BLACK AND GREEN REVIEW

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NO. 1, SPRING 2015

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OPENING EDITORIAL

KEVIN TUCKER

It's now been 7 years since the final issue of *Green Anarchy* (US), roughly a decade since the final *Green Anarchist* (UK), 10 years since an issue of *Species Traitor* has come out, and 8 years since the last Black and Green Gathering. While claims that anarcho-primitivism (AP) and radical anti-civilization green anarchism (GA) are dead are wildly false, things have been awfully silent.

Meanwhile the economy has collapsed into multiple recessions. The resource wars that started in the beginning of this millennium are just now starting to "officially" end while new ones ignite. Far worse post-Peak Energy production methods have reigned supreme. The programmers have found untold new means to weave themselves into our pockets and "communities". Climate instability worsens as storms grow larger and more erratic while droughts stretch longer and farther. Portions of the globe have gone aflame in social upheaval.

The past 9 years have literally been a slew of headlines that would appear to be an AP checklist for the collapse.

So what happened?

Context always matters.

Just a decade ago, the AP/GA milieu, alongside the wider earth and animal liberation struggles, had a tremendous fire blazing. Even when repression hit home, there were discussions, actions, and a semblance of community forming in the furnace of civilization's dying flames. Our critiques were unfolding before us as tensions were mounting.

But then came the silence.

Close to 10 years of it. What was building with force was now trickling. Outside of John Zerzan's steadfast and committed drive (always praiseworthy), the lion's share of this milieu went quiet. Magazines and collectives folded and events lost their rhythms. Bloggers tried to co-opt and market our critiques in consumable packages. Nihilistic and individualistic strands retook anarchist discussions. Then social networking came in and flooded out the ground to stand on.

Despite everything that had happened from the time of Reclaim the Streets in Eugene, Oregon in 1999 till the mid-2000s, all the repression, all the harassment, all the imprisonment, all the threats; it almost seems as if the Green Scare (a massive government breakdown on earth and animal liberation activists) got the best of us. Prisoner support groups had to abruptly end as our warriors turned into informants. Our friends faced multiple decades of imprisonment either for crimes without injury or tacit agreement that action is required.

The very act of thinking about liberation was increasingly criminalized and targeted. Security culture, it seemed, had failed and we now longer knew where things would fall.

I'm not pointing fingers.

I am one of those who pulled back under the increasing repression. Most of my friends did the same, even those who weren't legally required to do so. At times it almost felt like paralysis: watching all of the events that we predicted unfold. Seeing the worst of scenarios just playing out in a sea of systemized brutality, seeing children fear the empty skies and the drones they would bring, seeing the fracking and tar sands bubbles destroy places that we loved, seeing the community that we once belonged to fall into faceless squabbles and posturing, seeing eco-liberals discover socialist revolutionary text to try and skim the well-intentioned among us off as cannon fodder. Seeing the seasons wane and the tides rise. Seeing the sixth great extinction loom nearer.

Sometimes being right is the worst feeling in the world.

Many of us became spectators of a world, our world, turning towards the worst end possible.

Nothing has changed.

All of these things are unfolding with speed and the anarchist imagination to understand and challenge it shrinks into obscurity. The plague of social networking removes our ability to recognize experience as we fall into a post-modern place where time becomes an eternal now without presence and the ability of our minds to process information is lost as we offset cognitive functions to increasingly personalized machines.

We are still targets of the state: as we were, as we are, as we will be, but the silence must end. I can't stomach watching this song and dance and only tossing insults from the balcony any longer.

I know I'm not alone in this, but this publication is a step. Hopefully the first of many to pull ourselves from isolation and to once again be the threat the domesticators so clearly saw us as.

This is not a beginning, but a continuation of old paths, picking up with where we went in the meantime and where we left off before. A lot of us spent that time embracing wildness, trying to stay plugged in within resistance movements, working on land projects, and seeing megalomaniacs try to commodify and reify our principles and beliefs. This is a call to challenge, spread and grow our critiques and praxis.

But the times have changed. The purpose of *Black and Green Review* (BAGR) is very specific: it is not intended to replace or to revive any previous publications, but to expand these critiques and to bring discussion back into the fold. We intend to draw out old faces and serve as a basis for new ones. Our communities have been torn apart and replaced by facades of connectivity without grounding.

For us to move forward, we must address the increasing disconnect while working towards resolving its consequences. News spreads quickly and fades faster now than before. Speed has become the form and function. One of the function of *Green Anarchy* through its empowering and steadfast reporting of resistance news and communiqués has arguably been replaced, but the discussion has not. At least not in lasting ways.

We've fallen victim to the News Feeds.

That part was intentional. The programmers, the domesticators of this late Modernity, know that regardless of content, context matters the most. Form determines function. While arguments might flare with regularity and an irritating sense of repetition, it might feel as though discussion is now a lost art, their presence into the electronic void only merits integration into the platforms.

To have lasting and impacting discussions, we need to pull attention away from the machines. That is no simple task and the manifestations of techno-addiction inherent in unconsciously swiping screens are no easy enemy. And that is the function that we had in mind behind starting BAGR: how do we have discussions again that matter?

It might not be a solution, but it's definitely a start.

The format of BAGR is broken down into a five primary sections;

ESSAYS: Writings intended to challenge and push forward the AP and GA critiques of civilization.

DEBATES: Moderated discussions evaluating opposing opinions in terms of fighting civilization.

DISCUSSION: Often open-ended pieces intended to drive discussion to deepen our critiques and praxis.

FIELD NOTES FROM THE PRIMAL WAR: A look at particular actions and movements directed at resistance to civilization.

REVIEWS: Engaging and drawing on relevant publications.

We've forgone the debate for the first issue and expanded the Essays section, but this will be a regular feature. We're interested in anything pertaining to anti-civilization thought and praxis, but upcoming works will address the relevance or irrelevance of nihilism and egoism, the continued effort to update AP critiques in light of the impact and prevalence of the Digital Age, expanding historical, anthropological, ecological, and social underpinnings of the domestication process, evaluating actions, expressing the relationship of rewilding and resistance, espousing a love for the wild, and looking at current, future, and past land and resistance projects and campaigns.

We aim to simply encourage discussion. We want to hear your voice. We want to encourage you to articulate your understandings and questions. We want to expand and strengthen this critique so that our words, actions, and efforts have more fire, so that our love and rage cannot be suppressed.

So read, get pissed, get excited, and respond, but most importantly, learn from our nomadic hunter-gatherer past and present selves and get moving. The countdown to the end of time ticks on.

ESSAYS

Garter snake. Photo by Yank.

FASTER: The Age of Acceleration

John Zerzan

Acceleration is a key fact of human existence today. Time, technology, and modernity are speeding up at an entirely unprecedented rate. These categories or dimensions are becoming parodies of themselves.

Experience, consciousness, our sense of everything is rushed along in a perpetual, hypermediated present––which is not a present. The now has been banished from itself. In the technosphere phase of civilization, our very notion of the present moment has been redefined (mostly) as what flies by on a computer screen. Flying fragments, including us.

Even the perennial Subject-Object question, viz. is there an insuperable alienation between them?, seems to fade in the Age of Acceleration. The subject is ever more insubstantial and disembodied; the object maybe even more so. We are no longer so much surrounded by things as by fleeting virtual images.

Reality seems out of control, in a runaway world. As our daily lives accelerate, less and less happens to us. The power of acceleration, once thought by some to be liberating, is far more widely felt as an enslaving pressure.

Progress "on speed," as it were, heightens the advance of ecological catastrophe. Nature is systematically overburdened, and of course acceleration is its measure.

All of this outraces the ability of thought to come to grips with it. Hartmut Rosa puts it this way: "I fear that we are in danger of running out of claims, hypotheses and theories that are inspiring and challenging for late-modern culture."[1] Though not an acceleration theorist like Rosa, Bruno Latour offers "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters

of Fact to Matters of Concern."[2]

But there's no mystery involved. Rosa himself observes that it is "the logic of acceleration that determines the structural and cultural evolution of modern society,"[3] and that "Progress and acceleration were indissolubly linked together from the very beginning."[4] It is clear that growing social and technological complexity, boosted by increasingly interdependent systems and exponentially more powerful computing capacities, constitute the racing reality of mass techno-society.

The reality is more starkly revealed the faster it goes in every sphere. This has not meant, however, that an indictment of the whole is allowed. Such a rejection is perhaps ever more transparently or unavoidably implied, but that perspective is unlikely to be taken seriously. "From the very beginning," in Rosa's words, is an entirely appropriate usage nonetheless. It must be noted in passing that the current nature of this accelerating world is the outcome of the movement of two of the most primary social institutions: division of labor and domestication.

Time has always been a colonizing force. It became a thing, within us, then over us. The emergence and growth of this materiality, time consciousness, corresponds to that of alienation because it is the most primary estrangement. Time is neither neutral nor objective, especially as the depth of the present gives way to the techno-present and our sense of time is re-coded. It leaps forward with all the rest in our epoch, in which even the speed of light, a supposedly unassailable limit, has been surpassed. Time cracks the whip and mocks everything that doesn't keep up. It merges with technological existence and in countless ways proclaims that there is nothing outside either of these dimensions.

Time has literally speeded up. We live in a new global timescape that Ben Agger calls "fast capitalism" and the "total administration of time."[5] Along with time compression goes time famine: it feels like we never have enough time; time is running out. Time is getting more and more scarce. Pressure and stress hound us as we struggle, relying on coffee, energy drinks, and other substances to keep up.[6]

The temporal trajectory has become a permanent but impoverished present. As Baudrillard put it, "Time itself, lived time, no longer has time to take place."[7] Domesticated society has long been temporal in nature, now radically so.[8] The new, post-clock age is very decontextualized, but also shows more of the same progress of time's estrangement from the earth. The present contracts, but is increasingly all there is. History is evaporating; the past becomes somehow incomprehensible. *Posthistoire: Has History Come to an End?* by Lutz Niethammer poses this well enough. Hervé Fischer concludes, "Cybertime, our time, is tragic. It has no past,

no future."[9]

There's no time for depth, engagement, reflective action. The symbolic, which started with time, completes itself as the only presence. Fischer again: "Time has become the very matter of reality."[10] If it is true that oppressive time infiltrates and domesticates at a basic level, the struggle against domination cannot overlook it.

Modern technology is precisely what alters our experience of time. The always faster colonization of life by technology commands an ever-fluctuating environment in which the self is destabilized and such dichotomies as online-offline, public-private, and work-leisure are made largely irrelevant. The properties of the physical self are reduced, as galloping technology claims to complete and enhance them. Speed is of the essence; computing power means one thing—how fast it is. 2014's Magazine of the Year award went to a tech and business zine called *Fast Company* (*New York Times*, May 1, 2014).

Staring at screens we become "digital interfaces,"[11] approaching a communicative elsewhere which is nowhere. Through the always developing devices a great indifference to the world is apparent. And why should this be surprising, given how indifferent the world now is to us. A world subdued and rendered uniform, ugly and lifeless by onrushing technology. Enlightenment modernity, its promises unrealized, is now unrecognizable in key ways. Spengler said that modern times have been "stretched and stretched again to the elastic limit at which [they] will bear no more."[12]

The history of modernity is, on one level, a series of innovations in ever-increasing time compression. This mounting technological movement is foundational to the fact that Progress is totalitarian. From urbanization and globalization to the disorienting virtual waves of information, the enclosing pace is relentless.

About a century ago the futurist Marinetti declaimed, "One must persecute, lash, torture all those who sin against speed."[13] Fast forward to the present: Microsoft Cloud threatens all techno-serfs with the reminder that "The winning edge can boil down to nanoseconds. The Cloud That Helps Win the Race!" (full-page ad, *New York Times*, April 1, 2014). A nanosecond is a billionth of a second. Stock markets around the world now operate on this level. Paul Virilio says that "By accelerating, globalization turns reality inside out like a glove."[14]

Baudrillard stressed that reality comes to an end when real and unreal become indistinguishable. This is the current stage of the catastrophic nature of civilization, which is modernity. And Rosa points to the "acceleration process which is indiscernibly linked to the concept and

essence of modernity."[15] Virilio terms this "a culture of desertification,"[16] whose constant uptick guarantees the "liquidation of the world."[17]

All of this operates against mutual and embodied co-presence; this seems to be why (somewhat perversely) all the speeding-up has produced a big increase in sedentariness. Seated before the slight, synthetic glow of the screen as life flies by. As people work faster, because the machines go faster.

"Get.Arts.Fast" is William Grimes; March 21, 2014 *New York Times* offering on abbreviated theater and other performances, shortened to fit the busy schedules of exhausted patrons, as well as their shrinking attention spans. At least accelerating technosphere developments (e.g. Artificial Intelligence, nanotechnology) have so far not managed to keep up with the fantasies of those who actually put their faith in them. Ray Kurzweil's deluded technotopian Singularity dreams get a cinematic comeuppance in the 2014 *Transcendence* movie, by the way.

Somewhere Spinoza wrote that we are immortal here and now, in each instant. And so we continue, in the face of what wants to be overwhelming. Jean-Claude Carriere, asked how he accomplished so many things, responded, "My reply is always the same, and I'm not trying to be funny: 'Because I do them slowly.'"[18] Gifted athletes often remark similarly, on their ability to slow things down.

"All that is solid melts into air," as Marx and Engels characterized the transforming power of industrial capitalism in *The Communist Manifesto*. But what drives the now frantic pulse of transformation was unleashed far earlier. It has indeed gone into overdrive with the Industrial Revolution, but heightening complexity under the sign of domestication is thousands of years older than modern capitalism.

"Don't be evil" is Google's well-known mantra, part of its mission statement. Of course the whole mega-project, of which Google is only the latest tiny part, is the "evil" that is now so virulent. It may appear as the force of destiny, in which case it is time for a new conquest.

Endnotes

1 Hartmut Rosa, *Alienation and Acceleration* (Natchitoches, LA: NSU Press, 2010), p. 7.
2 Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry*, Winter 2005.
3 Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration*, translated by Jonathan Trejo-Mathys (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 279.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 321.
5 Ben Agger, "Time Robbers, Time Rebels: Limits to Fast Capital" in Robert Hassan and Ronald E. Purser, eds., *24/7: Time and Temporality in the Network Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).
6 The popular literature is of course extensive. For example: Martin Moore-Ede, *The Twenty-Four-*

Hour Society: Understanding Human Limits in a World That Never Stops (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993); Thomas Hyland Eriksen, *Tyranny of the Moment* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2001); Brigid Schulte, *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time* (New York": Sarah Crichton Books, 2014).

7 Jean Baudrillard, *The Intelligence of Evil or the Lucidity Pact* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 27.

8 For historical analysis see my "Beginning of Time, End of Time" in *Elements of Refusal* (Columbia, MO: C.A.L. Press, 1999) and "Time and its Discontents" in *Running on Emptiness* (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2002).

9 Hervé Fischer, *Digital Shock* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), p. 50.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

11 Arthur Kroher, *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 175.

12 Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* I (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), p. 19.

13 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The New Religion––Morality of Speed" in Hartmut Rosa and William E. Scheuerman, eds., *High-Speed Society* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), p. 58.

14 Paul Virilio, *The Original Accident* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 51.

15 Rosa, *Alienation and Acceleration, op.cit.*, p. 8.

16 Paul Virilio, *Negative Horizon* (New York: Continuum, 2008), p. 35.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

18 Catherine David, Frederic Lenoir, Jean-Philippe de Tonnac, eds., *Conversations About the End of Time* (New York: Fromm International, 2000), p. 164.

THE LAST GRAVEYARD

A translated poem of Xu Lizhi, the Foxconn worker who committed suicide on 30 September 2014, at the age of 24, in Shenzhen, China.

Even the machine is nodding off
Sealed workshops store diseased iron
Wages concealed behind curtains
Like the love that young workers bury at the bottom of their hearts
With no time for expression, emotion crumbles into dust
They have stomachs forged of iron
Full of thick acid, sulfuric and nitric
Industry captures their tears before they have the chance to fall
Time flows by, their heads lost in fog
Output weighs down their age, pain works overtime day and night
In their lives, dizziness before their time is latent
The jig forces the skin to peel
And while it's at it, plates on a layer of aluminum alloy
Some still endure, while others are taken by illness
I am dozing between them, guarding
The last graveyard of our youth.

21 December 2011

THE SUFFOCATING VOID
DOMESTICATION AND PATHOLOGICAL DISTRACTION

KEVIN TUCKER
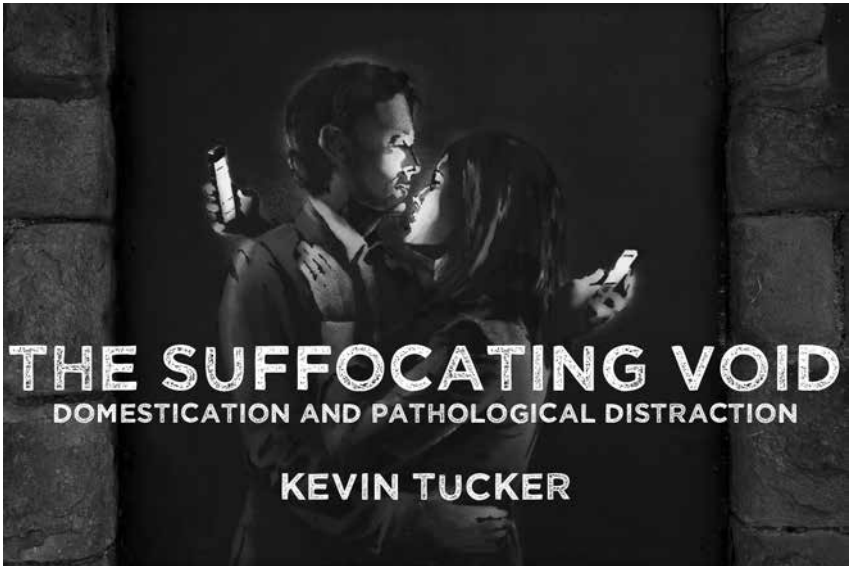
> "It would be imprudent to deny, or even to play down, the profound change which the advent of 'fluid modernity' has brought to the human condition. The remoteness and unreachability of systemic structure, coupled with the unstructured, fluid state of the immediate setting of life-politics, change that condition in a radical way and call for a rethinking of old concepts that used to frame its narratives. Like zombies, such concepts are today simultaneously dead and alive." – Zygmunt Bauman[1]

Something has changed. Radically. And for the worst.

It is tellingly difficult to describe something without a name. And that something has quickly crept into our minds and psyche. We call it "social media" or the "social network", but those words normalize what is a revolutionary change in our relationship to technology. We're not talking here about a mere platform of technology, we're talking about a mindset, a constantly flowing stream of information whereby a refusal to participate renders the human, now reduced to the status of a "user", obsolete.

There has been a distinct turn away from the internet being relegated to a computer and it is now not only with us at all times, but always on, always moving, always watching. The internet has moved from a form of communication to the increasingly predominant one. So much so that the United Nations has declared internet access a

human right.[2] As fiber optic cables are buried in plain sight, Wifi signals permeate our world.

Your muscles twitch. You believe it's your phone in your pocket, but you're holding it in your hand[3]. You didn't notice you were even checking it. Our immersion into the world of the machine is most notable in how little attention we pay to it.

We expect it and we are expected by it.

This is the suffocating void, the demanding emptiness of Modernity, the obtuse compliance with the domestication process as rendered in binary by programmers.

We need to stop.

Stop our movements, still our minds, silence our devices and for a moment, even just one moment, just be present. It's not easy. It's not easy to get there and it's not easy to stay there. The air is thick, it is difficult to breathe and even harder to get your bearings. It is overwhelming. The weight of our stuff, our drama, our baggage comes crashing in. In our world, stagnancy is the equivalent of death.

We are stuck in constant movement. We become the flood, the rushing waters, a conversation with no beginning, no end, and no content. To our nomadic gatherer-hunter minds, there's an inkling of familiarity. Our bodies want to move, to flow and respond. But this is not the movement of bodies within a rooted world: it is a trap. We are stuck within the eye of a tornado, so we try to move with it, but it never stops and it never ends. And when you attempt to stop and assess the situation, the true horror of our reality, the crushing impact of what the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has aptly labeled "Liquid Modernity" will overcome you.

It will annihilate you.

Our ancestors, our shared lineage that formed our bodies and minds, were driven by movement. Within our crisis, the pathetic reflection of that primal urge is not movement, but restlessness. We are moving, but we are going nowhere. Shuffling to avoid stagnancy. Moving lifelessly to avoid death.

This is not an accident.

Nothing in our reality really is any more. We are a herd of individuals vying for attention in a sea of selfies, tweets and yelps. The ecologist Paul Shepard long ago pointed out how domestication stunts development[4], but technology derails it. Increasingly unable to find or define ourselves outside of the machine, we move further inwards. And the programmers pull the strings. We learn to express

ourselves through the machine and, in doing so, we become one.

Our distraction keeps us from seeing the monumental change taking place: the immersion into a constantly connected, but never grounded social network. We are, so to speak, "always on". Smart phones, tablets, screens everywhere we look, wireless signals pervading nearly all spaces, check ins, GPS and monitoring equipment constantly reassuring the world that we are here and we are consuming this manufactured reality.

Within decades, we went from being sold the mythos and myths of Progress to rendering the narrative null through immersion. We no longer need to dream of a glorious Future, we are here. Progress is no longer spoken of, but expected and systemic.

Like the Agricultural Revolution, Industrial Revolution, and the Green Revolution before it, the Interface Revolution propels civilization beyond the boundaries and limitations of earlier systems. The firewalls of Jericho have been breached. Progress innovated, the processes integrated.

For the programmers, this is no small feat. This is the dream of every domesticator: people lining up and fighting for the latest technology, fighting for a place in line, paying top dollar for devices with built in tracking and data mining software and willing to remain in debt to sustain the terms of our bondage. Never mind that the world is suffocating under piles of waste, choking down makeshift mines for rare and difficult to extract metals, while workers are forced to sign anti-suicide clauses, villages are displaced, and sustained low budget warfare are both form and function; the expectation isn't just that all of this will be ignored, but that you, the consumer, will be back for more next year. Or sooner.

And when things are really moving along, not only are the consequences of technology (both internal and external) ignored, they are accepted and justified.

If the architects of Uruk had the foresight, they would have been seething with jealousy over the control and obedience this technocratic dystopia holds.

But in their place we have the ever-present bloated smiles of Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg encoded into the machines we carry. The smiles of billionaires who built their impossibly massive fortunes on our desecrated earth: buried, literally, in a sea of intentionally outdated and short-lived devices. Devices filled with metals mined by the dispossessed under the directives of warlords.

Devices built by the displaced and disempowered. Devices awash in toxic residue that dilute into groundwater, streams, rivers, and contaminate oceans.

Devices that whiten the blood stained teeth of programmers, of billionaires: of domesticators.

And their smiles are injected into every aspect of our lives.

THE FLESH MACHINE

> "With this new 'megatechnics' the dominant minority will create a uniform, all-enveloping, super-planetary structure, designed for automatic operation. Instead of functioning actively as an autonomous personality, man [sic] will become a passive, purposeless, machine-conditioned animal whose proper functions, as technicians now interpret man's [sic] role, will either be fed into the machine or strictly limited and controlled for the benefit of de-personalized, collective organizations." - Lewis Mumford[5]

Lewis Mumford long ago made the observation that the first components of the "Megamachine", the infusion of technology and society, were made of flesh and blood, proverbially speaking. It has long been the dream of the technocrats to make the flesh the last, in an absolutely literal sense. While Mumford was talking about the coordinated efforts it took to build monuments and to clear and plow fields in the Mesolithic era, the programmers of our time just want to remove the clunkiness and messiness of their apparatus from our view.

This was the vision of Progress that we had been sold.

The Future would be better. The Machine would deliver us from drudgery. Its "apparent purpose", as stated by former advertising executive turned neo-Luddite, Jerry Mander, "is to eliminate human ailments and human unhappiness…, to expand the human potential, and to create a world of abundance for human enjoyment." Meanwhile driving in the "unstated purpose" to "fulfill the inherent drive of technological society to feed its own evolutionary cravings, to expand its domination of the both Earth and space, and to complete the utter conversion of nature into commodity form."[6]

For many of us, the failures of Progress are no surprise. This is a mythos as distraction: your sacrifice now will benefit you later. It is not only a religious imperative, it is the or-

igin of religious thought only to be readapted as seen fit through time. A cosmological delayed return economy[7].

And within Modernity, that adaptation grew into and through the allure of new technology.

Change comes into the picture.

Marshall McLuhan spotted it with the printing press, Jerry Mander spotted it in the television, when Mumford saw the thread, he saw strong hints at the potential of the computer, but he seemingly would have hoped it could have not gotten to the point where we are now: change is expected, integration is constant. Speed itself, as John Zerzan aptly notes[8], has become virtue.

We have suddenly found ourselves at a strange impasse where narratives have collided. The need for the sales pitch of Progress has been surpassed by the want for the new. We aren't questioning the expectation that we are always available, "always on", we are lining up for the newest devices to further those intrusions.

Fighting *for* them.

Getting to this point didn't happen over night, but even within the history of technology, it all happened with unthinkable speed. The mobile phone took a remarkably fast slide from toy of the ultra-rich to nearly universal acceptance. By 2013, 91% of the adult population in the US owned at least one.[9]

The unprecedented nature of this has led two industry proponents to applaud the near universal acceptance of mobile phones as the most quickly adopted consumer technology in the history of the world. Gloating in their sickening book, *Networked*, authors Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman state: "the Mobile Revolution has allowed [Information and Community Technologies] to become body appendages allowing people to access friends and information at will, wherever they go." The key being "always accessible", but, in true form, they see "the possibility of a continued presence and pervasive awareness of others in the network"[10] positively.

The architects of civilization have long understood that the power of the domestication process lies in its ability to be internalized. The mythos of Progress requires daily affirmation. The programmers, however, realized that affirmation could become integrated.

They just needed to eliminate any distance between a given technology and the user. Lo and behold, a trip into a recently built suburb or even newly gentrified city will show that the eyesore of power lines have been rid from sight. We go wireless

so we no longer see the machine as separate. Unsightly and in-convenient wiring goes to routers in corners and under fur-niture. Corporations sponsor "Wifi Hot Spots" to customers. We remove the wiring from sight to internalize its function.

And this has sadly been effective. Very effective.

What you see when you step into public places are faces illumi-nated by backlit devices. Groups of teens walking together and each lost in their own virtual presence. 1.3 million car accidents in the US during 2011 were caused by drivers distracted with their cell phones.[11] You will see people constantly swiping their screens to look for updates, feeds, messages, or just blindly glancing out of hab-it at their phones, most seemingly with no recognition of what they are doing.

The conclusion of the Megamachine, the necessary step to fur-thering the goals of Progress, was to eliminate barriers. To make it so we treat phones as an appendage, while the Programmers dream of making them one.

To make us complicit.

To make us comply without even noticing it.

I have long held that the genius of civilizers is falsely attributed to manufacturing needs. Simply put, they aren't that smart and we ar-en't that gullible.

What it does come down to is an understanding of what a human being needs. We are social animals. In our minds and bodies, even when lost in some ridiculous App on an iPhone, we are trying to rec-oncile the world of the hunter-gatherer with the path that Modernity has set us on. For the most part, our emotional and mental free fall is held in place so long as our inertia is matched by social rebounding.

Community is etched in our Stone Age soul. We don't just want others; we need them.

And herein lies the tragedy.

This is our animality being torn from us, repackaged and then sold back to us. We want movement, we want connectivity, we want contact, and, in the absence of the physical, the electric options are literally inescapable waves penetrating our minds and bodies.

This is how Progress was sold to us and this is why we buy into this Void. Amongst 7 billion people and counting, in a sea of unend-ing electric synapse and stimuli: we are lost, alone, and confused.

While it may be utterly unrecognizable, the mound builders of Mesopotamia and the high-tech sweatshop worker serve the same

function: to become the apparatus so that we may consume it.

And that downward spiral is driven by our consumption.

THE ZUCKERBURG GALAXY

> "There is a huge need and a huge opportunity to get everyone in the world connected, to give everyone a voice and to help transform society for the future. The scale of the technology and infrastructure that must be built is unprecedented, and we believe this is the most important problem we can focus on." – Mark Zuckerberg[12]

Facebook didn't invent social media, but it has become iconic in its acceptance and usage. While often being joked about as a scourge, near the end of 2014 more than 1.35 billion people logged on at least once per month[13]. That surpasses the population of China.

And it continues to grow.

As much as the mainstream celebrates social media, even attempting to posture it as the tool of liberation during the Arab Spring (though ironically demonizing it when it was used in the same way in the Ferguson Uprisings of 2014 and beyond), our sense of how radical this change in form really is becomes lost.

