology that can heal disease keeping us more fit to extend our consciousness,

super intelligent machines that amplify consciousness, and programming our DNA to be 'fitter, happier.' and thus have an optimal access to consciousness. Ideas of this nature have all but permeated our technological imagination to the point which most lay people can no longer distinguish fact from fiction. Scientific journalism will proclaim at once how far from these fictions we actually are today, then carelessly attribute the word 'thinking' to the activity of a new algorithm, embedding a covert logic deep in our bio-hardware. Singularity, or the belief that we as thinking animals can transcend our biology, to such extent that we merge with machines of our own creation, inaugurating a new era of super-human intelligence that runs at the speed of light and is benevolent, solving the problems of its past, curing our diseases, saving us, absolving us all at the same time has intoxicated humans in growing numbers (the Chief of Engineering at Google, for one).

It is an impossible task to research just how many humans believe in this 'Singularity,' in the tragic tenants of Trans-humanism (Human+, Post-Humanism et al), and in the vain and religious origins of these beliefs; for those beliefs are ghostly tendrils of brain cells that our science can still not point to. Our information spaceships shuttle us by headlines and sound bytes and out there forming like a black cloud in the deep web, the intrepid and inevitable es- chatological Event. The Singularity is near! A gravitational threshold we careen towards and after which there is no turning back, and no one knows what is on the other side; a Rapture or Kingdom Come of humanity's own making. These morsels of sugary information lie waiting in the spongy, grey-matter for more click- bait headlines that will galvanize one (accidental?) fallacy to the next, until it forms an apparition, a god. Because "only a god can save us, so we must invent new gods."

Perhaps for the sake of drama our scientific and techno-venture- capitalist-entrepreneurs, our symbols of virtuosic intellect and success, our dear heroes, now irresponsibly express fear at the "existential threat" our machines pose to us, as if it's all spiraling out of our control and that these scientific truths would appear to us no matter which way we directed our trusted instruments. But who is directing this intrepid progress in which this "existential threat" lies waiting like a demon seed inside a nucleus waiting to be let out? More importantly, isn't this existential threat a product of consciousness itself? Does Science have a will of its own? Are discoveries really made as if on accident or are situations being studied with an underwritten end use? To be facetious, did a scientist look through a microscope and say, "By Jove! The A-Bomb!"

Obviously, there are likely some scientists that are by no means villains, that study chrysalis or bird migrations, and we do not claim the practice of science to be inherently corrupt. We merely suggest that it is easy to see, when taking the world at large, a very disturbing trend involving the minute inter-workings of government, military, academic institutions, technologists, industrialists, and capital of all kinds. Let us not forget that the invention of magnetic tape, precursor to the hard drive was one of the technologies "stolen" from the Nazis at the end of WWII (as well as a disturbing amount of Nazi scientists and industrialists). These figureheads of Science, though, speak as if there is no bias to their work and their observations and no implications of the technology they're developing, of the world they're creating, that they work in objective truths, and yet, now we see them evangelizing, speaking in prophecies and predictions, telling us information that they know and we can know too. If we'd just believe.

Knowledge as the Lightning Scars of Chaos

Knowledge against old wisdom, breakthroughs against tradition, our now verifiable truth beckons—no— demands our attention. Knowledge proclaims to be permanent, infinite, the-way-it-is. Knowledge says to the rest, I am the order of the cosmos and you must heed my mechanics. Knowledge too easily attracts attributes of the mathematical and the rational, forgetting the limitations specific to those formalities of relativity. Wisdom cowers in its poetic temporality, tradition tries to incorporate and revise its prophecy, and knowledge now says. But, this saying, is ours a world that can harbor such things as to be saying? Is there any reason upon which one could stand and speak the words, I say.? Reason is a forgiving word in this situation, in that it presupposes a reason to be saying. "Here is my reason." The reason is the impetus of the saying. So, when I say, "this reason", the context is inherent. I reason about the world, and I say my reason to others.

Ideally, reason would have stopped at explanation, in response to an inquiry. Why are you dancing? I have gotten drunk and the shadows of my pet tree induced a vivid wind upon my mood! Why are you leaving? Because I realized you currently annoy me! Such is the good of reason. When saying comes first, however, without inquiry, is the practice by which the world turns. The reason for this drought is your sins, the reason of this bad economy is the liberal mind, reason tells us that the singularity is inevitable; when saying has had no inquiry and only platform. When people engage us about how we should see the world, or what the future might hold, when people evangelize explicitly or implicitly for a certain reason (cause).

Those that reason, that say, they show us pictures, they point to graphs, "see" this is my reason, this is what I mean. Like a surprise tour guide in the Museum, "This way to some exciting new information!" But, reason, in the real world is much more complex than that. What reason do those that say have to be saying in the first place? For what reason is such and such person in the media? What is the reason for this suggested content? Really. It is quite easy to reason. It is easy to select from the massive amounts of data exactly what one needs to create 'a reason'. Several critics of the Singularity prophets point to the fact that they use arbitrary, exponential graphs that end in the years of their predictions, ones that paint dramatic pictures despite being misleading.

Reasons hang like stars, at the whim of our beckoning, to say what they mean, to be made into constellations. Seven points become a graph and seven stars become a bear. Reasons can become signs, which can then relate to subjectivities, which we claim are bound in a continuum of restraint to a vista or location, in other words knowledge is embodied. Knowledge, or an object of thereof, is subjective, point specific, mutable, relative, temporal and impermanent. Knowledge is a seizure, a state of beholding a sequence of signs upon which we attribute some meaning. Signs we get from being in the world. Beholding these signs and being 'seized in knowing' allows for an intelligence or emotion to blaze through to create judgments and actions. This beholding can open the automatic glass doors to The Museum, but we find that there are innumerable museums and other more frightening things like, say, pure fear, for instance. Knowledge is embodied in that it is dependent on the location both temporal and spatial of our body. Our bodies are the only ledger of knowledge.

Killing Machines or Judge Dredd Runs on a Magic 8-Ball

Considering knowledge as a seizure of beholding, take for example a cluster of signs and slogans: "intelligence that has transcended human levels." The elements easily give rise to assumptions in the mind. Either by themselves, or in combination they electrify our imaginations, and yet mean nothing. Are there levels of intelligence? What is the metric of these levels? What is an 'intelligence?' What is a human level of intelligence? How does intelligence show itself to be transcendent or above-without of another level?

Trans-humanists have no care for these metaphysical and labor-intensive questions. The trans-humanist wants to drag every critic into the murky swamp of ethical puzzles, for there is not a single purely philosophical defense or explanation of this so-called movement. Just like them, we are obliged to leave metaphysics to metaphysicians, and here simply give them a nod. All this to bring to the attention of the reader that those scientist developing "artificial intelligence" have not addressed the answers to these questions, let alone acknowledge that there are complicated questions (not only the wishy- washy ethical ones), and seem to not care to clarify that they are completely ignoring these questions. It is apparent their inability to comprehend matters of thought is dubious to their claims of recreating it. In spite of the appropriation of anthropomorphic words there remains a vast difference between algorithmic intelligence and the centuries long metaphysical arguments about what part of the world our thought inhabits, and the lack of these arguments in the realm of cognitive science, especially at the popular level, now appear as negligence and malpractice.

As of yet, "artificial intelligence" remains in the domains of commerce, military and police: driving sales, placing ads, automating transactions, recognizing shoppers, or shoplifters, determining the sentences of convicted persons, the movements of terrifying robotic killing machines (which are still not autonomous by the way), and thousands of backdoor intricacies of The Dark Future. In short, the "intelligence" of artificial intelligence is too mundane to deserve much worry in and of itself. After all, they are programs, mechanical in nature, logical machines and extensions that work on information alone and produce output in the form of information, a ticker tape with a verdict. The implications on the other hand, of it becoming uncontested to have proprietary algorithms, purchased by a state institution, that are subject to no explanation or transparency… That elements of state bureaucracy are embedding itself into code, not the legal codes written in English able to be pointed to and argued in court, but within outsourced, obscured, proprietary computer code, insulated from the scrutiny of the public and the non-specialist, should raise some eyebrows (but it won't).

Order Was Only a Metaphor

Scientists are the innocent theologians of capital. Artificial Intelligence is predominately machines made by humans for industry like any other means of production, yet their uses are encroaching mass manipulation. Our very words that search for our humanity: knowledge, intelligence, awareness, etc., are fraught with fractal complexities. It is all such an excellent diversion, so maddening— so unfortunately obvious. As the closing accelerates, as our options become more limited, the force of artificial intelligence upon our systems is amplified. Monopolies of all kinds (industry, ideology, modality) galvanize and presuppose themselves with the aid of our frame-

works of cybernetic governance. On the back end, their algorithms weigh the efficacies of new methods of control and force adoption of the behaviors required to be stored as workable data. Many argue that this is our power over the 2nd law of thermodynamics, that we are organizing, crystallizing in antientropy against the 'great evil' chaos and heat death. However, might this closing, this bureaucratic force of consecration to ever limiting modes is itself be much more symptomatic of heat death? This homogenizing of culture is precarious, from our political behavior to food production to our every day. Our blind traditions become our disease, with the all too human oversimplification of life, and thus, of our dear consciousness.

Our fantasy of uploading our consciousness is the mirror side of what has actually happened: we have sheathed our entire civilization in glass and metals. Our activity is simplified down to that of automata encased and crystallized, denaturing ourselves, enshrining our castes; perhaps our consciousness is the one thing that won't make it into the vacuum, for it will be lost like the rest of 'nature' under the gaze of our arrogant instruments, who's operators seek not "what is" but "what can be of use to power." Who's science would limit the scope of the world to have their hypotheses validated into theory and law. An ethos that would rather have humanity mirror our own artificial intelligence, dumbing itself down and removing its connection with unknowing and unthinking and all the chaos our minds are connected to and seek only happiness and comfort (the modes deemed evolutionarily acceptable) fleeing death and discomfort as if they are not intrinsic to life itself, as if one would feel anything floating around as pure intelligence in the music of the spheres, like DMT angels, now bitterly jealous of mere mortals, Lucifer by the billions.

The Bleating Absence of Sound…

In seeking the keys of consciousness, of animation and awareness, one can never have the correct approach. The lens is always too exclusive, the instruments focus blindly and leave out the world in which they exist. Seekers mine to their idea of the center of the world, but a center is a naive a concept as a fathomable whole. Like the wolf who in licking flesh off the blade cuts it's tongue and devours itself to death, the plagued mind of the Scientist rips apart the world in front of him looking for the proof of his superiority of his chosen-ness and stands in heaps of flesh and fire with only the curse of indifference. In the shade of steel monoliths, an inverted sublime, in terror of our own power, the myths of Lucifer and Bacchus lose their initial revisionary lights and evil and delight are taxed and dreary. The heroic have long been cast out as nuisance, for in their sobriety they know they are now the Un-makers, the disruption of mass unmaking, and for that they would suffer unimaginably.

Outside of these myths, in the horizontal light of a rotating Earth, a magic still dances. The play of light on nothing-something for no one, and there life is but for no reason. There are no omens in the moon and wind, just light and displacement. With the arrogance of language we seek to live only within it and not of the world it represents. Nature was perceived as frightening and hostile, so it was fashioned into a nemesis. Now as it runs off with itself still independent of our will, thriving and careless, yet different, always different. Like a sound too loud and distant, and ricocheted across all valleys, so both its origin and texture are indeterminable. A solar flare trumpets the cornucopia. We hold our bitterness like flowers at gods grave. The Earth will pay for not loving me. If I can't have her no one will. Scorned and jealous of every moment we can't

preserve of every love not endless. Life lived only for itself is an unbearable torture to the vain. The dreamers of Heaven or Elysium wander, locked out by their own failures to keep the dream alive. For god is but one dream to have died: the dream of objective approval, of validation of our thoughts and feelings and ways of life. But not all dreams have yet been exhausted and vexed. Our shadow dances on the horizon as the dawn silhouettes us toward the mountainside. A mere body, caster and perceiver of shadow in one—a Plato's Cave-Machine— living the dream.

Invocations to the Violent Deities: Shiva and Chinnamasta

by ca/sh

Introductory prayer to Nrsimhadeva, the half-lion half-man incarnation of Vishnu, who slays demons to protect his devotees:

om Hrim Kshraum ugram viram ma- ha-vishnum

jvalantam sarvato mukham

nrisimham bhishanam bhadram mrityur mrityum namamy aham

I bow down to Lord Narasimha who is ferocious and heroic like Lord Vishnu. He is burning from every side. He is terrific, auspicious and the death of death personified."

A devout Hindu preacher named AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada brought the practice of Gaud- iya Vaishnavism (the worship of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu as a direct in avatar of Vishnu) to the north American continent, in the 1960s.

It was the fastest growing religion to hit these shores, within ten years of his arrival, the Hare Krishna explosion had a temple in every major world city, many preaching centers and cow protection farms. This religious path emphasized the congregational chanting of the holy name of a merged God in his Radha-Krsna form as well as ritual and meditation as sacrificial entryways to Krsna's heavenly abode of Vrndavana Goloka.

Straightedge culture in the 1990s, reincarnated this trend, the desire for physical purity and emotional release dovetailed almost perfectly with Prabhupada's version of ve- dic culture. Bands and scene members were yelling primordial names of God, chanting rounds of holy names, taking ancient ritual initiation, preaching this path and visiting it's root of India.

I traveled to India under this mode in the early 2000s. Channeling my youth experience into austerity and deep transcendental understanding.

It was here at the Vrndavana Iskcon temple that I met and sang with my adopted guru, Aindra dasa babaji.

Your eternal servant, Aindra's song entered my ears and heart, the sound vibration made me weep as all of my misconceptions and investment in the material world melted away and I saw your eternal forms dancing in candle light.

That night, dissolution came with the revelation that the purpose of syllabic intonation, sound vibration can be hypnotizing or hallucinatory or rock splitting or healing powers.

Next, I visited Shyama and Radha Kunda, a bathing place where tears of separation from Krsnas girlfriend, Radha fill a warm pool. Next to this pool is a cooler, larger pool formed when Krsna saw the watery result of his separation from Radha, he then cried a pool. I bathed in both. Rad- ha's tears stripped me of my speaking voice for at least 24 hours. The waters were another dissolution, another revelation; cosmic, supernatural energy runs through everything

earthbound, skybound and heaven- bound. The syllables, the water, even the blessed food were profound energies to commune with.

I have tried over and over to commit austerity to feel it again, to transmute sound to a force multiplier, harnessing the elements through primal “hums” and “phats”

I have used my physical absence to practice more correct intonation, material austerities, the compete de- nial/ absorption of self. I have embraced knowing the illusion is just that, manipulating it to my control, playing with gods. I have acquired many more manifestations of these Gods and Goddesses, more bronze, more marble, more wood and soapstone but mostly more rocks, in which the seed syllables buzz in different names than I started with, different sacrifices, same methods of offering and worship, just different wavelengths of creations buzz.

oh, Maheswara, Shivayah, Gopes- war, You sat on Mount Mehru for eons of earthly time in deep drugged meditation.
Your Nataraja form dances material creation to nothing.
You taught Kali that she must break from your neglect.
Your care taker, your lover, is nothing compared to your visions of vrndavana. Your focus on the rasa dance earned you the name gopeswara, protector of the gopis, the deepest love in the universe.
In your desire to merge into the dance, your corpse was left for her to dance on in the material cremation grounds.
This union transcends the material. It stops time, it is creation and destruction in one instant. Please Gopeswara, let me have one taste of this absolution, this dissolution into the loving arms of Her.
Bom shiva, bom babulnath.
Namo shivayah.
Namo bhutanath.
Complete offering to Siva,
Lord of smoke, the underworld and ganja.
Praise shiva.
Praise the Lord of the ghosts

Each vedic deity has internal and external balance of life and death, which complements their physical counterpart; in mathematics, this disposition would equal zero or nothingness. This is the void, where the seeds of material creation manifest; ruled by the deities, Garbodakshya Vishnu and Laksmi, they maintain the realms of dark and light energy. The demiGod Bramha is then born from this energy to exhale the material universe. His inhalation destroys material creation. This cycle maintains in periods of time known as yugas, of which there are 4. We will not discuss the first three in this tract, but will focus intention in the current era, known as Kali yuga, the period of struggle and strife of the Material condition, the end times, right before Bramha breathes in again.

This history was spoken into the ear of vyasadeva in the form of the Vedas and the written word of God, Sanskrit. This language is rooted in primordial sound vibrations known as bija or seed. The contemporary study of cymatics proves the inherent energy of focused sound. These seed syllables are used in meditation and ritual to break the vibrations of the material energy, Maya, a goddess manifesting the illusory potency of material creation.

oh Chinnamasta, incarnation of the divine mother Kali,
You sever Your head to feed Your disciples, You dance on the back of lust and desire.
Barren mother of mothers,
Your blood feast is nourishing sacrifice. How can I be worthy of your warm red embrace. I cannot give up the way you can. I can not give of my own self solely for the benefit of others, for I am male bodied.
I am the focus of your rage, I am your jealous lover, and I will betray you.
Yet you stand bleeding—feeding.
Life giving blood milk.
Your scimitar glistening in the darkest night, the crescent moon hangs in the sky. Procreation is my material curse, please have mercy on those I have selfishly hexed in the seeds of birth.
Screams in a mother's voice,
My life went to shit.

I was crying myself to sleep again. Feeling over tired and shaky no matter what time I went to bed. I started participating in my eating disorder. I lost forty pounds and my milk tried to dry up. I kept saying I'm so sad I'm so sad.

I wasn't parenting the way I wanted to parent. I wasnt being a friend to my friends. I was empty. I wanted to die so badly but I knew I couldn't because I have all these children. I was drinking gallons of ginger tea trying so fucking hard to feel better.

Wellness, anything.

I was frantically searching for a reason not to kill myself. This is a familiar place. A comfort zone. I hadn't been back here in ten years. I had to make it stop. I'd been talking to the moon a lot. (This wasn't a coincidence) She gave me answers, mostly gave me fifteen minutes of quiet in a salt circle to slow down and smoke some weed after my kids were asleep. She made me listen to the night and she told me to try to connect. Sit on the earth. Take up space. Stop fucking crying, you're drying up your own milk. Put that water back you fucking life giver.

I needed something tangible. Something I could hold and something I could watch myself, feel myself transmute this energy to. I needed to give off some darkness. I started to give Kali offerings every day. A tomato from the garden, some moon flower. A morning glory. I wasn't sure that she wanted them but I kept offering. I didn't know any of her pushpam prayers but I'd messed with a little diety worship before and have studied my share of meditation so I wasn't exactly unfamiliar.

My problems were earth problems, my crisis wasn't existential. I knew I needed to get free so I asked her to free me on the off chance that she might oblige. I studied her form and I asked myself, how can you relate to this?

I have to be honest, I thought I was forcing a connection where there wasn't any. I felt stupid in my woo, desperate and out of place like a white girl in a head dress.

I was afraid that I was doing it wrong but I kept doing it and one day I felt a shift. I don't think I saw it for what it was at the time but she doesn't bear her fruit like that. It was subtle. A decision. A shift.

I decided that my problems were bullshit as long as my milk was drying up. Everything else could wait. I gave life to three people who didn't ask for me, the least I could do was sustain them.

My baby was freaking out, clawing at my breasts, trying to scratch the milk out. My midwife told me what herbs to drink and to nurse thru the dry sockets. It will let down, it will come back.

Om Shrim Hreem Hreem Aim Vajra Vairochaniye Shrim Hreem Hreem PhatSvaha
Prayer to Chinnamasta for protection and dissolution of fear.

Equinox at the Headwaters

by Sever

We had travelled far that day, even though it was the equinox. A car is not a healthy thing to have a relationship with, and though travellers have always come to love the things that bear them across the face of the earth, burning gasoline is not a good way to celebrate the balancing of the seasons, the beginning of the return of the sun to our hemisphere. But we live in the wasteland, and nowadays, people have to go great distances to connect all their disparate parts.

We were headed to Uytaahkoo, the mountain that rootless ones like me know as Shasta, to find the headwaters of the river that the Spanish colonizers called "Sacramento." The place was not treated as well as it should be. An asphalt parking lot and easy sign posts made access banal. An informative placard gave the spring its scientific explanation. Nonetheless, there it was, a veritable river erupting from the womb of the earth, surging up around the rocks at the base of a steep slope, gathering in a pool, spilling over a fallen log and running its way downhill, to join with countless other tributaries in a long journey to the south—to the Ocean—in one vision, or in another—to a series of dams and irrigation channels to feed a delusional Machine that believes it constructs itself.

It was raining that day, and the heights were lost in dense mist. We knelt, wetted our hands, filled our water bottles, and carried them a ways, accompanying the river on its path. Evergreens collected the cloud- spray and released it half-time in fat drops. The earth soaked up the rain and passed it on to the river. Not a mile downstream the river was already fattened, running white over the stones. When we came around a bend, I looked into the waters and the face of a coyote appeared, staring at me. "Move in," she said.

I thought of the way coyotes move back in to the wasteland, preying on the rodents that are more tolerant of the Disaster, eating beloved housecats, haunting suburban nights with their ghostly yapping. They belie the victorious narrative of Civilization, breaking through the acoustic barriers that block out all the other voices, the endless voices of the world. They rewild, not in a "Desert" that Civilization has relinquished (Civilization never relinquishes), but at the interstices where the grinding of the gears can still be heard, where the radio voice still booms out, "There is no other way but Onwards."

I realized that the Collapse has already occurred, maybe it happened decades ago, but the State continues to shout out its marching orders, to direct those who follow it and, in a way, those who fight against it. States can manage collapse indefinitely. And in truth, no State has ever collapsed, but that those who suffer it give it a little push. Sometimes we are the protagonists of the destruction of the State, rising against it at its most powerful, and surviving the clash when so many times before we have been slaughtered. Other times, the State is weakened by its own hubris and sickness, and we topple it when it is already off balance. But not even a weak State fails if its subjects choose to remain weaker still, spectators to entropy, waiting for the God-Kings to leave this earth of their own volition.

We are entropy, devouring structures with razor teeth, or we are nothing at all.

The coyote said to move back in, to reclaim the wasteland. It is time, long since time. The Collapse has already occurred.

The world of Civilization and the world of the world are overlapping, one atop the other. There is no moving out of the one, but there is a moving into the other, putting our feet down, eating from it, dying into it. The battles in the streets of the city of the Machine are important. They set the whole thing trembling. Yet the tower is already tumbling, and we are within it, tumbling too. If everything is falling, then nothing moves. Only when we have our feet on other ground can we see the tower fall, and not fall with it.

I have never written of these things before, that the religion forced upon us calls "hallucinations," that an earlier, more charitable albeit in- fantilizing paradigm referred to as "daydreams." But part of the experience was the compulsion to share it, to talk about it. Here it is. Take from it what you will.

Phagein

by D/G

Your eyes are bigger than your stomach. Your brain is as big as two balled hands held together, your appendix is as long as your pinky finger, your stomach is the size of your fist. We use our body to measure the world around us. In the forgotten northern end of South America, among certain people, the old customs had the lower social classes portioned out with tattoos. The blown-out blue lines of ash and vegetable ink ran around joints and down legs, and across torsos. They made a map. In a hard year—a flooded year with no game or a drought year with no fish— these tattooed bodies showed the way through famine. They would be butchered and divvied up using the guide inked to their flesh; a tattooed bit here, a sectioned morsel there.

The Arawak speakers are familiar with eating flesh, if not personally then historically. Cannibalism was, after all, the justification that the Spanish Queen Isabella gave to Columbus to capture and enslave the indigenous population of the Caribbean. Those who ate their own had to be savage children of the Devil, not a wayward flock of God's, waiting to be shown the way to civilization. Lacking any exposure or evidence of true cannibals in the Caribbean, Columbus invented them, and slaves he got.

Butchering a compatriot to feed your kids is a gruesome, seemingly unimaginable act, but in that extreme instance there is intimate exposure to the junction of ecological disturbance and resilience.

Empty, black rock volcanic islands have been populated by wave-riding seeds. Entire species have flourished after being forced to new lands by immense storms. Static mountains hold the potential for eruption, stoic redwood stands have the ability to rage with fire. In upheaval there is a bloom of complex and dynamic interactions. Even drought can provide new possibilities for sustenance.

Cannibal is the anglicized version of *cannible,* the Spanish pluralization of *Canibe,* a mispronunciation of *Cari- be* or *Carib,* a supposedly man-eating tribe from the islands. The region's name, Caribbean, is derived from the name of those people, the Carib. Before Columbus, humans eating humans was known by the Greek word *anthropophagia.*

Before there were Greeks or Spaniards or Caribs there were cavemen. Neanderthals ate their dead, at least in some capacity. Bones show the marks of scraping and cleaning—clues suggesting meticulous removal of flesh from wet bone. Some of the bones were then used to make tools, others were crushed and had the marrow removed to be eaten in the same manner as the reindeer, horses, and wild boar the Neanderthals subsisted on.

These hairier Homo ancestors may have scavenged and eaten the partially cooked starchy leftovers of tubers in the charred remains of lightning strikes and subsequent wildfires on the savanna. Although the eating of meat is now fetishized by diet gurus, hunters, and animal rights activists, it may actually have been the tuber, not meat, that was the caloric ticket into the world of enhanced brain power. With the carbohydrates already partially digested by the heavens the primate stomach was able to extract more nutritional value from the subterranean starch.

Even then, those few million years ago on the mother continent, the Homo genus was probably bitten by mosquitoes. Insects have been dated to as far as back as the Devonian, some 400 million years ago. People believe that insects were the first creatures to develop flight. In amber the delicate wings of mosquitoes can be seen folded upon themselves.

The world's hungriest killer instinct is borne on these ancient wings. Responsible for the deaths of an estimated 1 million humans every year, it is only the female mosquito that seeks blood, which she finds by following the scent of the carbon dioxide that we mammals exhale. Protein and iron found in blood is used for the production of eggs. Some mosquitoes drink so much blood that they have difficulty leaving the body of the host, drunkenly flying off in search of some moist place to lay their eggs.

Ticks, no see ums, bedbugs, fleas, assassin bugs, and lice are also in the business of blood, a nutritional proclivity known as hematophagy. On chickens, blood-sucking mites come out to feed at night, sheltering near the vent of the bird during the day. The host individual will peck and scratch at the bites, causing feather loss and exposure of pink skin. At the sight of flesh the other chickens in the pen will begin pecking at the skin and drawing blood. With blood in the air and meat in their eyes the fratricidal fowl chase and peck and eventually devour their penmates, leaving the ground littered with hollow carcasses.

It seems as though this behavior is very old. There is fossil evidence of both healed wounds and potentially fatal skeletal injuries suggesting that T. Rex may have engaged in violent behavior of a possibly cannibalistic nature. If you squint, you can easily see the terrible lizard lurking deep in the chicken. Listen to them groan and coo as they pick through grass—it's not hard to see them foraging through steamy Jurassic foliage.

The beak is a choke point for birds. Most birds are gape-limited predators, meaning they can only ingest what they can slide down their toothless maws. For the most part there is no cutting, butchering, or dividing of prey, and tearing and shredding is limited to the sharp beaks of birds of prey.

Not all birds will get the chance to hunt worms at dawn. Certain fledglings don't stand a chance. There are lazy species that have learned to roll the unattended eggs of other species out of the nest and quickly lay their own, leaving the parents of the dead to incubate the usurpers' offspring. With colonial nesters such as gulls, it is common for smaller, weaker hatchlings to be preyed upon by older, more developed birds. It is an easy, low-risk foraging strategy that values the species over the familial unit.

In ancient Egypt the mantis, known as *bird-fly,* was a courier of souls, bringing the dead to meet the arbiters and divine deities of the afterlife. In Su- meria the two names for the mantids translate to *necromancer* and *soothsayer,* suggesting the Sumerians also saw the mantis as a magical, even divine creature. The praying mantis' most noted behavioral characteristic is the sexual dynamic. In the book *The Praying Mantids* the authors describe the phenomenon as such:

Males are renowned for their ability to initiate copulation while being eaten. The organization of a mantid's central nervous system will allow both copulation and spermatophore transfer in the absence of descending input from the cephalic ganglia.

The females and males find each other using the chemical networks used by many insects, but cannibalism may not be as much a factor of ritual as just of hunger. Sexual cannibalism is more readily observed in controlled environments and well fed females are less likely to decapitate the smaller male.

Hunger also factors into the sexually cannibalistic behavior of the Australian red-backed spider. In red- backed spiders the fractionally smaller male will launch himself onto the fangs of the much larger female. She disembowels him as they mate over the course of five to thirty minutes. It's understood to be an investment. The well-fed female has little interest in other males, and the cannibalized male has given his offspring a nutritional nest-egg, a caloric head start. Generational foresight taken to a sacrificial extreme.

After their late-summer fertilization, the female mantis extrudes a foam that encases and then hardens around her offspring, protecting them from predators and the elements. When winter has passed and temperatures begin to warm, the egg case cracks and nymphs extract themselves from the hardened foam. In the open air their exoskeletons harden and gain slight color. The tiny mantids crawl out of the split egg case, using their siblings like a ladder to dangle to the nearest leaf or stick, where they sway and assess their surroundings. Their eyes swivel and observe. Their spiny raptorial arms are already prepared to hunt. Their mandibles are ready to gnaw. While some venture off to hunt aphids or gnats, others lie in wait for a slower, smaller brother or sister to feast upon.

Sharks also occasionally taste their siblings. *Adelphophagy* is the name for the eating of a sibling. For sand sharks, this meal occurs in ute- ro. In the mature female reproductive system, the young sharks are like a chain with progressively larger links, the most developed of the young swimming freely in the oviduct fed by a conveyor belt of younger kin, eating the others until its expulsion from the uterus as a born killer.

Implicit in the survival of the shark is the remora, that strange sucking fish that hangs from the hunters, as well as the crabs that will feast on the decomposing body of the toothed fish when it dies, and in turn the parasites that live on the crabs' carapace. This harmony with unpredictability and the faculty to seamlessly adapt many functions within a single form is what has allowed sharks to exist, to thrive. Whether hunters, scavengers, prey, or hosts, when all sharks and remoras become detritus there will be another such symbiosis to take their place.

The devouring of a sibling in utero is part of a web that runs from the mother's uterus to detritivores in the deepest crevices of the Mariana trench. Spurious, fickle, impartial, gregariously violent and heartless, the "web of life" is anything but. Far from the warm embrace of a loving parent, it is full of claws and teeth that creep and lurk.

Mabiki is a Japanese word that has the dual meanings of "to harvest rice" and "infanticide." In the rural regions of 17th century Japan a married woman could expect to raise three children on average but to give birth to twice that number. Particularly for poor families, the benefits of raising a child for future labor had to be weighed against the time and energy expended to do so. The value of an infant was considered in terms of cosmology, economy, and time.

There was no consensus of the sanctity of every individual human life and the loss of one was considered to be potentially beneficial in the long run to many. Death was seen as an act of stewardship akin to the farmer uprooting some crops to allow light and room for others to grow. Balance isn't found in outcome but in the processes. There is no static expression of succession to achieve, or an ideal climax to strive and sacrifice for. Even the most profane, reprehensible acts play part in the simple hardwired drive for hunger. The beauty of complexity is found in disturbance.

Blackfish

by Emily Johnson

There is a fish that lives in very deep, very cold rivers. Their taste is strong, pungent, oily. They are caught in weighted traps that fall, then rest somewhere near the muddy bottom. The traps are left for days. In winter, when the tops of rivers freeze, blackfish push their plump bellies down into the mud, as far from the ice as they can get. They wait. They are never seen swimming in their rivers. They don't jump up into the air to break their egg sacks like salmon or to catch bugs like trout. People know they are there because they know they are there.

When blackfish are hauled up in traps, they are motionless and then they are stored in buckets. 3, 5, 6, 7 blackfish can lay in the bottom of an average bucket. They lay there, belly down. They don't flop, they don't roll off, heaving, to one side. They don't fight the air. They press their plump bellies down on the bottom of the bucket, holding themselves in the fish kind of upright. I imagine that they imagine the top of the bucket covered with ice, the bottom covered with mud.

Blackfish can lay in the bottom of a bucket, sitting on a porch for months; no water, no mud, no food, no fish air. They lay there, on their bellies, still. But when brought back to their river, when held in their very deep, very cold water, when gently primed in the cups of two human hands, the blackfish heaves, its sides pulse, its head moves from side to side, and then, it swims away.

My cousin told me about the time he tried studying blackfish for the science fair at school. It was spring. He put his blackfish trap down into the river and waited two days. He caught four blackfish. He placed these in his bucket which he placed in the back mud room of the house near the dog food. He had to wait until fall.

I said you can eat blackfish, that their taste is strong, pungent, oily. You can, but you eat them raw, and you eat them head in. Head in your mouth. It's as if you eat the blackfish while, at the same time, the black- fish swims to your belly.

My cousin didn't eat his spring caught blackfish. He wanted to study them. To open them. To see the guts, the bones that seem to dissolve with spit. He imagined blood and a heart and lungs. He wanted to pin the blackfish open, draw a picture, label parts, find out how they sit themselves upright in the bottom of buckets, why they never surface their rivers, how they come to life after months pressed into mud. He took one blackfish and held it in his hand. He didn't wake it. He took a knife, and he cut it. From anus to head, up the belly. But he didn't see lungs or guts or blood. He held the knife in his right hand, the black- fish in his left, but after the cut, he couldn't hold onto the fish. It dissolved in his hand, became a kind of thick, black, liquid goo. He tried to stop it from slipping between his fingers, but the blackfish goo got heavier as it dripped toward the floor and the whole mess of it slid off his palm, gathering in a puddle at his feet.

He tried another.

Same thing.

"If you cannot cut a blackfish open to look at its insides, can you study its insides?" he asked me.

But he didn't give me time to answer.

Instead, he continued, "I couldn't cut another. I ate my last two black- fish. And I ate the blackfish that were sitting upright in my father's bucket, the ones he caught for feasting in late winter. Emily, I ate five blackfish," he said.

"Good god," I said.

No one eats five blackfish.

You eat ONE, for health, but my cousin thought that if he ate a lot of blackfish he could find out about the blackfish soul. About what they dream during the ice over. About their survival through the harshest conditions; laying in buckets in homes, away from the deep, cold habitat of river and mud. About their swim down our throats. He thought there was something the blackfish could teach him that he could, maybe, in turn, teach his family and friends and teacher at school.

But the blackfish made him puke. It poured out of his mouth, swam over his tongue, that same thick, black liquid goo he felt slipping through his fingers. It pulled out of him, leaving him feeling cleaner than before, but with a horrible taste in his mouth. He lay down, belly pressed to the floor. He couldn't move, so he fell asleep.

He told me, "The blackfish are unstudyable. They exist to live in rivers, and buckets, and bellies. You cannot cut a blackfish. Please, do not try. You cannot eat too many. Trust me, don't. But, when the blackfish enters your dreams, you hold still and listen to what it says. It will tell you when to swim head first into danger, it will tell you when to press your belly down wherever you are, and rest. It will tell you how to survive this world. It will tell you its secrets."

Earthdivers: Origin stories, mixed descent, and metaphor

by Gerald Vizenor

The term Earthdivers is borrowed from a traditional theme in tribal creation myths and is dedicated here as an imaginative metaphor. The earth- divers are mixedbloods, or Metis, tribal tricksters and recast cultural heroes, the mournful and whimsical heirs and survivors from that primer union between the daughters of the woodland shamans and white fur traders. The Metis, or mixedblood, earthdivers dive into unknown urban places now, into the racial darkness in the cities, to create a new consciousness of coexistence.

Metis is a French word which means mixedblood in current usage, or a person of mixed Indian and French-Canadian ancestry. The Spanish word mestizo means a person of mixed Indian and European ancestry. The words Metis and mixedblood possess no social or scientific validation because blood mixture is not a measurement of consciousness, culture, or human experiences; but the word Metis is a source of notable and radical identification. Louis Riel, for example, one of the great leaders of the Metis, declared a new mixed- blood nation in the last century. He was convicted of "high treason" and executed.

"It is true that our savage origin is humble, but it is meet that we honor our mothers as well as our fathers," said Louis Riel to his proud followers. He is quoted from *The Strange Empire of Louis Riel* by Joseph Kinsey Howard. "Why should we concern ourselves about what degree of mixture we possess of European or Indian blood? If we have ever so little of either gratitude or filial love, should we not be proud to say, We are Metis?"

Metis John Baptiste Cadotte was distinguished in tribal and white histories. William Whipple Warren noted in his History of the Ojibway Nation the Cadotte had "received a college education in Montreal. He was among the first individuals whose European, or white blood, became mixed with the blood of the Ojibways. On leaving college, he became possessed of forty thousand francs which had been bequeathed to him by his father, and with this sum as capital, he immediately launched into the northwestern fur trade." Warren was educated in mission schools and was the first mixedblood to serve as representative in the territorial legislature.

"Intermarriage went hand-in- glove with the trade of skins and furs from the first decades of discovery," writes Jacqueline Peterson in her brilliant essay "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great lake Metis." She explains that the "core denominator of Metis identity was not participation in the fur trading network per se," but the mixedblood middleman "stance between Indian and European societies." The Metis "functioned not only as human carriers linking Indians and Europeans, but as buffers behind which the ethnic boundaries of antagonistic cultures remained relatively secure."

Jacqueline Peterson points out that "it is no coincidence that many of the labels describing the offspring of interracial unions articulate an implicit wish to blot out or sterilize the human consequences of miscegenation. Thus like the derogation 'mulatto,' which stems from mule, and

'griffe' the monstrous winged child of black and Indian parents, 'halfbreed,' 'breed,' and 'mixed-blood' hint broadly at cultural and biological impotence."

In the traditional earthdiver creation myths the cultural hero or tribal trickster asked animals and birds to dive for the earth, but here, in the metaphor of the Metis earth- diver, white settlers are summoned to dive with mixed- blood survivors into the unknown, into the legal morass of treaties and bureaucratic evils, and to swim deep down and around federal exclaves and colonial economic enterprises in search of a few honest words upon which to build a new urban turtle island. In traditional stories the metaphor of the earthdiver centers on the return to the earth, rather than a separation from the earth and a futurist transcendence to a computerized heaven. The earthdiver does not dive into space. The trickster secures his earth, his urban places now, and then he dreams out of familiar time and space. Tricksters and earthdivers are the metaphors between new sources of opposition and colonial ideas about savagism and civilization.

The earthdiver myth has a "world-wide distribution," according to the folklorist Elli Kaija Kongasin in an article published in Ethno-history. "It is told in various forms, but it always has four invariable traits— earth covered with water, the creator, the diver, and the making of the earth…"

In his book *The Religions of the American Indians,* Ake Hultkrantz writes that the "primal sea represents primordial chaos, while the great flood is chaos of a later date, caused, for example, by the wrath of a god or the transgression of a taboo… No other creation myth in North America is as extensive as the one about the Earth Diver who brings up land from the primal water "

"In North America there is a profusion of tales regarding the origin of the world, whereas the creation of man is a rarer topic. . . . One of these traditions, which is prevalent in North America and well known in North Asia and Europe, tells how the creator sent an animal down to the bottom of the sea to bring up sand or mud from which the earth was subsequently made…"

Earl Count in his essay "The Earth-Diver and the Rival Twins: A Clue to Time Correlation in North- Eurasiatic and North American Mythology," published in *The Civilizations of Ancient America*, states that the "cosmogonic notion of a primal sea out of which a diver fetches material for making dry land, is easily among the most widespread single concepts held by man."

In his provocative research article "Earth-Diver: Creation of the Mythopoetic," published in *American Anthropologist*, Alan Dundes turns his attention from modern myths to psychoanalytic theories and assumes, for purposes of his hypothesis, the existence of a cloacal theory of birth; and the existence of pregnancy envy on the part of males." While Dundes waits to be invited to dive, in the metaphorical sense of the urban earthdiver, through his own assumptions and ideas, consider one version of an earthdiver myth as an illustration of the creation of turtle island. Creation myths are not time bound; the creation takes place in the telling, in present-tense metaphors.

Victor Barnouw collected earthdiver creation stories as Lac du Flambeau and published them in his book *Wisconsin Chippewa Myths and Tales.* Barnouw writes that the narrator of the following earthdiver myth was a shaman, or a tribal spiritual leader, "to who I have given the pseudonym of Tom Badger… a quite level-headed man in his seventies, with a good sense of humor."

Wenebojo is also transcribed as manibozho, nanibozhu, wanibozu, manabozho, nanabozho, nanabush, and other variations from the oral tradition. Nanabozho,is the compassionate tribal trickster of the woodland anishinaabeg, the people named the Chippewa, Ojibway, Ojibwa, or Ojibwe. Wenebojo or naanabozho is the compassionate trickster, not the trickster in the word

constructions of the anthropologist Paul Radin, the one who "possesses no values, moral or social. knows neither good nor evil yet is responsible for both," but the imaginative trickster, the one who cares to balance the world between terminal creeds and humor with unusual manners and ecstatic strategies.

Wenebojo was standing on the top of the tree.. .and the water was up to his mouth. Pretty soon Wenebojo felt that he wanted to defecate. He couldn't hold it. The shit floated up to the top of the water and floated around his mouth.

Wenebojo noticed that there was an animal in the water. .Then he saw several animals—beaver, muskrat, and otter. Wenebojo spoke to the otter first.

"Brother," he said, "could you go down and get some earth? If you do that, I will make an earth for you and me to live on.. "

Anyway he went to the bottom of the water…he drowned. Then he floated to the top. Wenebojo tried to reach the otter. He got hold of him finally and looked into the otter's paws and mouth, but he didn't find any dirt. Then Wenebojo blew on the otter, and the otter came to again. Wenebojo asked him, "Did you see anything?"

"No," said the otter.

The next person Wenebojo spoke to was the beaver. He asked him to go after some earth down below and said, If you do, I'll make an earth for us to live on.. "

The beaver was gone a long time. Pretty soon he floated to the top of the water. He also drowned. Wenebo- jo got hold of the beaver and blew on him. When he came to, Wenebojo examined his paws and mouth to see if there was any dirt there, but he couldn't find anything. He asked the beaver, "Did you see any earth at the bottom?"

"Yes, I did," said the beaver. "I saw it, but I couldn't get any of it." These animals had tried and failed..

The muskrat was playing around there too. Wenebojo didn't think much about the muskrat, since he was so small; but after awhile he said to him, "Why don't you try and go after some of the dirt too?"

The muskrat said, "I'll try" and he dived down.

Wenebojo waited and waited a long time for the muskrat to come up to the top of the water. When he floated up to the top, he was all crippled. Wenebojo caught the muskrat and looked him over. The muskrat had his paws closed up tight. His mouth was shut too. Wenebojo opened the muskrat's front paw and found a grain of earth in it. He took it. In his other front paw he found another little grain, and one grain of dirt in each of his hind paws. There was another grain in his mouth.

When he found these five grains, Wenebojo started to blow on the muskrat, blew on him until he came back to life. Then Wenebojo took the grains of sand in the palm of his hand and held them up to the sun to dry them out. When the sand was all dry, he threw it around onto the water. There was a little island then.

They went onto the little island— Wenebojo, the beaver, the otter, and the muskrat. Wenebojo got more earth on the island and threw it all around. The island got bigger. It got larger every time Wenebojo threw out another handful of dirt. Then, animals at the bottom of the water, whoever was there, all came up to the top of the water and went to the island where Wenebojo was. They were tired of being in the water all the time, and when they heard about the earth that Wenebojo had made, they all wanted to stay there.

Wenebojo kept on throwing the earth around.

Dundes observes that despite the "lack of a great number of actual excremental myths, the existence of any at all would appear to lend support to the hypothesis that men think of creativity in anal terms, and further that this conception is projected into mythic cosmogonic terms."

Dundes continues his comments on excremental expansion: "The fecal nature of the particle is also suggested by its magical expansion. One could imagine that as one defecates one is thereby creating an ever-increasing amount of earth."

We are fortunate, perhaps, as Metis and mixedblood earthdivers, that Alan Dundes did not choose to explain creation in terms of female penile envies, or penis captivus, and the expansion of urine as a theoretical assumption to account for the flood. Expanding his discussion to include ideas from the tradition of philosophical dualism, Dundes asserts that the "devil is clearly identified with matter and in particular with defecation. In a phrase, it is the devil who does the dirty work."

Victor Barnouw does not seem to resist these mythic movements or rise above fecal interpretations of tribal creation stories.

In a section of his book devoted to anal themes he writes that "Alan Dundes has suggested that the Earth-Diver motif is a male fantasy of creation stemming from male envy of female pregnancy and an assumed cloa- cal theory of birth. In Dundes' view the mud from which the earth is formed is symbolic of feces. This may seem an extravagant hypothesis, but it would be in keeping with Chippewa myth with its exclusion of women and its striking anal themes. . . . The idea of creating people from feces occurs in some Chippewa tales. . . .in our series Wenebojo creates some Indian warriors by defecation here and there and sticking feathers into turds."

Barnouw refers to other stories in his discussion of anal themes, including one where the daughter of a chief denies her suitors. The suitors, "in revenge, defecate into a hole, make a human form from the dung, dress it up in fine clothes, and will that it become a human being. The dung man goes to the village, where the chief's daughter falls in love with him. He leaves, and the girl follows his tracks. She finally comes to a pile of dung, where the trail ends.

In both of these stories males create people by defecating, in line with Dundes' hypothesis."

Some anthropologists seem to have little appreciation for sacred games in tribal creations. Their secular seriousness separates the tribes from humor, from untimed metaphors, and the academic intensities of career bound anthropologists approach diarrhetic levels of terminal theoretical creeds. The creation myth that anthropologists never seem to tell is the one where naanabozho, the cultural trickster, made the first anthropologist from fecal matter. Once made, more were cloned in graduate schools from the first fecal creation of an anthropologist.

While the traditional earthdiver themes have been exhausted in minor academic word wars, the mixed-blood earthdiver is a metaphor in a timeless tribal drama. Turtle island is an imaginative place; not a formula, but a metaphor which connects dreams to the earth. The Metis are divided in white consciousness, denied an absolute cultural corner, and, therefore, spared from extinction in word and phrase museums.

Earthdivers and new urban shamans now summon the white world to dive, to dive deep and return with the sacred earth. The Metis wait above the chaos at common intersections in the cities for the white animals to return with earth, enough to build a new urban turtle island. Earthdivers, tricksters, shamans, poets, dream back the earth.

"We demand too much when we ask that the poet establish a new world," Writes Karsten Harries in his article "Metaphor and Transcendence." The world seems to float on words, but "first we have to learn to listen more attentively to the many voices of the earth. What makes

listening difficult is the fact that as members of a community we are necessarily caught up in already established and taken-for-granted ways of speaking and seeing.

'We understand things without having made them our own. The adequacy of words is taken for granted, their origin forgotten. There are moments when the inadequacy of our language seizes us, when language seems to fall apart and falling apart opens us to what transcends it…As language falls apart, contact with being is reestablished.. "

Earthdivers speak a new language, their experiences and dreams are metaphors, and in some urban places they speak backwards to be better heard and understood on the earth. They speak in unusual languages, so unusual that "language seems to fall apart," but this illusion of disintegration, Karsten Harries asserts, "does not lead to silence.. '

In his essay on "What Metaphors Mean" Donald Davidson writes that "meataphor is the dreamwork of language and, like all dreamwork, its interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as on the originator. The interpretation of dreams requires collaboration between a dreamer and a waker, even if they be the same person; and the act of interpretation is itself a work of the imagination.

"So too understanding a metaphor is as much a creative endeavor as making a metaphor, and as little guided by rules. . . . The idea, then, is that in metaphor certain words take on new, or what are often called 'extended' meanings. . . . Perhaps, then, we can explain metaphor as a kind of ambiguity: in the context of a metaphor, certain words have either a new or an original meaning, and the force of the metaphor depends on our uncertainty as we waver between two meanings. . . ."

Earthdivers waver and forbear extinction in two worlds. Metis are the force in the earthdiver metaphor, the tension in the blood and the uncertain word, the imaginative and compassionate trickster on street corners in the cities. When the mixedblood earthdiver summons the white world to dive like the otter and beaver and muskrat in search of the earth, and federal funds, he is both animal and trickster, both white and tribal, the uncertain creator in an urban metaphor based on a creation myth that preceded him in two world views and oral traditions.

Metis, naanabozho tells, were the first earthdivers.

Tribal ideas and sources of consciousness, and earthdiver metaphors, demand some privities on tribal world views: time is circular and creation takes place in ceremonies and between tellers and listeners; sacred names, dreams, and visions are images that connect the bearer to the earth; shamans and other tribal healers and visionaries speak the various languages of plants and animals and feel the special dream power to travel backward from familiar times and places.

A. Irving Hallowell has written numerous descriptive and research articles about woodland anishinaa- beg. His stories are familiar to most listeners. For example, he once asked an old anishinaabe man about the animation of stones:

> *Are all the stones we see about us alive? He reflected for a long while and then replied, 'No! But some are.' This qualified answer made a lasting impression on me. And that is thoroughly consistent with other data that indicate that the Ojibwa are not animists in the sense that they dogmatically attribute living souls to inanimate objects such as stones.*

In his article "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View," Hal- lowell explains that his tribal friends were

puzzled by the white man's conception of thunder and lightning as natural phenomena as they were by the idea that the earth is round and flat. I was pressed on more than one occasion to explain thunder and lightning, but I doubt whether my somewhat feeble efforts made much sense to them... my explanations left their own beliefs completely unshaken... Underlying the Ojibwa view there may be a level of naive perceptual experience that should be taken into account... What is particularly interesting is that the avian nature of the Thunder Bird does not rest solely on an arbitrary image. Phenomenally, thunder does exhibit 'behavioral' characteristics that are analogous to avian phenomena in this region.

Hallowell did not have to talk to old men to learn that the earth and other forms of life are personal experiences. Some anthropologists separate themselves from the earth and imagination with colonial research words and elitist templates. The earthdivers now turn around, talk backward, and summon anthropologists to dive for the earth with imaginative words.

The Ojibwa self is not oriented to a behavioral environment in which a distinction between human beings and supernatural beings is stressed... Impersonal forces are never the causes of events. Somebody is always responsible,

Hallowell points out in his book *Culture and Experience.*

The names of characters in narrative are real and imagined, but it is difficult to know the difference. Real characters seem fictional, at times more imaginary. The real worlds are not unlike the imagined mythic worlds. Differences in realities are never clear because the distances between tribal dreams, earthdiver myths, comedies and metaphors, and familiar places float free from time in some conversations.

Peter Jones, of Kahkewaqouna- by, the Ojibway missionary, said that his personal tribal name, which means "sacred feather" in translation, was given to him by his traditional grandfather.

The Indians have but one name, which is derived either from their gods or some circumstance connected with their birth or character, Jones wrote in *The History of the Ojebway Indians: With Especial Reference to Their Conversion to Christianity*, published more than a century ago in England. *When an Indian is asked his name he will look at some bystander and request him to answer. This reluctance arises from an impression they receive when young, that if they repeat their own names it will prevent their growth, and they will be small in stature. On account of this unwillingness to tell their names, many strangers have fancied that they either have no names or have forgotten them...* "

Jones described traditional practices at a time when tribal cultures were burdened with disease and death, colonial revisions, primal survival; his comments were romantic, perhaps servile to his religious conversion, because this assumed reluctance to reveal personal names, whether such a practice was true or not, belies martial domination. Would we have revealed our names to the men who denied our cultures, or to those who were dedicated to either our destruction or conversion? Indeed, tribal names, dream names, and words that assured the sacred in communal and oral traditions were protected, but tribal cultures were seldom passive—never as submissive as the neocolonial transformers once imagined.

The use of a created name for an author avoids the limitations suggested in autobiographical writing and the use of first-person pronouns. However, other critical textual considerations are raised when an author writes about himself through any name as a character in a narrative.

Georges Gusdorf expresses with unusual ease the consciousness of the autobiographer in his article "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography,"

> *The man who takes delight in thus drawing his own images believes himself worthy of a special interest. Each of us tends to think of himself as the center of a living space: I count, my existence is significant to the world, and my death will leave the world incomplete.…*
>
> *This conscious awareness of the singularity off each individual life is the late product of a specific civilization. Through most of human history, the individual does not oppose himself to all others; he does not feel himself to exist outside of others, and still less against others, but very much with others in an interdependent existence that asserts its rhythms everywhere in the community.*

Earthdivers are the new metaphors between communal tribal cultures and the cultures that oppose traditional connections, the cultures that would own and market the earth. The experiences of the autobiographer are similar to those of the earth- diver: the blood wavers in personal metaphors.

It is obvious that autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape where consciousness of self does not… exist, writes Gusdorf.

> *But this unconsciousness of personality, characteristic of primitive societies such as ethnologists describe to us, lasts also in more advanced civilizations that subscribe to mythic structures, they too are being governed by principles of repetition*
>
> *Autobiography becomes possible only under certain metaphysical preconditions. To begin with, at the cost of a cultural revolution, humanity must have emerged from the mythic framework of traditional teachers and must have entered into the perilous domain of history. The man who knows that the present differs from the past and that it will not be repeated in the future; he has become more aware of the differences than similarities… Artistic creation is a struggle with an angel, in which the creator is more certain of being vanquished since the opponent is still himself. He wrestles with his shadow, certain only of never laying hold of it…*

Earthdivers wrestle with their shadows; they capture some light from the written images of their experiences. The opposition of the trickster, and the implied resolutions, are internal; anarchism is balanced in dreams and mythic imagination. The verbal contradance is more than a mere autobiographical cakewalk.

"*There is no question but that a spirit of anarchism is bred within the autobiographical act,*" writes Louis Renza in "A Theory of Autobiography." The sense of anarchism is "mitigated in words where the writer blends the exclusive, though collective, 'minority' persona." In literature or in ecology, comedy enlightens and enriches human experience without trying to transform either mankind or the world.

Wenebojo kept on throwing the earth around.

Still Time: Love Letter To Dark Mountain

By swiddening elf 2
My heart's aflutter!
I am standing in the bath tub
crying. Mother, mother
who am I? If he
will just come back once
and kiss me on the face
his coarse hair brush
my temple, it's throbbing!
then I can put on my clothes
I guess, and walk the streets.

I've been living (staring) at the trees that surround my tiny cabin in the pacific Northwest. Most of them are Large Leaf Maples, *Acer macrophyl- lum.* When I arrived here in February, they had no leaves. There they stood, dormant, appearing the same day after day. One of my landmates tapped some of them for maple syrup. Sap poured and moved from the outwardly appearing stillness and dormancy of each tapped tree. A current of sugar and essence and water dragged up and dragged down the cambium tissue, with a particular sweetness, a particular proportion of sugar, of micronutrients, particular to the contour of the land. Tapping opened my eyes to other aspects of the tree, of each particular tree, to their gnarled curves, arcing into the light above.

Over many days and weeks the trees appeared dormant, except for that nagging current of sap that moved through their veins. And I knew, as well, that a time of quickening was approaching when the buds would grow noticeably fatter each day, and during each day. Their motion would become perceptible, while in the end of the winter, it required a way of seeing and experiencing the trees. This gave their stillness a tension. I felt myself waiting, waiting for this inevitable burst of life and growth.

I knew that this process would take place whether I acted or not (short of cutting the trees down!). In other words, this process happened autonomously of my interventions, wishes, critiques, desires.

If changing our lives is changing our actions, and changing our actions is changing what we think, and if we think in language, this language reveals certain limits to thought. What saw in the forest around me was tightly bound up with this.

Languages are ways of communicating about the world, and are thus *a way of describing the world.* We can say this about ideologies as well.

Desertion

The jig is up, the fix is in, and it's time to get the fuck out of here. Out of here? Yes, out of what it is we are stuck talking about. Pack your shit, we're moving again.

If the state wants to make us its captives, then we have to capsize ourselves, and escape. We have to carve out space where we can play and experiment with just what playing is, to discover what capacity for play still lives inside us, and then gently tend it and cultivate it into our power. This inevitably entails talking and thinking in new ways.

The lifestyle anarchists and the insurrectionary guerillas both agree: the bottom line is to stay free and evade capture. And what of those of us who *have* become captives?; of work, of television, of social media, of school, of the next new prison and its recyclable architecture? We might start by remembering what it is to be free, to play, to be liberated. We can remember and we can tell stories to tend to this remembering. These stories can be told at the campfire, in the coffeeshop, at the party, on the corner, in the trenches, and on the frontlines. In this tending and storytelling we are building a net, a glue, that will hold on to the parts of ourselves that know what it is to be ecstatic.

Desertion is a permanent position in relation to the state that continues with or without the existence of the state, and involves adopting tactics in real time through a moment -by-moment analysis of the state and its imposition into the deserter's life. It is not simply constituted by yet another land project but originates in a discourse—a collection of certain stories—that inform practices that generate more stories. The discourse of desertion is a discourse of verbs. Note that there is not a way to say *desertion, desert,* or *deserting* that is not, at least in part, describing a state of change, of motion. Our aim is the ecstatic abandonment of the shackles of conversation, and beyond. Desertion is an eruption of the spirit that breaks new ground, whether in the prison cafeteria, or in the woods.

2

I love you. I love you,
but I'm turning to my verses
and my heart is closing
like a fist.
Words! be
sick as I am sick, swoon,
roll back your eyes, a pool,
and I'll stare down
at my wounded beauty
which at best is only a talent
for poetry.
Cannot please, cannot charm or win
what a poet!
and the clear water is thick
with bloody blows on its head.
I embrace a cloud,
but when I soared
it rained.

I've been tracking deer in the woods around my cabin. Their pebble-like scat appears glistening and fresh within days of being defecated, and slowly erodes by wind and rain to small piles of dirt resembling a mole hill. My eyes move variously from wide-angle peripheral vision: to subtleties in the surrounding landscape; to the ground just in front of my feet where I continuously verify that I am still on a deer path; to the path arcing forward, leading me, as I read the track

into the indiscernible veg- etation—hoof print, hoof print, hoof print, scat, hoof print, crushed fern leaf, a deep print where the deer leap, over an undisturbed bramble branch. And then plants, and plants against the color of the sky, and sky's time of day, and the whole majesty of it.

This is a way of perceiving and reading. This is language and communication. 'Hoof-print' could be denoted otherwise. I hope you will understand, but you are not present here with me, and I will never demand that of you either way.

Linguistic lines of flight

I appreciate John Zerzan's critique of language, but I disagree with him. In his essay *Language: Origin and Meaning*, he readily intermixes and confuses language, with writing, with communication. Writing does appear to be a hallmark of bureaucracy and statecraft in many if not most cases, but this is a topic for another essay. Because Zerzan does not clearly define language, we must stop at this point of origin ourselves and unpack its involvement in our crisis.

Rather than critique language, I would propose a means by which we might discover a way of communicating with our friends that is indigestible/illegible to state metabolism. I don't believe we can yet recognize when we are engaged in this process, but I think it will look like the unnoticed or undescribed ritual life between friends. We are all familiar with the experience in which we choose not to name a moment in order to protect it from—its eventual destruction. Instead, we allow it to dance upon our gestures and glances and improvisation, like holding smoke in our palm and passing it around as it drips through our fingers and dissipates.

There is a language to this, a language of imagination and escape available to the prisoner and the CEO alike that might define a path toward liberation—if we can procrastinate its eventual destruction.

A native person where I live told me a story about his people's word for God. Their word was often mistranslated as 'creator', but its closer translation in English would be 'creation', because their word is a verb. This phenomenon of *god as a process* is common in many languages of Turtle Island. I won't offer up the actual word here for the limitless metabolism of civilization down the road, but I think holding onto this idea of desertion, anarchy, remembering, daydreaming, resistance, and insurgency as *illegible verbs* is fundamental.

3

That's funny! there's blood on my chest
oh yes, I've been carrying bricks what a funny place to rupture!
and now it is raining on the ailanthus as I step out onto the window ledge
the tracks below me are smoky and glistening with a passion for running
I leap into the leaves, green like the sea

I've been sitting still (staring?) at the tracks and at the maples and my books and at theanarchistlibrary.org meditating on psychogeography and nature. A more pure, a more moral, a more American, and a more primitiv- ist eye sees purity in the wilderness *just beyond our reach.* A wilderness of precisely nowhere. There aren't places where *nothing is constructed.* If I leave only footprints and a meditative mind, is this 'constructing the environment'? If we annihilate this world and leave it alone, I suspect some weedy trees will be growing there within a few seasons. Psychogeography, and the anarchist imagination draws almost entirely from people writing in the city—from the overconstructed.

psychogeography (n.)(v.) (origins Paris, France and the Situationists, ca 1958)—1. An exploration of urban environments that emphasizes playfulness and "drifting". 2. The study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals. 3. A whole toy box full of playful, inventive strategies for exploring cities that includes just about anything that takes pedestrians off their predictable paths and jolts them into a new awareness of the urban landscape.

At Standing Rock, it took 30-50 minutes depending on if there was snow or the river was frozen to walk from one end of the encampment to another. That is, 30 minutes of wandering through a dream of dreamers in waking material time, space, and place. But the psychogeographers of yester-generation and today have limited most of their wanderings to the urban.

Bio-Insurrection and Negation's Summer

Annihilation and limitless negation, as a quick sketch of nihilist tendency, are still *earthly.* They may come and go from the cosmos, but they continue to inhabit and haunt the earth. They like it here. Perhaps because volcanic eruptions, disturbances from old growth collapsing, mountain lions attacking, annihilating, digesting, and assimiliating black tailed deer, and vultures in turn eating the corpses of mountain lions, appeal to the (an) nihilators sensibility that the destructive urge is also a creative urge. We could say *negation is fecund.*

Clearing out the existent (nihilism) and leaving everyone alone (anarchism) would look a lot like an an- archo-primitivist version of rewilding, but perhaps most surprising to myself (although it shouldn't be) it looks like indigeneity casting off the shackles placed their by colonization. We could call it a contour of indigenous anarchism. Recall this passage from the opening of the beautiful meditation *Locating an Indigenous Anarchism:*

If we were to shape this world (an opportunity we would surely reject if we were offered), we would begin with a great burning. We would likely begin in the cities where with all the wooden structures of power and underbrush of institutional assumption the fire would surely burn brightly and for a very long time. It would be hard on those species that lived in these places. It would be very hard to remember what living was like without relying on deadfall and fire departments. But we would remember. That remembering wouldn't look like a skill-share or an extension class in the methods of survival, but an awareness that no matter how skilled we personally are (or perceive ourselves to be) we need our extended family.

In this poem *Mayakovsky* that I've woven in, Frank O'hara writes: *That's funny! there's blood on my chest*

oh yes, I've been carrying bricks what a funny place to rupture! and now it is raining on the ailanthus

Here we encounter 'an effect' of the environment of the poem, whether 'consciously organized or not' that ushers me into a daydream of lovely summertime riot, but with something decidedly *Green.* Blood, brick, rupture—all artifacts of the insurrectionary imagination—and ailanthus. *Ailanthus altissima*, whose common name in English is 'Tree of Heaven', are common urban weed trees all over the temperature climates of Turtle Island. They thrive in the cracks. Their crushed leaves have an aroma similar to peanut butter. Their heavenly peanut essence busts through the concrete of the existent.

If our aim is the annihilation of civilization, which is a way to describe our current predicament, it is necessary to adopt models to conceive of how it works as a totality through space and time, on Earth, in order for it to be destroyed. Against His-Story provides us a chance to experiment with civilization as an *organism.* This is fitting. Organisms can heal. Institutions aim to produce a similar effect.

What stands out to a lot of people involved with ELF activity and analysis is that nearly everything they destroyed was rebuilt. Who is it that rebuilds, that heals, the wound inflicted by the insurgent act?

It is you and me, and the people just around us. Our neighbors. Our schoolchildren. If the insurrectionary anarchist approach is valid (an open question!), if we can actually destroy society through informally organized asymmetric guerrilla war, a necessary aspect of annihilation is that people we don't know and cannot reach, cease to repair the system as we, the termites, the deserters, devour its foundations.

The barricade functions as Jung- ian archetype in rebel religion. I've always adored barricades since seeing Les Miserables on Broadway. I propose that we have experimented tremendously with the construction of the road barricade to the detriment of the barricades that prevent the invasion of the organism—civilization, capitalism, the United States, society, government—into our creativity and moralities. How do we prevent ourselves from adopting the discourse of the state and domination, and from there opening our work to the metabolism of civilization? How do we let the thing bleed to death with all of its wounds from our pebbles? *Demotivational Training* can help us here:

[The] history of the 20th century has thoroughly demonstrated that the attempts to oppose World Trade, Inc. with models of behavior aimed to subvert it have in the end provided it with its best weapons. Today, the managers want nothing less than to make every employee a situationist … Trying to outdo this would be absurd. On the other hand, limiting the critique to the domain of the negative, without prescribing a specific goal, is to show great optimism stemming from the hypothesis (obviously unproven) that most people have within them all the energy necessary for their autonomy without their being the need to add any. In his time Lichtenberg wrote, "Nothing is more unfathomable than the system of motivation behind our actions." One can hope that this this impenetrability can definitively restore its rights.

Desertion presents itself here, again, as *a more holistic approach to insurgency* that doesn't rely on revolution or insurrection to be virile and joyous, that remains open to attack, at the level of striking a material blow, as well as the force of inertia of the drop out. This updates the definition of sabotage to our time where mass submission is perhaps as destructive as vacuuming ecosystems of life. One disagreement with *Demotivational Training* would be this: I do not think critique is limited to the domain of the negative. It always gestures in other directions. The author in fact proposes a particular definition of demotivation as an adoption of opacity that allows World Trade, Inc. to collapse in the mire of the beaches of demotivation. This is delightfully congruous with desertion.

4

Now I am quietly waiting for
the catastrophe of my personality
to seem beautiful again,
and interesting and modern.

The country is grey and
brown and white in trees,
snows and skies of laughter
always diminishing, less funny
not just darker, not just grey.

It may be the coldest day of
the year, what does he think of
that? I mean, what do I? And if I do,
perhaps I am myself again.

Is there a *derive*—an indeterminate wandering through the urban landscape—for the natural, for the woods?

Behind the property line of the four acres where I've been writing this essay is state forest land. A short trail leads to a primitive logging road and a great expanse of clearcuts, and old cutblocks in various stages of Douglas fir regrowth ranging from four foot high saplings to about 40 year old mono-aged stands. Here, the woods are farmed. There is nothing particularly natural or wild about this space, but since I've long since dispensed with those terms, except as a point of departure, I don't seek them outside of myself and what is immediately available to me.