Marshall McLuhan famously made the case that the "Gutenberg technology", the printing press, had made universal change in the way its users and consumers saw the world. This pattern, beginning with the written word, cannot be overstated. Yet it is so often lost within civilization because everything we know is taught through the lens of symbolic culture: the internalized whispers of domesticators reinforcing our own perceived split from the wild world and necessary dependency on masters. This is how domestication works, but the purpose of technology is to update form and context. And as McLuhan famously observed: form dictates function, the medium is the message.

So his words for the impact of the printed word hold equally true for the updated technology: when a technology is introduced "if it gives new stress or ascendancy to one or another of our senses, the ratio among all of our senses is altered. We no longer feel the same, nor do our eyes and ears and other sense remain the same."[14]

Technology flattens our world by reducing our reliance on senses while over stimulating particular sensory input. Our brains are, to put it simply, overworked and underwhelmed. Mediation and repre-

sentation as evidenced by blogs, Youtube channels, Facebook feeds and Twitter handles.

This is the form.

This is the form that creates a world filled with crushing depression, alienation, suffering and anxiety. A National Center for Health Statistics study found that by 2008 the usage of anti-depressants in the US had gone up 400% over the previous decade across all demographics.[15] The iPhone was released in 2007. The researcher's period of study from 2005-2008 saw an increase of Facebook users from 5.5 million to 100 million.[16] That is an increase of over 1700%. And this isn't even touching on the horrid and dire social and ecological consequences across the world.

The point isn't to say that Facebook caused these things, but, along with all other facets of the social network (both past, present and future), it exacerbates them. It amplifies on exponential terms.

The content and platforms drive each other. But they always have.

Hyper-internalized and portable technology is the form.

Domestication is the function.

As the domesticators developed technology to employ their will, the ability to make change with intentionality arose. No longer was power in the scythe and the stored grains. The agrarian curse of drudgery and toil for the perceived pay off in the heavens paved the way (literally) to updated industrial forms.

And the mythos evolved.

Collective consciousness was slowly channeled into individual consumerism. It is no surprise that the overstressed working class in early industrializing nations thought their liberation lied within possessing the machine collectively, nor is it surprising that the antidote to that notion was selling individual heavens on an increasingly closer horizon.

Progress remains. Mythos adapt.

Technology increasingly spread from the means to the purpose itself. The time clock led to the pocket watch to the wristwatch and now to the cell phone. We embrace the objects that confine our minds to think on an artificial sense of place and self.

Our world becomes both larger and smaller, so we turn to the machine, to this bartered identity. Even in a sea of flux, the technology itself increasingly becomes the constant. It becomes the savior.

Chellis Glendinning called this process by what it is: "techno-ad-

diction". "In such a society people have historically become obsessed with anything that helps them to cope with the trauma of it all."[17]

We buy to know we're alive.

And, increasingly, we Tweet to remind everyone that we're still here.

Facebook's creator, Mark Zuckerberg, saw the writing on the wall. He didn't just sell it: he bought it. His rise from a computer programmer at Harvard up to the richest 20 people in the world is sadly well documented and pathetically emulated.

While not coming up from the bottom of the social ladder, his story is more of an emotional rags-to-riches triumph. The reader can relate. A teenager in the 90s, a product of great technological change and raised in an atmosphere where "play" went from being outside with friends to inside and playing video games. Or, in Zuckerberg's case, programming them.

This story is drenched in the turmoil of responding to adolescence through increasingly mediated means. The starting point for what would become Facebook was a site that rated other students by their looks. It should not be surprising that the origin point of Facebook is driven equally by a bully's entitlement and an unrelenting sense of insecurity. And that is the tone that carried on.

Facebook didn't arise in a vacuum. This is hardly even history at this point; we're talking about websites that increasingly dominated the social atmosphere over the past decade. It's hardly necessary for me to recant them.

What is important here is how and why Facebook took off.

The obnoxiously entitled "Blogosphere" matched with former Facebook contender, MySpace, both served, as necessary steps towards what social networking would become. The blogs were driven by an attempt at a, and I'm biting my tongue here, "grassroots" sense of giving voices and reporting. Often centered around contemporary topics, their necessary role was less in what was being said, but littering the fairy tale notion of the internet as an "information super-highway" with opinions equally weighed with actual reporting and research. A huge part of the lucrative Search Engine Optimization (SEO) field existing relied on the hopes for bloggers to have their posts on a subject get the highest ranked search results in Google or whatever else is currently being used.

Blogs quickly became an accepted resource. The internet is, after all, marketing. A blog is a brand for an individual. A public face:

a personalization of a perspective that transfers the subject from content to provider. This is the cult of personality moving from the television, books, politicians and newspapers to overly excitable and entertaining personalities. These people were enthralling because they could be you, the spectator. This was a move driven home even further via Youtube not long after.

MySpace was the place to market the self under the guise of a place to keep in touch with friends. A place to sell the image of yourself that you wish to portray. Echoed along the lines of Twitter, where irrelevant quips of 140 characters, and in an increasingly entangled and over-sharing, yet selective, web, the social network became accepted enough that the nearly stalker-esque Facebook was ready to take its place.

The idea of posting your quips and selling yourself was worthless unless it was the main feature: the News Feed. This is a sea of words projected onto a constantly shifting wall as if it was news. From the hyper-personal to the irrelevant, it's laid out flatly for your selected audience.

And there are no mistakes here.

These moves are intentional. They are marketing.

Sold as a supplement to the life anyone wants to live, they have become the main course. And they become the platform for broadcasting the life you want others to see. Far from being a tight knit group of friends, social networking sites, as Jose van Dijck states in his critical history, "forge personal, professional or geographical connections and encourage weak ties."[18]

This is that urge that we all have within us: the need for community. It is your inner-hunter-gatherer and their band associations.

An impulse redirected for a reality supplanted.

We spread ourselves widely. We feel that having information about others is as good as having actual relationships with them. And every time we log on, we are selling ourselves.

The grotesque level of acceptance of the social network is apparent in how Zuckerberg basks in it: "Think about what people are doing on Facebook today. They're keeping up with their friends and family, but they're also building an image and identity for themselves, which in a sense is their brand. They're connecting with the audience that they want to connect to."

And to always end on a high note: "It's almost a disadvantage if you're not on it now."[19]

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We buy this reality because we sell it. If you want to take part in this society, if you want to stay connected with friends and family, both close and distant: here is the platform, here is the place to do it.

It almost seems ridiculous to give this platform such intense scrutiny. In the timeline of civilization, it won't even be a fragment of a blip. But the spread, grasp and ramifications of Facebook, its intentional and unspoken uses, are monumental. You simply cannot escape them. It's not as simple as deactivating an account (it was years before deleting was even an option).

These have become the terms, the grounding on which this late stage of Modernity stands.

The narrative of Progress hardly needs to sell a distant future; it has created an eternal present. And in doing so, it has removed the presence. It removes the essence of being human.

This is change.

This is change at a rate and depth that is unprecedented even in the nasty, short and brutish history of civilization. Amongst all of the critiques of technology, this is something that was predicted in dystopian terms, but the reality is far scarier and by the time most of us noticed its effectiveness, we are at a loss for outlets and terms to even discuss this ongoing and worsening epidemic.

The News Feed ticks.

Against the backdrop of a 24 hour "news" cycle, it is a fitting backdrop: the techno-addicted need constant stimulation. Going outside hardly cuts it unless it's for taking selfies or a necessary part of the sale for the projected self.

The Self, driven by hyper-individualistic consumerism, takes a form and precedence that could make even the most rampant egoist blush. This isn't just posturing; it's an attachment to a projected and widely cast image. An online persona is increasingly less foreign to our sense of identity. McLuhan was hardly off base when he claimed, "schizophrenia may be a necessary consequence of literacy."[20] In the digital age, schizophrenia may very well be a prerequisite.

It is hardly surprising that cyber-bullying has become such a massive issue. The bully and bullying are no longer physically confined to a psychical place. And the amount of information and sources of self-doubt of the victim are broadcast far more widely.

And these are the terms on which marketers and programmers think. The social network is the place where they act.

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MINING THE SHALLOWS

> "It is a common fallacy, though, to think of platforms as merely *facilitating* networking activities; instead, the construction of platforms and social practices is mutually constitutive."[21] – Jose von Dijck

The link between social networking and technological production is vital. The point is, after all, to find ways to keep participation constant and consistent: to be always on.

Capitalists are no strangers to malicious forms of aggressive marketing. For a technocrat like Zuckerberg, it's clearly a two way street. New phone technology allows for updates to his system and updates to Facebook sell new phones.

The mobile industry is, after all, a force to be reckoned with. An industry report projects revenues to pass $2 trillion by 2017. As it stands now, 3.2 billion people are active mobile network subscribers.[22]

This is a massive economic force. Planned obsolescence is no new concept in terms of acquiring wealth. As the technology advances, so does the life expectancy decrease. But as the cell phone and its programs become the only acceptable form of communication, their monumental costs simply become a begrudgingly accepted burden.

The average smartphone in 2013 cost $337.[23] Imagine running into you from a decade ago and saying that's what you would be paying for a phone and that it would only have an expected lifespan of 2 years, at best. The absurdity of it is lost both in the cost of owning and using a cellphone (the average 2013 bill in the US weighed in over $700 per year[24]) but, as we'll get to in the following section, the ecological and social costs far outweigh all others.

Beyond planned obsolescence lies functional obsolescence: the perception that a technology is no longer functional in comparison to its contemporary options. You see this rampantly in the cell phone world where even replacing a battery or charger on a 2-year-old phone can be a feat. Just as with the News Feed, if you can't keep up, you are left to believe that you will drown.

But the function here is key.

The technologies being actively developed and sold serve a single purpose: to further entrap the user into the social network.

To become the algorithm.

When Facebook finally went public in 2012, Zuckerberg spoke to investors like old friends: "Advertising works most effectively when it's in line with what people are already trying to do. And people are trying to communicate in a certain way on Facebook — they share information with their friends, they learn about what their friends are doing — so there's really a whole new opportunity for a new type of advertising model within that."[25]

The very notion of creating an all-encompassing platform for communication is to expand into previously unreachable areas. This is why Facebook bought Foursquare: an application that "checks in" and posts on your News Feed where you physically go. Not to be left behind, they also purchased Atlas: an application that tracks offline purchases.[26]

This information is key to automation.

Every time you ask Google or Siri a question, Google, Apple and the NSA are listening.

The goal of programmers is to track your movements, decisions, thoughts and statements to create algorithms to predict and influence your actions. The cell phone, an early platform for GPS tracking, is the perfect platform for this. It is on your person, it is your electronic leash and confidant. It's an object you can stare at with intent when you don't feel like making eye contact or uncomfortable small talk.

And it is a tool to continually gather information about you.

Little is telling about the power of the temporary and shallow nature of new information from the Void than how quickly the outrage over the exposed US government's far and wide reaching surveillance programs died. Nothing changed, but everything was accepted. If the alternative option was to give up on cell phones and social networking, then it was an uncomfortable, but possibly necessary evil.

The users could live with it.

Less surprising was the FBI's official call out to social media corporations and platforms requiring them to offer a "back door" to organize, gather and collect information that might have been unavailable through real world social networking.[27]

Though science fiction writers might have dreamed being the first to come up with a technology as absurd as Google Glass (a literal technologically infused lens) it is in the more common forms of technology that the programmers claim their victories.

We chose to take part in this inexplicably vast social experiment and database without seeing it as a choice.

Again, this comes down to a redirection of impulses. The world that we live in is one in which every decision, purchase and action that we make has dire consequences across this globalized, technologically dependent world.

This is not the connectedness that hunter-gatherers knew and felt.

This is far from the relationship with the breath that moves through all things which our wild souls are intertwined with.

This is a vast, intentional, disconnected hyper-dependence. Our minds are wired for nomadic movements within familiar landscapes. That is how we are shaped. Our hunter-gatherer minds are bioregional in practice and global in spirit, but not consequence.

The unnatural world that civilization has created and Modernity has accelerated are simply too large for our minds to even comprehend. Our inability to empathize with the consequences of our actions is literally out of our world.[28] Programmers and marketers know this.

And they prey upon it.

So it is hardly ironic when Zuckerberg famously proclaimed: "A squirrel dying in front of your house may be more relevant to your interests right now than people dying in Africa."[29] The use of the word 'relevant' obscures the horrific confluence of our realm of being and our realm of understanding. Zuckerberg, like all other programmers, knows that when faced with the challenge of addressing the consequences of our actions, it's far easier to sink back into the reality that they've sold us than to address the one we live in. We'll get back to this, but it's pertinent for understanding the pathological drive of the social network for directing our impulses and how they can do it.

And the reality here is frightening.

If there is a canary in this coalmine, it should be Nicholas Carr's excellent book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains*. As far as I'm concerned, it's the *Silent Spring* for the crisis of the further integration of the internet and technology into every aspect and moment of our lives.

There are many points he touches on that are crucial to understanding how our interactions with technology, particularly the internet, impact the function and development of our minds.

While programmers like Zuckerberg extol the faux-virtues of transparency and giving voice to individuals through their platforms, the subtext is about instilling their vision into our minds through channeling synapses. Literally.

When we buy into or accept their mythos that the internet exists to make the world a freer, better place, stuffed beyond recognition with information, we are accepting an argument on their turf. And that turf is a confusing place.

There is almost nowhere on the internet where you aren't being sold products: be it physical, ideological or cosmological. This is the message in the medium. Information, relationships, connections and so on are all consumable. Quantifiable in nature, ever expanding in form: this is the world stripped of life and coded in binary and algorithms.

That information that you were after, that pressing question you had to Google, that curiosity that you had? Those are all starting points. The internet does act like a web. Every point is measured in its relation to others. It is a multiple-choice adventure at all times and if you weren't aware, the hyperlinks can sell you on directions that flashing ads might not.

They want you to click. They beg you to click.

Once you do, you start down their rabbit hole: this fog of consumption of information and products, opinions and trivia. There's no explanation for how you found these random factoids when you paste them in on your News Feed, but there's a science to it. Click. Share. Integrate.

At its heart, this visceral assault is not a new concept. We've known from the inception and integration of the television how this external and contrived fantasy (especially when driven by fright) deeply impacts our fight or flight synapse. We are overwhelmed with options even if they all lead to the same complicity.

This is how our brains work.

And this is what the programmers know.

That is why they can adjust algorithms on Facebook as a social experiment to see how the tone of a News Feed can impact worldviews. They call this "emotional contagion". To date it's been clearly exposed at least once as part of a weeklong emotional experiment conducted through tweaking the tone of shared content in your News Feed on Facebook.[30]

This is your cage.

The real question for me is, do people have the tools that they need in order to make those decisions well? And I think that it's actually really important that Facebook continually makes it easier and easier to make those decisions... If people feel like they don't have control over how they're sharing things, then we're failing them.

Mark Zuckerberg, Scumbag.
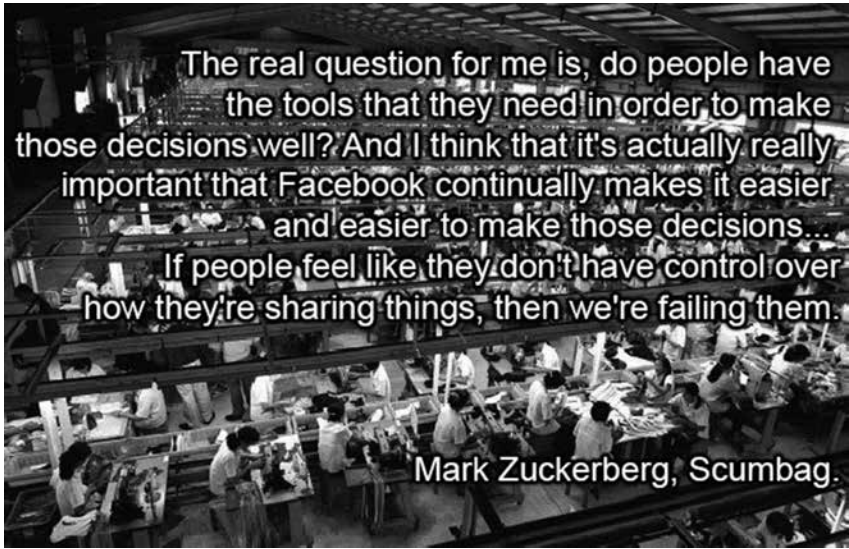
While we are told that life without civilization was a struggle, we ignore that while things can happen fast, our minds and bodies have evolved to cope with them. Should we suddenly realize that we're being tracked or should a hunt take an immediate turn: our bodies are built to respond.

On the other hand, we were not built for prolonged exposure to over-stimulation. If anything, our inability to process the overwhelming input from life in Modernity is testimony to how much more relaxed our nomadic hunter-gatherer life really was. And yet we continually attack and offend our sensibilities. The result is exhausting, stimulating, exciting, depressing, crushing, lost, and searching all at the same time.

In true form, that is what the internet looks like: a barrage of ads, information, stimulus, and options. It is a visceral and literal distraction.

Following McLuhan, being on the internet forces the use of some senses at the expense of others: "We can assume" Carr observes, "that the neural circuits devoted to scanning, skimming, and multitasking are expanding and strengthening, while those used for reading and thinking deeply, with sustained concentration, are weakening or eroding."[31]

And the biology behind this is worse.

Not only are we impacting what senses are being used; we are altering the way our brains take in information. To move from short-

term to long-term memory, a particular event or piece of knowledge requires a sense of depth, a memorable moment. It stops the flood of input in our waking lives long enough for the mind to find a reason to hold on to it.

As enraging as your online arguments can get or as off-putting as something might be, when read on the internet, the form dictates function in the mind. In a sea of distraction, all things are given equal footing. And our minds don't take the sensory overload of one site more seriously than others.

We are losing the ability to remember.

Our brain treats the internet as an external source: the very warehouse of information that the programmers have sold to us. We don't need to retain this full information because we can access it at any time through our computers or, more commonly, our phone. To say, "Google it" is hardly a passive phrase, it is an intrinsic change in the way they we find information.

We no longer gather it; we just seek it out when we need to reference it.

And then it is released again into the internet. This is not an intentional process on our part, but it is absolutely underpinning the nature of our relationship with the world through the megamachine. This is the suffocating void: that fogged sense of place, filled with the pressures to maintain existence while always searching for another reason to prolong the presence.

As Carr states, we are "outsourcing memory" and in doing so, we are outsourcing function. This is our integration with the machine, our delusional participation in the Spectacle and yet it's as though we're not even there.

It's worth quoting Carr at length here:

"The influx of competing messages that we receive whenever we go online not only overloads our working memory; it makes it harder for our frontal lobes to concentrate our attention on any one thing. The process of memory consolidation can't even get started. And, thanks once again to the plasticity of our neuronal pathways, the more we use the Web, the more we train our brain to be distracted – to process information very quickly and very efficiently but without sustained attention. That helps explain why many of us find it hard to concentrate even when we're away from our computers. Our brains become adept at forgetting, inept at remembering. Our growing dependence on the Web's information stores may in fact be the product of a self-per-

petuating, self-amplifying loop. As our use of the Web makes it harder for us to lock information into our biological memory, we're forced to rely more and more on the Net's capacious and easily searchable artificial memory, even if it makes us shallower thinkers."[32]

The machine is not controlling your mind: the machine is absorbing it.

This eternal present comes at the death of memory while the future hangs in the balance. It is widely noted that nomadic hunter-gatherers lack a sense of anything other than cyclical time. Living within the realm of an immediate return subsistence, it's easy to conflate our sense of immediate gratification. These are two greatly opposing realities: one lives in honor of the past and the future, the other exists at their expense.

The real world struggles to keep up. Amazon, the largest internet retailer in the US, pushed Sunday delivery as an option, is working on same day delivery, always offers one or two day shipping, and is just one of many corporations trying to cash in on streaming and immediately available content.

While our nomadic hunter-gatherer lives are typified by immediate return interactions, this sad repackaging of immediate gratification is an entirely different beast. It sacrifices long term relationships and sustainability for short-term acquisition. Another impulse to feed. Another plug to fill. A furthering of our integration with technology.

We are addicts.

But we wind up here for the same reason, every single time: we are lost. Our minds are wandering instead of our bodies, but they remain untethered and the internet provides an oasis for the search.

This is the restlessness.

The search is trying to find a light within the void. But the search is complacency. As long as we are lost, we are logged on. Our memory is as long as our News Feed. Our feelings are as deep as our memories.

Our tragedy is that as our world burns, we lose the very ability to even remember it was there.

And so civilization pummels along. Taking all of us with it.

PRODUCING THE VOID

"In the event of non-accidental injuries (including suicide, self

mutilation, etc.), I agree that the company has acted properly in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, and will not sue the company, bring excessive demands, take drastic actions that would damage the company's reputation or cause trouble that would hurt normal operations."[33] – Foxconn's required anti-suicide clause for employees.

It's easy to see the abyss of nothingness that is being sold to us as a First World problem, yet the fact that nearly a quarter of the Earth's population regularly uses Facebook indicates the depth of its pervasiveness.

Our daily lives, now more than ever, the fabric of our "social" lives, are soaked in blood.

While our ability to comprehend or empathize wanes, our footprint spreads exponentially.

Let's start with those phones.

Most of our phones are made in Shenzhen, China. And it is a city built on cell phones. "Twenty-five years ago it was a fishing village surrounded by rice paddies. Today it is an urban sprawl of 12 million people" observes journalist Fred Pearce.[34]

This is the home of Foxconn's now notorious sweatshops.

Foxconn runs the leading technological production facilities. This is currently where most Apple and Sony products are made, Blackberrys as well in their heyday. The reason they got some news was shocking: employees were forced to sign an anti-suicide clause. According to Wikipedia's numbers, up till 2013, at least 24 workers had killed themselves: the wretched working conditions, exposure to toxic chemicals, monotony of industrialized production, and overall depression being the clear common causes.

The most common method of suicide was jumping from the rooftops of the factories and corporate housing (if we can use the term that liberally), so the response of the corporation? Install netting around the rooftops to catch jumping workers.

Foxconn, for many living beings, sounds like hell.

The marketers promote the myth throughout civilization that you have a choice. And to some degree it is true. You can not purchase a smartphone, the catch is that it is that you are expected to. Consumers laud this as a choice: you lose your right to complain once you bought in. This is the Litmus Test for compliance in the Void. The presumptions here, however, are disgustingly off.

The presumption carried on is that people go to sweatshops because they want jobs. This may be true for some, but there's a long standing colonial and imperial legacy that is endemic (predominantly, though not exclusively) throughout the southern hemisphere whereby subsistence societies live in areas that would otherwise be useful for, let's say, the production of rare earth metals.

In some places, it's just easier to demolish any access to subsistence just to build factories and create a work force. If you can no longer harvest from the land directly, then you need to buy food.

But back to the rare earth minerals example (believe me, there are many options), your phone would not exist without them. Here in Shenzhen, tantalum is used to help make phone batteries lighter and last longer. That tantalum, however, comes from Congo, where forests are cleared by military leaders (often not on the State's side) to build what can only be considered shanty-mining villages.

And who works there? Prisoners, those caught in the crossfire, and, quite often, children.[35]

And these places are horrifically dangerous.

But for your phone to be lightweight and last longer off the charger, a constant and ongoing civil war will find bodies to fill, dig, and exhume those mines.

Then those materials are processed and assembled by overworked and tired hands in China before being sold to you. And while this new phone has a separate light to notify you when something is happening on your Facebook News Feed, every part of that contraption was possibly the worst part of another dozen people's lives.

And this goes on for every single piece of technology that you

The thing that we are trying to do at facebook, is just help people connect and communicate more efficiently.

Mark Zuckerberg, Piece of Shit.

have in your pocket.

Never mind that those metals are both rare and irreplaceable.[36] Or on that they are on the verge of non-existence.[37] Or that they and their processing are absolutely toxic.[38] We are killing the earth, poisoning water ways, driving species to extinction, forcing labor, keeping sweatshops open, and on, for a device that allows nearly half of the earth's population to remain constantly in contact without ever just being there.

And this is how civilization ends: consumed by an uncaring and unfeeling impulse to reach out to those who are strangers surrounding us.

Lest you think the problem is simply capitalism, those operating the mines, work camps, poppy fields and mono-cropped farms are quite often socialist revolutionaries. No matter who is in control: this is the point that Modernity has gotten us into.

It is a quagmire of drifting along on limited resources with a sense of infinite wants and no fulfillment.

And it is here that our lives, the lives of all beings on this planet and the earth itself are bound. And as we sheepishly reload our News Feed, this is the world that is passing us by.

It's not okay.

We're not okay.

The problems that surround us, the emptiness of Modernity, the thing that has us looking at screens instead of into eyes is a distraction. It is life automated. As you shudder away from that frightening noise, the clutter, the crowds, the moment you look up mindlessly from your phone; you are confronted with all of this.

And it is too much.

It is suffocating. It is an endless nothingness, a weight on the lungs, a turning in the stomach, an unidentified repulsion.

The temptation is to look away. That is why we don't even have the words to address this plague, to address how the hardwired matrix became an invisible leash. We aren't confronting it. And the programmers, the domesticators of Modernity, are counting on the fact that we are losing the very ability to even situate or reconcile our loss and context.

They are counting on our inability to recognize the world around us.

And yet this is not the world as it exists.

The earth is suffering from the consequences, but it is still alive.

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The wildness refuses to be tamed. It refuses to succumb to the machine.

Our hunter-gatherer minds and bodies know this, despite everything that we have been taught. These misdirected impulses and synapses linger amidst the confusion. That is why we still reach out in the first place.

That is why these caged birds Tweet.

In that moment, that second when we look up, that second when we feel the crushing realness of our circumstance, we are human. We are afraid. We are scared. We are lonely.

And we do have a choice.

If given the chance, these realities will never be reconciled. These words might be etched forever in silicon and roam electrical feeds so long as the power lasts, but that feeling is real. This world is real.

It is our work to smash the distraction. To pull the plug. To render the machines useless.

To see this world the way our bodies feel it and our minds know it, there is no other option but the annihilation of civilization. We have guides. We have instincts.

We have our wildness.

So before we are lost in a sea of unending, constant nothingness: to take the first step, we must first look up. Breathe deep.

And fight back.

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SLAVES TO OUR OWN CREATIONS

CLIFF HAYES

In November of 2014, I was fortunate enough to spend an entire day with a friend in Cyprus at his apartment. He has multiple sclerosis and is bound to his wheelchair and his apartment most of the time. We talked about a wide range of things, but one statement my friend arrived at, somewhat unexpectedly was - "The creation of technology is something unavoidable, like God." We were both puzzled by this statement. What could it mean? Below is my attempt to deal with this statement and what it might mean.

There is a natural human inclination to be social animals and maybe a tendency to be part of something beyond any individual's capabilities. The healthy relationship is probably to see our lives as only a part of a greater living being, but with the advent of domestication there was a push to control what was around us (enforce our will upon our habitat) and we ended up changing ourselves and our relationships. Possibly an attempt to reground human life in a "greater scheme of things" was a main impetus of religion. Through religion, humanity created Gods to serve and give our collective lives some sort of direction that had been lost following our own domestication.

Hand in hand with organized religion comes the hierarchical state. As these two foundational institutions of civilization tried, yet failed, to provide individuals with a fulfilling purpose, the search for purpose became more personal. In contrast to the collective duty and servitude towards the state, the Enlightenment came along to promote the individual powers of intellect and creativity. This movement was bolstered by a Protestant style rebellion against a centralized religious authority (a push towards a more personal relationship to whatever God represents) and the democratic reformation of the state.

As mass culture and civilization continued to spread, the individual became more alienated from others, and the whole of society, resulting in pressure building on the individual to find their own purpose. That purpose is largely pursued via an attempt to tailor personal experience as finely as possible to our individual whims. The often quoted "pursuit of happiness" per se. Eager corporations swoop in to sell you personalization of their products in an effort to define your user experience in a meaningful way. One that is supposedly of your own creation ("Have it your way at Burger King!").[1] However, your user experience is completely shaped by the prevailing technology of your contemporary mass society, and so your life is little more than a mirror of what the technology reflects back at you.

Likewise, egoism takes a strong stance that your singular experience of your life is all there is to provide you with any sort of purpose. The only thing you can ever rely on, ever attach any sort of honesty or truth to, is your singular experience of your immediate environment. Nihilism takes this one step further positing that there is no objective value in anything, and even your subjective ego is unable to provide your life with any value. Supposedly, that is the liberating aspect of nihilism - you are freed from this personal struggle for value, or purpose, and can now live life honestly without any moral pretense.

This progression from our initial domesticated beliefs in Gods, to our contemporary technologically nihilistic beliefs might be pointing to something. The statement "technology is something unavoidable, like God" might mean that we have forgotten, or lost, something integral to our humanity through our own domestication and our subsequent religious and technological inventions. It could be pointing to something that we are trying to find a surrogate for in our contemporary conditions. It could be pointing to something that is at odds with our mechanistic, technologically derived lives and our self-centered creations.

We have forgotten how to live as a part of something larger that is not of our own creation, or under our own control. We have forgotten wildness and how it was to live without being slaves to our own creations. We don't need God or technology to serve, or nihilism to throw it all away in a fit of indignation. We have more primal needs. So perhaps technology and God have become unavoidable creations, but only in a way to remind us of what it really means to live and how much we've lost serving them.

Endnote

1 Vintage Burger King Commercial - Have it Your Way – 1974, http://youtu.be/KJXzkUH72cY

ESCAPING THE VOID

STEVE KIRK

The background of our technological stupidity sits as a stark and constant self reflection. We are constantly confronted with an identity that has no grounding, a body devoid of spirit. Our mind is overwhelmed with images of itself, wrapped tightly around a dissolving reality of crumbling expectations. Our inherent sense of the infinite is infected by domestication and drives our insatiable growth. The leviathan feeds, not just on the land, but on our capitalized souls.

As our data stream compounds us further and further into a piece of this inexorable jigsaw puzzle, we drown. Our resurrected digital self becomes a component. We become artificial intelligence. Our pieces construct the movement, the continuation. Each input, each click, each self-centered piece of content builds the self beyond the body. A brand that we can never own. A body we can barely remember. The intelligence of the machine is built on our participation. It is data and algorithms: a truly artificial intelligence. Mounds of information construct our new reality. We are the appendages to stores of data, a God in the form of a machine we pour our hearts out to. The unending deified web is a compendium of data points broad enough that we are forced to feel the only adequate response is constant immersion. We are guided by a creeping fear that we might miss something regurgitated by leviathan's gut. We input a reflection of its output, forever in an endless and winless game. We are the machine.

A continuity lives within us. It was present in our day to day lives until we threw it out in favor of digital mediation. Continuity of experience is the remarkable lack of a linear narrative through the story of the earth.

Our experience was defined by similarity. There was no end, no inevitable future, only existence as it was. Change was small and monumental but never expected at its now moment to moment pace. Inter-generational understanding was something that happened before we stunted natural development in favor of continual and constant progress. The progress was never there, but we could only cling to change. The world we once knew was annihilated. This destruction of generational continuity has gained speed and momentum with each generation that became more addicted to a progressive endpoint, always just out of reach. Our experience was real. Even up through the digital, there was a semblance of understandable experience. The idea that we could trust our movement, our thoughts, our contemplation. Now we have settled for being constantly battered. We cannot make sense of this experience.

The continuity of the day to day is largely gone. The digital generations further undermine it with a silent understanding that everything is new, everything must be new. If change isn't defining us, we disappear. The material conditions, the specialization, the pre-industrial drudgery, they are all precursors. But we cannot escape that in the wake of the digital we are more profoundly lost then we have ever been in the history of humanity. Our experience becomes more unrelatable day after day. There is less and less life to feel connection with. We make up new answers. The trans-humanist hand reaches down to pull us up.

This is where continuity meets continuum. Where, despite our broken experience, our existence is based in animality. Despite everything, our bodies and minds still pull towards wildness. As the unraveling happens faster and faster, as the world we built on top of the wild fissures beyond control, there is an inevitable reality already written in each breath. We may be able to pull our minds away, dream an escape from flesh, but the continuum of existence can only be tormented by civilization, it cannot be killed. It persists. We are everything that came before, whether we despise it or embrace it. Despite the efforts to define our blip of civilized existence as a monumental force on our genes, we still can't shed this animality.

The stories and myths have largely died. Our hands cannot find familiarity. The past becomes nostalgic in its mundane lack of technological interruptions. We look onward to progress but our genes call us back.

Continuity is annihilated in favor of an interpersonal data stream that is fully traceable, fully documented, and forever provable. There has been, at most other times throughout human existence, the possibility of that which lies "beyond the walls". As we discover and map the depth of existence, we are forced to look inward, to delve deep into the shallows of

life devoid of experience. We are specialists in this begrudging feat. We are told that we must only live in experiences through the illumination of desire, our "devices", and the possibility they present.

The once unshaken continuum of human existence and the continuity of human experience are shattered. Only a few decades earlier the breaking of continuity was still up for debate. People still wanted autonomy on some real and physical basis. But now, in the wake of universally usable, seemingly endless connections that go with us everywhere, the question has been repositioned. It is not enough to ask "do we wish to be able to live independent of our masters?" To have this discussion you must post and tag, like and share, engaging in the unconsciousness that sustains our fragile facade masquerading as truth and inevitability.

We once lived in a time where there were no data banks. The domesticators draw false parallels across aeons about the supposed inevitability of human ingenuity. In a brain never colonized by the meaningless search for that one crucial fact, one defining picture, one perfect piece that must sit on the other end of our digital maze: our inherent skillfulness is articulated through application. From infancy we fall into the pieces of our existence. The continuity of that experience remained unbroken for millions of years. While it may be helpful to measure the time that hunter-gatherers have lived on the earth versus the time of the world-eaters, the orientation we are missing is not the time measured but the continuum which precedes time. This continuum is not a measurable phenomenon. What does 3 million years feel like? Can we quantify the difference between 3000 generations and 300? I do not believe we are equipped with the real ability to understand the depth of a continuum and continuity that most of us never experience.

For countless generations that existed outside this narrow sliver of domesticated time, the continuity of our daily experience was as fundamental as breathing. A simple look at stone tools shows an undeniable connection from the first strike of hammer stone against rock to every strike that follows. The idea that the very skills for living exist within an ancestry that is felt but not scientifically quantifiable is a concept that defies the reasoning of civilization. It is beyond difficult for those tied to the mind of science to open up to experience that exists outside of numbers. We must open the gateways to experience, both foreign and instinctual.

How do you define the dysfunction that surrounds us? It exists outside our paradigm of understanding. We exist in a time where each tragedy is linked. The collective weight of our daily trauma grows like drops of water pooling towards an ocean of despair. We exist within realms of profound pain, articulated in the physical, psychological, and spiritual.

This comprehensive assault becomes the defining essence of our lives. That nagging injury, that daily headache: the assumption that we will have to push through becomes the backdrop to our daily dysfunction. The chronic diseases we live with are only surpassed by our insatiable thirst for a reality that is always just out of reach. As much as we cling to the weight of civilization, as much as we identify with the whole process, we are still lost. We steer our digital avatar away from human experience towards ever present and constant change. Our forced and debilitating comprehension of this shift in our every day sucks all sense of an ancestral past out of our broken minds. We feel no choice. We perceive there is no escape. We concentrate on the void.
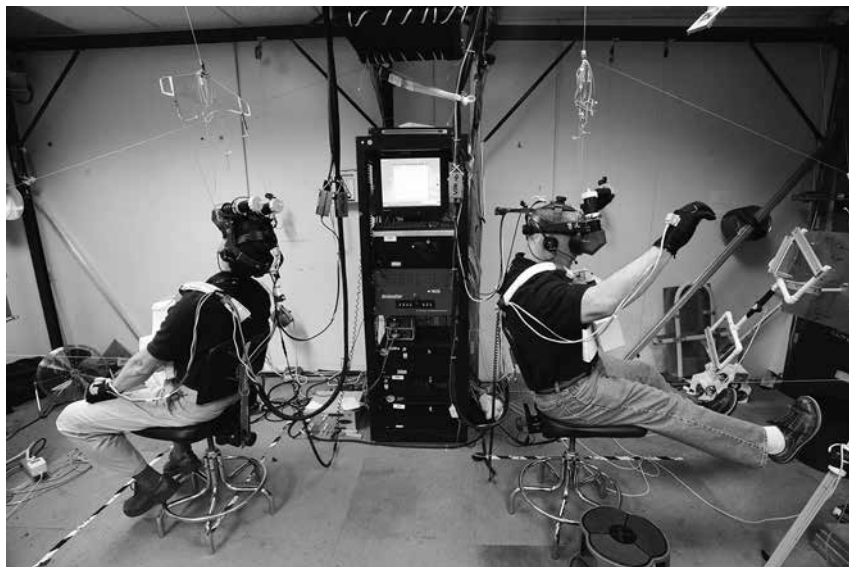
The world envelops me. I contrive a reason to believe I am in a different place. A hopeless mantra scripted crudely by my imperfect mouth sits on my tongue. The unbraced reality redefines my meandering. Conflicting signals burn out in the dwarfs of time and space, places left undiscovered, if only to reserve a meaning in the infinite.

The inability to experience the infinite amputates our already stagnant and broken bodies. We are starved of any experience attached to our hunter-gatherer existence. Our constant movement, our desire to return, is met with staunch resistance. Coerced into a lie, we die with its taste on our tongues. There are those of us who will never feel the connection but yet will spend our whole lives looking for it.

Now that the substitutes seem, if anything, boring, the motivation to

carry on with daily work is combated by the realization that the world is no longer any fun. The infinite world that laid beyond our farthest travel is demolished piece by piece as the leviathan slaughters wildness.

How can the pieces fall so far apart? How can the center seemingly still hold? Does it fissure and even those waiting for the dramatic and dynamic shift will never see the void staring back at them? Our feeble attempts at structuring a linear and rational idea behind this typhoon of constant destruction gives us time to forget that it is actually happening. Right now.

Our minds hide in nostalgia. With feeling but not context. To give us a glimmer of life that can be held over our heads, both rich and poor alike. The slightest pieces of life outside the brain-destroying, back-breaking paradigm are used against us. The leftists cheer the advancement of workerist achievements, as if the reward of a weekend had made a ten millennium tradition of annihilating wildness worth it. Beyond the money, beyond the addiction, beyond the crises, the religion, the politics, the pop culture, there is a need to find something that exists in this undefined space. It is neither crafted nor static, it is not amenable to our constant change and lack of stillness. It is wildness. It is always moving. Wildness is alive, even when it does not breathe. It operates around us in the spaces we cannot perceive to purge. It is in our walls, outside our windows, on and in our bodies.

There is a vast and immediate reality behind wildness. We can define it, reify it, but ultimately it is lived, not just by an individual but by a community of life. Wildness does not exist in a vacuum of self-experience and its defense and proliferation is as serious and real as extinction. It is the infinite, the finite, and its own context. It is existence without mediation on a scale as large as the cosmos.

The essential reality we must confront is the reestablishment of our place within our continuum that exists underneath all the layers of domestication. Wildness awaits us. What was for thousands of generations taught in stories and lessons has been stolen from our lyrical nature. The skills exist as a set unto their own. But the movement, whether fire from the smolder of softwood or the eternal chime of rock splitting, carries its own song. Detractors will say this is the story of a mystic, one devoid of fact. So be it. The departure from only that which is provable and instantly referenced is the only move left. The hyperlinks you add to reinforce our crumbling reasoning. The proof that is just a click away, truth just waiting to be found. The subtle nature of explanation and deep thought are left to die as we dive into the stale and uninspired data stream. We collect our moments and deposit them into the machine, paying with our time like coins in a rigged arcade game.

Songs of the past are left in our genes. There are those that will never

believe this, and we may forever live in a dystopic future. It will be the massacring of the subtle and crucial myth-makers by the crusading data analyst-solutionists that will define the primal war. This continuum that propels us to live, to continue on, is the first target of domestication. In every indigenous culture, every culture of resistance, the death starts at the destruction of stories that carry our continuum and continuity. The battle is not lost in the analytics. It is only the serpents so poisoned by their owned reflection who believe that they can reason out of domination.

To the domesticators and many domesticated alike, life is simply a means to power. We are reaching so far down this path that the most elite believe power is a means to eternal life. These are the stories of a culture staring into the void. Wild stories wind and twist as they quickly dissolve into the abyss. We loose our context and tear ourselves away further from our bodies. Stories of the wild are drowned out by the drone of never ending notifications.

The leviathan attempts to weave a pattern but the evidence of its failure is articulated perfectly by the unrelenting rate of suicide.

The pattern that establishes our continuum, the skills that create continuity, the experience which creates wildness (life) is as foreign to us as those unknown places that used to sit beyond our field of knowing. Our journeys have become adventure-less. Time replaces experience. Redundancy replaces rhythm.

We take a stab at defining domestication so we can be content with its limitations. The brutal truth behind the veil of intellectualism is that domestication is about being broken. The way a farmer breaks a horse. It is about damage done from day one reinforced until the day we perish, consumed with the fleeting vision of what might have been. The feralized among us are thought of with contempt for longing to capture a life that so many could not. But the feral are victims to this unrelenting void as well. That does not mean it is static, or effects us all the same, but we are almost universally domesticated. We operate in a zoo that is everywhere. It wraps around the planet with only pockets of wildness left, places it has not yet decided to destroy.

We must confront the depth to which we are damaged and realize that wellness has already woven itself around rhythms that stretch across a million springs. The portrait of wildness exists. We do not have to settle for a broken and fragmented future, it is inevitable that the anthropocene will end.

The creeping manufactured fear that has kept us at bay, swells in our minds. There is a sense that we cannot shake. We feel something is wrong. We have realized we are being broken. As much as each excursion into the earth to feed the leviathan bleeds our wild continuum, each click, every reinforcement of our projected identity,

every distraction from direct engagement and stillness pulls us away. The answers are projected as inevitable, just beyond reach. The annihilated present carries on as we search our uploaded self for answers.

My dreams of a clickless future haunt me. The ever-present cacophony of clicks and notifications infecting more of the earth daily as my vision drowns.

But still, underneath the drone of endless uselessness, there is stone splitting, the unending sound of streams and rivers, the scratch of hand against wood, the fresh smell of decay and the anise of an oyster mushroom. Wildness still exists. No number of clicks or perfect search phrase can reestablish our continuum. We can only hold on to its eternal echo and build a semblance of continuity and community. With our children by our side and our band at our back, we can demolish the ceaseless nothingness. The void is a reflection of who we want the world to believe we are. It is not you staring back.

It is not enough to just pull the plug in this world of pervasive connective radiation. There is a constantly fueling beast at our door and in our mind. As the world drives closer to dynamic shifts and opportunities, it will only be the real us. Flesh and blood. Our skin will touch the earth, bone and tissue will carry us, our brains will heal, our bodies will remember. The void dissolves as distractions become absurd and the machine can no longer maintain its myth of endlessness.

As the complexity moves faster the vulnerabilities grow larger. The void is there to make us forget the weakness in each step. The leviathan grows or dies. Every click adds to its girth, each identity swallowed is fuel for expansion.

Put your feet on the ground. The rhythm beneath you grows louder. The digital hum becomes the backdrop not the feature. The pulsing in your chest begs for you to listen. This was here before you and will be here after you. The forgotten chapters have foreshadowed the next. The future is primitive whether we see it or not.

The Commodification of
Wildness and its Consequences

Four-Legged
Human

PASTORALISTS, MARKETS, 'GREEN' CAPITALISM, AND SPECIES EXTINCTION

We had been tracking the rhinoceros since the day before. The plan was to walk into the mopani, roughly following the course of the river so as to maintain proximity to a source of water, letting the animal tracks guide us wherever they took us. We camped in a meadow, home to an elder baobab tree, and in the morning resumed tracking our rhino. Ian is an expert tracker and every time it seemed we had lost the track in the grass, or the smudge of more recent impala or buffalo tracks, he would carefully make his readings and pick up the rhino again. Excitement ran through our minds and bodies in anticipation of our coming encounter with her.

"Don't move" whispered Ian suddenly. We stood in silence, eyes wide, intently listening to the sounds of the veld. Satisfied we weren't being watched, Ian motioned us over to see what had caused his abrupt attentiveness. There, perfectly clear in the red dirt, was a fresh track made by a tennis shoe. Somebody else was on the trail of our rhino. We all knew who this person was; a dangerous and hostile enemy of rhino and, equally, a great threat to us; rhino poachers, those who kill for horns to be sold in the Asian black market.

If these hostiles were to find the rhino it would surely be killed, stripped of its horns and left to rot in the hot sun of the African veld. If the poachers discovered us on their trail they would either run, or if feeling cornered, attempt to kill us as well. So our rhino tracking ended and we retreated back to the shelter of the river bank. Ian pulled out his satellite phone and made a call. "I've got fresh human tracks on top of fresh rhino

tracks here" he reported. At dusk that night we went down to the river for water. In the distance I could see silhouettes of men with rifles slowly and quietly stalking up the river corridor towards our camp. Soon a group of men fully outfitted in military tactical assault gear were in our camp talking with Ian, getting all of the information he could provide them on the whereabouts, age, and direction of the tracks. Then this anti-poaching squad armed with assault rifles and grenades disappeared silently into the night, on the hunt for rhino poachers.

The next morning, as we moved away from the area in order to lessen our exposure to any hostilities, we heard gunfire in the distance. I still don't know what actually happened. But I like to think that it was the poachers who got shot up and not the rhino. In fact, I like to think that us venturing across the veld at the time saved that rhino from being slaughtered for profit, at least for the time being.

Most experts agree that, in the face of a powerful poaching network administered by such entities as the Chinese and Vietnamese mafias, the remaining species of wild rhinoceros have little chance of not going extinct within the coming few decades[1]. Although the anti-poaching squads have received millions of dollars in funding from various conservation interests they can't keep up with the poachers and many speculate that the war against rhino poaching will prove futile, that the myth of rhino horn being an effective aphrodisiac in Chinese medicine has become irrefutable dogma for elite classes of Asian males, that the market is just too powerful, that the lure of a few hundred dollars for local ex-military riflemen come poacher for the horn cartels is just too strong[2]. After all, a military trained African peasant could make $300 a year as a farmer/herder, but could pocket $3000 a year as a rhino poacher. A few successful rhino kills means the poacher becomes the wealthiest man in his village and along with that power, prestige, cars, and a smartphone.

Who could argue? We're all just fighting for an equal piece of the pie. Occupy Wall-Streeters' are fighting for the same things: a share of the wealth, the ability to purchase industrial food, buy plastic consumer goods, pay a monthly smartphone bill, and obtain whatever else has been deemed necessary for 'survival' in the 21st century.

But the rhino poacher in Africa lays a lot more on the line than does the American leftist struggling for his piece of the pie against capitalists on Wall Street. Officially poachers are supposed to be captured and put on trial but, as it was explained to me, behind the scenes a decision has been made to initiate a shoot-to-kill policy on rhino poachers as it is now believed by officials that the only hope of saving the rhino from extinction is to instill in every poacher a fear that they will surely be killed

themselves if they happen to be caught trying to poach a rhinoceros.

Which side are you on? The side of wild nature? Or the side of civilized humanity? I myself am on the side of preserving what is left of wild nature and defending what is left of human wildness at all costs[3]. And it seems at this point the logical conclusion of the agendas of both the political left and right are purely humanist and futurist. Either agenda, if seen to fruition, can only lead to the complete totalitarian domestication of the planet and the human species. And, at this stage, without totalitarian annihilation of wildness it does not seem that we can keep eight billion capitalists and wanna-be capitalists alive on this planet.

Most of those who care about the rhino will argue that we need to incentivize its protection by making it valuable as a source of local ecotourism income. This isn't the only 'green' capitalism strategy proposed to save the rhino. A second market-based approach is to domesticate a population of rhinos and farm them in order to produce rhino horn for the Asian market and thus reduce pressure on wild rhinos. This may allow elite Asian men eternal access to rhino horn potion, but it is nonetheless a repeat of the same old story of domestication and commodification which creates wealth for a select few and wreaks havoc on planet earth. These are microcosms of the fundamental status quo argument that the market is the only useful tool for saving the planet.

Let's just say that these proposed measures did save the rhino. This would mean that somewhere else a growth-oriented industrial-tech

society must exist, a society which has the wealth to travel to Africa to view rhinos in the wild and/or to pay a premium price for rhino horn products. For such a society to afford to participate in this their source of wealth must come from some other high impact activity, decimating some other bioregion. To become an eco-tourist one needs to be paid, and to be paid, someone somewhere needs to be developing capital. Thus conservationists who promote these 'green' capitalism schemes are simply externalizing the impacts of commodification to elsewhere. Either of these measures amount to externalizations of costs and either way wild species will continue to go extinct.

The drive to exploit and destroy wildness in exchange for wealth, status, and prestige is nothing new. In fact it is inherent to the mindset of the African pastoralist cultures from which the modern poachers originate. Farmers and their pastoral trading partners have always been the enemies of wildness. The African peasants who have been recruited by the poaching cartels originate inside of cultures that in all of their known history have maintained heavy-handed regimes of domestication, expansion, and war, rooted in long standing trajectories of resource commodification for the purposes of producing a surplus of goods to be used for enhancing the power and wealth of elite tribal headman and their direct kin[4].

The Bantu pastoralist tribes were at war with wildness when they began invading southern Africa from the north three thousand years ago[5]. Lions, leopards, elephants, anything which got in the way of their expanding pastoralism, anything that might eat their cattle, were viewed as savage enemies. Viewed equally as enemies standing in the way of pastoralist progress were the San hunting cultures whom had made home in the region for at least seventy thousand years[6]. Never before encountering a domesticated animal, if a San hunter came across a cow he would very likely hunt the cow and kill it for food, with no concept that the cow was the property of the Bantu tribes. In retaliation the Bantu began hunting down the San[7]. For thousands of years prior to the current rhino crises the descendants of the modern poachers were capitalizing and expanding by domesticating, doing away violently with any wild human or beast which got in the way.

THE ROOTS OF COMMODIFICATION

No matter what form, the entire paradigm of resource commodification is connected to delayed return economics (here defined as production and utilization of a surplus for purposes of storage and trade), as

opposed to immediate return economics (the utilization of resources for immediate and direct use by the producers) [8]. Delayed return economics can be viewed as a spectrum of resource utilization, with subsistence oriented food and material storage at one end, and storage oriented towards commodification and wealth accumulation at the opposite end. Activities at either end of this spectrum have the potential to evolve into an undesirable set of circumstances. The particular focus of this essay, however, is the consequences of the latter more advanced and expansive mode of delayed return activity[9].

Utilization of a surplus for commodification is representative of a dangerous evolution for any socioecological system. Commodification is a trigger point for expanding authoritarianism, mass-ecological alienation, the reification of physical and psychological needs, and socioecological overshoot. I argue that realization of the above consequences does not necessarily require domestication or agriculture, as many anti-civilization activists have posited, but only requires commodification at relatively rudimentary levels for the potential to evolve towards socio-ecological crisis. Several factors are likely at play regarding a society's evolution towards practicing a mode of commodification but for our discussion here I propose we look to specialization and associated division of labor as critical starting points on a liner trajectory towards the practice of commodification[10], the premise being that when a specialist of any type becomes the only person within a group who can provide a necessary good or service, a foundation is developed for class division and incentives comes to exist for specialists to grow wealth and power.[11] Specialization in a craft has the potential to create oppressive power dynamics if common people become dependent on specialists that utilize specialization as a means to build power through commodification of the goods being produced. Here we find a strong possibility for the rise of primitive forms of accumulation, occurring at the point where a wild resource is stored and commodified for use in trade practices meant to grow the wealth of an individual. Egalitarianism fades with increasing accumulation, because in this practice some person or group always gets the upper hand.

Various arguments have been made that spiritual specialization could be one of the earliest forms of evolving hierarchy, with shamans representing the original hucksters[12]. With a realization that economic advantage could be gained from specializing in various rituals which professed a power to control the forces of nature and the spirits of the animals which the people relied upon to live, it is logical to grasp how the spiritual specialist easily could become too powerful if people came to

believe that this person had real influence over the natural world. In this process the shaman learns how to turn supposed spiritual influence into a commodity that can be exchanged for both political and material capital[13]. As the shaman's power grows he receives tidings from the producing class (the hunters and foragers). Eventually through this process the shaman commodifies the performance of healing ceremonies and rituals and thus begins amassing power and wealth.

This is not to say that manipulation and commodification is the case in every occurrence of spiritual specialization. Certainly there are cases where a gifted person practiced shamanism and healing within an egalitarian context. Likely reminiscent of the primal human spiritual praxis are cases such as the Siberian Yukaghir animists for whom "shamanic specialization is a question of degree…the shaman's activity and experience, rather than being some kind of mysticism at the disposal of a particular religious elite, is a specialized form of what any other member of society is capable of doing[14]". For Yukaghir hunters "concrete bodily processes of perception and experience" at the individual level are seen as primary "rather than exaggerated or enhanced control of abstract religious representations, signs, and symbols[15]". Concomitantly, Yukaghir hunters maintain a direct and unmediated connection with the living wildness they inhabit alongside animals and spirits, "all of whom are understood to be mimetic doubles of one and other[16]." The deep participatory spiritualties entirely rooted in place cultivated by these circumstances are atrophied by increasing specialization, the reduction of the healer to the far more pervasive role of a commodifier channeling spirituality toward imperial ambitions, a few generations of shamans evolving into a powerful family that controls access to resources and spiritual realms without ever physically domesticating them.

Based on historical knowledge of various indigenous peoples, it is likely that among the earliest humans small trades or gifting occurred for simple negotiation of peace with a neighboring band, for example. But an evolved dependency on accumulation for trade – both at the inter-band and intra-band levels, may be representative of a point where surplus production, commodification, and trade become necessary for the actual survival of a people. Here a group of people or an individual person becomes physically and/or psychologically dependent upon some type of hierarchy for survival, dependent for some type of good or service that can only be provided by a specialist, or dependent on a previously unneeded resource that can only be supplied through trade.

As this process plays out in a society, not only does it drastically shift relationships between humans and wildness, it also drastically

shifts relationships among individuals within human communities. Here specialists, no longer generalist producers with direct on-the-ground full-spectrum holistic relationships with wildness, have domesticated themselves and the once free hunters have been duped into becoming dependent on elitist commodification specialists. This may well have been the beginning of our social and ecological crisis: one person in the group figures out how to specialize in a specific trade, divides the labor, tricks the common people into becoming his dependents, thereby amassing power and wealth through commodification. Endangered rhinos, 50+% biodiversity loss, the Anthropocene, the sixth great extinction - all to follow.

THE CATASTROPHIC FEEDBACK LOOP OF DELAYED RETURN DEPENDENCY

"The commodification of wildness is the beginning and the end of civilization". Kevin Tucker

Indigenous Native America is riddled with examples of social and ecological devastation occurring as a result of resource harvest patterns shifting from subsistence orientations to trade orientations, in both the colonial and pre-colonial contexts. Not too long after the Plains Indian bison hunting cultures obtained horses through the Spaniards, countless Great Plains bison were killed for the purposes of trading their tongues and their hides for European goods[17]. Plains Indians simultaneously became dependent upon equestrian domestication and dependent

upon trade for European goods, rifles becoming a particularly desired commodity. Inter- and intra-tribal conflicts increased as a result. Warfare and raids became more numerous as equestrians were able to cover vast areas in competition for resources and control of territory. Violence increased dramatically as native peoples experienced the surge of mass commodification moving west[18].

Fur trapping is another important example of the heavy impacts to traditional social relations and traditional approaches to economics initiated by commodification[19]. During the eighteenth century when Russian traders invaded the Aleutian Islands off the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleut people were forced into sea otter hunting on a massive scale for the Russian fur trade. The Aluets were expert sea otter hunters and had used sea otters for fur and food for centuries prior to the Russian arrival. Skilled as the Aleuts were, the Russians forced them into servitude in sea otter pelt production by holding their wives and children hostage, raping the women regardless, and threatening to kill them if the men did not produce enough fur[20]. As a result of their settled, delayed return orientation the Northwest Coast tribes maintained strong traditions of warfare, slave raiding, head hunting, and ritualized violence well prior to conquest. Nonetheless, involvement in the colonial fur trade seems to have greatly exacerbated such practices by these groups. According to anthropologist Joan Lovisek:

> *Slaves were always important to Northwest Coast cultures prior to and after contact, but the economic importance of slaves escalated after 1830, as warfare changed to opportunistic, individualistic predatory raiding. Slaves were ransomed for trade goods or sold to other groups for furs, which could then be exchanged for trade goods. For many groups…it was easier to obtain trade goods by predatory raiding than by trading, trapping, or hunting animals for furs[21].*

When Euro-American authorities began to round up the remaining free Indians and confine them to reservations part of the deal for the surrender of their hunting grounds was a guarantee to an allocation of "commodities" by the US government, industrial food products to replace the wild foods that, without access to land, would no longer be available to Indians. Today "commodities" are still distributed by the BIA to Native Americans in Indian country. Indians mention commodity foods with ire and disgust, because of the debilitating health effects of these foods and because of the history of forced dependence on them for survival.