So, I smoked part of a joint. I put on my rubber boots and high-tech lightweight down jacket. I cued The Brilliant podcast, which I adore, and listened to Bellamy and Aragorn!! discuss an ITS communique addressed to the nihilists. I walked into the unwild.

Overflowing identity in the desert

> Social structure is in large measure both a state effect and a choice; and one possible choice is a social structure that is invisible and/or illegible to state makers…The vagueness, plurality, and fungibility of identities and social units have certain political advantages.
>
> *The Art of Not Being Governed*

Desertion presupposes contingent and tentative identity. In the context of living within or on the frontline of a state, identity becomes partially defined by the state. Desertion may find its footing in identity, but only for the sake of leaping beyond it. Static, homogenizing, and ascriptive aspects of identity are the bedrocks of domination and state discourse. From Mao to Thomas Jefferson, the state has employed rigid categories to generate its division of labor in each of its iterations. The place we seek for identity is the place that overflows these categories and the roles they circumscribe.

Desertion cannot be sacrificed for the edification of identity; this is precisely the problem we face. On the other hand, a simplistic rejection of identity does not help to explain its tendency to resurface within a band of deserters. What we are looking for might be a fluid, shifting identity, and groups formed not through ascription, but on the basis of affinity, friendship, and group practice. It is key to have both and to slowly build them through time. This process is likely to generate a new identity that can simply be abandoned because of the prerequisite of a robust discourse of desertion. Any subcultural identity generated out of the muck of the Spectacle has

a shelflife, but they can create temporary shelters and stepping stones for desertion. Again, *The Art of Not Being Governed*:

> *Lois Beck says of the Qashqa'i of Iran: "Tribal groups expanded and contracted. Some tribal groups joined larger ones when, for example, the state attempted to restrict access to resources or a foreign power sent troops to attack them. Large tribal groups divided into smaller groups to be less visible to the state and escaped its reach. Intertribal mobility [shifting ethnic identity] was a common pattern and was part of the process of tribal formation and dissolution."*

Desertion that manages to traverse intersections of class and identity can be particularly potent. I am referring here to some of my own experiences of what P.M calls ABC dysco: the coalescing of groups of dysproducers from every class of the global economy partaking in counter-information, sabotage, material infrastructure development, and dropping out. I suggest this potency is due to the storytelling that amplifies through encounter of a variety of social strata.

I stated above that a discourse is a collection of stories and that desertion is a multivariate collection of stories that describe movement, transience, and impermanence. ABCdyscoing/TAZ-ing is the practice of deserting by moving from one discrete independent process of desertion to another as a means of simultaneously circulating and cultivating the discourse of desertion. It is the practice of honing one's storytelling skills, and furthering space for their development. ABdyscoing generates and tells stories that enrich the connection between desertions. But we ought to invent another more pleasing sounding word/phrase/verb for this phenomenon.

The current surveillance apparatus in the Most Developed Countries, made possible by the general invasion of information technology and communication technology into every sphere of life, neutralizes the ability to tell and spread certain types of discourses of desertion that are particularly potent—sabotage, ille- galism, legendary riotous acts, gun- fighting, etc..—within the fabric of everyday life. The antidote to this has been Security Culture, which still marginalizes this discourse and does not address this marginalization our recent ancestors never had to face. I am often struck with surprise to learn sometimes years into a friendship about that epic escapades of some of my fellows. I first thought this a demonstration of successful security culture, but I have since despaired. I disallow myself, along with many friends and affinities from sharing my most rich moments of—desertion. This means, in many ways, despite our best efforts, we do not know each other. We do not know what we have done, nor do we know what we might do if this situation was changed.

We face a tremendous problem at the basic level of storytelling itself. Communication about radical, outlawed activity can no longer *simply* take place in our homes, in the company of friends and affinities. Telling stories in person is all the time becoming a more exclusive affair. Political activity online is represented as an acceptable and effective means for simultaneously constructing and deconstructing the totality. This presents a problem for the supposed goal of relieving anxiety that will prevent us from pursuing the lives of which we dream.

The Puppet and the Bomb

by Freddie Forest

Humanity is rudderless on a powerful ship of its own making. Having built the impressive juggernaut of civilization, it no longer knows how to steer it, or even why it was built in the first place. Lost in the frenzied search for technique, growth becomes the purpose of life, and distraction becomes the only recourse to address why we are here. Our philosophical and political questions are outdated. Human supremacy, so robust and unparalleled in our context, no longer evokes the question of *how* human life should be, but *if* it should be at all. The perils that undermine our existence, from climate change to nuclear war, seem to point to this most radical of inquiries.

Such an atmosphere of cosmic pessimism has recently leaked into popular culture. In the 2014 HBO television series, *True Detective*, one of the characters, Rust Cohle, explains his views on the tragic futility of life to his partner:

> *I think human consciousness is a tragic misstep in evolution.*
>
> *We became too self-aware, nature created an aspect of nature separate from itself, we are creatures that should not exist by natural law. We are things that labor under the illusion of having a self; an accretion of sensory, experience and feeling, programmed with total assurance that we are each somebody, when in fact everybody is nobody. Maybe the honorable thing for our species to do is deny our programming, stop reproducing, walk hand in hand into extinction, one last midnight—brothers and sisters opting out of a raw deal.*

A minor controversy arose around the series as to whether the television writer, Nic Pizzolatto, had plagiarized Cohle's views from the work of horror writer Thomas Ligotti, specifically his 2010 nonfiction work, *The Conspiracy Against the Human Race (Conspiracy)*. Pizzolatto conceded Ligotti's influence, which introduced a new audience to Ligotti's work, and his pessimistic worldview in particular.

The reclusive Ligotti has been producing short fiction since the 1980's for a loyal cult audience. Influenced by the work of H.P. Love- craft and Franz Kafka, as well as the philosophies of Emil Cioran and Peter Zapffe, Ligotti has been a seminal author in the genre of horror and "weird fiction."

After establishing his renown as a fiction writer, Ligotti tried his hand at nonfiction in *Conspiracy*. The origin of the work according to a number of sources lies in a therapist's injunction to write a self-help book as part of his treatment of depression and other emotional problems. In response, Ligotti went about writing an anti-self-help book: not a work that discusses how to make life better, but one that elucidates why human consciousness is a bottomless pit of absurdity and suffering. Ligotti channeled his exceptional erudition and insight into an extended essay denigrating the human quest for control and happiness. In his reflections, Li- gotti indicates that

humans are puppets playing out a rigged game that traps people in agony until death and decay inevitably triumph.

Ligotti begins *Conspiracy* by citing the very injunction he intends to violate: "If you can't say something positive about humanity, then say something equivocal." Ligotti disparages this obligatory optimism throughout the book. The default opinion states that the fact that we are here is enough for us to merit a ringing endorsement. At the very least, you should keep your mouth shut if you think differently. Later, in discussing Arthur Schopenhauer's Will- to-live, Ligotti states the following:

> *Wound up by some force… organisms go on running as they are bidden until they run down.*
>
> *In pessimistic philosophies only the force is real, not the things activated by it. They are only puppets, and if they have consciousness may mistakenly believe they are self-winding persons who are making a go of it on their own.*

The progressive and revolutionary milieu is based on the idea of an autonomous individual making choices. The existence of free will is the basis for political and social change, and the absence of such will is considered a reactionary idea. Li- gotti is much more bleak in his assessment of human striving. He cites another author stating that, "Conscious subjectivity is the case in which a single organism has learned to enslave *itself*." [Ligotti's emphasis] There is no free inside seeking to defend itself of the oppressive outside. The enemy isn't at the gates, it has been in the center of the city all along. Ligotti speculates that the human may be something "strange and awful," that we may not be so radically special after all. He cites an extended passage from Joseph Conrad about the tragic sense of life in humans:

> *Yes, egoism is good, and fidelity to nature would be best of all… if we could only get rid of consciousness. What makes mankind tragic is not that they are the victims of nature, it is that they are conscious of it.*
>
> *To be part of the animal kingdom under the conditions of this earth is very well—but as soon as you know of your slavery, the pain, the anger, and the strife—the tragedy begins.*

Aside from the disease of consciousness, Ligotti refuses to concede anything positive about human life:

> *Deviations from the natural have whirled around us all our days. We kept them at arm's length, abnormalities we denied were elemental to our being. But absent us there is nothing of the supernatural in the universe. We are aber- rations—beings born undead, neither one thing nor another, or two things at once… uncanny things that have nothing to do with the rest of creation, horrors that poison the world by sowing our madness everywhere we go, glutting daylight and darkness with incorporeal obscenities."*

From this passage, one could interpret all dreams of perfect and perfectible worlds as nightmares of undead animals: those creature that refuse to live in the present but are frantically flailing in an idealized past or a harmonious future. Ligotti comments on the mentality of the humanist optimists:

They trust anything that authenticates their importance as persons, tribes, societies, and particularly as a species that will endure in this world and perhaps in an afterworld that may be uncertain in its reality and unclear in its layout, but which sates their craving for values not of this earth—that depressing, meaningless place their consciousness must sidestep every day. Sure enough, then, writers such as Zapffe, Schopenhauer, and Lovecraft only wrote their ticket to mar- ginality when they failed to affirm the worth and wonder of humanity, the validity of its values (whether eternal or provisional), and, naturally, a world without a foreseeable end, or at least a world whose end no one wants to see.

In arguing with an optimist humanist, it doesn't matter how bleak the reality is. The fantasy of the optimist always trumps the bleak reality of the pessimist. The pessimist is always wrong because they deny that every desire is legitimate, every world is possible, and that every string moving the marionnette about can be cut. To deny any of these expectations is the Last Heresy: it elicits the Biblical weeping and gnashing of teeth almost on cue. That the absurdity of the human animal itself is the primary cause of the impossibility of its dreams never occurs to them. It's as if homo sapiens were an optimistic animal ipso facto.

Ligotti ends *Conspiracy* with a litany of propositions concerning various aspects of his pessimistic philosophy:

No self now, consciously speaking.

No feeling your old self or new self, false imaginings if you think about it, self-conscious nothings everywhere you look…

No bosom of nature, abandoned on the doorstep of the supernatural, minds full of flagrantly joyless possibilities, a real blunder that was, the human tragedy…

Jon Padgett, a writer inspired by Ligotti and founder of a website devoted to his work, Thomas Ligotti Online, elaborates on many pessimist themes in his own recent short story collection, *The Secret of Ventriloquism.* A trained ventriloquist, Padgett revises old rules of learning ventriloquism in his story, "20 Simple Steps to Ventriloquism," to make a broader point about the puppetry of going through the motions of daily life. For example, Step 12 concludes with the following observation:

Remember, the 'People' you must deal with to survive are mere dummies serving a higher purpose—a kind of Ultimate Ventriloquism—that they cannot hope to comprehend. Animal-dummies must be treated at all times with false and/or unsympathetic regard. Believe me, they do not feel a thing.

Step 20 describes the Greater Ventriloquists who speak with the voice of the Ultimate Ventriloquist, a stand-in for the absurdity of the universe:

But we Greater Ventriloquists are active. We are active as nature moves us to be: perfect receivers and transmitters of nothing with nothing to stifle the voice of our perfect suffering. Yes, we Greater Ventriloquists speak with the voice of nature making itself suffer. Nothing can be more normal than that. The head is a useless mechanism. Cast it aside. We do not need it anymore. There is nothing but the voice of this pain and this panic thrown into the darkness.

Returning to *Conspiracy*, it would be a mistake to believe that Ligotti has no opinions concerning the ethical inclinations of humanity. Ligotti presents an extinctionist perspective as the only acceptable approach to address the problem of human suffering. Though he is pessimistic about humans doing the "right thing" in this case, he ends his book stating:

> *Why do so many of us bargain for a life sentence over the end of a rope or a muzzle of a gun? Do we not deserve to die? But we are not obsessed by such questions. To ask them is not in our interest, not to answer them with hand on heart.*
>
> *In such spirit might we not bring to an end the conspiracy against the human race? This would be the right course: the death of tragedy in the arms of nonexistence.*

In a footnote, Ligotti elaborates further on the moral dimension of preventing human suffering:

> *What has been called 'man's inhumanity to man' should not entice us to misanthropy smarting for our species to come to an end. That deduction is another blunder, as much as it would be a blunder to tub- thump for our survival based on the real abundance of what is valued as 'humane' behavior... [T]o conspire in the suffering of future generations, is the only misconduct to be expiated, not that we will ever be ready or able to rectify our incorrigible nature. That we were naturally or divinely made to collaborate in our own suffering and that of human posterity is the blunder.*

In the penultimate footnote of the book, Ligotti vents his frustration at the cosmos (perhaps in keeping with the intention of this being an "anti-self-help" manual):

> *One cringes to hear scientists cooing over the universe or any part thereof like schoolgirls over-heated by their first crush. From the studies of Krafft-Ebbing onward, we know that it is possible to become excited about anything— from shins to shoehorns. But it would be nice if just once these gushing eggheads would step back and, as a concession to objectivity, speak the truth: THERE IS NOTHING INNATELY IMPRESSIVE ABOUT THE UNIVERSE OR ANYTHING IN IT.* [Emphasis in the original]

With these two last points I can express my minor differences with Ligotti and his pessimistic worldview. For if Ligotti's central point in his book is to emphasize the absurd and banal nature of human existence (in contrast to the self-importance we give ourselves), why should human suffering have any special metaphysical status? If Ligotti can otherwise simply look on human existence with a cold eye, why can he not have the same eye of, say, Rene Descartes observing a dog being tortured and concluding that its howls and convulsions are merely physiological hiccups and nothing more? "Pain" isn't even an appropriate classification for these phenomena. Why does Ligotti continue to give particular regard to human suffering, to the point that we have to self-immolate because our consciousness has become a hideous deformity in an otherwise dead and tranquil cosmos? How did we become the only evil in the universe? Should mountains be obliterated as well simply because landslides occur, or trees exterminated because they sometimes get struck by lightning or consumed by termites?

Perhaps Ligotti pulls back a little from the inhumanist precipice before he falls over. Human consciousness is neither formidable nor intimidating. Humans are indeed dumb creatures, and

so is their pain. The only reason pain exists is because we forget it: we neither suffer all the time nor are we meant to live lazy endless days in Elysium. No sooner do we despair of a pain than we fall asleep and forget it in the morning. Is this not the real reason the human race keeps going? Our ideas are not strong enough to bring about Paradise, or to damn us entirely to Hell for that matter. Human beings don't live in a horror story. Such tales are merely the other side of the utopian coin. Life isn't absurd because it is perpetual suffering: it's absurd because it's a blind game of chance between agony and ecstasy, governed by the tempos of forgetfulness and decay. In this scenario, humans, like all animals, are much better at coping with crises than preventing them altogether.

As for Ligotti's disgust with the grandeurs of the cosmos, this calls to mind some lines from Robinson Jeffers' poem, "The Broken Balance":

> *All summer neither rain nor wave washes the cormorants'*
>
> *Perch, and their droppings have painted it shining white.*
>
> *If the excrement of fish-eaters makes the brown rock a snow-mountain At noon, a rose in the morning, a beacon at moonrise*
>
> *On the black water: it is barely possible that even men's present Lives are something; their arts and sciences (by moonlight)*
>
> *Not wholly ridiculous, nor their cities merely an offense.*

Being unimpressed with the workings of nature or artifice is part of the general stupefaction of modern life. We are unimpressed with some things because we are often impressed by others (though foolishly perhaps). This too is part of our condition, something that we simply cannot help. There is no use being angry at this. Arguably the only anger that is warranted is against putting too much stock in this wonder; against the idiotic tendency to declare, "The heavens declare the glory of God." They do no such thing; they proclaim their own glory: transitory, material, and all-too-earthly. Not being content with this small glory is the tragedy of our condition. It goes this far, and no further.

What then of the "political" and "social", the asinine tendency of modern people to want to "change the world" or "make a better one"? At the very least, you should be suspicious of your own desires and opinions, for they are not wholly yours, nor will you ever be sure where they come from. If existential rage wells up within you, you should acknowledge that it too is part of the puppetry of your animal and social existence: a product of forces that you will never grasp. (For only the forces are truly real. Here we are in complete agreement with Ligotti.) Is inaction the only real freedom here? That is a silly question which you should know the answer to by now. The puppet is not freer when its strings are not being pulled, for the strings are still there. I leave you then with this: If the throwing hand dangles from the end of a string, should it throw the bomb anyway?

Suddenly, Pan

Later that evening she sees an eagle flying across the marshes, in the same direction. It's golden-dark, almost night. The region is lonely and Pan is very close. Geli has been to enough Sabbaths to handle it—she thinks. But what is a devil's blue bite on the ass to the shrieking-outward, into stone resonance, where there is no good or evil, out in the luminous spaces Pan will carry her to? Is she ready yet for anything so real? The moon has risen. She sits now, at the same spot where she saw the eagle, waiting, waiting for something to come and take her. Have you ever waited for it? wondering whether it will come from outside or inside? Finally past the futile guesses at what might happen… now and then re-erasing brain to keep it clean for the Visit… yes wasn't it close to here? remember didn't you sneak away from camp to have a moment alone with What you felt stirring across the land… it was the equinox… green spring equal nights… canyons are opening up, at the bottoms are steaming fu- maroles, steaming the tropical life there like greens in a pot, rank, dope-perfume, a hood of smell… human consciousness, that poor cripple, that deformed and doomed thing, is about to be born. This is the World just before men. Too violently pitched alive in constant flow ever to be seen by men directly. They are meant only to look at it dead, in still strata, transputrefied to oil or coal. Alive, it was a threat: it was Titans, was an overspeaking of life so clangorous and mad, such a green corona about Earth's body that some spoiler had to be brought in before it blew the Creation apart. So we, the crippled keepers, were sent out to multiply, to have dominion. God's spoilers. Us. Counter-revolutionaries. It is our mission to promote death. The way we kill, the way we die, being unique among the Creatures. It was something we had to work on, historically and personally. To build from scratch up to its present status as reaction, nearly as strong as life, holding down the green uprising. But only nearly as strong. Only nearly, because of the defection rate. A few keep going over to the Titans every day, in their striving subcreation (how can flesh tumble and flow so, and never be any less beautiful?), into the rests of the folksong Death(empty stone rooms), out, and through, and down under the net, down down to the uprising. In harsh-edged echo, Titans stir far below. They are all the presences we are not supposed to be see- ing—wind gods, hilltop gods, sunset gods—that we train ourselves away from to keep from looking further even though enough of us do, leave Their electric voices behind in the twilight at the edge of the town and move into the constantly parted cloak of our nightwalk till Suddenly, Pan—leaping—its face too beautiful to bear, beautiful Serpent, its coils in rainbow lashings in the sky—into the sure bones of fright—

Excerpt from *Gravity's Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon

Living in the Hands of the Gods: Remembering Daniel Quinn

by Ramon Elani

> *I think what you're groping for is that people need more than to be scolded, more than to be made to feel stupid and guilty. They need more than a vision of doom. They need a vision of the world and of themselves that inspires them.*
>
> Daniel Quinn *Ishmael*

It's the late 1990s, I'm a teenager. I'm sitting on the floor in a sparsely furnished old log cabin in the forest with my tribe. Proud, beautiful girls with red bandanas worn over their long brown braids. Strong young men, with the soft down of their first beards on their faces. Friends and lovers, all. The air is thick with the smoke of sage and weed. Pachelbel's Canon in D Major plays on an old record player. A pot of lentils boils away on the wood stove. My head rests in the lap of my first love, a girl with a slightly upturned button nose and long red hair. We read passages aloud to each other from Daniel Quinn's *Ishmael.* We drop acid and wander through the forests and meadows, dreaming of returning to the blissful harmony of pre-civilized existence. Golden youth and its dreams.

Thousands of miles away, Julia Butterfly Hill was sitting in the redwood tree she named 'Luna' and a year or so earlier Ted Kaczynski had been convicted for mailing bombs to computer labs and timber industry lobbyists.

My friends and I had dropped out of high school around this time and taken our education into our hands.

As we had already rejected the conventional notion that intelligent, intellectually engaged young people belong in school, we were thrilled by Quinn's iconoclastic words. The power of stories and the truth behind the stories are not the same thing. You don't need anyone how to tell you how to live. We already know everything there is to know. Quinn could hardly have found a more eager audience. We sought ideas that recreated the world. We instinctively knew that something was deeply wrong with the world. And we were young, naive, and idealistic enough to think, at that moment, that something could still be done to make things right. Quinn's words radically and irrevocably changed the way we saw the world around us.

As a red-diaper baby, raised by cosmopolitan intellectuals, the ideas of Marx already seemed out of touch and reductive. There were deeper forces at work than economics, that much was clear to me. *Ishmael* gave me an entirely new understanding of the problem that I could only vaguely perceive. The notion that there were ideas and biases so deeply ingrained within human culture that we never even saw them at work forever changed my intellectual orientation. Quinn's writing influenced the way I read and engaged with everything that came after. Truly, his impact on me could not be overstated.

I wouldn't be surprised if others reading this piece have their own stories of discovering Daniel Quinn's writing that are similar to my mine. As Lisa Wells writes in *N+1,* following Quinn's death on February 17, 2018:

> *I persuaded my three best friends to read* Ishmael, *and they were similarly affected. At night we convened a kind of book club in a motorboat parked in my friend Matt's garage, smoking cigarettes and stacking empties of Milwaukee's Best Ice, discussing how best to spread the word about the Civilization problem. Days, we'd cut class and walk the streets of our suburb with oracular intensity, surveying the future ruins of stripmalls and car lots and wondering if anyone else in those multitudes foresaw what was coming. Soon, we'd dropped out of high school.*

In some ways Quinn's message speaks best to teenagers. But this is not a criticism. There is a beautiful, powerful simplicity to Quinn's philosophy that anyone can understand. This is a rare quality. It is a testament to Quinn's gifts as a writer and thinker that he found a way to tell a profoundly threatening, controversial story is such a gentle and accessible way. And furthermore, by framing the problem, an admittedly terrifying, apocalyptic problem, in such a calm way actually seems to have the effect of inspiring people to act. There is something about unrestrained militant rhetoric that really undermines the gravity of a message. That kind of rhetoric, so widespread among primitivists, radical environmentalists, and enemies of civilization, is utterly absent in Quinn's writing.

It's important to stipulate here that Quinn never called himself an anarchist and was hesitant to be associated with anarchy or anarchist ideas. The only ideology that he explicitly identified with was what he called new tribalism, building off the ideas of Gary Snyder. He likewise distanced himself from environmentalism as such, with its hollow notions of conservation. Nevertheless, as philosopher Bron Taylor argues, its clear that Quinn *"articulated the most prevalent cosmogony found within radical environmental subcultures."* In the end, whatever green anarchists and anarcho-primitivists believe, Quinn's ideas have been staggeringly influential in the creation of those beliefs.

The content of Quinn's philosophy is a version of story that most of our readers are already familiar with: civilization is a force, a way of life, which sprung from the idea of human exceptionalism. As agriculturalists subdued nomadic communities, civilization progressively spread across the globe. The ideology of civilization states that the destiny of humanity is to rule and subjugate the earth. Thus civilized humanity experiences its relationship to the cosmos as a war and as the logic of war demands, there must be a winner and a loser. Ultimately civilization makes a prison of human society and a graveyard of the earth. The impulse to endlessly allow human society to grow is a demonic one, which curses the individuals in that society as surely as the non-human beings of the world.

For all his admiration for hunter- gatherers and non-civilized human communities, Quinn never fell back on prescriptive solutions. In *The Story of B*, Quinn writes, "*The world will not be saved by old minds with new programs. If the world is saved, it will be saved by new minds—with no programs."* We can see here the influence of Quinn's youthful aspiration to become a monk. The compulsive need of anarchists to act, the absurd idea of insurrection, and of intentionally bringing about industrial collapse were delusions that Quinn was utterly untempted by. Nevertheless, Quinn saw his work as a way to "save the world." He believed that as civilization inevitably

weakened, human communities organizing themselves into tribal groups was the only path forward for humanity. This need not take the form of rewilding, per se, given the limitations of the biosphere to suddenly accommodate seven billion foragers.

Echoing Derrick Jensen, another foundational thinker within this milieu, Quinn clearly identified the Malthusian problem of increasing availability of food leading to increasing human population. At the end of the day, whatever solutions are proposed without addressing the simple question of endless human growth, will be meaningless. It seems that Quinn was working on a book at the time of his death that was going to suggest limiting access to food as a way to reduce the human population back to a size that would less radically alter the environment. Throughout his career, Quinn supported the idea of a reassessment of the tribal model. As by far the most successful organizational model for human communities, in terms of longevity and minimal ecological impact, Quinn promotes some version of a new tribal revolution, though in his writing he is quick to point out that this does not mean trying to recreate a way of life that largely disappeared. For Quinn, the point is not to try to return to the indigenous way of life but to recognize it as a model or inspiration. The past is past. We cannot go backwards. But we can use the examples of those who came before us to guide us forward. Whatever is coming, Quinn believed, will not happen all at once. We have time to adjust and adapt.

Again, there is a tremendous amount of flexibility in Quinn's approach and he avoids much of the dogmatism that is unfortunately so prevalent in anti-civilization analyses. While recognizing the historical role played by sedentary agriculturalists in relation to nomads and hunter gatherers, Quinn acknowledges that there is nothing inherently destructive in agriculture as a practice or a way of life. It becomes so when it positions itself as the only viable way for human communities to organize themselves, denies the validity of other ways of life, and comes to dominate them. Quinn insisted that humanity as such was not the problem, but one particular type of culture that had come to dominate all others, which we call civilization. And the unforgivable flaw of civilization is that it teaches humanity that it is above nature.

There is an overwhelming sense in the mainstream discourse that the destruction of the biosphere has been the result of some kind of incredible error or foolishness on the part of humanity. That we don't realize what we are doing. That people merely need to be educated and then the destruction will stop. Quinn deeply understood that this was not the case. As he writes in *Ishmael*, *"We're not destroying the world because we're clumsy. We're destroying the world because we are, in a very literal and deliberate way, at war with it."* The doctrine of anthropocentrism, whether it places civilized or uncivilized humanity at the pinnacle of existence, will perpetuate this war until we destroy ourselves and billions of other species. In other words, Quinn understood that no critique of civilization that does not make some version of an inhumanist argument central will ever carry very far. The ultimate significance of hunter gatherer life was that it did not place a high value on human life.

Quinn's writing that sets him apart from other foundational thinkers is that he manages to avoid justifying his position by depending utterly on the tradition of Western anthropology, and its inherent links to racism, colonialism, and industrialism. What does it say about our understanding of indigenous communities if that understanding is completely derived from the research of those who sought to destroy them? Instead of deploying mountains of *scientific* evidence *proving* that hunter-gatherer life was superior to our own, Quinn makes his case intuitively and through the use of socratic dialogue.

The world has changed since *Ish- mael* was written in 1992. The tone of our conversations has become darker, more hopeless. The sense of urgency that so many felt in the 1990s evaporated, after decades of inaction and defeat. At some point it became clear that whatever revolution we were waiting for was never going to happen. And truly, before I learned of Quinn's death, I hadn't thought about him and his books for years. The historical moment of seminal writers such John Moore, David Watson, Derrick Jensen, John Zerzan, Fredy Perlman, and Daniel Quinn has clearly passed. Some have been discredited and maligned, some simply forgotten. Meanwhile, new voices have sought to build upon and revise the work of these early pioneers. The young will always seek to distance themselves from the old. And they are not wrong to do so. The old are notoriously hesitant to recognize when it is time for them to step aside. This is the way of things. But for all of the ways that we may deviate from those who have come before, let us strive to be humble enough to praise them for paving the way for us.

If it's true that Quinn was working on a book at the time of his death that proposed that the global food supply should be so heavily restricted that no more than one billion humans were left alive, it would put him in the same category as Scandinavian philosophers Peter Wessel Zapffe and Pentti Linkola, the latter having also proposed the human population should be reduced to one billion. Linkola writes,

> *The crippling human cover spread over the living layer of the Earth must forcibly be made lighter: breathing holes must be punctured in this blanket and the ecological footprint of man brushed away. Forms of boastful consumption must violently be crushed, the natality of the species violently controlled, and the number of those already born violently reduced—by any means possible.*

For all his gentleness, it appears that Quinn had come to a similar conclusion by the end of his life. Cutting off the global food supply and letting six billions starve is certainly no less violent than any method that Linkola may promote. And yet this is where we are. And while most still deny this path and its logic, I doubt I am alone when I say that there are fewer and fewer alternatives that are remotely compelling. If we were all Julia Butterfly Hill in her tree twenty years ago, we are all of Kaczynski's party now, in one way or another.

Whatever my friends and I thought was going to happen back when we first read Quinn seems less and less likely to happen. That fierce group of passionate young people evaporated like dew. None followed that path we discovered among Quinn's words. I'm not sure any of them would even remember that experience we shared. For myself, I have ceased waiting and withdrawn into the self. The future of the human race and the planet ultimately no longer concerns me. I stand among the misty pines in my high place and seek to lose myself in within the spirit of the cosmos, come what may. I attempt to sublimate my consciousness among the spirits of mountain, forest, and moon. To detonate this fragile human identity and dissipate into the ten thousand myriad things. And rejecting utterly the anti-natal- ism of Zappfe, Linkola, and Quinn, I will seek to guide my children and their children down the path of the way. To whatever extent the world can be saved, it can only be achieved within the soul of the individual.

Night through Dreams: Sangre de Muerdago – Noite

by Ramon Elani

> "We seem to move on a thin crust which may at any moment be rent by the subterranean forces slumbering below."
>
> "From time immemorial the mistletoe has been the object of superstitious veneration in Europe."
>
> —James Frazer

Voy os pinos. I go to the pines. There is a hidden presence among the trees there. It walks alongside me. Something I cannot see but feel in the submerged parts of my soul. The dark lagoons of consciousness, where strange fish swim and forgotten structures lie buried beneath algae and dirt. Titanic beasts move beneath those waters with glacial slowness. Shapes that blend and merge with each other. Mad, incomprehensible struggles occur in those lightless deep places. A stirring upon the fringes of awareness. A light fluttering in the bottomless caverns of sleep. The Thing-Among-the-Pines whispers to me but it is my own voice. Is it a dream? Or a memory?

Above the rocky cliffs, where millennia of waves have broken their strength upon those fortresses of stone, stand the dolmen rising out of the gloom of twilight. Fearsome monuments, mystic and dread. The fair Iberian moon shines down on these relics of the people of the hill and the forest. But I have seen the corridor through the pines that leads to the great mound. The force that sleeps within stirs in its fitful dreams. It has seen castles rise and fall. It has seen the great forests torn down. It has seen the thousand rivers flow to the sea, bearing the silt of ages. It has seen the wolf dancing among the lightning on frosty peaks. And it will see many things more. Things forgotten, things dreamed, things only partly remembered as consciousness slips beyond the threshold. Is it night? Is it day? It is the moon, the moon and the pines. Do I dream? Or do I remember?

It is upon the threshold between the two worlds that the gentle sounds of Galician folk druids Sangre de Muerdago ("Blood of Mistletoe") dwell and weave together ancient songs of the lost gods that once prowled lush inlets and pine forests. The songs of those who now sleep beneath the barrow and dance quietly under the moon. Since 2007, San- gre de Muerdago have been evoking the haunting memories that wander among unhewn stones and ruined castles on the Galician coast. Universally acclaimed for their blend of medieval and contemporary folk traditions, their latest LP *Noite,* continues to tell twilight stories of moss, mud, and stone through the nickelharpa, hurdy-gurdy, and the celtic harp.

Having played almost 300 concerts in over 20 countries over the past several years, Sangre de Muerdago has become one of the foremost voices in the global neofolk movement. And fans of their recognizable haunting, ethereal aesthetic will not be disappointed with this latest release.

Moving gracefully from gentle, somber, and contemplative moods to the rousing, intoxicating, and ecstatic, *Noite* builds on the work Sangre de Muerdago has done over their last three albums, split records, and EPs, while also bringing a fresh sense of inspiration. Pablo Ursusson's other-worldly voice drifts through these songs like the mist descending from the mountains, weaving its way through the pines. With accompaniment by Asia Kindred Moore, Georg Borner, and Erik Heimans- berg, Ursusson brings the listener on a rambling midnight journey through the woods. There is a kind of selfdiscovery that can only be achieved through the descent into darkness, a kind of knowing that only shines by the light of the moon. *Noite* offers us a contemplation of this dark knowing. There is sadness in these songs but it is of a sweet and delicate kind, a stabbing at the heart occasioned by a potent memory.

The world we pass through now is the dew upon the blade of grass.

It exists in a moment of staggering beauty and pain before it vanishes in the blazing truth of the sun. Sangre de Muerdago playfully reminds us of the vastness that lies beneath our feet. A greater world, thickly numinous, inhabited by the ten thousands things and spirits, vaster and more true by far than the one we wander through blindly during our days and nights of loneliness and confusion. This is music that calls us to the groves, to the high places, to the ruins. It beckons us to follow the image of the capering flute player, the Horned One and his skin of wine, to leave behind the world of modernity and industrialism, a world that seeks to bury the old gods and the Spirit of the Wild. But as we know, buried things are no less potent, though they are entombed. A god forgotten becomes a myth and in the dreams of night, myths rise from their dusty slumber and stride boldly through meadows and woods. *Noite* brings us to this dream-like realm, where the gods of the wild world dance and sing around the bonfire, beneath the moon. It is music that dances like the ceremonial flame.

Sangre de Muerdago Noite-LP/CD/
Digital, Out in Spring 2018
Neuropa, Musica Maxica—LP
SMGS Records, Musica Maxica— CD & Digital

Without Words: A New (old) GA

by Aragorn!

A new green anarchism wouldn't require words to describe it. It'd be as simple as opening the door and saying, be here! Here, a place forever hidden in the expansion of civilization, in the grousing about concrete and wires, in the dissection of what exactly is wrong with… where exactly? But a new (old) green anarchism would be located in one place and one place only. A new green anarchism would be an anarchism of infinite here-ness. Hello. Nice to meet you.

Grammar is the problem…

Words are put together just so. Into paragraphs and pages. Into rows and columns. And for words to make sense they are organized by grammar. By Strunk & White, by sentence diagrams, by slaps on the wrist from the forever rulers. This discipline isn't part of the problem, it is the problem. What I want to say has been disciplined into me. What I will say to you has the rigor of the 1000 slaps it took for me to say it correctly. The violence of grammar is that now I do it to myself, and when I don't do it, it is only for a moment and I'm aware of it the entire time. Like the shy guy at an orgy.

Or is it recognizability?

Each issue of Black Seed could add to the new (old) GA, because the parts lend themselves to infinite review. There are three parts: unrecog- nizability—a basis in presence; here- ness—this place called Turtle Island; the metis, blurred, impure nature of life today. For this issue we'll focus on recognizability.

I recall when I was trying to live in this world (instead of outside of it) I went to a school, one I paid for, one filled with Brutalist blocks of Real Live Learning. I took chemistry, I fell in love, but I was alone. Largely this was because I was looking for a sign that others were not giving.

Today it would be something else entirely. The kind of counter-cultural signs I was looking for in the eighties are readily available today. It is nothing to swing by Hot Topic on the way to campus and be seen. I'm talking about a different time, a time when Wikipedia didn't allow people to easily calibrate themselves perfectly That was a time when recogniz- ability was possible*. It was enough to understand that Charles Hurwitz was evil and that the machinations of the Maxxam corporation were going to destroy one of the last holy places left in North America. What the kids today call wildness was an actual place. It was called the Headwaters Forest Preserve and it was under attack. We saw each other in a couple of old strummed songs and we went to war—a war in which it seemed our bodies could possibly stop the machine.

By the time Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney were bombed, it wasn't possible to believe this any more. The one weapon we had to fight the monster and to stay clear of its horrors was dulled

by overuse and un- suitability—a sword against a tank works only in rare and very particular circumstances.

But this is my story. Yours is probably different.

How

To put this in the now old-fashioned and tired war language of anti-civilization discourse, how does the war against civilization turn into the confused set of identifications-as-partici- pating in this war? How come we are further removed from actually ending the reification, separation, and the current order while at the same time having fiercer, less-compromising, rhetoric?

The fundamentals are obvious, or should be to someone with a basic radicalt education. At some point the world was divided into the takers and the doers, the top and the bottom, the owners and the workers. From our position as workers, this didn't seem like a preferable state of affairs so we got organized. We found each other, we found our voice, we named what was going on and what we'd prefer. We tried to make that happen and basically failed.

At best we came to a kind of detente that is aggravating when calibrated against how things should bet. But, for many, an 8 hour day was a fair compromise to not living in the war-torn landscape of Pinkertons and our bare naked divisions. If the choice is Total War or a peace that embodies structural inequality, guess which won? After the victory of liberal reforms we relaxed, smoked a joint, and divided into our constituent parts.

Those who chose peace lost again when the takers got organized and used our own divided selves as the very way to control us§. In our condition it's easy to diagnose the cause and impossible to know what the cure is. Do you know anyone who is not infected?

This is not to say that many aren't trying. A large part of the fierce rhetoric about the beautiful being that is me, and you, is that each expression of it has a chance of appealing to another oppressed person. Leftist math says that adding up all the pain will somehow equal enough—for a movement, a new category of demands, a hip new slogan, something real. But if what you want is a different world entirely, it is clear that leftist math is wrong. It's probably always been wrong but since the owners got organized it becomes easy to see leftist math as the desperate attempt to create another cop inside our heads.

Brown Cow

The new (old) green anarchy is another world that is impossible. It is not possible to live without constraint when every day a new headline blares excitement about a new enclosure. Whether it's social media, a fantastic ideology, or a movement heading towards a new law, our attention is drawn to the productive energy of doing something. Anything.

Turtle Island is here and not here. We both live there and have done everything humanly possible to distance ourselves from this place we live on. This disconnect is as fundamental as the body-mind split but doesn't have a movement to express it. (Perhaps the New Age expression of a new direction from Western pedagogy is a type of answer but it's always been too mired in personalities that directly benefit from its not-rad- ical approach to difficult subjects— like capitalism.)

My effort, started last issue and continuing here, is to articulate this impossible goal by way of a kind of negation. If we can't say, "this is what we are for," we can only say what we are against. Stack up our objections and climb them, reaching, for the sky, for the sun, for the world out of reach. Our mouths cannot say words that do not exist. There is no enunciation of what the beauty of not-this could be. I've never seen it but I welcome you to join me in this sound and flow.

**Of course there is an existential point here too. I'm trying to refer to an outside of abstractions represented by the state forms like band, tribe, nation, and country. But also outside of the knowledge of genre and team-sports. Prior to the Internet is also prior to the knowledge of a type of division that has refined itself into an incapacity to meet someone outside of their brands, signifiers, or disgust.*

t Radical is a term I've been criticized for using that I'd like to reflect on for a paragraph or two. On the one hand every term to describe someone informed by the same ideas that I have been is kind of silly. On the other it is necessary. I can feel the hunger for its lack. I wish anarchism or anarchy were enough, but they're not by a long shot. For starters I disagree with about 80% of anarchists on just about everything and many somethings I agree with far more (as a distracting sidebar I mention those who are influenced by the SI who stopped thinking after they criticized anarchists for being bureaucratic, as if that were a unique characteristic).

So what to do? In my case I've picked a broad term, with its own baggage, to say that I am part of a conversation that is bigger than the 10,000 people who might see Black Seed but not as large as I'd like it to be. There are some pre-conditions but the bar to entry is low. Let's call radical-the-word what it is, a speed- bump and not a reason to slow down all that much.

$ The sweet anarchy of a lawless land dictated by no value but the one we determine together.

§ The best description of this, to my taste, is in Adam Curtis's excellent documentary series The Century of the Self *and especially the episode titled "There is a Policeman Inside All Our Heads; He Must Be Destroyed."*

Against the World Builders: Eco-extremists respond to critics

by Los hijos del Mencho (Fracción anti-pirata)

Eco-extremists and aligned theorists writing in the English language have contributed little regarding recent polemics against our Tendency. This is a wise decision since, for those who hate us, our words only inflame their hatred all the more and, while we don't mind being hated, we would rather focus our energies elsewhere. Our enemies seem to thrive on finding opponents they are unable to defeat (Nazis, the Republican Party, civilization, etc.) so accumulating a few more enemies can make it seem like they are getting somewhere., We neither need nor desire their parasitic attention.

Unfortunately for us, aligned parties have asked us to respond, and to that end we have produced this essay. Herein we seek to inform on certain controversial topics that Anglophone readers may have missed in an environment of social media and twenty-four hour distraction. We do this both for those interested in what we write, but also for those who hate us. If that much emotional investment is going to be placed in events that occur outside of one's immediate sphere, it might as well be for the right reasons.

We will primarily address the essay, "Of Indiscriminate Attacks & Wild Reactions," from the Olympia-based "edelweiss pirates." We will also touch on criticisms expressed in *Black Seed* 5, as well as in other communiqués and call-outs issued in the last six months or so as needed. Our aim is not to make ourselves, the Individualists Tending Toward the Wild (ITS), eco-extremism or nihilist terrorism appear better than they have been portrayed as this would be a fool's errand, and not at all honest. We don't fear being despised, and we understand that people want to kill us. You should want to kill us, because you are our enemy, and we don't even like ourselves that much. You can call us edgy but, honestly, that's one of the nicer things you can say about us.

So to begin…

After the release of the 29th Communiqué of the Indiscriminate Group Tending Toward the Wild (GITS) in May of last year and a cell of the Individualists Tending Toward the Wild (ITS) claiming responsibility for homicides and the attempted bombing of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the international insurrectionary anarchist community, as well as the social anarchist Scott Campbell, have issued counter-communiqué after counter-communiqué opposing eco-extremism, and ITS in particular. Most of these were rather short until the release of a long 50 page essay on the Anarchist Library website and later Anarchist News entitled, "Of Indiscriminate Attacks & Wild Reactions: An Anti-civ Anarchist Engages with ITS and Atassa, Their Defenders and Their False Critics." (Henceforth, OIAWR) Upon first examination (at least to the uninformed reader) the essay seemed rather comprehensive and well-prepared. However, due to the number of targets it attempts to hit as seen in its lengthy title,

engagement with eco-extremists texts and rhetoric is rather minimal within the development of the essay. Most of the accusations are thus inaccurate and a product of the author(s)' rather active imagination when it comes to the current political situation.

The author(s)' main claims against their opponents can be summarized in the following points:

1. The eco-extremist journal, *Atassa*, is a pro-rape publication;
2. ITS's misanthropy is a convenient cover for its misogyny since it now primarily targets women and society's most helpless;
3. ITS attacks anarchists and should not be tolerated in anarchist circles;
4. Little Black Cart (LBC), *Atassa*'s publisher, is directly responsible for spreading this pro-rape misogynist rhetoric in the anarchist community in the United States due to an irresponsible drive to stir up conversation for its own sake;
5. In the end, ITS, *Atassa*, and, by extension, LBC, are proto-fascist forces that seek to give comfort to the enemy as an unwitting Fifth Column within the fight against oppression and domination.

We will address each accusation in what follows.

A. Rape

After an introductory section, OIAWR enters into a tendentious reading of two central essays of the first issue of the journal, *Atassa: Readings in Eco-Extremism*. Generally, the author(s)' method of reading could best be termed as a "hermeneutic of suspicion". Ramon Elani's essay, "Return of the Warrior", is denigrated as a bad reading of a questionable author, Pierre Clastres, with judgments made against the cited scholarship that are little better than unwarranted ad hominem:

In addition to whatever patriarchy was found on his travels, it's fairly obvious in reading Clastres that he himself is some kind of male chauvinist, in the good French intellectual style, who occasionally starts blathering on about the ideas of gender and sexuality that he supposedly locates in the cosmology and customs of the people with whom he lived, but without ever really offering the reader any reason to believe that this is how these people understand themselves, or that any of their material practices confirm the sexism Clastres seems so eager to confirm[1]

Citation needed but of course none is forthcoming. In the anarcho-primitivist social justice world of the edelweiss pirates, an accusation is all that is needed to prove guilt, and then one moves on to the next slander. Anything that conforms to their "necessary" morality, inherited from Christianity, is a primordial re-wilded desire for egalitarianism, and everything that doesn't is a plot by bad misogynist colonizer anthropologists, or something to that effect:

I can't think of any self-interested or dubious motive for why these observers would remark with horror, can you? Maybe it's because they had a vested interest in making indigenous peoples look

[1] All references from OIAWR are taken from the version on Anarchist Library: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/edelweiss-pirates-of-indiscriminate-attacks-wild-reactions

like warlike apes to justify their civilizing colonial ventures. Maybe underlying that was a perceptual bias, that spiritual illness that inheres in the very culture we claim to be trying to fight.

OIAWR hits its stride with the accusation that in describing the crime of rape in primitive warfare, women as spoils of war, Elani endorses this behavior. Again, the pirates accuse:

After reiterating that primitive war is a means of preventing radical inequality, we learn that "This is the complexity of primitive society: there are enemies and there are allies […] Such alliances are created and maintained primarily through the exchange of women, who are also accumulated as spoils of war. This paradox, the exchange of women in securing alliances and the capture of women in war, illustrates, for Clastres the disdain toward exchange economy. Why should we trade for women when we can simply go get some for ourselves: "the risk [of war] is considerable (injury, death) but so are the benefits: they are total, the women are free."

If these bits of pedagogy and rape culture sound suspiciously rather like modern compulsions, imperatives, and fantasies to the critically-minded reader, you should know that Elani agrees with you…

We will leave Elani's essay for now and turn to the pirates' reading of the titular essay of the journal, Abe Cabrera's "Atassa: Lessons of the Creek War (1813-1814)". In their brief treatment of this essay (which establishes, along with Elani's contribution, the putative "pro-rape" tenor of the project), they focus on one scene of the lengthy essay: the massacre of the white inhabitants of Fort Mims by the Red Stick Creeks:

The section of the essay that follows shortly on the heels of this quotation is "The Massacre at Fort Mims as Re-Wilding," in which one of the bloodiest attacks of the Creeks is related. Cabrera is certain to assure us: "What followed was a slaughter of exceptional brutality, but well in keeping with the ethos of Creek vengeance in war," and quotes a number of white His-storians and anthropologists (who seemingly don't all agree on the precise extent to which this behavior was precedented among the Creek) about the "purifying blaze" that would now rid the nation of the apostate Creeks. Throughout the piece, Cabrera is certain to demarcate the concepts and the actions that are admirable and in keeping with an ancient wisdom. This mostly takes the form of a kind of inverted Noble Savage proposition that always and in all cases upholds whatever brutality was done by the Creeks of 200 years ago and posits such acts and principles as eternal, salutary, and Wild.

When Cabrera arrives at discussing the fate of the women at Fort Mims, his laudatory tone and narrative is utterly unbroken. With an incipient giddiness consonant with everything he's written up to now, he quotes at length about the gratuitous mass rape that took place at Fort Mims. Not a word of contextualization of the horrors of civilized war, or of war at all, is proffered. After this– his crown-jewel block quotation—he begins the next paragraph, "Far from being acts of gratuitous or extraordinary violence, what occurred at Fort Mims was well within the cultural and spiritual logic of traditional Creek culture." To prove his point, he quotes another white historian at length.

Here is the ideological underpinning being offered by their US boosters for the femicidal actions claimed by ITS. Here is the "indiscriminate attack" being refined, in print as in thought. Here is Rape-as-Re-Wilding.

Again, we must point out here the "hermeneutic of suspicion". In spite of being an essay that aims to be well-documented, the pirates feel that they can discredit all of the "His-storians" and white scholars without it seems having done any research of their own, or citing any counter-narratives describing the same events. But here it is worth citing in full the passage that so scandalized the authors of OIAWR:

A special fate was reserved for the women. The Indians stripped them naked, scalped both head and nether parts, then raped some with fence rails and clubbed all to death like small game. Those unfortunate enough to be pregnant had their bellies slit open. Then the glistening fetus was snatched out, cord still attached, and laid, still living, carefully by the mother's side in horrible tableaux—in the case of Mrs. Summerlin's twins, on both sides of her. The indomitable Nancy Bailey met a similar end. When approached by an Indian who asked who her family was, she reportedly pointed to a body sprawled nearby and boldly exclaimed, 'I am the sister of that great man you have murdered there.' At which the enraged Indians clubbed her to the ground, slit open her belly, yanked out her intestines, and threw them onto the ground around her.

While a gruesome sight to be sure, this was not the only atrocity that the Red Sticks committed at Fort Mims. Right above the cited text, the "Atassa" author describes a small boy being clubbed to death and bodies being dismembered and held aloft as trophies of war, a custom among some of the Shawnee warriors present at the massacre. One wonders why child murder and dismemberment left the pirates so unfazed, but brutal rapes with fence rails were a bridge too far.

And of course, the "white historian" cited at length after this passage appears to be nothing but an exploiter who wants to spread calumny and detraction against poor indigenous people, because that is the only reason white His-torians exist.

Dr. Shuck-Hall has directed [Christopher Newport University's] *public history program for almost a decade. Her book-length analyses of Southeastern Indians were published by both the University of Nebraska Press and the University of Oklahoma Press. She assisted tribal advocates to secure claims to ancestral lands, and undertook museum curatorial assignments for Southeastern Indian tribes.*[2]

It appears here that the edelweiss pirates were too preoccupied with their invective to do a simple Google search, but we suppose that's forgivable if the object of one's polemic is so vile and lacking in human decency.

One wonders what the pirates think indigenous warfare was actually like, uninformed by Christian admonitions to "turn the other cheek" (which Christian soldiers did not even follow) and where scalping and torturous death were widely reported in the context of war. The Creeks were a remnant of the Mississippian cultures, and in places like Cahokia human sacrifices are widely believed to have taken place. It is odd that the pirates did not blame agriculture and sedentism for all of the bad things done at Fort Mims like every other primitivist. It is rather foolish then to cast doubt on heavily documented historical events, especially if one presents no counter-narrative in its place.

And Abe Cabrera isn't white. One could state that white authors are "cleansed" of their whiteness if he cites them.

We leave the pirates' yellow journalist exegesis and lay our cards on the table. First and foremost, eco-extremists don't have any prescriptive counsels for any human at all in our context. None. We don't care if people rape, murder, kill, commit infanticide, etc. etc. We do not believe that condemning behaviors, issuing trigger or content warnings, or admonitions from hindsight are of any use, or even desirable. Ramon Elani and Abe Cabrera's matter-of-fact descriptions of previous atrocities are neither "laudatory" nor "salutary". Some confusion might lie in the fact that they feel no need to judge two hundred year old events through the prism of modern egal-

[2] http://cnu.edu/publichistorycenter/about/

itarianism or morality. *Atassa* is no more a "pro-rape" journal than it is a "pro-infanticide" or "pro-horse theft" journal, as these are also crimes described in its pages. One could here suspect that mentioning "rape" hits the "right buttons," and is the pirates' attempt to jump on the "fake news" bandwagon of 2017. In this case, accuracy suffers when marketing is one's ultimate goal.

If the pirates had so desired, they could have easily found other damning evidence of eco-extremism being soft on sexual violence. Here we will cite one example as the pirates do not seem to have performed even cursory research on the topic. It comes from a work during the Wild Reaction phase of eco-extremism called, "They took their time already: Wild Reaction responds to Destroy the Prisons":

"Before this comment RS [Wild Reaction] answers that if DP take themselves for community connoisseurs, we hope they know that the people of the hills in Mexico, since hundreds of years ago, are used to lifestyles that are frowned upon by the city dwellers sick with Western culture, certain ways of life that are perceived as 'brutal'. For example, to exchange a woman for a cow or a swine, is common among natives, it is part of their customs, their way of life, and is something normal, while for Western moralists (including some anarchists) it is something unworthy, they get all worked up and cry to the heavens when they hear about this. Generally anarchists of the feminist type are those who most make a scandal about it. RS doesn't see it as a bad thing, RS respects the development and customs of the country people, this is why we express ourselves in favor of power relations in such communities because it is not our concern to try and change them. We emphasize, it is not that we are 'machistas' but honestly we don't set ourselves against this kind of native attitudes. This is what we think, even though it will infuriate the anarchists that we talk in this way, oh well."[3]

There is absolutely nothing prescriptive about eco-extremism. There is only an extreme pessimism concerning human thought and action, so it is no surprise to us if some *indios* in the hills of Mexico still give away their daughters for the price of a cow. We do not expect humans to be just or reasonable in this or any other context. Eco-extremism has no inclination to tell uncivilized societies how they should behave, we don't believe in "The Fall," good guys vs. bad guys, etc. If that sort of talk was ever appropriate, it isn't anymore. We have no inclination to be Lawgivers to this or any other society, past or present. Our pursuit is attack on this society, this reality, and we do not feel the need to go back two-hundred years to call out injustices that most people have forgotten.

Do eco-extremists then advocate that women simply accept their rapes? To the extent that we care about those in affinity, there are two ideas at play here: 1. To renounce the idea that women (or anyone else) are victims who need to be protected by hyper-civilized society and 2. That all vengeance and retribution be carried out amorally and individualistically, as "societal solutions" and shaming are mere frauds. As some female eco-extremists have stated (yes, they exist):

The Western view is for one to look upon oneself as a woman as a victim of everyone and everything. It forces you to focus on dumb struggles which only distract from the true problem: Civilization. The system benefits when we look for the guilty amongst ourselves, and when we turn our anger on men, immigrants, the justice system, the state, the speciesists, etc. Thus, going along with all of the ephemeral struggles makes us part of the herd, but of a black herd: the supposedly "rebel" one, which one realizes is not even the case.

[3] http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/they-took-their-time-already-wild-reaction-responds-to-destruye-las-prisiones/

I have not wanted to remain thus. I have accepted my existence as a woman, and I have declared war without quarter on civilization, and not on a model of a system of domination called "patriarchy". The eco-extremism that I defend is not focused on gender. I have wounded both men and women equally since this war is against civilization as a whole. Though the gender of the target is not important, at the same time I realize that as an individualist my condition as a woman in what I have done. Maybe I don't recognize it publicly for strategic reasons, but I do with those in affinity.[4]

She acknowledges, at least tacitly, the role the subjugation of women played in the emergence of civilization. The point is that it is no longer important, or rather, it would be important if one expects a "better" society to emerge out of the rubble of the current hyper-civilized techno-industrial civilization. As we don't expect this, and as we think it is absurd to try to engineer a society based on spotty anthropological information, talking about abolishing patriarchy is about as useful as talking about terraforming the Moon or colonizing Mars. We will not waste our energy trying to achieve it.

Is there an eco-extremist approach to rape in particular? One eco-extremist spoke on the topic on an Internet radio program called, "Radio Primate". At around the forty-five minute mark, he stated something along the lines of the following:

"If I say that I oppose rape, what good would it do?... If someone, even if they are old or young, a neighbor, relative, etc. raped you, instead of condemning rape, or victimizing yourself, why don't you look for that person, and in an intelligent manner, get a knife, or even a gun, look that person in the eye, and, again, in an intelligent manner, kill them. Why are we going to declare ourselves in favor of or in opposition to civilizing activities? If someone did something like that to you, take justice into your own hands. Do what has to be done and that's it... If you, individualist, were a victim of this sort of civilizing activity, look for the person who harmed you and make them pay, so that their blood is splattered everywhere and your hands are stained with their blood. And be happy that you did it... and don't be ashamed. When you're doing it, enjoy it, without regrets, your will be done..."[5]

One might say that's "ableist" or psychopathic, we cannot imagine anything more cathartic. What good are endless analyses of the past and present versus vengeance in the here and now?

The "rape apologist" accusation is just a marketing ploy. The eco-extremist, echoing an anarchist of yesteryear, could retort that they could never be rape apologists because they are too busy advocating for (and working for, in their own way) the extinction of the human species. They are innocent of that minor charge as they are busy working on a greater project (even if, admittedly, they could never bring it about themselves).

Of course, to paraphrase Joseph Stalin, one rape is a tragedy, and the extinction of the human race is merely a statistic.

That accusation refuted, we move on.

B. Misogyny

This is somewhat related to rape, but deserving of its own section. The premise is that misanthropy is merely a cover for oppressing the most vulnerable and downtrodden sector of society,

[4] "Eco-extremism and the woman part 1" Found here: http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Revista-Extinci%C3%B3n-1.pdf

[5] http://prmlkuddink.torpress2sarn7xw.onion/

insinuating that ITS and other eco-extremists target women and oppressed people disproportionately. We quote the pirates:

Why is it so often that those who claim to be "pessimistic about all human endeavors" seem bound to express this alleged pessimism most potently as a hatred of women? One wonders at how deeply the misogyny runs in those for whom rape is not part of the reason for their pessimism, their alleged misanthropy, but instead is their stock response to the despair, a check in their own plus column, the form taken by their revenge upon "the world."

It's not just that they claim to hate humans but never kill themselves or each other. It's not just that they dress up "the indiscriminate attack" in the clothes of a serious theoretical proposition as cover for the fact that they increasingly only attack women, faggots and pussies. It's not only that they profess their hatred for anarchists while eagerly claiming a lineage with Severino Di Giovanni, the Italian anarchist and anti-fascist transplant to Argentina of a century ago, who indeed placed bombs with little regard for the possibility of collateral damage, but never randomly, always targeting the powerful.

And again:

Meanwhile, ITS is so bad at war, so bad at being the nomadic, cannibal warriors of their own deranged imaginations that all they can muster is collateral damage, the "indiscriminate attack," being their attempt to maintain their aura or nimbus of being the Most Down while actually camouflaging their own letting off the hook of those most responsible (impotence may be to embarrassing of a word to admit). To call their recent claims emblematic of an attack on low-hanging fruit may be understatement to the point of absurdity, an insult added to the injury done to their "random" targets.

And again:

Hyper-masculinized and/or indiscriminate violence, exalted as means and end, coupled with a mythic spiritual ideal is in line with proto-fascism, especially that of ex-anarchists who take their aim primarily or exclusively at "reds," egalitarians, queers, women, etc.

This one is pretty easy to address. We list here all of the attacks by ITS in the last calendar year (2017) and tally how many women, "faggots" etc. they've killed or injured. We can then assess how "misogynist" and "bad at war" they are.

1. 21st Communique (January): a bomb sent to the Head of Codelco, Oscar Landerretche, one of the largest mining companies in the world, in Santiago, Chile. He suffered minor injuries to his hands due to the trajectory of the blast, though his mother-in-law, maid, and three year old daughter were also in the room, though uninjured.

2. 22nd Communique (February): bombs placed in churches and a biotech company in Torreon, Mexico. No one was injured.

3. 24th Communique (February): a bomb placed on a bus in Mexico State, Mexico. No injuries.

4. 25th Communique (March): The assassination of the Vicerector of the Technological Institute of Advanced Studies, Luis Arturo Torres Garcia.

5. 27th Communique (April): Firing on infrastructure in Mexico State, Mexico. No known injuries.

6. 28th Communique (April): The placing of an exploding envelope on a park bench in Torreon, Mexico. A girl found it, it exploded, but the media reported that no one was injured.

7. 29th Communique (May): The deaths of two hikers in Mexico State (male and female), the placing of an explosive device at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and the death of Lesvy Berlin Osorio.

8. 30th Communique (May): a bomb planted on a bus in Santiago, Chile, which did not explode.

9. 32nd Communique (July): a bomb planted at a church in Mexico State, Mexico. The sacristan of the church picked it up and it exploded, wounding him.

10. 34th Communique (July): another explosive envelope left on a park bench in Torreon, Mexico. It is not known what happened to the envelope.

11. 35th Communique (August): two more explosives left in two churches in Mexico State, Mexico. No known injuries.

12. 36th Communique (August): a tractor trailer set on fire in Mexico State. No known injuries.

13. 37th Communique (August): an incendiary device placed on a bus in Santiago, Chile, which started a fire and consumed the vehicle. No known injuries.

14. 40th Communique (September): placing a bomb in front of a physics and astronomy building at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, addressed to the director of that department, Dr. Gloria Dubner. The bomb was found and disposed of by the bomb squad. No known injuries.

15. 41st Communique (October): a bomb placed in another church in Mexico State, Mexico. No known injuries.

16. 42nd Communique (October): the murder of two male pilgrims carrying a St. Jude statue in the state of Queretaro in Mexico.

17. 43rd Communique (November): attempted bombings of bus lines in Santiago, Chile. No known injuries.

18. 44th Communique (December): the sabotaging and destruction of power lines in the state of Nuevo Leon in Mexico.

19. 45th Communique (December): an attempted mail bomb that exploded in a major processing center in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Two male workers sustained minor injuries.

So let us break down the total deaths, injuries, etc. that ITS has claimed responsibility for and see if they are targeting (in the pirates' words) "women, faggots, and pussies". Now, I don't see any hate crimes against homosexuals here, so that's off the list. Women? Of course, there is the Great Martyr Lesvy Berlin Osorio of UNAM fame (whose boyfriend is being tried for her

murder, just for everyone's general information), but also the female hiker who no one talks about (Because she was hiking with her boyfriend who was also killed? What sort of headline-grabber is that?) That's two women, versus the university administrator, the male hiker, and the two Catholic male pilgrims. Add to that the CODELCO chief (where the bomb exploded in his kitchen) and the maimed Catholic sacristan, and we still don't see a war on women. There is the bomb sent to Dr. Dubner, but was she off-limits for being a woman, or fair game due to her position within the university? And the poor random girl who picked up the envelope. Still, no misogynist war in sight.

What we do see, overall, is a war against companies and infrastructure (CEOs, university administrators, construction equipment, infrastructure, vehicles, etc.) as well as against such institutions as the Catholic Church (Have anarchists buried the hatchet with the Papists yet? We must have not gotten the memo.) While the "random attacks" against the "most vulnerable" makes a great talking point for enemies and "frenemies" of eco-extremism alike, that's clearly not what is going on here. Most of the eco-extremist's targets are also being attacked by insurrectionary anarchists in the same regions of the world, only the methodology is different.[6] Any attack that eco-extremists carry out requires planning, scoping out the location, and exceptional measures so as to not get caught. For the most part, their targets are carefully selected not out of any moral considerations, but merely because of logistics. The two major considerations are "Can I do it?" and "Can I get away with it?"

But what of the poor "vulnerable" people who were attacked or died? Lesvy Berlin was walking in front of the engineering department of the university. Perhaps their intention was to leave a dead body in front of a center of techno-industrial progress: hardly a random choice of venue. The two hikers: well, they explain themselves there, and we will discuss this below. The vice-rector: do I really have to describe that one to anarchists? And the head of a mining company? How about the sacristan and the two pilgrims carrying a statue? So Catholics are now off limits to anarchists, I suppose. Durruti would be proud of today's insurrectionaries for sticking up for the poor innocent believers.

So these attacks and casualties are far from "random". They are most definitely not leaving the powerful alone, but they aren't sparing the "vulnerable" either (whose complacency keeps the "powerful" in power). It is tempting to make sloppy generalizations due to deeply felt antagonism, but this feeling does not make these generalizations accurate.

Individualist eco-extremism refuses to "call-out" or mandate a particular action. If one person wants to sabotage some power lines, and they can get away with it, fine, that is their individual prerogative. If someone wants to randomly kill someone, as enemies of the human race, eco-extremists would never oppose or condemn that. There are no coordinated attacks, no meetings where individualists hash out and have struggle sessions about "correct strategy". The correct strategy is: will someone get hurt or killed; will something be destroyed; and can I get away with it? It's that simple. If you don't think X is a good idea, do Y instead.

So with the true nature of eco-extremist actions in the recent past established, we can move on to the next accusation.

C. Attacking anarchists

This accusation is true. I will let Scott Campbell summarize:

[6] Cf. http://www.excelsior.com.mx/comunidad/2017/07/26/1177661

OkupaChe is an autonomous space for a variety of collectives and individuals that for years has been under threat and attacks from the police and university administration. On December 14, after a growing push for the eviction of the okupa, there was to be a large student assembly with OkupaChe as the first item on the agenda. At some point during the night before the assembly, an explosive device was left outside the doorway of the auditorium. It was described as a package made up of flammable material and nails, powerful enough to have started a fire and wounded people at the space as well as passers-by. Initially thought to be part of the push to evict OkupaChe, in March an ITS group mentioned "an annoying device that we left in the mousetrap called che." In the more recent statement, ITS elaborates further, regurgitating without irony the government's talking points about the space:

[D]id you know that one of our groups placed a bomb at the "Che Squat"? That was done mainly because they were defaming us and we shit on those anarcho-rock star ex-con politicians and drug addicts who hang out there, because the auditorium is supposedly so legendary: a symbol of "autonomy" and the "combative" student movement of the '90's.

So along with their tirades and death threats against individual anarchists, one can see that they have actually attempted to kill or injure anarchists en masse and cause damage to anarchist spaces. In preparation for this article, I reached out to anarchists in Mexico to attempt to document other ITS threats. They indicated that numerous threats from ITS have been directed against anarchist individuals and projects, but no one felt comfortable going on the record.[7]

In replying to Mexican anarchists in particular, ITS wrote the following in its Thirty-Third Communiqué:

We ask ourselves, are not the people who the federal government sent to infiltrate your anarchist spaces more important than ITS, who aren't in those spaces? And speaking of, did you know that one of our groups placed a bomb at the "Che Squat"? That was done mainly because they were defaming us and we shit on those anarcho-rock star ex-con politicians and drug addicts who hang out there, because the auditorium is supposedly so legendary: a symbol of "autonomy" and the "combative" student movement of the '90's. Now it's just a den of slimy journalists, a place where the Cisen and Mexico City Investigative Police plant their informers to gather information no matter how irrelevant. From there the press has gathered names, nicknames, photos, addresses, etc. of "comrades" in 2014 after various "slaps," from there you get the Pegasus malware that infected the personal cellphones of anarchists that year and at that site. Let it be noted that we are not saying this to portray ourselves as "defenders of anarchists," of course not, that ITS group placed the bomb at that squat because inside was a person who was trying to pass himself off as one of us. He foolishly deceived a bunch of young anarchists and dazzled them with his guns, with his threats, his made-up stories, and supposed connections with us to gain popularity and be "that guy". With that bomb we got him out of the scene and we started to hunt him. Only with the help of anarchists who he had deceived (who you should try to "eliminate" instead of posturing as the "new people who will deal with ITS," which is apparently now in style). That person returned to his police barracks and we lost track of him. This isn't a lie, you can investigate it with your sources and you will see that it's not part of our "pathological lying." Ha![8]

[7] https://itsgoingdown.org/its-attacks-anarchists/

[8] https://atassa.wordpress.com/2017/07/20/thirty-third-communique-of-the-individualists-tending-toward-the-wild/

Since this event, there has been much back and forth, mostly one sided in terms of actual harm done against either side. In the 39th Communiqué, ITS in Chile stated that it tipped off the family of a person murdered by the anarchists some years back, apparently the victim of a botched incendiary attack:

So now that it is all the style to threaten an anarchist war against the Eco-extremist Mafia, snitching included, we gave some clues about these nuns to the friends and family (some of them criminals) of Sergio Landskron, so that they'll know who to shoot and stab to get even. They're looking in freed squats around the site of the indiscriminate attack and they'll know who took their son-uncle-brother from them. They're squats full of shitheads who have gotten out of the explosives game because of this anarcho-Christian sin, but we know that they have this hidden sin on their chest and it won't be forgotten anytime soon.