Just prior to the formation of Indian reservations, as Native American

self-sufficiency was being annihilated by the effects of colonization and increasing numbers of Indians were becoming dependent upon European industrial goods, those who gave up on resistance were referred to as "loaf about the forts" by the bands who continued to hunt and gatherer for their food while simultaneously waging an armed resistance against the US military. The "loaf about the forts" were those Indians who stopped hunting and resisting and surrendered themselves as dependents to Uncle Sam and thus spent their days groveling about the Cavalry forts in search of commodity hand-outs[22]. These are but few examples of the circumstances which led to a near total dependence on world-system industrial goods now defining the economies of all of the remaining northern Native American peoples.

We know that many pre-colonial indigenous peoples fully embraced delayed return and commodification, with hierarchy, property ownership, territorial warfaring, and slavery as the corollary[23]. The maintenance of trading alliances likely made some groups more secure from outside threats and more resilient in the face of scarcity and/or ecological change, by providing a safety net to fall back on for obtaining an actually necessary good in the case of an inability to obtain that good independently. However, here we start walking on shaky ground because the differences between psychological wants and actual needs end up falling into very murky cultural grey areas. If a band of ancient hunters happened to kill a large mammal they may very well have given a portion to another band in exchange for something else, so it is not unlikely that small scales of exchange have existed among humans for hundreds of thousands of years. However, sharing or exchanging at this level does not mean that a group becomes dependent upon killing animals as a means to produce commodities to exchange for other goods necessary to their actual survival. Consequently, a people becoming dependent upon trade for survival seems to represent one critical non-grey-area shifting point from subsistence to delayed return orientations.

The process by which thousands of years of indigenous self-sufficiency comes to be annihilated by contact with industrial goods and ensuing dependence upon commodification can be clearly viewed throughout the global ethnographic record. The record makes clear that when societies become oriented to commodification a positive feedback loop is initiated which forces dependence upon increasing commodification for survival. In that process, as people became dependent upon, say a firearm for hunting, the skills to make hunting weapons from local materials are often lost and game can no longer be harvested without access to industrially manufactured firearms and ammunition. In order for such

hunters to survive on the land, they have no choice but to participate in commodification in order to produce a surplus to exchange for whatever world-system goods they have become dependent upon. An important conservation mechanism exists here because when actual needs are not reified, and the production of a surplus for trade is thus not required, impacts to surrounding wildness are minimized[24]. However, when surplus production becomes the mode, a positive feedback loop is initiated where self-sufficient cultures and the wildness they depend on must ultimately be shattered in order to maintain the inputs stemming from increasing dependence upon outside goods, technology, and market economics.

As societies cross the threshold from immediate return to trade oriented delayed return a hard boundary is crossed between socio-ecological sustainability and eventual overshoot[25]. Less advanced forms of delayed return dependency ultimately evolved into agriculture. The record clearly shows that surplus production oriented farming models with a propertied class of large producers whom control surplus and rely on market models to exchange surplus for wealth accumulation tend to evolve unsustainably and eventually lead to both ecological and social overshoot. The Central American corn growing civilizations are one example among many[26].

In the agrarian and industrial worlds, the process by which capitalists suck up small producers and turn them into dependent serfs has been ongoing throughout known history. Elites prey on the production of surplus by commoners and accumulated surplus ends up being controlled by a select class. Wealth accumulation by elites continuously drives directives for increased production because continuous production of surplus is necessary for wealth production. Social overshoot originates with the debilitating psychological effects that this trajectory inevitably has on all sectors of society. The need for excess production forces commoners to labor harder and harder, suffering immensely both emotionally and physically as a result. A lack of engagement in production by elites translates to extreme alienation from social and ecological reality leading to burgeoning sociopathic tendencies and a deepening reification of needs. Because wealth accumulation and its concomitant growth mentality eventually necessitates overshoot, gains in security and power by elite classes are temporary, through time they dig their own graves in a paranoid, hyper-domesticated obsession for control.

In summary, the long-term results are generally socially and ecologically catastrophic whenever a group of people becomes reliant on trade for their survival. Anytime a self-sufficient foraging and hunting peoples have fallen into this trap it has led down a path to hell both for

them and the wildness they once thrived within. Evolved physical and psychological reliance on commodification results in a loss of traditional skills and ultimately domestication. People devolve to a trance state, extending all of their life's mental and physical effort in an effort to fulfill reified needs. This process has occurred throughout all known civilized history and defines the point where most of us are today – ultra-domesticated and 100% dependent on commodification for our survival.

TRANSITIONERS, PERMACULTURALISTS, AND OTHER 'GREEN' HUCKSTERS

> *"It seems that we still need to learn that the problem is not who the capitalist is, the problem is that there is a capitalist at all".* Richard Wolff

The crisis which confronts us and the earth today is rooted in the commodification of wildness proliferated across nearly the entire planet, and the rewilding, locavores are not exempt. Every last remaining ecologically adapted and balanced wild and free thing on earth now risks the threat of commodification. From carbon trading schemes, to 'green' products, to eco-tourism, to rhino farming etc., many on the environmental left believe that commodifying wildness in one way or another is the only way forward to save us and the planet. They find it far less threatening to play the shaman's game, rather than fight it, because they too are under its spells of dependence, its fear mongering that they shall never survive without its blessings. Not only are many of these folks in the business of commodifying physical wildness into products for sale or products for viewing/experiencing, they also work hard to commodify what's left of human wildness. Wild experiences within the body are sold to be guided by recreational experts. Wilderness therapy, as necessary as it is, is now commodified and sold by the industrialized mental health care system, more guru huckstering, capitalizing off the ultra-domesticated masses.

The fact is that virtually all of us are entirely dependent on commodification for our survival at this point, that none of us now have the ability to be fully self-sufficient. Folks have children to raise and families to support and playing the game is somewhat unavoidable for the time being. As a result a portion of our future resilience now partly depends upon our involvement, but shall we just accept this as an inevitable facet of reality and go on designing the future pathways of our children around the tyranny of commodification?

Within the ever growing ecological/economic-reality movement

people are recognizing that we must absolutely transition to a different way of living. Yet, dominant across the spectrum of these movements is a general refusal to recognize the roots of the problem. Virtually every proposed solution to the crisis involves some form of commodification. Amongst the 'small-green-enterprise' minded transitioners, there appears to be unquestionable support for commodification in the face of a history which informs us that the likelihood that a privileged, wealth amassing, expansionist class is bound to grow within these 'small-green' enterprises – a demon in our midst.

While parts of the permaculture movement are based in small-scale immediate return thinking[27], much of it seems to be riddled with delayed return aspirations. Permaculturalists continuously refer to their projects as business ideas. "Financial Permaculture" is the buzzword and it generally revolves around entrepreneurship within the context of capitalism. One of the permaculture principles is to "obtain a yield". Just how large of a yield? Are their limits? What do you plan to do with that yield? As your business/food producing monopoly grows and wildness gets in the way, what then? At what point does the integrity of permaculture Zone 5 take precedence?

Today with some landholding 'permaculture' farmers turning their large yields into big organic produce business we can see where this is going – a leftist propertied class that controls food production and who could theoretically enslave into debt bondage their constituents who have no land with which to produce their own food. As the leviathan continues to crumble and the 'transition' occurs are the successful local

growers going to relinquish positions of power and assist with bringing on food production in a collective manner? I have spent a fair amount of time within permaculture circles and based upon my experiences I see this as highly unlikely. All-in-all, we find most of the folks involved with today's various transitionary movements idealizing the agrarian societies of the pre-industrial era simply because they existed at smaller more locally self-sufficient scales, while forgetting how alienating, feudal, and socially unsustainable these agrarian arrangements actually were. After all, these arrangements ultimately brought us to the terrifying global state of affairs we are in now.

Sadly, I now hear that even amongst so-called primitivists, rewilders, and green anarchists' schemes are being designed to sell wildness.

In my area there is a burn-site which consistently produced an abundance of wild morel mushrooms over the years since the fire. Local foragers would make an annual pilgrimage to the spot and harvest morels for personal use and there were always plenty to go around. Then non-local commercial pickers got word of the location, 'back-to-nature' people from Washington and Oregon. On the 11 mile bike ride into the burn my companions and I came across several strangers of the commercial picker type on their way out carrying backpacks, obviously filled with morels harvested for the market. When we arrived at the burn and began looking around all we found were hundreds of broken hollow stems in the dirt. Because these noble back-to-the-landers are earning an independently generated income through being closer to wild nature shall I celebrate them? Absolutely not. They are nothing but Takers, not ultimately cultivating dependence on wildness for their survival but further dependence upon industrialism and the market. They will exchange their harvest for cash to buy what? The burn could easily have handled subsistence foraging by a few more small local groups. Yet as soon as the delayed return folks showed up the resources were gone. In the spirit of our prehistoric immediate return ancestors, our band of subsistence foragers would do well to drive them out if they show up again at the burn.

I hunt for much of my food and I have several friends who do the same. But it is not difficult at all to find people who originate from formerly immediate return hunting cultures, or who originally became interested in hunting for the purposes of becoming more self-sufficient and developing deeper relations with wild nature, falling into commodification traps in their hunting practices. I often hear of native hunters selling animal parts for cash, trading polar bear hides for weapons, drugs, and alcohol is one example that comes to mind, as well as the killing of walrus only to sell

their ivory tusks, and the selling of bear gall bladders in the Asian black market. Recently a friend of mine killed a mountain goat and called me boasting about how he sold its hide to a taxidermist for a thousand bucks and said that with such a prosperous return he plans to now always sell his hides to taxidermists to pay for his future hunting expenses. But where does this mentality lead? To a dependence upon harvesting animals for cash and the commodification of wildness. Once this dependency is forged, first due to a love of the hunting life and the closeness to wild nature it brings, some hunters turn to guiding wealthy trophy hunters as a source of income. This creates a dependency on maintaining a certain number of kills in order to keep clients happy. Guides battle for territory and attempt to monopolize whatever resources are there. Dentists from Chicago go home with heads to put on their walls. Local subsistence hunters go another year without food to feed their families.

The above examples of modern wild resource commodification can be described as relatively small-scale when compared to other modern occurrences. It would be helpful to look at the cultural and economic evolution of commercial fishing for a view of the consequences of bumping the small-scale commodification of wildness up to larger-scale global market levels. Marine biologists assert that 90% of world's large species ocean fishery stocks have been depleted since industrialism[28]. Commercial fisherman are generally steadfast to proclaim their spiritual connection to the seas and label their practices "sustainable", but they need massive amounts of cash and fuel to keep their operations up and running. Today in Alaska a commercial fishing community is battling heavily against the proposed development of the world's largest open pit gold and copper mine at the headwaters of the world's largest remaining unaltered wild salmon river. Northern Dynasty Minerals, a Canadian company with links to the global mega-mining-corporation Rio Tinto, has developed a marketing campaign for their development of the mine centered around the fact that commercial fisherman need access to industrial metals too, if they wish to maintain the equipment necessary to stay in business at global market scales[29]. Northern Dynasty certainly has a point, one to which the commercial fisherman have no viable response. Yet, the ancestors of many of these commercial fishermen, Yup'ik Eskimo peoples, lived for thousands of years from non-industrial technology dependent salmon fishing. It seems that at this point, to mount a truly effective fight against the mine and all that it symbolizes, these fishermen need renounce industrialism outright, including industrial fishing and move back towards fishing at the subsistence level and into a wildness centered future. However, because in the last 50 years these

communities have become so heavily dependent upon commodification and the industrial goods it provides in trade, their ability to shift back to a localized subsistence orientation, both physically and psychological, may likely be gone.

Are any of the above so-called conscious activists merely pursuing the commodification pathway temporarily, as a bridge to a different future? This is a question that must be asked. But let's face it: specialization, the division of labor, and commodification ultimately brought us to this point (fossil energy and digital-tech are latecomers in the game) and without commodification there would be no industrialism as we know it today. So as commodification fails us, and fails the planet, we need to be much more critical about how we attempt to organize in the future. Unless a conscious effort is made to organize in alternative ways, we can only expect repetition of debilitating commodification feedback loops to occur in whatever new societies formulate from the ruins of this one.

IN ETERNAL DEFENSE OF WILDNESS: AN ANARCHO-PRIMITIVIST PLEDGE OF RESISTANCE AGAINST COMMODIFICATION

> *"They become 'wealthier' by enlarging the number of individuals they have reciprocal relationships with. It is a wonderfully sensible way for the individual to ensure there is always someone to look after his or her interests, and so might be seen as the primal key to unlocking our human potential".* Stephan Corry, former Survival International director, speaking about his observations of indigenous peoples gifting as opposed to hoarding.

I think the people who survive the coming bottleneck will organize in various ways. As the world-system implodes there is no doubt that some communities and entire cultures will remain embedded in trade oriented delayed return and thus remain continually at war with wildness. I think it will be very difficult for most to shed themselves of this mentality and it is not unrealistic to assume that there will always be large groups of Takers roaming about. There will inevitably be societies organized around classes of conquerors, elites, and peasants. Societies that decide do pursue large-scale sedentary agricultural production will likely attempt to organize under either of the two opposing models of socialism or capitalism. Regardless of which way these are organized, they will be based upon specialization, hierarchy, and trade surplus production and therefore they will not be socially or ecologically resilient. As an anarchist, I say it is best to stay as far away from any of these arrangements as possible.

Richard Heinberg recently alluded to the potential for serfdom by maintaining division of labor in post-collapse agricultural production:

You know, high energy returns on energy investment is what made the Industrial Revolution happen. It is what made the middle class, it is what made urbanization and all the rest…if we go all the way back to the average energy profits of agrarian times, which were maybe three or four, five to one…virtually three-quarters of the population would have to be involved in producing energy in order to produce enough surplus for the other 25% to live in towns and specialize in being bankers or mayors…stamp collectors, who knows. But that is the path we are on[30].

Is this a desirable path to be on? We need to take an honest look at where commodification takes us, how it distresses our relationships with one and other and our relationships with wildness. It is a dangerous oversight to brush off the importance of delayed return/immediate return analysis. No matter what type of strategy you plan to use to obtain the basic necessities of life; food, clothes, shelter, water, heat, it appears critical that specialization and trade oriented surplus production are done away with to the furthest extent possible.

With cognizance of the long-term effects of commodification on human societies, wildness, and the planet, the only way forward is for us to scale back and forge pathways that move towards total immediate dependence on local ecology, not as a commodity, but as our source of life and spirit. Anarcho-primitivists should stand against 'rewilding'/transitionary/local foods movements that perceive, promote, and utilize commodification as a solution to our crisis. When designing the future, when thinking about how we might try to build community, commodification oriented thinking needs to be heavily scrutinized and not just taken as inevitable, particularly when it comes to land projects and rewilding activities. Rather than obsessing about financial security (whatever that means) we should set as a priority efforts to redefine our relationships with one and other and with the natural world. Surely commodification will continue to occur in our surrounds but we should reject it, on principle. Through this we will become the truly adaptable and resilient, the fleet footed, silent, untraceable, independent, unconquerable ones: the last defenders of a wild earth.

Endnotes

1 For example see http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141020-rhinoceros-death-suni-kenya-science-world-endangered-animals/ and http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/extinction-countdown/2013/11/13/western-black-rhino-extinct/.

2 Many of the rhino poachers are veterans of the Angolan wars and other armed conflicts.

3 It is logical to anticipate accusations of ecofascism as a reaction to the stance I have framed here. In response, perhaps we should inform our accusers that accusing us of being ecofascists because of our total allegiance to wildness over civilized humanity simply amounts to our accusers being full-fledged Manifest Destiny anthrofascists.

4 It is probably important to note here that many African chieftains were highly complicit middle-men in the European slave trade, selling off their own slaves won by war, and raiding less powerful groups to round up more. In the process, these elite headmen became increasingly wealthy and powerful. For a brief example see Stern, S.M. 2007. *It's time to face the whole truth about the Atlantic slave trade*. George Mason University.

5 Clark, J. D. and S. A. Brandt. 1984. *From Hunters to Farmers: The Causes and Consequences of Food Production in Africa*. University of California Press.

6 Newman J.L.1995. *The Peopling of Africa: A Geographic Interpretation*, Yale University Press.

7 Later, but for the same reasons, 'bushman hunting' became a favorite sporting pastime of the Dutch Afrikaner colonists. Much has been written on this history. A quick read on the plight of the San is National Geographic's *'Bushman'* overview by P. Godwin: http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0102/feature6/fulltext.html. Also see: Wells, S. 2002. *The journey of man: a genetic odyssey*. Princeton University Press.

8 I want to make clear that in this essay I am not referring to delayed return in the context of storing food for later direct consumption by a community. In the context of our modern sedentary predicament, as well as in the context of differing regional climatic conditions, it is my assertion that there is a distinct difference in outcomes between storing food for direct consumption at the household level and storing a surplus to be used for commerce.

9 James Woodburn brilliantly developed the concept of immediate return/delayed return analysis and defined delayed return as a system where "people hold rights over valued assets of some sort, which either present a yield, a return for labour applied over time or, if not, are held and managed in a way which resembles and has similar social implications to delayed yields on labour". Woodburn assigned delayed return as being responsible for the evolution of "load bearing relationships" in a society and posited that hierarchy is a natural corollary to situations where people are required to "build up, secure, protect, manage and transmit delayed yields on labour". (Pages 32-33, Woodburn, J. 1988. *African hunter gatherer social organization: is it best understood as a product of encapsulation?*. In *Hunters and Gatherers Volume 1: history, evolution, and social change*. Eds. Ingold, T., Riches, D., and J. Woodburn. Berg Publishers.) I posit that storage is more complex than being a simple delayed return to commodification trigger and that it is possible for long term storage to occur at egalitarian levels, especially in regards to nomadic hunting and foraging in cold climates. Nomadically accessed winter caches were abundant in the indigenous arctic and sub-arctic. Small bands stored dried salmon in underground pits for the winter, caribou, seals, walrus, and whale were cached in stone pits and permafrost dug-outs, berries and plants were stored overwinter in seal skin pokes filled with seal oil. Hunters and fishers would know the location of distant caches and would revisit them for food during nomadic travels or in the spring during "starvation time". As such, it seems logically possible to store food and not trigger commodification as a result. If we view delayed return on a sliding scale, storage for trade and wealth accumulation is the more extreme and consequential version.

10 The evolution of symbolic thought is also an important factor always worth consideration, but for the sake of brevity it will not be considered to any depth here.

11 There is an argument that commodification only occurred with the rise of domestication and the ownership of property. I believe in certain cases its validity to this analysis. For my purposes here I want to explore the possibility that, when specialization is allowed to run amuck, commodification can just as easily occur within culture's that have not developed domestication.

12 For example, the eminent human ecologist Paul Shepard lamented that in some cases "shamanism tended to diminish individual self-reliance, the significance of the personal fast, vision, and guardian animal…" and that as shamanism evolved into more complex forms it initiated "an ego-centered shift from the old, egalitarian band existence, with its mood of accommodation to the natural world, toward the centralized magic of the shaman, with a concomitant rise in his political power". (Shepard P. and B. Sanders. 1985. *The sacred paw: the bear in nature, myth, and literature*. Viking. Pg 96, 124). Such views remain controversial however, especially due to the persecution of Siberian shamans by the Soviet Union, as a result of an analysis by Soviet scholars that an original 'primitive communism' was destroyed by the shaman who "purposely deceived and cheated his fellow men in order to live luxuriously at their expense" (Willerslev, R. 2007. *Soul hunters: hunting, animism, and personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs*. University of California Press) (see also: *Shamanism in Siberia*. 1978.

Edited by V. Dioszegi and M. Hoppal and Forsyth, J. 1992. *A History of the peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian colony.* Cambridge University Press, and Vitebsky, P. 2005. *The reindeer people: living with animals and spirits in Siberia.* Mariner Books). Despite the controversy, specific cases of spiritual specialization in indigenous society should be viewed individually on their own merits. My analysis leads me to believe that the rise of spiritual specialization in hunter-gatherer societies should remain subject to scrutiny by people concerned with the foundations of both power and commodification. At the very least I see a strong case for rejecting spiritual specialization of any kind within our contemporary movements. All 21st century new age spiritual gurus should be viewed as suspect.

13 The supposed medical benefits of rhino horn stem back to this type of huckster spiritual specialization. Rhino horn was being sold for a premium by Asian Silk Road traders one thousand years ago and the origins of the trade are likely rooted in a more ancient practice of rhino horn commodification. Today certain practitioners of Chinese medicine continue to profit immensely from rhino horn huckstering.

14 Willerslev. Pg. 124

15 Ibid, Pg. 124

16 Ibid

17 For example see: Isenberg, A.C. 2000. *The destruction of the bison.* Cambridge University Press.

18 There is also amble evidence that in certain cases access to industrial goods and markets decreased the occurrence of sometimes incessant pre-colonial Native American warfare. While these are certainly legitimate historical accounts, manifest destiny oriented political interests often use this as an argument that life becomes easier and more peaceful within civilization, because with access to industrial goods incentives for tribal raiding no longer exist. Nevertheless, almost all documented cases of post-colonial Native American warfare are related in some way to increasing involvement in commodification. For numerous accounts of both pre-colonial and post-colonial Native American warfare see: R.J. Chacon, and R.G. Mendoza. 2007. *North American indigenous warfare and ritual violence.* The University of Arizona Press. Also see: C.G. Calloway, 2006. *One vast winter count: the Native American west before Lewis and Clark.* Bison Books.

19. For example see: Sandoz, M. 1978. *The beaver men: spearheads of empire.* Bison Books.)

20 Gross, J.J. and S. Khera. 1980. *Ethnohistory of the Aleuts.* Department of Anthropology University of Alaska Fairbanks.

21 Lovisek, J.A. 2007. *Aboriginal warfare on the Northwest Coast: did the potlatch replace warfare?'* Pages 59-73 in Chacon and Mendoza.

22 Sandoz, M. 1992. *Crazy Horse: the strange man of the Oglalas.* Bison Books.

23 Examples can be found in Chacon, R.J., and R.G. Mendoza. 2007 and Calloway, C.G. 2006, as well as Adams, E.W.A. 1991. *Prehistoric Mesoamerica. Third Edition.* University of Oklahoma Press, among many other works.

24 There may be situations where dependence upon outside goods lessens ecological impacts at the local scale for a period of time, but as discussed above, earth is essentially a closed loop system and the requirement for goods at larger than local scales implies externalizations of impacts to other localities.

25 The onset of overshoot occurs at varying temporal scales, spanning decades to thousands of years. Nonetheless, once the boundary is crossed socioecological collapse is inevitable.

26 See: Adams, E.W.A. 1991.

27 Archaeological and ethnographic research has shown it likely that various forms of immediate return oriented permaculture/food forest cultivation were practiced by some indigenous groups well before and long after the establishment of large scale domestication and agriculture. Nevertheless, peoples who practiced horticulture and did not eventually commoditize the produce in some manner are the minority. Also, I want to make clear that my critique here does not apply to all those who practice permaculture. There are certainly people involved with permaculture who understand the consequences of commodification and who are striving to enact alternative models. Part of the problem is that permaculture as a concept has grown to the point where it has been coopted by status quo leftists and environmentalists, groups of people who have a general track record of failing to acknowledge critical realities which force them to think and act outside their comfort zones.

28 For example see: Pauly, D. et al. 2002. *Towards Sustainability in World Fisheries.* Pages 689-695, Nature 418.

29 See: http://www.adn.com/article/20110813/pebble-advertising-wars-heat-sides-seek-support

30 http://richardheinberg.com/museletter-262-the-oil-revolution-story-is-dead-wrong

CIVILIZATION ONLY LOVES THE LIVING WHEN THEY'RE DEAD
NATASHA ALVAREZ

For them:
One day when the ruins of these cities lay in sparkling shards around
our feet
we will tenderly lift the lifeless bodies of those once alive
from their displays in museum basements and on library shelves, from
the walls of restaurants, living rooms, and dens,
And we will dig sacred burial sites with ceremonial tools
and sing our apologies into their glassy eyes and frozen hooves.

We will place them tenderly in broken ground
and cover them with cool and ancient soil
where they belong.

We couldn't love them while they lived
so we killed them or waited with bated breath
for their deaths
made them
frozen and stuffed
the same way we feel inside.

Because civilization only loves the living
when they're dead.

May the wild ones run free again
someday.

Even in a dim museum hallway
he is beautiful.

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Most green anarchists of European ancestry have vehemently rejected the Abrahamic faiths of the Iron Age (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), for their divine hierarchies, their dominion theologies. And most as well the Axial Age faiths, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism from India, Confucianism and Taoism from China, Zoroastrianism from Persia, or Platonism from Greece, all of which arose under a period of increasing ascendancy for urbanization and the State, under the division of life between market and temple[1]. Many, unable to swallow various New Age spiritual farces, nonetheless valorize Greco-Roman pagan religions or idealize various European Pagan religions. Some champion modern neo-pagan notions. I examine these each in turn, arguing that if we really wish to rekindle deep bonds to the vital wildness of the Earth, then we must dig deeper.

I examine paganism primarily as a constellation of non-Abrahamic faiths, chiefly polytheist or henotheist—and purportedly earth-centered—which arose from Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age pastoral-agrarian societies. I focus on the Indo-European trajectory because of its historical importance, and because of the contemporary Greco-Roman and European pagan revitalizations.[2]

THE NEOLITHIC BACKGROUND

The Neolithic Revolution inaugurated domestication, the transition from foraging to farming, from hunting to herding, with many cultures mixing

subsistence strategies in this period. Neolithic peoples on the European continent initially appear to have had minimal material hierarchy. They often crafted ceramics and female figurines, and practiced megalithic stonework: markers and monuments, chambers and circles. But they had already begun to live sedentary lives in permanent towns, and worship deities of domestication. With agriculture they grew swiftly, leading to a large-scale population crash by 5000 BCE. The copper phase of the early Bronze Age intensified a trajectory toward specialization and social inequalities, toward hilltop fortifications and metallurgical workshops, toward royalty and war. The Bronze Age succeeded the Neolithic, here starting in the Caucasus region ~3700 BCE (Maykop culture) and the Aegean region ~3200 BCE.

Archaeological and linguistic evidence suggests that a singular Neolithic-era proto-culture split in the Ancient Near East, which influenced the rise of Persian and Hindu cultures (Proto-Indo-Iranian), and passed through either the Pontic-Caspian steppe or Anatolia, giving rise to Greek culture, followed by Italic and Latin, Celtic, Nordic and Germanic, Slavic and Baltic cultures in continental Europe. I focus here on Indo-European culture, with origins likely in the Yamna or Sredny Stog cultures. Proto-Indo-European society had patrilineal kinship, basic textiles, hand-ceramics, animal husbandry (especially horse domestication), the plow, and the wheel, advancing through some mix of conquest and cultural diffusion. Historians debate whether the Proto-Indo-European cultural spread began during the 4th-5th millennium BCE, or the middle or early Neolithic. Either way, the Proto-Indo-European ur-pantheon and its social organization profoundly shaped both Greco-Roman and European paganism up through the Iron Age, and through Christendom as well.

GRECO-ROMAN PAGANISM

Pastoral-agrarian subsistence arrived in the Mediterranean at the earliest ~7000 BCE. Austere but sufficient, it entailed grainfields, vineyards, pasture, herb and vegetable gardens, fruit and nut orchards. It emphasized barley, olives, grapes Pre-Aegians peoples existed on these islands, such as the Pelasgians and Leleges.

In Archaic Greece, the Aegean civilizations (Minoan Crete, Cycladic culture, and Helladic society) brought the Bronze Age to the Aegean-Mediterranean region. The Minoans preferred commerce, and worshiped principally Rhea, a shield-bearing Mother Goddess responsible

for agricultural fertility and the birth and death of the animals. Greece demonstrates a marriage between sedentary domestication and religion, mirroring the rest of the pagan situation. In the Archaic Period, tyrants often seized power from hereditary monarchs in the cities. Tyrants such as Peisistratus gained legitimacy through temples and festivals. Secretive traditions such as the Eleusinian Mysteries grew popular, offering the underclasses a series of initiation rites promising afterlife benefits, contrasted with the dreary Olympian afterlife. Also in that mythic cycle, Hades, lord of the underworld, captures Demeter's daughter, and Demeter causes a drought to force Zeus to allow her return. Afterward, Demeter teaches the Greeks agriculture.