Do the moralists consider this snitching too? It's all the same to us, it's not for nothing that we are egoists, criminals, and amoral. But let it be known, what we have just stated is just one demonstration that we know quite well those behind certain things, we know where the campaign in Chile against eco-extremism comes from. We thus state that if they continue with this pathetic campaign they shouldn't be surprised when we respond.[9]

Eco-extremists have also insinuated that there is a link between the beating of an anarchist in the University City in Mexico City and ITS, though no direct responsibility is taken for this attack. In the 44th Communiqué, which takes responsibility for the destruction of an electrical tower, ITS mentions this most recent violent incident against an anarchist, ITS explains:

These kids, have they forgotten from where anarchist groups in Mexico have gotten their explosives from 2015 onward? If they forgot, we remind them than in many cases these explosives have been acquired from the aforementioned eco-extremists with the intent of causing more destruction without regard for the political differences that divide us. We aren't going to name those groups with "anti-authoritarian" leanings that have bought explosives from our contacts so that they wouldn't have to put their asses on the line. They know full well who they are. Why is it that (with the exception of old insurrectionary groups) none of these "new" groups of anarchists say shit against the eco-extremists?[10]

Here we recall that, while the initial polemic against ITS by old members of the FAI / CCF in Mexico issued a vigorous condemnation, it did not deny a former collaboration:

Although ITS were one of the few clusters with which we did not directly coordinate when undertaking joint actions, we were in solidarity with them, in the same way that some of the comrades that made up our affinity groups obtained monetary resources for them to solve specific difficulties when requested. That has been (and is) the basis of practical co-ordination between the new anarchic insurrectionalism and eco-anarchism.[11]

To think that there is an absolute wall between anarchists and eco-extremists in the countries where eco-extremists operate is a bit silly, especially since overlap between these groups has

[9] https://atassa.wordpress.com/2017/09/19/thirty-ninth-communique-of-the-individualists-tending-toward-the-wild/

[10] http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/mexico-cuadragesimo-cuarto-comunicado-its-grupo-7-se-posiciona/ (our translation)

[11] https://325.nostate.net/2017/08/03/its-or-the-rhetoric-of-decay-joint-statement-of-insurrectional-groups-in-mexican-territory/

been documented.[12] In places of relative peace and legality (i.e. most of the places from where condemnations of eco-extremism come), people can afford to morally pick sides according to unsullied principles. In the realm of illegality and violence, one's allies and enemies are not as clear. We are speculating of course. To expect that people involved in that way of life will take as authoritative the words of anarchists far away in comfortable situations seems a bit delusional, especially if just for the crime of planting a bomb at an "anarchist" squat named after Che Guevara (an authoritarian Marxist). And as for subsequent actions, we are not sure what anarchists expect from the eco-extremists: that they are supposed to treat them with kid gloves because they're "comrades"? The anarchists have already made clear that this isn't the case, so they shouldn't be surprised when people who like attacking human beings start attacking them.

To us it seems that a particular group of "Third World" anarchists are asking "First World" anarchists to come to their rescue. An interesting spectacle but we don't see how this goes anywhere. This is a family feud and not one side deciding to "go fascist". Perhaps some anarchists on the ground can't afford to be as moral as Scott Campbell, the pirates, the veterans of the CCF, or others. We end this section with an excerpt from an eco-extremist text entitled, "The Anarchist Myth":

Who knows, maybe new generations of anarchists will know how to turn this decadence around and take other paths, more dangerous for the existent. We don't know one way or the other and, contrary to what many people think, we would be glad if this happened since more tension, more attacks, more bombings and fires, assassinations and alterations of normality of any kind; in short, extremist and destructive criminal activity (of whatever kind) adds chaos and destabilization to a declining civilization.[13]

Intermezzo: An exegesis of the GITS / ITS 29th Communique

In order to proceed further, we have to address the red herring of "ITS Before the 29th Communiqué" vs. "ITS After the 29th Communiqué". Like most hyper-civilized, even those interested in eco-extremism had a hard time moving past the death and destruction reported in that communiqué and their significance. There was no schism in these events, and if one is perceived, it was due mainly to the difference in rhetoric / reasoning behind the actions as reported in that communiqué. To give a more faithful interpretation of events, we will of course have to enter the realm of speculation, but we think the following is a more accurate interpretation of events.

In addressing the 29th Communiqué, we must keep in mind that eco-extremism is not a doctrine or even an ideology. It is a tendency: that means that it mainly indicates the inclinations of its adherents and not their actual positions. For example, eco-extremists have been characterized as "religious fundamentalists," when certain members of the Tendency have been explicit that they do NOT have any religious beliefs or spiritual practices.[14] The nihilist terrorist tendency in Europe does not seem to have any religious inclinations at all, or even explicitly ecological ones for that matter. This is a broad tent, but instead of an ideological position holding these groups and individuals together, the binding position is one of attack: violent, indiscriminate, and mis-

[12] Cf. http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/chile-la-ciudadania-espero-que-le-explosen-infinitas-bombas/

[13] https://atassa.wordpress.com/2017/07/15/the-anarchist-myth/

[14] http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/es-en-it-unas-notas-sobre-las-recientes-difamaciones-y-breve-aclaracion/

anthropic. Beyond that, it is up to each eco-extremist / nihilist individualist to determine their reasons for doing things.

In that sense, the 29th Communiqué does not come from the "mainstream" of eco-extremism, at least in Latin America where it is most active. Though co-signed by an ITS cell, the main author of the communiqué was the *Grupo Indiscriminado Tendiendo a lo Salvaje* (GITS), the Indiscriminate Group Tending Toward the Wild. While it is safe to assume that there is a solid strategic union between ITS and GITS, their reasoning and actions have been somewhat different, as have been their results.

GITS surfaced first last year as the *Grupúsculo Indiscriminado* or Indiscriminate Faction that claimed responsibility in early 2016 for the murder of a computer science student in Mexico State. The police caught the supposed assailants of this attack and sentenced them in 2017, though the Indiscriminate Faction stated that they were the real culprits.[15] They were also part of coordinated actions with ITS in 2016 and early 2017, including bombings and sabotaging a rail system in Mexico State. In the 18th Communiqué, they issued the following ominous threat:

We'd like to state to all those people who are attracted by "natural beauty" that you too are in our sights. Just like the list of scientists, the list of "forest lovers" who we will attack is quite long. Don't be surprised if one day while you're out camping the "Devil" shows up. This time you won't be offered as a sacrifice, you'll just be fertilizer for the trees. "The coyotes descended from the mountain, now they return to them."[16]

In a communiqué in March 2017, the Indiscriminate Faction announced its merger with an ITS group to form GITS. In this communiqué, they took an explicitly extinctionist line regarding humans, renouncing terms such as "wild nature" and making explicit that their reasons for omnicidal attack were completely secular:

Our position now is to attack the human being, killing and mutilating, now that the human being is the principal culprit for the changes that Planet Earth has suffered. Among these are the changes in the biogeochemical cycles that the planet has suffered in the last few years. These include cycles of N, P, C, CH4, H2O. We don't deny that the whole system is in constant change but this change has accelerated considerably after the Industrial Revolution (we don't have to go into detail here, whoever wants can study this, whoever doesn't can call us crazy.) Why do we say this? Many leftists, ecologists, anarchists, hipsters, pseudo-intellectuals, and the rest spit out the same thing: "the human feels like god in modifying natural systems." We speak here of the use of GMOs, which industry paints a rosy picture of. "They do it for the good of humanity," so that there can be better quality, more productivity, where they can't produce or there is a lack of production of this or that crop. So why is it so bad to isolate a specific protein in "X" species and put in a bacteria (Thermophilus aquaticus) to synthesize the protein? At the end of the day it doesn't seem too "bad," since the human being consumes proteins, synthesizes proteins, and requires essential amino acids. Maybe the use of GMOs isn't so bad to additionally benefit "X" species… Wait, what about the biogeochemical cycle of N? What about the nitrates and nitrites of the Earth? You already have an example of how the biogeochemical cycle is altered and the consequences that come with it. Anyone with knowledge of the above would tell us we're right. They would stoop down and say that we (humans) are a danger for the Planet Earth. Others will call us crazy. But the changes are there, more evident than ever.

[15] http://www.milenio.com/policia/estudiante-poli-upiicsa-muerto-iztacalco-gabriel_ramos_millan-sentencian-milenio_0_911308918.html

[16] http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/mexico-eighteenth-communique-of-the-individualists-tending-toward-the-wild-indiscriminate-faction/

Some hope that so-called "wild nature" will end it all, others hope to enjoy life, others struggle for equality of the human being, and the vast majority lives as a mass on the planet...[17]

While this was the first explicitly extinctionist text in the eco-extremist canon, the position has been adopted by most in the Tendency as far as we can tell. Nevertheless, few eco-extremist groups are keen on scientific reasoning, and some even criticize it.

A couple of months after the release of the 18th Communiqué the murders of the two hikers and Lesvy Berlin Osorio took place, as well an attempted bombing of the UNAM. At the risk of satisfying no one, we will point out a few things:

1. There is a reiteration of the scientific reasoning for their attack at the beginning of the essay;

2. The murder of the two hikers was predicted by GITS' predecessor some months earlier, so that might make the story of GITS "settling" for the hikers instead of illegal loggers not as plausible;

3. Taking responsibility for the Berlin Osorio murder is almost an afterthought at the end of the communiqué.

This is not to say that the communiqué is not telling the truth, but Berlin Osorio's boyfriend was arrested for her murder and is currently being tried for it[18] (as was the case with computer science student). Again, we do not know for sure, but these are the only two actions that an eco-extremist group has taken responsibility for internationally where others were caught and charged with the crimes. (It should be pointed out that the murder of the hikers remains unsolved.)

What unsettled many about the 29th Communiqué was its randomness and seemingly absurd justifications for the discussed actions. We should remember that the groups that carried out these attacks envisioned them well in advance, and the venues were not at all random. Also, in comparison with all of the other eco-extremist actions in 2017, these remain a bit of an outlier. Most other attacks have been against biotechnologists, executives, academics, etc. There have also been a disproportionate number of attacks on the Catholic Church and its faithful. As we saw above, to think that the 29th Communiqué was some sort of "watershed" moment does not conform to the character of most attacks carried out in the last calendar year.

D. Black Seed no. 5: With frenemies like these...

Eco-extremism haunted the latest issue of the LBC paper, *Black Seed*, published last year. While there were some articles that mentioned eco-extremist themes in a positive light and would not have been entirely out of place in *Atassa* or similar publications (with honorable mentions to "Murder of the Civilized" and the "Erotic Life of Stones"), there are two articles in particular that were explicitly critical of eco-extremism, namely Bellamy Fitzpatricks' "Revolutionary Dissonance: Why Eco-extremism Matters for Those Who Most Hate It," and "Eco-extremism or

[17] https://atassa.wordpress.com/2017/03/18/communique-of-the-indiscriminate-group-tending-toward-the-wild-gits/

[18] https://lasillarota.com/metropoli/novio-de-lesvy-berlin-osorio-sera-juzgado-por-feminicidio/183672

Extinctionism" by John Jacobi. While OIAWR offered its own critique of *Black Seed*, we will ignore it in this section because their criticism amounted to little more than upbraiding the *Black Seed* writers for not being moral enough in their critiques.

Fitzpatrick's article was balanced in places, but its critique seems to be little more than nihilist one-upmanship. Also, in spite of having footnotes, his reading of eco-extremist texts is careless to the point of negligence. For example, his main critical section is entitled, "Ajajema's Holy Warriors," and later in his essay he characterizes the events of the 29th Communiqué as "'sociopathic' people who have killed hikers and an intoxicated woman in the name of an unfamiliar, long-dead god." Only, as we have seen above, that is NOT why GITS allegedly killed those people. Their reasoning is actually more along the lines of his own when he speaks of cyanobacteria. Indeed, there have been eco-extremists or individualists who have been explicit about their own lack of religious motivations in carrying out their attacks:

Here in Europe there are also groups of nihilist terrorists, individualistic criminals and extremist misanthropes who are alive and kicking, and we remind you again that some of these groups were until a while ago close to you and your rotten environment, we know who is who and where they hang out each other, violence and the attack for us is not something new, but a practice that has become an extension of our own being, since it has been part of our life for years already… we do not have "pagan gods" what we have are weapons, explosives and information… So watch your words, your internet bravery can be expensive in real life.[19]

So alright, maybe that is a minor slip-up. And maybe we can state instead that ITS sent a bomb to the CEO of one of the largest mining companies in the world[20] in the name of a "long-dead" god, which is a sensible conclusion because the *Ajajema* journal most likely is published out of Chile and not Mexico. We have seen that some eco-extremists are "spiritual", and some are not. But never does a personal belief within eco-extremism become an exclusionary confessional barrier. The enemy is the human, and the reason to attack is entirely your own.

In condemning theology, Fitzpatrick ignores the critique that eco-extremism has of such humanist concepts as "liberation," which he un-reflexively accepts and takes for granted in his essay. For example, he cites an article on the Wandering Cannibals blog but only in passing. Allow us then to cite a selection relevant to this conversation:

For the eco-extremist, indiscriminate attack against the hyper-civilized is a cultic offering to the Unknowable which breaks the anthropocentric ambition of techno-industrial society. It is an attack on the supposed stability and bliss that law and order seeks to bestow on its adherents, a blood offering to Wild Nature. It is a religious act, not a political one, even if religion is understood very loosely here (as it had been before the emergence of modern Western civilization). It is a blow to the ascetic ambitions for a better tomorrow of both priest and scientist. It is the affirmation that only the Inhuman can defeat the idea of Human Power as Its Own End, only it can break apart all ambition for control and artificiality. The shedding of the blood of the hyper-civilized is a prophetic act that foreshadows the final destiny of techno-industrial society, and perhaps of humans themselves: a descent into Chaos, that fecundity that births and destroys beings without measure, and of which techno-industrial civilization is only a farcical imitation.[21]

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[19] http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/es-en-it-unas-notas-sobre-las-recientes-difamaciones-y-breve-aclaracion/

[20] https://atassa.wordpress.com/2017/01/15/twenty-first-communique-of-the-individualists-tending-toward-the-wild/

[21] https://wanderingcannibals.wordpress.com/2017/04/14/of-angels-and-cyborgs/

And if we can beg the reader's indulgence, we will cite another passage from an article on this blog that is pertinent to the conversation:

Perhaps the real ethical problem behind indiscriminate attack isn't one of assigning guilt, but of discerning if innocence even exists in this context. Seven billion people don't live their lives being innocent or guilty of anything. Their default mode is "minding their own business". They're fodder, they know not what they do. At that level, their lives are mostly devoid of discernible ethical content. And even in situations where people "care", they often rob Peter to pay Paul: they live part of their life unethically to sustain an ethical veneer elsewhere in their lives. The bottom line is: if you don't want that forest cut, or that ocean floor drilled, or that river polluted, you don't have to look far to see who is at fault. You are, your friends are, those you love are. Or do you and they eat only air and live in thatched huts made from the branches of native trees? Or do you treat yourself with local plants when you are sick, or check your email using only a wooden bow drill? If (by your actions, not your words) you don't care about Wild Nature, why should it care about you? Why should anyone?

Human life is not and can never be heroic, ethical, noble, or anything else it aims to be. You can expect little from it, and it is not eternal. Those who continue to defend humanism only wish to circle the wagons and defend Human Power as its own end by any means necessary, but they are defending the material means by which that species supremacy is upheld. The eco-extremist has come to the conclusion that the only way to attack Human Supremacy is to attack humans in any capacity in which they are capable. They do this not out of some inverted sense of morality, but out of the realization that morality is impossible, or rather, it cannot do what it says it does: sift the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, and the innocent from the guilty. Their attack is a refusal of the premise that the human ideal can govern life on a universal ethical level. It is a launching out into the Inhuman in the Name of the Unknowable, with little expectation in terms of human achievement.[22]

So while it is of passing interest that Fitzpatrick compares humans to cyanobacteria in terms of ethical responsibility and moral weight, what better way to take the argument a step further than killing some humans for no other reason than it's Tuesday or cloudy outside? If human beings really aren't that significant, then killing a few of them should be no big deal, right? And of course, eco-extremists admit every time they mention human extinction that their efforts are rather insignificant in terms of bringing it about.[23] The problem is ultimately *quantitative* and not qualitative: it is not one of innocence or guilt, but one of mere existing and taking up space. Whether Fitzpatrick wants "liberation" for a particular group or his own circle of friends is neither here nor there in this regard. As the eco-extremist writer Zupay states in his "Reflections on Freedom":

We cannot state it emphatically enough: freedom is an illusion. Nature is not our mother, she is "cruel," "merciless", and yes, "oppressive". Or at least that is how the hyper-civilized would see it. But for us, all this merely is, and what has always been. We don't tremble at the movement of the tectonic plates, or when the tsunami makes a particular eco-system disappear. Nor are we taken aback when a crocodile eats its young or a tribe of savages strangles its babies. We got rid of our civilized prejudices, we killed our moral being. We blew to pieces those who sought to domesticate our bodies and minds. We accept reality, we look our truth in the eyes and we are NOT afraid.[24]

[22] https://wanderingcannibals.wordpress.com/2017/08/20/notes-on-extinction/

[23] For example, Jeremias Torres' "Notes on extinctionist violence", found here, in Spanish: http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Textos-Pensamientos-de-un-ecoextremista.pdf

[24] http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/reflexiones-respecto-a-la-libertad/

And as we have stated above, perhaps to Fitzpatrick's relief, eco-extremism isn't prescriptive. It doesn't tell him or anyone else what to do. It has no plan for him other than being another hyper-civilized for whom it has no reason to care about. All the same, Fitzpatrick seems to think that the eco-extremist way of life entails living "ascetically and dangerously", which is out of the question for him. Rest assured, the mentality of the eco-extremist is more like that of a criminal, and, dare I say it, a serial killer, and less like that of a monk or a Bolshevik. Yes, it is dangerous, but no more dangerous than for anyone else who decides to live a double life. There is difficulty in it, but all "normal" people live double lives at work, in their homes, and certainly out in public. So it is no more "ascetical" than what most people experience in their normal lives on average.

As for the whole "not getting caught," one can think that here is the rub. Fitzpatrick thinks that since their activity is "dangerous," of course eco-extremists must be fanatics on par with Che Guevara and Vladimir Lenin, displaying the same revolutionary "trappings." What he forgets is the actual joy of harming and killing one's enemy: a particular pleasure that we hyper-civilized don't often experience, or if we do (say in the context of modern warfare or "revolutionary" violence) we are asked to feel guilty about it. As the last article of *Regresión* no. 7 stated:

I recommend to the individualists who are ready to take a life to choose their target wisely, commend themselves to their ancestors, sharpen their knives, and be cold at the moment of committing the deed. They should also enjoy it: nothing compares to the moment when you hear the last breath of a hyper-civilized person and seeing the blood spurt forth from the body of your victim. Let us decide the fate of the lives of others with guile, remembering the acts of previous murderous warriors![25]

If we are going to be truly amoral and nihilistic, perhaps the acts of eco-extremists carry no more ethical weight than stamp collecting or taking up the accordion. After all, humans basically have the same metaphysical significance as cyanobacteria and stones. Why make a big deal out of humans killing other humans, especially if they seem to be able to get away with it? All human activity requires effort, from killing people with bombs to creating a permaculture homestead somewhere in the countryside. That doesn't make any of it "ascetical".

John Jacobi's essay in *Black Seed* no. 5 is a public repudiation of his dialogue with eco-extremism due to its embrace of extinctionism. Though Jacobi has had very public relations and even sympathetic exchanges with eco-extremism, up to writing a rather informative article in *Atassa* no. 1 concerning eco-extremism's ideological pedigree[26], he now feels the need to break ties since eco-extremism has lapsed too far into theological and nihilistic inclinations. This newfound aversion to eco-extremism brings up the question: if eco-extremists were not extinctionist before, what were they? Did they hope that a certain group of humans would be able to make it out of civilization and start anew? If so, Jacobi's reticence to endorse indiscriminate attack would be justified: if you accidentally kill one of the Chosen with enough of a "Wild Will" to make it out of civilization, are you not diminishing the chances of ultimate victory, i.e. a fully feral, wild humanity?[27] Clearly, eco-extremists have never thought this. Their hopelessness and pessimism toward all of hyper-civilized humanity (i.e. the only humanity left for all intents and purposes) has never been in doubt. The hypothetical positing of a "small group of people who are willing to embrace the wild," does not bring such a group into being, and neither does the

[25] http://regresando.altervista.org/revista-regresion-n-7/

[26] "Apostles and Heretics"

[27] For more on this position, cf. "On Wildism and Eco-extremism", found at this link: https://ia801902.us.archive.org/20/items/AtltlachinolliEcoExtremistDialogues/Atltlachinolli%3A%20Eco-extremist%20Dialogues.pdf

existence of the peoples of such places like the Amazon or the Andaman Islands whose entire existence is due to the "conservationist" impulse to "leave them alone". The exception proves the rule, and if techno-industrial civilization and the rule of law collapsed tomorrow, such isolated peoples would no longer be protected.

The real issue with Jacobi has always been his intransigent belief in the human as a closed system, no matter how much recourse to "the wild" he has at times. He can't but spout such Enlightenment dogma as "the source of human values is human beings themselves," as if all "humans" have been equal throughout history, as if to predicate "human" in both the civilized and uncivilized resolves the issue at the level of first principles. As if the object of human cognition continues to be the continuation of the actually existing human genome, even if only within the circle of those who have an adequate affinity with the "Wild Will." But even if eco-extremists posit a "human nature" that is corrupted by industrial society, they neither posit a clear idea of its essence, nor a way to "fix" that nature by creating an "outside" of civilization. Such an "outside" does not exist, and there is no feral future, nor is one possible.

So to Jacobi's question, whether eco-extremists carry out their action because of their hatred of humanity or their love of the wild, they would reply that this is not an "either/or" dilemma. One can, and probably should, have both points as motivation. There is no natural "outside" that the hyper-civilized can take refuge in, as we are all products of civilization itself. But as techno-industrial civilization is neither a well-defined nor stable phenomenon, the ultimate object of hatred is the idea of human power and control as their own end, which can only be countered by attacking the human as both product and agent of that control. In this sense, extinction is like a wish more than a practical program: it is like the anarchists who wish for a "society without domination," though they know that this is probably not attainable. There will probably be *homo sapiens* well into the distant future, but one can act as if they should simply not exist.

In the end, this difference between Jacobi and the eco-extremists may be scholastic, at least on the surface. In terms of action, Jacobi and other wayward disciples of Theodore Kaczynski will continue to go about seeking the right theory and conditions under which to act, sinking deeper into ineffectiveness and sectarian bickering. Individualists, on the other hand, will act in the here and now, within the only life that Wild Nature has bequeathed to us, with the imperfect tools that we have both theoretically and practically. Though the embrace of human extinction may be more of a provocation than a real possibility, it does more starkly define what is important in our context, and what is secondary.

E. Fascism

We return to OIAWR to address the issue of fascism and eco-extremism's supposed role in political discourse in the United States and beyond. Even if eco-extremists eschew political action and intentions in their attacks, the pirates attempt to graft eco-extremists into the leftist narrative (though the places that OIAWR most speaks about in this regard are not places where actual eco-extremists are active). If the eco-extremists wish to be excluded from that narrative, it's too late: for the pirates, individualists are already useful stooges of the reaction, patriarchy, 4chan, and a host of other ominous enemies.

The pirates assert that, *pace* Scott Campbell, there is no "eco-fascism," but this is far from letting eco-extremists off the hook. Eco-extremists obviously do not share many of the essential characteristics of fascism, which they define succinctly as "*populist ultra-nationalism fixated upon*

the rebirth (following a period of perceived degeneration or decay) *of the Nation or the People as conceived, usually, as a racial entity*." Nevertheless, like a pestilence in the air, eco-extremists have caught the fascist contagion, and are already proto-fascists. This small secretive cabal of individuals is doing the work of the State by attacking anarchists and giving the anti-civ movement and ideology a bad name. Or to put it in the pirates' words:

…The fact of the ever-shifting content of the ITS ideology bespeaks a political opportunism that is indeed reminiscent of the early italian fascists and their figurehead Mussolini, whose superficial, chameleon-like qualities as a theoretician were among his hallmarks. One can imagine current ITS positions, like prior ones, being thrown over in short order in favor of more fascistic ones. The resemblance could conceivably prove to be something more than incidental.

So the fact that eco-extremism is a developing Tendency and not a defined ideology means it's a loose cannon without principles just waiting to go fascist at any moment. Not only this, but they give "comfort to the enemy," and that enemy could readily sympathize with the ethos of eco-extremism at some point:

Similarly, we can imagine new combinations for our enemies, the formation of an equivalent bridge or web connecting the opportunistic apocalyptic ramblings of the ITS to a more explicit fascist populism. We can imagine new ranks of fascists inspired or informed by their own homegrown supervillains. We can even imagine (quite easily) white nazis who think these homicidal subversives are pretty cool, potential allies even if they are Mexicans, or insurrectionary white boys gleefully seizing upon these role models to gloss over or christen their own lack of commitment to fighting against rape culture. It is the formation of such a bridge that must be prevented. It is the beginnings of this formation that we may be glimpsing in the recent turns of this situation.

So the accusation stands: if ITS and those who dialogue with it aren't "eco-fascists", they might as well be. Their lack of commitment to the humanist egalitarian values that the pirates defend means that, "if they are not with us, they're against us." These "suspicions" and "imaginings" must be taken seriously by the whole anarchist, anti-authoritarian, and radical community because the OIAWR authors have studied the issue and have come to the conclusion that, *mirabile visu*, the anti-civilization and anti-fascist agendas are one in the same. The best way to fight civilization is to double-down on fighting for egalitarianism (which for the pirates is practically an Eternal Dogma written in the heavens via cherry-picked anthropological data[28]), against patriarchy, transphobia, and the whole host of Neo-Christian talking points that enshrine the Victim as the Supreme Object of veneration. They can call ITS and LBC "proto-fascists" because they know history, and they know these groups better than the groups know themselves (in spite of their getting very basic facts wrong).

We counter such a specious reading of what eco-extremism means in the current moment by pointing out the pirates' true tactic: throwing a lot of things at eco-extremism and hoping something sticks. Rape apologists? That's clearly not a thing. Misogyny? Eco-extremists hate all humans equally, and attack on that basis. Proto-fascists? Well, they share some characteristics if you use your imagination and squint rather vigorously… ITS is like the new *Freikorps* ready to stick another rifle butt in Rosa Luxemburg's head. Never mind that the circumstances in which fascism arose in the 20th century, with rising working class militancy and increased labor actions shaking the capitalist system, look nothing like what "fascism" is today, at least in the United

[28] For a discussion of this topic, see Bill Finlayson's work: https://www.academia.edu/2024993/The_Complex_Hunter-gatherer_and_the_Transition_to_Farming

States: social lepers live-action role playing in the streets and hitting each other with sticks. This is still fascism, trust us. (So say the pirates.)

If this accusation is clearly not sticking to eco-extremism either, what is eco-extremism on the social level? Really, not much. Nor does it aim to be much. ITS has stated the following concerning the possible grafting of ex-leftist cadres with some training in arms into the criminal element:

The FARC have also given up their arms (and the ELN is on the same path). Even though some groups are determined to continue in the jungle as they have for decades, the organization itself has signed a peace accord with the Colombian government. This has generated different reactions. Some members of the paramilitary groups (that fought to the death against the FARC) have dedicated themselves to hunting down ex-guerrillas, now disarmed and mere vulnerable civilians.

On the other side are the ex-guerrillas who refuse to give up their arms. They don't want to be easy prey, and even though they know the "revolution" failed, they can't really return to civilian life after so many years of war. So they contract themselves out as mercenaries for strong criminal groups like the PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital, a criminal organization with its origin in Brazil but with strong presence in Paraguay and Argentina, which is dedicated to drug and arms trafficking.) This was seen in the "Robbery of the Century" in Paraguay in April of this year, where different decentralized groups lit various cars on fire to serve as a distraction for the main mission. At the same time, the principal body of heavily-armed commandos detonated a large explosive that blew apart one of the walls of a transport company, and after a firefight the bandits entered the company and robbed ten million dollars. On top of this, they had the nerve to escape on a boat that passed through the Itaipu Reserve in Brazil. This act, totally different from the usual methods of the PCC, could not be realized without military expertise, and without the technical and strategic help of the ex-guerrillas of the FARC now working for the PCC.

For some time these types of criminal actions have pleased us more than the acts of political guerrillas. This is sufficient to allow us to say with pleasure that the era of "revolution" has passed and the only thing left is to commit oneself to the individualist struggle for survival, leaving behind weak and disgusting humanist values.[29]

It is thus either extreme negligence or opportunistic intellectual sloth that leads the pirates to think that ITS will "break bad" (or "break worse"?) and become a bunch of brown Mexican Nazis, along with the entire editorial board of Little Black Cart passing over into fascism (Little Brown Cart? They wouldn't even have to change the acronym). The Enlightenment / secular Christian prejudices of the pirates can't possibly fathom the chaotic future before us, thus they have to resort to labels from early last century to assess social phenomena that have little to no resemblance to those of the past. ITS aren't a bunch of ex-anarchists tending toward fascism, but rather ex-radicals tending toward anti-social criminality.[30] Maybe one could make the argument Karl Marx makes in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* concerning the lumpenproletariat being a fertile breeding ground for reaction, but why then single out the eco-extremists who make up a minuscule blip when compared to the vast numbers of slum dwellers in Latin America who are low-hanging fruit in terms of recruitment into criminal gangs? Will the pirates begin policing them as well?

[29] https://atassa.wordpress.com/2017/07/09/thirty-first-communique-of-the-individualists-tending-toward-the-wild/

[30] Cf. http://regresando.altervista.org/n-5-en/

Perhaps ITS is cannon fodder for the reaction, a front for reactionary / police forces in the countries in which they operate. But if this small, individualistic terrorist project in the periphery of capitalist civilization is somehow part of the vanguard of the neo-Fascist wave, I would say that fascism could certainly do a lot better. Not that individualist eco-extremists are incompetent: they have evaded capture so far to the point that perhaps some government actors still think they don't exist, or are not a priority (which is not the case for the high priests of the CCF, et al. who think ITS is some sort of cancerous menace) Rather, in terms of societal change, they have made no impact outside of their own pleasure at attacking people. Very little "strategy" is involved, at least from the point of view of accomplishing some transcendent interpersonal goal. A group of dangerous and somewhat competent individuals a neo-fascist menace does not make.

But if we are going to armchair psychoanalyze eco-extremists from behind computer screens, as the pirates and others have done, it is appropriate that we return the favor, especially since OIAWR is so explicit concerning the beautiful vision of hope that it advocates. Namely, its view of anti-civ primitivism is that of a deeper critique of this society whereas previous versions of green anarchism "failed a lot of people". In attacking hierarchy in the name of equality, this critique must pick up allies in the feminist and anti-colonial struggle, engaging with such new trends as Afro-pessimism that seek to uncover the chains that previous green anarchism has left on oppressed peoples in their quest for total liberation. Within this process, eco-extremism and LBC's nihilism are temptations in the desert, the sin of despair against the Egalitarian Holy Ghost. And as we know from catechism class, the sins against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven in this life or in the next.

The urgency that the pirates believe is needed for their agenda is clear in their disappointment that others don't see things as they do:

At a time when hard-hitting and practical analyses of both civilization and fascism could serve as direly-needed interventions in post-election discourse and on-the-ground struggles marked by the talking points of corporate media, alt-right, white nationalists, tankies, social ecologists, and syndicalists, they think a crucial use of their access to resources is to clearcut another field in order to publish their 35th title on egoism.

As the world burns to cinder and bleeds out from the wounds inflicted by civilization, and as white nationalists enjoy a resurgence on the way down, consolidating power, influence, and initiative, the nihilists believe that one of the most pressing issues of our time is the precise contour of the religiosity of conventional primitivist thought. This religiosity is evidenced primarily by a belief that a qualitatively better life could be had by humans which would necessarily accord with some aspects of our deep past, but most importantly it is revealed by a refusal to endorse the femicidal rape theology of ITS and Atassa.

If those who deviate fail to fall into line concerning "what is to be done?", shame them and name call, just as Stalinists called those outside of their sphere "social fascists" in the "original antifa". The time to strike is now! Or so the pirates declare. The wind is at our back and the masses are open to the anti-civ Gospel:

We, too, remember the words of Tecumseh and the burning of forts[31]*. We remember the visions and sacrifices of the members of the MOVE organization who took aim at their enemies manifested as Science, Medicine, and Technology, who fought for a wild and untrammeled existence right in the heart of the un-living beast, advocating for a life based on hunting and gathering. We recall*

[31] Except for the rape-y parts that probably didn't even happen - our note.

the positive reviews of anti-civilization literature written by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Howard Zinn, and others who set us on our path of resistance. We share the love and the rage of those for whom white power and fascism are faces of the absolute enemy.

So it's all one love, one cause, one struggle… except for the Fight for 15 or Medicare for all or free college education, or every other leftist cause that the pirates, with their penchant for anthropological texts and anti-tech rhetoric, simply cannot endorse. But they have gotten "positive reviews". The Great Primitivist Awakening is probably just around the corner.

And of course, there is the question of racism:

Anarchists are not the first nor the most intimately knowledgeable of the problem to identify white supremacy as the key to power on this continent. If any of our enemies can be defeated, it will not be without defeating this enemy as well. As the lynchpin to the rotten schema of civil society, there is a corresponding panoply of social institutions and cultural scripts at work day and night to make matters of race and whiteness invisible and uninteresting, obscure and menacing. As the elephant who has lived in the room with us since birth, it is the issue nobody wants to talk about.

Whether intentionally or not, there is a certain antiseptic critique of identity politics to be found in the post-left and nihilism that is consonant with this imperative, consigning matters of race, white supremacy, and fascism to secondary importance at best, perhaps affording them the stock response of silently collapsing them into a general critique of hierarchy.

As non-white people, perhaps people who have been "victims" of racism in the U.S. context, our lack of faith in anti-racist politics is not due to failing to acknowledge racism as a problem in our lives. It is, rather, an acknowledgement of the complete failure of anti-racist politics to be anything other than reformism in favor of a small sector of already middle class individuals within an "oppressed community," as well as a tool for smooth talkers who can work their way into the academic or government bureaucracy. At least this is what we have seen with our own eyes, in Ethnic Studies Departments and other places where this dreck is peddled. The endgame of the anti-racist critique is the neoliberal Barack Obama, the endgame of anti-sexist politics is the greedy imperialist harpy Hillary Clinton. There is no way to separate the meat from the fat on that decaying, maggot-strewn carcass of New Left politics. So we have walked away from it.

Subverting the culture of civilization doesn't mean never trying unprecedented things. If certain social innovations can be seen as species-wide or species-effective experiments (like, say, those that involve pronoun usage, gender presentation, or other retooling of the conventions of language and custom), there is no more reason to oppose them than there is to curse the first tree dwelling shrew's descent to the forest floor, or the first following of the game into unknown territory.

With this passage, it is appropriate to discuss why anti-civ and nihilist readers might still distrust the pirates at the end of the text. It is precisely due to where this confluence of antifa and anti-civ politics leads: the conviction that the fascist menace appeared *ex nihilo* on November 9th, 2016, when half the country determined that a white nationalist coup was just around the corner, and every single "decent' person in this country entertained the possibility that a riot might be in order.

Except some of us have seen this film before know and how it ends. We remember that the largest marches in history failed to prevent the invasion and sacking of Iraq, which brought about such horrible fascist things as the Islamic State. We remember the "General Strike" of May 2006 when many Latino and other immigrants marched in the streets for their right to remain in the United States, only to be given the same President Obama who deported more people than his predecessor in the office. We remember all sort of "promising" social movements that arose

when the Democratic Party was not in power, the universal disdain for the "Idiot" missing from a village in Texas, etc. etc. We remember liberals turning into radicals overnight, only to turn back into liberals once they performed the mandatory kabuki theater motions of the "Lesser of Two Evils," again leaving radicals holding the bag of fanaticism and irrelevance.

That is not to say that things are not as bad as the pirates say they are. Really, the glaring omission from their essay is their failure to engage anything that a particular author actually wrote, even though they send much "exquisite venom" his way elsewhere. For example, in their invective against *Black Seed*, they fail to mention that another "rape apologist" wrote an essay for that publication. Perhaps this was an oversight; perhaps they were not impressed with the essay. But at this juncture, a passage from that essay, "The Catalog of Horrors," can shed some light on the pirates' possible motives:

The categorical imperative is simple in this case: give people the information, all the information, and they will act on it. This is what birthed the Green Movement, anarchist or not. Show the people how much the environment is hurting, how much civilization hurts people, how awful civilized life is, and they will wake up and oppose it. Ideologues cite trends such as increased recycling, emissions regulations, electric cars, and the like, as examples that this approach works. Just a few more campaigns to enlighten and inform, and maybe, just maybe, we'll save the Earth and destroy civilization. Just one more issue of the Catalog of Horrors will finally get people to rise up, never mind that this tactic seems to date to the dawn of civilization itself.

I don't completely blame the average person for going about their day while the world falls deeper and deeper into environmental crisis. But I don't let them off the hook either. The leftist wants to have things both ways: he or she wants to place all power in "the People," yet blame all ills on a tiny minority that the People could easily defeat. Which one is it then? Could it be that people aren't the knowledge machines that modern activism expects them to be, that they just want to get through the day and not be bothered with questions above their pay grade? Could it be that not everyone can be bitten with the bug of concern for the Future, that such a preoccupation is by no means universal? Could it be that even those who are driven to make a better Future for their children have only a dim and partial conception of what that could possibly look like?

Conclusion

Here then we can make our definitive judgment on OIAWR: it is an intellectually lazy interpretation of eco-extremism veiled in grad student verbosity. With the quote that ended the last section, their motivation appears to be to "sheep dog" wayward anarchists and nihilists back into the fold, or rather, back into the vicious cycle of the leftwing of Capital. "YOU MUST CARE! YOU MUST BE MORAL! YOU MUST WORSHIP THE VICTIM!" The "rape" and "misogyny" emphases aim to appeal to the common human desire to save the "damsel in distress". It's the pitch of the snake oil salesman or weight loss guru of the magical result despite all odds: "Yes, things look bad, but there's still hope. DON'T YOU WANT A BETTER WORLD?!!!" It's "green anarchism 2.0: This time, it's different." We are reminded of the vicious cycle of the racket that Jacques Camatte once described in his essay, "On Organization":

In its external relations, the political gang tends to mask the existence of the clique, since it must seduce in order to recruit. It adorns itself in a veil of modesty so as to increase its power. When the gang appeals to external elements through journals, reviews, and leaflets, it thinks that it has

to speak on the level of the mass in order to be understood. It talks about the immediate because it wants to mediate. Considering everyone outside the gang an imbecile, it feels obliged to publish banalities and bullshit so as to successfully seduce them. In the end, it seduces itself by its own bullshit and it is thereby absorbed by the surrounding milieu. However, another gang will take its place, and its first theoretical wailings will consist of attributing every misdeed and mistake to those who have preceded it, looking in this way for a new language so as to begin again the grand practice of seduction; in order to seduce, it has to appear to be different from the others.... The inability to confront theoretical questions independently leads the individual to take refuge behind the authority of another member, who becomes, objectively, a leader, or behind the group entity, which becomes a gang. In his relations with people outside the group the individual uses his membership to exclude others and to differentiate himself from them, if only – in the final analysis – so as to guard himself against recognition of his own theoretical weaknesses. To belong in order to exclude, that is the internal dynamic of the gang; which is founded on an opposition, admitted or not, between the exterior and the interior of the group. Even an informal group deteriorates into a political racket, the classic case of theory becoming ideology.[32]

The edelweiss pirate, the primitivist, the "nihilist" poser, etc. cannot live without their safety blanket of Enlightenment humanist values, and even though they espouse principles that undermine those values, they have recourse to claiming to possess a "grown-up" critique as opposed to the new kids in town who are just out to be edgy. The thoughtful reader may still be taken aback by the moralizing *fatwas* of insurrectionary anarchists who are themselves demonized as "terrorists" by government agencies and most normal people. "Aren't you guys supposed to question everything?" These neo-Christian humanists masquerading as "anarchists" have to jam the square peg of eco-extremism into the round hole of an illusory rising fascism, but no one really buys it. "Why not just call them crazy psychopathic misanthropes?" Indeed, that is what we are, but it just doesn't have the same ring to it as "misogynist rape apologists."

Besides, letting misanthropy come to the forefront, even in its most illegalist and anti-social form, might reveal the self-hatred at the core of each hyper-civilized person in terms of their own meaningless life. It is best to not lead them down that rabbit hole, they just might surprise us. It would then be harder to recruit them into a racket or commune or whatever mysterious scheme anarchists happen to be running this week.

If the pirates had read the titular essay of *Atassa no. 1* with better intentions, they may have noticed the very first paragraph:

It has been over 150 years since Karl Marx in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon *reflected on how events occur in history, as it were, twice: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Yet it is arguable that to differentiate between the two (tragedy and farce), one has to assume that history tends toward a particular direction. An event that is similar to a past event, so the logic goes, somehow failed to learn "the lessons" of its unpleasant predecessor. This idea makes assumptions concerning humans in a particular context acting in groups: that they have agency, that they have complete transparency in realizing what they are doing, that certain lessons can be learned after the fact, etc. If, on the other hand, we appreciate the blindness and resolve needed for heroism in an endeavor, any act can appear to be foolishness to the observer looking on in hindsight. All that the actors see in the middle of things is necessity. Our struggle may not be one of "learning the lessons" and breaking the cycle of tragedy and farce. It may simply be an issue of returning to the "heroism"*

[32] https://www.marxists.org/archive/camatte/capcom/on-org.htm

of tragedy. That is to say, perhaps we must return to the tragic as an escape from progress: to realize that things must be thus, and it is our own reaction that is most important when faced with an inevitable outcome. It's an issue of whether we fight or lay down our arms because we are blind to an elusive "future."

The pirates cannot admit the tragedy at the heart of human endeavors, especially collective ones. If they did, the gig would be up, the Emperor would have not clothes, they would have no carrot to use on the hyper-civilized along with their stick of inter-group stigma. Hopelessness is reactionary, hope is revolutionary, and the condemnations will continue until morale improves.

Eco-extremists are not the friends of humanity. We don't want to save you, and we don't really care if you live or die (honestly we would prefer that you weren't here.) All the same, we're doing you the solid favor of pointing out the humanist trap that the edelweiss pirates are placing for you to get you back into the cage of hyper-civilized political logic. Eco-extremists would do what they do in a fascist society, a bourgeois democratic society, a communist society, an anarchist society, and so on and so forth. We don't care about your political calculations or prejudices, the "social significance" of this murder or that bomb doesn't matter to us. The point is that those who carried out these things enjoyed themselves, and the only social significance is in transgressing those humanist Christian values that would condemn those who assert "MY will be done." You can consider that fascist, egoist, civilized, it doesn't matter to us. Your elections don't matter, your victims don't matter, and your social justice doesn't matter. We have no faith that you could destroy civilization, or even pose a threat to it. We have no faith in your collective solutions, or visions of a brighter future. If you built your impossible "other world," we would want to burn it down as well.

It's okay to have lost, to be a loser even. We weren't given very much to work with in the first place, and deceiving ourselves otherwise does no one any favors. The issue now is: do you want to go out in a dignified manner, do you want to make it interesting at least, or are you going to stick to the script that made us lose in the first place? There is no use complaining, and you can't withdraw from the game now. Your move.

-Los hijos del Mencho (Fracción anti-pirata)

Do Ants Dream of Domestication: a review of Corrosive Consciousness

by Aragorn!

I believe I am like most people who write. When I sit down to write I am not quite sure what I am going to say. I have a couple points in mind when I sit down but don't have an organization to what I'm trying to do. When I'm lucky, I make my points and find a couple of other things along the way. A thesis, argumentation, and supporting evidence comes out of the momentum of the writing process. I recognize I'm not lucky often.

This book is the opposite of that. Bellamy Fitzpatrick (BF) demonstrates how to make a clear, full- throated argument. Here he is not restrained by the word count of a magazine (a much shorter version of this book exists in a prior issue of *Black Seed),* or the ad hoc nature of the audio format (Bellamy is best known as a podcaster on both The Brilliant podcast with me and the Free Radical Radio podcast with Ry- dra Wrong). The thesis of this book is to demonstrate a "corrosive consciousness: an orientation that, in each lived moment, dissolves reification, an anarchist form of life as a way of unmaking civilization within yourself and your relations." This demonstration is mostly as critique, and here Bellamy excels. This book succeeds as critique in exactly the way I wish were more common with anarchist (and personal) disagreements with each other.

> *Critique, in my view, is always implicitly complimentary: its mere existence validates the importance of its target, regardless of how harsh it may be. As someone who fell in love with the nonhuman world as a child and found the human one nauseous, Anarcho-Primitivism drew me to anarchism in a way that the Humanistic Left-wing or Right-wing versions never could have, and so I've lavished it with a good deal of this praise. Barring a sea change in the discourse with the Anarcho- Primitivists, what follows is a sincerely fond farewell.*

If personal experience is any indication this critique will be treated like the attack of an enemy but any honest reader will be shocked at the generosity and willingness of BF attempts to improve the Anarcho-Prim- itivist perspective. To put it a different way, BF was surprisingly eager to participate in the project that we understand as AP but is largely the work of two authors, John Zerzan (JZ) and Kevin Tucker (KT). Bellamy wanted to be on the team; this is that story, and it is far more friendly than I would have been given the same circumstance.

As a sidebar, I am not an innocent bystander to this engagement. I have been in something like a public feud with the AP for a number of years, since I publicly asserted that "we (*Black Seed*) will also develop space distant from anarcho-primitiv- ists' tendencies towards fetishizing indigenous cultures, uncritical rewilding, appropriated spirituality, and reliance on anthropology." Mostly this feud has been comprised of offhand dismissive comments on JZs weekly radio show but it's also included dismissive essays conflating all enemies (ie those who disagree with any aspect)

of AP as egoists who can now be ignored due to the irrelevance/wrongness of their position. My ambivalence with the AP has resulted in a lack of engagement with the silliness of this disagreement (what seems to be mostly a spectator sport). This is not to say I'm don't have opinions about AP or their statements, but I didn't consider myself equipped, or particularly interested, in engaging with the AP on the level necessary to be heard past the FUD of JZ's radio show, KT podcast (‼!), or their shared publication.

To put it differently, this review of *Corrosive Consciousness* is not a critique. While I am not in lockstep with BF (especially with regard to his views on anthropology and forest gardening), I believe he did a great service to the modern green anarchist space in this work. Full stop. This is the kind of writing and critical analysis anarchists need to get past the ways we are bogged down in our own, and in the broad left's, toxic pattern of assertion as argumentation. End sidebar.

The strongest point that BF makes here is a denunciation of what KT considers his strongest theoretical contribution to AP thought, domestication. In a sequence that fills about half the book (p34—92) the complex of ideas, theories, and values that comprise the AP ideology are itemized and evaluated. This includes an incendiary attack on KT-as-theoreti- cian that we'll return to, but mostly the purpose of this denunciation is a kind of clearing of the decks. Namely, AP is called out for claiming to argue from the mainstream of anthropological thought but instead holding a conservative, and largely discredited, set of anthropological ideas as the basis of its truth. AP (mainly KT) has developed some new terminology that is, to say the least, highly specious. He uses domestication, wildness, nature, human nature, and other terms to lay out a taxonomy of good and evil, pro and con, us and them.

> *Perfectly paralleling domestication, wildness refers at once to the genetic, the metaphysical, the social, and the spiritual, effectively bleaching it of any clear meaning and theoretical relevance. It is yet another margarine-word, a word for moral posturing, rhetorical bludgeoning, and subcultural positioning. If one is "For Wildness", they are one of the good guys; not for it?—Get Fucked."*

These are arguments you've seen before if you have paid any attention to good-faith criticism of AP prior to *Corrosive Consciousness*. The difference here is that the argumentation is literally supported by chapter and verse citations (219 footnotes in all), is as complete as is reasonable to expect, and comes from someone from the inside, not a hostile actor.

The carefulness of BF's reasoning is demonstrated not only in the extensive notes, but also in his understanding and naming of rhetorical devices that are even more important to recognize in their ubiquity. For example, one takeaway from the book is about certain kinds of argumentation techniques. Here again BF does us a fantastic service. He introduces the argumentation technique of Motte- and-bailey, which I am sure our readers will recognize from themselves and others.

> *Motte and bailey (MAB) is a combination of bait-and-switch and equivocation in which someone switches between a "motte" (an easy-to-defend and often com- mon-sense statement, such as "culture shapes our experiences") and a "bailey" (a hard-to-defend and more controversial statement, such as "cultural knowledge is just as valid as scientific knowledge") in order to defend a viewpoint.*

AP purports to be both a source of wisdom about the world we come from, and an indicator of where we should be headed, an answer to "what is to be done." *Corrosive Consciousness*

has points to make about AP's usefulness in both these endeavors. BF defends AP from the unfairness of the attack that any world other than our own is impossible to defend. He then goes on to list and consider some things that could be done, including insurrectionary subsistence, perma-culture, forest gardening, etc. and discusses APs ambivalence toward these strategies. This ambivalence is particularly poignant in the case of a discussion of violence, since AP famously defended Ted Kaszinski and his anti-social, redemptive violence, which injured innocents and grandfathered eco-extremism. JZ was specifically brought to public attention (specifically in *The New York Times*) because he was running the Unabomber for President campaign. Twenty years later, eco-extremist groups (especially ITS—Individu- als Tending towards the Wild) have declared their brand of ecologically fueled war against civilization as one where "indiscriminate attack" will happen (as was also the case for TedK's mail bombs—and all bombs) and all of a sudden the AP are declaring that such tactics are fascist and anyone who would not unequivocally reject them are at least quasi-fascists.

Around eco-extremism, AP takes the easy route of arguing in synch with the popular refrain of the day, which posits indiscriminate attacks as fascist and fascism as the crisis at hand. Aside from the shift in perspective from the days and actions of TedK to today, it is fair to be critical of violence, as it is fair to be critical of non-violence. It is true that no one knows how to get from here to there. Whether it is called The Revolution, The Collapse, the Great Insurrectionary Something, or the wild popularization of GoodTM ideas over Capitalism and the State, it is impossible to know how transition will happen. When you participate in the game of this prediction you will always fail, frequently sound like a fool, and probably be incoherent in your thinking. This puts active dreamers of any stripe into the uncomfortable role of advocating for things they like while trying to sound like they have a plan. AP doesn't have a plan but that puts them into good company (everyone else). It doesn't make them particularly incoherent, it makes them as incoherent as everyone else. The issue is less that they sound like they know the answer, and more the rigidity and dogmatism that they bring to the topic, and the bad faith attacks that they make on other arguments and arguers.

Over the years, BF has engaged in many back and forths with the AP, and the funniest part of this book records BF trying to get the AP writers to talk about the question of ants. BF asks how the behavior of ants and other nonhumans could be measured to humans with regard to domestication. After several exchanges this question was dismissed as a demonstration that BF did not understand that domestication was a distinct phenomenon from evolution. Here is a great quote from KT on the matter

> *As far as we might know it, ant "agriculture" is an evolved trait, ostensibly one they could always have had (likewise, it could be recent). Domestication by/of humans is historical, it represents a change in subsistence and evolutionary trajectory.*

There are many things to value about *Corrosive Consciousness*, from its carefulness to its humor. Among those things, my favorite— which might take on too much signif- icance—is the chapter that goes into the question of wildness. Wildness is obviously a bridge term representing the crossover from a spiritual understanding of what nature is, to an objective, *scientific* understanding of what nature is. It's both. It's neither. "Wildness is our genetic state" but also "Wildness, at least how I experience and conceptualize it, is sacred; that word is an indicator, not an encapsulation… " Couple this thinking with KT's relationships to the spirit world and the totemic animals that personally deliver him messages and it's not unfair to name KT as a mystic.

> *A retrospective reading of all of Tucker's work as mysticism thus becomes possible—his whole oeuvre becomes much more comprehensible. Like Zoroaster and Mani before him, Tucker's belief structure is founded on a revelatory spiritual experience that transformed him. That much of his writing is peppered with ardent paeans and urgent assertions—"Wildness exists," "I believe in human nature," "my spirit knows this. My spirit* feels *this. The spirit of all life knows this. It has always known this. I've only begun to listen," "When we learn to open ourselves to wildness and chaos, the organic anarchy of our beings will flow"—can suddenly be read in an entirely different light.*

As compelling as I found this book it likely will not matter to the AP fan base. In an online discussion I had with another reader of *Corrosive Consciousness* they attacked BF for what they saw as his personal attacks on AP, but more for not understanding that the facts, or details, of what the AP write isn't important. What is important is the "greater point" of AP, which is that it is somehow deeper in its analysis than other forms of green anarchist ideas. This isn't on the pages from the AP writers, it is, perhaps, in the cries to connect spirituality to AP. If you can't see it in the words, it's because you can't feel it in your soul/heart. If you can't feel it, it's probably because you are disconnected from your body and have a bad case of the civilizations.

Some readers will hate the chapter and verse citations, the use of logical fallacies to tear apart arguments, and the footnotes, but as far as I'm concerned this is as complete a demolition of AP as is necessary, and maybe more than necessary. If the best response AP has to this book is a blow off 10 minute discussion on John's radio show about how postmodern and philosophical it is then I think the time for these AP writers has passed. They are not participants in an ongoing discussion about how green (ecological, based in the earth) ideas should inform our anarchism but a religious doctrine based in a bizarre interpretation of anthropology. As such they would no longer be the kind of content I'd like to see in any of the projects I host.

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Black Seed: Issue 7

A journal of indigenous anarchy

Various Authors

2019, Summer

Editorial

This issue of Black Seed, the seventh in five years, represents yet another editorial group change and yet another optimistic push for the project. We can now say that the project is indigenous-led, for what that's worth. We intended for this issue to be filled with manifestos about what that means, but perhaps these fragments say as much as we can in manifesto-language

Black Seed is a publication of an indigenous anarchy. Two words that mean a million or, to put it another way, we are here, from this place, and we are free from the rules that have come before us, from the ideologies of Empire and Colony. This ridiculous assertion is possible because whatever hope or vision we have for the future begins with the genocide of the people we come from and from an engrossing political fantasy that has entailed holding the contradictory positions of individual freedom (in the fantasy of liberal ideas that have freedom meaning the freedom of ownership and markets) with collective responsibility (meaning we are responsible for fixing the social problems that resulted from too much liberalism). Distinct from the neo-liberal collectivism of postmodern America is an indigenous anarchy and the practice and belief in here-ness and freedom.

Indigenous is a troubled word. We like that— because living is a troubled affair—but we understand the confusion when one feels unclear about our intention when using it. It is a classic "overloaded operator" in that it means several, more-or-less unrelated things, which rely on the context of the word more than the word itself. It means something similar but perhaps more general than "native" (as in Native American). It also means a spiritual connection to the place you inhabit that is indivisible. It is about blood and it is about land and it is about spirit.

Anarchy is a troubled word also. Anarchism is the political belief in a certain kind of world, with specific traditions, histories, and tensions; anarchy is the set of moments that have actually occurred, where that belief was actually put to a test. These specificities and distinctions do not exactly roll off the tongue. Not only does the term itself invite confusion but the partisans of the position are actively disagreeable. For us to use the word at all, we have to suffer association with others whose definitions we disagree with (and they us). But we refuse to let go of the brutal optimism of wanting a world free from terrible systems and their histories. We desire a freedom with the pedigree of Emma Goldman, Renzo Novatore, and the hundreds of years of native American resistance to colonization.

We still use the term green anarchy to describe our position but this issue begins a preference towards other words to describe the same things. We like green over terms such as primi- tivist, ecological, or environmental but that is because green says something that is more general when in fact we are more specific. We are pro-here-ists. We are located where we are, not a general humanist environmentalism that defends, for instance, human life above other life. We are related to you who live there only by the fact that the intricacies of our life connect and relate to yours. We recognize that most of your problems are yours and yours alone. We'd like to hear about them, especially in the pages of this paper, but know that we are not in that thing that the old-fashioned

call solidarity. Even when we think you are right we now live in a time when the ties that bind are loose indeed. We are not part of a high-minded project. We are each trying to survive and might only have that in common. We live in the cracks of empire, between surveillance and those who snitch, and in the inscrutability of our own position. Post-indian, post-left, and after call-out culture.

This issue features articles on veganism, fungi, and post-Indian aphorisms, interviews with the Ampoa Duta collective. It finishes the Talsetan Brothers interview from issue 5 (oops), and includes reviews of the IAF, Ellul and Voyer, and *The Uninhabitable Earth.*

There are dramatic updates to our website at:

http://blackseed.anarchyplanet.org.

By the time you see this issue, most older articles should be up at

https://theanarchistlibrary.org

Revolution of Fungal Life by Anonymous

The Revolution of Fungal Life: My Journey as an Anarchist into the Praxis of Mushroom Hunting

For the past seven years I've stepped away from a lot of my anarchist resistance projects and stepped into the forests of the Pacific Northwest. Learning about nature was always something I meant to do, but I put it off for years. Maybe I considered reading about the negative aspects of life emerging from our initial and continued separation from nature's rhythms to be absolutely necessary for demystifying the network of domination and my place in it, or maybe I thought breaking bank windows and spraypainting stencils and slogans was the most direct way I could make known my hatred of the totality of civilization, as well as the best way to encourage others to fight against it. When I was younger and my thoughts about anarchy were newer, I found myself drawn to many of the ideas within the green anarchist, pro-situationist, and insurrectionary anarchist tendencies. I spent a great deal of effort trying to further those ideas and practices, but I neglected to really engage with the non-human life that surrounded me. I failed to relearn those lost natural rhythms that, as I hypocritically told everyone who would listen, civilization was silencing. That isn't to say that I didn't know a few basic plants and their culinary or medicinal uses, but looking back now it feels like I was paying lip-service. All that changed for me when I began hunting and eating wild mushrooms.

I first ventured into the forest trails around my small city in search of Psilocybes. I've since discovered this is a common access point, where many others have found a deeper interest in mycology. I got myself the small field guide All That the Rain Promises and More and went out all fall. I didn't find any mushrooms, but while searching the fragrant, lush, rain-soaked forest floor I did find so many other fascinating fungal life forms. I was vegan at the time and already familiar with the commercial Portobello (Agaricus), Oyster (Pluerotus) and Shiitake (Lentinula) varieties at the store so I was really excited to find all of these edible and tasty mushrooms just popping up everywhere. For that first year I was too afraid to eat any of the ones I found, thanks to common conditioning about just how easy it is to poison yourself, so I just took them home and learned how to identify them. The following year I was a bit more ready, but I was still too scared to eat anything besides the foolproof basics: Lobsters (Hypo- myces Lactifluorum), Chanterelles (Cantharellus Formosus, Cascaden- sis, and Subalbidus), Oysters (Plu- erotus and Pleurocybella), Zeller's Boletes (Xerocomellus Zellerii and Chrysenteron), Shaggy Manes (Cop- rinus Comatus) and Shaggy Parasols (Chlorophyllum Brunneum and Olivieri). Occasionally I would go out with an older local anarchist mycologist/mushroom hunter who taught me tips to help pick some of the trickier species like Candy Caps (Lactarius Rubidus) and Shrimp Russulas (Russula Xerampelina). But it wasn't until my third year out, when I found my first Porcini (Boletus Edulis) that my mushroom hunting began in earnest. I had found and eaten a ton of other new mushrooms that year: the Prince Agaricus complex (augustus and silvicola), Hedgehogs (Hydnum repandum and umbilicatum), a Cauliflower (Sparassis crispa), Birch Boletes (Leccinum), Chicken of

the Woods (Laetiporus Gilbertsonii and Conifericola), but, for reasons I have yet to fully understand, my first Boletus Edulis was a pivotal moment that altered the course of my life.

Where I live there are edible and medicinal fungi fruiting every season, so foraging quickly became a year-round activity for me. Truffles (Tuber) and certain medicinal polypores (Fomotopsis, Trametes) and lichens (Usnea) can be found in the winter, Morels (Morchella) and Spring King Boletes (Boletus Rex- veris) fruit throughout the spring and then into the summer the Agaricus augustus complex, Chicken of the Woods (Laetiporus), Reishis (Gano- derma), Lobsters (Hypomyces), and Deer Mushrooms (Pluteus cervinus) emerge, until finally everything else pops up when the fall rains begin again. I used to assume that there were only four seasons, maybe five if you include harvest, but I now recognize that there are hundreds. Gathering became a passion that never ended and when I couldn't find mushrooms I began harvesting medicinal and edible plants. I soon realized that there were seasons within seasons. Cottonwood buds pop out from late January to mid February, Morchella Importuna fruit from mid March to late April, so if I want to collect a lot that year then I can't miss out on those brief windows. Eventually I began to feel that each new species I harvested represented a single note and as the season of each species layered with or followed the next, the procession of species became a repeating rhythm to me. I was beginning to make out the melody to an ancient and never-ending song, that I could play along with. But only if I were there, living closely amongst its natural composers, could I hear it loud enough to join in.

My joy for mushroom hunting led me to identification through taxonomy. I've always enjoyed noticing subtle differences. As an anarchist this helped me avoid traps through understanding and identifying nuances between the various left revolutionary factions—that, if I let them, would have tried to swindle away my creative energy to grow the political power of their organizations—and of course in the immense undertaking of categorizing all of the different forms of control deployed to maintain this culture of domination throughout its his-story. I've found that identification is the main holdup when it comes to picking wild mushrooms, but it's really not as difficult as most people are taught that it is; you just have to pay close attention to variations in form. Basically, every species is unique and has its own morphological features, and if you learn what parts to look for, then it's actually incredibly hard to poison yourself. I firmly believe that the majority of anarchists, who make it a practice to learn the terms used in the subversive theory they read, and who for the most part critically engage with each other over seemingly similar but actually different radical practices, are discerning and careful enough to master the fundamentals of mushroom taxonomy. While the technical literature uses some pretty loaded terminology (potentially problematic words like kingdom, order, retardant, pioneer, colonize, empirical, etc. or by classifying certain species as higher or lower, etc.) that many anarchists might find irritating, I still believe that it's worth it. Maybe we, as anarchists, could invent and advocate for better terms than what're available now.

Most mushrooms are either my- corrhizal or saprophytic or a mix of both in different stages of their life cycle, so I realized I needed to know the varieties of plant life that they were growing with, or feeding on, in order to locate them faster. With the help of keys, I did. Keys are tools that list what descriptors to look to whittle down to the exact species of mushrooms I found. Once I learned to key out most species of edible mushrooms and their plant partners, I just wanted to know who everyone else was. Now, when I walk through the forest, I know almost everyone there, which not only aids in finding the mushrooms I hunt for (by allowing me to view a fuller separation from form (ie, at a glance knowing that's a fallen alder leaf, not a mushroom) but has

actually changed the way I interpret my walk from pretty and mysterious green scenery viewed almost monolithically into a constant reminder that I'm surrounded by life that I recognize and can interact with. This becomes even more true when I return to regular patches and get to know specific individuals over years.

Although I am wholeheartedly opposed to cities, I have found myself living in them for most of my life. I've also, for financial reasons, never owned a car, so my mushroom hunting was for the most part limited to searching peoples yards and forest parks around my small city. I find myself doing serious mushroom derives to find new patches to harvest, wandering around on my bike, skateboard, or by foot, exploring new neighborhoods and city parks, making mental maps of trees in yards or wood chips in front of churches, the micro climates of certain neighborhoods, the distance to major roads, any evidence of pesticides or other sources of pollutants on stunted development of plant life and more. While on a mushroom derive I allow myself to be pulled by my own judgments, and it's more like the Situ- ationists derive than the Surrealists drift, because I analyze the pyscho- geography of the places I find myself in. Unlike both drift and derive, however, I am completely unimpressed by human structures and find my focus points to be, not architecture or side streets, but certain trees, grasses, or piles of wood chips. I often judge my immediate surroundings based on the amount and varieties of life that inhabit them. Forests and gardens, where there are hundreds of living things with endless intricacies to their relationships, become more and more appealing. When I go out on these mushroom derives, I usually end up violating private property laws, which is an excellent way to draw myself into new situations. I've made some friends by showing up on their lawn as a stranger, picking mushrooms and introducing myself. I have also been in a lot of altercations with asshole homeowners. Usually, I just calmly let them know that I don't respect their fucking bullshit middle class sensibilities. Sometimes I come back later and pick their backyards solely on principle. There's a map of the city I'm piecing together that's based on repeatedly visiting and checking on the health of individual mycelium. This is a life- affirming pyschogeography, which, along with my developing critiques of mass society, industry, leftism, and technology. have now fully discredited any lingering sympathies for the Situationists' unitary urbanism. I know see unitary urbanism as a way for council communism to automate production in order to turn the whole of civilization into a series of city-wide Disneylands.

Through mushroom hunting I've become more sensitive to picking out natural relationships forming where they are, instead of where I assume they should be. Idealized nature is an impediment to direct connection. While I would prefer to spend most of my days meandering through ancient lowland old growth temperate rainforests of Doug fir and spruce, I find that I spend most of my time in the far more common places where those forests used to be. As I lament the loss of these epic climax ecosystems, I consciously choose not to compartmentalize wildlife into only those purest environments. I'm absolutely opposed to nature as spectacle and therefore seek out habitats (no matter how sparse their threads of relationships may be) that are around me and that I can engage with. This search has helped me more fully understand the plight faced daily by the creatures who endure life in the city and just where those creatures tend to congregate. Understanding the hardships they endure to stick it out in cities makes me examine parallels in my life. I admire that certain kind of tenacity required to exist in places one shouldn't. As an anarchist I've spent a considerable amount of time trying to kill the cop in my head. What I've found is that the state can't possibly monitor and act within the totality of its own terrain and I can exploit the illusion of total control if I rid myself of ingrained submissive behavior. A com-

bination of a lack of state supervision and the infrastructure to repeatedly enforce its laws are what allow me to go beyond what I would normally allow myself to do. If I choose to, I can then go on to support others in freeing themselves, and as those strings of relationships become more expansive, healthier, and diverse it is that much harder for the forces of social control to remove us. What begins as a few lichens, mosses, grasses, and weeds growing in cracks with a handful of mushroom species supporting them (either through a direct mycorrhizal nutrient exchange or indirectly through the mycelium's saprophytic digestive process as it breaks down complex, potentially toxic, compounds, cleaning the soil and exposing their roots to important, previously inaccessible, minerals) eventually becomes something more substantial when each passing day more and more biomass is added and repurposed, that build up of top- soil shifts to a different type, that is able to support tree life, larger animals, and other more temperamental specialized species. Those forgotten cracks become a functioning ecosystem. I call the places where this process occurs, capitalist non-spaces. They're the dark corners, peripheries, less-used and off-limits areas that are built into the city planning. Median strips between opposing lanes of traffic (where I've seen my biggest Boletus to date), abandoned fenced- off lots, and buffer zones between train tracks and residential property are only a few examples. These are places where, for some reason or another, nothing is supposed to happen. They're the un-trafficked temporary refuges for life—often mistakenly referred to as dead zones—that exist almost everywhere I look. The spiders in your house or the raccoon who eats your trash, the capitalist non-space is where they live. It's the psychic manifestation of the notion that everyone must have a socially legitimate reason in order to be somewhere or else face judgment. If I were somehow able to track the physical pathways that the herd uses daily and subsequently highlight them on a map, the negative space would likely represent non-spaces. It's where the herd seldom ventures, because built into its design is some utilitarian or aesthetic function that either purposefully or inadvertently, through law or through social norms, restricts or deters exploration. Nonspaces attract life because nature abhors a vacuum and because of the unstoppable force of entropy. These might seem like blanket statements, but to me they are some of the most inspiring forces of destruction and creation imaginable, carried out by individuals who, through study and over time, I've come to know. To notice these creatures build a hodgepodge ecosystem in an environment so hostile to life, was crucial to developing my own eco-anarchist ideas of the importance of place, and perhaps can serve as an example of what the forces driving ruination can offer to those of us who have similar goals.

Mushrooms, and fungus in general, play an enormous role in entropy, which is the basis for any future ecological equilibrium that will come along to reckon with civilization's disturbances. Fungi actively destroy historical artifacts, buildings, ships, and mines; they can derail trains and cause plane crashes, degrade the military's munitions stockpile, fuck up lawns, blight entire landscapes of mono-cropped agricultural staples, make un-sellable up to one-fifth of the global markets' annual wood supply, and, through mycotoxin buildups from molds in our bodies and pathogenic fungal infections, kill us. In the end, fungus will destroy every last thing civilization has ever constructed.

One of my strongest drives is to eat wild food that I've gathered myself, so entropy, through the processes of fungal decay, is the side I support. I want everywhere I go to be filled with even more complex ecological threads, not just because that means more interesting natural behavior for me to admire, but because that means cleaner, healthier, and more abundant food available for me and those I choose to share it with. By taking on a more active role in the ruination of

this synthetic environment (which has been doomed from the start), I support the creation of the wild places that comfort me.

In the reordering of my worldview, which I consider to be a positive consequence shaped largely by mushroom hunting, an analysis of place became more important in my interpretation of crystallized power relations, the roles required to maintain them, the terrain created to fulfill it, and the mental conditioning required to navigate that terrain. When I observe society's routine movements, it makes total sense that capitalist non-spaces exist. The technology of speed (which I argue shapes civilization's historical development much more than wealth creation, despite Marxist theories to the contrary) is crucial for the reproduction of everyday life and has erased place in order to erase distance. Mostly the human herd moves from point A to point B as quickly as possible, and with the increased advances in the streamlining of transportation technology and infrastructure, anywhere in between becomes merely the nuisance of the daily commute. The inevitable erasure of place through the desired elimination of distance, coupled with industry's disastrous effects on the land, has turned just being in nature into a spectacle and a commodity. I've driven with friends on a road trip of seven and a half hours to spend a few nights camping in a pristine ecosystem that should exist right here in the deforested, shotgun shell-laden hills only a half an hour from where I live. I've seen others save up thousands of dollars to fly thousands of miles to Antarctica or a tropical coral reef somewhere. I think that by focusing so much on the exact place I am at the moment and my relation to the beings that make it up, I live my life in the present moment and am less plagued by the problems associated with being either past- or future- oriented. By hunting for mushrooms, a non-surrogate activity that engages my physical self, I'm also that much more able to remain present in my body.

Protective environmental legislation, campaigns for conservationism of environmentalist organizations, and the hands-off approach to those places deemed unworthy of our participation or protection, are all negative consequences of fetishizing pure, virgin eco-systems. The policing of forests with greenwashed, NGO-backed legislation is a threat to mushroom hunting and rewilding as a practice in general. Laws in California ban picking mushrooms entirely except in designated and policed parks where you are only allowed to pick five pounds. At first these restrictions were suggested by Bay Area liberal mycologi- cal societies who were reacting to the emerging influx of Asian commercial mushroom pickers, but later it was picked up by large policy-changing environmental nonprofits and has resulted in creating a network of outlaw mushroom hunters and an entire state where two whole generations have been denied access to and even guilted for what I consider to be the normal, natural animal inclination to forage for food and medicine. I've heard of environmentalists who've supported taking children out to go berry looking, because picking has a detrimental effect on the health of the overall forest. It's my view that these restrictions on gathering create a dangerous attitude of indifference when it comes to wild nature, which will lead to the further ecological devastation of the very places they want to protect. In an effort to keep nature a gorgeous spectacle to look at, environmental lobbyists pushed for and succeeded in expanding the budgets of the state's natural resource apparatuses. This filled the woods with khakied forest cops whose job is to police my actions in the wilderness. I think that if this pattern of legally harassing mushroom hunters continues, then all the practical knowledge that's been learned from successful sustainable wild harvesting practices over successive generations will be lost. It was important for me to learn how to look for bio-indicators of a places' health and strength so I can take the actions needed to ensure it's future harvest and to share that knowledge with others. It's only through the hands of direct interaction and not the lens

of passive observation that intimate knowledge of an area over time is even able to be honed at all. Not exactly the same, but similar enough to mention here, were entire generations of truffle cultivators who took what they knew about truffles to their deaths in the trenches of the world wars, or the lost swidden/fal- low farming practices that either died along with the tribes that perfected them or were outlawed and driven underground during the long and bloody civilizing process forced upon the original people of the continent where I live. I don't want the only people to be allowed to do what they want in the forest to be capitalists and grad students and I don't want subsistence farming and the supermarket to be my only options for feeding myself. For the most part, picking mushrooms out of their mycelium is like picking fruits out of their tree, as long as the tree remains healthy and a few of the seeds end up in adequate germinating conditions then the fruit will come back next fruiting season and the tree will have passed on its genes to the next generation. Even though we know scientifically that picking mushrooms won't curtail their continued exis- tence—and other factors such as competition with invasive species, habitat loss, climate change and pollution are the real main threats to mushroom populations—they still police me like a poacher. There are certain unsustainable harvesting practices, such as indiscriminately raking for truffles or denying a species their seasonal spore release by only picking the youngest firmest mushrooms (due to the shipping pressures of their short shelf lives), responsible for the decline in certain populations and disruptions in the nutrient exchange cycles of ecosystems. But I think these problems would go away if there wasn't a global market and its required infrastructure to facilitate their transportation and sale and if there wasn't the constant grinding economic determinism that forces hunters to over-harvest.

Mushroom hunting, and the skill sets needed for hunting and gathering in general, has given me a rewarding sense of autonomy, connection, and relief when confronted with the problems of food security and nutrition. I wasn't aware of just how broad the range was of wild foods seasonally available to me in my bioregion, or how related their nutritional profiles and gastronomic qualities were to their terrain. When I shop for what I can afford at the grocery store, I'm forced to make the choice between quality or quantity, both of which options pale in comparison to the nutritional value of a diet diverse in wild foods. So I gather them myself to supplement my meals, allowing me to afford the more quality foods I enjoy and not lose out on portion size. I feel that through fostering this kind of thrifty survivalist self-reliance, I have far fewer concerns about disruptions in supply chains caused by natural disasters, or people I could be friends with, I also have something beneficial, other than my limited defensive capabilities and my desire to escalate revolt, to offer to the people around me if they ever get so rebellious that the state does what empires throughout history have always done, and tries to implement starvation with itself as the solution. To paraphrase a dead guy I still respect: I spent my teenage years squatting and traveling. I've spent most of the last seven in the woods. I never forget a plant or mushroom I've gathered myself. I know how to accommodate myself for awhile and I am not the least bit afraid of ruins. I haven't the slightest doubt that I inhabit the earth. Let the bourgeoisie and essential proletarians rip apart their bright new world before they leave the stage of history, because I'll carry on forming better relationships with the natural world, and healthier ones, right here in this minute, throughout the collapse of the new.

Although I'm aware of the pitfalls of conservatism historically rooted in rural agricultural-based life, I consider permaculture land projects to be one of the last, and safest, healthy ways available for me to spend the rest of my daily life as free as I can. The biggest impediment I've faced, and I know this is true for many anarchists looking to form their own communities, is

money. Land that's enough to support the kind of projects I want, but affordable enough to be realistic, is usually wrecked in some way by industry. Mushrooms are amazing bioremediators able to clean up dangerous industrial wastes such as petroleum, and fecal and nuclear compounds. Knowing that I can work with fungi's mycoremediation capabilities mitigates my concerns about finding an acceptable, affordable place to live.

I admit that at the moment I don't have any skills in growing mycelium, but I plan to get them. Of course I'm interested in their magnificent culinary and medicinal uses, but in a much more profound way I want to practice growing mushrooms in order to begin my own personal my- coremediation campaign. My fascination with capitalist non-places and my desire to deepen the natural rhythms I enjoy, means I want to help these places heal from the degrading effects caused by industry and the disgusting inconsiderate behavior of the humans who surround me. I care about the health of the species that assemble themselves into the biosphere, but realize that I can only act from my position. Mycoremediation can allow me act, interact, and counteract in ways previously inaccessible to me.

For those of you who plan on, or who already are, confronting the architects responsible for this daily horror show directly, instead of acting in a more caretaker role, mushrooms can offer you up some powerful and subtle methods of attack that you can to add to your arsenal of individual reprisal. Caesars have been poisoned by the same species of Amanitas (Phalloides, Virosa, Bisporigera, Ocreata, etc.) that you could find in your own neighborhood and use on their modern day counterparts. I've read that they taste delicious before they shut down your liver and painfully kill you over the next few days. Dehydrated and powdered, you could carry them around and add them to food and drink, and because of the time lapse prior to the onset of symptoms, you would still have time to leave the area before anyone's the wiser. If assassination isn't your jam, you could use those same methods to dose your enemies with psychedelics. One thing to keep in mind with dosing, is that cops and soldiers have weapons and react violently to most situations, but I suppose if you're going to go into open battle with the state's security forces then that destabilization could be life saving. Imagine watching the CSPAN videos on YouTube of Lindsey Graham and the other politicians high as fuck on the senate floor, coming to insane realizations about life live on air. Or the released CCTV footage of DOJ office workers ripping apart their cubicles and making love. Hilarious. It's not only their lives and world-views at stake. Perfecting the art of isolating cultures and colonizing substrates makes their whole oppressive physical landscape susceptible to intentional decay and entropy. Fungi like Heterobasidium, Lentinus, Acremonium, Aspergillus and Peziza, to briefly name a few, can truly make punk a threat again.

It's my belief that the psychedelic mushrooms in the Psilocybe family and the fungal based synthetic chemical LSD are powerful liberato- ry tools for the radical process of selfrecreation that I consider paramount to the anarchist project of freeing your mind. I can disrupt my socially conditioned parameters through accessing previously unaware realms of thought and redefine myself by placing focus and intention on strengthening the drives that matter most to me and choosing to ignore and let whither those that don't serve me anymore (and maybe never did). By undoing myself in order to rebuild myself, I consider the whole experience less of an ego death and more of an exercise in egoist depth. While I haven't used Psilocybes in years, and I certainly don't condone their abuse or believe they were instrumental to human evolution, I do strongly advocate for their use in this way.

I am an atheist and my deeply materialistic worldview has no room for spooks of any kind. I do my best not to believe in things that aren't there and am generally hostile to ideas that can't be reasoned out or proven. Although I have a critique of technology and science, I find the scientific method to be one of the most helpful ways to make sense of the universe and my tiny place in it. Yet, surprisingly, I find myself feeling deeply spiritual when I'm on my knees at the base of a Douglas fir picking chanterelles. I even sort of worship them. When I've been walking in the rain, deep through the woods all day, and I'm tired, wet, cold, sore, cut up from brambles, stabbed by branches, and a little bit lost, I feel a kind of personal peace and contentment that comes along with non-surrogate activities. When I fill baskets full of my favorite mushrooms it almost feels like my ordeal is an offering and I'm rewarded for it with an epic harvest by my ancient dark gods, those tangled webs of filamentous hyphae that in silence have, for over half a billion years, destroyed and recreated the world over and over.

When approached to share my thoughts about mushrooms and how my experience with them relates to the anarchist project, I didn't think it did. But after exploring the ideas brought up in this piece, I now see that they have a lot to offer each other and I hope I made some of that clearer by sharing my story with you. This piece again reminds me of the mushroom life cycle: my thought process as the mycelium, my story as the mushroom, the ideas dispersing as spores, you the reader as the suitable germinating environment, and what you do with those ideas. The successful spread into new places. May my spores find you well and their germination spread the collapse of this bright new world in unforeseeable ways.

(Disclaimer, this is for entertainment purposes only and in no way do I condone anyone doing super cool stuff like breaking the herd's precious little laws.)

Whatever-Veganism by Aragorn!

A mild critique

This is challenging to write because of my mixed feelings on the topic. I am the person I am going to critique here but I'll be described by readers as having no idea what I am talking about. I will speak to reason, ethics, social cliques, and aesthetics but am no expert in any of them and will therefore be dismissed out of hand. I have no answer as to how to how **you** should navigate the ethics or personal relationship you have to your food, to the fundamental way you live in this world, which means that the last paragraph of this article will not sum it up they way you might hope it would. It will begin with how It'll end.

You have individual choice about how you relate to what you consume. This is true of food, of entertainment, and of how you intoxicate yourself. It is kind of sad, because most of us have really poor judgment about ourselves, especially our body, our mind, and our possible futures. We are terrible advocates for our own position. Our choices should be social decisions that make sense to a shared sense of responsibility, advocacy, and timing. We should think about what we do in the context of a set of cultural values that we share with others or, better yet, that we make with others in a healthy and humane way. Instead, to the extent that we have people, or, ahem, communities, they are only truly social in the most transparently shallow ways. Sociability is more a matter of affect, of how we appear as a group, rather than how we *do* group.

There was this great situationist pamphlet series called *The Situationist Times* (they are shared as PDFs on libcom) that punched up the SI in the 80s. I'm recalling a piece that's been reprinted a million times, that has a list of social roles, that I first saw in *The Situationist Times.* Social workers, architects, teachers, and the like in a left hand column, while on the right it just says "cop." On the one hand is the label of your social role, on the other is what you actually are. Beautiful simplicity that still sums up two important points. One is that we are quick to wrap a person up in a word and rightfully write them off as a result. The other is that this demonstrates an idiotic simplicity to our thinking and how we, as radicals, see the world. Yes, social workers are cops but that is not how they see themselves. It is not how the world at large sees them. Our insistence that we are right (to call them cops and as a result write them off entirely) is a hallmark of the role that a radical plays in society. Standing firm on a position that is both true and, basically, meaningless.

If this article is successful then you won't change a thing about yourself. You'll continue eating as you do, calling yourself what you were, but perhaps you'll have a bit more humility in regards to how you interact with other people. Frankly this article is not really about veganism at all, but about the kind of logic that radicals find themselves trapped by. Veganism is but one example, there are many others. All can be boiled down to a simple maxim: radicals have no chill. It's a big turn off that I have spent most of my adult life resisting, while at the same time being utterly captivated by. Recent writing on the topic has finally inspired me to write this but it's been due for at least a decade as I've changed around these issues… as I have gained chill.

What is true

It is true is that as a percentage, livestock represents close to two thirds of all animal biomass on earth. Humans are about one quarter and all wild animals are the rest. Agriculture represents something like 18% of all greenhouse gases. Industrial agriculture produces 100 times more manure than municipal waste. It is inarguable that the production of livestock has a large environmental impact but any measure of the resource impact of feeding 7+ billion comes up with sobering results. In short, there is no sustainable way to do it.

Veganism (ie the ideology of a vegan diet) makes three kinds of arguments advocating for itself: rational arguments about resources; ethical/moral arguments about life and the value of it; personal arguments about health, wealth, and aesthetics. It is interesting that the PETA link I'll share in the footnotes mostly argues in the third area. When I was first exposed to vegetarian ideas in the 80s rational and ethical arguments were primary. Clearly the audience has changed from those who are rationally concerned about the fate of the world and their place in it, to something we'll call more general.

Perhaps this is an appropriate time to bring up my own history. I grew up in a small midwestern city. As a young punk I was exposed to many of the different flavors of punk (skinheads, goths, rockabillies, etc.) and in our town there was exactly one vegetarian (this was the mid 80s. Times were rather different.). Even though my father claimed to be a vegetarian when he was a kid (whatever) I was not really introduced to vegetarian ideas until the late 80s. I was then vegetarian for about 24 years, and of those, vegan for 22. I've now been an omnivore for about seven years. I am the ex-vegan I made fun of for the better part of 20 years and part of this article is my reconciliation with that fact.

What is differently true

I am ignoring a lot of the process details and the argumentation that allowed me to pass from one position to another because I am reticent to invite you into that part of my life until you've met me half way. I assume now, more than ever, that we aren't exactly friends, that we don't share a lot of cultural indicators or the easy flow of it. My bands aren't yours. My experiences are from a time different than yours. I hate nostalgia but recognize its pull.

Obviously I am talking around the tritest of points. As my anarchist worldview has aged it has gradually lost the need for new, young, fresh faces. Of course I get a lot of energy and excitement from other people's excitement, but I no longer require it. I have been disappointed far too often to count on it in any way different from the inspiration of seeing a good band, eating a sweet, or feeling the cloying, pathetic phenomenon known as nostalgia. Yes, it is true, I have become more pessimistic, but even that has grown boring. What my aging has really looked like is that the giant steps we used to take, even if rhetorically, between mountain tops aren't possible any more. Anarchism, and the anarchists who try to live it, have become small and hostile to the kind of imagination I remember.

Partially this is a good thing (even if I am not included). It is good to stick to your local scene. It is good to do your small witchy projects that are more about your little sexy crew than about something world-changing, the size of a country or language space; it is better to become

generationally indecipherable. I am not your friend. Do things for and with your friends. Fail. Do it gloriously. Leave us behind.

Insofar as this relates to veganism or anarcho-veganism it is better to write your truth and know that it doesn't mean anything beyond your social clique. Don't confuse yourself about that. But, to relate it back to my time, we actually took a band that called itself Vegan Reich seriously enough to believe their utter bullshit about the scale of their ambition and their stupidity around caring about others. They (the band and the "hardline" movement) actually related their activity to the Third fucking Reich and implied they desired to violently implement their half-assed ideas (they were all in their early 20s) across the entire world. This was then, as similar ideas are now, the exact same thing as colonization. This is cossacked men coming to a new world, declaring the residents to be savages who should be cut down like timber, and then doing it. Letting the next generation (or 10) deal with the hand-wringing and concern of how terrible were the actions that created the world they lived in. It is the perfect example of burning the world and letting our children deal with the consequences.

And it is why anarchism, veganism, and other associated ideas will never change the world in any sort of meaningful way. The conservative (meaning the desire to keep things the same) impulses of liberalism, progressives, and even Conservatives (ie right wingers of any stripe) will fight any sort of radicalism when they sprout. This is easiest to see when the radicalism presents itself as a fighting set of ideas (like any kind of vegan crusade). Sure, maybe they are right and proper (in the eyes of the position), but nothing creates a reaction as much as a holy crusade. This new anarcho-veganism demonstrates this in such technicolor that maybe even they'll recognize it.

What is said

Almost every argument made in the defense of anarcho-veganism is partially true and mostly false. I'll use the most recent "challenge to the dominant anthropocentric narrative" as an example. *(Biting Back: A radical response to non-vegan arguments* see sidebar [The Anarchist Library editor: text at end of this article])

In my earlier construction of three kinds of arguments for veganism (rational, ethical/moral, and aesthetic), these four arguments are in order: ethical, rational, rational plus, and aesthetic. Before I get to the specifics of each argument, I'll talk them through. Each of them has underlying biases that are interesting and speak to three things: a model of social transformation, a belief in social transformation, and an aesthetic sensibility that has changed since veganism of yore.

First let's define speciesism as it is clearly an important idea for the author of *Biting Back*.

> *Speciesism, like many other isms, is based on a line of thinking which views certain unchosen traits as inherently superior over others. Racists think they are superior because of their race, sexists think they are superior because of their sex, speciesists think they are superior because of their species. Speciesism arises out of an anthropocentric view of the world in which an individual holds the belief that the human is the most important animal and therefore has the right to subjugate other animals based on species.*

Sexism, racism, homophobia, etc are compelling insults when you first hear them but fade over time as you recognize them as unavoidable aspects of living in a world filled with preferences that

are not your own, and people who are horrible and pleasant in ways not necessarily related to how quantifiable their sexism, racism, and homophobia are. Speciesism is lined up, especially by this author's tone, as something one could live with in a human being. While obviously, by their definition, a specist sounds like lousy company (just as cartoon sexists, racists, and homophobes do), their *working* definition of speciesism probably sounds a lot more like "humans and animals are different." Now our fight is about definitions and not so clearly a story about good and evil.

Now, on to the central points. The first is the question of defining what is and is not colonization of and for other people. The premise of this point speaks to the arrogance and obliviousness of radical discourse in the 21st century. It is fine and fair for us to have a shared conversation about what is and is not colonization but, like gentrification, The State, and Capitalism, we are literally on the outside looking in. We are not the active agents of these enormous systems of control, domination, and oppression. We—and by this we I mean 99% of the readers of these words—are the victims here. Radicals using the same terms to describe those they disagree with as those they accuse of structurally causing the issues, is the kind of flattening and simplifying of reality that causes radical arguments to be dismissed out of hand.

That said, this argument is interesting. If you see veganism as a sub- or counterculture, the phenomenon of native people becoming vegan (or into metal or whatever) is a demonstration that native people are humans, who live in a modern social environments where they are exposed to the same information and subcultures that the rest of us are. The idea that veganism is both a kind of colonization of natives and one that natives might also choose is a way to understand that perhaps the world doesn't work the way you think it does. Multiple contradictory things happen all the time. Indigenous people are both independent actors and victims of logics (like yours) that would disappear them into the ideology of the frontier, veganism, genocide, and colonization. At some point indigenous people aren't the landscape upon which you get to make your choices, but are makers of some of their own. This means that many indigenous people see their relationship to food as a spiritual one that is not parse-able by vegan quantification of life and suffering into debate topics. Others might agree with vegan logic.

The second point is that factory farming and capitalist logic are two distinct categories to consider when measuring the ethics of the food we eat. Everyone who cares about the food they put in their body takes measure. This measure is along rational, ethical, and aesthetic lines. All three of those lines tend to value certain parts of the human project that I think are worth interrogating. One argument that many, if not most, tend to make around topics of diet as if their goal is to fill the planet with humans. I think that *Ishmael* was strongly argued on this point. It said that human population will grow to use the supply of food. A common vegan argument is that it takes less agricultural resources to feed a human with a vegan diet. Both of these arguments are thinking about a desirable & rational future based on diet. The author of *Biting Back* centers their definition of speciesism and hierarchy to make an ethical argument against animal use and tries to draw a distinction between "use value" and what we'll call living value. *Biting Back* even goes so far as to say that ATR (After the Revolution) "elimination of human supremacy on a personal level will create new relationships with non-human animals— relationships based on respect for their right to bodily autonomy and freedom from human domination." Is it possible for *Biting Back* to imagine a current relationship to animals that is respectful and free? To return to the conversation about indigeneity, most natives would be insulted to be told their current relationship to non-humans is about "human supremacy" but I'll leave it at the fact that ethical arguments go both ways. Finally while the aesthetics of factory farming are pretty general (everybody hates it) it's

not as if many people who enjoy it are in love with the aesthetics around fourth wave booj vegan food either.

Third point. Veganism isn't inherently anti-capitalist. I'm starting to feel repetitious here but we live in a hierarchical society. The definition of society could be argued to include hierarchy in its definition. While anarchists are generally against hierarchy there is an important line, or distinction, where we have to understand what our fight is actually against. Is it a fight against bad words, or behaviors that could be described using bad words? Is is a snipe hunt that never ends? Or is it a fight for autonomy, and if so, where does that fight begin and end? For *Biting Back* it appears that challenging the "socially constructed hierarchy of human supremacy that normalizes our consumption of [animals]" is their project. Fine, go for it, but your tone and totalizing, name-calling attitude does little but paint you as the new Hardline.

Finally (and I'm getting bored of this exercise myself) is the point that *Biting Back* is responding to, that "I'm not contributing to animal oppression because I only steal or dumpster animal products." Capitalism is a logic that extends beyond trains, automobiles, and animals. It objectifies all of the things and turns them into fixed and measurable quantities. It does not care about what is not quantifiable. Animal pain, oppression by any definition, or whether you like or hate something is more or less irrelevant in the capitalist imagination because it doesn't measure on the bottom line. To the extent to which capitalist logic recognizes new features of a commodity, is when new features add to the value. The rise in "Impossible Meat" has just this week been added to the menus of both Burger King and Del Taco menus. Congratulations, your activism around the potential new form of relationship humans could have with animals has created a product demand that has been satisfied. Any problem that can be solved by the market will be.

Obviously neither the dumpster diver nor vegan has meatless meat as a goal, but it is something being done and for a certain percentage of people that is enough. For the rest, the line gets muddy. *Biting Back* argues, weakly, that the commodity form described above can only be solved by developing a non-hierar- chical relationship to animals. Great argument if it were true, but any evidence here goes the other way. Relationships based on non-capitalist values are extra-capitalist, not anticapitalist. The market churns on, and those of us who might desire another way of living have to find it in the cracks and spaces we can crack open. There are no magic bullet answers like dumpster diving, stealing, or metaphysical relationships to nonhuman animals.

Pro health

Please note that I am not arguing for any particular diet as a solution or alternative to veganism. At heart, diet ends up being about a lot more than healthy bodies, and I am not the judge of your choices. Identity, whether we like it or not, has a central component that relates to how, when, and under what condition we eat. To tell someone what to do with regard to diet is a way to tell them how to be a human. Someone who demands they know how to do that better than you is determined to be disappointing.

I guess my point in writing this is to reflect on my own bad choices. I confused *my* radical, alternative, choices with correct ones. I didn't notice that for many years my extreme position wasn't so different from the fat, lazy, american diet I'd privately accuse others of having. I didn't notice that the food may have been different but the structural way I related to others, to the food I ate, to my body in this world, was similar to others I judged. To put it as pointedly as I possibly

can, no matter what I call my diet I still mostly eat out of packages. I still "prepare food" in the same way a short order cook prepares food. I open packages. I am still several orders of remove from how I eat, relying on capitalist logic to determine how organic, pure, and wholesome my food it. I trust the labels so much I never check on them and don't have the food chemistry setup to really know how many kilocalories are used or burned. I rarely eat what could be called whole foods. Whether vegan or omnivore I am a consumer of food. I, like 99% of the rest of you, am utterly powerless to feed myself if there isn't a store involved. I can't process wheat, animals, or anything beyond walking through a garden with my fingers crossed.

If I were going to start this entire conversation over it would be entirely different. I wouldn't start with what units-of-food I put in my mouth. It would start with how would I, and my people, feed ourselves without stores. Id take a sober measure as to what is possible in the city vs the not-city. Id talk about health, perhaps even from the perspective of rationality, ethics, and aesthetics. But I am mostly someone who eats like a bachelor in the city and every option is shitty. I ballooned as a vegan. I'm slowly finding a way to not kill myself as a post-vegan. Every option is shitty.

But I will not stand idly by watching a generation of anarcho-vegans without at least mentioning, to the few who will listen, that spinning up a moral crusade—with all the personal animus and hard words—has shit all to do with the stated goal. Be vegan. Be happy enough with your own choices to live with them. Stop changing the subject to what me and mine are doing. I've seen too many generations of post-vegans become post-anarchist, post-caring, post- trying, post-friends to not see some connection between Crusaders and people comfortable in their own skin. Don't take my word for it. Look around at your crew. Reflect on the people you have chosen, those who chose you, and consider if you are in it for the long haul. I didn't like the answer when I did this exercise. I changed.

I wish I could end this by saying that I found a social answer to this problem. I did not. I found love but nothing deeper. I didn't find the love of community, or of belief. I found other broken people to consider the questions that veganism tried to answer for me over the years, but never did. I found individuals who tried to find anarchy with me but failed. I still reflect positively on my times as a vegan, the potlucks, the friends, but in the final analysis I have to say that those relationships were shallow and the things we claimed to be fighting for would be better described with different terms and language-sets all together.

resources

https://www.petalatino.com/en/blog/reasons-to-go-vegan-in-the-new-year/

https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/biting-back-a-radical-response-to-non-vegan-anarchists

https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/andrew-x-give-up-activism

Biting Back: A radical response to non-vegan arguments (excerpt)

1. *Imposing veganism is a colonial practice because killing and eating meat is an essential aspect of many indigenous communities.*

One need not look far to realize that there are a great number of indigenous people who are vegan today as well as a number of indigenous people whose customs never centered on consuming animals. There is no monolithic indigenous culture to evoke and therefore the gesture is meaningless. There are only multitudes of indigenous people with their own beliefs and customs. Attempting to justify

hunting and/or non-human animal consumption by romanticizing Indigenous people only plays a role in homogenizing the experiences of all indigenous peoples.

2. *I oppose factory farming but there is nothing wrong with killing animals outside of capitalism.*

…At the core of speciesism is a hierarchical relationship between human and non-human animals (which is refleeted in their everyday use for entertainment, pharmaceutical testing, and fashion trends involving their skin and fur) which justifies their oppression beyond just capitalism. Since the social relationship to non-human animals has been heavily shaped by capitalism, they are viewed as manufactured commodities rather than living beings capable of experiencing pain and suffering. While the elimination of capitalism and factory farming will end the institutionalized manifestations of speciesism, only an elimination of human supremacy on a personal level will create new relationships with non-human animals-relation- ships based on respect for their right to bodily autonomy and freedom from human domination.

3. *Veganism is only a consumer activity and not inherently anti-capitalist. Boycotts don't change anything.*

Speciesism is normalized through individual participation in a broader social program that objectifies non-human animals and places them below humans as commodities to consume. Taking part in this process of objectification normalizes the existence of oppressive thinking and ideology in anarchist spaces. It is an incomplete observation to say veganism is only concerned with food; it opens new avenues of thinking in terms of our relationship to non-human animals, while challenging a socially constructed hierarchy of human supremacy that normalizes our consumption of them.

4. *I'm not contributing to animal oppression because I only steal or dumpster animal products.*

Simply put, dumpstering animal products undermines the necessity for developing personal non-hierarchical relationships with non-human animals which destroy their assigned commodity status.

Towards an Anthropology as Science Fiction by Dominique Ganawaabi

Not long ago, Primitivism was a significant strand of North American anarchy. During the period of the WTO protests (culminating in the Battle of Seattle) and through the Green Scare repression of environmentalists, John Zerzan's ideas, about the dangers of technology were undeniably important to many on the left. Acting as a sort of fatherly spokesman for the shadowy figures of black bloc and clandestine eco-saboteurs, he communicated dangerous critiques of civilization, in a language that vaguely progressive readers could relate to, in interviews to large media outlets like *The New York Times, The Atlantic,* and *Vice News.* Those were perhaps more hopeful times. Protesters in Seattle were able to disrupt power in a way that seemed impossible before. Environmentalists and animal rights activists had a set of militant tactics that could cause some amount of damage to the systems they hated. It felt like we were winning and Zerzan was ready to suggest that even though things are always getting worse, our position was gaining momentum. "I really feel that we're getting to the point— and perhaps this is wishful thinking— that these ideas are about to burst on the scene." A time was coming in the future when anarchism would become mainstream. The situation *has* changed since then. It can be admitted that anarchists as a subculture are surely early adopters of practices that eventually spread to the wider society. For example, the formal sexual consent model and privilege discourses that were a part of the scene a decade ago, are now employed by corporate news pundits and politicians. Not all of us see this popularization as a victory. Today, radicals are seemingly more concerned with race and gender issues (mostly playing out on social media) than with globalization or climate change. Even though all of these problems were and continue to be equally relevant, priorities change over time. The easiest way to discredit Primitivism given the current climate would be to accuse it of racism towards indigenous people. While Derrick Jensen's Deep Green Resistance was essentially removed from the anarchist space for taking the wrong position on transgender issues, Zerzan's peculiar use of anthropology has thus far avoided facing similar consequences. The mere use of the word "primitive" might almost be enough to entice a purge but this kind of response would also mean not engaging with the things of value that they have to offer: namely, the idea that civilization needs to be destroyed just as much as capitalism and the nation state.

What Primitivism gets right is unfortunately difficult to access because of *how* its proponents communicate their ideas. More troubling (at least to me) than the possible racism or sloppy methodology are the rigidity of thought, totalizing worldview, and unflinching ideological hubris. Rejecting the trickster spirit in native theory as postmodern is more objectionable here than disagreements over specific definitions of wildness or domestication. Coyote has always resisted easy categorization. Zerzan comes away from a brush with a trickster saying…

> *Going against all that is forbidden, trickster is a comic inversion of the official story, he deconstructs social limits. As Nanabozho of the Ojibway tradition, he is alternately the*

> *savior of his people, and a buffoon and sexual aggressor. I offer the words of this essay in acknowledgment of my place as a non-native outsider, in hopes of possible, if slight use-value. Anarcho-primitivist in orientation, I respect and am deeply inspired by the indigenous dimension, past and present. Postmodernism, in particular and in its more general cultural sense, has pitted itself against the idea of creation stories and grounded Trickster realities. The voice of cynicism, isolation, and technological ungroundedness, postmodernism insists on the "effacement of historical origins and endings." Accepting the fragmented and depthless reality of mass society, postmodernism is the turn away from traditions, away from origins, to the weightless zone of surface and word play.*
>
> We have to wonder how he conceives of a storytelling tradition that depends on something other than word play or what mythical worlds can escape the ethereal plane. How do the post-genocide avoid sounding dispossessed and nihilistic?
>
> In the space between life and death that natives often exist in, between dawn and darkness, how can shadows appear without the arrival of sunlight? Zerzan goes on to analyze a quote from the same prominent native writer. *Postindian consciousness is a rush of shadows in the distance, and the trace of natural reason to a bench of stones; the human silence of shadows over presence. The shadow is that sense of intransitive motion to the referent; the silence in memories. Shadows are neither absence of entites nor the burden of conceptual references. The shadows are the motions that mean silence, but not the presence or absence of entities. The sounds of words, not the criteria of shadows and natural reason, are limited in human consciousness and the distance of discourse.*

Zerzan's response:

> *Which Parisian postmodernist wrote the above, you may ask? None other than Anishinaabe Gerald Vizenor, whose frequent references to post-structuralist/postmodern theorists such as Derrida and Roland Barthes, along with such unreadable passages as the one quoted above, help to identify him as a writer who is uninterested in the clear prose of Native stories. In fact, for him, according to Robert Berner, "traditional tribal narratives are only the inevitably tragic remnants of dying cultures.*

Native people, since the earliest encounters with other cultures, have always adopted new tools if they served a purpose, practical or otherwise. In the modern context, French theory is no exception. In the same way that indigenous warriors would use Spanish horses and lances against intruders, native writers reinterpret western philosophical concepts and literary forms from phenomenology, to (coming of age) Bildungsroman, and indigenous futurisms. Tribal storytelling may often use simple language, but the meaning of the trickster archetype is far from immediately intelligible. It could also be argued that the indigenous influence on postmodernism is far more germane here than the specter of a poststructural abandonment of traditions. An abhorrence towards metanarratives is another way to say that hundreds of oral traditions, in different languages and settings, are preferable to the Latin "one true church". The imaginative failure of Primitivism is related to the distinction between anarchy and Anarchism. The point is not to adopt the mostly passe assumptions of postmodernism, but to embrace ambiguity and playfulness as inherently valuable. Maybe he flirts with death and destruction, but the Coyote also desires sensuality and indulgence.

Black Seed has tried to distinguish itself from other anti-civilization projects by emphasizing a strong critique of anthropology and humanism. This clear distancing from primitivist ideology as personified by Zerzan, takes place against the backdrop of years' long conversations in the green anarchist milieu about the limitations of using an anthropological lens as the primary way to understand people. Khaki-clad explorers, who collect dreams and songs to be cataloged with the same zeal as entomologists who pin butterflies under glass displays, should seem absurd to those of us endeared to the natural world. Modern Native Americans continue to be the most vocal about distrust for anthropologists; even in the age of rigorous ethics review boards, sacred objects and ancestral remains line the shelves of university vaults.

This ideology probably should have been retired to the archive a long time ago but, a decaying Mayan calendar is right every millennia or so. The rise of agriculture, like any other subject, is worth looking at as to how it might relate to the formation of social hierarchies. It could be argued that classifying societies according to their food production methods is just another iteration of historical materialism, but if we think of bricolage instead of engineering, that sin can be forgiven. Every weapon should remain available to us. Anthropology has an intensely racist past and is embedded in a profit-driven university apparatus that hasn't moved far beyond the failings of scientific positivism. Still, there are some expressions from within this discipline that are worthy of attention from anarchists. Something left out of the story is that many of the strongest criticisms of anthropology emerged from within the field itself. The 1960s generation of New Anthropology was birthed at a time when radicals were beginning to interrogate even the sacred assumptions of classical Marxism; questioning anthropology as science was a necessary conclusion. Theorists at the time turned to the ideas of Heidegger, Gramsci, the Frankfurt School, and an assemblage of "unreadable" texts by Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan to deconstruct and re-en- vision the discipline.

The go-to ethnographer for the more rebellion-inclined is Pierre Clastres, who views tribal people as Nietzschean warriors always ready to throw poison darts into the throats of would-be rulers. This is appealing compared to primitivist claims that hunter-gatherers were mostly conflict-free proto-liberals. I also, at times, identify with Chimpanzees more than Bonobos, but anthropomorphism yields different results than learning a new dance by watching elk play.

Instead of looking at nonwestern societies with the goal of learning about other cultures, anthropology can be used to find something out about ourselves. Writer Michael Taussig does this better than almost anyone. People on the edge of the industrial mono-world can show us how irrational and destructive this civilization really is. Anthropology can be an implement to understand mass society. "The Magic of the State" in particular, provides an example of how ethnology and history can be used without falling into the trap of believing that we can understand the development of a nation or a people objectively. More surrealism than empirical historiography, the essay tells the story of a fictionalized Latin American country. Examining the mythical facets that produce conquistadors, indians, and slaves might be more fruitful for comprehending colonialism than obsessing over exact dates and verifiable artifacts. The problem with Primitivism is not necessarily that it draws inspiration from the Other, but its fixation on knowing the final truth about what living in this world means. Those who use "postmodern" as an epithet come off as being fearful of the chaotic and irrational side of wilderness. It's good that there are questions that might never be fully answered. The world, disenchanted or not, can still be met with wonderment as well as terror.

Unlike the vetted anthropologists and philosophers mentioned above, anarchists when telling stories to an anarchist audience about other life- ways, can say something different. In many ways, the writing from our sphere might seem like a poor imitation of what comes out of university humanities or social science departments (at its worse it certainly is), but, for what we lose in resources and prestige we gain a smaller and more accessible dialogue. How anarchists might use the knowledge of specialists and how to disagree in a way that steers clear of resentful polemics are questions guiding this provocation. Primitivisms relationship to anthropology and the lived experience of Native Americans should be countered with our own speculations.

Nihilism and postmodernism are not flags to wave or some self-applied identity, but sets of interpretations that help explain our present situation. In place of an all-encompassing theory composed of the hidden platonic forms that shape Primitivism, we can create a cosmology of direct experience. Zerzan continues to represent the worst aspects of both Christianity and scientism. The great Leviathan, that impulse that drags free creatures into enslavement, has been usurped by the Behemoth, a monster so massive and indifferent to our existence that it is almost impossible to comprehend. Ethnology is just as needed as science fiction for finding inspiration for other ways to live. We will always come up with new stories, as well as retell many from the past, as long as we have desires that are still in motion.

> Ages ago, a certain South African bushman, Hochigan, hated animals, which at the time were endowed with speech. One day he disappeared, stealing their special gift. From then on, animals have never spoken again.
>
> Descartes tells us that monkeys could speak if they wished to, but they prefer to keep silent so they won't be made to work. In 1907, The Argentine writer Lugones published a story about a chimpanzee who was taught how to speak and died under the strain of the effort.
>
> Jorge Luis Borges
>
> From *Book of Imaginary Beings*

Post-Indian Aphorisms by Dominique Ganawaabi

1. Although colonization has often meant violence and tragedy, it is now mostly characterized by a grotesque boredom. The expansion into the new world *terra nullius* (empty space) meant that native peoples were only valuable as an absence. We reserve the right to remain ever-vanishing.

Asking that the inheritors of genocide stay optimistic is in poor taste.

2. Indigeneity is presently shaped by the external management of memory and forgetting. First contact, smallpox, Wounded Knee, and residential schools are the least important parts of our history. Although we are cold and hungry, our suffering is small compared to yours.

3. A tribe is more than an individual, but something other than a subculture, political ideology, or nation state. Criminal gangs, maternal orders, or secret societies are closer to the mark. Indigenous ancestry does not flow from the blood (as it moves through our veins or remains in the soil) but from our mucus, phlegm, and bile.

4. Mixedbloods will be buried as deep as their white blood. Fullbloods will levitate in a sacred dance at the treelines…

Anthropologists will be buried upside down with their toes exposed like mushrooms.

5. To speak very broadly, white people have been afraid of the unknown, while indigenous peoples have learned to fear the observable. Indians have tended to disappear, and the nazarenes seem to over-emphasize the value of merely existing. Setting each other (or ourselves) on fire to stay warm is starting to grow a little old.

6. Thus far there has been much talk about sperm quantum, but not enough about the aura and reflective qualities of native ovum and semen. Those of us who still exist may feel some hesitation about multiplying the banal experience of social life.

A female sexual organ filled with several male private parts is emptied, its contents spread across the grass.

7. If colonists imported the idea of salvation, it is also true that they brought with them the concept of sodomy. Amaranth, cocoa, and sugar maple each represent–the venial, the mortal, and the sins that cry to heaven.

Monotheism and Enlightenment values are invasive species.

The European God has been dead for seven generations but he still appears in the blurry paranormal photographs of hunters. Ghost signals represent more than the pareidolia of finding patterns where none exist.

The entity of North America is a vast haunted burial ground.

9. Shamans who sell ceremonial knowledge in economic or social markets are unforgivable, but the ones who peddle ridicule and make people pay for it are sacred.

All forms of creativity, such as magic rites and rituals, make the unseen visible. There is something to learning to sit with the anxious feeling, recognizing its blurred edges, while being ready to obscure the light that wants to get out.

10. Antiblackness (social death) is the scar left from being torn from humanist illumination. Indigeneity is the wound created by being forced under its shadow. Black people are not reducible to bodies. Flesh is never just flesh. The indigenous are not equivalent to the land. Nothing can be heard in this silent field.

11. Because genocide is more than just negation, decolonization cannot be completed until Christian Europe has been conquered and recreated in an indigenous image. This can not happen soon enough. If you asked the average climate scientist, in just the right way, they would probably agree.

12. White women held in Indian captivity was the earliest form of American Literature. With some luck it could also be the last.

13. Cultural appropriation should be immediately implemented by the non-indigenous. Start with headdresses and dream catchers, but follow through by instituting traditional kinship systems and gender roles that can count past two. The realization of Full Animism is the most advanced stage of socialism.

14. Rather than attempt to live among or "work with" wild indians, allies should concern themselves with awkward attempts at rewilding: consider holding a mouthful of warm water while scaling a resistant hill.

15. Decolonialized eugenics will be used to spread bronze skin and high cheekbones. Syphilis will do the rest.

16. The burning of Notre Dame cathedral is not a sign of civilization's decline but of its remaining strength.

17. The term Two-Spirit emerged from the academy via ethnology. It is oriented more towards Hegelian ideals than to the miasma of native gender expressions. Living trans and queer lifeways does not require the legitimization of a historical precedent.

18. Postindian identity resonates beyond the auditory traditions. We exist as texts, bibliography, and index. Perhaps most importantly, we inhabit words that are impossible to speak except in whispers or piercing shouts.

We might have more in common with glimmering silken webs than with the stone reliefs of Olmec statues.

19. Experts have claimed that the savages make no proper distinction between cultural and religious categories. A new term might be created for the process of coerced atheism. Some of us still play dead or peer out when we should be sleeping.

We expect that if nightmares can come true, than dreams are just as real.

20. Rationality tells us that this world is probably slipping away, we aren't exactly reveling in that prospect but even if it's too late for traditional knowledge to reverse it all, we feel that impermanence is not a curse.

After a few mournful howls or wimpers we can turn and trot away.

The Anpoa Duta Collective: Part 1

Interview with Aragorn!

This collective was interviewed for *The Fight for Turtle Island*. Here we are able to include more of the wide-ranging conversation with them.

ADC2: When we started this we were living in the city but we were also doing a lot of base-building, organizing work in Dakota communities. Part of it was around treaty rights stuff, some of it was around land access, sacred sites, just a lot of different work.

A!: The weird thing about native stuff, right, is like, as soon as you touch a native thing, people assume that you know everything about all the 500 nations.

ADC: Right. Right!

A!: So, where does the Sioux, how far east do the Sioux go?

ADC1: That depends on who you ask and in what era. The broadest traditional territorial borders that I've heard of, traditional meaning prior to contact, were as far east as Michigan, as far south as Missouri, as far west as Montana, and as far north as Manitoba. The great Sioux nation was one of the largest political bodies that existed prior to contact.

ADC2: Part of that too is that different people, historians, linguists, look at different markers for how to define territory, which is a mobile thing. It fluxed, it changed. So in Michigan there're places that have Dakota names, there's a Mendota, Michigan; I think there's another place that's a Vedonteh[?], which for us is a really significant concept—it's where two rivers meet. So you see some of these references in Michigan. So that would have extended, that would have fluxed, so for example, basically there'd be relatives in North Carolina. So if you look over, there's people who speak a language that is mutually intelligible. If they spoke to us we would understand them, and if we spoke to them they would understand us.

ADC1: Their story is that, not much before contact…

ADC2: Yea, it was in the 1700s when they were going on a trading expedition, they were going out east, and basically doing this large loop from Minnesota out to a lot of the Great Lakes, over to like, New York, essentially. And then they were going to go down the coast and back up, and that's just the trading route that they were on… It doesn't even seem like they were exploring, that was just their trading route. They were exchanging things, exchanging ideas and information, and they ended up being in North Carolina when settlers were arriving and getting established and basically got stuck there. So there's this community of Dakota people.

It gives you an idea of how far not just territory but influence spread. There's this talk in places in Mexico that down there they have catlinite [?] or pipestone, which is one of our sacred stones up here. We have records up here of people having stuff from them that would've been traded up and down the Mississippi…

ADC1: like chocolate…

ADC2: …Yea. So it's really difficult to quantify what the territory would've been.

A!: So I'm sure of the large, dozen or so groups that are scattered throughout the u.s. many peoples are subgroups or related groups…

ADC2: Right

A!: … so, Anishanaabe are mostly down the St Lawrence river through Wisconsin,

ADC2: Through the great lakes A!: Through the great lakes, even to northern Minnesota, but are not necessarily known in oral records as being huge travelers, like the Odawa are known for moving around and pushing furs on French people or whatever but not necessarily for going to South Carolina. ADC2: Right.

A!: But of course to have a set of stories or an understanding of what the world was like pre-contact for me becomes a really dangerous conversation because it basically is owned by anthropologists.

ADC2: It is. So, we reference a lot of oral stories that we hear from people, so one story that we've heard elders tell is their first contact with white people, which actually occurred, in the story, on the shores of Lake Superior.

ADC1: Actually it's not specified. It could be Hudson Bay. They're not sure.

ADC2: It could be Hudson Bay, but how they reference the body of water is how Lake Superior is referenced today. We think it's Lake Superior, but it could have easily been Hudson Bay…

ADC1: I think it might have been Hudson Bay…

ADC2 :… there are some… just going back to [baby interrupts] we also reference oral traditions from other people, so Hauten Oshone [?] have a dance that they say they got from Dakota people, so… there's a historic… like, there would have been an alliance between us and them that extended up until 18…

ADC1: …up til the war of 1812. ADC2: Yea. which Dakota people fought in, and so… For us it's this really fascinating idea, trying to look at what that might have looked like, or how these alliances worked in the past, which gives us an idea of how they could work today, right? But yea, so anyway, there's that reference, but there's also a story, it's one of the creation stories, so… like I mentioned there's seven bands, there's seven fires of the [ochenti shakoien SP!?]. So, one of them references Podoteh [sp?] as like this site of creation for one of the ochetis, or one of the fires, so for them it's the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. That's referenced in a number of different ways as basically the center. So, when we talk about where that traditional territory would've extended, right now a lot of people, like the furthest east that Dakota people live contemporarily, like within traditional reservation communities, I think Prairie Island is the furthest east, at this point, and it's on the border of Minnesota and Wisconsin on the Mississippi river. And then you have people as far west as Montana.

A!: Right, it's huge.

ADC2: So if you look at where the center is, then you have to go further east.

ADC1: Food's ready.

ADC2: So that's just one idea of where like, but like Minnesota Mico- che [?] is identified as the homeland, that's how the homeland is defined for the Dakota, who are, you know more the woodland style, traditionally. A lot of people, when they think of Sioux they think Lakota, which has a very plains culture and style, but for us, some of our ceremonies would have been closer to the ceremonies of Anishanaabe than they would be to the Lakota. So like we have the Wakanachipi [?], we had permanent settlements that we lived in, participating in different, like sugaring camps, berrying camps, so that kind of gives you a framework.

A!: Yea, most of that's new information for me. I mostly thought it was all plains.

ADC2: Yea, the eastern part gets over-shadowed, and I think a lot of it goes back to, out of the whole Sioux nation, we were the first ones to come in contact, we were the first ones to fight.

A lot of people break up history by war, in different ways, so there's a US/Dakota war, 1862, and then there's Red Cloud's war, and these other wars. But for us it's one long war. There's accounts of that starting even earlier, like in 1858, that there were some people who declared war then. And for us, there's one man…

ADC1: one of our personal heroes,

ADC2: yea, he's been vilified throughout history. Inquidutah [?] is his name, and he's vilified because he's seen as this person who committed a massacre of white people in the 50s. He participated in the war of 1862, and he was already an old man at that point, he was probably in his 50s, right? And there's records of him participating in just about every battle from 1862…

ADC1: …from 1858…

ADC2: well, 1858 was I guess the first attacks, he conducted a lot of raids against traders and when the war of 1862 broke out he was actually part of those wars, and when the US forces drove people into South Dakota, he was part of those battles. And he continued fighting all the way through, he was in some of the last battles like…

ADC1: Battle of Little Big Horn… ADC2: Actually one of his sons is thought to be the one who killed Custer, because he was the one who got Custer's horse, and traditionally if you killed someone you got his horse. So that is a point of pride, that was…

A!: I imagine it is a point of pride! (laughter)

ADC2: . that was a Dakota man. So he was living among the Lakota. So what's interesting is, in american history, at the time of Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, these guys were like vilified, right? They were later either captured or killed, they were either imprisoned or they were executed. So then they become these safe heroes, because they were conquered. So now we can celebrate their prowess. But Inquidutah was never captured. He died an old man…

ADC1: … a free man…

ADC2: . in his sleep. He was up in Canada, and he died in his 90s, an old man, having lived a life full of battles. He was never conquered, and became and stayed a vilified figure. So like I said, when we started that paper with a group of people, we kind of put it up almost like throwing our colors up, like "this is who we are," and trying to find other people in Dakota communities who were in the same place. And like I said it was a CrimethInc-style project… we didn't want to put our family names on it, we didn't want to put our personal or traditional names on it, we just wanted to put this out there and see who responded. Partly because there's people who agree with each other but have family beef with each other or there's community beef, or whether you're traditional or not, or whatever it is, so we were essentially like "f all that" let's throw up our colors and see who rallies, right?

A!: Have you succeeded? Do you have some peers?

ADC2: Yea, I feel like as a result of that …

ADC1:… it took a little while and it didn't happen in the moment. It had consequences as something that had happened in the past. I hear people referencing it. But I didn't hear it at the time. And of course when you're trying to compose something and you're trying to get submissions for something like a paper, and of course nobody writes, and you're hounding after people, then eventually it's just not worth it anymore. and we moved on.

ADC2: Well, it was just a small group of us and we were trying to pass it on to other people. We wanted it to be more than just a handful of people doing most of the work, so we put it out there so it's not just a handful of us bottomlining it. And it just didn't happen. And we realized that it did what it needed to do. Like, we found each other…

A!: How many issues did you do? ADC: Six.

A!: I've never seen it.

ADC2: Oh, I'll give you some copies. There's some copies that we don't have anymore… I mean, they disappeared off the shelves. People grabbed it, people read it. Even people who didn't like it, they read it, they responded to it. There's some narratives, or maybe, lack of a better term, there's some "discourse" that we put out there… I think, I don't know, it's hard to quantify…

ADC1: Yea…

ADC2: There were times when we were capturing things that were already happening 14.51 we just put a voice to it, and there's also times when we started conversations.

ADC1: Like a really great example involving Inquidutah: so we were destroying at… I can't even remember what event it was, but a man came up afterwards and he shook both of our hands, and he said "thank you," and we said "for what?" and he said "Inquidutah was my grandfather. This is the first time anybody has ever written anything good about him."

A!: Wow.

ADC1: Yea. And I was like, I knew who this man was, I had known him throughout my life, but I never knew that his grandfather was Inquidutah. So that was very interesting, and it has started a conversation about heroes, who our heroes are, and who are the people we want to emulate, and why…

ADC2: and why we celebrate or don't celebrate them. Why do we celebrate… why does everyone reference…

ADC1: 'Cause someone got mad at us for that article.

ADC2: Yea.

ADC1: .like, "he was not a nice person."

ADC2: …and it's fine. That's also something to say. Like, there's things that he might have done that we don't agree with now, but… and there was an interesting conversation that came up… I mean there were lots of interesting conversations…

I feel like there were just certain things that we were tapping in to, things that were happening, conversations that were happening, that we just allowed people to put on to paper.

A!: I'm going to change the topic.

ADC1: Mm hmm.

ADC2: Yea.

A!: You're sober.

ADC: Yea.

A!: That's unusual.

ADC1: Yes.

A!: So for you it comes from CrimethInc background…

ADC1: I mean, all said and done, I don't… unlike many people specifically from this community I don't have a super intense family history of alcoholism, in that, by the time that I was born, it had all been sorted out. So my family had all gone through AA and everything, but you still have the historical trauma factor of alcoholism having run in the family and the different ways people had coped with that over the course of years. For me… There's always the personal component—I don't like the idea of not being in control of myself and so therefore I don't like the kinds of things that put me out of control of myself, especially in public situations.

But the thing we talk a lot with our kids about is substances being used as a tool of colonial oppression: that it's been given to us specifically for the purpose of making us stupid. And it is

through the influence of these substances that we have in some cases signed away huge tracts of land…

A!: is there an example you use when you make that argument?

ADC1: Sure. A great one (laughs) is the first treaty known to have been signed between the Dakota people and the United States government, the treaty of 1805. And part of… I mean there's a lot of really weird, interesting things about that treaty. The guy who was in charge of getting it signed was actually an official representative of the US government. All kinds of weird stuff was part of that. But one of the bribes that was handed over to get—only two—community leaders from a confederation of seven different nations, was four kegs of whiskey. So, these things being used as bribes, as tools, to get us to concede to things that we would normally never do…

ADC2: It's also interesting, the way of politics around sobriety. It's very different I think from anarchist circles. In anarchist circles, sobriety is, in a very real sense, about whether you drink alcohol or don't drink alcohol, like with straight edge: it's very clear cut. Out here, there's people who will have a glass of wine, who will have the occasional alcohol, but they don't drink, they don't party. That's the line we try to support, 'cause I feel like it's where a lot of people are at out here, too, this idea of not getting drunk, not being under the influence.

ADC1: [baby sounds] Education, regardless of what you're abstaining from, is not historically that successful.

ADC2: right. Also it's a much more political idea. So when we translate it into Dakota, when we talk about it, it's abadezah [?], that's the word. And all that really means is to be clear headed, to have a clear mind. So we use that with our kids, in a number of ways, not just around drinking alcohol… like if you're drinking alcohol and partying you're not of clear mind. But it's also when your head's filled with propaganda, when you're doing things and you don't know why you're doing them.

A!: I believe ideology is a word for that.

ADC2: Right. exactly, that's exactly it. So that's to give an example of why I was talking about our program, it's what we try to do, it's like stepping stones, or building blocks… and the idea of abadeza[?] which a lot of our kids can easily understand to refer to not getting drunk, not getting trashed. it's an easy connection.

Then when we talk about dancing for the American flag at powwow… When we ask why they do that and they don't know how to answer us, that's another time we talk about abadez[?] "you're not understanding why you're doing something, or, when you sing a flag song, what you're actually singing about." So there's a number of examples we use to break that down, and part of it goes along with language. Like, a lot of people talk about learning the language as a decolonizing act, and language as a radical act. And in and of itself, I don't think it is. You can learn the language and still support the US government.

ADC1: A really great example of this actually is from when my mother first came back here and was trying to do language work in the community. What's common in native communities, especially in language or vitalization projects, especially in urban or academic areas, where there's this total idolization of elders. Elders and fluent speakers are like, you know, the bees' knees! So she comes back and she's trying to do language work out here, and she's working with this one elder who is trying as hard as she can to get her own grandkids kicked off of the rolls because of per cap money. Per cap money was just becoming a thing at that point, and she's like "well, they're not really Dakota, so they shouldn't be… " and you know, of course, this is in the language, right?

So she's having this conversation in the language, and then proceeds to talk about the founding of the church at Upper Sioux, and how the people who are coming in right now are not from the original church founders… It was this incredibly colonized, christian, money-centered thing. So you can have all these conversations in the language and it doesn't change them. ADC2: Another example is from one of the last issues we did of our paper. There was a project where people were translating the star-spangled banner into Dakota. As you can imagine there were some people who had a very "why the hell would you do this" reaction, and there were other people who were very supportive. So we really wanted to give voice to the people who were critical of the project. Of all the things to translate, why that? Really breaking it down, critical consciousness, and really having a clear mind and asking "why are we doing this." There were a number of submissions in response to our callout, and one of them was really, really powerful. It was around a drum group, where there were a number of people talking. And they're asked to sing a song to honor veterans. So they chose what is essentially a flag song, a song for the united states. so it's not actually a veterans' song, it's a song for the US…

A!: It's a nationalist song.

ADC2: and not a good nationalist, but an imperialist nationalist. And one person refused to sing it. They were like, "well, why won't you sing it?" and he says, "well, do you know what the song says?" and the kid repeats all the words, and they're in Dakota, so he says all the words. and he says, "so what does that mean?" and the kid says, "it's honoring veterans." and the guy says "no." and he translated line for line, "what you're singing is 'may the flag of the president fly forever over our homelands.' that's what you're singing when you sing that song. and if you don't know the language you don't know what you're saying." So it was this powerful moment where you could see why learning the language can be this moment, but only if it's… so for us it's this very Fanonian concept. Revitalizing culture, revitalizing language, but if it's not done within a certain context, it becomes empty, hollow… It's through struggle, through that kind of critical perspective that it has more meaning but also creates meaning. The stories change, they adapt to your current situation.

A!: I have to admit that for me, Oda- wa, which is usually seen as a subset language of Chippewa, or Ojibway… I mean, there are may be a hundred Ojibway speakers left?

ADC1: More in this state, I think, I think there's about 500.

A!: Maybe. But we're talking that hundreds would the total number left. And if we talk about Dakota broadly… my guess would be thousands, but low thousands.

ADC1: Other way around. There's five speakers in the state of Minnesota.

ADC2: Five native speakers who are fluent.

A!: That really surprises me.

ADC1: Yep.

ADC2: For Lakota, in South Dakota, and is a different language,

ADC1: different dialect ADC2: Yea, there's probably closer to about 1000. There've been actual surveys. For Dakota, especially in Minnesota, where we are, there's very… at one point there were ten… ADC1: there's more in Canada. there's maybe maybe 150 speakers in Canada.

ADC2: Fluent speakers? Oh I don't think there's that many.

A!: And then you compare all this to Dine (Navajo) and they're huge… ADC2: They still have a first language.

A!: Exactly. So, obviously, talking to Klee, the frame of reference is just so tremendously different.

ADC1: I was at a language conference in South Dakota, last minute, invited to speak on this panel of people who were studying language. I was talking just about language programs and whatever, and finally this one elder asked a question, he says "do you think our language will be able to continue?" "yes…" So I was the last in line, and everyone else gives these super upbeat answers, like "absolutely! if we put our nose to the grinder, we're totally going to be able to do this, this is an important part of our identity, we'll be able to pull it together." So finally it comes to me at the end, and I was like "no, actually. I don't. I hate to be the downer on this one but one of the primary issues with this is that Dakota as a language, Dakota has an ideology does not make any sense, within a capitalist, colonial framework. So if you're going to beholden to the US government, if you're going to be loyal to the capitalist system, if your dream is to continue to wear blue jeans and drive trucks, Dakota isn't relevant. It's not relevant to the world that we've created under these circumstances. Because an ethnified people with their own language doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make sense to speak Dakota to maintain some rudiments of culture. It won't work."

ADC2: You only need to look at the last 100 years to see…

ADC1: …to see proof of that…

ADC2: Yea. The language has been rapidly and dramatically declining. In combination with assimilation into culture.

A!: But this is a strange phenomenon. At least in the Navajo context, it seems like every other generation recommits to either the language, or no language.

ADC2: Yea.

ADC1: Yes.

ADC2: I think the biggest difference with the Navajo is you have… with the Dine you have a very specific context with a very large land base and a large population, and also relative isolation from outside culture. I think that …

A!: absolutely.

ADC2: that's changing with technology, as people have more ready access to the internet. And there's different ways that people are going to react to that, it's not going to be a black or white thing, but… yea, I think that isolation's been a protective factor for them vs here, and where there're checkerboard reservations, or small reservations, change happens much more quickly.

A!: Yea.

ADC2: That's like … there're linguists who spend their whole lives studying this.

A!: I'm going to change topics. ADC2: By the way this is wild rice with some venison and some other stuff in it, so… if you want more we have plenty.

A!: Thank you. So the thing that is really interesting to me. There's this project I've really been wanting to do for a while is to sit down with people who've left anarchism, left radical politics…

ADC2: Nice. Awesome.

A!: …left counter culture. Sit down with them and ask them…

ADC1: why…

A!: Why'd you go?

ADC1: [laughter]

ADC2: Fascinating project.

A!: So… at some point that'll happen. As it turns out, that's this conversation too!

ADC1: Absolutely.

A!: So far in this set of interviews— this is the third—and all three of you are done with anarchism. I mean, I haven't heard that come out of your mouth yet, but you've been checked out. You haven't been a public person or figure in that space in years. So that's really interesting to me that in all three cases… Gord Hill (Zigzag), Lyn Highway (do you know her?—she was part of the Coast Sal- ish insurrectionary anarchists…) but more or less their work is elsewhere. ADC2: Elsewhere, yea. Interesting. The public persona thing is interesting: I never really wanted to be a public persona.

A!: That's the problem with being a political prisoner, right. You don't get a choice in the matter.

ADC1: In all fairness, you may not see yourself as that, but I totally thought I was dating some mobster the first several times we went out because everyone knew him. And not just like, local people in Minneapolis, but like, we'd go to Wisconsin, or to Winona, or wherever and people would recognize him. You were a public figure in that people knew who you were

ADC2: . but not as in have a public persona that I promoted or…

ADC1: That's true, but you were a very well-known person active in a given community [talked over]… ADC2: But the difference… and some of that was very intentional. I try to do this wherever I go, but I was developing relationships and connections to people. A lot of that, like in Minneapolis, growing up there and having a very wide and diverse social network, and as a result of that…

A!: You were born and raised in Minneapolis?

ADC2: Yea. Part of it was trying to make connections. For me it's always been like, like part of a big family, trying to figure out how do all these pieces fit together, all these relationships, trying to figure out what's our connection. So you end up realizing how small this world really is, right? Like, it's really funny, like your dad… We actually met your dad.

ADC1: Yea.

ADC2: I forgot to mention this to you but we ran into him around Bulgaria A!: I'm so embarrassed.

ADC: Don't be embarrassed.

A!: So you passed through punk and punk-influenced anarchism.

ADC2: Yea.

A!: … which is not necessarily the CrimethInc thing. How did that happen?

ADC2: I don't know how it happened. A!: You mentioned that town, Winona.

ADC2: Yea.

A!: There was a scene there?

ADC2: There was, yea. I'm trying to think. Part of it was having a real dedication to being in Minnesota.

[The Anarchist Library editor: poem included on same page at the end of the interview]

The Beauty of Things

To feel and speak the astonishing beauty of things-

earth, stone and water,

Beast, man and woman, sun, moon and stars-

The blood-shot beauty of human nature, its thoughts, freanzies and passions,

And unhuman nature its towering reality- For man's half dream; man, you might say, is nature dreaming, but rock And water and sky are constant-to feel Greatly, and understand greatly, and express greatly, the natural

Beauty, is the sole business of poetry.
The rest's diversion: those holy or noble sentiments, the intricate ideas,
The love, lust, longing: reasons, but not the reason.
Robinson Jeffers

My Mind Below this Beautiful Country: Part 2

Interview: Goat

Talsetan Brothers Share their stories of Land Defense and Indigenizing

This is the second half of the conversation between, Ishkadi and Lo'oks, the Tahltan brothers. The first half was published in Black Seed #5.