As bronze metallurgy emerged, social stratification, monumental architecture, and fortifications all proliferated. A warrior-aristocracy solidified with Mycenaean Greece (the Pylos and Knossos Kingdoms) toward the Bronze Age's climax, which popularized slavery. The militaristic Mycenaeans progressed the Olympic pantheon, which superseded the Titans, ruled by the sky-judge and thunder-god Zeus. It also featured Hestia, goddess of the hearth, architecture, domesticity, the family, and the State. Just as the fickle gods of Mount Olympus ruled from a distance, ancient Greek States shaped religious direction in palaces from afar. The Athenian and Spartan city-state transitions before Classical Greece preserved the earlier urban dominance over spirituality. Classical Greek mythology held that the Titans had rebelled against the primordial elemental deities, such as Gaia (Mother Earth), Uranus (Father Sky), and Eros (Chaos), and ushered in a Golden Age of primitive communism where foragers and pastoralists lived easy lives: healthy, merry, and free. It held that agriculture, private property, and metallurgy ruined that earlier, better way, condemning Greeks to civilized indignities. The mythic death of Pan, phallic faun-deity of hunting and herding popular among peasants, symbolized this transition. It implied finality, as only one other Greek god had ever died.

Proto-Roman Bronze Age culture arose with fortified pastoral settlements associated with the Proto-Villanovan Urnfield culture, near warrior-mariner and other pastoral cultures. The Italic Peninsula held many cultures at the time. Roman society proper arose from the Latin tribe (who traced their ancestry to the mythological King Latinus) migrating to the Italic Peninsula[3], and founding city-states during the 8th century BCE (Iron Age).[4] This included Rome, which gained hegemony over the other Old Latium city-states after a few centuries, and established a royal palace tradition. Roman society displayed particular cruelty with practices like the gladiator tradition (developed from their Etruscan rivals), and

crucifying its runaway slaves. Slavery formed the backbone of the Roman economy, Rome's population often half slaves. As most know, Rome became the most powerful empire of the time, building a proto-industrial apparatus featuring complex artificial waterways, concrete architecture, and intensive underground extraction with the first hydraulic mining and drainage wheels. Early Roman religion revered the Vestal Virgins, who tended the sacred fire in the Temple of Vesta, in the Roman Forum. It originated with Romulus and Remus, and the founding of Rome. Roman religion emphasized patron divinities for personal and domestic worship, alongside State religious practices where whoever had the highest social rank conducted services, often a quite self-serving tool for the educated, male, land-owning military aristocracy. Various Roman rulers claimed divine ancestry. As Rome conquered, it absorbed various domestic cults and traditions.

In Greece's Hellenistic Period, cultural intermixing prevailed; religion continued to reflect increasing distance from primal forces, as it had done at each successive phase. Outsiders brought Isis from Egypt, and Hathor, patron goddess of miners. From Syria: Atargatis, and Hadad/Ba'al, a sky-warrior god. Some welcomed Cybele, a protecting Mother Goddess of healing, fertility, and wild nature. However, even before her arrival in Greece, Phrygians in Anatolia depicted Cybele as a protector of cities, symbolized by her Mural Crown. Imperial Rome re-branded Cybele as a protector of warships as well. Ptolemy I devised the god Serapis to unify Greco-Egyptian culture under his rule. With significant Egyptian and pharaonic influence, Greek ruler cults developed, with Alexander the Great demanding his worship as god-king. Rome proper had already practiced deification of deceased emperors, and sacred monarchy with Julius Caesar. After Alexander's death, Rome Hellenized; its supreme deity, Jupiter, a sky-judge god who controlled the harvest with weather, and ensured oaths, incorporated Zeus' legends.

Late Roman paganism in Greece continued an urban legacy. Monotheist mystery cults competed with Christianity in the cities, including Mithraism (an exclusively male religion, chiefly depicted with Mithra's bull slaughter), Gnosticism (espousing dualism, asceticism, and rejection of the material world), Manichaeism (believing in a war between God and Satan), and the Cult of Dionysus/Bacchus (a festive tradition of fertility, and intoxication by wine, associated with plebeian freedom). All of these religions existed estranged from connection to any actual living landscape or uncontrolled terrain, purporting universality precisely because they functioned as rootless archetypes. The brief Roman sun-worship tendency via Elagabalus largely functioned as a means for the emperor to

legitimize his dictatorship through feasts. Neo-Platonist mysticism continued the Platonic tradition of rejecting the material world available to the senses, instead embracing the world of abstract "Forms".

Traditional pagan polytheism in Greece and Rome, the foreign polytheist traditions it absorbed, its various mystery traditions and imperial cults, and the alternative religions in Rome, all advanced theologies of domestication or the city-state. In every age, and even the oppositional currents. Governing divinities continually channeled spirituality toward imperial ambitions. Imperial Rome eventually installed Christendom, concluding the Greco-Roman pagan progression.

EUROPEAN PAGANISM

Proto-Indo-European culture likely spread from the Balkans to the Italic Peninsula and Eastern Europe ~6000 BCE, to Southern and Central Europe ~ 5000 BCE, to Western Europe spanning 6500-4000 BCE, and to the Baltic ~3500 BCE. It arrived to regions already full of myriad cultures, including Paleolithic and Mesolithic foragers, and Neolithic herders and farmers. Neolithic pagans of the Bronze and Iron Age assimilated, displaced, or exterminated the animistic foraging peoples of the continent. Celtic, Nordic and Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, as well as Slavic and Baltic pagans of the Iron Age—the main traditions romanticized today—proved particularly war-oriented.

Celtic

Atlantic Bronze Age Proto-Celts adopted bronze axes and swords, status markers of social elites. Definite early Iron Age Proto-Celts, like the Hallstatt and La Tène material cultures, following the Urnfield material culture, lived in martial chiefdoms based on cattle transhumance. Hallstat culture had chariot burials, and La Tène had fortified towns. Celtic chieftains had towering hillforts. Celtic mythology included Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish, Breton, and Manx traditions, with Gaulish and Brythonic, Welsh, Gaelic, Celtiberian, and Gallo-Roman mythologies. Celtic peoples of Gaul, Britain, Wales, and Ireland all practiced druidry.

The Celtic Druids of Iron Age Gaul, a secretive order and professional priest class, combined an animistic oral tradition with agrarian and judicial responsibilities. Gauls practiced kingship or elected magistrates, and waged notable campaigns against Rome in the 4th century BCE, and against Greece in the 3rd century BCE. Rome equated the Gaulish/Brythonic deity Camulus, god of war, to Mars, their war god, guardian

of agriculture. Welsh deities included Amaethon, an agricultural god. Gaelic Celts, as well as Gauls and Britons, had the solar-warrior Lugh, and thunder-warrior Taranis. Iron Age Celtiberians had a hereditary elite born from military aristocracy, and their fortified towns largely replaced clan life. Candamius served as thunder-god, and Cariocecus served as god of war. Many non-Celtic tribes had also lived on the Iberian Peninsula, such as the Aquitanians and Iberians. In Gallo-Roman religion, Ambisagrus acted as thunder-god, Sucellus served agriculture and war, and Epona served equids and fertility. Celtic chiefdoms and kingdoms expanded from Central Europe to Iberia, the British Isles, and also the Balkans (Dacia, Thrace, Illyria), and Anatolia, in many cases building cities. Christianisation began heavily from the 5th century onward.


Nordic & Germanic

Proto-Nordic history began with the patriarchal Battle Axe and Boat Axe material cultures of Northern Europe, more pastoral than agrarian. They overran pre-Scandinavian foragers in the Neolithic, and flourished in the Bronze Age. Germanic paganism gained prominence with the Norse religion in the Bronze Age, notable for the Viking-era expansion by Nordic raiders and colonists, merchants and mercenaries. As the Norse intensified their dependency on crops and livestock, the deity Freyr became central, a god of sacred kingship, virility, prosperity, and weather control. They also revered Gefjon, goddess of virginity, fertility, and the plow. The

Slave Trade fueled the Norse economy from the 6th-11th centuries CE, including forcing many Franks, Anglo-Saxons, Celts, Germans, Balts, Slavs, and Latins into thralldom. Likely a mix of overpopulation, agricultural scarcity, and regional politics and displacements led to Norman invasions starting around the 9th century CE, using their iconic longships and wideships. They voyaged from Scandinavia to various parts of Northwestern Europe and the North Atlantic, to Normandy, to the Iberian Peninsula and Portugal, to the Mediterranean, to North Africa and Asia Minor, and to the Arctic and North America. Christendom replaced Norse paganism in the early 11th century CE.

Germanic paganism we can trace back to the Nordic Bronze Age ca. 1700 BCE and Central European Urnfield material culture ca. 1300 BCE. They had both open settlements and hilltop fortifications. Battle implements included bronze swords, axes, and chariots. One noteworthy myth included that of Nerthus, the fertility goddess, who traveled by ceremonial wagon and brought peace and celebration as the tribes locked away their iron goods. Germanic societies practiced sacred elective kingship, where free men who could trace their ancestry back to their tribe's divine founder would choose a king, functioning as military leader, high priest, lawmaker, and judge. Free men held estates or swore fealty to landed lords. Restitution prices for conflicts differed by class, and serfs had no inherent value. Cattle ownership largely measured wealth, though Germanic tribes also used the plow, farmhouses, and granaries. They generally practiced raids but not occupations, organized by a chieftain and his retinue. In the 2nd century BCE, Germanic chiefdoms invaded Gaul and the Italic and Iberian Peninsulas. Following the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Germanic Visigoths conquered southwestern France and the Iberian Peninsula, the Vandals conquered parts of Hispania and North Africa, and the Ostrogoths conquered part of the Italian peninsula. All had converted to Arian Christianity by that time however. The Franks and Lombards became Catholic with the Byzantine Roman Empire.
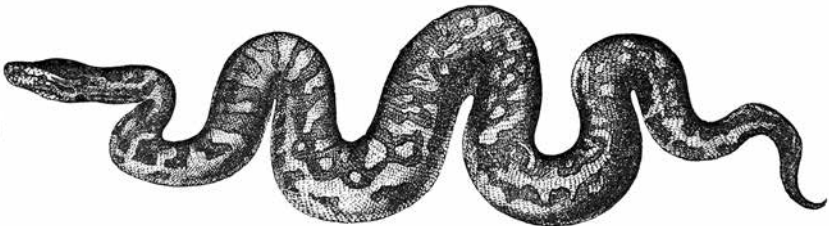
Anglo-Saxon

Anglo-Saxon history follows after Roman Britain in the Iron Age, with emergent warrior-priest judge-kings, and oaths between lords and retainers. Historians disagree some, but Anglo-Saxon England likely formed during the Migration Period (~300-700 CE) when Germanic peoples (e.g. Angles, Saxons, Frisians, and Jutes) either displaced or dominated the mostly Christian Sub-Roman Britons[5]. They came as immigrants, settlers, raiders, and mercenaries, with both acculturation and war taking place. Elites formed through claiming divine ancestry. Seven main Anglo-Saxon kingdoms solidified out of earlier tribal formations with temporary war-chiefs. The Anglo-Saxons had "wandering settlements" under tenure of low-ranking freemen with support of arms and law. They had a system of townships and tax-collecting sheriffs, of fealty oaths and collective responsibility within kinship groups for bringing related fugitives to court for suspected crime. They inherited the Roman villa system of organizational infrastructure whereby subsidiary settlements dependent upon an administrative center. Anglo-Saxons also continued slavery, and the Saxons forbade marriage across caste lines.

This pagan period only really spans ~450-600 CE, til Christianization recommenced with the baptism of Æthelberht, King of Kent, in 597 CE, and gained command anew with the 11th century Norman conquest. Arwald, the final pagan king of Anglo-Saxon England, died in 686 CE battling Christendom. Nordic, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon pagans alike championed Odin/Wotan/Wōden and Thor/Donar/Thunor, sky-warrior god archetypes commonly paired in Indo-European mythology. Ingui Fréy (Freyr) also held central importance for the Anglo-Saxons, god of fertility and protection for crops, livestock, and commonfolk. Anglo-Saxons continued the Germanic pagan practice of "blót", sacrificing cattle to the gods in November; the English word "bless" comes from this *blothisojan* (blot), "to smear with blood".

Slavic & Baltic

The Komarov Bronze Age material culture spawned early Proto-Slavic culture, along with the Iron Age Przeworsk and Zarubintsy. Slavic ethnogenesis[6] likely occurred in the massive area between the Dnieper, Danube, and Oder rivers, a vast but largely loose and decentralized formation of chiefdoms and clans. Historians debate Milograd, Chernoles, and Lusatian origins, and whether Slavic identity arose more toward 200 BCE or the 6th century CE. Regardless, local powers consolidated between the 6th-9th centuries CE, and princes with treasuries and soldiery emerged,

along with class distinctions. Amongst West Slavs, strongholds replaced earlier open and shifting settlements. While the Slavic tribes did not enslave war prisoners, they did escalate from raids to permanent territorial occupations. Slavic paganism had a dualistic emphasis on spirits and demons. Early Slavs had more Iranian religious influence compared to other Indo-European peoples, and had pagan priests. Alongside the concentration of chiefdoms from expansion, diffusion, and war, came the henotheistic worship of Perun, a sky-warrior god. Jarilo served as deity of vegetation, fertility, and harvest.

The Balts[7] arrived in the eastern Baltic and west-central Russia in the 3rd millennium BCE, pastoral-agrarians, with supposed Trzciniec and Sosnica cultural origins. We know of Baltic paganism primarily from remaining folklore from Latvia and Lithuania. In Latvian pagan mythology, Jumis protected the grain and Māra protected the livestock. It also featured the thundercross, similar to many Indo-European cultures' swastikas. Slavs largely assimilated the Balts during the 4th–7th centuries. Christianization of the Southern Slavs came from the Franks in the late 9th century, and of the Eastern Slavs under the Kievan Rus tribal federation beginning in 988 CE.

CONQUEST OF THE SKY-FATHER & THUNDER-WARRIOR

Though the Proto-Indo-European pagan cultures that came to dominate the Mediterranean and Continental Europe often warred with each other, they shared common social, economic, and technical developments. Metallurgy re-purposed from ornamental and minimal tool use, to war: battleaxes, swords, chariots. Pastoral and agrarian subsistence. Elite grave goods and treasure hoards, their weapons and livestock parts often buried too. Life in chiefdoms, city-states, kingdoms. Divine rulers, nobles, freeman, slaves. Priests governing spirituality.

Ancient Indo-European societies largely practiced tripartite class specialization between priests, warriors, and commoners (peasants or craftsmen). Their religions often reflected this division of sacral, martial, and economic spheres, with a patron deity for law, justice, or magic (e.g. Lugh/Teutates; Odin/Týr; Veles), a thunder-warrior (e.g. Taranis; Thor; Perun), and a patron deity for farming, stockbreeding, or crafting (e.g. Esus, Trí Dée Dána; Freyr; Jarilo & Svarog). Often these duties mix or spread somewhat, such as between the Greek Zeus, Demeter, Pan, and Hephaestus, with the Roman Jupiter, Mars, and Vulcan, or seen with the Celtic Lugh. Indo-European deities for sovereignty, military, and pro-

ductivity rarely formed a sacred trinity however, whereas gods ruling the heavens, earth, and underworld more often did.

Indo-European mythology chiefly worships a "Sky Father", such as the Vedic "Dyauṣ Pitṛā", the Greek "Zeus Pater", the Latin "Ju Piter", and the Thunder-Warrior. Symbols of the latter include the thundercross, suncross, sunwheel, and swastika, representing the thunderbolt, spoked chariot wheel, and solar chariot myth. Symbols of conquest. All of these pagan cultures, as products of the same Proto-Indo-European mythology tracing back to some of the original urban empires (i.e. Mesopotamia, Egypt), shared variations of a central conquest myth. The good, heavenly man-god[8], usually representing affinities with thunder or lightning, sun or sky, war, royalty, law, masculinity, truth, and dominance, a bringer of civilization, subdues an evil, earthen serpent woman[9], usually representing affinities with water or fire or underworld, nature, chaos, femininity, trickery, and rebellion. The latter a destroyer of civilization, who hides captured treasures in underground or undersea caves, who harms crops or livestock. The story echoes throughout Proto-Indo-European mythology and folklore, and that of its relatives.[10]

Can we reduce this purely to snake-hatred? No. Many of these religions actually had serpent cults. Most fundamentally, Indo-European religions' primary myths often center around the moralism of civilized heroes fighting savage monsters. Sometimes the message communicates quite explicitly. In one Slavic myth, the Great Black Snake unleashes dark forces, but the heavenly blacksmith of law and fire, Svarog, seizes the serpent's tongue and tames it into a plow for agriculture, banishing its minions to the underworld. In Celtic Irish lore, Balor, giant king of the indigenous Fomorians, and personification of blight and drought, seizes the cow of fruitfulness to lock away. The Smith God forges Lugh a thunderbolt to slay him. Lugh then extorts from Balor's son, Bres, the knowledge of agriculture, for Irish colonization. Domesticating weather, vanquishing wildness, erecting empires. Civilization's tale.

So what then of the historical pagan societies? As clerical religions, they atrophied participatory spiritualities rooted in place. Increased human domination of landscapes coincided with personification of natural forces as humanoid figures, with distancing from primeval elements and phenomena. These militaristic chiefdoms and kingdoms may have claimed to worship the land, but they owned the land as property. They mined the land for copper and tin and iron. The initial transition from gathering surface clay or salt or flint to gathering surface copper or tin or bog iron may have occurred gradually, but the additive consequences reveal an extractive orientation. They had class hierarchy, slavery, and con-

quest. Anti-authoritarians have no good reason to venerate or romanticize "heathen" conquerors. Do not worship gods of farm and forge, gods of tillage and grazing, palace gods. Do not idealize the pastoral-agrarian war myths of Bronze and Iron Age colonizers, do not worship metallic gods. And even the Neolithic peoples worshiped gods of domestication; they too lived to shepherd and slaughter, to plow and to reap, "Mother Goddess" or not.

NEO-PAGANISM & WICCA

Neo-Paganism's Fascism Problem

Neo-paganism has a fascism problem. The first European pagan tradition revival culminated in Romantic nationalism, embodied in the Revolutions of 1848, a wave of attempts to upend feudal remnants and move toward folkish nation-states. Ethnic separatism and nationalism in paganism, as well as pagan land ownership, constructed a solid foundation for European Fascists to later harness pagan motifs under "Blood and Soil" rhetoric. Contemporary European neo-paganism often appears inseparable from right-wing nationalism, with neo-*völkisch* movements thoroughly appropriating pagan traditions. Kind of easy when Greco-Roman, Celtic, Germanic, Nordic, and Slavic pagans all used swastika or triskelion symbols, often connected to lightning-symbolized mobile chariot warfare, eerily foreshadowing the Nazi *blitzkrieg* (lightning-war). The Nazis rode a *völkisch* mysticism undercurrent, including a synthesis of Nazi and pagan symbols. It seems difficult to untangle Týr as both pagan deity of law and heroic battle, and Nazi leadership rune and SS battle sigil. And again, difficult to untangle pagan swastikas from Nazi swastikas. And although non-right-wing neo-paganisms certainly exist, all the various European neo-pagan reconstruction and revival tendencies[11] merely attempt to resurrect the Sky-Father and Thunder-Warrior legacy I've already critiqued. They champion a legacy with a strong affinity for a patriarch or set of patriarchs who unify spheres of authority: the elite warleader, high priest, law-master. The ancient basis of the State, and Führer-material, surely.

Let's move on to another neo-pagan tendency: Wicca.

Wicca

Wicca, largely syncretic and eclectic, nevertheless has some commonalities, originating in the 1950s with Gerald Gardner, Father of Wicca, and

supporter of the UK Tory Party. Wiccans adorn themselves with the "Five Elements" pentacle. Ann-Marie Gallagher illustrates it through the tree symbol, composed of Earth (soil and plant matter), Water (sap and moisture), Fire (photosynthesis and internal warmth), Air (respiration), and Spirit (connection and life). Others employed the candle symbol, with its unmelted/solid aspect (Earth), melting/ liquid aspect (Water), lit/plasma aspect (Fire), releasing/gas aspect (Air), and phenomenon/magic aspect (Spirit). While I find some personal value in the Five Elements notion, many Wiccans allow it to emphasize abstraction and reductionism, disconnecting themselves from the multitude of real life elemental manifestations.

Wicca likely eschews sacrifices only as it maintains separation from any real connection to subsistence. It certainly holds pastoral-agrarian affinities. Along the Wheel of the Year, Wiccans typically celebrate three harvest celebrations, during Lammas (Loaf Mass), Mabon (Harvest Home), and Samhain (Summer's End).

Some Wiccans consecrate royalty with the "Holly King" and "Oak King" folklore.
Wiccans typically worship the Triple Mother Goddess (Maiden, Mother, Crone), along with the Horned God (associated with wilderness, virility, the Wild Hunt). These heteronormative and gender essentialist symbols culminate in the Great Rite of many Wiccan traditions, where the High Priest and High Priestess perform sexual intercourse to raise magical energy for spells. Nowadays, this most often takes place symbolically, using the extremely disturbing symbol of the dagger for the phallus, and chalice for the womb. Even this goddess-centering religion succumbs to patriarchal depictions.

Wicca seems to emphasize the domestic, with candle replacing campfire. It appeals to earlier European traditions of witch covens, known for herbcraft and depicting natural spirits as helpful familiars. Appreciation for women's contributions to earth-based spirituality of course holds importance, however, the notion of encounters or pacts with domesticated faeries, demons—replacing wild totems—appears telling. Also worth noting, cultural emphasis on witch curses emerges primarily with sedentism and domestication.[12]

Wicca has many sacred ritual implements, including broomsticks, candles, cauldrons, chalices, crystals, daggers, grimoire, incense, pentacles, and wands. Most of the rituals however continue the pagan legacy of separation, in that they have no bioregional root. If Wicca can perform its rituals on a space station, with no biosphere, does it really count as "nature worship" at all? We must acknowledge the spectacle of "invoking"

or "summoning" elements, familiars, spirits, or deities in this way, versus direct and intimate relationship with the living wildness. Paganism, as a pastoral-agrarian phenomenon, meant subduing lands and subjugating species. Nature became abstract, alien, outside. Monstrous and threatening. Pagans ritualized from a sense of lost connection, while still maintaining separation. Paganism substituted the symbolic for the sensory. Neo-paganism and Wicca perpetuate these flaws.

ANIMISM BEFORE, ANIMISM ANEW

So where does this leave those of us of European descent, who wish to live a more "spiritual" and earth-centered existence? I invite pagans to deepen their bonds to wildness and vitality, to hone sensation more than honor symbols, to root into place. Rather than treating the elements as mystical and external, find your strand in life's web of relations. Go back to the source. Toward wildness directly. Toward animism. Greco-Roman and European paganism all contained animist aspects, since paganism arose from animist roots. Many folk tradition components may yet have redeeming value. Not necessarily the obsession with monstrous outsiders like dryads, dwarves, elves, giants, kobolds, nixies, nymphs, wyrms, or werewolves, but special connections to springs or stones or trees. Many accounts indicate Indo-European worship of sun, fire, and moon directly. Appreciation for lunar and solar cycles. Solstice and equinox celebrations. Reverence for rivers, forests, marshes, hills. Altars and shrines for local spirits. Feasts, bonfires, and revelry. Rites of passage. Sounds kinda

nice without all the focus on crops, livestock, cities, royalty, and war. The animist aspects still prove viable.

Animists lived in Europe long before pagan cultures. Anatomically modern humans have populated Continental Europe for at least 40,000 years[13]. Ancient seafaring evidence suggests Middle Paleolithic humans lived in Crete as early as 128,000 BCE. Let us not forget ancient Europe's multitude of foraging cultural groups, animists of forgotten names and legacies[14]. Ever heard of any of them? Some indigenous animists still inhabit Europe actually: the pre-Russian Nenets peoples, and the pre-Scandinavian Sámi peoples, persisting against all odds.

Animism arises from empathy, intimacy, kinship, self-transcendence, sensuality. Animism means to approach a landbase with child-like wonder, to approach the world openly. Open to anomaly, not bounded to archetype. A non-dualistic approach to subject and object, matter and spirit. Each year civilization brings more precise control, more imposed order. Bind your heart to your landbase. Feel its pulse, bear its scars. To sanctify domestication means to renounce wildness. To sanctify the urban means to extinguish vitality.

I could point the reader to various writings on animism[15]—and I have my own in the works—but I'd just as soon advise: place your hands in moss and soil. Feel a river's flow. Watch the dance of dragonflies. Behold the wonder of thunder and lightning. Speak with birds, hear their song. Conjure fire by friction. Feel the movement of wind. Practice tracking and botany. Chant and sing and dance together around campfires! Forage! Climb a fucking tree![16] Whatever you do, do not adapt to the cage of the city with rituals of alienation. To rust metallic gods means to resist that which eradicates wildness and vitality. Free your feral heart, and find kinship among the bonfires. For ruins, not runes.

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ENDNOTES

1 See John Zerzan's 'The Iron Grip of Civilization: the Axial Age', or, David Graeber's *Debt: The First 5000 Years*. In Taoism and Jainism however we can see a backlash against the new order, whereas rulers readily put the rest to work during that crucial era of social reconstruction.
2 Why not elsewhere? I have more familiarity with the Middle Eastern and European context. I know less about the Arab pagans Christianity and Islam conquered. I don't know enough to comment about Afro-Carribean vodun, voodoo, hoodoo, or obeah, but I believe similar criticism would apply

to at least the African pastoral-agrarian pagan traditions. Spirituality in the Americas many have explored elsewhere in depth. The Axial Age critiques better suit the Asian context (esp. India & China). And animism of course still exists in Korea, in Mongolia, and in South-East Asia (i.e. Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, the Malay Peninsula).

3 Their Latial culture, a subset of Iron Age Villanovan culture, arose from the earlier Apennine culture.

4 The Roman Iron Age succeeded the non-Proto-Indo-European Etruscan Iron Age.

5 The Pictish tribal confederation existed in Scotland, enemies of Rome and the Anglo-Saxons alike. The Pictish kingdoms lived a pastoral-agrarian existence, practicing something resembling Celtic polytheism before their elites turned to Christianity. They built hilltop fortresses, and later enclosed farmsteads.

6 Ethnic Slavs include East Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians), South Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Bulgarians), and West Slavs (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Wends).

7 Ethnic Balts include Lithuanians, Latvians, and many extinct groups like Old Prussians.

8 Sometimes a knight.

9 Sometimes a giant.

10 List includes: Anatolian: Tarhunt/Teshub v. Illuyanka. Balkan: Sabazios v. the chthonic serpent; Rostam v. the dragon; the Knight v. Zmeu. Baltic: Perkūnas v. velns/vels/velnias; the twelve brothers v. Žilvinas; possibly Jumal/Ukko & Ajatar. Celtic: Taranis v. Cernunnos; King Arthur v. the dragon; Sigurd v. Fafni; Lugh v. Balor. Christian: Michael v. Satan; Christ v. the sea dragon; Virgin Mary v. the serpent; Saint George v. the Dragon; Saint Patrick v. the snakes. Egyptian: Ra v. Apep, Nut v. Geb. Greek: Zeus v. Typhon; Zeus/Argus v. Echidna; Zeus v. Campe; Kronos v. Ophion; Apollo v. Python/Delphyne; Heracles v. the Hydra & Ladon; Cadmus v. the Ismerian Dragon; Perseus v. Cetus & Medusa; Bellerophon v. the Chimera; Jason/Medea/Orpheus v. the Colchian Dragon; Coroebus & Eurybatus v. the Lamiae. Islamic: Allah v. the Serpent / Iblīs / Shayṭān. Judaic: Yahweh or Gabriel v. Leviathan or Rahab or Tannin. Levantine: Baal or El v. Lotan or Yam-Nahar. Mesopotamian: Anu or Marduk v. Tiamat. Nordic, Germanic, & Anglo-Saxon: Thor & Odin v. Jörmungandr & Nidhogg; Sigurd v. Fáfnir; Beowulf v. the dragon; Woden v. the wyrm; Ragnarr Lodbrok v. the serpent pair; Thidrek & Fasold v. the flying dragon; the prince v. the seven-headed serpent. Persian: Garshāsp/ Fereydūn v. Aži Dahāka / Zahhāk, Aži Sruvara, Gandar βa; Keyumars/Gayōmart v. Ahriman; Kāveh the Blacksmith v. Zahhak's serpents. Roman: Hercules v. Cacus. Slavic: Perun v. Veles; Svarog v. the snake; Ivan / Dobrynya Nikitich v. Zmey Gorynych; Krakus v. the Wawel Dragon; Alyosha Popovich v. Tugarin Zmeyevich; the imperial eagle / lightning-dragon v. Ala; Ivan v. Baba Yaga. Vedic: Indra/ Parjanya v. Vrtra & Vala; Krishna v. Kāliyā.

11 Neo-paganisms include: Balkan — "Zalmoxianism". Baltic — "Dievturi", "Druwi", "Romuva", "Dievturība", "Taaraism". Caucasus — "Abkhaz", "Adyghe Habze", "Ætsæg Din". Celtic — "Celtic Reconstructionism", "Celtic Neo-Druidism". Finnic — "Mari & Mordvin Neo-Paganism", "Udmurt Vos". Germanic — "Ásatrú", "Odinism", "Theodism". Greco-Roman — "Hellenism", "Italo-Roman Tradition". Slavic — "Rodnovery".

12 See: *The Domestication of the Human Species* by Peter J. Wilson, 'The Witch and the Wildness' by Kevin Tucker.

13 We could also consider 380,000-year-old wooden javelins of human predecessors in Germany...

14 Such as the Aurignacian, the Gravettian (inc. Pavlovian), the Solutrean, the Magdalenian, the Hamburg, the Creswellian, the Azilian (inc. Federmesser, Tjongerian), the Lyngby (inc. Ahrensburg, Bromme), the Swiderian. And in the Mesolithic: the Fosna-Hensbacka (inc. the Komsa), the Sauveterrian & Tardenoisian, the Maglemosian, the Kunda, the Kongemose, the Microlithic-Macrolithic Nemans, the Ertebølle-Ellerbek, the Nøstvet & Lihult, the Pit–Comb Ware (inc. the Narva & Sperrings), the Pitted Ware, the Fenni.

15 "Animism' Revisited: Personhood, Environment, and Relational Epistemology' by Nurit Bird-David. | 'Rethinking the Animate, Re-Animating Thought' by Tim Ingold. | 'The Song of the Land: Bioregional Animism' by Sarah Anne Lawless. | 'A Brief Summary of Animism' by Jason Godesky. | *The Spell of the Sensuous* by David Abram.

16 Inspired by Comrade Black's essay, "Neo-Paganism is Not the Answer – Climb A Fucking Tree".

DISCUSSION

Snow Geese. Photo by Yank.

Andrew Badenoch is the instigator of the Feralculture Land Liberation Project and ardent moderator and primary contributor of the Intentional Paleo Community group. Having become disenchanted by the game of capitalism, he struck with the allure of the hunter-gatherer life and started taking steps in that direction laying groundwork for more to follow.

We'll certainly be keeping up with the land project, but the ideas around it and questions that have arisen have brought forward some really promising discussion, so we're always happy to host it here.
- Kevin Tucker

Can you talk a bit about the land project, what it's called and where it's coming from?

The working title is "The Feralculture Land Liberation Project", which is an outgrowth from ideas discussed in the "Intentional Paleo Community" Facebook group started around September of 2012. The community or communities under that umbrella may evolve different names over time. To the extent that it's currently possible, we're shifting updates and ongoing discussion of the project to feralculture.com to reduce our contributions of free labor to the Facebook empire.

In short, we're working to build something like an immediate-return hunter-gatherer community in the cracks of an insane delayed-return society. We also recognize that biomes friendly to wild human cultures have been obliterated in many ways. With that in mind, we consider a rewilded permaculture to be a useful bridge for regenerating what agri-cultural-industrial society has killed.

Our vision is to create and expand a global network of communi-ty land which is a living laboratory for the ethnogenesis of a renewed hunter-gatherer culture and the regeneration of landscapes necessary to support it. The implementation resembles an umbrella community dis-tributed across clusters of nodes. We're not thrilled with that jargon, but think of a bioregional cluster of 2-5 properties that people could realis-tically travel between, without mechanized transport, in 3 days or less. Each property (node) would be roughly 3-15 acres. So rather than an in-sular land project of 100+ acres, our 100+ acres is spread out over a wid-er area and not contiguous -- looking something like a series of camps hunter-gatherers might travel to and from at various points in the year as individuals or groups. Each cluster of nodes would be farther apart, and people could travel between these wider biomes if desired, or devote time to deepening their connection to the landscape in a single cluster.

Often when explaining this, I get, "oh, like a hunter-gatherer time share?" Perhaps we're missing out on a growth market by not offering free trips to Florida for coming to a presentation. But I see what they're getting at. In a sense, joining the community is like an all-access pass, but the soulless condo/hotel is replaced by a living entity spread across the land, and there's no blackout dates, scheduling, or required checkout times.

Before getting too far into this, I'd like to throw out the disclaimer that we recognize multiple problems with the ideas and language of land ownership discussed here. We're sympathetic to critiques along various lines, including those argued by Thomas Paine and Henry George; the various, nuanced, and diverse historical problems of colonization and destruction of indigeneity, and standard anarchist critiques of proper-ty. Unfortunately, our primary limitation seems to be the system of state sanctioned property, and our discourse often gets mired in that frame-work. Our hope is to liberate as much land as possible from agriculture and its derivative systems of extraction and violence. The fine print on every U.S. National Forest sign, "U.S. Department of Agriculture", can be seen as a microcosm of the totalizing tendency inherent in the agricultur-al orientation to the world -- the tendency we strive to unwind.

So you're involved with a land project that has its roots in understanding the role movement played in nomadic hunter-gatherer communities where the purchasing is looking at nodes rather than just massive plots. How did this idea come about and how does it look and function differently than most land projects out there?

The earliest impetus was the simple recognition that the diets of hunter-gatherers (foragers) seem to yield healthier humans, and the social life of hunter-gatherers seems to yield happier humans. Whether or not that's true, a hyper-rational, scientific fundamentalist culture purporting to deliver health and happiness would, by its own logic, have to consider the merits and implications of this competing hypothesis. If it is true that foragers are healthier and happier, said culture would, by its own rules, face the paradox of dismantling itself or revealing its narrative as fraudulent. That's where the philosophical gambit began, and since civilization will regurgitate fraudulent narratives as long as it can, the question of everyday life quickly moved up in priority.

The next element of the quandary was trying to square the widespread failures of intentional communities -- over the past century -- with the strong and resilient community tradition that seemingly existed among hunting and gathering Hominin for upwards of 2 million years. On one hand, there's this tradition of apparently sincere and well meaning individuals trying their hardest and sacrificing greatly to foster a deeply felt impulse to live in community within an agricultural context, and failing at high rates.

On the other hand, there's the ethnographic record rife with peoples living in wildness with intimate communities persisting almost incidentally. In practice, fostering community is something "intentional" even among the undomesticated, but it doesn't look quite the same as the various flavors of modern intentional communities. Something's going on here, and apparently something consistent. The question inevitably becomes, what is that something?

The only way I've yet found to bridge that chasm is through pursuing the idea of forager norms (and perhaps values, but that rapidly gets complex) versus agriculturalist norms (with pastoralists and horticulturalists imprecisely, but not arbitrarily, tossed in with the latter). This arrives at the fundamental divergence in mobility orientations between hunter-gatherer cultures (nomadic, non-sedentary, immediate-return, etc.) and agricultural cultures (sedentary, delayed-return, etc.). Foragers must move regularly for subsistence reasons, and farmers can't move regularly for subsistence reasons. The implications of this difference to cultural

adaptations permeate life. Anthropologists and archaeologists are quick to complete the story of the instantiation of private property, division of labor, hierarchy, patriarchy, zoonotic disease, theism, and the other unintended consequences of the civilizing process.

Permaculture came later in the community's theory, but its ethical foundations provide one way we might think about resolving the question of forager norms and agricultural norms in the context of community. The three ethics of permaculture are:

1. Care for the earth.
2. Care for people.
3. Consider limits to consumption and production, and redistribute surplus to the benefit of 1 (earth) and 2 (people).

If permaculture's founders, Dave Holmgren and Bill Mollison, hadn't realized the flaws in thinking about the concept as "permanent agriculture",

Photo by Jennifer Andrews.

and scuttled that in favor of "permanent culture", we would reject it. And though the movement can feel subsumed by farmers and gardeners and capitalism, Holmgren, Mollison, and Mollison's protégé Geoff Lawton all give nods to hunter-gatherer life as a model from which to learn. Since they did drop the agriculture bias after seeing permaculture's broader potential, and they do recognize forager life as a source of inspiration, and hunter-gatherers have demonstrated the closest examples we have of permanent cultures, interpreting the three ethics along those lines seems the most reasonable place to start.

We also take the rejection of agriculture further than most permaculturists, but feel on firm footing with Toby Hemenway's article implying that sustainable agriculture is an oxymoron. We diverge through our view that permaculture, when taken to its logical conclusion, is, and can only be, fundamentally anti-agriculture.

Put simply, we forward the hypothesis that intentional communities drawing from agricultural principles in designing for any of the three ethics will inevitably fail. The only question is when.

We find a pervasive problem with modern intentional communities in their consistent embedding of agricultural norms and values into their designs.

An example of embedding agricultural norms into the first ethic of earth care is in communities that purchase massive plots of land with the intent of bringing it under annual cultivation. It doesn't matter if these communities attempt to embed forager norms against private property and hierarchy into the second ethic of people care, they cannot and will not be permanent.

Examples of embedding agricultural norms into the second ethic of people care are in communities that: (1) operate as proto-feudalist domains where owners of the land arrange tenant farmer relationships and/or exert hierarchical control over the decision making or governance of the community; (2) enforce the private property fantasy of land ownership in which plots are subdivided and sold to individuals or families to which differential access is more or less permanently granted, and from which other community members are largely excluded; (3) grant power to overt or quasi-religious leaders or tendencies.

The oft maligned third ethic is more difficult to discuss due to political orientations bending the ambiguity to their will, but from an anarcho-permaculturalist perspective, a capitalist orientation toward the work and lives of plants and animals would be one example of embedding agricultural norms into the third ethic of returning surplus to earth and people.

Do you have a vision for how hunter-gatherer life impacts the way this community ideally would be built and expand?

Indeed. Our proposed solution to the problems of modern intentional communities is to design new iterations with the three ethics aligned along forager norms. One of the primary ways of achieving this is to draw from the mobility norm found among hunter-gatherers. This is the direct inspiration for the rejection of community as a single insular tract of land. Rather, we attempt to carve out a non-sedentary community distributed across a network of smaller properties. These individual enclaves would not function as healthy communities on their own, and would not support band size populations in isolation. However, when modeling forager movement patterns in the context of the private property framework of the nation-state, a network of small properties begins to resemble a pattern of mobile camps, particularly when mapped over time. We don't claim to perfectly echo the movement patterns of wild humans, merely that this appears to be a best practice within the current reality.

Unlike the agricultural norms inherently installed in a single property community compound, the distributed node-cluster framework embeds hunter-gatherer norms into the first ethic of earth care. This choice extends benefits into the second ethic of people care as well by aiding forager social norms associated with mobility. Band societies frequently use a network of fission-fusion camps as a release valve for conflict. Rather than the dim notion that individuals expelled from one hunter-gatherer band faced impending death, asking someone to leave often resulted in the exiled joining a band in the larger regional network (or cluster, in our case) of friends and relatives comprising multiple options. Of course, egregious offenders could be urged to leave the entire regional group considering communication between them tends to be regular, and social pressure is regularly used to curtail dominant or violent behavior. The fluid membership of each band in concert with the fluid movement of each band is a norm we attempt to draw from with a focus on purchasing multiple small properties rather than a single large one. Further, this approach can often be leveraged by favoring the purchase of nodes that border state or federal land open to hunting, fishing, and gathering. Unlike most intentional communities, we disabuse the notion that all land from which we draw sustenance must be legally owned by the community.

Does a nodal project offer unique limitations?

Definitely. One limitation is that small parcels of land can be more expensive per acre. This is not always the case as some areas command higher prices for large contiguous tracts.

There's also the problem of interacting with multiple bureaucratic jurisdictions. Community decision-making and self-governance (again, language we don't like but end up using due to our context in spectacular capitalism) becomes more complicated as interests and personalities are multiplied by multiple properties with multiple features and multiple needs.

Can you tell us about where the project is at now and where you'd like to see it grow?

We've provisionally purchased the community's first node in the abundant hunting and fishing region of interior Alaska. It's riverfront property on a river with large salmon runs and a variety of large and small game, waterfowl, and other fish species in the watershed. This particular piece also has the benefit of being mostly surrounded by state land, which is the least restricted classification in the jurisdiction of Alaska.

At the time of this writing, we have not begun accepting members or contributions. The timeline for officially opening the project is measured in months from now, which may be minutes from when you are reading this.

In terms of growth, the goal is to establish something like 3 nodes that form the seeds of 3 clusters through which we can establish a presence. We see potential for clusters of nodes in Canada, Cascadia, Maine, North Carolina, New Zealand, Central America, South America, Eastern Europe, Scotland, Asia, and well... all over really. We don't see this as exclusive to any particular region, and actively seek to expand the concept globally.

In addition to growth driven by members who wish to join us on the land, we see opportunities for the donation of land to the project by variously motivated individuals who may be unimpressed by the idea of conservation as pockets of contrived wilderness from which humans are excluded from living. We don't view humans as separate from the wild, and we know there are many who own land and are looking for something deeper and more regenerative than wilderness as spectacle.

WILD HEALING:
TALKING ABOUT BUILDING
WILD COMMUNITIES WITH SKY

The Rewilding and Green Anarchist milieus are hardly strangers to posturing radicals. There is often a lot of talk about hardcore attempts at seriously going wild, but honest discussions about the difficulties of going wild, creating community, starting over and healing are sadly rare. So when *Reclaim/Rewild*, a zine Sky co-authored, came out in 2004, it was a relief to see some of that discussion, but also in the context of wanting to start a hunter-gatherer inspired land project.

While the looming reality of civilization's collapse constantly draws closer, any attempts to recover and rewild is still stuck sharing the same world civilization is trying to conquer, as well as the same bodies and minds that domesticator's seek to tame. Legal and social, psychological and physical; there are many barriers that civilization puts up around us. Subsistence living has always been the target of civilizations. To see the way out of these cycles, we need to start by being honest about our paths out. While this project disbanded, it left the grounds fertile for more.
- Kevin Tucker

Can you give me a little background on the land project that you tried to get going?

Over ten years ago, we put forth an effort to build an intentional community with the goal of moving towards an autonomous foraging lifeway. There was an emphasis on eating a wild food diet, crafting as much as possible from the land including tools to do such, and healing. We knew this would be a daunting task that would be more of a journey than a means to an end goal. The hope was to find people who shared our vision and were willing to begin the lifelong process of healing through the deep physical, psychological and spiritual wounds acquired while living in civ-

ilization. We felt strongly that this required a commitment to honest and open communication and healing with a circle of people.

What was the allure of Alaska? Do you have a sense of how this contributed both positively and negatively to the hope of this project?

Alaska was chosen based on research. We wanted to choose a place where we were citizens, to make logistics less complicated. We obtained data on things like the location of superfund sites, acid rain rates, mercury and PCB contamination of fish, etc. We considered land use possibilities. Alaska came out on top in all of these categories. Alaska is an extremely wild place. Just the vastness of land, there is room to be here and it is feasible to hunt, trap, fish, and gather wild plants. These are the positive aspects of doing a project like that here-the resources are available in abundance. The drawbacks are probably climate and distance. The climate is harsh, particularly the cold and dark winters. I cannot say with certainty that our circle did not coalesce due to location, however that is possible. With vastness comes the potential for isolation, and fear of it. Proximity to family and friends outside of the project is part of the equation for some folks; in that case it could have been negative.

What did you learn through this about the complications of finding and purchasing land?

Purchasing land in Alaska can be a long process. Much of the land is owned by Alaska Native Corporations, federal agencies like the National Park Service and BLM, or to a lesser degree by the State. Private land for sale and in the areas that we were interested in was largely classified as Native Allotments. Purchasing a native allotment can take years and there are ethical issues to consider. Much of the allotments are either in areas of high flood risk, or more remote than we were looking for (we were hoping to be within a day's travel by dog team of a post office or small store). Water was also an issue; we needed access to a creek for drinking water. Looking back I am not sure if buying land was necessary; or if it was a worthwhile expenditure of energy looking for the perfect location. There are alternatives to owning land such as squatting, long-term leases, or obtaining permission from a current landowner.

What did you learn through this about both the necessity and complications of building community?

What is the formula for finding like-minded individuals with a shared goal to commit to a project long-term? I think this comes down to what a project is really after, because with people comes compromise. There are complex reasons why people decide to leave civilization, and we all carry baggage, fears, anxiety, and boundaries. With breaking addictions in diet and lifestyle comes associated stress. I am a big proponent that there needs to be a level of support and sensitivity. Each of us has things we are ready to give-up, and some places we are not ready to go yet. This means understanding what is flexible to the goals of the community and what is not. For one winter, there were 5 of us. We cooked over a fire made with bow drill, we had talking circles, we ate wild food, and we were the closest to our goal at that time. There was momentum and drive to continue learning and growing together. We openly discussed as a group what each of us were struggling with on a regular basis. Open communication built trust, and trust is a necessity when considering a primitive lifeway.

Speculation in hindsight can become consuming, but is there anything that stands out as far as the process of preparation and planning that was missed, overlooked and otherwise complicated the project as it went on?

I think if I had to look back on something that may have been unintentionally overlooked it would be the realities and logistics for including families. It was our intention and goal to have age diversity in our community, however in reality it was primarily folks in their 20's that spent significant time with us. This is undoubtedly in part due to the complex logistics that multiply when attempting to move a family with children into a community. However there are other factors that could have played a part such as our role on the receiving end in regards to support for parents, and where our outreach was being directed. I think we attracted people of similar age and backgrounds as ourselves. Perhaps our vision appealed to people like us, however that was not the ultimate goal.

How did you cope with this process in terms of rewilding and attempting to escape civilization?

This was a time of intense personal healing and growth. Distractions were limited, and diet was also limited. This was a humbling experience. I found myself battling mental chatter and anxiety. I worked through nightmares and faced fears. I spoke openly to my community on a regular basis through talking circles where we all shared our experiences. I

was able to make progress in quieting my mind, calming my anxieties and ultimately in feeling somewhat grounded. That being said, that process is ongoing when attempting to make such changes. This is where I found the strength to keep trying.

How do you see land projects and communities fitting in to the resistance to civilization?

Resistance to civilization begins with each one of us as individuals looking in the mirror. Land communities are a direct rejection of a civilized lifeway. It's a choice to be accountable and move forward towards a positive solution.

Is there any advice that you might have for those working towards land projects, moving away from the grid, or otherwise trying to (re) build and immerse into communities?

I don't have much in the way of advice. It's a huge undertaking. There is so much to consider. I really feel like I have more questions than answers.

Photo by Jennifer Andrews.

FIELD NOTES FROM THE PRIMAL WAR

Red Tailed Hawk. Photo by Yank.

THE NASTY, BRUTISH AND SHORT OF IT:
PRIMAL WAR AND RESISTANCE TO CIVILIZATION

The Primal War is a refusal of and resistance to domestication. It is recognition that civilization has never been a monolithic event, but a constant and ongoing process of submission. Civilization requires complicity; the Primal War is where that complicity breaks down. It is the shut off valve where our bodies and minds say "no more". It is resistance. It is rewilding. It is taking on dams and pipelines. It is foraging and building communities. It is withdrawal and it is attack.

The path between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be is long and mired in redirected impulses. Our struggles intertwine with our awareness. Through immersion into wildness, that breath of the forest, our resistance is grounded.

The writings in this section intend to discuss and focus on resistance to civilization through its many forms. Some more effective, some less so: the purpose is to refine the potential for praxis. We seek neither blueprints nor Little Green Books, but we can certainly learn from mistakes and successes.

There are a number of events that we did not get to cover in this issue, but will be getting to for the next one, but unquestionably deserve recognition;

The Mi'kmaq resistance. The Mi'kmaq are a First Nations band living in Occupied Canada who have seen the tragic bubble of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, heading their way and have taken a stand. That stand has taken the form of blockades, confrontations with the State, violence from the State, and multiple warriors being held behind bars. Knowing how forceful the catastrophic windfalls of opportunisic destruction brought on by the fracking bubble can be, this stand is exemplary in its bravery and importance.

The Unist'ot'en Clan blockades. The Unist'ot'ten are a Clan of the Wet'suwet'en peoples, also in Occupied Canada, who have set up blockades and taken a strong and enduring stand against proposed fracking and Tar Sands pipeline construction. The dual threat of post-peak oil extraction methods makes this all the more important, but this struggle targets the bubble which exponentially threatens the earth and its wild relations if only to sustain another decade or so of domesticated destruction.

True Crime Case Files: The California Grid Attack

Date: April 16, 2013
Location: Silicon Valley, CA

There remains a long-standing assertion amongst revolutionaries that the disruption or abolishment of an oppressive system requires military force. That there will be war. That there will be battlefields.

And that there will be bloodshed.

That thinking is, of course, rooted in a base understanding of what qualifies as an adequate target. Not that we would advocate it, but apparently a person or persons near San Jose, California decided that the grid, the electronic infrastructure of this technologically dependent civilization, was theirs.

And on April 16, 2013, in a largely unreported event, they took their shots.

Their target was a PG&E (Pacific Gas and Electric Company) power substation that fueled Silicon Valley. Starting in an underground vault, telephone cables were exposed and cut. And within a half hour, a 19-minute precise shooting spree took out 17 giant transformers. By the time the police arrived, the shooter or shooters were off.

No suspects apprehended.

A PG&E spokesperson at the time claimed that there was a "human error" in the lack of response to any alarms regarding cut fences. That's hard to read, but considering the plan and scope of the attack, it's a bit hard to fully believe that claim.

Though the power company was able to divert power through other substations in the area, it took 27 days for the repairs to this substation to occur. Those repairs came with a price tag of $15.4 million. The interesting aspects of this attack are less in what the attacker/s accomplished, but what they uncovered: the vulnerability of the grid.

The vulnerability of the grid lies in its proximity. To be everywhere, it

must reach everywhere. Despite living in a society that proudly flaunts its wireless nature and spirit, those advances have yet to be applied in terms of infrastructure. If there is electricity, there are wires. And those wires connect.

A substation is one of those crucial meeting points. They largely serve two purposes: to either ramp up the voltage of power lines so they can cover longer distances or to diffuse that voltage for local energy consumption. Either way, the transformer is the key to establishing voltage regulation: a substation is worthless without it. Throughout the US, there are roughly 2,000 giant transformers constantly at work and spread out throughout power substations.

They are costly and notoriously slow to manufacture and distribute. By their own admission, the energy sector keeps some spares around, but not many. Costly and cumbersome, transformers are largely built to custom specifications and weigh in around 500,000 pounds.

Industry and government officials had tried to play this attack down, but they didn't go silent. Then Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Jon Wellinghoff, claimed this was "the most serious domestic terror attack on the grid."[1] Despite only requiring the removal of two man hole covers, some early monitoring, and what one could only guess is a large amount of target practice, it became clear that the Emperor has no clothes and that their body lies exposed, stretched across their kingdom.

A 2009 Energy Department report claimed: "physical damage of certain system components (e.g. extra-high-voltage transformers) on a large scale…could result in prolonged outages, as procurement cycles for these components range from months to years."[2]

The reporting here gets iffy and intentionally so. The vague and ambigious nature of public statements leaves the impression that attacks on the grid, in varying forms of severity, are a regular occurence. Often major outages are caused by falling trees or debris, but from the highly coordinated and planned (such as this) to more common forms of robbery or drunken fits, what officials seem to be alluding towards is that events aimed at the grid itself are extremely common.

And even more tellingly, it is largely indefensible.

The conflation here is with terrorism. That any person who attacks the grid has as much blood on their hands as the ideologically or religious bound zealot who kills with impunity. This isn't to try and impose a reason for why this sniper or snipers targeted this substation, no claim was ever made, but it seems probable that anyone attacking the grid recognized that it is, in and of itself, a target. Specifically transformers, that

avenue and outlet of socio-political and technological power, not people.

The continued existence of the grid is the continued presence of an always on, energy and earth sucking civilization. One ruled by the looming and persistent omnipresence of an electrical outlet. The attackers could have nearly any reason to resent this and take charge. We won't know.
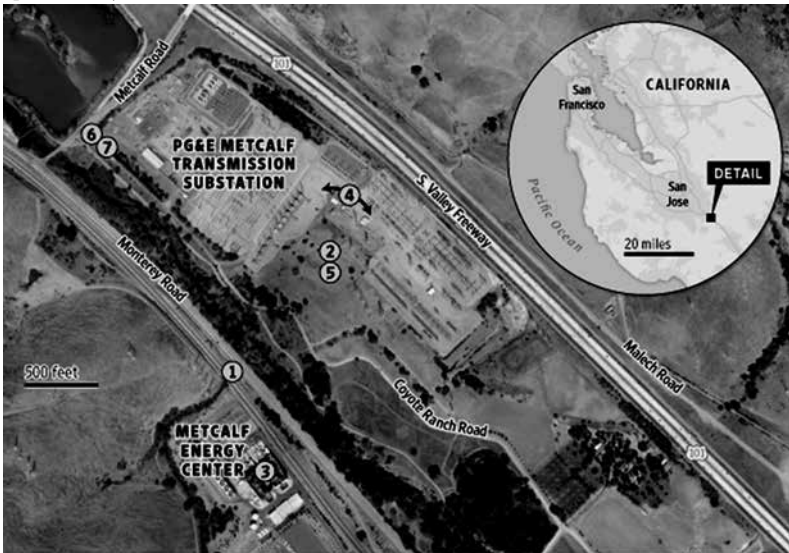
But what matters more is that the shooter/s reasoning doesn't matter. In their scurry to hit talking points and sweep this attack under the rug, hopefully before hitting the news cycle, officials made it clear that if replicated in numerous locations, this kind of attack isn't something that could have been prevented, prepared for, and quite possibly recovered from.

And here it remains: the most immediate threat to ominous and omnipresent power is the reality that its continued existence is fickle, tedious, and, in the long run, only temporary.

Endnotes

1 http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/29/us/california-power-substation-attacked-in-2013-is-hit-again.html?_r=0
2 http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304851104579359141941621778

Shots in the Dark
A look at the April 16 attack on PG&E's Metcalf Transmission Substation

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
12:58 a.m., 1:07 a.m. Attackers cut telephone cables	1:31 a.m. Attackers open fire on substation	1:41 a.m. First 911 call from power plant operator	1:45 a.m. Transformers all over the substation start crashing	1:50 a.m. Attack ends and gunmen leave	1:51 a.m. Police arrive but can't enter the locked substation	3:15 a.m. Utility electrician arrives

Sources: PG&E; Santa Clara County Sheriff's Dept.; California Independent System Operator; California Public Utilities Commission; Google (image) The Wall Street Journal
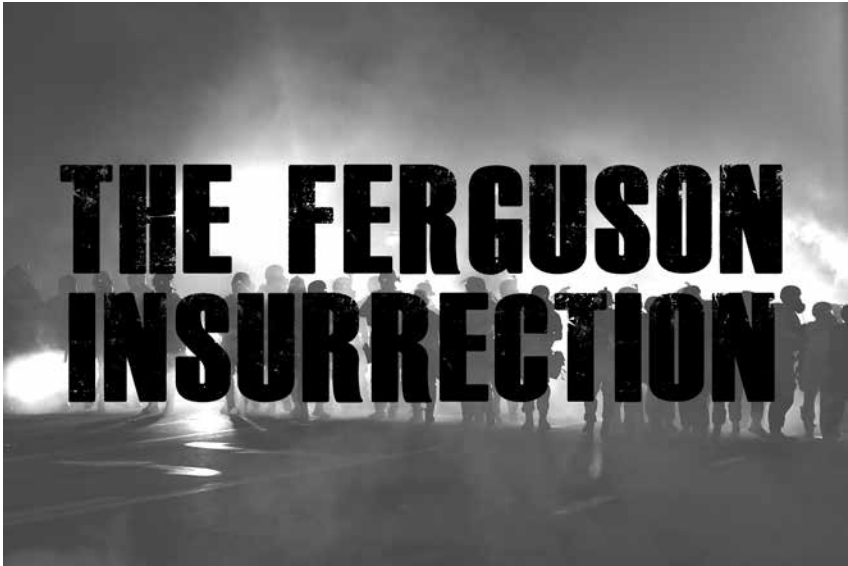
The execution of Michael Brown, an unarmed black 18 year old, by a white police officer on August 9, 2014 in Ferguson, MO, was sadly not an anomaly. The response, however, has been.

Within hours, the streets had filled up and shortly after, businesses were in flames. And every night for weeks, it happened again. Each night spreading wider and farther.

The confluence of systemic racism and the feeble-minded, infantile bullying mentality of those drawn into the police force unsurprisingly creates volatile and deadly situations. Time after time, police murders occur with regularity and largely without consequence. The explosiveness of the murder of Michael Brown doesn't arise from the particulars, but from the sheer crushing weight of this reality. That fragile boundary between the threat of state power and coercion burst and the rage flooded.

And while that rage has waned, it hasn't died. Coiled and ready to strike, the rage boils just beneath the surface.

While this unrest has been called many things, it should be referred to by what it has proven itself to be: the Ferguson Insurrection.

THE PROMISE OF THE INSURRECTION

The promise of this insurrection lies in the fact that while many groups have tried to own or direct that rage, none has succeeded. Solidarity demonstrations have shut down mass transit in major cities, but attempts to curb property destruction have faltered. Riots have broken out with

regularity and fervor in an ephemeral response.