This conversation was recorded in the recently constructed Healing Center at the Unist'ot'en Camp. For the past 8 years, the Unist'ot'en clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have been occupying their traditional territory and preventing government and industry from entering the land to build pipelines that would transport tar sands and fracked gas to the global market. The Unist'ot'en Camp has served as a site of inspiration where land defenders from disparate regions can meet, network, plan, learn from the Unist'ot'en strategy, seek wisdom, and heal.

Days at camp are spent tending the infrastructure of the site, being with the river that has been protected as a result of the imagination and responsibilities assumed by the Unist'ot'en, conversing, cooking, and laughing. Nights are spent beneath the stars, huddled around a fire with fellow comrades, sharing stories, planning, and laughing. While I was at the camp this winter I met Ishkadi and Lo'oks, Taisetan Brothers who are regular occupiers and visitors of Unist'ot'en, and whose territory is 4 hours drive north from there. They had stopped over at camp en route to their land. One night as some of us were drinking tea and eating snacks, they began to share stories about their home, their language, and their work defending their territories from industry. Several of us stayed up late into the night with the brothers, riveted by their stories and their particular cadence as a duo. What is printed below comes largely from what they shared that night. This conversation was made possible in part by the unique space created by the Unist'ot'en where indigenous and settler radicals can encounter each other and share their stories.

Ishkadi grew up colonized on Iskut Indian Reservation No. 6, in so- called Northwestern British Columbia, in Tahltan territory. He has been involved in direct action and blockades in defense of his people's territory for over 10 years. He is pursuing the reclamation of his indigenous identity.

to'oks was born in a hospital outside of Tahltan territory. He grew up pursuing guidance and wisdom from his elders, especially his grandma and grandpa. In his spare time he is crafting a diabolical scheme to dominate the world. He calls it "World Peace." Ishkadi and Lo'oks are brothers and they are the two youngest speakers of Tahltan in the world, of which there are currently less than 30 speakers.

Ishkadi—Our culture is deeply enriched with community support, it's all communal. Our people did everything with each other. Nowadays, it's different because of that colonial question, that hole, that dark cloud above us. Cause when they put us in reservations, when they took

individual kids to residential schools, when they forced kids to go to day school, they were attacking those kids individually. But when they took individuals to the reservation, they colonized a whole community. The after affects of that are many different things. And on top of that, they slapped on a system that would suit the colonial interest. So instead of having our traditional governing structures, they abolished that. They made it illegal to do it that way. Suddenly the potlatch and the sundances were illegal to do, and those were really influential for spiritual purposes, social organizing, name giving and so many things that went along with that. Then when that happened, they took the Indians in the reservations, then they put a voting system in to elect a chief in council. The chief used to be appointed to that position through their merits, through their good will, of how well they treated people, how they did good for the whole nation, not just themselves. They've enacted a completely different kind of leader and put the word "chief" on it, and that's the band chief, band council. And they just have jurisdiction on the reservation, it's pretty much all they have. So now we've got that form of colonizers. You can't really call them colonizers; they're just dealing with the colonial situation.

Lo'oks—We never had our cultural teaching from our parents. I mean we had remnants of it, but never had a full grasp of it, so our grandparents were the ones that would teach us. And that's a huge generational gap, we're the grandchildren and we're learning from our grandparents. There was a gap in our traditions through our parents, we did learn from our grandparents but it was kind of hard because there was a generational gap. There were certain points that took a while to take in, certain teachings, certain questions we would ask our grandparents that would never come up because we were using our English, we would think it would help but it didn't. And our uncle who was living with our grandparents at the time, who spent most of his time with our grandparents, he's their son, and he would fill in those gaps, along with our aunties and sometimes our mother as well.

Ishkadi—Me and my brother were learning Tahltan language together, our buddy Oscar was learning Tahl- tan by himself, and we hooked up, and the three of us started to discuss the language as a trio. Brother has been the one that learned it a lot earlier and a lot quicker, so he would be the one who would come to us, he already had the Tahltan mindset. And then Oscar would come in with his linguistic side, and I would come in with an anthropological, ethnographic vantage point, and we would decipher the language, the three of us. And what that did was help us to understand the way our ancestors think. Their worldview, everything they did, their whole language was land-based. There's a word that our grandpa told us that was a high Tahltan word, it's Es-di yige konelin.

Tatsetan/Tahltan: A Land Based Nomadic Language

Lo'oks—Well what that means is Konelin, means "nice place." You see a good landscape or a good lookout, a place that has a nice, natural scenery that you just like, you say Konelin, it's a nice place. And Es-di yige, is under, Di is in mind. We can all understand memories, I can say I remember this place or land, but the thinking of our people long ago, it's all embedded in our language with this is Es-di yige konelin, it's expressing that you're happy. When you come back to your home that you grew up in, you feel happy like you're back at home. You feel happy in your mind because you remember the landscape. When you're walking the land, you create a cognitive landscape, a cognitive map of the area. And when you leave somewhere else, that part

of the land stays with you in your mind. We would all say, "I remember this place," but it's a piece of landscape on this earth that's embedded in our mind that will never leave us.

Ishkadi—The part that got us was Esdi, "my mind." You picture the mind in western culture and psychology, they all have a different view of it, as something to dissect and everything. And this is the thing about English language, and the difference between English language and Tahltan language. English is a very separatist language, a double tongue language, and on the good side the English language could create things like poetry and really cool stuff that has double meanings. And on the bad side, the darker side, the evil side, they come up with stuff in business, and law, and the courts, where the English language could say one thing but mean numerous other things. I like to call it, the double-tongue language, because of that. But the Tahltan language, it's more of a connection and more expressive. It's a language of feeling, connection, and the whole concept of it is Es-di yige konelin translates to "My mind below this beautiful country." It implies the cognitive landscape, the mind as part of the land. It's the beautiful territory of the mind. The underneath, below it, it also insinuates that the sky is part of the mind. That connection is based in that one word, Es-di yige konelin, three words put together, one phrase. That is an example we use all the time of how Tahltan language connects us to the land. So to further that argument, if you mine the land, you are mining our minds. You're ripping out the mountain within our minds. This is another form of why we do what we do, why we take part in actions, why we defend our territory. Because we're not just defending it for the sake of defending it, there's a holistic reason, a more spiritual reason. Our ancestors defended our territory, and it says that in the 1910 Tahltan declaration, that we defended with our blood. And in this day and age, industry or government, whatever it is, they come in, they do their work, and then they tell the Tahltan colonial council, "This is happening. Take this deal, the deal won't get any better." That's a far cry from "we protect this with our blood".

Lo'oks—Another example is "Going for skin." Like when we say "I'm going," you say Desal, like "I'm walking, going by walking." And that's the only means of transportation, going about with your two legs. So coming and going has to do with walking, and there's different ways of using that word for walking, you say you're coming and going. So when you say, "Ejidesal", ejide means skin.

Ishkadi— Like hide.

Lo'oks—When our people were going hunting, they were providing food for their families, their communities and all that, but it's the skin that has a huge importance in providing us clothing and keeping us warm in certain temperatures and also protects us from a lot of things. Clothing in actuality is very important for our survival, and our people's everyday needs. From making clothes, backpacks to carry the food, moccasins. So skin was a huge thing that made the community function and do the things they could do for everyday life.

Ishkadi—Skin was even used for our, what they call huts. We lived in huts traditionally, no houses. Skin was part of what we used for tarp, tarpleen.

Lo'oks—When the early explorers and surveyors came into the territory and they brought in wall tents, they didn't use canvas, they made wall tents out of skin. They had moose hide, like a wall tent made out of moose hide. So they adapted to many new things, but skin was a huge thing. Without skin it's very hard to survive, it's very hard to do all the things without skin. So when they go out hunting, it's like when you say, "Ejidesal", it's "I'm going hunting." But it literally translates to "I'm going for skin." So going hunting, you're going for skin but there's also a bonus involved, you get food to feed your families.

Ishkadi—Yeah, and hunting insinuates a hit or miss. When Westerners trophy hunt, they go out and if they don't get nothin', they come back and, "Ah, I got skunked this time." But our grandparents and our elders knew where the migration routes were, so when they went out and there were no animals there, they would say, "Okay, they're not here. We must go to this other place where they would be this time of year." So they would walk there. The longest our grandpa told me that they were out of food was two months, and that was two months of going to different routes until they finally got a moose, I think it was a couple of moose. And when they say food they're just talking about big game, because for two months they had to be eating something. They were eating rabbits, squirrels, small animals that were around. That too is that whole relation with the land is with Ejidesal, they did not just go out for hit or miss or trophy hunting, they went out for survival. So they knew everything about the land. Our grandpa, or our uncle, we could ask, "Where is a good place for moose this time of year?" And he would tell us, "Walk up this river or this creek, you go up this mountain, right there, you'll see 'em." And you could see how our ancestors knew more than just where the animals would be. They would walk in a huge, vast territory that's many, many square kilometers. It wasn't just a couple of hectares, they were walking miles and miles. And they would learn what animals eat what, what kind of plants they would eat, what kind of other animals they would eat. And they knew all of that by their relationship with the land. So if they looked around and could see what kind of plants were in an area, they knew what kind of animals would be there. Or if all of a sudden there were plants that were plentiful in one area, they knew, okay, this certain animal is gonna be here, this year or next year. So it was a guarantee that they were going to get something back by their relationship with the land.

to'oks—We were doing more than just the language. We were going back to the land and doing everything our grandparents did before, which was going out on the land and being one with everything. Knowing everything about the land our grandparents walked on, and continuing with that.

Indigenizing, Land Defense, and Decolonization

Ishkadi—I think the last major part of our indigenizing was protecting the land. Prior to that we were still working, getting paid to "save our language." Since our decolonization route, we've started to do all this work that wasn't just separating from colonialism. We had to fill that hole, we had to fill that void with the ways that were taken from us. We had to pick up where we left off. We had to find out a different route, 'cause throughout our teenage years we wanted to be musicians, we wanted to make money with music and do our thing that way. But we never really had backing. It wasn't until our whole years of trying to regain, reclaim our identity then that became something else. Now we've got a foundation. Our next adventure in decolonization, as they call it, is to reclaim our territories, to reoccupy our land. 'Cause that has to be done. We're on our territories, unceded and unsurrendered. If we still live on a reservation and we don't flex that, that's not very strong until we get out there.

Lo'oks—I liked our area the way it was. In 2003 rumors came around that more development was coming in, more mines, and then those rumors became reality. I was surprised that no one was resisting, that there was absolutely no resistance. It wasn't until a couple years later, around 2005, that more of this stuff started happening, then our people started blockading. I really en-

joyed seeing that, I took part in it as much as I possibly could. I didn't want to see the land destroyed before I was able to go on it. And I didn't want to have areas on the land that I could not go to, and when it's already cleared out and I could go to it and it's not the same as it used to be. I liked the way it was, untouched and still able to roam around freely and not worry about any destruction happening to it. I liked our home the way it was already.

Ishkadi—Then this company was doing some test drilling around the territory looking for coal. And we heard about it, and at this time we were still working our jobs, "saving the language." We were being paid to revitalize the language, and it was cool at first, that we were getting paid, but our actions would pretty much eliminate our jobs from there because of "political unrest." But we were still employed under that, which was important too. We were told about these things happening up in the Klappan, and they told us to show up. So we went up once, and it was just people camping out. What they were doing was just drumming their songs and singing. The elders, the Tl'abane Keepers, went up to the company camp and said, "We're giving you guys an eviction notice, you have 24 hours to leave." Singing their songs, playing their games, but the companies did not leave. They kept on going. "Oh that was cute," the companies thought. "No big deal, sure you want us to leave but we're invested in this place." They did that for about a month. And we just heard about it. Fortune Mineral was gonna utilize this road, but the Iskut Band maintained that road so they weren't allowed to use it. So our Uncle John actually came in and stopped them, blockaded them. Everyone told us, "Go help the Uncle!" And he was already there, getting wood for fire. One of our elders told us, "Go!" And he gave us a ride to the blockade. So we went, and by the time we got there, it was Uncle John and a few people there, and Uncle John already set Fortune Minerals out, sent them back. They had to fly their gear in. That was the catalyst for us. "Oh wow, we were a part of it while everything was happening." The peak of it was our core people. The initial actions were ten years previous, everything was hunky dory for the time being. A couple days later I heard something was going to happen, but that was it. So eventually we went up to the Spencer Flat, Tokadi we called it, everyone else called it Sacred Head Waters. We went up there to the camp, and next thing you know we heard that there was a drill less than three kilometers from that camp. That really pissed everybody off, and that turned into "We're gonna occupy that drill, we're gonna stop them from working." And we did. Tl'abane Keepers went there and stopped the drill. So the workers got sent back to the camp and that drill was in no use, it was still in the ground.

to'oks—We had a lot of the elders, and some of them came in and out to visit, some of them stayed there the whole time. There was a core group of us who were there the whole time, and then some other people who would come stay for a few days, go back out, and come back again. Some of the people would come visit, but go back. I can't really say off the top of my head. We also had settler support, which was a huge thing for us.

Ishkadi—And it was new.

Lo'oks—We had settler support previously, but it wasn't much, and they really couldn't do nothing because they came in with more of an environmental aspect of things, not so much an indigenous aspect of things. At the time, there was a separation between environmentalists and indigenous situations. This was when things started to change, when environmentalists started to realize that they had to work together with indigenous to protect the environment. So this was new for us when we finally had settler support that had a huge role with the whole thing.

Ishkadi—The settlers there, the non- indigenous folk, they were active bodies, but also they acted as media, so they helped us out in that way too. I mean it wasn't 100% that they were the

reason why it happened, but a large amount of it was due to them. So we took over that drill, and we took over another drill, then later on Fortune Mineral still wouldn't leave after we took over two of their drills. There was no active drilling happening for a time, and then eventually we blockaded their camp, their headquarters. Then the government called and said, "Get out, it's too confrontational." In this whole thing, it wasn't just the Tl'abanot'In people and the industry, Fortune Minerals. It wasn't just the industry versus the Indians, the First Nations people. The cops were there, they set up an RCMP detachment. And when we took over those drills, the cops were the first ones to come. And they confronted us, they said, "This is bad, what you're doing. We're impartial, we're here to keep the peace." But they were just enforcing the colonial rules. They were enforcing these permits that were bought on our territory: unceded, unsurrendered, Tl'abanot'In, Tal§etan territory. Some of the workers in that camp were Tahltans. It was really funny because one of them was worried that we were gonna hurt them or whatever. They were pretty much a sellout. The other Tahltans were cool, they were like "Whatever." They left after that, but since then they never came back.

That point was big for us, because not only did we stand up for something, it gave us purpose to tell white people who came in and colonized our people, "No, you can't do it." It did something to us. It gave us a sense of purpose. And that was a final part of our indiginization, our decolonization, uncolonizing. That was the part that made us want to live for something, gave us a purpose, gave us something else. We knew what we wanted. We knew what we had to do, it felt right. It's not going to school and making money off the system, and it's not going to the bootlegger and drinking our life away, snorting our life away. It's not that, it was something else. It's climbing a mountain. It's learning and understanding the language. Dissecting it, back and front, all around. It's looking for an animal and knowing where it's gonna go, and bringing that animal home and feeding your family. It's a bigger thing. And from that moment, I, myself, have gained so much. I could do that, I could tell the colonizers "No, you're not allowed on our territory." I also quit all that drinking, and all that crazy lifestyle, the drugs that I was involved in. I quit from that moment on, I've had a sober life since. And also, I did a lot of things from that moment because of the confidence that we built from that moment. And now our next adventure is to reclaim and occupy our territory. To move out there. All year, forever, ya know? Do something with it.

We Have Nothing To Say: Technology and the Economizing of Communication by Goat

How forget that? How talk
Distantly of 'The People'
Who are that force
Within the walls
Of cities
Wherein their cars
Echo like history
Down walled avenues
In which one cannot speak.
- from *Of Being Numerous by* George Oppen

We are tired of going untouched and unsatisfied, dragging ourselves through our pathetic lives that have no meaning, that grow more meaningless with each passing day. We sleepwalk from our bedrooms to our jobs, to restaurants and to dinner parties, and we know what will happen, which means we know that nothing will happen. This society, filled with so much money, so many straight lines, so many people, so much paperwork, so many machines, and so little verve, so little life, so little friendship, so little to discuss, so absent of touch, so absent of the sensuous, so absent of meaning, is revealing its own bankruptcy using the very scientific instruments it created to dominate the world with in the first place. Our wager is this: the dissatisfaction with the promises of the techno-capital utopia are spreading like a virus and this world cannot bear us becoming conscious of this fact.

But the virus spreads as doublethink. We want to clarify this dissatisfaction to clear the way towards destroying this world (or getting out of its way so it can destroy itself.) To accomplish this, we are enlisting Jean-Pierre Voyer's An Inquiry into the Causes and Nature of the Poverty of People and Jacques Ellul's The Technological Society. We also refer to a contemporary text that seems to be heavily influenced by both of the aforementioned texts, Guillaume Paoli's Demotivational Training, as a reflection of how intimately enmeshed the market economy is with technology.

Voyer's inquiry demonstrates that the fundamental misery of modern life is the absence of communication, the misery common to all slaves of all ages. He demonstrates this by revealing how the exchange and flow of money become the actual living part of this world, while the humans in it behave as money and commodity mules, living always under the weight of money, and moving around the products that money buys. In the process, we cede all of what makes

us human, what makes us a peculiar species in the world, to the economy, and to money. What makes the human peculiar is that we talk and tell stories. But in this world the stock market, the economy, and our bosses always have the last word. We see Voyer as the bedrock of this essay because we agree with his simple expression of the most fundamental problem of this world. The essential question is this: why is it that we have nothing to say?

We want to spend the space of this essay revealing that Voyer's critique is so fundamental and essential because it is a critique of technological society, although he almost never mentions technology. We draw from another French thinker Ellul, to help us with the task. Ellul, writing at the same time as Voyer's mentors and collaborators, the situationists, said in The Technological Society that "it is useless to focus on capitalism" because technology is secretly the autonomous force running the world. There is a tremendous amount of complexity in the relationship between technology, capitalism, and money. This an attempt to lay these connections and their consequences bare.

Defining technology and technique to bring about their ruin

> *Whenever we see the word technology or technique, we automatically think of machines. This notion…is in fact an error*
>
> ***The Technological Society***

It was the textile machines that destroyed what was left of the independent agrarian way of life in rural England. It was an oil rigging machine and the greedy policies administered by dozens of office workers that caused the Deepwater Horizon mess and devastated the lives of creatures in the Gulf of Mexico. It was dams, canning factories, and modern fishing boats that drove salmon and the people who enjoyed a life together with them on the West Coast of North America to the brink of extinction. It was the atom bomb that scarred modernity with Hiroshima and the still present anxiety of thermonuclear war. And this doesn't account for the deep psychological and spiritual trauma for which technology is also responsible. Tinder, Marvel movies and fair trade coffee aren't worth the price to be paid for modern life. We must destroy the belief in the inevitability of technological progress.

To understand what is necessary to destroy a belief, we have to understand what it is we believe. Fortunately for the owners of this society, the common parlance usage of the word technology is a deception. The belief in the transcendent power of technology is deeply entrenched but naming it is especially elusive. Technology is usually used to describe things like gadgets, planes, satellites, and smartphones. Using Ellul as our guide, we will show that this definition excludes the majority of social arenas and disciplines that are mobilized to make gadgets and machines a part of this world. Most of the technological world is best represented by the image of the office worker at their cubicle pouring over data and documents, managing the tension of reproducing technological life. This deception is catastrophic for theory; it completely obscures the interdependence of high tech on social organization and the management of the masses. The defenders of this society are desperate for these domains to appear to be separate. For example, Americans are made to believe that they live in the land of free enterprise, free of control imposed by the dreaded 'planned economy' of Communist regimes. This is complete bullshit. How else could Amazon Prime guarantee next day delivery without the fastidious management of a

planned global economy? Managing workers through organizations and human resource departments, the gargantuan quantity of gadgets that masses of workers can produce, assembly lines, media spectacles, propaganda, and the use of psychoanalytic techniques by marketing firms form a unified logical whole, with common characteristics. In addition, each of these techniques are made possible by, and are contingent upon, the functioning of all the others. Technology-as- gadgets then—its common parlance use—doesn't do technology justice. This is a furiously technical society. Efficiency and order lurk around every corner, and every corner that blocks the movement of progress is erased. So while we don't always think it necessary to come to terms to start essays, we do think it is necessary to spend a bit of time discussing what we talk about when we talk about technology.

All humans use tools, but not all humans worship the study of the development of technical operations. There is much confusion about this. All human groups tend to perfect the techniques that make their way of life possible. Gatherers know where certain patches of plant foods exist on the land, when they will be ready to harvest, the best means of harvesting, how they must be cured if necessary, and the various ways to prepare them. This technical operation or technique is perfected and made efficient more and more with each time it is performed. Techniques are economized; they tend toward efficiency.

Techniques are not necessarily material tools, but they are also forms of social organization like the division of labor or magical practices. For Ellul, the essence of technologies is that they are means to an end that are perfected over time. They answer the question 'how?' This is why magical practices are technologies, or techniques. They are means to some end within their cosmology.

In most societies, social and spiritual practices create an assembly of obstacles to the pursuit of technical operations as an end in itself. As a result, the accumulation of technical operations is limited. The modern world is just the opposite. There is at present almost nothing in the way of the pursuit of technology for its own sake. Technology, that "neutral" phenomenon, as people often say, slips into every aspect of modern life. In order to convey this interrelated and interdependent character of the technological order, Ellul adopts the monolithic word technique. We use it as well, but we will use technique and technology somewhat interchangeably from here on to refer to the totality of technical operations in every field of human activity for a given society.

For Ellul, technique grows out of the machine, and the machine is the pure expression of technique. But eventually the machine becomes a minor element in the vast realm of technique.

[L]et the machine have its head, and it topples everything that cannot support its enormous weight... Everything had to be reconsidered in terms of the machine. And that is precisely the role technique plays. In all fields it made an inventory of what it could use, of everything that could be brought into line with the machine. The machine could not integrate itself into line with nineteenth-century society; technique integrated it. Old houses that were not suited to the workers were torn down; and the new world technique required was built in their place. Technique has enough of the mechanical in its nature to enable it to cope with the machine, but it surpasses and transcends the machine because it remains in close touch with the human order. The metal monster could not go on forever torturing mankind. It found in technique a rule as hard and inflexible as itself. Technique integrates the machine into society. It constructs the kind of world the machine needs and introduces order where the incoherent banging of machinery heaped up ruins. It clarifies, arranges, and rationalizes; it does in the domain of the abstract what the machine did in the domain of labor.

This shows how technology based on the machine spreads its logic through every detail of life in order to ensure its survival and reproduction. A similar confusion between tool and the obsessive study of the totality of tools exists with the way the word market is used in common parlance. The old market, the 'bazaar', was face-to-face, happened at a certain designated time and place, and was generally based on haggling. As Paoli shows, the market of the olden days is in every significant aspect the opposite of the market-economy. The global market, The Economy, is impersonal, unlimited by time or space, and all products are pre-exchanged with determined prices. You can purchase solar panels manufactured by Asian slaves at 3am from the comfort of your Tempur pedic mattress without communicating with a single soul if you have the money, a smartphone, and internet. This peculiar similarity in the way technology and the market are misconstrued as something ostensibly limited, but are in fact pervasive and totalizing, points to the deep intimacy between capitalism and technology.

Technique creates a new kind of human, one who is flexible, or is endowed with "plasticity" as Ellul says, because this new subject is forced to let go of values as the steamroller of modernity transform reality at an ever accelerating rate. Technique refers to the relentless logistical operation that characterizes modern life. Each of us are enjoined to coordinate, manage, and interpret the awesome power of techno-capitalist society in order to survive. But logistics are the pinnacle of military thinking, not social life. In this world all spontaneity is integrated as a detail into the dominant plan. And without spontaneity, creativity, ecstasy, and freedom begin to be bleached of any meaning.

Marx's technophilia: why the left will never be able to critique technology

> *As late as 1848, one of the demands of the workers was the suppression of machinery… [M]en still suffered from the loss of equilibrium brought about by a too rapid injection of technique, and they had not yet felt the intoxication of the results. The peasants and the workers bore all the hardships of technical advance without sharing in the triumphs. For this reason, there was a reaction against technique, and society was split. The power of the state, the money of the bourgeoisie were for it; the masses were against.*
>
> *In the middle of the nineteenth century the situation changed. Karl Marx rehabilitated technique in the eyes of the workers. He preached that technique can be liberating. Those who exploited it enslaved the workers, but that was the fault of the masters and not the technique itself.*
>
> ***The Technological Society***

We had the opportunity to see the well known autonomist Marxist Silvia Federici speak in late 2018. At some point in her talk Federici said, "I'm not against technology", and then spoke at length about all the problems with technology—pollu- tion, land dispossession, social disintegration, etc. And yet, she prefaced this with, I'm not saying I'm against all these things. "Don't get me wrong gang. I still worship where you worship." Federici's hedging of her position about technology is representative of most of what we know of the contemporary left. Through Ellul's lens of technique, which includes the techniques of managing massive organizations, we can also

see why Marxists need to stay on the side of technology in order to envision their coordination of the vast industrial technological apparatus in their com- munized end game.

The fundamental premise of every political doctrine, to the extent that they refer to a person's disposition on capitalism, have already conceded to the technological imperative. Demotivational Training observes that people talk about the economy the way they talk about God, demonstrated by the imperative embedded in almost all discourse, "How can we get the economy to grow?" This imperative is disguised language for technological progress, for new means for creating new products. This would be obvious if it wasn't obscured by Marxists, most of whom are still focused on how we will communize these means when the social war finally places them in the hands of what's left of the proletariat. Communists, #acceleration- ists, tiqqunists, appelists, communi- zation theorists, and most anarchists (i.e. the radical left) carefully avoid taking anything less affirmative than the 'neutrality' position on technology because they still need to organize people at some level to continue producing the goodies of modern life that they seem to think they won't need to give up after their revolution. As the Situationists, still the gold standard for the best of Marxist theory, said, "[Advances in material development] could be turned to good use—but only along with everything else… You can survive farther away and longer, but never live more. Our task is not to celebrate such victories, but to make celebration victorious—cel- ebration whose infinite possibilities in everyday life are potentially unleashed by these technical advances." We find this optimistic attitude about technology more or less preserved in contemporary post-situationist theory such as Post-Civ: "Primitivists reject technology. We just reject the inappropriate use of technology.most technologies are being put to rather evil uses—whether warfare or simple ecocide—but that doesn't make technology inherently evil", and #accelerate "an accelerationist politics seeks to preserve the gains of late capitalism while going further than its value system, governance structures, and mass pathologies will allow." Sneakier still is the pamphlet, "Instructions for autonomy", which suggests that autonomy is something to be learned from The Party. Obviously autonomous actors need instruction (read: coercion) for operating technocivilization, because too many of us would just leave this world behind if we were given the chance.

All this lightweight theoretical work on technology neglects the fundamental mantra of technique, that because it was possible it was necessary. It is this logic that has unleashed technique and the means of production on humans and on the planet. It is impossible to separate the appropriate use of any technique from its full spectrum of possibilities, for it is the investigation of the full spectrum of instrumental possibilities that reveal each individual technique. Each stage of technical development becomes dependent on the prior stage either continuing or becoming replaced with something more efficient. Either way, the basis of huge inputs of energy and human plasticity must be reproduced in order to reproduce the means of production. This is especially the case with advanced industrial technology like microchips which are only possible as a result of several previous stages of technical development. To ensure this continues it is paramount to nurture a belief in progress.

Coercion, management, and organization are inseparable from the physical means of production. Marxists and the left have to ignore the reflection of the machine in social relations because they need to somehow coordinate the masses of workers in their vision of communism or communization. The only way to reproduce modern industrial technology is to guarantee the production and reproduction of a whole cornucopia of raw materials whose distribution is spread throughout the planet. It is impossible to envision accomplishing this without coercion. Marxists

need organization for their theory to be coherent which explains their superficial attitudes about technology. If the Marxists began a thorough investigation of technology, they would be forced to abandon their position!

The Situationists distinguish themselves, along with anarchists, for never having made calls for the seizure of the state, but they still were proponents of workers councils that would seize the means of production. For Ellul, the means of production only exist as a result of techniques of the state. "The basic effect of state action on techniques is to co-ordinate the whole complex. The state possesses the power of unification, since it is the planning power par excellence in society." After all, the state funds massive scientific ventures that open the way for technological progress and defends them with its courts and armed bureaucrats. It follows then that there simply is no difference between seizing the means of production and seizing the apparatus of the state. Here is Marx's debunked idea of seizing the state still alive and well.

Many people take no issue with positioning themselves as anti-capitalist and anti-state, but they seem to lose their nerve when confronted with the question of adopting an antitechnology position. Let's be clear: most of the gadgets we (are forced to) enjoy today are the result of the state, capital, and technique. There will not be the communization conception of 'flows' of humans moving with joy and spontaneity from one site of production to the next to continue reproducing the world as we aesthetically and formally experience it. Just about everything must go. We cannot continue to have the material stuff of this world if we want to abolish this world. Abolishing this world necessitates abolishing its means of production.

Techno-Capital Spirituality

> *Nothing belongs any longer to the realm of the gods or the supernatural. The individual who lives in the technical milieu knows very well that there is nothing spiritual anywhere. But man cannot live without the sacred. He therefore transfers his sense of the sacred to the very thing which has destroyed its former object: to technique itself. In the world in which we live, technique has become the essential mystery*
>
> ***The Technological Society***
>
> *Money truly is god.*
>
> ***An Inquiry into the Causes and Nature of the Poverty of People***

Voyer provides us with a critique of the Situationists. His critique is that the Situationists didn't scrutinize Marx with enough care and as a result the owners of society were able to defeat them by recuperating their ideas. Thus we must make Voyer's critique of Voyer, which is to say, to critique the Marxism in his thought. The aim here is to arrive at a critique that is beyond society's capacity for recuperation.

Voyer continues Marx's investigation of the commodity by taking capitalists at their word. This allows him to articulate capitalist cosmology. The ritualistic activity of capitalists, their ruthless pursuit of profit, invests money and commodities with universal Value. We encounter Value everyday as the pre-established price of all the shit we buy. "Value is the ability that products of work have to exchange themselves in thought without any human intervention." Marx spent hundreds of pages turning Value into something real, and in one sentence Voyer reveals it as

nothing more than a spook. From here, Voyer provides us, as Marx and the Situationists never did, with an adequate definition of what a commodity is:

> *a product of work that accomplishes exchange in thought, a product of work that by itself makes an abstraction of everything that could be an obstacle to exchange, a product of work gifted with spirit, a pre-exchanged*[1] *product of work. "Value" signifies nothing other than the thought of the commodity. "Commodity " signifies nothing other than a thing that thinks and talks. Some sing and dance…but all of them are really saying, underneath their apparent chatter.: "I am only in appearance bread, in reality I am wine, iron, cotton." In fact what they say is even more basic, more general, they say, "I am only in appearance bread, wine, etc. In fact I am three dollars." What do commodities think about? Money. Money is the idea that is in every commodity.*

At the core of Marxist thought is the focus on the relationship between the means of production and the immense accumulation of commodities, the economy being the collection of the totality of all the means of production and commodities. For most Marxists, just as trees, fungi, rain and animals make forests, humans make the economy. It is natural. Voyer begins his inquiry by showing that the economy is nothing more than anidea that runs on belief, that only exists as belief, and thus, does not really exist. The economy is the idea of a force that economizes everything. This is precisely what technique does to everything it touches. Here is where the commodity form and its general abstraction in the economy dovetail with Ellul's conception of technique. Each of these ideas point to the application of efficiency to every sphere of existence, including human communication. Voyer says:

> *The economy is the visible part of the commodity, the visible part of a world in which things practice humanity—practice universal exchange using humanity as a means. The invisible part of the world is the silence of man. The real part of this world is not the visible but the invisible part. The reality of this world is not the selfserving blabber of commodities but the silence of man. Thus in this world the true is only a moment of the false.*

In our secular society, technological progress and money are God. Their pursuit ennobles the pious industrialist. Money acts as the holy spirit dwelling within all commodities, the means of production is the body of God on Earth, and the technological God issues new means and innovations for sustaining the economy's endless growth.

But Voyer dismisses this fundamental relationship between the commodity and technology because he did not scrutinize Marx's belief in the liberatory potential of technology. In a footnote of An Inquiry, Voyer ridicules Ivan Illich and those who focus on tools for not understanding that, in our world, tools are first of all commodities.

> *For this economist, as for all economists, he has no doubt that the economy is the reality of the world, and that changing the world will result in a change in this reality. But in fact, the reality of the world, that is to say, the reality of its unreality, is not the economy*

[1] Voyer uses the word exchange in its more antiquated sense referring to the union of human communication and the exchange of material goods. The rise of commerce has eliminated this antiquated understanding of exchange which Voyer considers the "human activity par excellence."

but the commodity. The reality of the world is not "an industrial mode of production," nor a market mode of production, but the commodity… The economy is the bourgeois conception of the commodity, the bourgeois conception of the unreality of the world. And so the conformist economist Illich would like to reduce the central question of publicity to asimple question of tooling, and to hide first, that the modern tool, before being a tool, is a commodity and, second, that what is fundamentally wrong with the modern tool is what is fundamentally wrong with the commodity.

The problem is that Voyer is using a flawed conception of the tool as a tangible object, separate from other means. As we have noted, Ellul expands the definition of technology from the emphasis on tools epitomized by the machine, to the totality of techniques and their pursuit, including techniques of social conditioning and social massification. This complicates the inquiry into the nature of the commodity because it means that the commodity is a technique, a tool, a means. The commodity could not have been unleashed without the immense accumulation of techniques, and vice versa.

Capitalist technique is designed to make things that think about money. Seizing these techniques—the state, the factories, the media apparatus, public transit, laboratories —and projecting them into even the most optimistic of circumstances, as theorized by communization theorists, will still result in producing things that think. Voyer either misses, or regards as insignificant, that the universal equivalence that Value and the commodity realize is a masterwork of rendering human communication efficient. It streamlines and harnesses the communication of billions of wage-slaves. If the commodity is a product of work that is pre-ex- changed, machines pre-accomplish all meaningful work, so that a commodity is in fact a pre-accomplished product that is pre-exchanged. At last, this society has realized its end game of having no reason to speak or do anything. Texture has finally been abolished! Marx became enamored with the power of the means of production and the specter of his mistake is still with us.

The similarity we noticed between these two texts is apparent to anyone reading them side by side. There is an endless number of analogies between Voyer's inquiry into the commodity economy and Ellul's investigation of technique.

Ellul says, "Technique transforms everything that it touches into a machine"::"The essential characteristic of the commodity is that it first reproduces its own conditions, its perpetual self-justification, the new unknown worlds necessary for its development, and that nothing ever can oppose it in this domain where it stands unrivaled to the point that it is capable of destroying the world if nothing essential opposes it" says Voyer.

Voyer says, "The civilizing role of the commodity is to socialize in its horrific way things that were not social"::"Technique cannot be otherwise than totalitarian. It can be truly efficient and scientific only if it absorbs an enormous number of phenomena and brings into play the maximum of data. In order to coordinate and exploit synthetically, technique must be brought to bear on the great masses in every area" says Ellul.

Ellul says,"[Man] is a device for recording effects and results obtained by various techniques. He does not make a choice of complex, and in some ways, human motives. He can decide only in favor of the technique that gives the maximum efficiency. But this is not a choice. A machine could effect the same operation. ":: "Alienation is not the alienation of work…it is the alienation of the essential human activity—exchange—and

> *the alienation of that which in this activity can be alienated, the idea of exchange. The more exchange becomes general and universal, the more it becomes the affairs of things and the more humanity becomes simply the spectator of the human activity of things." says Voyer.*

Both texts are an attempt to challenge the totality at the depths of its foundations and in the process their critiques corrode into one another, each from their particular perspective. The key point of connection is their analysis of the economy, because economics can be defined (to the chagrin of economists) as "the science of efficient choices."

The technological God is the deity that fills the breach opened by the bourgeois revolution. He is the true man behind the curtain. Destroying this belief in technological progress, and its various calling cards - that everything is relative, that we believe that we don't believe anything anymore,[2] and a superficial apathy masking warm feelings for progress - is the prerequisite to the downfall of this society.

Techno-pessimism: Ellul's Technological Society and Paoli's *Demotivational Training*

> *...if a sudden change should occur and public opinion should turn against technique...the whole social edifice would be at stake.*
>
> ***The Technological Society***

We are living in an era in which technology is continually rousing partisans into its morality, a morality of means, of the ever more purified pursuit of means. "[Technique] evolves in a purely causal way: the combination of preceding elements furnishes new technical elements. There is no purpose or plan that is being progressively realized. There is not even a tendency toward human ends. We are dealing with a phenomenon blind to the future, in a domain of integral causality." We see here on the one hand an articulation of degraded postmodernism with no beliefs, no ends, no goals, and on the other a technological morality that frames everything. "[E]verything which is technique is necessarily used as soon as it is available. This is the principal law of our age."

These traits of technique—the pure pursuit of means as an end, and the immediate implementation of newly discovered means—are more pernicious than they first appear to our post-modern secular eyes. The concern of this world is to figure out how to get things done. These are the laws built into every conversation, every computer, every blueprint, and every tool. Effects and affects are always peripheral, secondary, useless. Experience and feeling are always at the mercy of the cause of technology.

An instrument as complex as a personal computer is obviously an advanced realization of the "integrated causality" Ellul names, and it simply cannot exist without a technologically advanced global domination apparatus. It is representative of the depths of the prevailing naivete that we can't imagine or realize what it would take to produce and reproduce a vegan burrito, but some still think computers will magically keep producing themselves in our utopias. This

[2] "The difference between ancient society, modernism, and post-modernism is this: the ancients knew that they believed, the modernists believed that they knew, and the post-modernists believe that they don't believe in anything anymore. It is precisely this latter belief that we have to destroy." *Demotivational Training* p11-12

isn't to suggest adopting a morality with regard to technology, it is to demonstrate that we are already intensely moralistic about technology; most people think it is good (while retaining an un-confessed pessimism). This belief simply has to go so that new ethics regarding technology and tools can blossom.

One approach to establishing these ethics can be found in Demo- tivational Training. This text has a considerable amount of theoretical overlap with The Technological Society, in particular Ellul's pessimism about the utter lack of means for recourse in the face of the power of the global techno-capitalist system. But Paoli sees this pessimism as a peculiar kind of ethic and form of self-defense within a system that is desperate to economize, integrate, and motivate all of us.

The crux of Paoli's argument also shares an analogy with a small, but fundamental concept describing the nature of technique that Ellul calls the 'self-augmentation' character of technology. People have a tendency to simplify and perfect their tasks and work, which ostensibly should improve quality of life over time in an ecologically balanced culture. But within the unified totality of the technological apparatus this urge is inverted against us. Each increase in efficiency adopted within a particular technical field slowly spreads and augments the totality of technical operations. It is the problem of how reforms rescue the sick society they intend to change, applied to the most granular tasks. As technique continues to integrate everything, it becomes more and more dependent upon the minor improvements of the technical world produced by its workers.

Paoli's title Demotivational Training mocks the raging war within corporations to figure out how to extract creativity from their human resources who have grown remedial as a result of living in the very world technique creates! Paoli slyly employs the degradation of life against itself in a desperate attempt to find a glimmer of hope for resistance. To hasten what he theorizes as the epidemic of demotivation plaguing late capitalism, Paoli coaches us to fight the drive to improve our work environment and allow the system to slowly degenerate. In the closing section of Demo- tivational Training, he argues for us to "cancel the project" because radical projects are often the kindling of dominant society's fire.

Although Ellul never suggested canceling the project, he was keenly aware of the futility of them. We were troubled throughout our reading of The Technological Society by why Ellul has not received more credit for providing a total critique of society. One reason is that he clearly did not have a militant public relations orientation like his situationist peers. Another reason is that Ellul's analysis lead him to the conclusion that the technological society had not only become autonomous, but that revolt, incapable of stopping the techno-behemoth, was a new kind of opiate of the masses.

> *Technique diffuses the revolt of the few and thus appeases the need of the millions for revolt. The same could be said of all the "movements" started since the turn of the century in response to the frustration of the most elementary human impulses. But can it be maintained, therefore, that social movements such as surrealism, youth hostels, revolutionary parties, anarchism, and so on have failed? They have failed in that they have not achieved their own goals of re-creating the conditions of freedom and justice or of allowing man to rediscover a genuine sex life or intellectual life. But they have been completely successful from another point of view. They have performed the sociological function of integration. Technical means are so important, so difficult to achieve and to manage, that it is easier to have them if there is a group, a movement, an association. Such movements are based on authentic impulses and valid feelings, and do allow a few*

> *individuals access to modes of expression which otherwise would have been closed to them. But their essential function is to act as vicarious intermediaries to integrate into the technical society these same impulses and feelings which are possessed by millions of other men. Herein lies their sociological character. Certain deep ecstatic instincts and impulses would otherwise escape the jurisdiction of the technical society and become a threat to it. Movements…are a sociological necessity to a technical milieu.*

This sheer pessimism would have been anathema to Guy Debord and his merry Situationists.[3] An additional reason that Ellul's work is less known is simply that his emphasis on the critique of technology was perhaps too dissonant for his era to accept. A half century ago, it was still possible to believe in the coming techno-utopia. We wager that no one really believes this today. Polls have demonstrated that Americans are no longer optimistic about technology,[4] and here we are forced to contend with the strange schizophrenia that characterizes technological affect. A shizophrenia plagues the modern mind that holds a techno-pessimism and techno-optimism in its head simultaneously. We feel the peril and the convenience in our gadgets at once. This sort of tension cannot last, it will erode itself and decompose. Similar to Marx, Ellul seems to believe in the reality and power of the object of his study more than is appropriate, and this is where his pessimism meets with Paoli's observation that demotiva- tion—of the worker or activist—is precisely what this world is producing and cannot bear. Because society can never deliver on its promises, it is generating a deficit in the realm of motivation and belief. This is perhaps the Achilles heel of the dominant order.

Applied Anti-Tech

> *Why can'tpeople talk to each other in public places, places that are so incorrectly named? Here is the essential, unique question that contains all the others. Every other question that claims to be interesting in itself is an impostor, reformism, a diversionary maneuver on the part of the enemy. On this question, above all on the response to this question, the divide opens between the friends and enemies of money, the friends and enemies of the state. The question of the silence of people in the streets is the essential question. The response to this question is the strategic response to all questions. The response to this question suddenly provokes generalized chatter. One can easily understand that the enemy will do everything in its power not to have this question addressed.*
>
> ***An Inquiry into the Causes and Nature of the Poverty of People***

One night, during the twilight of an Occupy camp we'd been frequenting, a man began unfolding a small table near the center of camp. After he erected it, he set up a coffee maker and plugged it into a net of extension cords that lead to a generator. A friend chatted the man up, and he told us with excitement that he was going to brew coffee and sell it for $0.50 a cup. Our

[3] According to Ellul, the situationists declined Ellul's application to join them because he was a Christian. This is probably another reason why people have ignored him.

[4] "A 2005 poll of 69,000 people in North America revealed that a majority, 51%, can be classified as "technological pessimists," meaning that they are at best indifferent to modern technology, and at worst outright hostile toward it." found in David Skrabina's introduction to Technological Slavery. Forrester Research study, "The State of Consumers and Technology: Benchmark 2005."

friend suddenly became stern and assertive, and told him, "You can't do that here. We're not selling stuff here." Here was the seed of a group magical taboo. The camp, like all the others, was destroyed days later, but this magical taboo lives on. Standing Rock, for all of its shortcomings, can boast the honor of having maintained a habitat of industrial resistance free of commerce that lasted nearly a year and hosted tens of thousands of people. But unlike Occupy, prayer and spirituality were explicit goals and practices at Standing Rock. Many natives we met there from varied backgrounds and factions all insisted that non-natives begin to develop a spiritual life.

Money and technological progress have reigned within the spiritual void opened by the Enlightenment for several centuries in Europe, and they have conquered almost the entire globe. Technology is what secular people invest their belief in, and spending and making money is the daily practice of this peculiar form of malignant spiritual nihilism. The reigning sense that life is meaningless is a lie. This world, the world of progress, the world of the commodity, the technological society, is meaningless, but only because it is founded on such absurd logic. That logic is this: The ends justify the means, and the ends are means. The means justify the means. But just as any elementary school prisoner learns by the time they matriculate, you can't use the same word in its definition, lest the word become meaningless. So then, this world is meaningless, but we don't know if life itself is meaningless. What we can see is that humans generate meaning as a matter of our existence, of our daily activity. Even our dreadfully isolated technological society bombards us with meaning, it is just meaning that is meaningless, meaning that is false, a world that is totally false. The irony of this world is that to be a nihilist in a nihilist society is to believe that life has meaning!

The Situation is Hopeless, Just Hopeless: A Pessimist's Review of *The Uninhabitable Earth* by Mallory Wournos

> *Soon people will be coming here to make documentaries about how we've been forgotten, about how nothing has been done.*
>
> survivor of the Brumadinho dam collapse

> *Some call them 'mountains of doom.' Dotting the landscape of once-green Wales to this day are the stygian slag heaps resulting from centuries-old collieries, mammoth piles of debris that tower above the mining towns. They are cheerless sights, which one writer likened to "spiritless cathedrals of the industrial age." As was proven in horror at Aberfan on October 21, 1966, these looming giants are killers.*
>
> from the entry on the Aberfan landslide in *Darkest Hours*

I've been a disaster enthusiast since I was young enough to read. That might sound strange and gruesome, but I somehow got my hands on a massive tome of despair called *Darkest Hours: A Narrative Encyclopedia of Worldwide Disasters by Jay Robert Nash.* I was mesmerized by the horror, more visceral and terrifying than the movies that my Grandpa was the only one who would let me watch late at night; pictures of tangled metal cutting through flesh, searchers balancing precariously on rubble searching for survivors, grief on their faces, and rows of bodies covered in white sheets laying on cracked and crooked roads after an earthquake. The first entry is the tragic landslide in Aberfan, Wales, where a slagheap 800 ft. high was weakened, "releasing a two-million- ton torrent of rock, coal, and mud, which cascaded onto the Pantglas Junior and Infants School and 17 other buildings… crushed to death and buried alive were 145 persons, of whom 116 were children." Stories like this profoundly shaped my view on the disasters we inflict upon the world and therefore ourselves, more than any statistics on things like carbon levels; I had no concept of that then and no use for them now.

I still harbor a passion for these stories, so when I heard about *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming* by David Wallace-Wells, billed by one critic as "a terrifying polemic that reads like a cross between Stephen King and Stephen Hawking" (I hoped for more of the former than the latter), I was excited to see what the latest in climate change literature had to offer, and what it offers is an overwhelming accounting of humanity's sins.

The book is divided into chapters that, like Dante, take us through different hells we are already experiencing, and describe punishments we can only begin to appreciate: heatwaves, famine, floods, wildfires, pollution, disease, economic collapse, and conflict. We're talking destruction on such a scale that it is considered a *hyperobject;* a "conceptual fact so large and complex that, like the internet, it can never be properly comprehended." That climate is something

we have no control over is the cause of epidemics of distress and depression, which this book will not alleviate. Nor should it.

Anybody in the United States who has gone to see a therapist, psychiatrist, or other mental health professional has inevitably heard the positivity spiel. It goes like this: you go in for terrible depression, anxiety, or any number of conditions that are branded abnormal or deviant. Sometimes this is because of personal prob- lems—grief over the death of a loved one for instance—or visual and auditory hallucinations, things that in the past been were the realm of shamans and witches, but are now efficiently exorcised through pharmaceuticals. However, more and more people are seeking help because of a deep existential crisis, which at its root is the state of the world.

The response of these experts is to dismiss your concerns as something to avoid thinking about (perhaps using behavior modification), something holding you back (from reaching your potential), and something that can be fixed (with the right medications). Becoming an empty shell is better, apparently, than feeling an emotional connection to the world, which in these times can only distress you. The last thing this society wants is for people to stop participating, by which they mean going to work each day and contributing to society. Panic attacks? There's a pill for that. Nightmares? There's a pill for that as well.

But maybe nightmares are real, and none of us can ultimately escape them. Everybody will be touched by the consequences of humanity's hubris and ecocidal ways. Ultimately, this acknowledgment is what lies at the core of *The Uninhabitable Earth.*

Each climate-related event can be expanded on to reveal the terrifying details of what we have faced, are facing, and will face. It would have been nice for Wallace-Wells to get even more detailed with his descriptions. Perhaps it's my penchant for the morbid, but the best example of this may be Luis Urrea's *The Devil's Highway,* which tells the story of a group of Mexican migrants who were found dead after being ditched by a coyote in the Sonoran desert. Tracing their path to disaster, Luis does not spare the reader, as the migrants weren't spared on their trek to seek out a better life in a country hostile to their dreams. The description of their fate is stomach-churning. Here, he describes all six stages of heat death: heat stress, heat fatigue, heat syncope, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. He describes each in detail. Consider the following, which is just one stage, the final one:

> *Your blood is as low as it can get. Dehydration has reduced all your inner streams to sluggish mud- holes. Your heart pumps harder and harder to get fluid and oxygen to your organs. Empty vessels within you collapse. Your sweat runs out.*
>
> *With no sweat, your body's swamp-cooler breaks. The thermostat goes haywire. You are having a core meltdown.*
>
> *Your temperature redlines—you hit 105, 106, 108 degrees. Your body panics and dilates all blood capillaries near the surface, hoping to flood your skin with blood to cool it off. You blish. Your eyes turn red: blood vessels burst, and later, the tissue of the whites literally cooks until it goes pink, then a well-done crimson.*
>
> *Your skin gets terribly sensitive. It hurts, it burns. Your nerves flame. Your blood heats under your skin. Clothing feels like sandpaper. Some walkers at this point strip nude. Originally, BORSTAR rescuers thought this stripping was a delirious panic, an attempt to cool off at the last minute. But often, the clothing was eerily neat, carefully folded*

and left in nice little piles beside the corpses. They realized that walkers couldn't stand their nerve-endings being chafed by their clothes. The walkers stripped to get free of the irritation.

Once they're naked, they're surely hallucinating. They dig burrows in the soil, apparently thinking they'll escape the sun. Once underground, of course, they bake like a pig at a luau. Some dive into the sand, thinking it's water, and they swim in it until they pass out. They choke to death, their throats filled with rocks and dirt. Cutters can only assume they think they're drinking water.

Your muscles, lacking water, feed on themselves. They break down and start to rot. Once rotting in you, they dump rafts of dying cells into your already sludgy bloodstream.

Proteins are peeling off your dying muscles. Chunks of cooked meat are falling out of your organs, to clog your other organs. The system closes down in a series. Your kidneys, your bladder, your heart. They jam shut. Stop. Your brain sparks. Out. You're gone.

Wallace-Wells doesn't see himself as an environmentalist, or even, as they say, a "nature person," having grown up in cities "enjoying gadgets built by industrial supply chains I hardly think twice about." He truly represents the average person in the West today and this is exactly who this book is for, because presumably none of this will be new for anybody reading this paper, who are already critical of civilization. That some pretty fringe ideas are being presented to a mainstream audience is what makes it important. Some of the names he drops will be familiar to many of you—James C. Scott, Robinson Jeffers, and Paul Kingsnorth to name a few. But to most these will be new names and new ideas, perhaps in a paradoxical way providing com- fort—in a time where we can find little—by guiding us to new paths secreted away. That is, if you see the coming chaos and revenge of the wild to be comforting, with minds unclouded by the delusions identified by Wallace-Wells:

The slowness of climate change is a fairy tale, perhaps as pernicious as the one that says it isn't happening at all, and comes to us bundled with several others in an anthology of comforting delusions: that global warming is an arctic saga unfolding remotely; that it is strictly a matter of sea level and coastlines, not an enveloping crisis sparing no place and leaving no life undeformed; that it is a crisis of the 'natural' world, not the human one; that those two are distinct and that we live today somehow outside or beyond or at the very least defended against nature, not inescapably within and literally overwhelmed by it; that wealth can be a shield against the ravages of warming; that the burning of fossil fuels is the price of continued economic growth; that growth, and the technology it produces, will allow us to engineer our way out of environmental disaster; that there is any analogue to the scale or scope of this threat, in the long span of human history, that might give us confidence in staring it down.

For each of these narratives, the author provides ample evidence to chisel them apart, using science and statistics to back them with examples from both micro and macro catastrophes. It's a laundry list of climate horror you can't ignore; readers are strapped down with their eyes pried open, forced to look at what we have brought upon ourselves. Nature's ultraviolence, in the form of hurricanes, earthquakes, and other disasters.

Again, readers of *Black Seed may* feel this is tedious. More of interest to green anarchists is what Wallace- Wells has to say further into the book, where he talks about "the climate kaleidoscope," beginning with a chapter on storytelling—one of the most important things that can be done by those of us hurting, fighting, and struggling to survive in this doomed society. Writing our own myths to counter those of the worldeaters is imperative, but no easy task considering our scant resources versus the vast majority of the global media.

One of the most damaging myths that haunts the new man, *homo in- dustrialis,* is the idea that surroundings of concrete, strip malls, air-conditioned cars, and heated homes have insulated mankind from the dangers of the natural world. We have not moved farther away from nature, on the contrary. In his brilliant and harrowing book, *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan,* Brett Walker describes this well:

> *the pain and suffering that remind us of our relationship to nature is caused by the modern technologies and engineered environments that are meant to shelter us from certain kinds of pain, meaning that, paradoxically, the more technologically driven modern life becomes, and the more alienated from nature it thus appears, the more we are reminded in painful ways of our timeless connection to na- ture…Our bodies are porous and easily insulted—easily industrialized—inescapably tied to the environments we inhabit; not only the food we eat but the air we breathe and the water we drink can prove dangerous. In this respect, modernity and its technologies and engineered landscapes have not distanced us from nature…*

The stories in *The Uninhabitable Earth* also remind us that we are intricately linked to our surroundings. Poison the land, and we too are poisoned. Modern medicine will do everything it can to discover the resulting human diseases and treat them (as long as they can afford it, or to stem the tide of a cataclysmic epidemic). Scientists all over the world devoting their lives to discovering how to cheat death. From individual mortality to human extinction we are taught to fear non-existence, so people tighten their blinders until they can't see their intimate relationship with the wild, and choose instead to continue believing they have overcome the kinds of problems other an imals face, up to and including death. These ideas have played a large part in leading us to where we are today. There will always be consequences for our actions, and there's no way to beat nature when we are part of it. Each new technology brings with it new possibilities for frightening events: consider a future in which it's commonplace to hear about another electric vehicle exploding, or another self-driving car plowing through a crowd, adding to the already massive numbers of yearly vehicle deaths. One doesn't need to think of nanotechnology and AI to see that where we're headed isn't going to be pleasant, especially when things already look so bleak.

Humans lost when they began dismissing omens of doom, and instead turned to numbers and experts. These numbers might tell us, for instance, that this many whales turned up with plastic in their stomachs, the weight of that plastic, and all the information that can be garnered from the corpse before it explodes spectacularly, cold reason masking the suffering of the magnificent creature. The 40 lbs of plastic is more than enough evidence that we have crossed the point of no return, and yet we collect and search through more and more data in a desperate attempt to find an answer that will magically fix the state the world is in. Why are people afraid to look? An article written by Wallace -Wells posted on the *NY Mag* website addresses this:

> *Why can't we see the threat right in front of us? The most immediate answer is obvious:*
>
> *It's fucking scary. For years now, researchers have known that 'unrealistic optimism is a pervasive human trait, ' one that, whatever you know about how social-media addicts get used to bad news, leads us to discount scary information and embrace the sunnier stuff.*
>
> *And the generation of economists and behavioral psychologists who've spent the last few decades enumerating all of our cognitive biases have compiled a whole literature of problems with how we process the world, almost every single example of which distorts and distends our perception of a changing climate, typically by making us discount the threat.*

So many remain optimistic, even though governments show no signs of implementing their own regulations. Even the extremely moderate proposal of the Green New Deal, a bill that was more symbolic than anything, was killed before ever being seriously considered by lawmakers (see the now infamous speech overflowing with memes by Senator Lee of Utah). By now we should know that these green energy solutions mean nothing except fatter wallets for those who invest in these scams. Ask the villagers in China who militantly resisted the building of solar panel factories. They know better than anyone that there's nothing "green" about it. They are simply new technologies that don't replace old tech running on fossil fuels, but are merely placed adjacent to them, creating an even larger footprint.

If you're a pessimist, don't expect to make any friends. It's more likely you will be dismissed outright—slandered as defeatist or worse—when presenting someone with evidence that challenges their sunny dispositions about what humanity is and what it is capable of (we as a species have proven plenty capable of destruction). This is just more reason to push back against the crack of the activist whip that demands everybody do something, even though most of us realize that changes in, say, individual consumption, would have to be on a worldwide scale. If the hippies failed to conjure their worldwide awakening (proto-wokeness), what chance to these idealists have in this much more fragmented society that just can't stop consuming at a rate unprecedented in human history? Their answers only rearrange the same logic of capitalism that created and supports these massive but unstable states to begin with.

There is a reason for the cult of optimism: it keeps people going. In an effort to prevent burnout you must have hope that you can make a change. Usually optimists, curiously, have no concrete solutions to the worst of the problems on the horizon, only judgement for those who they see as apathetic. Wallace-Wells distances himself from pessimism many times (e.g. "Each of us imposes suffering on our future selves every time we flip on a light switch, buy a plane ticket, or fail to vote. Now we all share the responsibility to write the next act.") Not only does he describe himself as an optimist, he makes the claim that to be pessimistic about humanity's prospects is to be apathetic to human and non-human suffering. This couldn't be further from the truth.

Brett Walker's *Toxic Archipelago* begins with a horrific story of a pod of orcas becoming trapped between fast moving thick ice and the rocky coast. A mother, desperately, vainly, trying to protect her calf, was the only one to be rescued by locals. The remaining 11 were crushed, slashed and ripped apart by the jagged rocks, the sound of their screams breaking through the howling wind. Of course, when scientists performed necropsies, they found the PCBs and mercury detected in the blubber to be eleven times higher than normal for whales in Japanese coastal waters. He goes on to reflect on choosing this story to open the prologue:

I must confess that, partway through writing this book, when I heard the story of this destroyed orca pod, a darker tone began to permeate parts of my analysis and narrative. The image of a mother orca trying in vain to protect her deformed calf was hard to shake, particularly because I assume some blame, as a member of homo sapien industrialis, for their destruction…I tried to exorcise the darker side of this book during later editing and rewriting, but I was unable or, quite possibly, unwilling to do so. No doubt, when they read the pages ahead, some of my colleagues will cry out, 'He narrates environmental declension!' And rightly so, I should add. But I remain unapologetic: I am a historian and I am calling it as I see it, and I see environmental decline and deterioration everywhere.

Unfortunately in the end, Wal- lace-Wells, even in the face of his growing collection of similar horror stories, suggests if we really cared we'd run to the voting booths posthaste. His point isn't about purity, but about a sober assessment of the scale of change necessary, and I agree with Wallace-Wells that the only thing that would make even the smallest impact (using human suffering as the barometer here), is massive political engagement that would put enough pressure on the jugular of corporations and other profiteers of industry to choke them out, as no regular person on the street has any power to force the issue at all.

Is all this negativity just a sad and desperate plea to act now before its too late (as if it already isn't)? For the pessimist, the answer is no. Pessimism has no solutions or answers to these disasters. However things change it won't be for the better. Even places seemingly out of reach will one day face the wrath of the wild forces. Nature will cause more destruction than anarchists could ever dream of achieving, and she shows no remorse, no discrimination. Anybody is a potential victim. While some in the direct path at this juncture are most vulnerable, even the well-off—who can simply rebuild or move entirely—will suffer. There might not be any perilous journeys for them across deserts and oceans to reach safer land, but rest assured they won't be able to evade the inevitable cataclysms to come.

Most people have no time, or are unwilling to listen to prophets of doom these days, being stuck in front of glowing screens and working to survive. And when people finally leave their jobs they want to come home to binge Netflix, not read about the latest climate horrors. Hell, they know if they wanted to there's no reason to even check the headlines. One can simply walk out into the city and see that suffering and death is all around us, and that we suffer ourselves, every day, from civilization's debilitating effects, both psychological or physical.

Calamity and its "invisible undermining of self," also undermines our ideas of reality. Charles Darwin, after experiencing an earthquake in Concepcion, Chile, wrote: "A bad earthquake at once destroys our oldest associations: the earth, the very emblem of society, has moved beneath our feet like a thin crust over a liquid; one second of time has created in the mind a strange idea of insecurity, which hours of reflection would not have produced." This is what can be called "nature's agency;" a reminder that *homo industrialis,* despite seeming omnipotence as it builds skyscrapers higher and higher, is actually pitifully weak in the face of nature's strength. Ultimately, we aren't in charge. Is this fatalism? Perhaps, but maybe that is better than being in denial of the storm on the horizon. Coming to accept this means giving up control to the chaotic forces of the wild, where we will drop to our knees in awe of its power, relinquishing our stolen crown.

There's A Twitter for That?! by Aragorn!

This article has nothing to do with the IAF. I have no problem whatsoever with the idea that there is a new "collective of Indigenous anarchists that includes one Indigenous Marxist," and that is "striving for anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and antifascism." I mean I also don't think it matters—other than being a sign of the times—that something that I value has found its voice on the Internet (for better and definitely for worse). But it is surreal and demonstrates a lot of things that are worth reflecting on and evaluating about radical projects up till now and into the future.

There is an indigenous Twitter?

On the face of it the idea it is a no- brainer that there is a little corner of Twitter where indigenous activists find each other and share information. It couldn't be more resource-light to share news about indigenous action, analysis, and strategy. Twitter is also a perfect medium to keep updating, pinging, and doing the bare minimum of what web apps do to keep one in the loop.

Which is the say that the churn of Twitter is no different than that of a dozen other services one feels obligated to subscribe to, to understand the zeitgeist of our time. Why should indigeneity be any different? Why does it feel so bitter and hollow to say that out loud?

I do not begrudge indigenous people the right to not disappear. It is stupid to have to even pause and say it. But my aesthetic revulsion to the largest platform of one-way communication also means that I think we should not stand mute. But what I want is impossible. I want the deep underlying reality of native life to be formed like a sort of laser beam. I want it to burn into the soul of a humanity that is fucking it all up. I want indigeneity to be a force of change that is undeniable, permanent, and fatal to the logic of Western Empire. Twitter feels like something else entirely.

Is it a qualitative improvement to print ten thousand pieces of this paper articulating an indigenous position than to share with ten thousand people up-to-the-minute information? Well, yes it is, but the effort this represents in writing, designing, and distributing might be worthless. It depends on your goal, of course.

If your goal is to create an aesthetic of indigenous desire, to reflect on a generational question, or to build a movement, then a newspaper is probably an historical artifact. It is far too resource-intensive, and it is so fucking slow: this project is the result of months of effort by a half dozen people or so. It wasn't full time work but it was deliberative and iterative. Whereas creating a Twitter account takes one motivated person and a pot of coffee. More pointedly while a Twitter account can call itself anything, whether it in fact is a federation or exemplifies the best in anti-bad-stuff thought, is a matter of belief. There is no accountability.

There is, in fact, nothing human at all about a Twitter account, but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

What there is is search. Like an interest in beach volleyball, the Kar- dashians, or space travel, all it takes to be part of Indigenous Twitter is the capacity to type the term into the search bar. Today it leads you to news about Brazil and the potential genocide of natives by Bolsonaro, the state of Maine replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day, and a landmark legal victory in Ecuador. There was also an ad for the new John Wick movie. I'll download that in six months once it makes it to the torrent sites.

Support and support

Even as I type this I feel so exhausted. If you have made it this far in an issue of the Green Anarchist newspaper *Black Seed* you don't need your engine primed about whether the corporation Twitter Inc is on the side of the total liberation of people along lines best described as anti-modern, transformative, or indigenous. You are for this total liberation, as I am, but the devil, as they say, is in the details. How do we do it. How can the process of doing it bring us together, stronger, and heal all the ways we are broken.

What does support even mean any more, since we are naturally for all of the good things. We can even repeat how For Good we are with chants and repeated group behaviors. We can write checks. We can sign up for every social media expression of how downright good we are and how we have materially, existentially, and/or quantifiably supported good things. What does support even mean? I ask that question sincerely. Especially in the context of the Internet, the idea of support seems to be more about being seen as supportive rather than actual material support. I mean it is obvious that if, as for many artists, exposure is valid payment than linking to information can be seen as support. Support is clearly a modern kind of newspeak term that is code for performing support but isn't necessarily that related to actual support, as say, an exchange of material goods would be.

Should support require some sort of material sacrifice to be considered actual? It seems so depression- era thinking to even say, but a soup line up in front of an old WPA sign is support in a way that a thousand retweets don't seem to compare to. But somehow the modern human animal thinks it is the other way around. In the attention economy we get to eat dust and celebrate celebrity. Our interest is in logo design and color contrast action shots and not a lifeway beyond recognition, not reducible to a meme.

It is worth noting that when one subscribes to the IAF Twitter feed the recommended other feeds include IGD (It's Going Down), Black Rose Federation, and Revolutionary Left Radio. Three projects that are nothing more than support sites (although IGD and RLR arguably have an entertainment aspect to them, BRF does not.). By the end of a day (or an hour) one could arguably support all the possible Twitter things, and not one person would notice.

Orientalism

Buried in here are a number of issues that are hard to access. If I were to indict the news/support/entertainment complex it would begin with an examination of who we are versus who we cover. If we are part of a movement to attack and change the world then sharing stories of strangers who use our terminology, wear our clothes, and eat our food doesn't seem particularly

problematic. What if our stories are actually stories of other people who we don't and can't talk to. Where do our stories become their stories?

> *Orientalism is a term used by art historians and literary and cultural studies scholars for the imitation or depiction of aspects in the Eastern world. These depictions are usually done by writers, designers, and artists from the West.*
>
> Wikipedia

In the universe that measures people by how racist, sexist, transphobic, and generally "fucked up" people are, to be orientalist is pretty bad. It is among the worst kind of "othering" and is often taken to be the final word on a person. Being orientalist is also central to the colonial project and to every project that has otherwise been described as a "support project" up till now. It is the patronizing idea that we (by any definition of we) know how to help people better than they can help themselves. And it has a whiff of being true, as often times we (as colonized subjects who also colonize) have more resources (money) than those we are helping. As Jesus said in Luke 6:20-21 "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." He said a bunch of other assertive shit about how great the poor are but I think you get the point. Christians, and by extension the West, draw a line between us and them and it has a lot of strange and terrible implications.

I want to use the term "orientalism" to describe those implications, to get at a point that isn't particularly friendly to many, many people who I would describe as friends. As much as I find anarchist security culture (which essentially can be described as an arrogance about how important we are as individuals) annoying I basically agree with it to the extent that our representation should be controlled by us (collectively and individually) and not them (systems of control that usually are state agencies). Selfies not fixed cameras.

But how we (collectively and individually) choose to represent ourselves, especially in "our" media, is nightmarishly terrible. The same Twitter search I referenced earlier (re: indigenous) is a case in point. Representations of natives are either as performers (in traditional regalia) or members of bourgeois culture (in proper clean clothes at bill signings and whatnot). Paper dolls, only very rarely with a third dimension. But media, even and especially "our" media, is even worse.

Again, nothing new here, I've been railing against the orientalism of natives by the left for decades (as have more articulate voices than mine who have inspired me). The newer point is this: in our fight against orientalism we have chosen to create an empty space where representation would otherwise exist. In our yearning to not-unfairly-por- tray-our-subject we have generally chosen to say nothing. When given the choice we have been vague, and that has allowed our position to be mispresented by those who have no compunction about orientalizing everything around them. Rather than articulating a charismatic position that contradicts the orientalist one, we have (seemed to) hedge.

The IAF is not a bad actor here. Their website is a better impression of them than their twitter feed and although there isn't a lot of original content, what there isn't terrible. It focuses on border issues, ongoing struggles, and some history. It is representational and while the issue of orientalism is not confronted, there is this glancing blow in the *About* section.

> *We must be able to articulate an Anarchism that both speaks to the material realities of our relatives both living on the rez and in diaspora, all while maintaining the diverse perspectives of our peoples' various cultures. We must create a place where these conversations can be had... where our ideas and dreams can be fleshed out. IAF strives to provide the space for this to happen.*

This is a very high bar to set for your project and it is not really in evidence in either the Twitter or website content. What is in evidence is a version of other people's words and activism. The place where conversations can be had is a Twitter stream, with other anons, in the chaos of an unthreaded, tweetstorm environment.

I don't mean to lean so heavily on Twitter (although I've never had a satisfactory conversational experience there), as every forum, platform, and mechanism on the Internet has the same or similar problems. Instead I'm attempting to sympathize with IAF's problem. I've had the same enormously large and ambitious goal and have also failed at it.

The medium is the message in this case. If you want 10,000 subscribers and to utilize social media platforms by their own logic you don't also get to not-be-orientalist. You get to tell stories, many of them might even be good ones, but at some point they aren't your stories. They are someone else's and any rhetoric about "fleshing out our ideas and dreams" is aspirational, and not exactly honest. It might even be fair to say these stories are a mechanism by which we orientalize our own experience.

Federalism vs Confederalism

If I understand correctly, the IAF and their website is somehow related to the FAI (Federation Anarquista Indigena) in South America. I'll provide links to these groups so you can do your own research as I have no first hand experience to draw upon beyond what I've read there. But, perhaps, how these groups are linked and by extension how we would also link to them might be an important lesson for the future. In a time when we want to abolish all of the things, are terms like federation, confederacy, and autonomy salvageable and if they are, how?

Here it is appropriate to state a bias. The use of the term "federation" is troubled in the English language anarchist space. To use the word in good faith in the 21st century is a short cut to position yourself as a class-struggle anarchist: as a red (communist) anarchist rather than a black, green, or purple one. For an indigenous anarchist project to align itself, even unwittingly, with this position is strange. More pointedly, there is a fifty year tradition of anarchist federations including SRAF (Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation), Love & Rage, NEFAC, and Black Rose Federation that is worth knowing and distancing oneself from. This is not to say these federations are bad but that they hold positions about the primacy of, for instance, the working class' role in social revolution, that are a pretty far distance from most indigenous perspectives.

On a structural level, the question is where do we draw the lines. A federation has certain implications that seem onerous to me but I understand why people would make them. The first is the question of organization coherence. The second is a form of organizing that hasn't exactly been successful in the past few decades. (It hasn't succeeded at social revolution but perhaps it's been a good way to throw a potluck or bake- sale.) But my experience is in North American activist circles. YMMV. I consider a federation an enclosure but it doesn't have to be and perhaps

the IAF/FAI points to a new model. One that hasn't been explored by the IAF literature at this point but that raises a provocative idea.

More attractive to me, would be something more closely mirroring a confederacy, not unlike the Iroquois Confederacy. But perhaps this is a conversation about scale as much as about how people organize. In the anarchist use of the word, a federation is usually a few groups of people attempting to stitch together common projects. A dozen groups of about a dozen people each is aspira- tional nowadays but even Love and Rage (in the '90s) numbered a couple hundred members (in over 20 chapters or so). A confederacy, in my understanding, would be thousands of members who aren't tightly stitched together at all (sharing neither language, territory, nor function) but an agreement of peace and sharing. That sounds right to me.

Perhaps it's enough to say here that there is a history and that words have meaning. For the IAF, as far as I can tell, the F (ederation) part of their name is probably rhetoric and not political weaponry or intention (other than perhaps by their marxist member ;-)). They post news stories from mostly not-North America on Twitter, even I can give them a break on this front.

References

https://twitter.com/IAF_FAI
https://twitter.com/FaiMujer
https://iaf-fai.org/

BC Indigenous Land Defense Updates

Secwepemc 'Tiny House Warriors' and TransMountain Extension Tar Sands Pipeline Resistance

In Summer of 2017 members of the Secwepemc nation and supporters began construction of the first of 10 mobile tiny houses on one of their old village sites. The Secwepemc 'Tiny House Warriors' plan to strategically site the tiny houses with land defenders living in them throughout their territory along the proposed route of the TransMountain Extension pipeline. This project is part of an effort to reoccupy their territories and establish villages to heal from colonization and revive their traditional way of life.

From the declaration of the Sec- wepemc: "Investors take note, the Trans Mountain Pipeline project and any other corporate colonial project that seeks to go through and destroy our 180,000 square km of unceded territory will be refused passage through our territory. We stand resolutely together against any and all threats to our lands, the wildlife and the waterways. We are committed to upholding our collective and spiritual responsibility and jurisdiction to look after the land, the language and the culture of our people." In the summer of 2018, partly in response to public opposition that threatened the outcome of the pipeline, the Canadian government purchased the TransMountain Extension pipeline for $4.5 billion from Kinder Morgan. On July 14th 2018, Canadian RCMP evicted the Tiny House construction.

The project moved the tiny houses to Blue River camp where they are currently occupying a proposed Kinder Morgan Man Camp* site that will bring over a thousand men into the unceded Secwepemc Territory. The Tiny House Warriors are seeking support for the next phase of construction.

To learn more and support this effort visit:
https://www.facebook.com/tinyhousewarriors/.

Unist'ot'en Camp and Coastal GasLink Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

Pipeline Resistance

Unist'ot'en Camp has entered into one of its most difficult standoffs with energy companies and the Canadian state to date. On December 14, 2018, the Supreme Court of Canada approved an interim injunction for TC Energy (formerly TransCanada) subsidiary Coastal GasLink Ltd. to conduct pre-construction activities on Unist'ot'en territory. All five clans of the Wet'suwet'en Nation responded by agreeing to support the Gidimt'en clan establishing a checkpoint about 20 km down the road from the Unist'ot'en Camp checkpoint. Both clans re-established their traditional "free, prior, and informed consent" protocol for any party that wished to enter the territory. In early January 2019, the Gidimt'en camp was raided and Canadian RCMP (cops)

forcibly invaded Unist'ot'en territory. Since then, RCMP have been protecting the injunction, allowing Coastal GasLink to conduct surveys and begin the construction of man camps to house workers on Unist'ot'en land for pipeline construction which is part of a $40 billion LNG export project. After the invasion the Tsayu clan of the Wet'suwet'en nation joined the fight with the Unist'ot'en and Gidimt'en clans by occupying their traditional territory, re-establishing a traditional trapline, and maintaining an additional "free, prior, and informed consent" checkpoint. The Likhts'amisyu clan of the Wet'suwet'en nation announced in April that they will begin reoccupying their territories as well to resist the CGL pipeline. The Gidimt'en have continued to maintain their checkpoint despite regular harassment by the cops. On May 28, the Supreme Court will decide whether to grant CGL an interlocutory or permanent injunction for the construction of the man camp and pipeline, which could escalate industry aggression and police violence. The Unist'ot'en, Gidimt'en, and Likhtsamisyu camps are seeking support with establishing and maintaining the occupations. To learn more and support these efforts visit: unistotencamp.com yintahaccess.com likhtsamisyu.com https://www.facebook.com/Tsayu-Land-Defenders-145084489749640/

*"man camp" is slang in the indigenous land defense scene for all-male worker camps, infamous for hosting men who rape and murder indigenous women. These camps have a statistically increased rate of murders and rapes related to them.

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Black Seed: Issue 8

A journal of indigenous anarchy

Various Authors

Summer 2020

Welcome to the eighth edition of *Black Seed* journal.

This issue was meant to be published in the winter of 2020, but we were devastated in February by the passing of our co-editor, friend, lover, and *Black Seed* originator, Aragorn! Finishing this issue has been an unintentional practice in group mourning. Two obituaries from people with intimate relations to Aragorn! and *Black Seed* open this issue.

In addition, the world has been wracked by the COVID-19 pandemic, and although we at *Black Seed* quietly (and not so quietly) invite in the mayhem, one consequence of this pre-apocalyptic event is that this edition will sail more slowly than usual on the winds of distribution. We suspect it might not find its way to you until later this summer or fall.

In our last issue we labeled our changes up til now as being "a journal for Indigenous Anarchism" without explanation. Here we'll flesh out that change at least a little more. This project was made by green anarchists who feel that a green anarchist perspective was incomplete. Sure, we started this project partly to distinguish ourselves from primitivism, but we are also dissatisfied with other perspectives called Green, like Green Capitalism, Social Ecology, and other fixed positions. We recognize Green Anarchism, Anarchism, and even ideological Indigeneity as moving targets. Those of us who are post-Indians tour the ideologies that poorly liberate us, full well knowing that the task remains ours, and celebrating that we have each other and the power to go beyond the language and limitations others have for us. This has been a true pleasure of publishing *Black Seed.*

Overall, 2019 was a great year for an Indigenous Anarchism, with this issue hinting at possible new directions, and with the IAC (Indigenous Anarchism Convergence), which happened over three days in Flagstaff in August and changed our ideas about different approaches to Indigenous anarchism. Generational, political, and cultural differences were in evidence and by the end of the weekend it was hard to point to a shared center of gravity. One of the big challenges of this issue, put together just a season after the IAC is that an IA perspective may just too big. Many people came to the event with perspectives and opinions that were quite different from the essays and one-on-one conversations we had had up till that point.

We have a range of feelings coming off of the tail end of the IAC event and about the consequences of Indigenous Anarchism as a whole. As you'll read in "Fire Walk With Me" (one of two reportbacks from the IAC), "I witnessed an indigenous anarchism but it was unfamiliar to me, a Dine anarchist." We are in that ecstatic space where we have more questions then answers. How do we respond to the questions, "Are we Indigenous or are we Dine, Anishi- naabe, Lakota?" Are we writing for a movement that does not exist yet, and maybe shouldn't?

The project of *Black Seed* is to both state that we are here and that that matters, and to explore who we are, as an act of becoming, dialogue, and negotiation. In this issue, we mostly show this by way of interviews and an underlying tension.

It is a failure of our imagination that we find ourselves trapped by a fork in the road we call "activists vs do nothings" or "Critical thinkers vs idiots who charge in." Of course we should want both-and-more or "everything all the time" but we find ourselves exhausted by the project of being all the things, with never a break, and no end to the self-critical lens that burns us all out. We know a tension exists. We need to do it all and support our friends who are doing the same. We need to have a bit more flexibility in our thinking and tolerance in our assertions. [suggested: This flexibility will, of course, look different in different contexts, which can make it difficult and complicated to recognize when we're doing it badly or well.

The conversations in this issue follow up on these thoughts with provocative words from people on the ground. The O'odham Anti-Border Collective begin to parse the complications of having tribal land cross national boundaries, fighting development (roads) at the same time that a border wall is being built, and fighting for tribal sovereignty and spiritual preservation of land that is currently being desecrated. "Contrasts at the Boundary Lines" is an interview between two mixed people about preserving and living inside cultures under siege. The second installment of Aragorn!'s conversation with the Anpoat Duta Collective is a frank look at plea bargain math, relationships, and making decisions.

One issue a year is about what we are capable of as a small group in the Bay but we'd like to do at least two issues a year. In this pursuit this issue has been primarily compiled in collaboration with Indigenous Action and features voices that presented at the IAC (ie the content from this issue is primarily from AZ and the Southwest). Initially we had looked forward to a Southwest editorial collective emerging from the Indigenous Anarchist Convergence but that didn't fully coalesce.

How do we support new writers with new ideas while also remembering old ideas, forgotten conflicts, and the lessons of bruises and torn muscles? To start, an Indigenous Anarchism is not merely a youth movement or a passing fad. We honor, attend to, and dismiss our elders because of our intimacy with them and not because they are segregated into a part of our life that we safely ignore or blow off. What is called critique in our urban intellectual circles may be called the wisdom of age or the experience of time in others.

Black Seed is a project for radical autonomist minds to gather and share ideas, using newsprint to do it. We would have liked to extend an invitation to all of you to continue (or start) to write good shit and to send it in, but with the passing of Aragorn!, the future of *Black Seed* is now uncertain. The "we" here is written with heavy hearts; Aragorn! contributed to this editorial and we finish it and this issue—perhaps the last—without him.

This re-calibration of *Black Seed* carries with it some of the growing pains you'd expect, and in some ways, the masochists in us crave more of it, as it's in those tensions—where we feel like we're breaking—that some of the most exhilarating growth occurs. This doesn't happen with tokens of mutual deference and the same damn people writing the same damn shit. Beyond the contrived leftist self- and collective castigations, we seek out those hard conversations, which often have the humor of our ancestors (although that deft levity always seems to be the first casualty, rendering most discourse uncomfortably numb). Whether it's a fierce call for radical centering, or forceful renouncement of stifling traditions, or lashing out at those already on the ground, these are the dialectics of ruins and ruination and they should be hard and messy and joyful and gut wrenching and for some reason, though we adorn ourselves with targets (for enemies and friends, fren- emies?) when we put ourselves "out there," we manage to keep going. In Dine Bizaad the idea of a "where" is lived and strived for as, *Sa'a naghaf bik'e hozho* (over there

in old age is a future in harmony). The “who” and “how” is where the exquisite pain is, and if we truly seek to destroy a world, we must not be afraid of ruins.

An Obituary for Aragorn! by Leona

This is a love letter.

Let's get some things out of the way. He was a slob, he needed someone who would clean after him. He didn't like dirt and mold and grunge, but would live with it until someone else came along and cleaned it up. Gendered? Duh. Oblivious about it? No. He was impatient and demanding. He was an outrageous gaslighter- without-abuse. He was a hoarder; he didn't give up on ideas for projects, and would buy things as both prod for, and reminder of, the projects he contemplated. He frequently put people in the position of doing things that they didn't know how to do. He wanted people to hear silences, to contemplate things that were unsaid, to pay attention, and while I would call that part of his native background, it is not separate from being a neglected child of a charismatic, poor, and abusive mother. Regardless, it's something that we can learn to do, and he was hurt when he wasn't offered that generosity by people he cared about. He forgot that not everyone had his options or abilities. He would yell and have temper tantrums in public and in private, and then get mad when people responded in ways he thought were not worthy of them—partly out of self interest, partly out of boredom, and partly out of concern: if you were able to be shut down by someone like him, who was only loud and smart, then how much worse would your life be around people who actually meant you ill? Strength, perseverance, stubbornness, reliability—these aspects of what could be called the same thing—were important and worth encouraging in yourself and others. I would say he was dismissive of people's fears, but supportive around our weaknesses, and that sometimes he could tell the difference between those two better than the people involved, but again, this is a love letter.

I'm trying to establish that I saw his faults as clearly as anyone saw them, sometimes as well as he did, to set the context for what's written here.

I am biased. I am one of the three romantic relationships in his life when he died, who lived with or adjacent to him, whose life was absolutely changed by him, who love him in that way that "love" is an inadequate word for. His three partners have been an advertisement for poly-amory, using our various skills in complementary ways to get through this immense grief (and to confuse the shit out of hospital staff and government bureaucrats). I say that not to share inappropriate personal information, but to say, this is who he was. He made it work, living near and with three stubborn, demanding, outspoken women. He loved strongly, and he didn't give up on people. He called giving up on people *genocide,* a white culture thing, and he was always ready to engage in a relationship again, even if it was uncomfortable for all concerned. (He could frequently be counted on to make it uncomfortable.)

But this is not why you're here. You're here because, among other things, he was a force of brilliance who said things no one else would say: incisive, wise, unexpected, funny, challenging. One of his skills— which he only started coming to terms with in his 30s—was the capacity to cut to the heart of a person, poking at something deeply personal and difficult, frequently as part of a quip or snark. Sometimes people could appreciate it, sometimes they couldn't. His whole life he dealt with the social consequences of saying these things, usually unplanned: words as true

as they were hard to hear, a reflection of how deeply and quickly he saw people, without even realizing that he had.

This ability of his also made him think that he was right more than he actually was. It's a weakness of very observant and clever people to forget or never learn how to be wrong. He died before he learned (or acknowledged learning) some of the lessons that are more likely after you turn 50. But he was getting there. He had already admitted what one could call The Lesson of Ramsey-at-AK- Press, aka the lesson of being the main face of a project that requires a public presence. Politics *firmly* aside, many of the aesthetic things that he disliked about the AK Press of the time—for example the focus on their own titles, the single-mindedness, the way that project fit into a capitalist context—he understood better as LBC went on. He made different choices, obviously, but it shifted his frustration.[1] But then, his aggravation with other projects like AK and infoshop was always, for him, more of a goad to achieve his own projects, to aim away from the inadequacies of the existent.[2]

He started projects, including *Black Seed,* when he felt a lack in the scene that he thought he could do something about. He put himself on the hook for meeting the needs he wanted met. Some people can probably recite this litany with me at this point: theanarchistlibrary. org, anarchy101.org, anarchistnews. org, *Black Seed,* theanvilreview.org/ *The Anvil Review,* thebrilliant.org, littleblackcart.com, anarchyplanet. org, anarchybang.org, just to name the biggest of the projects that he inspired, sweat over, and usually paid for, though of course part of his skill set was inspiring other people to participate, communicating both his own excitement and the need for This Excellent New Thing. He also thought of and helped organize many events (anarchist salons, bookfairs, the BASTARD conferences, a weekend anti-state commie and anarchist get-together) and hosted numerous anarchist projects, including ones he disagreed with: so many that I never knew all of them, or could keep track of all the things he was responsible for. We joked that it wasn't safe for him to go on road trips because every time he came back from his reflection time— being on the road and talking to different people—he had at least one huge new project idea to add to the growing pile, which, again, never got smaller. Projects, like relationships, didn't go away; at most they just got put on hold, until the rest of the world, his friends, his enemies, whatever, realized what they were missing.

There are not words in English to describe him.

Since he's died I keep trying to figure out how to say something about his capacity to think/feel deeply and in different directions from anyone else. I can't figure out how to say it even to myself, much less other people. None of my words begin to describe it. His friends used to talk about him being the smartest person they'd ever known, which is part of it, but… He wasn't just *smart.* He didn't just *care.* He moved in a different way from anyone I've ever known: in his thinking, in his life, in his inspiration, in his expectations. People don't have to be different to be amazing, awesome, lovable, life- changing. It is trite that I'm falling back on that language of

[1] LBC started out as a distro project, He thought we'd be helping our friends who didn't know how to market themselves. We could be the reliable moneyhandlers, shippers, and receivers. But baby distros go away on the regular, and/or couldn't even get us their stuff, so LBC's mission changed.

[2] Someone once told me not to tell him that they were considering taking a job with AK, because they accurately assumed that he would be disgruntled with them for joining The Other Team. He certainly would've given them shit, teased them, poked at them for the weaknesses of that project, and for their lack of ambition. I expect he would've been disappointed that they wanted to keep it from him, rather than play with him (or at least let him play with them) about the sucky realities of capitalism and teams.

"being different" as a way to say something about him. Perhaps it is a weakness in my ability, perhaps a weakness in the language. Perhaps it is part of grieving, to acknowledge the things that I will never find again, to contemplate "never" as it becomes ever more relevant, personally, socially, globally.

All the characteristics that I started out with, trying to explain that I am not blind to the things that were frustrating or even enraging about him, are also things that I appreciate; they were parts of what I (and so many other people) found so heart- stoppingly special about him. That is one of the functions of love, I expect.

The following questions are for silent reflection but do with them as you will:

Is it possible to learn from someone else's love? Is it worth writing this? Can sharing this most-beauti- ful-thing-that-ever-happened-to-me mean anything to strangers and acquaintances and frenemies and Enemies and friends who are reading this? Where does this fit into *Black Seed,* into nihilism, into anarchy, into the big ideas that are important to all of us? How gendered to have his partner write about her feelings! Do we let those labels—which are only ever semi-accurate at best— shut us down, or do we find orthogonal ways to use them? When I say "label" here, do I mean "gender" or do I mean "feelings"?

This is a love letter. Only one of many. *Some are funnier.*

There are not words in English.

Black Seed is a love letter too.

Weary Warrior by Aunt Loretta

Weary Warrior
Lie down and rest
You've earned your colors
And worn them well
Your voice is heard no more
Yet your words are etched in our minds
And we hear them still
Too early you are gone from us
We mourn your passing
But like legends of old
You will live forever in our hearts and minds
Goodbye, son, lover, brother, friend Rest now in the arms of those gone before
Who welcome you, Weary Warrior

The Burden of Our Travels by Klee Benally

I first met Aragom in 2011 at a protest. I had organized a rally against ski area expansion and snowmaking with treated sewage desecration on one of our sacred mountains here near so-called Flagstaff, Arizona. Picture the typical activist theatre: holding signs and banners, chanting, in front of City Hall and oh yes, a megaphone. My friend Drew Sully, who was the most anarchisty of the white anarchists (sorry Brian) in the dry desert wastelands of so-called Arizona drove up for this special occasion. A connection to his friend Aragorn who was giving some talk or something in occupied O'odham lands of "Phoenix." You see, we had done some fun agitation with a Dine O'odham Anarchist bloc and had a particular configuration that was working.

So, I met A! and we talked a bit while he assisted and held one side of a massive banner that read, "Protect Sacred Sites, Defend Human Rights."

After the demo (I'm using that term so it's printed in Black Seed (BS), fight me) we met at the old location of Taala Hooghan Infoshop. It was a small space so close to a nail salon that we got contact high from the chemicals while stapling zines.

I think anyone who has seen me and A! in the same room knows this, but we wouldn't fucking stop talking. Really, if you've read the interviews or heard the podcasts, that was us, all the time, we seriously wouldn't shut up. If we could we would talk each other to sleep, and actually, we nearly did so many times throughout the years.

In retrospect I think Drew's intentions were to fuck up my life by introducing me to Aragorn, 'cause that's what really happened and that's a bit what this story is about.

I had a cautious relationship with Anarchism at that point. While I read and studied the requisite materials and had read and been familiar with A!'s work (initially through Green *blech* Anarchy) and we had copies of his zines at our infoshop. I still resisted the anarchist identity that was impossible to ignore due to its cliched overwhelming whiteness.

So at our first meeting A! said this, "I'm an anarchist without adjectives."

He was a bit smug but that was endearing. He had a gift of seeing things for what they were and a greater gift that… I guess the only way to describe it is like he had already read the end of the book and there was a great big joke in the final chapter. That was one thing that I don't want off the record: he was witty fucking hillarious. Sometimes our conversations felt like rehearsal for a stand up show that no one would ever ever want to attend…

I have a shitty memory so this isn't really chronological. It's a punk-rock collage of the moments that mattered most to me. I like to reflect this way because it hit me hard when he passed. I had just talked with him the day before and we were messaging and talking to each other regularly. The last thing he messaged me about BS was regarding our collaboration on this issue's editorial, "I'll see if there are any changes to discuss. btw after looking at the new version I am excited about this issue again. :-)" and yes, he put the nose in there. I don't like writing this but I think it's worth offering since there is one massive brilliant conversation A! was having with a lot of people and perhaps this tiny bit of imperfect cartography is somehow useful.

Every once in a while A! would travel through on his fancy motorcycle. I'm not a bike person so I can't recall the build, but ya know. He always looked road weary by the time he got here, but the 17 or the 10 will do that. Sometimes his stops were quick, like he'd have a book fair or other event and we were a rest point. He'd have a few questions and hit record. We'd keep going and at some point he'd look up and sleepily say, "I'm done." the recorder would go off and we'd keep talking. Like when he presented on "conflict infrastructure" at Taala Hooghan after his trips through Europe back in 2013. The in- foshop calendar had this listing:

Mon. 30th - A conversation about Conflict Infrastructure with Aragorn! 5:30PM

A speaking tour with a cart full of books.

> "*…We will talk about our experiments in conflict infrastructure and, if we are successful, re-transmit an old idea. For anarchism (by the name) to survive the new cold wind of this world, we have to build something to warm our bones. For the stories of anarchy (dramatic and small) to be told, there has to be a circle of friends, comrades, lovers, and fren- emies. Conflict is the left hand of anarchy but something like home is the right. Let us sit together and warm our hands on these topics.*"
>
> https://aragorn.anarchyplanet.org/2013/08/15/conflict-infrastructure/

This was one of the most fun conversations and provided the direction for a shift in our organizing strategy at Taala Hooghan Infoshop (see, damn you Drew, life-fucking-up right there!).

I'm pretty sure this is when I actually saw A!'s master yoyo skills: such a geek.

Later that same year I helped organize an event called "Fire At The Mountain." It was listed as an Anarchist/Anti-colonial bookfair with workshops and discussions such as "We are Ungovernable: A Discussion on Indigenous Liberation, Anarchy & Allies," "Second Wave Anarchy An introduction to anarchist ideas since 1968 by Aragorn!," and "Anarchist - What We Need To Be by John Zerzan."

I remember sitting there waiting for John and A! to either have a dance off, makeout, or something to break the tension. But they just had a lively back and forth at each other's Q&A's and that was it. sorta a let down if you ask me, but I guess we got enough kicks from the whole Attassa shitshow (I can say fuck ITS and send love to LBC at the same time, but I dont think very many people even read LBC's statement on the issue)…

Overall this event was shiny and in many ways one of the best ways that we presented an idea of what our work at Taala Hooghan Infoshop was about and a direction that was complementary in so many ways to the informal work that A! and I had started on.

For some reason A! invited me to present at the East Bay Anarchist Bookfair in 2014, perhaps it was reciprocity. I played an intimate show at the Long Haul Infoshop then talked about "Dismantling Decolonial Fetishism." It was a busy time. It was great to experience the Little Black Cart family in action.

I share these events and moments because they all really led up to the Indigenous Anarchist Convergence held last year August 2019 at Taala Hooghan.

Before that though, I just want to say that I really think you should read or re-read *The Fight for Turtle Island* and "Locating an Indigenous Anarchism" (reprinted in this issue). This is the best window into who A! was. Not the conflictual troll of trolls or nihilist pariah. I'm not sure how many people had the chance to sit with A! and his aunt in the same space together but this was him. She's a typical Native elder auntie, you know, the one who is quiet but if needed she'll cuss

up a storm and laugh about it. We had Thai food with lots of family. He ate something vegan. He was courteous.

I never got to see him at his lows, I think I would have appreciated that. I really thought that at some point we would grow to hate each other and I looked forward to that cycle and possibly making amends. But that never came.

Back to the Indigenous Anarchist Convergence (IAC) because I did think we would hate each other after it ('cause isn't that how radical "communities" work?). So what you read in the editorial and what you'll read in the report-backs are one part of it. We had some great conversations planning the IAC and at one point A! said he was thinking of not attending. Apparently the specter of oogle animosity was concerning in some part of so-called Arizona. I told him he didn't have a choice and that his attendance was required. As the event drew closer the excitement mounted. There appeared to be such a strong energy (just using that word to piss A! off now) and momentum that it was really a necessary moment in a discussion that was occurring for years now. We discussed his ideas for BS as an Indigenous Anarchist Journal and how we could try to establish a Southwest editorial collective to hold one issue down. He imagined what it would look like to have Indigenous anarchist editorial collectives take an issue each year or so and make the content useful for them. It was an exciting proposal.

A! attempting to drive his motorcycle to Big Mountain in the middle of the night on an impossible road for a street bike. Sitting in a hogan with Dine elder matriarchs discussing their autonomous lives. A! making frybread. Going back to my place and complaining about the same shit. Eating super hot salsa and telling ridiculous stories. Horrible Native jokes. Waking up early, sharing organizational frustrations, him challenging my stewing on problems that weren't mine. Sometimes I'm transparent. We talked like family. That meant we had no pretenses and trusted each other. We had incredibly different paths culturally and to a large degree, politically. We could have fought, but we didn't.

He didn't like my activist resume and I didn't give a shit. That was a fun tension and we would joke then the work or discussions would continue. You see, we were always conspiring.

When we started writing the editorial on a riseup pad it was awkward. We were so used to talking it seemed artificial. The notes were surprising, at one point I thought he was channeling Starhawk (sorry, cheap dig, couldn't help it). We were almost finished editing when he passed. So now it's broken. Like a piece of old pottery scattered by ruins. There are fragments. Even in our calls to organize and complete this issue. It's trudging. It's broken. It's incomplete. And that is what also makes it beautiful.

When we honor someone's life it is not to place them on a pedestal and ignore the rough edges and imperfections. That would betray the brilliant complexities of all of our humanity. I appreciated A! more for his honesty and constant biting exploration (here he would say, ah, you like adjectives). His impulse towards challenging those complexities and sharing the process-of, made him and his ways such an incredible autonomous force.

He wasn't afraid to make a mess or elicit animosity.

When I first read *The Fight for Turtle Island* I was a little frustrated that the topics were edited after our conversation and that conversations just paused. But now I appreciate it. In some ways it's the best eulogy out there. I can reread that book and stop in our conversations and think about when they'll begin again.

I miss this. But it's still there, and that I'm deeply grateful for. Thanks for fucking up my life in the best way dear brother. We'll see much more though and yes, it's a bit of waiting but it's also a bit of fucking shit up. we're not done yet, not by far.

I wrote this for A!'s family Ariel and Leona after he passed. It's for them but of course, you've realized this by now, this whole issue is for them:

Even if they don't recognize your words, they know your voice
The ancestors have called you home To the world beyond worlds
Your voice joins theirs In songs that know
no time
The burden of our travels Are those left behind
But this is your ceremony
Winter sleeps the trees A bitter chill on our lips Eyes closed
Everything
In
Cycles

Locating An Indigenous Anarchism by Aragorn!

First published in *Green Anarchy*, 2005

It's easy enough to hedge about politics. It comes naturally and most of the time the straight answer isn't really going to satisfy the questioner, nor is it appropriate to fix our politics to this world, to what feels immovable. Politics, like experience, is a subjective way to understand the world. At best it provides a deeper vocabulary than mealy-mouthed platitudes about being good to people, at worst (and most commonly) it frames people and ideas into ideology. Ideology, as we are fully aware, is a bad thing. Why? Because it answers questions better left haunting us, because it attempts to answer permanently what is temporary at best.

It is easy to be cagey about politics but for a moment let us imagine a possibility. Not to tell one another what to do, or about an answer to every question that could arise, but to take a break from hesitation. Let us imagine what an indigenous anarchism could look like.

We should start with what we have, which is not a lot. What we have, in this world, is the memory of a past obscured by history books, of a place clear-cut, planted upon, and paved over. We share this memory with our extended family, who we quarrel with, who we care for deeply, and who often believe in those things we do not have. What we do have is not enough to shape this world, but is usually enough to get us by.

If we were to shape this world (an opportunity we would surely reject if we were offered), we would begin with a great burning. We would likely begin in the cities where with all the wooden structures of power and underbrush of institutional assumption the fire would surely burn brightly and for a very long time. It would be hard on those species that lived in these places. It would be very hard to remember what living was like without relying on deadfall and fire departments. But we would remember. That remembering wouldn't look like a skill-share or an extension class in the methods of survival, but an awareness that no matter how skilled we personally are (or perceive ourselves to be) we need our extended family.

We will need each other to make sure that the flames, if they were to come, clear the area that we will live in together. We will need to clear it of the fuel that would end up repeating the problems we are currently having. We will need to make sure that the seeds, nutrients and soil are scattered beyond our ability to control.

Once we get beyond the flames we will have to craft a life together. We will have to recall what social behavior looks and feels like. We will have to heal.

When we begin to examine what life could be like, now that all the excuses are gone, now that all the bullies are of human size and shape, we will have to keep in mind many things. We will have to always keep in mind the matter of scale. We will have to keep in mind the memory of the first people and the people who kept the memory of matches and where and when to burn through the past confusing age. For what it is worth we will have to establish a way to live that

is both indigenous, which is to say of the land that we are actually on, and anarchist, which is to say without authoritarian constraint.

First Principles

First principles are those perspectives that (adherents to) a tendency would understand as immutable. They are usually left unstated. Within anarchism these principles include direct action, mutual aid, and voluntary cooperation. These are not ideas about how we are going to transform society or about the form of anarchist organization, but an understanding about what would be innovative and qualitatively different about an anarchist social practice vis-à-vis a capitalist republic, or a totalitarian socialism.

It is worth noting a cultural history of our three basic anarchist principles as a way of understanding what an indigenous anarchist set of principles could look like. Direct action as a principle is primarily differentiated from the tradition of labor struggles, where it was used as a tactic, in that it posits that living 'directly' (or in an unmediated fashion) is an anarchist imperative. Put another way, the principle of direct action would be an anarchist statement of self-determination in practical aspects of life. Direct action must be understood through the lens of the events of May '68 where a rejection of alienated life led large sections of French society into the streets and towards a radically self-organized practice.

The principle of mutual aid is a very traditional anarchist concept. Peter Kropotkin laid out a scientific analysis of animal survival and (as a corollary to Darwin's theory of evolution) described a theory of cooperation that he felt better suited most species. As one of the fathers of anarchism (and particularly Anarcho-Communism) Kropotkin's concept of mutual aid has been embraced by most anarchists. As a principle it is generally limited to a level of tacit anarchist support for anarchist projects.

Voluntary cooperation is the anarchist principle that informs anarchist understandings of economics, social behavior (and exclusion), and the scale of future society. It could be stated simply as the principle that we, individually, should determine what we do with our time, with whom we work, and how we work. Anarchists have wrestled with these concepts for as long as there has been a discernible anarchist practice. The spectrum of anarchist thought on the nuance of voluntary cooperation ranges from Max Stirner who refuses anything but total autonomy to Kropotkin whose theory of a world without scarcity (which is a fundamental premise of most Marxist positions) would give us greater choices about what we would do with our time. Today this principle is usually stated most clearly as the principle to freely associate (and disassociate) with one another.

This should provide us with enough information to make the simple statement that anarchist principles have been informed by science (both social and physical), a particular understanding of the individual (and their relation to larger bodies) and as a response to the alienation of modern existence and the mechanisms that social institutions use to manipulate people. Naturally we will now move onto how an indigenous perspective differs from these.

In the spirit of speaking clearly I hesitate in making the usual caveats when principles are in question. These hesitations are not because, in practice, there is any doubt as to what the nature of relationship or practice should look like. But when writing, particularly about politics, you can do yourself a great disservice by planting a flag and calling it righteous. Stating principles as

the basis for a politic usually is such a flag. If I believe in a value and then articulate that value as instrumental for an appropriate practice then what is the difference between my completely subjective (or self-serving) perspective and one that I could possibly share usefully? This question should continue to haunt us.

Since we have gone this far let us speak, for a moment, about an indigenous anarchism's first principles. Insert caveats about this being one perspective among many. Everything is alive. Alive may not be the best word for what is being talked about but we could say imbibed with spirit or filled with the Great Spirit and we would mean the same thing. We will assume that a secular audience understands life as complex, interesting, in motion, and valuable. This same secular person may not see the Great Spirit in things that they are capable of seeing life in.

The counterpoint to everything being filled with life is that there are no dead things. Nothing is an object. Anything worth directly experiencing is worth acknowledging and appreciating for its complexity, its dynamism and its intrinsic worth. When one passes from what we call life, they do not become object, they enrich the lives they touched and the earth they lie in. If everything is alive, then sociology, politics, and statistics all have to be destroyed if for no other reason but because they are anti-life disciplines.

Another first principle would be that of the ascendance of memory. Living in a world where complex artifices are built on foundations of lies leads us to believe that there is nothing but deceit and untruth. Our experience would lead us to believe nothing less. Compounding this problem is the fact that those who could tell us the truth, our teachers, our newscasters and our media devote a scarce amount of their resources to anything like honesty. It is hard to blame them. Their memory comes from the same forgetfulness that ours does.

If we were to remember we would spend a far greater amount of our time remembering. We would share our memories with those we loved, with those we visited, and those who passed by us. We will have to spend a lot of time creating new memories to properly place the recollection of a frustrated forgetful world whose gift was to destroy everything dissimilar to itself.

An indigenous anarchism is an anarchism of place. This would seem impossible in a world that has taken upon itself the task of placing us nowhere. A world that places us nowhere universally. Even where we are born, live, and die is not our home. An anarchism of place could look like living in one area for all of your life. It could look like living only in areas that are heavily wooded, that are near life-sustaining bodies of water, or in dry places. It could look like traveling through these areas. It could look like traveling every year as conditions, or desire, dictated. It could look like many things from the outside, but it would be choice dictated by the subjective experience of those living in place and not the exigency of economic or political priorities. Location is the differentiation that is crushed by the mortar of urbanization and pestle of mass culture into the paste of modern alienation.

Finally an indigenous anarchism places us as an irremovable part of an extended family. This is an extension of the idea that everything is alive and therefore we are related to it in the sense that we too are alive. It is also a statement of a clear priority. The connection between living things, which we would shorthand to calling family, is the way that we understand ourselves in the world. We are part of a family and we know ourselves through family. Leaving aside the secular language for a moment, it is impossible to understand oneself or one another outside of the spirit. It is the mystery that should remain outside of language that is what we all share together and that sharing is living.

Anarchist in spirit vs. Anarchist in word

Indigenous people in general and North American native people specifically have not taken too kindly to the term anarchist up until this point. There have been a few notable exceptions (Rob los Ricos, Zig Zag, and myself among them) but the general take is exemplified by Ward Churchill's line "I share many anarchist values like opposition to the State but…" Which begs the question why aren't more native people interested in anarchism?

The most obvious answer to this question is that anarchism is part of a European tradition so far outside of the mainstream that it isn't generally interesting (or accessible) to non-westerners. This is largely true but is only part of the answer. Another part of an answer can be seen in the surprisingly large percentage of anarchists who hold that race doesn't matter; that it is, at best, a tool used to divide us (by the Man) and at worst something that will devolve society into tribalism [sic]. Outside of whether there are any merits to these arguments (which I believe stand by themselves) is the violation of two principles that have not been discussed in detail up until this point — self-determination and radical decentralization.

Self-determination should be read as the desire for people who are self-organized (whether by tradition, individual choice, or inclination) to decide how they want to live with each other. This may seem like common sense, and it is, but it is also consistently violated by people who believe that their value system supersedes that of those around them. The question that anarchists of all stripes have to answer for themselves is whether they are capable of dealing with the consequences of other people living in ways they find reprehensible.

Radical decentralization is a probable outcome to most anarchist positions. There are very few anarchists (outside of Parecon) that believe that an anarchist society will have singular answers to politics, economy, or culture. More than a consequence, the principle of radical decentralization means it is preferable for there to be no center.

If anarchists are not able to apply the principles of self-determination to the fact that real living and breathing people do identify within racial and cultural categories and that this identification has consequences in terms of dealing with one another can we be shocked that native people (or so-called people of color) lack any interest in cohabitating? Furthermore if anarchists are unable to see that the consequence of their own politic includes the creation of social norms and cultures that they would not feel comfortable in, in a truly decentralized social environment, what hope do they have to deal with the people with whom they don't feel comfortable today?

The answer is that these anarchists do not expect to deal with anyone outside of their understanding of reality. They expect reality to conform to their subjective understanding of it.

This problem extends to the third reason that native people lack interest in anarchism. Like most political tendencies anarchism has come up with a distinct language, cadence, and set of priorities. The tradition of these distinctions is what continues to bridge the gap between many of the anarchist factions that have very little else in common. This tradition is not a recruiting tradition. There is only a small evangelical tradition within anarchism. It is largely an inscrutable tradition outside of itself.

This isn't a problem outside of itself. The problem is that it is coupled with the arrogance of the educated along with the worst of radical politics' excesses. This is best seen in the distinction that continues to be made of a discrete tradition of anarchism from actions that are anarchistic. Anarchists would like to have it both ways. They would like to see their tradition as being both a growing and vital one along with being uncompromising and deeply radical. Since an anarchist

society would be such a break from what we experience in this world, it would be truly different. It is impossible to perceive any scenario that leads from here to there. There is no path.

The anarchist analysis of the Zapatistas is a case in point. Anarchists have understood that it was an indigenous struggle, that it was armed and decentralized but habitually temper their enthusiasm with warnings about a) valorizing Subcommandante Marcos, b) the differences between social democracy and anarchism, c) the problems with negotiating with the State for reforms, etc. etc. These points are valid and criticism is not particularly the problem. What is the problem is that anarchist criticism is generally more repetitive than it is inspired or influential. Repetitive criticisms are useful in getting every member of a political tendency on the same page. Criticism helps us understand the difference between illusion and reality. But the form that anarchist criticism has taken about events in the world is more useful in shaping an understanding of what real anarchists believe than what the world is.

As long as the arbiters of anarchism continue to be the wielders of the Most Appropriate Critique, then anarchism will continue to be an isolated sect far removed from any particularly anarchistic events that happen in the world. This will continue to make the tendency irrelevant for those people who are interested in participating in anarchistic events.

Native People are not gone

For many readers these ideas may seem worth pursuit. An indigenous anarchism may state a position felt but not articulated about how to live with one another, how to live in the world and about the decomposition. These readers will recognize themselves in indigeneity and ponder the next step. A radical position must embed an action plan, right?

No, it does not.

This causality, this linear vision of the progress of human events from idea to articulation to strategy to victory is but one way to understand the story of how we got from there to here. Progress is but one mythology. Another is that the will to power, or the spirit of resistance, or the movement of the masses transforms society. They may, and I appreciate those stories, but I will not finish this story with a happy ending that will not come true. This is but a sharing. This is a dream I have had for some time and haven't shown to any of you before, which is not to say that I do not have a purpose…

Whether stated in the same language or not, the only indigenous anarchists that I have met (with one or three possible exceptions) have been native people. This is not because living with these principles is impossible for non-native people but because there are very few teachers and even fewer students. If learning how to live with these values is worth anything it is worth making the compromises necessary to learn how people have been living with them for thousands of years.

Contrary to popular belief, the last hope for native values or an indigenous world-view is not the good hearted people of civilized society. It is not more casinos or a more liberal Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is not the election of Russell Means to the presidency of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. It is patience. As I was told time and time again as a child "The reason that I sit here and drink is because I am waiting for the white man to finish his business. And when he is done we will return."

"For what it is worth we will have to establish a way to live that is both indigenous, which is to say of the land that we are actually on, and anarchist, which is to say without authoritarian constraint." – Aragorn!

"My ancestors wanted autonomy and I want that too." – JD

"We have lived here long before the US government, and we will continue to live here long after it is gone." – Diné relocation resister.

Indigenous Anarchist Convergence – Report Back 1

11.3.19

Kinlani/Flagstaff, AZ — **More than 120 participants and over 30 groups and organizations converged** at Táala Hooghan Infoshop to discuss, debate, and share their perspectives on *Indigenous Anarchism.*

The initial call-out for the convergence stated, *"…we call for those also seeking a fulfilling life free from domination, coercion, & exploitation to gather around this fire. For those sickened by fascinations with dead white-men's thoughts (and their academies and their laws), reformist & reactionary "decolonial activisms"*, and the uninspired merry-go-round of leftist politics as a whole. For all those ungovernable forces of Nature…"

Though leftist reactions were often replicated and much time was spent with well rehearsed presentations, the primary goals of coming together and interrogating the propositions of Indigenous Anarchism were fulfilled. We were also able to coordinate this gathering with a budget of less than $800 (thanks to everyone online who donated!) as we relied heavily on the mutual aid from many of our relatives in Kinlani who cooked, donated food, opened up their homes, and volunteered to support. In those terms the convergence could be counted as a success, but what we share in this report back should not be viewed as a celebration. This is no way represents everything that was discussed, challenged, debated, or expressed. Perhaps this incomplete offering written from memory, limited recordings, and scrapped together notes, should be seen more as fragments of stones with which we can sharpen ourselves on.

When we put the save the date out for the Indigenous Anarchist Convergence (IAC) we had a focus set on a regional dialogue that would be shaped primarily by those who were fairly familiar with the ideas we've been working on, we did not anticipate the overwhelming response from people throughout the so-called US. We also specifically invited those few voices who we've read or directly talked with in great length about Indigenous Anarchism (some who couldn't make it), and with that we knew we were inviting controversial people and that the potential for pushback was serious. The schedule was planned as one track and packed with discussions and workshops. Though each session was given substantial time (some over two hours), we shifted, waited, and went overtime as these functions inevitably do.

A preliminary gathering was held at Big Mountain hosted by Louise Benally and her family who have been resisting forced relocation by remaining on their ancestral homelands. This area has been declared the Sovereign Diné Nation by the residents who assert their autonomy free from US and tribal government control. Though only a few participants from the convergence attended, the connections and discussions (primarily in Diné bizaad), addressed land-based struggles, climate change, coal mining, traditional medicines, and autonomy.

The gathering also became a celebration of the shutdown of Navajo Generating Station, a coal fired power plant operating in the region, which ran its last train of coal just the day before. Diné

elder matriarchs Rena Babbit Lane & Ruth Baikedy joined the next day as John Benally shared an herb walk then addressed the geo-politics of the so-called Navajo-Hopi Land dispute. Overall the preliminary gathering, which was held at a traditional hogan with no running water or electricity, demonstrated the strength and resolve of traditional ways of life that are the backbone of the autonomous resistance at Big Mountain.

On Friday evening at Táala Hooghan infoshop, the convergence started with a prayer by traditional practitioner Jones Benally that connected the gathering to the sacred mountains within which we were welcoming everyone.

A statement was made that "this gathering is going to be messy, mistakes will be made, yet we are excited with that and what possibilities may come from this. Though this convergence may be premature and we may not have the entire capacity to host, we did not want to wait for this to happen, we wanted to push the conversations forward so that we can intervene in the current shitty political realities we face in more direct and effective ways. We also do not want you to participate expecting this convergence to be an annual affair, as we would then face the trap of Indigenous anarchism being defined by our context and our terms, we know this gathering would look very different if it were to be held in your lands and that you would do some things very differently than us. We would offer that the next convergence be hosted elsewhere so please think about while being here." A statement was also issued the infoshop could not guarantee it was a safe space, but that it should be viewed as a threatening space to all forms of oppressive behaviors and that known abusers, particularly perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, would be kicked out of the gathering.

On the Indigenous front there were several distinct tensions addressed.

Discussions on "good vs bad traditionalism" including a challenge to "not romanticize a pre-contact utopia" with a primary focus on gender were prevalent throughout the weekend.

On the panel "Locating an Indigenous Anarchism, Chris Finley stated, "I want to make sure that Indigenous queer people, two spirit people are sacred people. Queerness is not a result of colonization, that idea is fucked up. I want to make sure that we are sacred parts of our community. One of the things that we can do, while the settlers get their shit together, is work on homophobia in our communities, because that is a huge part of how the settler state maintains power, and these are things that we can work on now."

Brandon Benallie, of Ké' Infoshop stated, "Traditionalism is not the same as our life ways. Traditionalism is like a museum piece that sits on a shelf and gets old, whereas our life ways are accumulating knowledge and always growing, it's the people getting old who don't want to grow."

Another question was "how do we address movement policing elders or the elders who tell us go back to camp?" This primarily related to experiences in Standing Rock where elders held people back at the frontlines. Anecdotes were shared that provided no clear tactic other than recognizing that there are "elders and those who get older," and it's our challenge to understand how to address that dynamic based upon the situations in our communities. Julie Richards aka MAMA Julz, a water protector from the Mothers Against Meth Alliance, stated, "I want to be one of those elders who still locks down on the front lines to save our lands and future generations."

Identity politics was also prevalent, including an assertion of the lack of centering of trans & afro-Indigenous voices. Issues of identify policing were challenged specifically with so-called "white passing" Indigenous Peoples. This brought up questions of settler colonial attempts at "paper genocide." An afro-Indigenous trans person voiced that their struggle was one in which

they are, "hated by society and the people you fight for." Multiple calls were made to ensure that organizing spaces center trans and afro-Indigenous voices. Calls were also made to confront anti-blackness in Indigenous organizing (such as cooptation of Black Lives Matter by Native Lives Matter) and to ensure inclusivity in the movement to stop Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (#mmiw) by adding #mmiwgts to include trans and two spirit relatives who face further disproportionate hetero-patriarchal violence.

Land and place were central to nearly all conversations though some points were made that, "If Indigenous means of the earth, who is not an Indigenous anarchist?" and a concern that use of the term "turtle island" was too limiting or exclusive of a term. These tensions led some participating Diné and other Indigenous Peoples to clarify that their anarchism is a specific tendency due to their distinct cultural contexts.

The term "decolonization" seemed to have a heavier weight in the midst of these discussions as it was used very sparingly. Though in some ways the "decolonial" dynamics played out much as they do in other circles. The term "decolonization" is used in both radical and liberal spaces as an empty rhetorical buzzword, this is quite often seen in performative "land acknowledgements" when it should be meaningfully used with and in respect to the Indigenous Peoples' whose lands we are on. That dynamic was most clear from those who came to the convergence from large cities. In some ways their contexts felt distant and alienating, which is a dynamic we usually brace ourselves to face from academics, so it was concerning though not surprising in relation to the space and ways in which our cultural protocols were ignored and in some ways disrespected.

JD from so-called Canada spoke to the current "reconciliatory" efforts by the state to address genocide of Indigenous Peoples and addressed how "there can be no reconciliation that recognizes the self-determination of Indigenous peoples so long as the state of Canada exists… My ancestors wanted autonomy and I want that too."

On the anarchist front there surprisingly seemed to be less disagreement. Much of the emphasis was put on an Indigenous anarchism as a unique radical anti-colonial tendency antagonistic towards the european orientation of the term. Observations were shared regarding how the concepts of mutual aid, non-hierarchal social relations, and direct action were already embedded in many, though not all, of our distinct Indigenous knowledge systems, and that state-based revolutionary strategies, like socialism and communism, are inherently anti-Indigenous. Though there was not a cohesive agreement, a tendency expressed was that anarchism is a tool or position with which we can use to distinguish ourselves and efforts from liberal and leftist-produced settler colonial politics (primarily reformism and Marxism and its "tangents"). Little time was wasted reacting to white anarchist identity, which was perhaps the primary reason the Anarchist People of Color (APOC) position welcoming Indigenous, Black, and Brown People was invoked.

Chris Finley shared their experiences coming to anarchism through the punk-rock scene and arriving at a place of Indigenous feminist anarchism, "…I came back to anarchy because I want to know not just what I am against, because I knew this shit was fucked up, but what I wanted to be for and who I wanted to be with in that for. That's a difficult question, I am colonized, it's really hard for us to think of something outside of this so we need other people and to help us through that and to imagine those things together."

A zine titled, "*Autonomously and with Conviction: A Métis Refusal of State-Led Reconciliation*" that was distributed at the event asserted, "Anarchism is a political philosophy – some might say

a beautiful idea – that believes in self-governed societies based on voluntary association with one another. It advocates for non-hierarchical decision-making, direct participation in those decisions by affected communities, and autonomy for all living persons. Furthermore, it leaves space for the valuation of non-human entities beyond their monetary worth or usefulness to human beings. My Indigenous teachings have communicated to me that our communities are important, but so are we as individuals. Traditional ways saw decision making as a participatory process, based on consensus, where communities made choices together. My teachings tell me that the land can offer us what we need, but never to take more than that. I see these ideas as fundamentally compatible. I'd like to see an anarchy of my people and the anarchy of settlers (also my people) enacted here together, side by side. With an equal distribution of power, each pursuing healthy relationships, acting from their own ideas and history. Just as the Two Row imagined. I would like to see the centralized state of Canada dismantled. I'd like to see communities take up the responsibility of organizing themselves in the absence of said central authority."

Louise Benally spoke to her experiences resisting forced relocation on Big Mountain and calling for further action to take down all these systems that are destroying Mother Earth. Louise stated that anarchism is "about action, you believe in yourself, you believe in what you're going to speak about, you believe in what you're doing, you're not bound by a group or governmental entity, you do what you have to do. I believe in the earth and the spirits that work within the earth, that is where I first go. Working with and through nature, that is the only thing that I have faith in, I don't trust any system because it has never done anything for me. I don't practice christianity, that is not something that I understand. I don't base my ways on that, I don't believe in the US government because that is just about destruction of a culture and consumption of culture."

The panel "Locating an Indigenous Anarchism" was named after Aragorn!'s zine' that was published in 2005, from which he read a section of and provided a definition of Indigenous anarchism, "For what it is worth we will have to establish a way to live that is both indigenous, which is to say of the land that we are actually on, and anarchist, which is to say without authoritarian constraint." Aragorn! stated, "On the one hand I have a very big problem with hyphenated anarchism, when people refer to themselves as anarchist and blank, they really mean the blank and the anarchism is a secondary concern. I've always seen seen anarchism and indigeneity as being synonymous terms. For me the idea of an anarchism that isn't placed right here, never made sense. The idea of anarchism as a set of western enlightenment values that somehow we learned in school or something never made sense to me. One of the concerns I have about this weekend, is that sometimes our enthusiasm is more our concern and more the way that we communicate ourselves and our ideas than anything else, and in the case of something as important as this idea, this idea of a land based politics that is huge in size, I don't want this to turn into politics as usual. I say that knowing that that's going to be a challenge when it comes up in details."

After reading the except from "Locating an Indigenous Anarchism" Aragorn! emphasized, "For me those are the only terms that matter, 'authoritarian constraint' and 'place.'"

The Against Settler Colonial Politics panel on Sunday further asserted that, "anarchism is in fact something we can define ourselves," The panel also referenced Russell Mean's statement "For America To Live Europe Must Die" as an eloquent Indigenous response to the proposition of Marxist authoritarianism. A zine titled, "Marxism and it's Tangents… for anarchists," was distributed that stated, "…because sometimes people are not really on our team." Some of the Q&A had push-back regarding a "need for leftist unity" and not to perpetuate "european-based leftist

disputes," to that responses were made that we "should be honest about leftist politics, that the conclusions of communism and socialism are anti-Indigenous." A panelist asked the question, "are we criticizing authoritarianism or european dogma?" A sheet titled, "the Red Flags of Red Fasc(ists)" listing authoritarian leftist front groups was shared by a persxn who was at La Conxa in so-called LA when it was attacked by a Maoist group.

On the organizing/activism/struggle front, there were many workshops proposed about border struggles which were the primary focus of action against attacks on Indigenous lands and Peoples for the convergence. The O'odham Anti-Border Collective shared their strategies to maintain their ways of life despite ongoing occupation, borders, and barriers on their traditional homelands. On the Autonomous Organizing Against Borders panel, an organizer from so-called El Paso addressed how their community is responding to white supremacist attacks while they're facing extreme state repression. They also shared how a radical community center was undermined by "the subtle forms of white supremacy that invade and co-opt our spaces." They railed against "non-profit liberal power wielding mechanisms," and asserted that, "we're not here to ask for reform. The law is killing our people."

Another organizer from occupied Tongva lands so-called Los Angeles discussed their work directly supporting migrant folx held in concentration camps. The organizer received a call from a trans migrant person being held in one of the concentration camps and put them on the microphone. The conversation was emotional and raw with the tension of these struggles filling every corner of the room.

On the "Solidarity Means Action, Anti-colonial-Struggle Means Attack!" panel MAMA Julz stated that, "Prayer and action go hand in hand, I've always stood on that. If we're sitting there in prayers and there's no-one out there then nothing is going to get done. Our ancestors want us to meet them half-way. No matter how scary it gets, remember that as long as we're fighting for the people and mother earth in a good way, we're always going to be protected. If you believe you can shut shit down, shut shit down, but pray first."

Leona Morgan from Diné No Nukes and Haul No! spoke about fighting nuclear colonialism which has left thousands of abandoned uranium mines and spread cancer throughout Indigenous Lands. She stated that "70% of uranium comes from Indigenous lands" and that current proposals call for bringing all the nuclear waste from throughout the "US" into New Mexico effectively creating a "national sacrifice zone. They're saying here is that nuclear power is a 'clean' solution to global warming while we are the ones getting cancer, were the ones that have our water, plants, and food sources contaminated." She looked towards international anti-nuke direct action movements that are stopping uranium shipments and called for support, "We may need to do that here."

Klee Benally from Protect the Peaks and an organizer of the convergence provided an overview of the struggle and failures to stop the desecration of the holy San Francisco Peaks, which is located just outside of Kinlani/Flagstaff. A ski resort has been allowed by the Forest Service to make fake snow out of millions of gallons of treated sewage on the mountain. Klee stated, "Settler colonial laws were never designed to benefit Indigenous peoples' ways of life, they were designed to destroy them. To be more effective we need to be honest with ourselves and understand how Standing Rock was strategic failure in that it didn't stop the pipeline, of course it was a social and cultural success, but we need to be critical in real-time about these struggles so we can be more effective. If we don't talk about our failures how can we learn?"

On Sunday evening, before everyone started sharing their contact info, before dinner and after a lecture, we stopped and decided not to end in accordance with our traditional protocol.

An organizer for the convergence wrote in another report back, "Somewhere at the gathering, I expected to be in the presence of indigenous anarchism. I did not know if indigenous anarchism was the fire we would gather around, if it was the individuals converging, or if it was an empty space where individuals were to ignite the flames. It's safe to say, my expectations were met. I witnessed an indigenous anarchism but it was unfamiliar to me, a Diné anarchist.... The potential I have discovered at the convergence is the particulars of Diné anarchy. Fires made from crystal and fires made from turquoise. Fires bright enough to find the light of other Diné anarchists in this dark world I find myself in. A world sickened from the industrialization of civilized humans whose culture of control and destruction forces all living things to adopt, adapt, or die. I suggest that Diné anarchy offers the addition of a choice to attack. An assault on our enemy that weakens their grip on, not only our glittering world, but the worlds of others. An opportunity for the anarchy of Ndee, of O'odham, and so on, to exact revenge on their colonizers. Until all that's left for Diné anarchists is to dissuade the endorsements of the next idol expecting our obedience."

A perfect analogy?

For the moment we see Indigenous Anarchism as a reference point, but this term is so broad that for all it could encompass it also stifles. We're not interested in re-engineering social arrangements, we're interested in inspired formations, agitations, interventions, and acts towards total liberation. From our perspective, at the base of Do'koo'osliid, we see more use in building contextual understandings deeply rooted in our sacred lands and teachings. This places us in some ways at odds with a flattening that the larger emergent force of Indigenous Anarchism would have. As Aragorn! stated, "Indigenous anarchism is a politics that has yet to be written and maybe that is a good thing."

For now we will continue to agitate, organize, write, discuss, and provoke to further radical autonomous/anti-authoritarian Indigenous tendencies towards total liberation.

Fire Walk with Me: IAC reportback 2

I answered a call to gather around a fire with Black, Indigenous, People of Color in Kinlam at Taala Hooghan Infoshop. Somewhere at the gathering, I expected to be in the presence of indigenous anarchism. I did not know if indigenous anarchism was the fire we would gather around, if it was the individuals converging, or if it was an empty space where individuals were to ignite the flames. It's safe to say, my expectations were met. I witnessed an indigenous anarchism but it was unfamiliar to me, a Dine anarchist.

Truthfully, it's inaccurate to say that the indigenous anarchism I saw was unfamiliar because that implies it possessed unidentifiable attributes.

I, very much, recognized the features of the fire and I recognized the methods to build that fire. In this case, the features were global indigenous justice and the methods were university jargon of the humanities discipline. The social movement that will be the fires of this indigenous anarchism require more and more indigenous resistance as the fuel to grow and grow the burning. What happens when we run out of fuel? Who do we reach out to for a fresh supply? I ask myself those questions knowing full well they will be answered quickly, meaning uncritically, by any individual enthusiastic with my premonition. Admittedly, the fire I had gathered around was not so much unfamiliar as it was unappealing.

This was unappealing because I also answered the call as an indigenous anarchist ["sickened by fascinations with dead white-men's thoughts (and their academies and their laws), reformist & reactionary "decolonial activisms", and the uninspired merry-go-round of leftist politics as a whole"]. However, I found that many of the people in attendance were academics, activists, de-colonizers, and leftists that were in very good health despite their proximity to these toxic superstructures. Academics vigorously drawing from their learning curated by western liberal intellectualism while being hungry for another direction with an agreeable pan-indigenous guide. Activists energetically sharing their praxis acquired from footage of Standing Rock while local indigenous struggles remained unknown. De-colonizers robustly calling out problematic land acknowledgements for not being inclusionary while missing the value of being specific to the land they're on. Then finally, leftists focusing on their vision of centralized solidarity as one voice united to change the world while the incoherence from every voice making individual demands to exhaust authority was never considered.

Yes, the indigenous anarchism I saw was kind of unfamiliar and mostly unappealing but I would not say the gathering was unsuccessful. I believe people will grow this indigenous anarchism. An ideology succinct enough for Instagram stories, 280 character limit tweets, and vibrant screen printed art, excuse me, memes. A movement global enough to essentialize a racial, humanist, and material struggle of indigeneity so others will comfortably speak for any absent voice. A resistance so monolithic the powers that be could easily identify then repress all indigenous anarchists.

For me, success would be more disagreements that are challenging and hopefully with humor. I'd rather agree or disagree with a new suggestion rather than dispute laudatory presumptions grounded in radical liberalism that has been indigenized, north american style, only for flair.

I understand an indigenous person can have a complicated personal relationship with their indigeneity and their role within the violent dominance of capitalist settler-colonial- ism. Additionally, I understand an individual's linear journey to Anarchism began somewhere and maybe they still sympathetically carry ideological mementos from their past. Facetiousness aside, I am glad people may have found potential from this gathering to develop their indigenous anarchist ideas.

The potential I have discovered at the convergence is the particulars of Dine anarchy. Fires made from crystal and fires made from turquoise. Fires bright enough to find the light of other Dine anarchists in this dark world I find myself in. A world sickened from the industrialization of civilized humans whose culture of control and destruction forces all living things to adopt, adapt, or die. I suggest that Dine anarchy offers the addition of a choice to attack. An assault on our enemy that weakens their grip on, not only our glittering world, but the worlds of others. An opportunity for the anarchy of Ndee, of O'odham, and so on, to exact revenge on their colonizers. Until all that's left for Dine anarchists is to dissuade the endorsements of the next idol expecting our obedience.

Contrasts at the Boundary Lines: A Chat with Armando Resendez by Dominique Ganawaabi

I sat down with Armando, a visual artist from the Tijuana/San Diego area, at his studio in Oakland. We discussed art theory, cultural identity, mythology, and failure. If it feels like the middle section of a longer, deeper conversation, that's because it is.

D: So, what have you been working on recently?

A: I'm making these paintings influenced by modern art based on contrast. Like "a primary green with a primary red" Next to each other they don't really go along. It's very unpleasant. That's why I'm calling the series "Contrast" but, in trying to do all that, instead of doing very high contrast colors I also been using earth tones. I guess I actually do want it to be pleasant, because some of them make my eyes hurt when I look at them. Too much green, too much red. It's not complementary, but that's kind of what I was going for. So I'm compromising.

D: Why did you originally want to do something jarring?

A: I was reading a Wassily Kandinsky book. He was talking about how certain colors go together, certain colors clash. A yellow is very earthy and a sky blue is very heavenly. If you put them together it won't make sense.

I'm also really into Piet Mondrian. He separates colors. He separates the primaries. He did it with the white and the black bars. You see it everywhere in the commercial world and we gravitate towards that. Art critics can explain it intellectually. You see yellow, red, and blue interact on construction sites and on hazardous material symbols. So primaries are used to call people's attention. Watch out! Nowadays we see orange or green neon.

D: That reminds me of how police and ambulances had to change their sirens because people got used to the old sound.They had to find a new way to get people's attention. Or how helvetica was a font that could be used for everything but at some point we get bored of it.

A: There are certain designs we use over and over because it gets people's attention, or they relax people. It seems like Kandinsky figured out something theoretically that I'm really excited by. I wanted to see what happens when you put colors together that shouldn't work and I've definitely had to compromise.

I started by painting cactuses. It became more earthy, but the bright red is still there like a flag. So a cultural context comes with it. I started also thinking about cultural contrast too. I don't know if people can see the cultural contrast in the paintings. A cultural clash going on, but I have these associations with certain symbols. There are cactuses everywhere, but obviously in Mexico there are a lot.

One painting is of a Mexican pot, but another is of the Oakland Raiders stadium. I wanted to do that because I've been painting all these ancient or old mexican things or generalized mexican things, but I wanted to say that Mexicans are also into the Raiders. I wanted to show really

commercial, modern things that Mexicans are into. It's not just the old things. It's not just contrasting colors, but a cultural contrast. I have one symbol in front of me and I see what happens in me as I present it in a painting. I've always been wary of using cultural identities and culturally identifiable symbols to sell art. Not that I'm selling much art (Laughter)

D: That's because you don't put enough Aztec calendars in there

A: Yeah, perhaps. I've always been wary of that. I mean obviously I'm painting a Mexican pot. I'm doing it. It's almost like if you use certain symbols you should know everything about them. It feels weird to sell things that are culturally important. I'm not trying to say fuck all these people who do that, but I want to connect to everyone. I like this tension, the same as with the colors. Like with music you can find a release, you can hold in and let go of energy. Letting things go and letting them resurface. My paintings sound very intellectual when I explain all this shit, but a lot of it is just going and doing it and maybe there are some ideas after the fact.