What we have been seeing is pure rage.

We are seeing a crack in the veneer of a proscribed social contract that we were born into. We are seeing mythos that goes back to the origins of property and the external boundaries inherent to sedentary societies amplified as domestication intensifies. States are built on the lie that we cannot exist without their structures and defense. From the armies of Mesopotamia to the police of Ferguson, MO, this is the tie that binds.

The rallying cry throughout this insurrection remains simple: no more. No more will these communities sit idly by as the pigs target, harass and kill. Some seek reform, some seek justice, but the overarching theme is that the attempts to suppress rage will no longer work. Complicity is no longer an option.

It would be an absolute stretch to pretend that there was widespread thinking about the relationship between this insurrection and the nature of domestication. It is not my place nor any one else's to attempt to own this insurrection through critique and reporting. Nevertheless, the base complicity with the law is an essential part of the domestication process. Conscious or not, the refusal to accept the legitimacy of state power nor to succumb to the mounting threats of an increasingly militarized police force is, on some level, a breakdown in that process.

This insurrection, like all insurrections, doesn't hold answers. Even if it does not seek them, there can be no divorce from the reality that people need to eat. Societies must not only attack the state, but move beyond it. Until that step is taken, the fate of those attacking is fully interwoven with the very society under fire.

Yet the rage still pours out.

And that's where the beauty of this insurrection lies: it exemplifies the limits at which the domesticated begin to bite back. Context always matters, but it is the erosion of social control that exposes the possibilities that the infallibility and inevitability of power is a lie. Plain and simple, this is what it looks like when people hit their limits.

It is this rage that has been the final blow to civilizations past, present and future. Anthropologist and historian Joseph Tainter famously observed that the apex of collapse is the point of diminishing returns. That's an economic positioning, but it holds true for all social, ecological and psychological aspects of life. If giving your life to serving civilization has only ever been met with systemic poverty, being antagonized by police and being a talking point for religious and political figure heads, then where is that return? Why take it?

In this case, as in many others, this isn't a proverbial or rhetorical

question. If you're penned up, bullied, and killed by a state that is doing you no favors, how much worse can it be once they are destroyed? The immediacy is telling. This is the response of the human spirit, the human animal. This is the fox chewing at its leg after being snared in a steel trap.

There's a part of the mind saying over and over again: we don't need this. And the façade, fortunately, is flammable.

THE LIMITS OF THE INSURRECTION

The problem with this insurrection, as with any really, is that it becomes a reified. Community leaders, that is say the would-be politicians (even the anarchist ones), eagerly champion the perceived cause, often in defiance of the words and anger coming from the streets. Rage is rarely owned by any one position, but that won't stop the professionals from navigating it.

We see this over and over again.

Liberals want to right the wrongs through reform. Conservatives want to demonize and ghettoize populations. Both will do so while bolstering the overall power of their militarized arm: resulting in military grade weaponry (tanks were a common sight in Ferguson), seeking body cameras (rarely if ever helping victims, but often used to identify and prosecute "suspects"), and allowing space to deflect the "trauma of the job" onto management rather than focusing on the pig mentality and logic itself.

That last point can't be overstated. Being over 13 years deep into oil wars, we're talking about a high number of PTSD-fueled jarheads flooding the police and private security sectors (the private security world, by the way, is the refuge of the discharged police). So while it's easy to look at the increase in police violence simply as documented by an increase in cameras and social networks to share videos, that's missing the point that this increased hostility can only be a fraction of the interactions and incidences that these former-soldiers were displaying overseas. This is a context that has not only been ignored completely, but one where grievances have been hastily suppressed.

The insurrection at home is a part of the global response to the globalized reign of techno-industrial civilization. It's just the part that we're seeing. But to separate this reality from the Arab Spring or uprisings throughout the world is to buy this same lie.

So as the well intentioned try to bring both sides to the table, they're really only ever-taking one: the furthering of state power and, at best, a relaxation of the barbed-wire fences.

The lack of a cohesive narrative apparent in what is an outpouring of rage lends itself to outside narration. This is especially true as our "user-generated content" society wants a Spectacle. We're programmed to want a smooth story arch. If anger in the streets is simply saying, "we have had enough", the sidelines are booming with a way to finish that sentence. The vacuum of power is an implicit presumption that we create to remove that rage and contextualize our external discussions.

The limitation of insurrection is the potential that it will die out through mediation. That is the goal of so many groups, religions, and states. That is the goal of domestication: to control the human *being* through diversion and redirection of impulses.

This insurrection continues to show its promise in its persistence and instinctuality. We can only hope that the narratives of ownership and compromise fail to take root. So that they won't die off in textbooks, prison cells, and Twitter feeds. This may not bring the end of civilization in and of itself, but it is a testament to the refusal of complicity necessary to continue its existence.

This may not be the final blow, but it is certainly a death rattle.

Alas, as the ability of civilization to carry on requires complete subservience, may the insurrection never die.

There has been an uproar, stemming from the logical and important critique of activism, that fears the reemergence of a civil disobedience ethic. On the other side of action, theoretically, sits ITS. The Individualists Tending Towards the Wild (ITS) are individuals who have sent bombs to numerous universities, professors, researchers, as well as journalists and non-profits in the name of wild human nature. ITS has its cut throat communiqués stylized to provoke anger and wrought with strands of logic pulled harshly and quickly together, making arguments that seem pointless to engage with. In its communiqués ITS, though contradictory at times, aims to be another theoretical bullet (as opposed to the actual bombs) against the plague of pointless property destruction and "sentimental environmentalism". Swallowed in is indeed civil disobedience and all other actions that would seem trivial (including non-human targeted arson as they have specifically named ELF as a sentimental "group") in the face of a bomb.

But how real are the differences from a strategical perspective? ITS has not aimed to disable areas of the grid or take out large swaths of data (no matter who they kill the cloud holds all). Though they have taken the most serious actions in terms of prosecution and state punishment have they nevertheless been culled by the plague of sentimentalism? Surely only the sentimental would play into the cultural idea of murder being the worst and most effective crime when there may be more effective non-murder focused tactics?

The answer seems obvious enough, of course they are drawn into a

sentimental and fundamentally emotional reality when confronted with the daunting question of "what to do" in the face of a civilization gripping at the final fuels, the final predators, caught in the last series of pushes before a cascading and dynamic shift that will be more horrific than any mail bomb.

Civil disobedience, in particular Earth First! has been condemned in this supposed resurrection of demonized tactics, is not evil. The discussion between these two tactics, though I don't think they are adequately described as "ends of the spectrum", is vital. ITS has made numerous dubious claims about the legitimacy of its targets, which have included establishment journalists and Greenpeace. They refuse to acknowledge when an attack goes awry, saying that an unintended casualty does nothing to deter their struggle for ego driven wildness. ITS opens themselves up for maximum prosecution but their obsession with Ted Kaczynksi makes them zealots for the killing of humans with no desire to understand the inherent limitations of their tactic. This is not to make an argument that "they have become like that which they fight". My point here is to engage with our biases. Because something is more extreme does not make it more effective. We seem perfectly capable of criticizing civil disobedience, and I understand how easy that critique rolls off the tongue, but other tactics become immune from engagement, even more so as we turn to an egoist and radically subjective view of the world

In this egoist turn away from our inherent sense of connectedness we see each action as existing in a bubble and the analysis of ITS among some, including the fine folks at Free Radical radio, has boiled down to ITS "destroying something that is ugly to them". This hollow and pointless analysis leaves us in a vacuous space filled with ambiguous meandering. The subjective nature of "destroying something ugly" can only lead to an ultimately moralistic view of the world where purged and un-purged egos sit apart from each other. Always purge your ego of every perceivable reified notion or that ego will be "tainted" by something or possibly, if you are a nihilist, everything. The ugly can become anything. With no grounding, no analysis, action departs from effectiveness. The analysis of civilization is left by the wayside as we search down pathways of logic devoid of the material culture which constructs our daily behavior. The struggle is isolated and subjectiveness takes the reigns as community becomes more and more irrelevant to our analysis.

Our self is a manifestation of experience and neurosis as well as conscious and unconscious absorption of ideas, senses, and communication. That this blurry matrix of self-realization or ego-actualization is a starting point for action seems, at best, unhelpful. Destroying something

ugly is meaningless in and of itself, the world driven by ego is manifested in countless ways and the end point is left purposely undefined to such a degree that no one, not even the ones taking action, have any idea what sort of world they want. The contradictions develop quickly as the hyper consciousness of our "self" spins into an idea of subjectiveness that can only be described as pointless and, ultimately, if we are to believe the premise, completely unrelatable. If it is true that our subjective experience is all that matters then we can just turn to transhumanism to fulfill the goal of realizing our true self.

Analysis matters. Infrastructure matters. For action to be effective we must simply look at implications not divinate for one truth. There is no precedent for an ego driven world yet anarchists seem to think they can open up a portal to liberation through a convoluted notion of a perceivable self that is a manifestation of a multitude of inputs both known and unknown, those in our consciousness and those not.

All actions are open to discussion. We can decide amongst ourselves which seem worthwhile and respect a large array. It isn't about drawing lines, it's about understanding where we are and where we want to go.
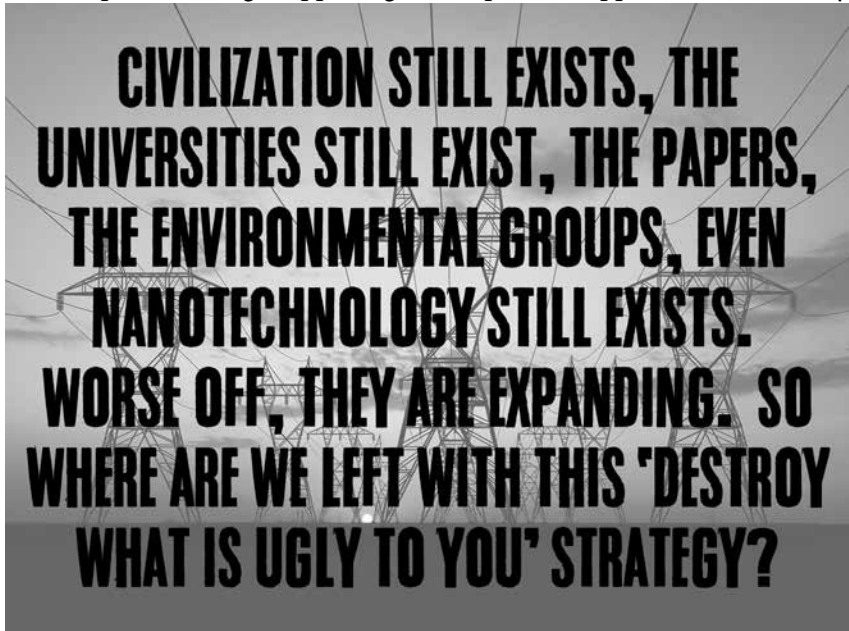
One could easily posit that me making such claims, or calling into question ITS tactics, is heretical and that to denounce such "productive" actions, while seemingly defending remnants of petty and "outdated" tactics, does nothing to enhance our level of praxis. All this is under the deluded supposition that one day we may just happen to stumble upon an answer of "what to do?" There is no shortage of prophets on the left and right spending countless hours trying to articulate a "rational strategy" that changes the world. The baseline lunacy of this claim is self-evident and, historically, easy to rebuke. Success stories of theory and tightly woven praxis are not in ample supply

To intellectually beat down the one asking the question, or the one with the U lock, does not create or clarify our praxis. The negation of strategical techniques once and for all is simply about purity. This goes both ways.

There is of course plenty of room for debate and questions addressing these issues, particularly around the notions of violence, property destruction, and moralistic pacifism. But discussion and critiques cannot, by a matter of necessity and actuality, exist apart from action. This is why discussion on ITS is important, at least tactically. Addressing the philosophical musings of ITS is tantamount to addressing Ted K's take on anthropology, forever frustrating and never satisfying. What this says about the psychology of those who see humans as the only legitimate

targets is something worth thinking about.

However, ITS is presenting a praxis of some sort and they are forthright about their immediate goals. We can dig into their formulations, we can actually discuss the implications of it from the perspective of what is currently happening. It would be easy to construct numerous ways to knock it down, feel as though we had philosophically kicked its ass and put the final word on "murder" as a tactic. As I read Black Seed I wonder what the reaction to an article titled "Two Steps Back: the Return of Murder in Ecological Resistance" would be. Didn't FC show us the abundant failure of a few (or one) murderous earth avengers mailing bombs? But for some reason, mostly aesthetic, there is a hesitation to make those claims. I see that as a good thing, we shouldn't be making blanket claims about tactics. But that hesitation does not extend, for reasons that are, again, mostly aesthetic, to civil disobedience. This is despite the fact that Earth First! has had some, albeit quite small in the scale of global civilization, successes protecting isolated areas. Of course there are serious strategical problems with saving isolated areas but it does not follow that those areas are irrelevant or that I am not personally happy that they still exist in some less mediated state of wildness. All wild places matter. With 75% of the surface area of the earth under human control, influence or habitation it seems relevant to stop new areas from being taken over. If we want a future primitive, this may be one of the most important things happening. Wild spaces re-appear fast but healthy

CIVILIZATION STILL EXISTS, THE UNIVERSITIES STILL EXIST, THE PAPERS, THE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS, EVEN NANOTECHNOLOGY STILL EXISTS. WORSE OFF, THEY ARE EXPANDING. SO WHERE ARE WE LEFT WITH THIS 'DESTROY WHAT IS UGLY TO YOU' STRATEGY?

ecosystems take time. Overall, however, this is a large scale failure, more is destroyed daily. While I appreciate the spaces "saved" there are several missing pieces and each Earth First! campaign can be looked at individually, something Black Seed does do. They make a blanket assertion in the article but truthfully it is a critique of select campaigns.

The point here is to address the way we view debating tactics and strategy in a largely theoretical vacuum. Theory and practice may very well be tied together but words, much like a sanctioned march, are ineffective at actualizing action in the here and now. The words may be more important than the march but to say that our theory can firmly define our praxis verges on a neo-Marxist argument that the people just need a rational argument, upon the perfect articulation revolution happens. The likes of Deep Green Resistance and the Revolutionary Communist Party have already found their perfect articulation in Derrick Jensen and Bob Avakian respectively, and look how far they have come! Action is tantamount to existing as a human, an agreement I share with the ITS articulation of being human, but there is often a chain of evasiveness in how we, as anti-civilization anarchists, address action. There are some decent and grounded reasons for this, prison among them, but the evasiveness needs to be acknowledged.

A program is hardly needed, a look to DGR solidifies this point. No one needs another "above ground" political apparatus dictating ideology with a "below ground" (that no one, in any circumstance, should ever admit to knowing about) committing actions which the "above ground" may or may not take credit for. This party-action structure has shown itself historically to be not only authoritarian but ineffective. Nonetheless, we can be more instructive about action when we talk, discuss, and confront. The discussion usually shifts around issues of legality and or violence. It may be more important to clarify what we want from actions and think about our goals.

I do not think ITS (or its contemporaries, Wild Reaction, Obsidian Point to name a couple) is harboring an effective strategy. This is less to say about the moral affect of those participating and more about the obviousness of their failure. Civilization still exists, the universities still exist, the papers, the environmental groups, even nanotechnology still exists. Worse off, they are expanding. So where are we left with this "destroy what is ugly to you" strategy? In the same place as the revolutionary as we can only possibly hope, in order for total destruction of the reified world, that there is a mass rising of egos motivated to destroy, in a nihilistic fashion, all possible impediments to the ego. The self at the center of actions seems increasingly bizarre in cases of meticulous planning, par-

ticularly when that planning involves conspiracy to commit an act which may lead to significant, if not permanent, prison time.

Somewhere in the middle of this we have black bloc and other supposedly radical tactics loosely associated with the idea of "insurrection". While helpful in many ways, and more often than not worth supporting, the idea of effectiveness hinges upon mass participation. While a move to lawlessness creates more opportunities for individuals and small groups the setting is exceedingly important and what we can say for ITS is that at least some planning is necessary to reach your short-term goal. Is that goal embedded in an overall strategy? A question worth asking, though the answer need not only be yes.

Liberating your individual person is a tiresome job and our concentration upon the fulfillment of our egos, even in their supposed and likely "union", leads us to a strategy or pure self-determination destroying manifestations of ideas, with our very own idea that liberation will come from their destruction. The institutions will have their illusion shattered and then something will happen. The exciting nature of this seemingly unexplored space is liberating for a moment but does this radical strategy of waiting for the theoretical hammer to drop do anything?

I do believe there is an effective strategy, I know that it cannot be fully articulated for reasons that go beyond law. We can create massive disruptions and heed the destruction of wildness, both internal and external to ourselves and our families. The answers are far less complex than we would like to believe. Continuing to hype an insurrection coming any day, or supporting actions because of their ego liberating bent, as well as demonizing any of these actions including all civil disobedience is not generally helpful. We may harbor the day of insurrection and I do believe that the unexpected is possible, even likely in the face of our ultra-domesticated day to day, but ultimately the collapse of global civilization will not have its primary driver be an insurrection or mass revolt. The infrastructure and armies cannot continue if we wish for a world of wildness. This is undeniable. It may be necessary that consciousness shift but that does not mean that civilization will fall. To put it bluntly: I do not mourn the nano-tech scientist, I celebrate wild lands, and insurrection in the streets brings us each and collectively closer to touching experience, but civilization will exist as long as the material structure exists with the fuel to run it. The reality is simple, the implications are striking, but we are stuck celebrating ineffectiveness, rallying the masses, and diminishing any victories not deemed radical enough in methodology. The implications of a critique of civilization are widespread and in front of our faces. Let's not forget them.

THE RESILIENCE OF THE WILD: TALKING AND STALKING WOLVES WITH ROD CORONADO
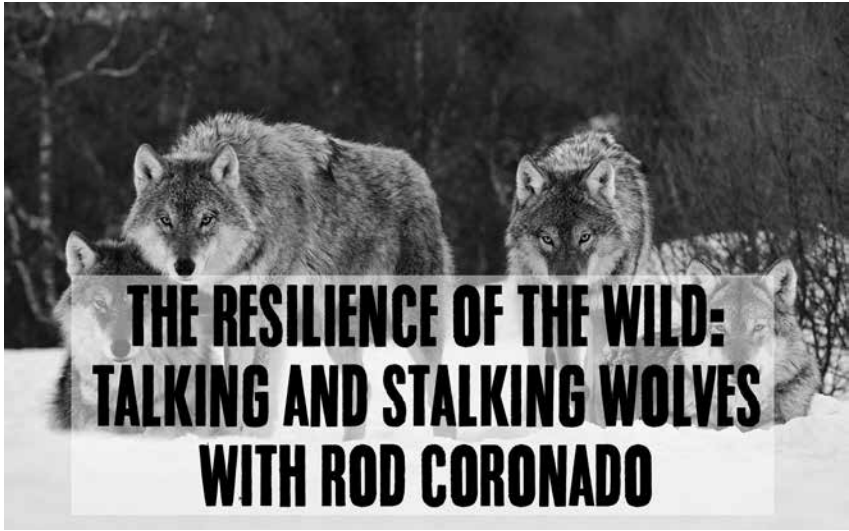
Rod Coronado should need no introduction. In the history of the Earth and Animal Liberation movements, fewer have left a bigger footprint. Be it sinking whalers with the Sea Shepard, taking part in Operation Bite Back (one of the first ALF campaigns to use arson as a tactic and focus on wild animals), a legacy of hunt sabs, being a Yaqui warrior, getting thrown back in Federal prison over Facebook friends, and now protecting wolves, Rod has quite the legacy. I've often said that while I don't believe in heroes, Rod is as close as they get. If you need a reminder of why, he is also the author of *Memories of Freedom*, which I consider to be required reading.

He has also remained in the crosshairs of the government more than anyone in this world. His last incarceration was a reminder of how bad the government wants to silence him and that threat still looms. He is legally no longer allowed to speak as a radical, but he has found ways to remain active for the wild through the Wolf Patrol, his sab-inspired group that has been tracking and documenting wolf hunts since they were taken off the endangered species list in 2012.

While some have postured over Rod's legacy and current work, none have walked in his shoes, faced this level of threat and found a way to continue struggling with and for the wild as he has. And as you can see and read, the inspiration, that wild light he exudes, has not and will not be killed.

For more information on the Wolf Patrol, check out wolfpatrol.org. For more of Rod's words (including *Memories of Freedom*) check out the collection of his writings, *Flaming Arrows* (Warcry Communications,

2011).
- Kevin Tucker

First off, it's great to have you back in the fold even though I know your heart never left. The response from current, future, and would-be wolf killers and their sympathizers has been almost following the archetype for civilized fears of wildness. Can you talk a bit about those responses and how the wolf became that icon of snarling, rabid wildness just waiting to kill.

Equally Kevin, it's a great honor to be having these kinds of discussions with you again. While my actions are what gained me the disfavor of many, it's our thoughts about the wild that fueled such actions that still need to be spoken. My actions and approach might have evolved, but my commitment to the preservation of intact ecosystems and the animals needed to maintain them remains the same. Which is partially an answer to your question.

I see my own views on wildness as a reflection of different world views that see (not saw) nature as a living being, a relation deserving of respect, and yes, reverence. That's not the dominant worldview, but it still is the view of many on this planet. My job has always been to represent that perspective, and when it comes to the most maligned animal on the planet, few would argue that it's not the wolf. The wolf may represent the lynch pin of healthy ecosystems, that is apex predators as a whole, but

to many cultures including Western European culture here and abroad, there still exists a strong hatred for predators like wolves.

Yes, some do not demonize the wolf, yet they still believe in managing them like other "game" species, but what I want to address is the very real culture of hate that has been vocally expressed recently towards the wolf. 500 years ago, when colonists first invaded, they brought with them their hatred for wolves.

Some say it was born out of wolves feeding on the human victims of the Plague, but much of that disdain arose out of the simple fact that wolves desire the same food source as humans, so there's a perceived level of competition.

So those first colonists wasted no time in their efforts to eradicate the wolf from North America. In my home state of Michigan, one of the very first acts of the Territorial Legislature was to enact a wolf bounty. So upon first contact, we had a culture of people fomenting hatred for an entire species based on ignorance and Old World fears. Those forces won, and for the better part of the 20th Century, the wolf was gone from the American landscape.

Then came the ecological awakening among the Invaders, and for the first time, European Americans began to look at, and seek an understanding of the role apex predators play in healthy ecosystems. Henry David Thoreau, John Muir and Aldo Leopold represented a new Euro-White Male perspective on nature and for the first time, we indigenous people breathed a sigh of relief. Maybe there was hope. Wolves returned. They are returning, and they will reclaim the majority of their traditional territory if left to their own devices.

But the hatred seed remained, and when wolves were reintroduced into the Northern Rocky Mountains in 1995, many mountain state residents saw the project as the federal government imposing its will on the good livestock raising people of the region. The only way the project could go forward, was for the federal government to promise to return management of wolves to state's authority when their numbers reached sustainable levels.

So those wolf-hating people waited, and when wolves were stripped of federal protections, it was like a fire sale on them. High hunting quotas were set in states like Montana, Idaho, Minnesota and Wisconsin and literally thousands of wolves were hunted and trapped between 2012 to the present.

But what happened recently, that hadn't happened before was the advent of social media. What Facebook has meant for wolves is the rise of

sites dedicated to the eradication of the wolves Second Coming. "Lobo Watch", "Montana Wolf Hunting & Trapping", "Wisconsin Wolf Hunting" and "Idaho for Wildlife" are all sites that have popped up that blatantly advocate for the illegal killing and extermination of wolves.

These sites post pictures of elk and deer killed by wolves, arguing that they are "killing our deer" and "wiping out the elk herds" in acknowledgement of the wolves primary prey source, as if their predation isn't natural and the human hunting of these animals is. These sites also are littered with the acronyms, "S.S.S" and "S.O.S." meaning, "Shoot, Shovel & Shut-up" and "Shoot On Sight."

There have also been plenty of violent threats made against Wolf Patrol directly, wolf haters threatening to shoot me and break my legs and some online wolf hating trolls trying to associate me with ISIS!

Which for me is really revealing of an operating worldview that still sees not only wolves as vermin, but a lot of red, yellow and brown people as vermin as well. And this is the real troubling revelation. That behind the hatred for the wolf, lies also a hatred for indigenous peoples and their attempts to preserve their own worldview in the continuing face of a culture that is empowered by governments to commodify and regulate wild nature through sport killing and lethal controls against any predator that kills livestock.

> I HATE THE IDEA OF BUCOLIC NATURE, TAMED OF ALL THREATS. THAT'S THE INVADERS VIEW, NOT MINE.

What does the wolf represent to you?

I grew up in the West, after the wolf had been eradicated. I didn't grow up knowing the wolf. I knew her cousin, coyote, better. But now that I live in the Great Lakes ecosystem, I'm beginning to gather more knowledge of wolf and respect, and share the Anishinaabe worldview of wolf. Anishinaabe are the principal indigenous peoples here in the Great Lakes, and they call wolf, Ma'iingan, which means brother.

The Anishinaabe believe that whatever happens to the wolf, will happen to them. So when the wolf returned, the indigenous peoples saw it as a sign of their own prosperity too. Then the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan began to hunt wolves, in MN & WI this included

trapping and hound hunting of wolves too. Over 2,000 wolves have been killed in the Great Lakes states since they lost federal protections in 2012, so all the tribes here are adamantly opposed and upset at these policies.

So I not only see the wolf as my brother, because that is how he is to my indigenous cousins here, and as a resident, I choose to respect that, but I also see the wolf as this sacred being that is closely related to us. Anthropologists say either wolf taught us to hunt or visa versa, but what is known is that our evolution in North America paralleled each other's and wolves have always been there, often helping humans find food.

I also believe that the wolf is a messenger from the natural world, sent to remind us of another way of living, a way of living not unlike the way we lived before, where we saw each other not as predators, but co-operators. Also, I believe the wolf wants to come back, wants to be a part of our world again, only some humans are staunchly opposed to that, and that saddens me.

I want to live in a world with predators. I don't want to be the most dangerous animal in the woods when I go into them. I like knowing that there is a bigger predator out there, one that belongs and fits in a healthy ecosystem. I hate the idea of bucolic nature, tamed of all threats. That's the Invader's view, not mine.

I know you've been tracking individual wolves personally and coming to know some of them. That makes it easy for this to cross from an activist cause to a spiritual connection that isn't easy to discuss, but I was wondering if you could speak to crossing that line and its significance.

I'll tell you a story from last October's wolf hunt in Wisconsin. We were looking for foothold traps placed for wolves, (which was legal until last December when wolves were returned to federal protections) so we were monitoring an area where wolves had recently attacked and killed a bear hound, knowing that trappers would know this as well. We had seen numerous tracks and scat, but no wolves. Then we spotted a guy on an ATV that I instantly knew was a trapper because of the gear on his rig, shovel, plastic tub to keep scent off his traps, rubberized gloves…so we followed him to a trail and when we walked up to him, he was placing a wolf trap in the ground. Afterwards, we placed a trail camera overlooking the trap site, so that if a wolf was captured, we would be able to film the trauma experienced.

As we drove back to camp, I started thinking about the wolves in that area, in particular, that one wolf that might happen upon that trap and be caught and killed. I thought about it, thinking that somewhere there was

a wolf right at that moment catching the scent placed on that trap and possibly traveling towards its imminent threat. I started crying because I felt horrible. I consider myself a cousin to the wolf, he is my relative and I care about him. And here I was walking away from a threat placed specifically for him and all I could do was take pictures of his suffering. I cried struggling to rationalize my actions, knowing if I did more, I might go right back to prison.

The next morning as we walked up to check on the trap there was a knot in my gut and I felt awful, knowing I might come up on a wolf, the first I would have ever seen, stuck in a trap and waiting to be killed. I honestly didn't know what I was going to do. My brain said one thing, but my heart another. Luckily, the trap was empty. Days passed, and no wolf. On the last day of the season, we discovered in the morning, that the trap had been sprung, but no wolf.

Moments later as we were leaving the area, we began to hear a chorus of wolves howling all around us. It was magic. It was like the wolves were reminding me that they still have power, and that I shouldn't fear for them because they are wild and can take care of themselves. Wolves like all wild animals, have so much to teach us if we are willing to listen.

Why focus on apex predators?

Because apex predators are way cool! Grizzlies, wolves, lynx, these are all such wild throwbacks to a primitive time when man was so much lower on the food chain. These animals inspired legends, myths and stories that indigenous people still tell their children in winter to get them to behave!

When I was in the Yellowstone ecosystem, I had an elk hunter, this huge cowboy with a rifle and pistol, tell me he was chased by a grizzly near our camp…on horseback!

I wish more apex predators were around reminding us of their dominance in nature. We force our dominance over nature, apex predators were given it by Creator. Also, wolves have only recently become a hunted species again. We can stop it. Before they become just another "game animal" we need to wrestle them away from "game management" philosophies and show them that some of us are ready to live in peace with them again. If we could accomplish that, then there might still be hope for the wolf/human reciprocity connection that our ancestors knew.

What can we learn from the wolves?

We can learn how to survive. In the wolf advocacy movement, there's a lot of infighting and division, a lot of strong personalities. I tell people we need to be like wolves, and instead of forcing one group's agenda on the entire movement, we need to branch off and form separate packs and be mutually respectful. But wolves can teach us so much more. And maybe this is why they appeal to so many, because they have a social structure like us, no, we have a social structure like them. They love and care for their kin the way we used to when we were part of intact communities.

When I am out on a wolf campaign, we are like wolves, we work in a pack, collectively for the good of all. We tap into their spirit which is fed from the natural world around us. Ultimately, wolves are emissaries from a different world, showing us that in nature there still exists harmony, and that it is a sometimes violent and brutal existence, but one filled with love and honor for your kin. If we could learn that, the entire world would be a better place.

FIELD WORK IN THE END TIMES, PART ONE

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST'S VIEW ON THE COLLAPSE

Rarely if ever does anarchism cross over into the drudgery of work in any kind of positive way. To be a die hard anarcho-primitivist working as an anthropologist is a bitter-sweet position: you are documenting evidence against civilization, often coming straight from its victims, but at the same time you are left biting your tongue to save your job and continuing to get that information and work with these societies. So after hearing about the complexity of the situation from a friend for years, it was apparent that this had to come out, but our source sadly has to remain anonymous to stay afloat in the field before civilization finally tanks. Ideally while he still has some tongue left.

This interview turned out amazingly, but unfortunately we've run out of space to have it all in this issue. So look forward to the second half in *Black and Green Review* number 2.

- Kevin Tucker

How long have you been working in Alaska and what drew you there?

As someone who has always maintained a great passion for remote wild places I pretty much always had Alaska on my radar as a place to spend some quality time. But honestly I just ended up in Alaska for practical reasons. I had spent several years in graduate school and was broke and needing to generate some income to pay off a student loan. I applied for jobs in a bunch of different places and the first one I was offered was in Alaska, so I packed up some gear and headed north. That was eight years ago now.

I think so often we picture Alaska as wild, uninhabited space. From talking with you, I get the picture that there are elements of truth to that, but then it's also the complete opposite: hyper-domesticated liv-

ing, massive wealth and lifestyle gaps, and ramped up resource dependency. Can you speak to that dualistic reality?

When you hear Alaska referred to as "The Last Frontier" there is a deep and very meaningful truth being spoken. It's hard to predict how things will play out in the future, but the general cultural ethos of a vast majority of the populace is one of conquest and control, essentially the same Manifest Destiny ethos which drove European expansion across the Old West. That mentality continues to push forward here and this time around it is armed with immensely powerful levels of technology to get the job done.

Wildness is core to the psychology and experience of pretty much all Alaskans, no doubt, but for many people it is only an ego bolstering secretly manipulated and controlled version. If the dominant culture in Alaska was able to see its real desires reach fruition, all available resources, whether fossil energies, precious metals, timber, fish, or game would be developed to serve the needs of Euro-colonial economic expansion. Wildness would be allowed to go on, providing it did not interfere with the priority of economic growth, and would be very much manipulated and controlled to serve the needs of an expansive industrial human society.

Alaskan's certainly need wildness as a source of food and overall spirit, but very few are willing to accept this wild land under its own terms. They push and push to force the land and animals to bend to their terms. Many game populations are artificially manipulated through a practice called "intensive management" with a priority to obtain "maximum sustainable yield" from the land. This means "controlling" predators, such as wolves and bears, through both encouraging the populace to heavily harvest these species and through State sponsored aerial gunning. Essentially, due to an unprecedented level of human population, there exists an unprecedented level of demand for wild resources, especially large game and fish. Core to the cultural identity and egos of many Euro-American Alaskan's, and most Alaska Native's, is the ability to hunt and fish for food, to be self-sufficient, to take care of oneself, family, and community through harvesting wild foods from the land. But there is also an unprecedented level of technology and a concentrated source of fossil energy available for each person to accomplish this. So the demands on wildness here are excessive. But it is a harsh land and the square mile densities of game are quite low and competition for game and fish is fierce. Therefore the government is under immense pressure from all sides to provide fishing and hunting opportunities to an entirely industrialized population, hence "intensive management", which really amounts to technolog-

ical manipulation and domestication of wildness here. Killing wolves to bolster moose populations for the demands of industrial hunters seems to me to be a form of moose farming than anything else. But the Great White Hunter goes and out conquers what his ego sees as 'wilderness' regardless of the fact that this opportunity is created for him by industrial manipulation.

Virtually all hunting and fishing is done with motorized equipment, ATVs, motorboats, and airplanes, and the entire population requires access to aircraft travel just to exist. I have sometimes characterized Alaska as "a nation state of industrial hunter-gatherers". So in that sense your characterization of the situation being a duality is highly accurate! People do want wildness, it means very much to them, but today they only want that relationship with the assistance of industrialized comfortable living and very, very few Alaskan's are willing to confront this enormous contradiction.

In terms of the geographic context, it is very true that the immensity of undeveloped, roadless, ecologically connected land in Alaska is incomparable to anywhere else left in the United States. Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Siberia are all that is left regarding in-tact large magnitude boreal and arctic wild ecosystems. But with the general expansionist attitude which dominates the majority of the Alaska populace, the future of wild ecology in Alaska is quite precarious. Realistically, whatever occurs as civilization's current bottleneck plays out the 21st century cannot be good for either Alaska's wild ecology or Alaska's human population.

Fossil energy decline induced civilizational collapse would be the most beneficial event for wild ecology in Alaska, but such an event would also eliminate the ability for the vast majority of humans who currently live in Alaska to survive, as life now is literally dependent upon a functioning global supply-chain delivering food, materials, fuel, and health care via small aircraft. The ability for 99% of Alaskan's to survive without connectivity to this supply chain does not exist and while this analysis also applies to America as a whole, the difference is that Alaskan's are the furthest removed US population from the essential goods producing geographic industrial core –3,000 miles removed, approximately. Moreover, because of distance from the supply-chain, the huge amounts of energy needed for heating homes and buildings, very little public transportation, and a massive reliance on aircraft, Alaskan's are very likely the most intensive consumers of fossil energy per capita than any other population on earth. In the event of a global humanitarian crisis related to declining fossil energy availability, assistance to persons living in the arctic would likely not be a global priority. So the entire situation is very grim.

The worst thing that can happen for Alaska's wild ecology would be long-term continuance of the global industrial fossil-energy economy. In this scenario colonial expansion pushes on, human population and industrial development expands and grows, roads deep into wild interior areas are built, oil, gas, coal, and metals extraction ramps up, and with dwindling sea ice, off-shore fossil fuel extraction and Northwest Passage shipping traffic become the new normal. This is the death knell for any remaining untouched wildness here. Add to this the possibility that increasing amounts of Americans will attempt to migrate north as climate refugees in the face of amplifying drought and wildfire problems in the south. The final northern frontier will be the last place left for America to expand. In this regard some Alaskan's suggest climate change will be a good thing for Alaska's economy, real estate markets, and overall feasibility of life due to a quickly increasing agricultural growing season. I see the former scenario as more likely than this one, however.

I've said a lot and there's much more to say. Perhaps I have not answered all the facets of your question, but that should be enough to get folks thinking about the immensity of the problem.

Can you give a little context for how Alaska became a boom state?

Measured by the scale of anthropological time, the current living arrangement I just described has had a very short existence indeed. In the mid-1970s Alaska began developing its oil economy. The major kick-start to Euro-colonial expansion in Alaska was the construction of the Aleyska Pipeline to serve the purpose of transporting crude oil from the North Slope oil fields along the Arctic Ocean to the Port of Valdez on the Pacific side. This project and the continuing production of North Slope Oil brought thousands of people up from the lower 48 states to take advantage of very high paying jobs. The population grew by leaps and bounds and the oil money went everywhere, generating a very prosperous capitalist economy and with it a dominant culture of American style mass consumerism. The state government also grew greatly as well as a result of being funded by huge amounts of oil money.

Oil tycoons moved in by the droves and reaped the rewards. The big cash returns for the imported redneck oil-man culture meshed nicely with a mentality compelled to conquer the rugged wilderness of Alaska with lots oil burning machines. The cost benefit ratio of building roads into the middle of nowhere is low, but providing you can afford the machines and the fuel and the fancy modern gear you can go conquer wilderness just as your Wild West forebears did, this time straight from the

city on your day off with your Super Cub airplane, or your fleet of ATVs. In this sense, access to (and domination of) wildness in Alaska is a rich man's game and the thousands of below poverty line native people who rely on wild food for subsistence cannot compete.

This is one important aspect of the wealth gap. The bigger picture is basically that the oil extraction economy became the biggest influence driving politics and resource management policy, across the board. There has been slights shifts to the left here and there, often times due to the liberal populations in the cities and the native vote, but overall Alaska is a hard-right Manifest Destiny inclined conservative's haven, purely as a result of the wealth created by the resource extraction economy and the cultural mentality the entire scenario bolstered.

You asked about the wealth gap and I neglected to discuss it before, so hopefully that provides an acceptable overview.

How does this relate to the colonization of the Arctic?

Well, colonization of the arctic by masses of hyper-domesticated, industrial consumption minded, fossil fuel dependent people would have only been desirable if wealth was available to make it doable for them, under their terms, and certainly not under the terms of wild arctic ecology. Such a people could never survive on this land without the mass importation of industrial goods and without a fossil fuel infrastructure of some type. So ironically, once again, it is oil which allowed this further colonial expansion, on all fronts.

Oil is also the impetus to Soviet, and now Russian, expansion in the Siberian Arctic and we all know what has been happening with the tar sands and pipelines on First Nation's lands in the Canadian sub-arctic. And there's Statoil, the Norweigan state oil company which basically funds human life in the Arctic regions of Norway.

So yeah, it's funny that human life on such a massively technological and comfortable scale can only exist when being supported by fossil energy and that all of these colonizers operate with an assumption this is all perfectly normal and that they can just go on living high on the hog indefinitely in one of the harshest environments on the planet without consequence. When it's not working out for them, which is now becoming increasingly relevant, it's usually the fault of environmentalists, or native activism, or Obama or whatever.

In many ways, Alaska really is one of the last frontiers and you're working with Indigenous Elders who have really seen all of this un-

fold. How would you sum that experience up?

In one word: heavy. Many of the elder's, Eskimo and Athabascan, the ones in their 80s and 90s, their grandparents were pretty-much fully self-sufficient hunter-gatherers and their parents grew up and lived on a scale of self-sufficiency and within a fully in-tact culture on a scale much greater than those elders have themselves. Change was occurring for each of those generations at a faster and faster pace and today what the elders are witnessing is something many of them have trouble coping with.

I think one of the main changes the elders I have worked with have witnessed is an overarching break down of community continuity where each successive generation has become more individualistic, more distracted by increasing technology, increasingly lethargic as a result of access to industrial foods and motorized transport, and immersed in alcohol and drug abuse.

One of the most distressing things for elders is witnessing their children and grandchildren and great grandchildren fail to learn many of the important traditional skills of their ancestors and probably even more traumatic is witnessing the loss of their languages. I think post-traumatic stress disorder plays a role. I'll never forget when a Nunamuit elder and I were talking about the old timers being affected by PTSD and he said "Its more than post-traumatic stress disorder, it is a soul disorder, a spirit disorder". And I think he describes the situation well, it's a sense of despair and confusion that happens to all once self-sufficient land-based peoples as a result of conquest and colonization.

What have been common themes amongst the elders?

Complaints and observations regarding access to store-bought food and the availability of mechanized transport such as snowmobiles and ATVs making younger people lazy, docile, and disrespectful are continuous in every community I have worked in. Kids being more interested in TV and video games than in learning traditional skills and being outdoors hunting and fishing for the family are also continuous complaints. Recently the observations from elders revolve around total community immersion into smartphone technology and social media. Not only do the elders complain, even many of the younger people admit to me straight-up that they would rather play with their phones than be out on the land hunting, fishing, and gathering. These observations are constant in every community I work with nowadays.

I will also say that another part of this is the humanity of all the people involved with these communities, understanding the reality that most of us when given the choice between a difficult and enduring task and a shortcut to accomplish the same goal will choose the shortcut without considering the long term costs. Many of the elders themselves have fully embraced modernity and while they often reminisce about the old ways they also are quick to explain how difficult a truly primitive lifeway in the arctic was. In this regard, another thing that always sticks with me regarding my conversations with elders was when I was talking with a 94 year old man about the effects of store bought foods and he said "long time ago nothin' but straight meat. Boy, you better like it". And I thought about what it would be like for them living on nothing but meat and fat and realized how welcome some of the industrial foods would have been to those old people. So there is a lot of personal humility involved with these interactions and a constant coping with my own domestication.

It feels like the relationships with indigenous societies in the Arctic really define a bait-and-switch form of contact. We know that, for example, the Inuit have the highest diabetes rates in the world. What does that look like on the ground?

I haven't worked with any Canadian Inuit groups but I see lots of news about how bad the situation has become in places like Nunavut, where there is a mass dependence on industrial foods and they have the highest food prices in the world, $28 for a jug of fake high-fructose corn syrup 'orange juice', for example. These people don't have the economy to buy

industrialized food so it needs often needs to be subsidized through various programs.

In Nunavut the hunting culture seems to have died out through dual factors of adopting an industrial lifeway and decimation of whatever game was available. It is a really bad situation up there. Families are starving and trying to feed children. In a recent article some government anthropologist made the point that these people come from a culture that has went through periods of famine on and off for thousands of years. This remark can be seen as insensitive but it is quite accurate. There is no doubt that arctic indigenous peoples developed cultural and biological adaptations to extending their energy stores via living in a state of constant ketosis, where during periods of famine all the rich and healthy fats consumed from marine mammals, fish, and caribou and stored in the body could be continually used as fuel for extended periods of time. This was when these cultures lived entirely on ketogenic fat based diets, with relatively very little plant foods in the diet even. Over the last few generations sugar via processed carbohydrate has replaced healthy wild animal fat as the primary fuel for northern indigenous people's bodies. And, as you mention, the consequences have been drastic in terms of diabetes rates, obesity, heart disease, dental issues, and overall health. Not everyone has been affected, as some people have different metabolic genes than others, but the negative effects across the board are certainly prolific and obvious when visiting communities.

There is a big push by various tribal entities and NGOs to get people to eat more traditional wild foods and less industrials foods and often times this is encouraging, but these campaigns are very limited by their political correctness in terms of being extremely sensitive to the modern native cultural environment where sugary foods of all types and processed carbohydrates in general are seen as part of the "tradtional" diet in a way. So you end up having this potentially dangerous cocktail of people eating lots of fatty wild animal foods mixed with large amounts of simple carbohydrates, pizza, soda, bread, candy, etc. I honestly don't know what the health effects of this are but my view is that a ketogenic diet in itself is an extremely good thing but that combining those very powerful wild foods with the more nefarious power of industrials foods is a very sketchy science experiment which cannot yield good results. All-in-all, it is basically a situation where modern native people are just as sugar dependent, if not more sugar dependent, than the average American, with heavy consequences to both health and traditional life ways.

REVIEWS

Kingfisher and Canada Geese. Photo by Yank.

After Prison
Available online at http://afterprisonz-ine.org/
Reviewed by Kevin Tucker.

In the anarchist world, prisoner support is one of the few areas where we can typically cross "party lines" and come together. At the very least, support for anarchist, earth and animal liberation prisoners remains part and parcel with fighting the state. Or, I should say, it seemed to be that way.

I was taken aback while interviewing and discussing the span and consequences of the Green Scare with former SHAC defendant Josh Harper for *Species Traitor 5*. Not only has support for current and former political prisoners been faltering, in terms of post-prison support, we have failed completely. Both of those things are sad truths, but in an era when so many anarchist prisoners have turned towards snitching, that just adds to the sense of isolation that those who held true must feel.

This is simply unacceptable.

In all honesty, I think Josh has been publicly modest in his statements and I hate to make it seem like I'm pointing him out, but his words are reflected by a wide swath of former prisoners who enter prison with strong support campaigns and leave to find little recognizance or real world positioning to help transition back into life on the outside. Prison, like all State institutions, is a place of violence. But unlike the violence in the world outside those bars, the general portrayal and, hence consensus, is that those in prison deserve the worst of what may happen to them or worse. So when prisoners lose their recourse and public empathy, that culture of violence becomes more prevalent and infectious. And it is ultimately ignored.

To think that winding up in prison because of ethics might make one immune to the toxic violence within those walls is naive at best and despicable in practice. As Rod Coronado states in his essay in the first issue of *After Prison*, these prisoners end up behind bars because they acted on their empathy. So while PTSD is a common response to the insanity of life in prison, it can be potentially harsher for those who wound up there for selfless reasons.

My immediate response to Josh's words is that this topic needs aired and I had intended to press it further in this publication. But I've been

elated to see *After Prison*. Here we have interviews with former anarchist, earth and animal liberation prisoners Jeff "Free" Luers and Josh Harper with contributions from Jordan Holliday and Rod Coronado, all discussing the impacts of life in prison and the difficulty reintegrating into the "outside world". I consider this an absolute must read for anyone who claims to hold these views or support those who do behind bars.

Nothing about this zine is easy, but it's not intended to be. My elation is most certainly not a feeling of happiness that this struggle has been tackled. It most definitely has not. This zine is not a solution, nor does it present any. It is a first step, the opening of a conversation that needs to happen, but one that those doing support need to be besides themselves to learn how to accommodate. In format and approach, the power of this zine is in being a reminder that the first step here is in listening. Read these stories. Recognize that solidarity doesn't end when a sentence is up. Listen and help.
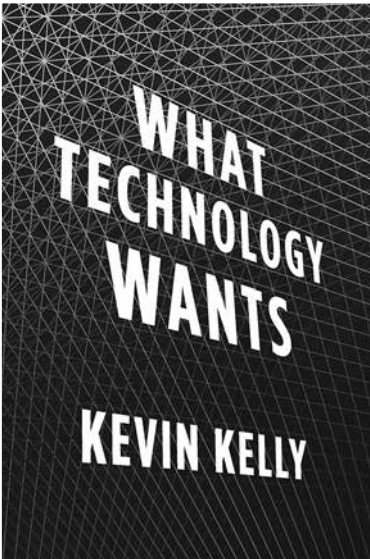
What Technology Wants
Kevin Kelly
Penguin, 2010.
Reviewed by Cliff Hayes.

About a quarter of the way through What Technology Wants I was a bit surprised that Kelly acknowledges so many problems created by technology. I guess it's hard not to deal with these facts of technological history, but I had anticipated he would be ignoring much of it. However this may be, I was not surprised by his willingness to sweep all these "bad side effects" of technological progress under the rug and claim that "the obvious benefits" of technology make it all worth it. Paraphrasing the idea that Kelly pounds over the readers head relentlessly, "Technology wants to be free and we want the freedoms and choices that technology provides." To support this motto, Kelly engages in various sidetracks showcasing how billions have flocked to technological civilization and that history shows this happening again and again. The fact that this is a one-way street that humanity is on (nobody leaves a technologically advanced life for a less technologically advanced life, right?) proves the superiority and inevitability of the

technological liberation of all human kind. One such wonderful tale he tells is of displaced indigenous tribes in the Amazon cutting down their own homes. They do this because, once civilization had infiltrated their place in the world, it was the only job that they were equipped to do. In his own words:

> Truly, there is nothing as disturbing as the sight of indigenous tribesmen, say in the Amazon basin or in the jungles of Borneo or Papua New Guinea, wielding chain saws to fell their own forests. When your forest home is toppled, you are pushed into camps, then towns, and then cities. Once in a camp, cut off from your hunter-gatherer skills, it makes a weird sense to take the only paid job around, which is cutting down your neighbors' forest. Clear-cutting virgin forests counts as cultural insanity for a number for reasons, not least that the tribal people ousted by this habitat destruction cannot go back. Within a generation or two of exile, they can lose key survival knowledge, which would prevent their descendants from returning even if their homeland were to be renewed. Their exit is an involuntary one-way trip. In the same way, the despicable treatment of indigenous tribes by American white settlers really did force them into settlements and the adoption of new technologies they were in no hurry to use.

In a manner that is common with Kelly, he makes an astute observation about the logic at the core of civilization and then readily dismisses it. I can appreciate his observation that technological progress transforms human life into serving the "megamachine" (in Lewis Mumford's words) and then eradicates the habitat and knowledge of pre-existing ways of life not dependent upon such an industrialized life-support system. Then comes the complete dismissal of this fact. He makes this observation and then has no qualms about sweeping it under the rug with the following paragraph:

> However, clear-cutting is technologically unnecessary. Habitat destruction of any type is deplorable, and stupidly low tech, but also not responsible for the majority of migrations. Deforestation is a minor push compared to the tractor beam-like pull of the flickering lights that have brought 2.5 billion people into the cities in the last 60 years. Today, as in the past, most of the mass movement toward cities—the hundreds of millions per decade—

is led by settled people willing to pay the price of inconvenience and grime, living in a slum in order to gain opportunities and freedom. The poor move into the city for the same reason the rich move into the technological future—to head toward possibilities and increased freedoms.

The mass movement towards cities "led by settled people" makes up the bulk of the those migrations towards the technological future. And one may ask, how did those immigrants to the technological future become "settled people"? I'm afraid the answer is in steps similar to what he outlined in the preceding paragraph. They were transformed into "settled people" through the domestication of their lands and bodies. Once they are settled and they have sufficiently destroyed their previous habitat and way of life, they have no choice but to migrate towards the tractor beam-like pull of the flickering lights of the modern industrialized spectacle of civilization.

But beyond even this criticism, Kelly not only is ignoring a lot of resistance to civilization, but he is rubber stamping genocide by those producing technology as long as that produced technology is able to make our lives "better". He writes that as long as the good benefits of technology are above 50%, and less than 50% have bad effects, then the net benefit to humanity is good and will compound and grow better as time goes on. So 10 million people dying for the benefit of a technologically dependent 5 billion is probably going to be okay along this line of thought. This points out another major problem with Kelly's thought. He is essentially updating utilitarianism to be almost wholly based on technologically derived pleasures.

Shortly after the publication of this book, I went to see Kevin Kelly speak at the Baghdad Theater in Portland, Oregon. I clearly recall him saying at this presentation - "The more technological we become, the more human we become." Of course, the unspoken flipside to this statement is "the less defined by technology we are, the less human we are" and that is an effective way to sum up the atrocities committed by technologically advanced civilizations over the thousands of years of their existence. The fact that Kelly marries technology and utilitarianism is not a shock. Michael Becker, in his essay, Anarcho-Primitivism: The Green Scare in Green Political Theory, did a nice job of pointing out how John Stuart Mill abhorred nature in his book, On Nature, and clearly defined our existence solely on our ability to manufacture desires based on the principles of utility. I for one have always enjoyed Nietzsche's potshots at Mill as a "blockhead" and the critique of his blind pursuit of happiness as

a psychotic view of life that neglects any feelings of vitality.

What Technology Wants manifests itself as a living system that Kelly terms the Technium. For Kelly, he sees the Technium as a living entity with a will of its own of which humans are the sexual organs (we reproduce technology because it currently is unable to on its own... but there's always hope!). This idea actually coincides with an anti-technology critique, but we of the anti-tech creed would call this "technology" itself, not an abstracted Technium containing both good and bad technologies which humans choose to produce or not. Beyond this fuzziness, Kelly is not clear on the difference between tools, technology and the Technium. I think this is a huge weak point in his book and speaks to how he is unable to accurately account for technology and it's total effects on humanity. His simplistically naive idea of the Technium enables the utilitarian attitude towards production and any human endeavor. Humanity is entrapped within the Technium, but Kelly sees this what technology and humans want. For all living things need a synthetic life support system that distributes freedom and opportunities so efficiently. What he writes is strongly utilitarian, and with that he incorporates all the weaknesses of this ethical theory that has been exposed as baseless by countless critics. As long as we create "stuff" and "expand our humanity through our technology", Kelly sees this only as a positive and makes a utilitarian wager that we should make our symbiosis with the Technium stronger and stronger because, ultimately, what technology wants, we want as well.

In the end, I think what Kelly is getting at is that technology gives us many poisons to choose from and what technology wants is for us to choose one that it can provide.

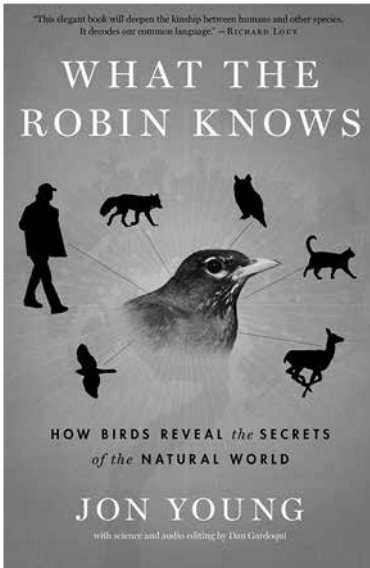**What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World**
Jon Young
Mariner Books, 2012.
Reviewed by Kevin Tucker.

It would be easy to write both this book and its companion audio lecture, *Advanced Bird Language*, off as fodder for the hobbyist birder. No doubt it would serve the birding world well to tune in, but it horribly underestimates the power of this content. This book is the *Art of War* for rewilding. The lessons contained within this book foster hunter-gatherers and warriors alike.

There is an unquestionable link between the skillset of a hunter-gatherer and that of a guerilla warrior. The ability to sustain oneself, cam-

ouflage in plain sight, and move unde-tected could be said to be the kind of skills that make or break your survival in a wide span of circumstances. What Jon Young has sought out to do, both in this book and his numerous track-er-warrior programs, is to teach indi-viduals how to read the alarms. In the forest, the countryside, the city, on the periphery, within the core; basically anywhere where birds might be, they are the first line of defense in awareness about what is going on around you and a reminder that the unaware domesti-cated human might as well be a lit bill-board.

Through unraveling stories of wild encounters, often hardly in wild places, Young elaborates on the 10 base response patterns for alarm or reaction amongst songbirds and lays out a path to learn to observe them. His method is highly effective: cen-tering around a sit spot, a place near you where you can sit and still your mind and body for 30 minutes per day and just observe, just be present and aware. The methodology is legit: the point isn't to offer a broadly ar-rogant intention that observation is immersion, but to provide the skillset to learn and understand what is baseline behavior and how each disrup-tion brings specific and telling responses.

The point is to take you beyond the threshold: to find empathy and employ it. This is, in effect, a manual and guide to rewilding, laid out in effective and time tested measure that many of us who were roughing it with a few field guides and slowly shedding scientism (through what I call a process of radical humility) would have loved to have had at our disposal off the bat.

Rewilding is a process of undoing domestication. That starts in our hearts and minds, but it is learned through getting in the dirt. The mes-sage that ecologists have taught is to take only photos and leave only foot-prints. That carries the domesticating impulse of remaining a spectator of life rather than live it. And that is exactly the threshold that needs to be crossed: going from observation to integration: to carry yourself into the wild with empathy.

There are no short cuts in this method, but there are clear steps laid out in this process. And there is no question: this is a spiritual path.

While it's easy to take an armchair stance on whether "wildness" exists or not, I'm with Young in recognizing that you can only go so far wanting to coldly observe wild beings without starting to pull the picture together: how the symbiotic line is crossed between mutually understood behaviors and interconnectedness. Even with a staunchly materialist or biological explanation for observed behavior, there is an underlying beauty to the interplay between all beings: an indisputable connectivity.

Here Young's focus on the American Robin (a native songbird whose presence is so commonly taken for granted) serves both as homage to the unexotic and overlooked and a reminder that wildness is not wilderness. It is not a pristine "Other" outside of and removed from our being. It is a constant. It is our baseline, our mutually understood behavior. This path is open to all and it is one our hunter-gatherer bodies and minds are adapted within. This isn't a creation of new methodology, but a rediscovery of impulses redirected by specialists and programmers. It is an awakening.

And those guerilla skills? This comes down to hunting after all. Tracking, stalking, blending in to shadows; these things aren't about manipulating the baseline, but becoming baseline. The path in this book is to understand alarms with the intent to continue down that path until you stop causing them. This is about invisibility.

While in the end, that aspect might be the only appeal of this work for some, it's hard to walk down this path and not see it as anything less than another perk in the end.

BLACK AND GREEN REVIEW

WILD EXISTENCE
PASSIONATE RESISTANCE

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