I like approaching things on all levels. I think it's good to have theory. I think it's good not having theory. Just paint it. "I want to use this color" I want to do it all at the same time.

D: I like the way you talk about tension. You don't just want to sell Mexican imagery. Maybe you want to connect with a broader audience but your nationality is still in there somewhere. It seems like it could get complicated.

A: Maybe it seems like i'm trying to waterdown my nationality, so I can sell to a bigger audience? Perhaps.

D: But the nationality is still there. You can still see the pots and cactus. Like you don't wake up and say "I'm going to eat tacos today because I'm Mexican" It's just what you do.

A: Yeah, it's just what you gravitate towards.

D: There is some kind of balancing happening. You could just paint totally universal art using only geometric patterns or instead only paint ethnic murals and zapatista masks. But you're doing something in between.

A: It's individual and very personal. I want to conjure something up inside of me. I hope I can do things that distract me enough to be free enough, but also my life and the things I'm tied to still show up. Recently I was reading about Aztec art. This was an interpretation. I don't know if the source was some Spanish person. It was from a theological text, but they had this concept called "Flower and Song." They thought that the most important thing was the arts. They thought that artists were the people who would find the truth. The flower will deteriorate. People will forget the songs. But, of all the things in the world "Flower and Song" are the highest things to aspire to, because they express a universal truth. The essence would be remembered.

D: What do you think about people who say that the Aztecs were a civilization with all the negative aspects that entails. That they subdued other indigenous groups?

A: I'm down with that. I've always liked anti-civ ideas. I would like to know about Mexican tribal people. I definitely try to learn. At the same time, we are living in a civilization. We're a part of it. I want to respect things, but what is this thing we're living in? What is this city? I'm not afraid to take things from different places.

D: Exactly. The Aztecs definitely had agriculture and cities but "Flower and Song" sounds like a different way of envisioning the world than how the Spanish did. What were their ultimate goals, and what did that mean for art?

A: There's also the idea that Cortez was Quetzalcoatl and that he brought the arts, songs, and crafts to Mexico. But, that's not actually what happened. The Quetzalcoatl story, whether it's real or not, has been around for a very, very long time. Since the Olmecs were around.

I like the idea of Quetzalcoatl, or even Orpheus from the Greeks. A person or in Quetzalcoatl's case a serpent brings things to a people. I also heard he was from somewhere else, maybe further south in the Americas or he was from the east and he came to South America. I've also heard some mystical people say that he wanted to bring some sort of higher religion and created an empire and the pyramids.

Originally he said he wasn't going to make pyramids any more. Another idea was that Quetzalcoatl was a person who failed. He came and wanted to do something but it failed. I think there's a lesson about a person who has all these aspirations and came to somewhere and failed. He was also against human and animal sacrifice. Obviously even up to colonial times there was still sacrifice. To bring it down back to earth, when people come to cities. I'm not from here. A lot of us are not from here. You realize there are alot of contradictions in yourself. You have all these aspirations. "I'm gonna be an activist," "I'm gonna be an artist." Then you go through this narrative. "This activism isn't what I thought it was." "These people aren't real." This big city thing is crazy. My identity isn't what I thought it was. Maybe before you didn't like doing the cultural stuff but then you get here and you realize you want to know about your tribe or where my mom comes from. I like people who don't have it all figured out. That can admit to being hypocritical, that they still need to work things out. It's an intimate thing. And granted I don't want people to base an identity around being hypocritical, but I like people that can be into one thing but also like something that contradicts it. I think deep down people have a lot of questions about what it means to be identified as a certain thing and ultimately they want to be free. Free to do whatever they want. That's not to say that people don't appropriate cultural identities. Certainly people do. Maybe I've never had a real teacher for that?

D: Are you saying it's possible to appropriate your own culture?

A: I think I am doing that. It sounds crazy. These symbols seem sacred, but at the same time..and it feels like maybe Mexico was like this before colonization…there's something about the sacred and the profane.

People were able to go along with Christian narrative while injecting indigeneity into it. Like the devil and angel battling. But there's also something about just being able to use those symbols, combining indigenous symbols with Christian symbols, smashing them together. There is a looseness in the symbolic world. I think some people take things too seriously. People have a strong reaction to seeing white people wearing certain things "That's fucked up!" I don't actually see that happen very often. I'm not talking about that exactly. I'm talking about Mexicans within their own cultures using those symbols. There is a freedom to use everything you have to try to understand whats happening. Painting a pyramid. Painting an indigenous person. It's drawing a map. That sounds legit. I know people who do that and I don't shut them down by saying "You don't know what that means"

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Rethinking the Apocalypse: An Indigenous Anti-Futurist Manifesto

…This is a transmission from a future that will not happen. From a people who do not exist…
The end is near. Or has it come and gone before?
–An ancestor Why can we imagine the ending of the world, yet not the ending of colonialism?
We live the future of a past that is not our own.

It is a history of utopian fantasies and apocalyptic idealization.

It is a pathogenic global social order of imagined futures, built upon genocide, enslavement, ecocide, and total ruination.

What conclusions are to be realized in a world constructed of bones and empty metaphors? A world of fetishized endings calculated amidst the collective fiction of virulent specters. From religious tomes to fictionalized scientific entertainment, each imagined timeline constructed so predictably; beginning, middle, and ultimately, The End.

Inevitably in this narrative there's a protagonist fighting an Enemy Other (a generic appropriation of African/Haitian spirituality, a "zombie"?), and spoiler alert: it's not you or me. So many are eagerly ready to be the lone survivors of the "zombie apocalypse." But these are interchangeable metaphors, this zombie/ Other, this apocalypse. These empty metaphors, this linearity, only exist within the language of nightmares, they are at once part of the apocalyptic imagination and impulse. This way of "living," or "culture," is one of domination that consumes all for its own benefit. It is an economic and political reordering to fit a reality resting on pillars of competition, ownership, and control in pursuit of profit and permanent exploitation. It professes "freedom" yet its foundation is set on lands stolen while its very structure is built by stolen lives.

It is this very culture that must always have an Enemy Other, to lay blame, to lay claim, to affront, enslave and murder.

A subhuman enemy that any and all forms of extreme violence are not only permitted but expected to be put upon. If it doesn't have an immediate Other, it meticulously constructs one. This Other is not made from fear but its destruction is compelled by it. This Other is constituted from apocalyptic axioms and permanent misery. This Othering, this weitko disease, is perhaps best symptomatized in its simplest stratagem, in that of our silenced remakening:

They are dirty, They are unsuited for life, They are unable, They are incapable, They are disposable, They are non-believers, They are unworthy, They are made to benefit us, They hate our freedom, They are undocumented, They are queer, They are black, They are Indigenous, They are less than, They are against us, until finally, They are no more.

In this constant mantra of violence reframed, it's either You or it's Them.

It is the Other who is sacrificed for an immortal and cancerous continuity. It is the Other who is poisoned, who is bombed, who is left quietly beneath the rubble.

This way of unbeing, which has infected all aspects of our lives, which is responsible for the annihilation of entire species, the toxifi- cation of oceans, air and earth, the clear-cutting

and burning of whole forests, mass incarceration, the technological possibility of world ending warfare, and raising the temperatures on a global scale, this is the deadly politics of capitalism, it's pandemic.

An ending that has come before.

The physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual invasion of our lands, bodies, and minds to settle and to exploit, is colonialism. Ships sailed on poisoned winds and bloodied tides across oceans pushed with a shallow breath and impulse to bondage, millions upon millions of lives were quietly extinguished before they could name their enemy. 1492. 1918. 2020…

Biowarfare blankets, the slaughter of our relative the buffalo, the damming of lifegiving rivers, the scorching of untarnished earth, the forced marches, the treatied imprisonment, coercive education through abuse and violence.

The day to day post-war, postgenocide, trading post-colonial humiliation of our slow mass suicide on the altar of capitalism; work, income, pay rent, drink, fuck, breed, retire, die. It's on the roadside, it's on sale at Indian markets, serving drinks at the casino, restocking Bashas, it's nice Indians behind you.

These are the gifts of infesting manifest destinies, this is that futured imaginary our captors would have us perpetuate and be a part. The merciless imposition of this dead world was driven by an idealized utopia as Charnel House, it was "for our own good" an act of "civilization."

Killing the "Indian"; killing our past and with it our future. "Saving the man"; imposing another past and with it another future.

These are the apocalyptic ideals of abusers, racists and hetero-patriarchs. The doctrinal blind faith of those who can only see life through a prism, a fractured kaleidoscope of an endless and total war.

Its an apocalyptic that colonizes our imaginations and destroys our past and future simultaneously. It is a struggle to dominate human meaning and all existence.

This is the futurism of the colonizer, the capitalist. It is at once every future ever stolen by the plunderer, the warmonger and the rapist.

This has always been about existence and non-existence. It is apocalypse, actualized. And with the only certainty being a deathly end, colonialism is a plague.

Our ancestors understood that this way of being could not be reasoned or negotiated with. That it could not be mitigated or redeemed. They understood that the apocalyptic only exists in absolutes.

Our ancestors dreamt against the end of the world.

Many worlds have gone before this one. Our traditional histories are tightly woven with the fabric of the birthing and ending of worlds. Through these cataclysms we have gained many lessons that have shaped who we are and how we are to be with one another. Our ways of being are informed through finding harmony through and from the destruction of worlds. The Elliptic. Birth. Death. Rebirth.

We have an unknowing of histories upon histories of the world that is part of us. It is the language of the cosmos, it speaks in prophecies long carved in the scars where our ancestors dreamed. It is the ghost- dance, the seven fires, the birth of the White Buffalo, the seventh generation, it is the five suns, it is written in stone near Oraibi, and beyond. These prophecies are not just predictive, they have also been diagnostic and instructive.

We are the dreamers dreamt by our ancestors. We have traversed all time between the breaths of our dreams. We exist at once with our ancestors and unbirthed generations. Our future is held

in our hands. It is our mutuality and interdependence. It is our relative. It is in the creases of our memories, folded gently by our ancestors. It is our collective Dreamtime, and it is Now. Then. Tomorrow. Yesterday.

The anti-colonial imagination isn't a subjective reaction to colonial futurisms, it is anti-settler future. Our life cycles are not linear, our future exists without time. It is a dream, uncolonized.

This is the Indigenous anti-future.

We are not concerned with how our enemies name their dead world or how they recognize or acknowledge us or these lands. We are not concerned with re-working their ways of managing control or honoring their dead agreements or treaties. They will not be compelled to end the destruction that their world is predicated upon. We do not plead with them to end global warming, as it is the conclusion of their apocalyptic imperative and their life is built upon the death of Mother Earth. We bury the right wing and the left wing together in the earth they are so hungry to consume. The conclusion of the ideological war of colonial politics is that Indigenous Peoples always lose, unless we lose ourselves. Capitalists and colonizers will not lead us out of their dead futures.

Apocalyptic idealization is a self fulfilling prophecy. It is the linear world ending from within. Apocalyptic logic exists within a spiritual, mental, and emotional dead zone that also cannibalizes itself. It is the dead risen to consume all life.

Our world lives when their world ceases to exist.

As Indigenous anti-futurists, we are the consequence of the history of the colonizer's future. We are the consequence of their war against Mother Earth. We will not allow the specter of the colonizer, the ghosts of the past to haunt the ruins of this world. We are the actualization of our prophecies.

This is the re-emergence of the world of cycles.

This is our ceremony.

Between silent skies. The world breathes again and the fever subsides.

The land is quiet. Waiting for us to listen.

When there are less distractions, we go to the place where our ancestors emerged.

And their/our voice.

There is a song older than worlds here, it heals deeper then the colonizer's blade could ever cut.

And there, our voice. We were always healers. This is the first medicine.

Colonialism is a plague, capitalism is pandemic.

These systems are anti-life, they will not be compelled to cure themselves.

We will not allow these corrupted sickened systems to recuperate. We will spread.

We are the antibodies.

+ + + +

Addendum: In our past/your future it was the unsystematic non-linear attacks on vulnerable critical infrastructure such as gas utilities, transportation corridors, power supplies, communications systems, and more, that made settler colonialism an impossibility on these lands.

Our organizing was cellular, it required no formal movements. Ceremony was/is our liberation, our liberation was/is ceremony.

We honored our sacred teachings, our ancestors and coming generations. We took credit for nothing.

We issued no communiques. Our actions were our propaganda.

We celebrated the death of leftist solidarity and it's myopic apocalyptic romanticism.
We demanded nothing from capitalists/colonizers.

The Anpoa Duta Collective Part 2: a conversation with Aragorn!

A!: So you passed through punk and punk-influenced anarchism. You mentioned that town, Winona. There was a scene there?

ADC2: There was, yea. I'm trying to think. Part of it was having a real dedication to being in Minnesota.

A!: You knew that from day one?

ADC2: Yea.

A!: You never wanted to move to a "cooler city"?

ADC2: Not really. I always talk about it this way: punk got me to anarchism, anarchism got me out of punk. I came into it as an idealistic thing and Minneapolis was a haven for punk rock, and by the time I was getting into it, it was already a has-been thing…

A!: Totally. I never liked Minneapolis punk.

ADC2: It was just one of those things—home town pride or whatnot. And I was seeing shows when I was even younger than that, with the friend group I was hanging out with. I got to see some Minneapolis legends. I'm sure some would be like, "who the fuck's that band," but… local legends. Those were very pivotal moments for me. It's also one of those things—playing in bands, being under 18, being under parents' watchful eyes, we didn't have a very large radius either. It was Minneapolis, and we went on a summer tour.

Ai: It's far to go anywhere from here.

ADC2: Right. So we would play shows in really small towns. We played a lot of shows in small town suburban scenes when I was 16. So part of it was reading the CrimethInc stuff early on, it had an influence as far as the aesthetics went, especially *Days of War, Nights of Love,* it had this aesthetic of punk, but had this thing going on that I was really getting into it for, while everyone I was around was drinking and partying, even though the songs were really political and resonated with me, that was all that was there—all we were doing was going to shows on weekends, drinking, and partying. That wasn't what I wanted.

ADC1: For me, my family had always been very politically active in the native activist scene.

A!: In Minneapolis?

ADC1: In Minnesota. My mother moved down, and got a job at ASU in Arizona—she's also a native aca- demic—when I was 10. So that's where I spent most of my teen years, in Arizona.

A!: Are your parents together?

ADC1: My parents are together, but it's my grandfather who's… I'm generation three of… I rebel against the idea of the native academic, but I suppose… So she was there. It's really bizarre, I never actually read Franz Fanon, or Albert Memmi, I didn't ever read them because they were talked about all the time, they were the dinner table conversations that I grew up with…

A!: oh my god… [laughs]

ADC1: So, yea [sighs] I have these ideas that I can vaguely reference to so and so, but it didn't really matter, they were just the household names that I knew.

So when we moved back here and I got involved in protesting the Minnesota sesquicentennial celebrations that were happening in 2008, and that's when [ADC2] and I met. I was going to college that year, and had some very minimal exposure to some anarchist theory, and thought "oh, this is kind of cool," and started hanging out with you [ADC2] in the different scenes, and I found it really fascinating but I was also disillusioned very quickly. It was cool that people were centered around these politics, but in a lot of ways those politics took a back seat, sometimes, to a lot of interpersonal drama. And in many cases the politics were not thoroughly thought out. The levels of cultural appropriation were obnoxiously high.

ADC2: Especially at that time. It was nauseating and I didn't want to be involved with that.

A!: What's crazy is that, in hindsight, that was the peak of this midwestern thing.

ADC2: Right. Right. In 2008, 2009. And one of the things that began to really bother me was lack of accountability to place: this idea of moving to a cooler city. In dealing with native issues and with cultural appropriation… we worked with a couple of people really hard core, we became good friends with them, brought out all of these ideas, spent months working and cultivating these kinds of ideas, and they move off to cooler cities. For me at least, I was not getting much in terms of the investment that I was willing to put into that community.

Part of it too, there's the idea of anarchism and anarchy, and being an anarchist. It's a scene, right? If you're not showing up, if you're not a presence, then you're not really part of it anymore. I feel like there's also tons of people who resonate with the ideas, but they either don't have an access point or they're not invested in what's primarily a youth culture. My point of checking out was when we started investing energy out here. I was spending all my time up here, and we decided this is where we're going to build roots.

A!: I'm going to interrogate you on that in a second. But first, I always talk about the big problem that I see is that people conflate the social aspects of anarchism with the political aspects. Basically you're coming of age with a group of friends who… you've never known something as awesome and great as this group of friends, and when that social fabric starts to fray for a lot of people—all too many people—the political fabric also frays because of the total conflation. But since we were talking about the fact that you have some reknown, [laughter] that's because you were about to be a prisoner.

ADC2: yea.

A!: and you spent some time inside. ADC2: yea.

A!: Was it county, mostly?

ADC2: No, it was federal.

A!: You spent time in federal prison: holy shit!

ADC2: yep.

A!: So talk a little bit about that, especially in the context of this leaving…

ADC2: Yea. So, we started doing more work out here in like 2008. I got charged in 2009.

A!: And you were charged with…

ADC2: Animal Enterprise Terrorism

A!: Right, so you were one of the first people to be charged under that new AETA [Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act]…

ADC2: Well, they charged me originally under the AETA, but the crime that happened was before the AETA, so they had to revise it back to the AEPA [Animal Enterprise Protection Act]. At first I was facing, I think 20 years or something.

A!: This was for something in Iowa, if I recall… Why do I remember all this?! That's ridiculous.

ADC2: Yea. It was a conspiracy charge.

ADC1: A one-man conspiracy.

ADC2: Yea, it was like one of those vague indictments.

A!: You got held over for trial? Is that why you were in the fed?

ADC2: Well I was in county for two, two and a half, weeks, and then I got out on bond, because I had no record and didn't… I don't know, they couldn't make a compelling reason to keep me, I guess. And that was with a public defender, which is really surprising. He said it was the first time he ever got someone out of county…

A!: [laughing] Oh my god.

ADC2: Yea, a federal prisoner… so he took me out to eat that night because it was the first time it ever happened. So then it was about a year and a half of trying to figure out what their case was going to be. It gets kind of murky. A couple days before trial…

A!: I assume they were trying to toss you plea agreements…

ADC2: Yea, before that they were trying to toss me plea agreements. And we made it known that I wasn't interested.

A!: Isn't it like 95% of people plea nowadays for a federal case?

ADC2: For federal cases, yea. And to be clear I did end up pleaing, but it was a non-cooperation plea. But it was interesting, when I first got taken in, it was for contempt of court. So I wasn't even charged for a crime, they just thought I knew something about something. Then they used the contempt of court as evidence that I was part of a conspiracy. So that's the goofiest thing. That was the evidence that they used to link me… When they brought me in they had said that they're interested in someone else, and they wanted me to say that this is the person who did this… "that's all we need you to do." And this was before they charged me, so this was when I just had the contempt of court. They were like "you'll get out the next day, all you gotta do is just say this person's name." And I was like, "I don't know what you're talking about." I had no idea, and… so it was kind of funny. They were under the impression that I knew someone and… anyways. So… contempt of court, then they use that for conspiracy for AETA. They had charged me after the statute of limitation was up for that crime, because the thing in Iowa happened in November or something like that. It was over the statute of limitations by…

ADC1: Only a couple days…

ADC2: Only a couple days, but it was past it. So then they expanded the conspiracy to "unknown date," so it wasn't just the one act, it was an on-going conspiracy. They linked it to another…

ADC1: It was a mink farm.

ADC2: Yea, it was another … they just said there is this broad conspiracy that did this thing in Iowa, and did this other thing in Minnesota. That put it back within the statute of limitations. It was actually a blessing in disguise, because the thing in Iowa would've been a much bigger deal, the thing in Minnes—when we sat down with the legal team—they were like, "if it were only this thing it would just be a misdemeanor, so you might only get probation."

So they kept on throwing plea deals, it was only a couple of them at that time, but the lawyers were like, "we're not interested, we're going to trial. Stop giving plea deals."

Then something really wonky happened. There was another person who was jailed for contempt of court, and was later released…

A!: That was Carrie.

ADC2: Yea. And they basically subpoenaed her to testify, and they subpoenaed another woman to testify. They both made it known that they weren't going to testify at the trial. So if we went to trial they would both have been in contempt of court. For Carrie the lawyers sat down and were like, "she's already been in for civil contempt, if this happens it will probably be criminal contempt, and this is what she could face…" So we just did the math at that point. We added up if she could do a year, this other person could do six to eight months, or I could do a plea, and maybe do a max of six months. That's a really simple equation from my perspective, just very utilitarian. My lawyer kind of laughed at it. He was like, "They're never gonna let you go for six months. They're never… like, the max punishment for that would be six months, it's a misdemeanor, they're not gonna let that happen." I was like "well, worst thing you can do is throw it out there, if they really don't want to go to trial… I'm not gonna go down for a felony…"

A!: Your life changes if you…

ADC2: Yea, I didn't want that to happen. And also the big fight was about Iowa, and there were a lot of things about that. It was the original case, I'm just, I'm not gonna go down for that. Anyways, the lawyers pitched it to them for the Minnesota thing, and as a misdemeanor. And that's what I pled to, a federal misdemeanor, and did six months.

It happens to people who go to School of the Americas protests. Those're the only other people who I know of who are charged with federal misdemeanors. It was a really surreal experience, going into federal prison…

A!: Did you do two and a half months?

ADC2: No I spent the full six months.

A!: They made you do the full six? Bastards. [laughs]

ADC2: I wasn't there long enough to qualify for early release. Yea, got really into weight lifting and got to hang out with tons of people and…

ADC1: It makes me feel better about the world that the prosecutor of his case basically lost his job over this…

ADC2: Well he didn't lose his job, he got…

ADC1: He got demoted, he's no longer allowed to have his offices in the main…

ADC2: I don't know if he's "no longer allowed" but we heard that his office moved…

ADC1: They moved his office…

ADC2: It sounds like it was a personal thing, like make or break, and it didn't happen, so…

A!: How did you change through this process? What were you… When you walked out of federal prison, were you like… were you different?

ADC2: Yea, I was ripped.

ADC1: [laughter]

ADC2: . like I said, I was weightlifting a bunch.

I don't know. I feel like I kind of had set myself up to just get through it. I had this mentality that there's not that many people who have faced federal charges who can get out. I just determined, worst case scenario, this is going to happen…

A!: Were you raised to the level of "Star of the animal rights community"?

ADC2: No, I don't think so.

ADC1: Not actually. That got to be very contentious about who was doing prisoner support for him.

A!: They treat their prisoners pretty well.

ADC1: They do.

ADC2: Yea. There were people who wrote to me, but I wasn't an animal rights activist at that point.

A!: Had you been in the past?

ADC2: Yea, I was in the anarchist scene. I was vegetarian, I did a ton of prisoner support for ALF and ELF prisoners. That's mostly what my activism had revolved around, was prisoner support. So I knew some of the realities of prison. And I think there was some pressure to play up the star role more, but it wasn't…

A!: It wasn't you.

ADC2: Well, like, I was a hunter, at the time I was hunting…

ADC1: That actually came up a couple times during…

ADC2: …about whether people should support me because I hunt.

ADC1: I got really irritated at one prominent member of the animal rights anarchist group who was saying that ADC2 was a Dakota primi- tivist who hunts animals. He's not "an ALF prisoner." It was like, he's not going to support you as such because of that.

ADC2: And that's fine. People come at it from where they're at.

A!: That's what I was asking…

ADC2: I don't take it personally either.

ADC1: I do. [laughter]

ADC2: There's no reason to. It's not worth it.

ADC1: I know.

ADC2: That status is glorified, and… prison is shitty. I went into it with, this is an experience that is supposed to be miserable. They're trying to punish you. They're trying to drain whatever out of you. For me, I went into it with "I'm going to get the most out of this experience that I can." I didn't really have a choice, especially with the plea, so… and then also it was very short term. Six months… I would've probably had a very different perspective if I were facing 20 years. That's a much bigger bullet to bite. Six months is almost literally nothing. I've wasted six months doing stupider shit.

A!: Absolutely.

ADC2: And there was some pressure to write communiques out of prison, or messages…

ADC1: You did one communique where you had gotten to 100 pushups… [laughs]

ADC2: I was in solitary for a while 'cause I was in private prison. So I had no contact; for a while I wasn't getting letters, I didn't have phone calls. So all I could do was…

A!: …push ups.

ADC2: Yea. So there was some pressure to do that but to put stuff out, or to make it… but it's like—six months. People…

A!: Right. When you compare yourself to McGowen, or to that poor kid in Sacramento…

ADC2: Right. Those are people who… there's a status… I do think that people who go to prison should be celebrated for political acts. And whether celebrity is the right term or not…

A!: Whatever it takes for them to get support…

ADC2: Yea, for me it was more of this notion that… I didn't really feel like I deserved that or wanted it. For me I went into it with… I hate to use the word zen, but… I'm going to do it day by

day, and make the most of this experience. And in some ways it's easier doing that. It's easier to just do your time.

A!: I've had a lot of serious medical stuff in my life, and it's a similar sort of thing, if I don't get this taken care of, I die, so I'm just going to let go…

ADC2: Yea.

A!: My agency is no longer the issue, I am going under the knife right now.

ADC2: Right. You let it happen.

I feel like, coming out of it, it was kind of doing… I don't know if soul searching is the right term. I'd sundanced before that, so I'd gone through some harder things than prison, let's just put it that way, things that were more physically taxing.

So for six months I spent a lot of time reading, a lot of time thinking, a fair amount of time writing, and coming out of it I had this clear idea of where I wanted to end up. And also a better sense of who's in my corner, politics aside. That's what came out of it in some way. There were some people, and I think it's important to have political ties, but I definitely came out really appreciative of the people who supported me, the people who had my back, and really appreciative of the people who wrote to me. But coming out I had a clear sense of where I wanted to throw my energy, and my weight. Realizing the kind of patience it was going to take. It's gonna take time. And building a resiliant community is going to take generations, you know what I mean?

A!: Sure!

ADC2: So I guess the stuff I came to was not really as a result of prison, but from having the time to sit back and reflect. And it wasn't so much that I was deciding to check out of anarchism, but just where should I put my energy, coming from where I come from. The scene in Minneapolis… there were good friendships, good community, but I was just realizing more and more that I wasn't fitting there, it just wasn't where my life was heading long term.

That's where I think, for us, the whole prison thing really solidified our relationship, too.

A!: Yea, I was going to ask you that too. How did you [ADC1] change through this? Sounds like you were not as patient. [laughter]

ADC1: Part of that's just my character, I'm not as forgiving of things in general.

A!: It is part of the role of being a partner.

ADC1: Exactly.

A!: One person can act all like…

ADC1: …"Oh, it's fine…" No it's not!

I don't know. I don't feel like I changed a whole lot. It was this interesting thing. We've had two major separations in our relationship, one was when he went to prison, and the other was when I went to El Paso for a year so I could do my midwifery training. So, similarly to my time away, it was an opportunity for me to live by myself for the first time, because I moved from home, went to college, he and I met and moved in together. So it was an opportunity to do that and be more independent, figure that out: who I was apart from other people. And through that became clear that no, this is the person I want to be with, and the situation in which I want to be, and come hell or high water, that's what I'm going to put my energy towards. And a huge part of our relationship—in the broader sense of the word—has really been wrapped up in and focused on the idea of radical indigeneity, from specifically a radical, nationalist, Dakota idea. Having this place of primacy both in our lives individually but also together. It's a focus that both of us have decided to throw what weight and energy we have, behind.

Anti-Colonial Hxstory: Colonization is a plague

BEFORE COLONIZERS, INDIGENOUS PEOPIES HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED SMALL-POX, MEASLES OR FLU. FHE VIRUSES TORE THROUGH TURTLE ISLAND, KILLING AN ESTIMATED NINETY PERCENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

In 1763, during an ongoing siege on the colonial military outpost called "Fort Pitt" led by Obwandiyag (Odawa Nation, aka Pontiac), British invaders used smallpox infected blankets as a biological weapon. The British general Jeffrey Amherst had written, *"Could it not be contrived to send the smallpox among those disaffected Tribes of Indians? We must, on this occasion, use every stratagem in our power to reduce them."*

Ongoing Colonization Continues to Desecrate Occupied Hia Ced O'odham Jewed by Sapé!

As we look to each other during a time of concern for the health and well being of our families, capitalist interests continue to reap destruction upon sacred land in the form of border imperialism. In the midst of the Covid19 crisis, the interim government is doubling down on desecration of sacred sites on unceded and occupied Hia Ced O'odham territory, otherwise known as Organ Pipe National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, and the Barry Goldwater Bombing Range. Earlier this year, explosions blasted through Monument Hill, in an area set aside as a formal 'enforcement zone,' designated by the Roosevelt Easement in a 1907 presidential proclamation. Before that time, the land was free and known as Hia Ced O'odham territory, going back to the times of our creation stories.

As Caterpillar bulldozers plunge through O'odham ancestral cemeteries, homelands, and prayer grounds, our families mourn. After the sugai bushes, palo verde trees, sacred Has:san (Saguaro) and other life is carelessly tossed aside for a 60 foot road, Southwest Valley Constructors, an entity of Kiewit, continues to erect miles of 30 ft steel bollard-style walls. In the near future, these steel barriers are to be completed with stadium flood lights, blotting out the magnificent views of the stars seen since the times of our ancestors, drastically changing the landscape. Well drilling companies pump from our sacred natural springs at record speeds, disregarding the sanctity of the area, the scarcity of water, and all life in the process. In an ecosystem where water is a scarce resource for plants, animals, and humans—much of our ecosystem is taken for granted. The water is then sprayed copiously over just flattened dirt roads. A generous amount of the desert water supply is also used to mix the concrete which is then poured deep into the jeved, to stabilize the steel wall.

Man camps have been established in Ajo, AZ, with regular unwanted interactions with community members concerned over this infiltration. The construction has doubled down during stay at home pandemic orders. Ajo Community Members and Tohono O'odham villagers are awoken by the sounds of semi-trucks carrying large panels heading south towards the border. Neighboring communities, Sonoyta, Ajo, and Gu Vo and Hickiwan districts of the Tohono O'odham reservation, have regular interactions and experiences with construction crews. Wall construction continues on unceded territory where Hia Ced O'odham were once forcibly removed—making way for mining, bombing range activities, and recreational enjoyment for settler tourists.

Meanwhile, on the Tohono O'odham reservation, contractors come through by the truckload, carrying large cylindrical shaped equipment. The Integrated Fixed Towers, also known as IFTs, are a project of the Israeli tech company, Elbit Systems, which has a subsidiary in the United States. Prior to deals made between the United States and Israel, the IFTs have been "tested" on occupied Palestinian communities in the West Bank, Gaza, and other areas of occupied Palestine.

Although many O'odham fiercely oppose these towers and their locations so near to communities, the Department of Homeland Security and elected officials of the Tohono O'odham Nation heartbreakingly agreed to this continued occupation of border patrol on O'od- ham lands.

Walls, towers, bombs, checkpoints, old mines, assimilationist policy, and revisionist history have all served in the interest of the settler colonial state. These entities are not new, but the rate in which they are desecrating our ancestral homeland, waiving their own settler imposed laws, is unprecedented. These occupying entities must be stopped, as well as the ongoing efforts to pacify our people through these mechanisms.

Liberation Through Dismantling Borders and Barriers

Dismantling borders and barriers is the first step in repairing divides between O'odham. Colonial forces often use divide and conquer strategies to sever connections existing among O'odham since the beginning of our creation stories. This persistent attempt at our erasure has caused much harm to our peoples, who continue to live along the United States and Mexico borderlands. Indigenous peoples are not conquered. Our existence in the face of attempts to extinguish our culture defies colonial declaration of conquest. Academics, serving the interests of settler colonists, went so far as to declare Hia Ced O'odham extinct, whitewashing much of our histories to fit a non-in- digenous narrative. Hia Ced O'odham, Tohono O'odham, and Akim el O'odham still exist, with O'odham in Mexico and O'odham in the so called United States having roots and relations in all the areas of the jeved. The O'odham Anti Border Collective looks to uplift the voices of O'odham water, land, and culture protectors throughout Turtle Island and connect our collective efforts.

O'odham traditional homelands expand all the way North to the Gila and Salt Rivers, East to Yuma, South to Caborca and the Gulf of Mexico, and West to the San Pedro River. As O'odham, we face numerous issues in each of our distinct communities.

Each community is impacted by Spanish and U.S settler colonialism in different ways. In our territory, colonization presents itself through many forms—extraction projects, mines, dams, corporate agriculture, deforestation, a massive border wall, deportation, incarceration, surveillance towers, bombing ranges, military occupation, a freeway desecrating mountains to pave way for industry, residential school survivors, sex and gender violence, missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, state brutality, food deserts, environmental racism that wastelands our homes, lack of healthcare, record diabetes rates, trauma, addiction, broken families, gangs, gun violence, internalized oppression of sexism, racism, homophobia, and through an array of other harms that aren't our way. In recognizing harms done to us and our community and naming them, we empower ourselves to break cycles rooted in colonial greed and oppression. By strengthening community bonds and reconnecting with himdag, we find ways to regenerate our cultures and community bonds. In this process, artificial borders and barriers become as meaningless as the colonial concepts that they hailed from.

The O'odham Anti-Border Collective

A history of colonial borders and barriers have severed relations between our people and himdag (way of life). We examine this history, looking to keep our roots intact as we repair

ourselves. We are a strong people with the ability to reconnect and heal the wounds caused by barriers, separation, and assimilation processes. We take collective and individual action for the decolonization of O'odham jewed (homelands), the revitalization of O'odham himdag, and the resurgence of O'odham people.

Prior to the colonial border, O'odham were connected through ceremony, trade, language, shared culture and identity, and social relationships despite geographic divisions and regional uniqueness. We considered ourselves relatives and recognized each other collectively as O'odham, demarcated only by region and dialect. O'odham peoples comprise some of the largest Indigenous communities in the U.S. today and historically have included several regions with slight differences in O'odham language dialect, geographic area, and small cultural nuances that distinguish one community from another, even though we are all collectively O'odham. We call ourselves Onk Akimel O'odham (Salt River people), Keli Akimel O'odham (Gila River people), Tohono O'odham (desert people), Hia Ced O'odham (sand people). O'odham in Mexico, also known as OIM, represent areas south of the imposed borderlands. There are also communities of O'odham descendants and tribal members in cities like Yuma, Arizona and Los Angeles, California who have lived there for generations. We are all descended from O'odham Huhugam, or ancestors. Our traditional clan systems are inclusive of mixed O'odham identities and we embrace the diversity of our people who are also of mixed heritage and other cultures. We reclaim the sacredness of our two spirit and LGBTQI O'odham who traditionally had important and honored roles in our culture and communities.

From the onset of colonization, religious barriers separated O'odham according to belief systems imposed by colonizers, and traditional ways of life were not allowed by missionaries unless they conformed to Spanish Catholic indoctrination. This indoctrination would later take the form of Mormon, Presbyterian, and other Christian beliefs brought by U.S. invaders. While some O'odham peoples converted to new religions, Indigenized these practices, and adapted to the imposition of colonial cultures in order to survive, other O'odham continued to resist colonization and assimilation in other ways. O'odham actively resisted through the overthrow of missions, escape and rebellion from enslavement (often in mines and plantations), and through exercising the autonomy to engage in colonial commerce on their own terms, often through taking advantage of traveling colonizers in need of food, guides, and supplies. We as O'odham continue to practice ceremonies that transgress the border, from the sacred salt journeys, running for prayer, or annual pilgrimage to Magdalena, Sonora.

At frequent times throughout history, O'odham resisted colonial occupation and encroachment through violent and bloody wars. War was seen as something to be avoided, but was fought to win when it came to protecting the land and people from those who wished to cause harm. Because our ancestors defended the jewed, we were able to retain existing territory where many O'odham now remain. Encroachment has been ongoing ever since. Colonizers, through the use of agents, informants, and anthropologists, studied O'odham and would report back on strategies to divide and conquer. Government forces would then instigate established tensions between neighboring indigenous bands of Apache and Quechan. This unfortunately led to conflict, disconnects we look to repair and move beyond as we remove barriers and fight the same battles to protect the earth.

The majority of O'odham jewed was unceded territory until recent times. After Mexico established independence from Spain in 1821, Spanish colonial recognition policy deemed O'odham lands as part of this newly established country. However, O'odham communities retained tradi-

tional leadership and autonomy. In 1854, the Gadsden Purchase created the current border, at a time when rebellions against missionaries, plantations, mineral, animal, wood, water extraction, and settlers were frequent. This border, an imaginary line at the time, was the beginning of a major separation of Hia Ced O'odham (sand people), Akimel O'odham (river people), and Tohono O'odham (desert people). The creation of this colonial partition commenced further separations through colonization, militarization, assimilation under two competing colonial regimes, and territorial acquisition.

Today, O'odham in Mexico still fight for recognition of traditional governments and ejidos on the territories they reside. O'odham in Mexico's territory is at risk of government encroachment in addition to land grabs and violence from Mexican ranchers, agricultural interests, tourism companies, mines, factories, non-Indigenous urban sprawl, and cartels. Much work has been done to preserve historical and sacred sites such as salt deposits, the Pinacates, the lake at Quitovac, and other sacred areas threatened by economic growth and encroachment from those who seek to extract our resources and destroy our lands, communities, religion, history, and culture. Many O'odham in Mexico seek to retain their own sovereignty through the practice of traditional autonomy. O'odham on both sides look to deconstruct the border in order to connect with each other through maintaining language, family ties, and cultural revitalization.

In the so called United States, many O'odham still live in territories claimed by the park service or colonial cities and towns. We consider these lands to be unceded territory, as these lands were not taken with the consent of O'odham. We look to recognize all O'odham traditional homelands and reclaim their significance, despite intentional erasure.

When we connect despite the barriers between us, our bonds as indigenous caretakers of the land become stronger. Our trade routes re- emerge as pathways to reconnecting relationships and practices of autonomy. When we practice our himdag and deepen our relationships to the land and to each other, it becomes possible to conceptualize a non-capitalist, non-consumptionist way of existence. There is power in collective resistance to assimilative policies of destruction and extraction. Our grandparents remember the time when the lands were unrestricted to travel. Our ancestors remember a time when our land and people were free. Our collective aims to be conceptually and materially free from colonial barriers, refusing the boundaries of the oppressor.

Recognition Strategy

The O'odham Anti Border Collective does not look to colonial government structures for leadership or recognition. We reject colonial strategies that seek our extinction. We welcome O'odham descendants to reconnect with their extended families and communities of origin. We welcome O'odham who have been disconnected from the culture or the community to learn, make connections, and heal. We hold the power as sovereign people to recognize ourselves and fellow Indigenous nations beyond the colonizer's scope of recognition. We acknowledge O'odham as the original caretakers of the land, protecting our people and traditional territory. We look to educate ourselves and our communities, so that we may respond to assaults on the land and our people as one.

Prior to colonization, indignous communities had their own methods of dealing with domestic abusers, sexual predators, internal conflicts, violence, and bad behaviors. Borders brought the so called drug war, and along with that, various substance abuse issues that had a rippling effect

of violence. O'odham are not alone among indigenous people targeted and killed by authorities at disproportionate rates. Newly formed police task forces regularly beat O'odham at their leisure, building a systemic cycle of distrust from an early onset. In both Mexico and the U.S., O'odham were enslaved, incarcerated, exploited, starved, and conscripted. We suffer generations of historical trauma from the violence of colonial regimes, the state, and colonial institutions on both sides of the border.

Too many have died through means of police brutality. Too many have been incarcerated. Too many have been sexually assaulted and abused and not helped by the supposed forces that claim to protect us. Our collective looks to build autonomy without the structural barrier of police, border patrol, ICE, or any entity of the prison industrial complex. We refuse the logic of disposability that the colonizer has brought through mass incarceration, deportation, and detention. As we envision society without borders and barriers, we envision communities without the rule of an outside central authority. We envision a future where once again O'odham have dignity, traditional virtues, and revolutionary spirit to resolve our own conflicts and guide our communities and families in a good way, decolonizing from lateral violence and oppression.

We seek to honor our lineages without reproducing sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or toxic masculinity. We seek to regenerate our traditional gender roles to become more equitable and to restore the sacred honor of our two-spirit siblings. We will not tolerate gender violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate or domestic violence, or any kind of toxicity that damages our dignity as O'odham people.

Where Militarization and Freeways Intersect

On O'odham land, we face the ongoing encroachment of the companies invested in exploiting and militarizing O'odham land and indigenous peoples all over the world. Elbit, Cemex, Raytheon, G4S, Corecivic, Tucson tech park, Barry Goldwater Bombing Range, Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Freeport McMoran, and other industries all have established bases on O'odham traditional territory. How did such encroachment take place? Colonial entities have many motives for displacing O'odham. The more we study the land, the more we realize that our issues intersect. Much of these issues are tied to greed and exploitation of resources.

The settler colonial destruction of land in the north of O'odham territory is evident in the large settler growth in cities such as Phoenix, which is Akimel O'odham territory. In a place where stars can no longer be seen in the night sky, and the sacred mountains are re-named by settlers, though we uplift the original meaning and significance these mountains carry for Akimel O'odham. O'odham connection to the land is present every time Target or another strip mall comes across more bones of our ancestors.

The latest desecration of sacred mountains came in the form of freeway expansion. Colonizers seek to restrict the movement of people, including O'odham, on our homelands but have no qualms destroying land to move products, natural resources, and capital. Members of Keli Akimel O'odham, the Gila River Indian community fought to protect sacred Moadag Doak (south mountain) from the expansion of the 202 freeway. The Canamex Sun corridor connects a NAFTA trade route from Canada all the way through Mexico. Because the United States has an interest in protecting these trade routes, it seeks to militarize the border and all ports of entry to secure its

ability to extract and move goods and commerce. Meanwhile, O'odham mourn the destruction caused to the lands in the name of greed and imperialism.

In an effort to make way for the mining industry, anthropologists falsely claimed Hia Ced O'odham were extinct. Because Hia Ced O'odham were more likely to resist colonial interference, the government used a strategy of disappearance. After decades of fighting for recognition, Hia Ced were temporarily recognized as a district within the Tohono O'odham Nation. Such recognition was short lived, as tribal politics influenced by federal interference set to dismantle Hia Ced existence yet again.

Nowadays, Hia Ced O'odham land is divided into various entities claimed by the government and national agencies. Hia Ced O'odham currently face the desecration of Trump's border wall plowing through desert spaces, threatening sacred water sources, and creating havoc to the natural indigneous environment. Al Wappia, or Quitobaquito, is one of our sacred springs threatened because the Trump administration is waiving environmental laws, bulldozing the wilderness, and creating wells to mix the concrete for the steel 30 foot barriers with stadium style spotlights, frightening endangered animals away from the only regional water source in an intensely hot desert, and blinding views of the stars.

Hia Ced O'odham and Akimel O'odham territory has been flooded, displaced, and is now divided by the Barry Goldwater Bombing range testing it's munitions for global wars abroad. Traditionally, O'odham young men would journey through this area en route to sacred salt deposits near the Gulf of Mexico. This route connected our peoples across O'odham jewed, and connected us to Indigenous communities from as far south as Honduras and as far north as Canada. However, the area is now used as part of deadly Prevention Through Deterrence strategy to deter undocumented peoples fleeing imperialist wars abroad from entering the country.

As O'odham we have thousands of years of history in relationship to Indigenous peoples of the south who are now forced to flee their homelands, largely due to U.S. policy and intervention. The majority of undocumented peoples coming through O'odham territory are indigenous and our relatives. The U.S. has barely over 150 years of colonial occupancy on our lands and has no legitimacy to restrict who travels on O'odham land. O'odham should be able to decide that. Further, our himdag teaches us to welcome and care for those in need. Colonial entities have no business criminalizing human beings and people who give water in an area where such water is scarce.

Being Anti-Border is Being for Indigenous Land and Life

We are committed to protecting land and life of O'odham and our jewed. Like our huhugam we are warriors protecting the sacred. We do this work in prayer, in ceremony, in healing, and in regeneration of our sovereignty and autonomy as Indigenous peoples. We practice our himdag when we protect the water like the spring in Al Wappia, or Quitobaquito, from racist border walls. We practice our himdag when we protect our sacred mountains like Moadak Doag from capitalist freeways. We practice our him- dag when we refuse to participate in racism, sexism, or homophobia. We practice our himdag when we leave food and water for migrants in the jewed. We practice our himdag when we protect women and two spirit people from violence. We practice our himdag when we protect our jewed from destruction for profit. We practice our himdag when we heal our bodies from addiction and the effects of poor western diets. We practice

our himdag when we learn our language and when we cross the colonial border to meet other O'odham for ceremony. We practice our himdag when we learn our history and reject colonial occupation, by the U.S. or Mexico. We practice our himdag when we care for our elders and our children, and heal our families from historical trauma. We practice our himdag when we refuse barriers, separations, extractions, and brutality by reaching out to create connections, protect the sacred, and regenerate life. We are O'odham against borders. We are O'odham for autonomy and sovereignty. We are O'odham, learning as we are going, caminando preguntan- do like our Mayan Zapatista compas, living each day to be good relatives and good ancestors to our future generations.

Voting is Not Harm Reduction by Klee Benally & friends from Indigenous Action

When proclamations are made that "voting is harm reduction," it's never clear how less harm is actually calculated. Do we compare how many millions of undocumented Indigenous Peoples have been deported? Do we add up what political party conducted more drone strikes? Or who had the highest military budget? Do we factor in pipelines, mines, dams, sacred sites desecration? Do we balance incarceration rates? Do we compare sexual violence statistics? Is it in the massive budgets of politicians who spend hundreds of millions of dollars competing for votes?

Though there are some political distinctions between the two prominent parties in the so-called U.S., they all pledge their allegiance to the same flag. Red or blue, they're both still stripes on a rag waving over stolen lands that comprise a country built by stolen lives.

We don't dismiss the reality that, on the scale of U.S. settler colonial violence, even the slightest degree of harm can mean life or death for those most vulnerable. What we assert here is that the entire notion of "voting as harm reduction" obscures and perpetuates settler-colonial violence, there is nothing "less harmful" about it, and there are more effective ways to intervene in its violences.

At some point the left in the so-called U.S. realized that convincing people to rally behind a "lesser evil" was a losing strategy. The term "harm reduction" was appropriated to reframe efforts to justify their participation and coerce others to engage in the theater of what is called "democracy" in the U.S.

Harm reduction was established in the 1980s as a public health strategy for people dealing with substance use issues who struggle with abstinence. According to the Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC) the principles of harm reduction establish that the identified behavior is "part of life" so they "choose not to ignore or condemn but to minimize harmful effects" and work towards breaking social stigmas towards "safer use." The HRC also states that, "there is no universal definition of or formula for implementing harm reduction." Overall, harm reduction focuses on reducing adverse impacts associated with harmful behaviors.

The proposition of "harm reduction" in the context of voting means something entirely different from those organizing to address substance use issues. The assertion is that "since this political system isn't going away, we'll support politicians and laws that may do less harm."

The idea of a ballot being capable of reducing the harm in a system rooted in colonial domination and exploitation, white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, and capitalism is an extraordinary exaggeration. There is no person whose lives aren't impacted everyday by these systems of oppression, but instead of coded reformism and coercive "get out the vote" campaigns towards a "safer" form of settler colonialism, we're asking "what is the real and tragic harm and danger associated with perpetuating colonial power and what can be done to end it?"

Voting as practiced under U.S. "democracy" is the process with which people (excluding youth under the age of 18, convicted felons, those the state deems "mentally incompetent," and undoc-

umented folx including permanent legal residents), are coerced to choose narrowly prescribed rules and rulers. The anarchist collective Crimethinc observes, "Voting consolidates the power of a whole society in the hands of a few politicians." When this process is conducted under colonial authority, there is no option but political death for Indigenous Peoples. In other words, voting can never be a survival strategy under colonial rule. It's a strategy of defeat and victimhood that protracts the suffering and historical harm induced by ongoing settler colonialism. And while the harm reduction sentiment may be sincere, even hard won marginal reforms gained through popular support can be just as easily reversed by the stroke of a politician's pen. If voting is the democratic participation in our own oppression, voting as harm reduction is a politics that keeps us at the mercy of our oppressors.

While so many on the left–including some Indigenous radicals–are concerned with consolidation of power into fascists hands, they fail to recognize how colonial power is already consolidated. There is nothing intersectional about participating in and maintaining a genocidal political system. There's no meaningful solidarity to be found in a politics that urges us to meet our oppressors where they're at. Voting as harm reduction imposes a false solidarity upon those identified to be most vulnerable to harmful political policies and actions. In practice it plays out as paternalistic identity politicking as liberals work to identify the least dangerous candidates and rally to support their campaigns. The logic of voting as harm reduction asserts that whoever is facing the most harm will gain the most protection by the least dangerous denominator in a violently authoritarian system. This settler-colonial naivety places more people, non-human beings, and land at risk then otherwise. Most typically the same liberal activists that claim voting is harm reduction are found denouncing and attempting to suppress militant direct actions and sabotage as acts that "only harm our movement." "Voting as harm reduction" is the pacifying language of those who police movements.

Voting as harm reduction is the government issued blanket of the democratic party, we're either going to sleep or die in it.

To organize from a position that voting is an act of damage limitation blurs lines of the harm that settler and resource colonialism imposes.

Under colonial occupation all power operates through violence. There is absolutely nothing "less harmful" about participating in and perpetuating the political power of occupying forces. Voting won't undue settler colonialism, white supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, or capitalism. Voting is not a strategy for decolonization. The entire process that arrived at the "Native vote" was an imposition of U.S. political identity on Indigenous Peoples fueled by white supremacy and facilitated by capitalism.

The Native Vote: A Strategy of Colonial Domination

Prior to settler colonial invasion, Indigenous Peoples maintained diverse complex cultural organizations that were fairly unrecognizable to European invaders. From its inception, the U.S. recognized that Indigenous Peoples comprised distinct sovereign Nations. The projection of Nation status was committed on the terms of the colonizers who needed political entities to treaty with (primarily for war and economic purposes). As a result, social organizations of Indigenous Peoples faced extreme political manipulation as matriarchal and two-spirit roles were either completely disregarded or outright attacked. The imperative of the U.S. settler colonial project has

always been to undermine and destroy Indigenous sovereignty, this is the insidious *unnature* of colonialism.

In 1493 the Papal Bull "Inter Caetera," was issued by Pope Alexander VI. The document established the "Doctrine of Discovery" and was central to Spain's Christianizing strategy to ensure "exclusive right" to enslaved Indigenous Peoples and lands invaded by Columbus the year prior. This decree also made clear the Pope's threat to forcibly assimilate Indigenous Peoples to Catholicism in order to strengthen the "Christian Empire." This doctrine lead to successive generational patterns of genocidal and ecocidal wars waged by European settler colonizers against Indigenous lives, lands, spirit, and the living world of all of our relations. In 1823 the "Doctrine of Discovery" was written into U.S. law as a way to deny land rights to Indigenous Peoples in the Supreme Court case, Johnson v. McIntosh. In a unanimous decision, Chief Justice John Marshall wrote that Christian European nations had assumed complete control over the lands of "America" during the "Age of Discovery". And in declaring "independence" from the Crown of England in 1776, he noted, that the U.S. had in effect and thus by law inherited authority over these lands from Great Britain, "notwithstanding the occupancy of the natives, who were heathens…" According to the ruling, Indigenous Peoples did not have any rights as independent nations, but only as tenants or residents of the U.S. on their own lands. To this day, the "Doctrine of Discovery" has not been repudiated and Johnson v. McIntosh has not been overruled.

The genealogy of the Native vote is tied to boarding schools, Christian indoctrination, allotment programs, and global wars that established U.S. imperialism. U.S. assimilation policies were not designed as a benevolent form of harm reduction, they were an extension of a military strategy that couldn't fulfill its genocidal programs. Citizenship was forced onto Indigenous Peoples as part of colonial strategy to, "Kill the Indian and save the man."

There was a time when Indigenous Peoples wanted nothing to do with U.S. citizenship and voting.

Katherine Osborn, an ethnohistorian at Arizona State University states, "[Indigenous] polities hold a government-to-government relationship with the United States. Thus, their political status is unique, and that means that they are not just another minority group hoping for inclusion in the U.S. political order. For indigenous communities, protecting their sovereignty as tribal nations is the paramount political concern."

When the U.S. constitution was initially created, each state could determine who could be citizens at their discretion. Some states rarely granted citizenship and thereby conferred the status to select Indigenous Peoples but only if they dissolved their tribal relationships and became "civilized." This typically meant that they renounced their tribal affiliation, paid taxes, and fully assimilated into white society. Alexandra Witkin writes in *To Silence a Drum: The Imposition of United States Citizenship on Native Peoples*, "Early citizenship policy rested upon the assumption that allegiance could only be given to one nation; thus peoples with an allegiance to a Native nation could not become citizens of the United States." The preference though was not to respect and uphold Indigenous sovereignty, but to condemn it as "uncivilized" and undermine it through extreme tactics of forced assimilation.

When the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1868, it granted citizenship only to men born or naturalized in the U.S., this included former slaves but was interpreted to not apply to Indigenous Peoples except for those who assimilated and paid taxes. The 15th Amendment was subsequently passed in 1870 to ensure the right of U.S. citizens to vote without discrimination of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude" but was still interpreted

to exclude Indigenous Peoples who did not assimilate. In some ways this was an act of disenfranchisement, but more clearly it was a condition imposed upon Indigenous Peoples facing scorched-earth military campaigns and the threat of mass death marches to concentration camps. The message was clear, "assimilate or perish."

In 1887, U.S. Congress passed the General Allotment Act, more commonly known as the Dawes Act, which was designed to expedite colonial invasion, facilitate resource extraction, and to further assimilate Indigenous Peoples into the colonial social order. The Dawes Act marked a shift from a military strategy to an economic and political one where reservations were separated into individual lots, with only male "heads of households" to receive 160 acres with any remaining lands put up for sale to white invaders who flocked in droves to inherit their "Manifest Destiny." Indigenous Peoples who accepted allotments could receive U.S. citizenship, and although this was the first congressional act to provide the status, it came at the expense of sacrificing Indigenous People's cultural and political identities in many ways, particularly by further fracturing the integrity of Indigenous matriarchal societies. Under the Dawes Act, Indigenous lands were reduced from 138 million to 52 million acres. In 1890, the overall Indigenous population was reduced to about 250,000 from tens of millions at the time of initial European invasion. In contrast, the colonizer's U.S. population had increased to 62,622,250 the same year.

The legal destruction of Indigenous sovereign nations was fulfilled in Supreme Court decisions by judge John Marshall who wrote in 1831 that the Cherokee Nation was not a foreign nation, but rather that "They may, more correctly, perhaps, be denominated domestic dependent nations… Their relationship to the United States resembles that of a ward to its guardian."

The U.S.'s genocidal military campaigns known collectively as the "Indian Wars" supposedly came to an end in 1924. That same year U.S. Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act (ICA) which granted citizenship to Indigenous Peoples but still allowed for states to determine if they could vote. As a result, some states barred Indigenous Peoples from voting until 1957. Until passage of the ICA, which was a regulatory action approved with no hearings, Indigenous Peoples were considered "Domestic Subjects" of the U.S. Government.

The Haudeneshonee Confederacy completely rejected imposition of U.S. citizenship through the IAC and called it an act of treason.

Joseph Heath, General Counsel of the Onondaga Nation, writes, "The Onondaga Nation and the Haudenosaunee have never accepted the authority of the United States to make Six Nations citizens become citizens of the United States, as claimed in the Citizenship Act of 1924. We hold three treaties with the United States: the 1784 Treaty of Fort Stanwix, the 1789 Treaty of Fort Harmor and the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua. These treaties clearly recognize the Haudenosaunee as separate and sovereign Nations. Accepting United States citizenship would be treason to their own Nations, a violation of the treaties and a violation of international law…"

They rejected the ICA and "resisted its implementation immediately after its adoption, because they had the historical and cultural understanding that it was merely the latest federal policy aimed at taking their lands and at forced assimilation."

Heath further adds, "For over four centuries the Haudenosaunee have maintained their sovereignty, against the onslaught of colonialism and assimilation, and they have continued with their duties as stewards of the natural world. They have resisted removal and allotment; they have preserved their language and culture; they have not accepted the dictates of Christian churches; and they have rejected forced citizenship."

It's important to note, and paradoxical, that the colonizing architects of the U.S. constitution were influenced heavily by the Haudeneshonee Confederacy.

Zane Jane Gordon of the Wyandotte Nation critiqued the ICA at the time it was passed, "No government organized . . . can incorporate into its citizenship anybody or bodies without the[ir] formal consent…The Indians are organized in the form of 'nations,' and it has treaties with [other] nations as such. Congress cannot embrace them into the citizenship of the Union by a simple act."

In Challenging American Boundaries: Indigenous People and the "Gift" of U.S. Citizenship, Kevin Bruyneel writes that Tuscarora Chief Clinton Rickard, who strongly opposed passage of the ICA, "was also encouraged by the fact that 'there was no great rush among my people to go out and vote in white man's elections.'" Rickard stated, "By our ancient treaties, we expected the protection of the government. The white man had obtained most of our land and we felt he was obliged to provide something in return, which was protection of the land we had left, but we did not want to be absorbed and assimilated into his society. United States citizenship was just another way of absorbing us and destroying our customs and our government. . . . We feared citizenship would also put our treaty status in jeopardy and bring taxes upon our land. How can a citizen have a treaty with his own government. . . . This was a violation of our sovereignty. Our citizenship was in our own nations."

Haudeneshonee also voiced opposition to imposition of U.S. citizenship policies due to separation of their Nation by the Canadian border. These impacts are still faced by Indigenous Peoples whose lands are bisected by both the Canadian and Mexican borders. The imposition of citizenship has politically segregated their people along colonial lines.

Perhaps one of the clearest illustrations of assimilationist strategies regarding citizenship and voting comes from Henry S. Pancoast, one of the founders of the Christian white supremacist group, the Indian Rights Association (IRA). Pancoast stated, "Nothing [besides United States Citizenship] will so tend to assimilate the Indian and break up his narrow tribal allegiance, as making him feel that he has a distinct right and voice in the white man's nation."

The IRA's initial stated objective was to "bring about the complete civilization of the Indians and their admission to citizenship." The IRA considered themselves reformists and successfully lobbied Congress to establish the boarding school system, pass the Dawes Act, reform the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and pass the Indian Reorganization Act of 1834.

U.S. citizenship was imposed to destroy Indigenous sovereignty and facilitate mass-scale land theft. To this day, the "Native vote" is bound to assimilationist conditions that serve colonial interests.

Assimilation: The Strategy of Enfranchisement

Historic acts of voter suppression appear to contradict the strategy of assimilation, after all, if white settler politicians desired so much for Indigenous Peoples to become citizens, why then would they actively disenfranchise them at the same time? This is the underlying contradiction of colonialism in the U.S. that has been articulated as the "Indian Problem," or more bluntly, the question of annihilation or assimilation?

As previously mentioned, it wasn't until 1957 that Indigenous Peoples could vote in every U.S. state.

According to Katherine Osborn, "Some states borrowed the language of the U.S. Constitution in Article 1, Section 2, which bars 'Indians not taxed' from citizenship and used it to deny voting rights. Legislators in Idaho, Maine, Mississippi, New Mexico and Washington withheld the franchise from their Indigenous citizens because those who were living on reservation lands did not pay property taxes. In New Mexico, Utah and Arizona, state officials argued that living on a reservation meant that Indians were not actually residents of the state, which prevented their political participation."

Osborn adds, "Article 7, Section 2, of the Arizona constitution stated, 'No person under guardianship, non-compos mentis, or insane shall be qualified to vote in any election.' Arizona lawmakers understood this as prohibiting Indians from voting because they were allegedly under federal guardianship on their reservations."

Early U.S. citizenship policy regarding Indigenous Peoples was clear; disenfranchisement would remain until we assimilated and abandoned our tribal statuses. Disenfranchisement was and is a strategy that sets conditions for assimilation. Suppression of political participation has historically been the way the system regulates and maintains itself. White supremacists that controlled the politics of areas where large Indigenous populations feared that they would become minority subjects in their own democratic system. They often subverted enfranchisement in violent ways, but this was never really a threat due to how embedded white supremacy has been in the totality of the U.S. settler colonial project.

It's not that settler society has capitulated to Indigenous interests, it's that Indigenous Peoples–whether through force or attrition–have been subsumed into the U.S. polity.

Perhaps no place is this more clear than through the establishment of Tribal Councils. For example, in 1923, the Navajo Tribal Council was created in order to legitimize resource extraction by the U.S. government. According to a report filed by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the tribal council was "created in part so that oil companies would have some legitimate representatives of the Navajos through whom they could lease reservation lands on which oil had been discovered. The Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Company's website states, "In 1923, a Navajo tribal government was established primarily for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to approve lease agreements with American oil companies, who [sic] were eager to begin oil operations on Navajo lands."

In order to fulfill and maintain colonial domination and exploitation, colonizers shape and control the political identity of Indigenous Peoples. Capitalists facilitated and preyed on the dissolution of Indigenous autonomy. The cost of citizenship has always been our sovereignty, the conditions of citizenship have always been in service to white supremacy.

That Indigenous Peoples were granted the right to vote in 1924, yet our religious practices were outlawed until 1979 is one of many examples of the incongruency of Indigenous political identity in the so-called U.S.

Suffrage movements in the U.S. have fought for equal participation in the political system but have failed to indict and abolish the systems of oppression that underpin settler-colonial society. After decades of organizing, white women celebrated suffrage in 1920, which was granted in part as a reward for their service in World War 1. Hetero-patriarchy was not dismantled and Black folx were purposefully disregarded in their campaigning.

Lucy Parsons, an Afro-Indigenous anarchist was among many who critiqued suffrage at the time. Parsons wrote in 1905, "Can you blame an Anarchist who declares that man-made laws are not sacred?…The fact is money and not votes is what rules the people. And the capitalists

no longer care to buy the voters, they simply buy the 'servants' after they have been elected to 'serve.' The idea that the poor man's vote amounts to anything is the veriest delusion.The ballot is only the paper veil that hides the tricks."

Black folx suffered decades of white supremacist "Jim Crow Laws" that enforced racial segregation and were designed to suppress their political power. These racist laws didn't end until the powerful mobilizations of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The U.S. government handed down legislation in the 50s and 60s including the 1965 voting rights act, which was critiqued by revolutionary Black Nationalists such as Malcom X, "The ballot or the bullet. If you're afraid to use an expression like that, you should get on out of the country; you should get back in the cotton patch; you should get back in the alley. They get all the Negro vote, and after they get it, the Negro gets nothing in return."

Radical movements have either faced extreme state violence and repression or have been systematically assimilated into the U.S. political milieu. The non-profit industrial complex has operated as an unspoken ally of U.S. imperialism in efforts of suppression and pacification (see The Revolution Will Not Be Funded by INCITE!). Perhaps this is the U.S. political machinery's method of reducing harm or impact from effective social and environmental justice movements. If they can't kill or imprison the organizers, then fold them into the bureaucracy or turn their struggles into businesses. At the end of the day, not everyone can be white supremacists, but everyone can be capitalists.

So long as the political and economic system remains intact, voter enfranchisement, though perhaps resisted by overt white supremacists, is still welcomed so long as nothing about the overall political arrangement fundamentally changes. The facade of political equality can occur under violent occupation, but liberation cannot be found in the occupier's ballot box. In the context of settler colonialism voting is the "civic duty" of maintaining our own oppression. It is intrinsically bound to a strategy of extinguishing our cultural identities and autonomy.

The ongoing existence of Indigenous Peoples is the greatest threat to the U.S. settler colonial project, that we may one day rise up and assert our sovereign position with our lands in refutation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

In Custer Died for your Sins, Vine Deloria Jr. idealized "Indigenous peoples not as passive recipients of civil rights and incorporation into the nation-state but as colonized peoples actively demanding decolonization."

You can't decolonize the ballot

Since the idea of U.S. "democracy" is majority rule, barring an extreme population surge, Indigenous voters will always be at the mercy "of good intentioned" political allies. Consolidating the Native vote into a voting bloc that aligns with whatever settler party, politician, or law that appears to do less harm isn't a strategy to exercise political power, it's Stockholm syndrome.

The Native vote also seeks to produce Native politicians. And what better way to assimilate rule then with a familiar face? The strategy of voting Indigenous Peoples into a colonial power structure is not an act of decolonization, it's a fulfillment of it. We have a history of our people being used against us by colonial forces, particularly with assimilated Indigenous Peoples acting as "Indian Scouts" to aid the enemy's military. In only one recorded instance, Ndee (Cibicue

Apache) Army Scouts mutinied against the U.S. when they were asked to fight their own people. Three of the Ndee scouts were executed as a result.

No matter what you are led to believe by any politician seeking office, at the end of the day they are sworn to uphold an oath to the very system that was designed to destroy us and our ways of life. The oath for members of Congress states, "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God."

Even if we assume that their cultural values and intentions are in line with those of the people, it is rare that politicians are not tied to a string of funders. As soon as they get elected they are also faced with unrelenting special interest lobbying groups that have millions and millions of dollars behind them and, even if they have stated the best intentions, are inevitably outnumbered by their political peers.

Today we have candidates that were elected making promises to stop the mass scale kidnapping and murdering of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people and what do they propose? They don't indict the resource colonizers destroying our lands whose very industry is precipitating this crisis of human trafficking and extreme gender violence. They don't propose ending capitalism and resource colonialism. They propose laws and more cops with more power to enforce those laws in our communities, so although we have an epidemic of police violence and murders against our peoples, Indigenous politicians address one violent crisis by making another one worse for our people. It's the fulfillment of the assimilationist cultural genocide of "killing the Indian to save the man." With that vote, the willful participation and sanctioning of the violence of this system, you kill the Indian and become "the man."

Tribal, local, and regional politics are situated in the same colonial arrangement that benefits the ruling class: politicians are concerned with rules and ruling, police and military enforce, judges imprison. Regardless of who and on what scale, no politician can ever represent Indigenous lifeways within the context of a political system established by colonialism.

A less harmful form of colonial occupation is fantasy. The process of colonial undoing will not occur by voting. You cannot decolonize the ballot.

Rejecting settler colonial authority, aka not voting.

Voting in the colonizer's elections keeps Indigenous Peoples powerless.

Our power, broadly speaking, does not come from non-consensual majority rule top-down man-made laws but is derived in relation with and proportion to all living beings. This is a corporeal and spiritual power that has been in effect since time immemorial and is what has kept Indigenous Peoples alive in the face of more than 500 years of extreme colonial violence.

The late Ben Carnes, a powerful Choctaw advocate, is quoted in an article about the Native vote by Mark Maxey stating, "My position is that I am not a citizen of a government who perpetuates that lie that we are. Slavery was legal just as well as Jim Crow, but just because it is law doesn't make it right. We didn't ask for it, the citizenship act was imposed upon us as another step in their social and mental conditioning of Native people to confiscate them of their identity. It was also a legislative method of circumventing the 'Indians not taxed' clause of the Consti-

tution, thereby justifying imposing taxes. The U.S. electoral system is a very diseased method where candidates can be purchased by the highest corporate (contributor) bidder. The mentality of voting for the lesser of two evils is a false standard to justify the existence of only a two-party system. Checks and balances are lacking to ensure that public servants abide by the will of the people. The entire thing needs to be scrapped as well as the government itself."

Voting will never be "harm reduction" while colonial occupation & U.S. imperialism reigns. In order to heal we have to stop the harm from occurring, not lessen it. This doesn't mean simply abstinence or ignoring the problem until it just goes away, it means developing and implementing strategies and maneuvers that empower Indigenous People's autonomy.

Since we cannot expect those selected to rule in this system to make decisions that benefit our lands and peoples, we have to do it ourselves. Direct action, or the unmediated expression of individual or collective desire, has always been the most effective means by which we change the conditions of our communities.

What do we get out of voting that we cannot directly provide for ourselves and our people? What ways can we organize and make decisions that are in harmony with our diverse lifeways? What ways can the immense amount of material resources and energy focused on persuading people to vote be redirected into services and support that we actually need? What ways can we direct our energy, individually and collectively, into efforts that have immediate impact in our lives and the lives of those around us?

This is not only a moral but a practical position and so we embrace our contradictions. We're not rallying for a perfect prescription for "decolonization" or a multitude of Indigenous Nationalisms, but for a great undoing of the settler colonial project that comprises the United States of America so that we may restore healthy and just relations with Mother Earth and all her beings. Our tendency is towards autonomous anti-colonial struggles that intervene and attack the critical infrastructure that the U.S. and its institutions rest on. Interestingly enough, these are the areas of our homelands under greatest threat by resource colonialism. This is where the system is most prone to rupture, it's the fragility of colonial power. Our enemies are only as powerful as the infrastructure that sustains them. The brutal result of forced assimilation is that we know our enemies better than they know themselves. What strategies and actions can we devise to make it impossible for this system to govern on stolen land?

We aren't advocating for a state-based solution, redwashed European politic, or some other colonial fantasy of "utopia." In our rejection of the abstraction of settler colonialism. we don't aim to seize colonial state power but to abolish it.

We seek nothing but total liberation.

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COVID-19, Resource Colonialism & Indigenous Resistance by Klee Benally

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Diné Bikéyah (The Navajo Nation) has faced and endured the highest rate per-capita of COVID-19 cases than any settler colonial U.S. state.

As this respiratory virus wreaks havoc through these lands, mainstream media has again anointed our people as the mascots of poverty and victimization. The statistics are pounded loudly to evoke settler pity: Approximately 33% of our people have no running water or electricity. We live in a "food desert" with 13 grocery stores serving nearly 200,000 residents. Diné Bikéyah has approximately 50% unemployment. While these facts are not wrong, the solution is not more fundraisers for the "poor Indians."

Has this pandemic impacted our people so disproportionately simply because we merely lack power lines and plumbing? Is it just because there aren't massive corporate stores on every corner of our reservation? Would we really be that much more immune from this disease if every member of our tribe just had a job?

Dehumanizing narratives have always been part of the scenery here in the arid Southwest. If you blink on your way to the Grand Canyon, it's easy to miss the ongoing brutal context of colonization and the expansion of capitalism. We live here and we even don't see it ourselves. We're too busy putting up that "Nice Indians Behind You" sign.

As Navajo Nation politicians impose strict weekend curfews, prohibit ceremonial gatherings, and restrict independent mutual aid relief efforts. As notoriously racist so-called reservation "border towns" like "Gallup, New Mexico" dispose of infected unsheltered relatives and initiate "Riot Act Orders" to restrict the influx of Diné who rely on supplies held in their corporate stores, the specter of the reservation system's historical purpose haunts like a neglected ghost, pulling at our every breath, clinging to our bones.

What is omitted from the fever-pitched spectacle of COVID-19 disaster tourism, is that these statistics are due to ongoing attacks on our cultural ways of life, autonomy, and by extension our self and collective sufficiency.

While economic deprivation and resource scarcity are realities we face, our story is much more complex and more powerful than that, it's a story of the space between harmony and devastation. It's the story of our ancestors and of coming generations. It's a story of this moment of Indigenous mutuality and resistance.

The Navajo Resource Colony & COVID-19

Colonial violence and violence against the earth has made our people more susceptible to viruses such as COVID-19.

While the COVID-19 virus spreads unseen throughout our region, a 2,500-square-mile cloud of methane is also concealed, hovering over Diné lands here in the "Four Corners" area. NASA researchers have stated, "the source is likely from established gas, coal, and coalbed methane mining and processing." Methane is the second most prevalent greenhouse gas emitted in the so-called "United States" and can be up to 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Two massive coal fired power plants, the San Juan Generating Station and the Four Corners Power Plant operate in the area. If regarded as a single entity, the two plants are the second largest consumer of coal in the "U.S." Most of the generated power is transmitted right over and passed reservation homes to power settler colonies in "Arizona, Nevada and California."

It's not news that over time, breathing pollution from sources such as coal fired power plants damages the lungs and weakens the body's ability to fight respiratory infections. U.S. settler universities and news outlets have acknowledged that exposure to air pollution is correlated with increased death rates from COVID-19. At the same time, the EPA has relaxed environmental regulations on air polluters in response to the pandemic, opening the door for colonial imposed resource extraction projects on Diné lands to intensify their efforts.

According to a recent report titled, "Exposure to air pollution and COVID-19 mortality in the United States," COVID-19 patients in areas impacted by high levels of air pollution before the pandemic are more likely to die from the virus than patients in other parts of the "U.S."

The New York Times published an article on the report stating that, "A person exposed to high levels of fine particulate matter is 15 percent more likely to die from the coronavirus than someone in a region with just one unit less of the fine particulate pollution."

The report further states that, "Although the epidemiology of COVID-19 is evolving, we have determined that there is a large overlap between causes of deaths of COVID-19 patients and the diseases that are affected by long-term exposure to fine particulate matter." The report also noted that, "On March 26, 2020 the US [Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)] announced a sweeping relaxation of environmental rules in response to the coronavirus pandemic, allowing power plants, factories and other facilities to determine for themselves if they are able to meet legal requirements on reporting air and water pollution."

According to Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Company's (NNOGC) website, "In 1923, a Navajo tribal government was established primarily for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to approve lease agreements with American oil companies, who [sic] were eager to begin oil operations on Navajo lands."

Arguably, nearly every economic decision that the tribal government has made since then (with few exceptions) has facilitated further exploitation of Mother Earth for profit.

For every attack on Mother Earth waged by colonial entities, Diné have organized fiercely to protect Nahasdzáán dóó Yádilhil Bits'áádéé Bee Nahaz'áanii or the Diné Natural Law.

Groups like Diné CARE have been mobilizing since the late 1980s to confront ecological and cultural devastation. Adella Begaye and her husband Leroy Jackson organized to protect the Chuska Mountains from logging by the Navajo Tribal government. They formed Diné CARE and challenged the operations. Jackson had reportedly obtained documents that showed Bureau of Indian Affairs officials were underhandedly working to get the tribe exempt from logging restrictions designed to protect endangered species in the area. He was found murdered shortly after.

In defiance of efforts by Diné environmental groups such as Diné CARE to stop coal mining and power plants in the face of global warming, former Navajo Nation Council Speaker Lorenzo

Bates declared, "war on coal is a war on the Navajo economy and our ability to act as a sovereign Nation." At the time, the coal industry was responsible for 60% of the Navajo Nation's general revenues. Bates stated that "These revenues represent our ability to act as a sovereign nation and meet our own needs."

At the cost of our health and destruction of Mother Earth, politicians on the Navajo Nation have perpetuated and profited from coal-fired power plants and strip mines that have caused forced relocation of more than 20,000 Diné from Black Mesa and severe environmental degradation.

For forty-one years Peabody coal, which operated two massive strip mines on Black Mesa, consumed 1.2 billion gallons a year of water from the Navajo aquifer beneath the area. Although the mines are now closed and the Navajo Generating Station (NGS) coal-fired power plant they fed is also shuttered, the impacts to health, the environment, and vital water sources in the area have been severe. The NGS project was initially established with the purpose of providing power to pump water to the massive metropolitan areas of Phoenix and Tucson. For decades, while powerlines criss-crossed over Diné family's homes and water was pumped hundreds of miles away for swimming pools and golf courses, thousands of Diné went without running water and electricity.

Diné environmental groups such as Black Mesa Water Coalition and Tó Nizhóní Ání', who have long resisted resource colonialism on Dził Yijiin (Black Mesa), recently celebrated the shutdown of NGS while the Navajo Nation scrambled to keep the outdated power plant operating arguing that it was vital to the Navajo economy. What was ignored in the melee was that the owners and operators of the coal fired power plant were motivated to shift towards natural gas that has become cheaper due to fracking.

In 2019 the Navajo Nation further doubled down on coal by purchasing three coal mines in the Powder River Basin area located in so-called Wyoming and Montana. Approximately 40 percent of the so-called U.S.'s coal comes from the area, contributing to more than 14 percent of the total carbon pollution in the "U.S." The deal also forced the Navajo Transitional Energy Company (NTEC) to waive its sovereign immunity as a condition to buy the mines from a company that had just declared bankruptcy.

Today there are currently more than 20,000 natural gas wells and thousands more proposed in and near the Navajo Nation in the San Juan Basin, a geological structure spanning approximately 7,500 square miles in the Four Corners. The US EPA identifies the San Juan Basin as "the most productive coalbed methane basin in North America." In 2007 alone, corporations extracted 1.32 trillion cubic feet of natural gas from the area, making it the largest source in the United States. Halliburton, who "pioneered" hydraulic fracturing in 1947, has initiated "refracturing" of wells in the area. Fracking also wastes and pollutes an extreme amount of water. A single coalbed methane well can use up to 350,000 gallons, while a single horizontal shale well can use up to 10 million gallons of water. As I've mentioned previously, this is a region with approximately 30 percent of households without access to running water.

The San Juan Basin is also viewed as "the most prolific producer of uranium in the United States." Uranium is a radioactive heavy metal used as fuel in nuclear reactors and weapons production. It is estimated that 25% of all the recoverable uranium remaining in the country is on Diné Bikéyah. During the so-called "Cold War," Diné lands were heavily exploited by the nuclear industry. From 1944 to 1986 some 30 million tons of uranium ore were extracted from mines. Diné workers were told little of the potential health risks with many not given any protective

gear. As demand for uranium decreased the mines closed, leaving over a thousand contaminated sites. To this day none have been completely cleaned up.

In 1979 the single largest accidental release of radioactivity occurred on Diné Bikéyah at the Church Rock uranium mill. More than more than 1,100 tons of solid radioactive mill waste and 94 million gallons of radioactive tailings poured into the Puerco River when an earthen dam broke. Today, water in the downstream community of "Sanders, Arizona" is poisoned with radioactive contamination from the spill.

Although uranium mining is now banned on the reservation due to advocacy from Diné anti-nuclear organizers, Navajo politicians recently sought to allow new mining in areas already contaminated by the industry's toxic legacy.

In 2013 Navajo Nation Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie proposed a resolution to undermine the ban, his efforts were shut down by Diné No Nukes, a grassroots organization "dedicated to create a Navajo Nation that is free from the dangers of radioactive contamination and nuclear proliferation." There are more than 2,000 estimated toxic abandoned uranium mines on and around the Navajo Nation. Twenty-two wells that provide water for more than 50,000 Diné have been closed by the EPA due to high levels of radioactive contamination. The recent push for nuclear power as "clean energy" has made the region more vulnerable to new uranium mining, including an in situ leach mine (which uses a process similar to fracking) right next to Mt. Taylor, one of the six Diné holy mountains.

Exposure to uranium can occur through the air, water, plants and animals and can be ingested, breathed in or absorbed through the skin. Although there has never been a comprehensive human health study on the impacts of uranium mining in the area, the EPA states that exposure to uranium can impair the immune system, cause high blood pressure, kidney disease, lung and bone cancer, and more. An ongoing effort called the Navajo Birth Cohort Study has also detected uranium in the urine of babies born to Diné women exposed to uranium.

In the book Bitter Water: Diné Oral Histories of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute, Roberta Blackgoat, my grandmother and a matriarch of Diné resistance to forced relocation on Black Mesa, stated, "The Coal they strip mine is the earth's liver. The earth's internal organs are dug up. Mother Earth must sit down. The uranium they dug up for energy was her lungs. Her heart and her organs are dug up because of greed. It is smog on the horizons. Her breath, her warmth, is polluted now and she is angry when Navajos talk of their sickness. The coal dust in winter blows in to blanket the land like a god down the canyons. It is very painful to the lungs when you catch a cold. The symptoms go away slowly when dry coal dust blows in from strip mining. The people say the uranium can dry up your heart. No compassion is left for the motherland. We've become her enemy."

Diné elders who have resisted forced relocation on Black Mesa have faced constant attacks on their ways of life, particularly through confiscation of livestock. The systematic destruction of Indigenous subsistence lifeways throughout Diné Bikéyah has been a strategy waged since the beginning of colonial invasions on these lands. This devastation has been profitable to Navajo politicians who seek to maintain our role as a resource colony.

In 2015 the EPA accidentally released more than 3 million gallons of toxic waste from the Gold King Mine into the Animas River. The toxic spill flowed throughout Diné communities polluting the "San Juan" river which many Diné farmers rely on. Crops were spoiled that year. As a measure of relief for the water crisis, the EPA initially sent rinsed out fracking barrels. Chili Yazzie, the former Chapter President of Shiprock stated, "Disaster upon catastrophe in Shiprock.

The water transport company that was hired by EPA to haul water from the non-contaminated San Juan River set up 11 large 16,000 gallon tanks throughout the farming areas in Shiprock and filled them up with water for the crops. As they started to take water from the tanks for their corn and melons, the farmers noticed the water from some of tanks was rust colored, smelled of petroleum and slick with oil."

Resource colonialism specifically targets Indigenous women, two-spirit, and trans relatives, as we see connected though the mass killings addressed through the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Trans, & Two-Spirits (#MMIWGT2S). #MMIWGT2S is a campaign initiated in so-called "Canada" to address extremely disproportionate and unreported violence against Indigenous womxn. The movement has been extended to Missing and Murdered Girls, Trans and Two-Spirit relatives (MMIWGT2S) due to the alarming levels of gender-based violence that are invisibilized.

initially focused on the link between resource colonialism and gender-based violence. The extractive industry's "man camps" which are sites at large-scale extractive industry projects where male workers are clustered in temporary housing encampments in areas close to reservations. For years Indigenous communities have raised concerns regarding these issues and only very recently the #MMIWGT2S movement has been more broadly recognized.

Violence of resource colonialism is violence against the land, which is violence against our bodies.

Food Deserts: A Project of Colonial Violence

Our health has been broken by nutritionally-related illnesses imposed by colonial attacks on our cultural food systems. Diné Bikéyah wasn't a "food desert" until colonization. According to the American Diabetes Association, "People with diabetes do face a higher chance of experiencing serious complications from COVID-19. In general, people with diabetes are more likely to experience severe symptoms and complications when infected with a virus."

One in three Diné are diabetic or pre-diabetic, in some regions, health care workers have reported diagnosing diabetes in every other patient.

In 2014, Diné organizer Dana Eldrige published a powerful report on Diné Food Sovereignty through the Diné Policy Institute. In the report the concept of the Navajo Nation as a "food desert" was contextualized as a process of colonialism and capitalism.

The report identified a Food Desert as "an area, either urban or rural, without access to affordable fresh and healthy foods. While food deserts are devoid of accessible healthy food, unhealthy, heavily processed foods are often readily available… [Food Deserts] are linked with high rates of nutritionally-related illness. For rural communities, the United States Department of Agriculture has defined rural food desert as regions with low-income populations, the closest supermarket is further than twenty miles away and people have limited vehicle access….Diné people with limited or no income are limited in their food choices, and since healthy, fresh foods are of greater cost, people with limited financial resources often have no other option than to purchase low-cost, heavily processed, high calorie foods which lead to the onset of nutritionally-related illnesses."

The report found that a majority of participants from Diné communities who participated in the study had to travel at least 155 miles round trip for groceries while others regularly drove

up to 240 miles. There are 13 full service grocery stores in the Navajo Nation, according to the report one of the stores contained 80% processed foods.

The report further stated that "An examination of the Navajo Nation food system reveals that our current food system not only does not serve the needs of the Navajo Nation, but also negatively impacts the wellbeing of the Diné people. These issues include epidemic levels of nutritionally-related illness including diabetes and obesity, food insufficiency (high rates of hunger), significant leakage of Navajo dollars to border towns, disintegration of Diné lifeways and K'é (the ancient system of kinship observed between Diné people and all living things in existence), among other issues; all while the Navajo Nation grapples with extremely high rates of unemployment, dependence on Natural Resource extraction revenue and unstable federal funding."

Our homelands didn't become a "food desert" by accident or lack of economic infrastructure, the history of food scarcity in our communities is directly correlated with a history of violent colonial invasion.

After facing fierce Diné resistance in the mid-1800s, "U.S." troops invaded and attacked Canyon De Chelly in the heart of Diné Bikéyah. They employed "scorched earth tactics" by burning homes along with every field and orchard they encountered. "U.S." Colonel Kit Carson led a campaign of terror to drive Diné on what is called "The Long Walk" to a concentration camp called Fort Sumner hundreds of miles away in eastern "New Mexico." The report states:

"Carson's scorched earth campaign including the slaughtering of livestock, burning of fields and orchards, and the destruction of water sources. This scorched earth policy effectively starved many Diné people into surrender. Word reached those who had not been captured that food was being distributed at Fort Defiance. Many families chose to go to the fort to alleviate their hunger and discuss peace, unaware of Carleton's plans for relocation. Upon arrival at the fort, the Diné found they could not return back to their homes and were captives of the United States military…Due to failure of crops, restrictions on hunting, and the unavailability of familiar native plants, the Diné had to depend on the United States military to feed them, marking a major turning point in the history of Diné food and self-sufficiency. Food rations were inadequate and extremely poor in nutritional content, consisting primarily of salted pork, cattle, flour, salt, sugar, coffee and lard."

When colonizers established military forts while waging brutal wars against Indigenous Peoples, they would also provide rations as a means of pacification and assimilation.

The book Food, Control, and Resistance: Rations and Indigenous Peoples in the United States and South Australia illustrates how food rationing programs were a tool of colonization and worked alongside assimilation policies to weaken Indigenous societies and bring Indigenous peoples under colonial control. Once Indigenous peoples became dependent on these food rations, government officials deliberately manipulated them, determining where and when the food would be distributed, restricting the kind and amount of foods that were distributed, and determining who the foods would be distributed to. Starvation was weaponized materially and politically.

The strategy of settler societies was to destroy the buffalo, sheep, corn fields, water sources, and anything that fed Indigenous Peoples to diminish our autonomy and create dependency.

As colonial military strategies increasingly focused on attacking Indigenous food systems, liberation and redistribution of resources was not unfamiliar to our ancestors, they effectively

raided colonizer's supplies and burned their forts to the ground. But clearly the scorched earth strategies were devastatingly effective.

Starting in the 1930's the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) ordered a reduction of Diné livestock herds. BIA officials killed the herds "and left them to rot, all in front of Diné families. Some herds were even driven off cliffs, while others were doused with kerosene and burned alive."
This mass killing of animals seriously impaired the self-sufficiency of Diné. Many had to rely on government rations and a growing trading post economy to feed their families. Although the political justification for the extreme reduction was to mitigate soil erosion, the report illustrates that other factors such as "desertification and deteriorating rangeland, such as climatic change, periodic drought, invasion of exotic vegetation, and a drop in water table," were the primary issues.

In 1968 the first grocery store opened on the Navajo Nation in Tséghához dzání (Window Rock, "Arizona").

The report illustrates that:

"the impact of these grocery stores and the decline of Diné foods were documented in nutritional research. By the 1980's, soda and sweetened drinks, store bought bread, and milk were commonplace in the Navajo Diet, while fry-bread and tortillas, potatoes, mutton, and coffee continued as staples. Although many Navajo families still farmed (corn, squash, and melon reported as the most cultivated crops), gardens were generally small and 'no longer appeared to be a major source of food for many families…In addition to dietary changes, the shift in Diné life and society also include the breakdown of self-sufficiency, Diné knowledge, family and community, and detachment from land. These changes did not occur by chance, but were fostered by a series of American interventions and policies (the process of colonization); namely forced removal, the livestock reduction, boarding schools, relocation, and food distribution programs, along with the change from subsistence lifestyles to wage based society and integration into American capitalism….Prior to American efforts of colonization, Diné people operated in a food system that was not only integral to our culture, but one in which Diné people actively produced and collected the food needed to feed their communities. This meant that Diné people did not depend on outside governments and systems for food. Not only did the people ensure that quality and nutritious food was provided, but they did so without operating under the authority or governance of these outside entities."

In the conclusion of the report, the Diné Policy Institute recommended, "revitalizing traditional foods and traditional food knowledge through the reestablishment of a self-sufficient food system for the Diné people."

In typical fashion, the colonial government and Navajo politicians have deepened the assimilation process through their efforts to reform the food desert issue, by starting a farming initiative that purchases seed from Syngenta and Monsanto and that uses tax incentives to make healthy food more affordable, furthering Dine peoples dependence on commodified food.

Although the Navajo Tribal Council established a mass-scale farming initiative called "Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI)," the farm has stated on its website that it plants genetic hybrid corn seed purchased from "Pioneer Seed Company, Syngenta Inc., and Monsanto companies." In 2014, in an attempt to "curb" the diabetes epidemic, the Navajo Nation Council created a law that raised the sales tax for cheap junk foods sold on Navajo Nation and another removing sales tax from fresh fruits and vegetables. Economic pressure on those already struggling

while not addressing the root causes and environmental degradation is par for the course for the colonial government and Navajo politicians.

Instead of directly feeding ourselves and communities, we have become dependent on businesses and corporations that are more concerned with profits than our health and well-being. The boarding schools were replete with capitalist indoctrination to forcibly assimilate Diné children into colonial society. The curriculum was designed with a clear lesson: To feed our families we needed jobs. To have jobs we needed to be trained. To be trained we needed to obey. To not have a job means you're poor. To employ other workers is to build wealth. To build wealth means success.

The process of destroying Indigenous self and collective sufficiency is an ongoing process of capitalist assimilation. Starvation is still weaponized against our people.

We cannot talk about economic deprivation and lack of resources without talking about history, we cannot address the COVID-19 crisis without addressing the crises of capitalism and colonialism. The disappearance & annihilation of Indigenous People has always been part of the project of resource extraction and colonialism.

A Virulent Faith

On March 7, 2020 in the small remote community of Chilchinbeto in Diné Bikéyah, a christian group held a rally and "Day of Prayer" in response to the coronavirus outbreak. According to one report a pastor was coughing during his sermon. On March 17th, the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on the reservation with Chilchinbeto as the epicenter of a growing outbreak. On the 18th the Nation closed itself to visitors. On March 20, as confirmed COVID-19 cases doubled then tripled, the Navajo Nation issued a shelter-in-place order for everyone living on the reservation and imposed a curfew 10 days later.

As schools were closed in response to the crisis, the Rocky Ridge Boarding School — located on Black Mesa just near lands partitioned in the so-called Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute — stayed open. Staff at the school had participated in the Chilchinbeto Christian rally and its roughly 100 students were exposed to the virus.

This is not the first time that Christians and boarding schools have exposed our lands and Indigenous Peoples to a pandemic. COVID-19 is not the first virus our people have faced.

From measles, smallpox infected blankets, to the influenza epidemic of 1918 (when an estimated 2,000 Diné perished), Indigenous Peoples have long been familiar with the colonial strategies of biological warfare. Some estimates state that approximately 20 million Indigenous People may have died in the years following the first wave of European invasion due to diseases brought by colonizers– up to 95% of the population of the so-called "Americas." The colonization of the "Americas" was a christianizing strategy codified in the 1493 Papal Bull "Inter Caetera" to ensure "exclusive right" to enslave Indigenous Peoples and take their lands.

As documented heavily in 1763, during an ongoing siege on the colonial military outpost called "Fort Pitt" led by Obwandiyag (Odawa Nation, aka Pontiac), British invaders used smallpox infected blankets as a biological weapon. The British general, Jeffrey Amherst had written, "Could it not be contrived to send the smallpox among those disaffected Tribes of Indians? We must, on this occasion, use every stratagem in our power to reduce them."

In 1845, John Louis O'Sullivan declared the "American" belief in the "God-given mission" of the so-called United States as "manifest destiny." This idea accelerated the colonial violence of "American" expansion.

Under the so-called "Peace Policy" of "U.S." President Grant, reservations were to be administered by Christian denominations which were allowed to forcibly convert Indigenous Peoples to Christianity. By 1872, 63 of 75 reservations were being managed by Christian religious groups. The "Peace Policy" also established that if Indigenous Peoples refused to move onto reservations, they would be forcibly removed from their ancestral lands by U.S. soldiers. These white supremacist christain policies led to laws passed by "U.S." Congress in 1892 against Indigenous religions. Any Indigenous Person who advocated their cultural beliefs, held religious dances, and those involved in religious ceremonies were to be imprisoned.

Total assimilation was also the ultimate goal of the violently dehumanizing "U.S." boarding school project. It was a religiously based white supremacist process to "kill the Indian and save the man," with the goal of "civilizing" or compelling Indigenous people to be "productive" members of settler society. Every menial job skill of the subsequent assimilation era represented a rung on a ladder that our people were compelled to climb for their "higher" education took them farther away from our cultural knowledge systems and self/collective reliance further into a system of economic exploitation. It was also a strategy to fulfill land theft through erasure of Indigenous connections and reliance on our lands.

Capitalism is an economic and political system based on profit motive, competition, free market, and private property and is characterized by extreme individualism. It's genealogy is rooted in slavery, genocide, and ecocide. Resource colonialism is the systematic domination and exploitation of Indigenous lands and lives to benefit the attacking non-Indigenous social order. This is different from settler colonialism, which is the invasion, dispossession, and/or eradication of Indigenous lands and lives with the purpose of establishing non-Indigenous occupation of those lands.

To this end, economic development models to address "poverty" in our communities only mean our people will continue to be dependent and ultimately solidify the arrangement that was established through colonial and capitalist domination of our lands and peoples. The process of "indigenizing" or "decolonizing" wealth in this context only makes us that much more complicit in our own genocide.

The colonial project is largely incomplete as our cultures are incompatible with capitalism. There is no duality of Indigenous and capitalist identity, they exist diametrically opposed as natural and unnatural enemies. Ultimately only one can exist while the other must perish.

In the midst of geopolitical battles for minerals, oil, and gas in the Navajo Nation resource colony, environmentalists have cried for a "just transition" into a "green economy." By urging for "new deals" to make capitalism more eco-friendly and sustaining unsustainable ways of life through solar or wind energy, all while the underlying exploitative power relationships remain intact. This arrangement doesn't seek to end colonial relations with resource extractive industries, it red/greenwashes and advances them.

In this way both Navajo Nation politicians and non-profit environmental groups (and even some proclaimed radical ones) are in the same business of fulfilling the expansion of capitalism on our lands.

Throughout our lands of painted deserts, our bleeding is obscured by red ochre sunsets kissing rough brown skin. This is where gods are still at war in the minds of those obsessed with words in books that are not our own. Everything is desecrated. Everything is for sale.

From Mother Earth to our bodies, in capitalism everything has been reduced to a commodity. As long as it can be sold, bought, or otherwise exploited, nothing is sacred. So long as the lands (and by extension our bodies) are viewed this way we will have conflict, as capitalism is the enemy of Mother Earth and all which we hold to be sacred.

Missionizing Charity & Allyship

Diné families in the remote region of Black Mesa on Diné Bikéyah — in particular those impacted by forced relocation — have long been the perpetually "impoverished" fascinations of aspiring white saviors. Self-appointed allies, ranging in political spectrum from anarchists to Christian missionaries have rushed to provide support through "food runs" and other forms of charity. They keep a tidy arrangement providing for some families and leaving others out, building long-term relationships that fill accounts somewhere, all the while providing maintenance to the very system of rationing and control that was set in place during the so-called "Indian Wars."

This brand of "charity" continues to be a strategy of colonial societies to control Indigenous Peoples throughout the world. Non-profit industry operatives (allies and Indigenous non-profits) missionize capitalist and colonial dependency, all while starving our people of their autonomy. They functionally are the new forts of the old wars.

Settler and resource colonialism and capitalism have been and continue to be the crisis that has dispossessed Indigenous Peoples throughout the world from our very means of survival.

From scorched earth campaigns that intentionally destroyed our fields and livestock and forced us to rely on government and missionary rations, to the declarations of our communities as perpetually "impoverished" disaster zones by Christian groups, non-profit organizations, and even some radical support projects, our autonomy has consistently been under attack. This is exacerbated today by those who perpetuate and benefit from cycles of dependency veiled as acts of "charity."

In its obscene theater, ally-politics have nearly become a characterization of Dances with Wolves. Whether it's self-discovery and guilt-distancing decolonial projects or groups such as Showing Up for Racial Justice and the Catalyst Project parachuting to the frontlines of Indigenous struggles (from Big Mountain to Standing Rock), the fetishist settler gaze rarely sees beyond the periphery of its own interests and comfort. In endless workshops and zoom meetings, it centers understandings of resistance and liberation on its own terms. This is most obvious when these false friends chase another social justice paycheck or abandon us when things get hard. The ally-industrial complex is in the process of colonizing Indigenous resistance. "Allies" are the new missionaries.

Settler society is grappling with how to understand and respond to this crisis, but for that to fully occur they have to come to terms with how their ways and understanding of the world has been built on a linear timeline, and how that timeline is coming to an end. Instead of fetishizing this ending with fantasies of apocalyptic survival and savior scenarios, this is the time of dirty hands, it's a time of direct action, meaningful solidarity and critical interventions. It's a time of solidarity and ceremony. If we are to have true solidarity and not charity on stolen lands, we

must establish reciprocal terms that have a deep understanding of ongoing legacies of colonial violence.

Indigenous Mutual Aid is Necessary

In early March 2020 mutual aid projects started mobilizing in Diné Bikéyah. As of this writing more than 30 groups are coordinating emergency relief in various forms of direct actions throughout our communities.

The idea of collective care and support, of ensuring the well-being of all our relations in non-hierarchical voluntary association, and taking direct action has always been something that translated easily into Diné Bizáad (Navajo language). T'áá ni'ínít'éego t'éiyá is a translation of this idea of autonomy. Many young people are still raised with the teaching of t'áá hwó' ají t'éego, which means if it is going to be it is up to you. No one will do it for you. Ké', or our familial relations, guides us so that no one would be left to fend for themselves. I've listened to many elders assert that this connection through our clan system, that established that we are all relatives in some way so we have to care for each other, was the key for survival of those who were imprisoned at Fort Sumner. It's important to also understand that Ké' does not exclude our non-human relatives or the land.

Indigenous Peoples have long established practices of caring for each other for our existence. As our communities have a deep history with organizing to support each other in times of crisis, we already have many existing models of mutual aid organizing to draw from.

This has looked like a small crew coordinating their relatives or friends to chop wood and distribute to elders. It has looked like traditional medicine herbal clinics and sexual health supply distribution. It has looked like community water hauling efforts or large scale supply runs to ensure elders have enough to make it through harsh winters. It has looked like unsheltered relative support through distribution of clothing, food, and more.

Any time individuals and groups in our communities have taken direct action (not by relying on politicians, non-profit organizations, or other indirect means) and supported others–not for their own self-interests but out of love for their people, the land, and other beings–this is what we know as "mutual aid."

When we recognize that we're all in this together, that no one is better than anyone else and we have to take care of each other to survive, this is what anarchists have come to call, "Mutual Aid." It's a practice that anarchist author Peter Kropotkin wrote about in his book published in 1902 called "Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution." His analysis was established in large part by observing how Indigenous communities cooperated for survival in contrast to existing European notions that attempted to assert that competition and domination were "natural" human behaviors. Kropotkin understood mutual aid as a law of nature, that when you observe and listen to nature, you understand that life thrives not by struggling for existence or the shallow notion of survival of the fittest, but through mutual support, cooperation, and mutual defense. We never needed and still don't need dead white men from Europe to instruct us on how to live.

Indigenous Mutual Aid organizing challenges "charity" models of organizing and relief support that historically have treated our communities as "victims" and only furthered dependency and stripped our autonomy from us. We organize counter to non-profit capitalists who main-

tain neo-colonial institutions and we reject the NGO-ization and non-profit commodification of mutual aid.

While solidarity means actively and meaningfully supporting each other, it also doesn't mean blind illusions of "unity" or that we must flatten out the diverse cultural and political ways and views that each of us maintains. There are some necessary tensions and factions in our communities and in radical Indigenous politics. Some Indigenous non-profits such as the NDN "Collective" and Navajo & Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief Fund (NHFCRF) have made millions of dollars from relief efforts in response to this pandemic. Relief has become big business while root causes are reinforced and further entrenched. To illustrate the disconnect of analysis, the NHFCRF started distributing coal for Diné and Hopi families to burn to stay warm in the cold depths of winter. Others are proposing a "revolutionary Indigenous socialist" agenda in an academic vanguard charge to proletarianize Indigenous ways through redwashed Marxism. This re-contextualizing of Marx and Engles' political reactions to European capitalism does nothing to forward Indigenous autonomy. The process inherently alienates diverse and complex Indigenous social compositions by compelling them to act as subjects of an authoritarian revolutionary framework based on class and industrial production. Indigenous collectivities and mutuality exists in ways that leftist political ideologues can't and refuse to imagine. As to do so would conflict with the primary architecture their world is built on, and no matter how it's re-visioned, the science of dialectical materialism isn't a science produced by Indigenous thinking. Colonial politics from both the left and the right are still colonial politics.

As the pandemic of COVID-19 wreaks havoc on our communities and threatens those most vulnerable such as our elders, those with existing health conditions due to colonial diets, ecological devastation, and polluting industries, immunocompromised, unsheltered relatives, and others, there is a clear need for organized mutual aid. Considering the cultural contexts, needs, and especially the history of colonial violence and destruction of our means of self and collective sufficiency, a distinct formation of Indigenous Mutual Aid and Mutual Defense, is necessary.

Indigenous Mutual Aid is not just about redistributing resources, it's about radical redistribution of power to restore our lifeways, heal our communities, and the land.

Prophecy & Medicine

Just two generations after The Long Walk & mass imprisonment at Fort Sumner, Diné Bikéyah was faced with the influenza epidemic of 1918. Before the outbreak of the flu, my grandmother Zonnie Benally, who was a medicine practitioner, was given a warning when a saddle spontaneously caught fire. After praying she understood that a sickness would come correlated with a meteor shower, and that by eating horse meat she could survive. Zonnie Benally spread the word and urged people to prepare by going into isolation. The sickness also came after a total solar eclipse, which medicine people warned would bring harm to our people.

Dook'o'oosłíid is one of six holy mountains for Diné, we were instructed to live within the boundaries of these pillars that uphold our cosmology. Arizona Snowbowl ski resort has been pumping millions of gallons of treated sewage from the City of Flagstaff to make fake snow on these sacred slopes. Since the Forest Service "manages" the sacred mountain as "public lands," they sanction this desecration.

When the initial proposal was made to desecrate the mountain, medicine practitioners testified in court that this extreme disturbance and poisoning of the mountain would have severe consequences for all peoples. Their testimony was prophetic.

Daniel Peaches, member of the Diné Medicine Men's Association stated, "Once the tranquility and serenity of the Mountain is disturbed, the harmony that allows for life to exist is disrupted. The weather will misbehave, the ground will shift and tremble, the land will no longer be hospitable to life. The natural pattern of life will become erratic and the behaviors of animals and people will become unpredictable. Violence will become the norm and agitation will rule so peace and peacefulness will no longer be possible. The plants will not produce berries and droughts will be so severe as to threaten all existence."

In 1996 two holy people visited an elder near Rocky Ridge where the Black Mesa outbreak occurred. They had been visiting and sharing messages for some time, & when Sarah Begay, the daughter of the elder came home one day, she saw the holy beings. All of the messages that had been shared were verified by Hataałiis (medicine practitioners). It became a situation because the family's ancestral lands were claimed in a constructed "land-dispute" with the Hopi tribe. Albert Hale, then Navajo Nation president (who has recently passed due to COVID-19) even declared a "day of prayer." Their message was prophecy. It spoke of the elders & times we live in now. There were conditions set & what they spoke has unfolded.

The Diné Policy Institute Food Sovereignty Report also found prophecy in their study, "'…it is said that the Holy People shared with the Diné people the teachings of how to plant, nurture, prepare, eat and store our sacred cultivated crops, such as corn. The importance of these teachings to our well-being was made clear in that the Holy People shared that we would be safe and healthy until the day that we forgot our seeds, our farms, and our agriculture. It was said that when we forgot these things, we would be afflicted by disease and hardship again, which is what some elders point to as the onset of diabetes, obesity and other ills facing Diné people today.'"

In response to ongoing attempts to remove her from her land and confiscate her livestock, Roberta Blackgoat stated, "This land is a sacred land. The man's law is not our law. Nature, food and the way we live is our law. The plans to disrupt and dig out sacred sites are against the Creator's law. Our great ancestors are buried all over, they have become sand, they have become the mountains and their spiritual presence is still here to guide us… We resist in order to keep this sacred land in place. We are doing this for our children. "

Pauline Whitesinger, a Diné matriarch in the resistance against forced relocation on Black Mesa once said, "Washington D.C., is the cause of a lot of hardship and disaster. It's like a human virus with side effects."

When I asked my father Jones Benally, a medicine practitioner, what he thought of this current crisis he said, "I've been telling you to prepare for this." And he has, especially since another recent solar eclipse. He said, "The government won't take care of us. They're part of the reason nature is attacking."

We have survived massacres and forced marches, we have endured reservations and boarding schools, we have faced forced sterilizations and national sacrifice zones. We have resisted attacks on Mother Earth as we have long held that the balance and harmony of creation is intrinsically tied to our wellbeing and the health of all living beings. Our immune systems are compromised due to colonial diets and ecocide. From abandoned uranium mines poisoning our lands and waters, to coal mining, fracking, oil pipelines, and desecration of our most sacred sites, we have become more susceptible to this and other diseases due to capitalism and colonialism.

Our prophecies warned of the consequences for violating Mother Earth. Our ways of being have guided us through the endings of worlds before. We listen now more than ever to our ancestors, the land, and our medicine carriers. In these times we care for each other more fiercely than ever. We are living the time of prophecy. The systems that precipitated this disharmony will not lead us through or out of it, they will only craft new chains and cages. As the sickness ravages our lands, we must ask ourselves, "will we continue to allow this empire to recuperate?"

I've grown up in a world of ruins. We have teachings and prophecies of the endings of cycles, but that's always how it's been here, in this world of harmony and disharmony and destruction. Diné teach this as Hózhóji and Anaaji.

An anti-colonial and anti-capitalist world already exists, but as my father says, "there aren't two worlds, there is just one world with many paths." Colonial and capitalist paths are linear by design. In this space between harmony and devastation, we listen to these cycles, we listen to the land, and we conspire. If the path of greed, domination, exploitation, and competition doesn't accept that it's reached its dead end, then it is up to us to make sure of it.

Your loneliness is a public health problem by Goat

The most fully realized community that exists, in this society, is the community of money, and money abolishes community because it abolishes trust. Communities create their lives through common action which can only take place through endless communication founded on trust. Money's abolition of community is also the abolition of communication. We experience the absence of communication in our daily lives as the spectacle of communication, the relentless appearance of communication, which conceals the real silence of people beneath the chatter of money.

What makes money? Machines. Machines make money. Money is created by mechanical action, by the seamless connection of motion between metal monsters, human flesh, scarred land, and plastic gadgets. Mass society is a machine made of machines. If humans are silent, if we have come to behave as human resources—as the idea of money in human vessels, as "commodity mules"—we also must be viewed as the reflection of the machine: predictable, mechanistic, manageable, dead.

We are so lonely because we have no one to talk to

In this world commodities speak, and humans shut up. Value—the price of each commodity, the price of each material and abstract concept of our world—has been determined by the merchant sorcerers conspiring with their technological sky god. Whether we are talking about Capital's exchange value and use value, or the GDP of the nation, value always comes with a price. Value is what makes clean water have a determined quantifiable relationship to a 50-watt light bulb or a 30-minute dog walk without anyone having to say a thing. Conversation disappears because debate about the peculiarity of each individual interaction, product of work, or desire is predetermined by value. We never name the price. All human interactions are economized as a result, as conversation and exchange are subordinated to techno-logic.

The commodity is the merchant's magical technique of efficiently rendering everything equivalent to everything else. Under the magical spell of the commodity, everything is everything, and everything is nothing. Each dynamic human relation is flattened by this equivalence that standardizes everything into nothing. The most horrific and recognizable indication of this is the explosion of people who report having no friend—that is "no one to confide in" or "no one to go to with a problem." People who have no one to talk to.

We have no one to talk to because we have nothing to say

We have nothing to say because commodities do all the talking, and machines do all the creating. Technocapital has engulfed the entire fabric of the conceptual world and created a situation in which everything is predetermined and pre-fabricated by the economy. The peculiar fetish of the rulers of this society is to scrutinize and manage every second of our time and transform them into machines to make money. It is critical, then, for each of us to be simultaneously isolated for production analysis, and considered in our productive capacities in aggregate. Docility, passivity, and silence help too. Some of us are slated to disappear and some to manage the cogs of the machine, but living as a human animal in group is simply out of the question.

We passively consume the events offered up by the owners of society as individuals, all 7+ billion of us. Not one of us is a signatory of a single International Trade Agreement. Will some leftist moron demand granting us the right to be signatories of these documents? To be signatories of this society?

You sit down to dinner Perhaps another person eats near you. Someone else is there, but really, you have no one to see. First, you ask, "How was your day?" Which means, "What happened at work today?" You answer. At some point you discuss the food. You look at your plate, and see: $3.38. A good savings, considering what it would have cost to eat out. You reflect on how proud you are for having had the discipline to cook a pleasant meal for two even though you were so tired from your job. Next, you mention the latest in media spectacles, both factual and fictitious, but really who cares about the difference between them anymore? Dinner concludes and you muster the energy to clean up. As *you wash the dishes, it occurs to you that not including the labor time for preparing and cleaning, the food-stuff for dinner cost you about 15 minutes of your time at your job. "Who can't spare 15 minutes?" you think! After the dishes are stacked, you call a person you met at work to see what they are up to. You are not all at surprised to learn they have had a very similar evening.*

We will not live as things that think about money

There is no scientifically-determined relationship between the price of an apple and an iPhone other than the science of slavery. It is only the efficient economizing of others' time that creates the illusion of a determined price. It is techno-merchant magic. None of these quantities are our own creation. They arrive as if ordained by God. And so, if we submit to them, if we passively make our purchases, we create less and less of our world, of the texture of our daily life, and as a result we transform more and more into the things that think about money: commodities, screaming their prices, their precise relation to all other things, including our time, while our relationship to other creatures grows more estranged, remote, and impenetrable.

We will not live in the complete absence of meaning

If money, value, and their material embodiment in the commodity abolish communication by pre-exchanging products of work without any say by wage-slaves, machines and mass organizations abolish the power process by pre-accomplishing all meaningful creative work. The situation we face is the complete absence of the ability to create the necessities of life and the complete absence of the ability to communicate to infuse life with spirit and connection. At the

level of meaning, of spirit, of trust, techno-capital's autonomous functioning gets you coming and going!

You are not alone, except in dealing with the entirety of your life.

"Mental health" emerges as a new concept in techno-capital's universe because the slaves of this world are deprived of it, so its absence appears and it is treated in a mechanistic fashion. Psychotherapists are the mechanics of techno-capital's human resources division. In the isolation of the therapist's workshop the privileged wage slave gets to buy back the appearance of their sanity, the illusion of a remedy for the absence of meaning and communication. Psychiatrists have even found a way to turn a profit for pharmaceutical companies off their crushing of human communion. The vast masses who cannot access the smoke-and-mir- ror show of therapy and psychiatry are forced to endure on more crass modes of release such as domestic violence, and drug and alcohol addiction. Everyone's got their thing in this paradise.

We feel the urge to explode just the same as you do

Humans have been domesticated into techno-capital's vision of the world— the commodity— so effectively, that each individual is a commodity, eats commodities, and almost exclusively talks about commodities. Everyone and everything has a price in this world. This creates the spectacle of society, the endless horror show of false smiles and cash exchanges through bulletproof glass in corner- stores, and electrons on Amazon.com. Many of us behave as actors in roles, actually dressed in costumes, during the majority of our waking hours.

According to this world, nothing is priceless. Only nothing can be infused with meaning. But this void of meaning, where nothing is meaning, has generated a daily life that is populated with the most grotesque and inscrutable moments of explosive rage and terrorism against itself. The civilians are terrorizing each other as civilians, not as militant terrorists. The civilians have taken the terror upon themselves.

You may speak with everyone now that you have nothing to say

Digital social networks have enabled each individual in the ever- expanding network the possibility of communication with anyone else in the network. It is at the historical moment when we are unable to communicate with anyone that we have nothing to talk about with everyone. This doesn't mean that we don't talk. It is the ever present anxiety that there is nothing to do, and nothing to say that forms the stage for an endless play that leads nowhere, that perpetually defers its second act. This is the horrifying misery of mediocrity and boredom that techno-capital democracies have always promised us. Everyday, wage slaves post, for anyone with the internet to see, that they have done nothing again, that they have said nothing again, that they still are not able to act or speak. If we were to have something to talk about, what we would say? Where might we begin? Are we able to recognize "having something to talk about"? There is still one thing to talk about (we hope!): the negative. Expression of the negative, of the profound dissatisfaction with daily life and the world is the narrow domain of discussion that must be expanded into whatever territories it uncovers. This profound dissatisfaction is the complete absence of trust,

the complete absence of spirit, brought about by the economizing of all our time and all our creativity.

If society betrays all desire

These cybernetic tech scumbags have us confused. It is not that smartphones are enabling us to communicate but that we communicate to enable smartphones. Our genuine desire for communication and connection has been betrayed by the business of telecommunication. Internet and communication tech is one of the leading edges allowing capitalism to soldier on, and it has its eye on every individual on the planet, as evidenced by Facebook's ambition to get laptops to all those who suffer without them in Africa and other annihilated backwaters of techno-capital's third world. If you haven't received the inverted order from your peers to purchase a smartphone, these guys are hellbent on making sure you do soon.

The genius of the new spirit of capitalism is its expansion of the market into the realm of human spirit and its ability to respond to the vagaries of this spirit at the speed of light. Because we are more and more like commodities and because so much communication is monitored and recorded and sold, the more we talk, the more commodification and product development can take place without any intervention. Social media tech firms are making billions selling data to intelligence and marketing agencies so that ads and products can be tailored to our ever changing desires. Now when we talk, it is critical for it to become mediated, and we must be buying and selling at once. This is the democratization of the absence of communication, the democratization of the appearance of communication, the democratization of the Spectacle.

Take your emotional state to be society's creation Today, it is impossible to deny that it is techno-capitalism that has proved to be the source of unalloyed dissatisfaction. Just as the instruments of scientific research create the next generation of $600 smartphones, technicians in the domain of clinical psychology and medicine are astonished to have uncovered the loneliness epidemic and are ignominiously announcing that its health impacts are more threatening—and less possible to dismiss as a personal choice—than smoking cigarettes. The apologists for this world will use every means at their disposal—armies of intellectually mutilated academics, psycho- therpaists, journalist whores, police and corrections officers—to blame loneliness on the lonely, to prevent the publicity of loneliness. We wager they won't be successful.

Because nothing satisfies

We are expected to be satisfied with nothing, and so, nothing satisfies. We suffer from this spiritually barren place at all times. Techno-capital's march eliminates meaning. It necessarily destroys meaning. It equates everything with everything so that nothing can have meaning. It destroys the spirit and puts progress in its place. We are born into and expected to reproduce this hollow, absurd reality andit never satisfies. This world must be destroyed because within it nothing satisfies. We sate our spirits on nothing. It is the addict for whom nothing satisfies. The complete absence of meaning—produced by the profit motive, by utilitarianism, by technological process—nurtures the addictive instinct. A dose of genocide there, a touch of alcoholism here. A stroke of amphetamines for those unruly animals, and finish it off with narcotics and work addiction for the remainder of the mob. Dopamine everywhere. Satiety nowhere.

It is with smartphones that a grotesque union of substance addiction, consumer addiction, and work addiction manifest. The purchase and use of smartphones presents itself as a choice and an obligation at once, and their use has an intimate relationship with addiction, as most clearly evidenced by the mounting reports of digital porn and social media addiction. Work addiction, amplified by precarious labor conditions, is worsened by the increasing requirement to obtain a smartphone in order to be considered for employment, which in turn increases the likelihood of smartphone addiction. Whether jerking off to porno inside a stall of your job's restroom, or receiving a friendly text message reminder about a schedule change with a co-worker while fucking someone you met that afternoon via Tinder, we can't help but notice that responding to the siren of the smartphone generates a certain erotic scandal, with all the familiar let downs and remorse of addiction.

Abolish the clock

If the era of Fordism was exemplified by the techniques that massified the car, clearly our era is exemplified by the techniques that have massified the smartphone. The smartphone is the meta-technology par excellence. It economizes technology, it makes efficiency efficient, it technologizes technology. Unlike the car, the smartphone is much more affordable, and yet is enormously dense in terms of embodied production and energy. Conforming to the trend of the pursuit of the perfection of the commodity, it is the latest and most perfected version of a global product that produces globalism. Let's not forget, of course, that mass production produces alienation.

We are not trying to say smartphones are the cause of all our problems. This is to mistake the total in a detail. But through investigating what the smartphone is, as the most general and modern form of technocapital, we can better illuminate the terrain.

Because life is too tense

Consistent with the march of techno-capital's vision of the world, the smartphone has deepened the bond between the realms of consumption and production, and most importantly, increased efficiency. Our ability to quickly text people all over the planet is a minor benefit of the general speeding of the modern world enabled by these new gadgets. The spread of smartphones to the hips and hands of most Westerners makes the worker always available, and the consumer always at the global marketplace. This allows production to remain in a more unified equilibrium with consumption a la "just in time production", rendering the economy more efficient and making the entire gig economy possible. It is not enough to be thinking about work when you are home and in your dreams, or, even worse, when you don't even have work. Now, work can text you for the most trivial reasons. But it's all good, because you get to order new running shoes online while you eat out at Burger King, which is nice consolation, being that you are eating alone, since you don't have anyone to see anyway. There are no boundaries, except on possessing any genuine human intimacy. It is essential to keep this new breed of slaves busier than ever with nothing in particular. Voided vessels tip more easily.

To be on the side of spirit

If we are all anxious and isolated, it is increasingly difficult to achieve any sense of release, and particularly spiritual release. Voices of the spirits are impossible to hear and respond to beneath the drone of modernity and the weight of our own depression. It is not presently possible to be spiritual, only the idea of spirituality is possible.

Spirit has been destroyed, trust has been destroyed.

Trust is part of the essence of the gift, spirit is the essence of the gift.

Gifts entangle the creatures in the gift exchange in an emerging relationship without an end based on an ever developing trust. With commodities, all relationships are all already over. Spirit is pre-exchanged and pre-packaged. The commodity transforms gifts into nihilism. Techno-capital presupposes the destruction of spirit. All we have left is the evacuated corpse, spirituality, the idea of the possibility of spirit. Spirit has been destroyed and its not going to come back easily or quickly. What appears as spirit today is the appearance of spirit, spirit gone spectacular. And there's nothing we can do t o remedy this catastrophe. Not enough gardens, not enough riots, not enough smashing, not enough bombs, not enough books to bring it back. In death, we know spirit will not return. What we choose to do under these circumstances should be nobody's fucking business. And yet it is.

Your loneliness is a public health problem

Nearly half of Americans report that they are not close to anyone any longer. Our tasks, whatever form they take, cannot take place without vaulting the wall of isolation, and herein lies the initial task confronting each of us, the desperate need for authentic communication and action in common that is so often spun-out by activist campaigns that dance around discussions of the essence of modern day misery.

Because there are barricades in our hearts

Isolation forces us to block the forces that isolate us. If the rulers of this society insist on placing barricades between us and everything, if they insist on isolating us more and more, they can only do so by also lodging the idea of their downfall in our hearts in the process. Money and machines and the social isolation that accompanies their conquest calcifies the soul into a dead, passive role— whether that role is to disappear, to labor, or to manage. But the barricading of communication and communion contains the idea of its opposite and sometimes overflows its isolating function and backfires.

Barricades bloom organically like seeds sitting dormant for many seasons and people are yanked to them as though moved by some alien force. This is the force of their species-being, their connectedness to place and to spirit, the force of the ancestors. It is the force that draws us out of our isolation and into communication.

But the barricades are not always erected and aflame. In the meantime, we must stick together and survive, grinding out and tending to the small spaces that we already have where we can at least meet or collaborate briefly to build the little worlds of our dreams.

Stand-up to be Performed at the Next Disaster by Skoden

How's everyone doing out there tonight? You guys are great. So, recently I was watching a movie about the Wounded Knee massacre… Too soon? People tell me I have a dry sense of humor. They tell me I'm dead-pan. Oops I said dead-pan. You can expect more black humour. Did you see that Dave Chappelle special where he met a real Indian at a casino and he said "Shit, I thought you were dead"? People tell me I have a dry sense of humor, but I prefer the term stoic. Anyone who's ever been to a Pow-Wow knows that the MC is a master of anti humor. If a punchline lands something has gone seriously wrong. Think Dad Jokes amplified by a powerful loudspeaker and centuries of incest taboos. I promise it's all a joke, but it might get pretty dark in here. I'll accept your nervous laughter and forced smiles. Social convention dictates that comedians should never punch down, but what about sideways? In all honesty, a lot of Natives, especially the politically minded ones, are way too serious. And not in the straight-faced for comedic effect sort of way. Anarchists also rarely act like clowns publicly, at least not on purpose. There is obviously plenty to be morose about. Anarchists and Native Americans share affinity by being the great losers of history. They cut kids hair in the boarding schools. Women had their heads shaved in Franco's Spain. That's no very funny, right? Not as funny as losing your hair in a vending machine accident.

Maybe indigenous anarchy isn't just another political program that will eventually fail, like they all do, but an existential question. It's about finding a way to live in a world that thinks we're all dead. For me that means humor as an act of decolonial presence. In other words, if I can't shit myself laughing I don't want to be in your revolution. Or against that old saying "If you're brown you have to frown." That's not actually an old saying, I just made it up. Because we're in an unknown frontier we get to create neologisms and new metaphors. "As toothless as a slogan, as naked as a priest" What I'm offering here are real world solutions to problems that are incomprehensible and unsolvable. The scene was was already set before we possessed consciousness, so dream analysis is just as important as getting woke.

Freud is mostly remembered for his heavy white cocaine habit. This allegation is said offhandedly to discredit his psychological theories. His ideas, like the anal stage and penis envy, seem outdated now, but if talking about buttholes still makes us laugh, i think he was at least partially correct. Maybe more damning in some circles is the fact that he was a white man with a white beard. Lacan holds up a little better. Masculine and feminine drives exist in all of us regardless of genitals or imposed gender. Why bring up psychoanalysis and make you think about their likely white pubic hairs when the topic is native americans? Did I mention that I'm a Native American myself? I'm wearing a Cleavland Indians jersey so you can't see my dope tribal tattoos or tell that my body is naturally hairless, but i assure you, im as smooth as a river otter. I mention Freud and Lacan because the way they talk about recognition from the Other for ego development can be helpful for understanding indige- neity. Being an Indian is impossible without a time machine or

an orgone accumulator. I wonder about things like why the culturally aprropiative transracialism of a Rachel Dolezal is so much more offensive than the transgender transitioning of a Cait- lyn Jenner. Isn't all this stuff just socially constructed? Imagine Rachel Dolezal transported in time to the Jim Crow south trying to explain herself. Now imagine Caitlyn Jenner, a century in the future, pleading in front of intersectional jury.

My tribe is much closer to the Canadian border than Mexico, but people always think I'm latinx. People always come up to me speaking Spanish. I feel kind of embarrassed that I'm not more fluent. Soy indio. I feel inadequate because I was only able to learn one colonial language. It's uncomfortable for me but I understand the confusion. I'm more of a Snow Mexican if anything. A northern indian. A rarer pokemon. I once went to a bbq hosted by some people from the Philippines and they all believed me when I told them I was half Filipino, until I wouldn't eat the roasted entrails. True story. I've also been Lebanese, Palestinian, and Eygyptian before. I even pretended to be Italian for a night so I could sleep with a skinhead girl. I know now that racism isn't an excuse for misogyny, but I was really drunk and she was stupid thicc. If I'm sometimes guilty of being white passing it's never at a job interview or after getting pulled over.

Im clearly trying to ruffle a few feathers here. I know how this all sounds, but it's possible to make statements like these because we live in a society that gets nauseous in the changing room. I didn't read Franz Fanon, don't tell anyone, but even before colonization what we call the west has been trapped in double-edged thinking. Cats at war with dogs. Crusaders versus the Moors. Men are strong and rational, whereas girls are icky. These imaginary oppositions affect us. We know that even if God is invisible he still has a penis. I mention Freud because i like to talk about White People Shit. I like white people shit like going to the opera or singing along to Migos songs. To be honest a mirror makes sense when talking about race and gender. You look in a mirror and ask "is that me"? No matter what you see it reaffirms your own identity. I know what it's like to be racially infantilized. I know how it feels when grown women call me daddy. I mention river otters because even if the arbitrary distinction between human and nonhuman, civilization and wilderness, is one of the oldest and most harmful myths, I would still rather go swimming than go to work.

Chief "Iron Eyes" Cody was one of the most successful personalities in a long and still vibrant tradition of make-believe Indians. He appeared in tons of westerns. He's the guy in the commercial shedding a single tear when he sees how polluted every thing has become. It's the kind of thing that makes you want to throw beer cans in the street just to defy stereotypes. But, he's interesting because it seems like he came to believe that he was really Indian. He started wearing braids and buckskin off set. He took a native wife, had Indian children, and was more or less accepted by a tribal community. I always say that everyone should try to become Indian as much as they can, but maybe I didn't think this through. It's supposed to be a metaphor like "the grass is always greener" Little boys don't actually want to kill their fathers to have sex with their mothers do they? Why do people like to play Indian when the Cowboys always win? I guess the poverty, alcoholism, and diabetes are a small price to pay for being able to turn yourself into a werewolf. Wolves are a lot cooler normal dogs, but dogs get rabies shots and squeaky toys and belly rubs. (Wolves don't get neutered) Sometimes I think about what it would be like to pretend to be a white person for a day. Maybe drive a Prius to burning man with my poly-triad while marinating on my privilege? Or road rage in a MAGA hat while diesel exhaust tickles down my mudflaps? It's hard to pin down exactly what a white person is. A real "can't see the forest for the trees" situation. At what point does a metaphor become a cliche?

The topic of assimilation, that fancy word for, "pretend you're me, or I'll kill you" is a more serious topic I guess. I mean that whole missionary system stuff wasn't very chill. But, the thing is, in my own life I have always spoken english, worn pants, and received my vaccinations. Another aspect of native identity is not wanting to be someone else's walking tragedy forever either. I've seen that photo of the frozen bodies at Wounded Knee way more times than I wanted to. Being as assimilated as I am, I understand when something is Shaksperian. Native genocide was kind of like that Romeo and Julette movie, the one with John Liguzamo. You know. Julette faked her death for some reason and Romeo committed suicide because he loved her so much? It's tragic because in the audience we know it didn't have to end like that. It was all just a big misunderstanding. They should have been together, but the stars were crossed. Something similarly ironic happened in the story of conquest. A nobler, but more naive character was killed off by a stronger dumber one. It's tragic because everyone would probably be happier if none of that shit happened and we all lived like Indians.

Freud doesn't really talk specifically about what the effects of conquest might be for the colonized, but in Civilization and Its Discontents he gives us the impression that living in societies like ours means repressing most of our instincts. Living in our world means anxiety and depression. Dread and anticipation. Just like with native storytelling, Psychoanalytic material is open to interpretation. Early man put out the phallus-like tongues of fires by urinating on the flames. When he learned to supress this homosexual urge, he was able to control fire and used it to become civilized. People sometimes compare the earth-diver story of Turtle Island's creation to the Prometheus myth. Marx and Engles, who honestly wrote about Indians way more than the classical Anarchists, told a similar story about how life used to be better. Indians liked sharing, being friends, and playing games, just like what you're supposed to do in kindergarten. Liberte, egalite, fraternite. Civilization was created in order to protect ourselves from nature, but that kind of strategy has diminishing returns. One day you're inventing the wheel and making pictographs and the next thing you know "Family" is a popular category on Pornhub and the earth's temperature is several degrees hotter.

There are other ways to tell the same tale. I want to avoid the monomyth, or hero's journey that Joseph Cambell described. Meaning that every story is really just the same story. Star Wars is the common example. Navajo Star Wars seems awesome, but pretty much anything sounds cool if you put Navajo in front of it. It's more fun to look for tangents that lead to unexpected places. What would Dances With Wolves be like if Kevin Costner got killed-off in the first scene? One tactic indigenous anarchists might use to subvert the three-act play formula could be to use the joke format: setup expectations and defy them. Knock knock. Who's there? Assassinate Johnny Depp.

I found out about the Red Lake massacre after I got out of the sweat lodge at the South Dakota State Penitentiary. Jeff Wiese committed a mass shooting against other members of his tribe in the ultimate act of White People Shit. It's hard to think of something funny to say about a massacre, but I can try. In the sweat lodge, when we close a prayer by saying "all my relations" That means ALL our relationships. These prayers will often remember to include all the other creatures: two-legged, fourlegged, the winged creatures and even the creepy crawlers. I always laugh when they say creepy crawlers. Bugs and worms. Eww gross. The point is, everyone is related and deserves our respect. Even white people. Even would be school shooters. Isn't it weird that some indians referred to the Keystone pipeline as an evil snake? What's wrong with snakes? Isn't that actually some biblical symbolism? I'm not saying that we are related to oil lines, but if I take animism

seriously then even plutonium has a spirit. A bad spirit right? Did Indians believe in Good And Evil? During the Chernobyl Disaster some miners got naked as they tunneled under the reactor to contain the meltdown. It's kind of funny because because their balls were out, flopping around getting fully irradiated. Sometimes when being an Indian gets too hard I tell myself "At least I don't have Acute Radiation Poisoning" Your skin melts off and your eyes bleed. No thanks. In the sweat lodge we get naked too, but it's in a sacred way so don't laugh. I do think about moving to Chernobyl, like I think most people do. Not as much traffic.

I do really think about going and homesteading at Chernobyl. There's a bunch of radioactive wolves and it's all post-apocalyptic. Don't we all want that cozy catastrophe to happen? Maybe there are zombies around every corner. Maybe an unexplainable super contagion. But, you don't have to stand in line at the DMV. You don't have to shave your legs. Presumably you don't have to recycle anymore. I imagine it's hard to be a liberal environmentalist in that situation, trying to find biodegradable ammo, or trying to get people to sign a petition for humanitarian efforts for the undead. Part of the draw of apocalypse is that you don't have to deal with so many people. You get to looting, go through people's underwear drawers. We can go to Chernobyl. I'm being serious here. I like the idea of doing some Mad Max shit, but i'm not sure if a major collapse will go down like they're depicted in Hollywood.

Prison movies aren't very faithful in my experience. Romantic Comedies are definitely engaged in some bleak dystopian world building. Sitcoms seem vaguely threatening if you remove the laugh track. Most of the tropes in prison movies do exist in real life to some extent. Getting poked or poking someone else is definitely a possibility. To really get the experience on film it would be a lot more boring. It would be more like one of those found footage movies but nothing happens. Just a fixed surveillance camera pointed at a person in a cell. The movie would be a minimum of ten hours long. It seems like there are more prison comedies than post-apocalyptic comedies for some reason. It's hilarious when someone drops the soap, but not so much when Toecutters gang chases after your family. I imagine the coming Indigenous Anarchism film starring Adam Beach will be closer avant garde experimentation than cinema verite.

Groundhog's Day starring Bill Murray beautifully illustrates Nietzsche's wheel of Eternal Return. You have to keep living the same thing over and over again. That's more like what prison is like. It's more Sisyphean, but that's also just what daily life is like in general. Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, casinos, contest powwows, and protest marches, which all resemble prisons? In prison you wake up, eat, work out, and watch Lockup Raw. And really, the sex isn't even that great. The really tragic thing about the apocalypse for natives is that it happened and we have to deal with even more people. If zombies are a stand-in for colonists, imagine a world where your boss, neighbor, or boyfriend is a zombie.

Because I wanted to find something better to do than watching movies and committing felonies, I went to Standing Rock. I put on a leather headband bigger than Dennis Bank's. I found one that could stretch across the Bering Strait. I talked with one of those good allies that always sit cross legged. She told me a story about some people who died in a sweat lodge in Arizona. "New Agers I'm assuming?" I asked. No. Spirit Warriors, some of them were even part Cherokee.

At the end of the day, being an anarchistic Native, that is to say a sentient being who believes that the non-sentient have interests, is not at all like a novel or a movie, it's performance art. For some of us it means dressing up in Furry costumes representing our clan totems. (Look out for me at the next rally dressed in whiteface, digging my teeth into the shoulders of grant writers.) Expecting to get our land back is just about as absurd as thinking the world will have a happy

ending, but be ready to be pleasantly surprised. I'm doing my part. I'm ready and willing to do a jump-scare on my therapist from behind his office couch. The situation is pretty desperate so anything is worth a shot. I'll leave you with some sage wisdom. In side of each of us are two wolves. One of them got away and left a hole in your screen door. The other looks ashamed when they poop. Which one will you feed?

Thanks for coming out folks. Don't forget to tip the bartender.

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